Lilly Grant
Clergy Economic Initiative

By Cynthia Newman, Minister of Clergy Economic Empowerment

Did you know that according to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average clergy person in the U.S. earns $46,150? A recent survey of clergy in the Indiana Region revealed that nearly 28% have more than $30,000 in educational loans. 50% of Indiana congregations do not provide health care for their clergy. These statistics represent the pressing need and wonderful opportunity for clergy to receive relief from some of their financial challenges. Enter...the FLOURISH! Project, where clergy and congregations may find financial peace for today and hope for tomorrow.

The Christian Church in Indiana has just completed its first round of grants for the FLOURISH! Project made available through a generous grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The grants provide funds to be applied toward debt relief, health care or retirement while offering a financial education through the Financial Literacy Academy. The structure of the grants allow clergy and lay leaders to partner together in receiving financial empowerment as pastoral and congregational leaders attend various components of the financial literacy training together.

Based on the FLOURISH! Project’s initiatives, sixteen (16) Compensation Support Grants (for congregations), twenty-seven (27) Financial Relief Grants (for individuals) will be available to clergy over the next three years. While the grant programs have eligibility criteria, all clergy may attend the Financial Literacy Academy offered in partnership with the Pension Fund.

For more information about FLOURISH! initiatives or to apply for the next round of grants, visit our website at indianadisciples.org/flourish

Disciples from Congo-Brazzaville Welcomed

By Sandra Gourdet, Special to the Indiana Christian

The Indiana Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) extended an extravagant welcome to families from our partner church—The Church of the Disciples of Christ in Congo (EDCC) located in Congo-Brazzaville. Their arrival was made possible through Church World Service, United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the U.S. government and Exodus, a refugee agency in Indianapolis.

Regional Minister Rick Spleth accompanied three separate delegations of Disciples to the Indianapolis International airport to receive our friends. In November of last year, Beaucjacques (Bojack) Ilondo, a young gentleman who sang in one of the EDCC choirs, was the first to arrive. Pastor Jean Baptiste Ilondo, his wife Blande and three children arrived in December. Docta Ilondo, wife Esther and four children arrived late February. They have been warmly received by several congregations in and near Indianapolis.

The Ilondos were members of the Disciples of Christ Church in Congo (CDCC) in the Equator Region. Originally from a village between Boende and Wema, they lived in...
Greetings from Jerusalem!

As I write I am currently in the Middle East with a group of Disciples Regional Ministers and United Church of Christ Conference Ministers and others visiting our Global Ministries staff in the Middle East and the many partners whose mission we support. I am happy to report that the investment our congregations are making through Disciples Mission Fund, the Easter offering, and Week of Compassion is being well used. Again and again I have been impressed at the comprehensive way in which our own staff and our mission partners are accomplishing great things in providing ministerial education, university education, vocational training, and kindergartens. They are literally saving youth from a life of despair; they are helping women find dignity and power, and they are fostering interfaith relations in ways that are a model for other parts of the world. They are serving the refugees, who exist in far too great a number, with dignity and care. I am very proud of what we are doing and encourage your support.

I met Radwa Salah in Lebanon who is working with Syrian refugee youth to provide them with conflict management and peacemaking skills which they will need to have for the day that the war ends. I am hopeful because I met Wafa Goussous in Jordan who is designing imaginative ways to give refugee women economic opportunity and address their sense of privacy and dignity. I have hope because I met Andrea Zaki in Egypt who is improving the lives of countless families with microcredit loans allowing them to start small businesses. And I have hope because I met Mitri Raheb in Palestine who is raising his voice with clarity and conviction about the need for the occupation of the West Bank to end.

All of them are equipped for the work that they do because of the offerings we make. They need more than that though. They need us to be better informed about their challenge. You can start by exploring the wealth of resources at the website for the Global Ministries Middle East Initiative: www.globalministries.org/meinitiative. You can also start by reviving your prayers for Jerusalem and the whole Middle East and all its inhabitants.

My heart is heavy at the same time with what I have seen. We have been to Palestinian refugee camps that have been existence since 1949 and to Syrian refugee camps that are just a few months old. The living conditions in each are intolerable. The Syrians we met left homes and jobs because of the danger of a raging war and are now living in UN tents in the desert in Northern Jordan just a few miles from the Syrian Border. They are barely getting by with no basic sanitary support. In all the camps half of the population is children.

I also saw the Wall. I knew about the Wall, of course, as I am sure you do. It is a separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank which is under Israeli occupation. Diane and I lived in Jerusalem for a time in the summer of 2000, prior to the Wall’s construction, and several times a week we would walk back and forth from Jerusalem to Bethlehem which sit side by side. Now a 30 foot wall and extensive and controlled check points block that easy access. The Wall is ugly as sin. The Wall is sin—brokenness and division of the human family.

Jesus’ time in Jerusalem also filled him with a heavy spirit. “As he came near the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace.” Luke 19:41-42

I am not optimistic about the future of the Middle East. Things are way broken here. I am hopeful though. I hold on to hope even when optimism seems unwarranted. I am hopeful because of the young woman I met in the Syrian Refugee Camp, a former law student from Damascus, who has created a one room school in a tent. I am hopeful because Christians, Muslims, and Jews, that they might know God’s peace. “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. Psalm 137:5-6†

Blessings on you and your congregation,

Richard L. Spleth
Regional Minister
**Logansport Jan. 3.**

at River of Life Christian Church, concluded his ministry effective Jan. 1.

**Patty Jones Village Dec. 31.**

Chaplain at Robin Run Retirement Village, Monterey, Monterey, Lawton Christian Church, Monterey on Dec. 6.

**Jarrel Hartle Church, Milton on Dec. 1.**

Pastor at Entry Point Church, Carmel on Jan. 24.

**Saint Samuel Johnson**

at Mt. Summit Christian Church, Monterey on Dec. 6.

**Lawton Christian Church, Monterey**

held their closing service of worship on Dec. 6.

**Mark O’ Brien**

concluded his ministry at Mt. Summit Christian Church, Mt. Summit Dec. 31.

**Bruce Naylor and Dean Hoisey**

were installed as Team Ministers at Southside Christian Church, South Bend on Jan. 17.

**Sam Davenport**

began serving as Interim Minister at New Lisbon Christian Church, Union City on Jan. 17.

**Keith Strain**

retired as Senior Minister at First Christian Church, Crawfordsville on Jan. 24.

**Tonja Gerardy**

began serving as the Pastor at Entry Point Church, Carmel on Jan. 24.

**Brian Nelson**

began serving as Interim Minister at First Christian Church, Crawfordsville on Jan. 25.

**Michael Sinclair**

concluded his ministry at Central Christian Church, Connersville on Jan. 25.

**Stephen Yarbrough**

began serving as Interim Pastor at First Christian Church, Westfield on Jan. 31.

**Sue Shadbourn Call and Robert Riester**

began serving as Co-Interim Ministers at River of Life Christian Church, Logansport on Jan. 31.

**Rick Abbott**

concluded his ministry at First Christian Church, Winamac on Jan. 31.

**Jeff Seger**

began serving as Interim Minister at First Christian Church, Winamac on February 1.

**Vernon Stover**

retired as Pastor at Sheridan First Christian Church, Sheridan on Feb. 7.

**Kathi and Jim Elliott**

concluded their ministry at Russellville Community Church, Russellville Feb. 14.

**Julie Mullins**

concluded serving as Pastor at East Lynn Christian Church, Russellville on Feb. 28.

**Becki Nunnally**

concluded serving as Interim Pastor at First Christian Church, Marion on February 28.

**Roslyn Harrison**

began serving as Pastor of First Christian Church, Marion on March 6.

**Bryon Rose**

retired Disciples pastor, died Jan. 27.

**Bobbye Brown**

retired Disciples pastor, died Saturday, February 27.

**Aaron Smith**

was ordained at Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis on November 22.

**Nick Orange**

was ordained at Olive Branch Christian Church, Indianapolis on Dec. 6.

**Chimiste Doriscar's**

Recognition of Ordination service of worship was held at Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis Dec. 21.

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**Save the Date!**

**July 17-22, 2016**

**Association of Disciple Musicians**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

at the University of Evansville, Evansville, IN

For more detailed information visit [www.adm-doc.org](http://www.adm-doc.org)

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**Ministry Milestones**

**CHANGES**

**Todd Barnhizer**

began serving as Interim Minister at Milton Christian Church, Milton on Dec. 1.

**Jarrel Hartle**

concluded his ministry at Lawton Christian Church, Monterey on Dec. 6.

**Lawton Christian Church, Monterey**

held their closing service of worship on Dec. 6.

**Mark O’ Brien**

concluded his ministry at Mt. Summit Christian Church, Mt. Summit Dec. 31.

**Saint Samuel Johnson**

retired as Chaplain at Robin Run Retirement Village Dec. 31.

**Patty Jones**

began serving as Chaplain at Robin Run Retirement Village effective Jan. 1.

**Michael Dodds**

concluded his ministry at River of Life Christian Church, Logansport Jan. 3.

**Bruce Naylor and Dean Hoisey**

were installed as Team Ministers at Southside Christian Church, South Bend on Jan. 17.

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**Kathi and Jim Elliott**

concluded their ministry at Russellville Community Church, Russellville Feb. 14.

**Julie Mullins**

concluded serving as Pastor at East Lynn Christian Church, Anderson on Feb. 28.

**Becki Nunnally**

concluded serving as Interim Pastor at First Christian Church, Marion on February 28.

**Roslyn Harrison**

began serving as Pastor of First Christian Church, Marion on March 6.

**DEATHS**

**Bryon Rose**

retired Disciples minister, died Jan. 27.

**Bobbye Brown**

retired Disciples pastor, died Saturday, February 27.

**ORDINATIONS**

**Aaron Smith**

was ordained at Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis on November 22.

**Nick Orange**

was ordained at Olive Branch Christian Church, Indianapolis on Dec. 6.

**Chimiste Doriscar**

Recognition of Ordination service of worship was held at Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis Dec. 21.
Disciples Impacting Our World

Michele Wood, member of Northwood Christian Church, Indianapolis and CTS Student (and artist-in-residence) was nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

Michele was nominated as the illustrator of Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony, Inspired by Historical Facts, a book that imagines the two American icons reminiscing over tea. The NAACP Image Awards celebrate the “outstanding achievements and performances of people of color in the arts, as well as those individuals or groups who promote social justice through their creative endeavors.”

Southside Christian Church Creates a Giving Tree

Early last spring, Southside Christian, Kokomo member, Mary Buchholz had lunch with a friend Beth. During their time together, this friend shared her dream of having a giving tree. Unfortunately, Mary’s friend Beth passed away. Mary decided to honor her friend and bring that dream to fruition. She contacted the Downtown Civic association and started asking for donations. Before long a tree behind the Kokomo library was adorned with hats, mittens, gloves and coats. Beth wanted warm clothing items to be available, without judgement, to anyone with a need.

The tree was a success, needing to be filled almost daily. Building on this idea, Rev. Becky Sundquist decided to fill a Giving Tree at the church in Mary’s honor. With help from several members of the congregation the tree was filled and refilled and will be until the end of February. Sharon Herr, another member, built on the idea by encouraging people to put Care Cans under the tree. These are waterproof cans filled with toiletry items and snacks. Many people across Kokomo are truly Sharing the Love of God.
Holy Place Gets New Lease on Life

Members of the small congregation on the east side of Indianapolis knew something wasn’t right. Due to a lack of young families, much of the education space in Eastgate Christian Church was going unused except for the occasional Bible study class and monthly board meetings, and they were troubled by a sense that God was calling them to do and be more in the Holy Place they had inhabited since 1957. But what would that look like?

A vision began to take shape in 2014 when it occurred to Eastgate Pastor Tod Iseminger and other church leaders that their space could be used better by others outside their immediate congregation. So, they went looking for and found a potential partner in Stillwaters Adult Day Care that operates out of space attached to Castleton United Methodist Church, which oversees its operation. Stillwaters was as attracted to the idea of expanding their services to the east side of the city as Eastgate Christian Church was to finding new mission and purpose for their unused space.

Perhaps it was fortuitous that in the spring of 2015, Eastgate leaders attended JumpStart Indiana, cohosted by DCEF, the Indiana Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Episcopal Church Building Fund. The day-long event focused on the creative use of buildings to enhance mission and ministry. At JumpStart, Rev. Iseminger spoke with DCEF Advisor Jim Michel about the possibility of sharing space in their facility, perhaps with Stillwaters. A month later, Jim was onsite at Eastgate to discuss needed changes to the building to accommodate licensed adult day care and the possibility of a DCEF loan to fund that renovation.

Long story short: Once the vision became clear, Eastgate Christian Church developed a business plan and signed a lease agreement with Castleton United Methodist Church/Stillwaters Adult Day Care to provide needed services to seniors in the church’s immediate neighborhood. Before the year was out, DCEF approved the church’s loan request and the project was off and running.

Rev. Iseminger is excited about the “new lease” on life that this new ministry provides for his congregation. “This new adult care program will allow Eastgate to serve its neighborhood in a way that we are currently not doing,” he explains, “and will provide volunteering opportunities for Eastgate members and other churches in the area. There is new energy in our congregation as a result of a renewed sense of purpose.”

Jim Michel agrees, “Eastgate is an excellent example of what can happen to a congregation when they do a new thing with their ‘place’ for all the right reasons.” He adds, “DCEF is honored to be a part of this transformation.”

Solar Panels on Downey Avenue Christian Church in Indianapolis

On October 8, 2015, the 28 new solar panels began producing electricity for Downy Avenue Christian Church on the east side of Indianapolis. They were installed after the congregation received a grant from the Indiana Office of Energy Development with the assistance of Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light. A dedication service for the panels was held on October 18, with the Interim pastor, Steven Moore, standing on the roof beside the panels. Each panel produces 285 watts of energy. It is anticipated that the yearly energy bill will be reduced by at least 20%.

The Exodus Refugee program provides major assistance to these families, but as you can imagine, this is an exciting opportunity for us to extend Hoosier hospitality to these brothers and sisters in Christ. Several congregations have provided contact persons to assist with the effort; if your congregation wants to help, and has not yet provided a contact name, please reach out to Susan McNeely via email at kyvoyageur@gmail.com or by phone at 317-514-7617.

Secondly, two of our partners from Mbandaka will be joining us at Regional Assembly this fall. Rev. ILUMBE Ndjongo Bernard, Principal Supervising Pastor of Mbandaka Post (equivalent to Regional Minister) and PEKOMBE Ilondo family arrival

The Congo Task Force, which assists in all things related to the Congo partnership, is in need of additional members to assist with our ongoing projects. If you have a calling to be part of this exciting ministry, please contact Sarah Riester at the regional office, sarah@indianadisciples.org.

Finally, please keep the Disciples of Christ in Congo, and particularly the Mbandaka Post, in your continuing prayers. Massive flooding has been experienced along the Congo River, along which many Mbandaka churches are located. This has made it impossible for a number of churches to meet, and has placed a severe strain on the finances of local churches. Any financial assistance you might want to offer can be offered as a designated gift through the Christian Church in Indiana, by check or on-line offering.†
Hands ON Mission Camp

By Lee Yates, Minister of Faith Formation

What would happen if Church Camp and a Mission Trip merged together? Well this year for CYF Camp they have. Now for this year, the Indiana Region introduces Hands ON Mission Camp! This camp is scheduled for June 13-18 at Barbee Christian Camp.

Youth in grades 9-12 will have a chance to serve in an off-site, hands on ministry project, benefiting Indiana communities. This project, in conjunction with REAL Services will put youth to work with disadvantage individuals in the community who need help with painting, landscaping or cleaning. Campers will also provide support to special projects on-site at one of the Indiana Disciples’ outdoor sanctuaries, Barbee Christian Camp.

Connect with other Disciples youth from all over the state. Get Hands on and register for camp, today!
Financial Literacy Academy

May 13-14 Marks the kickoff of the FINANCIAL LITERACY ACADEMY for clergy and congregational leaders within the Christian Church in Indiana. Created as an initiative of the FLOURISH! Project through a generous grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., the academy seeks to educate and empower clergy in the areas of personal finance, congregational finance, fundraising, and preaching/teaching stewardship.

LOCATION:
May and October 2016
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis Airport
2017 & 2018: TBD

COURSE OUTLINE
Clergy Personal Financial Literacy
(Spring Day 1):
Living debt free, saving for retirement, understanding the Pension Fund, budgeting, insurance and investment counsel, understanding clergy taxes, reporting and tax benefits. This is to be attended by the pastor and spouse, where applicable.

Congregational Best Practices
(Spring Day 2)
Clergy compensation and benefits, creating and adhering to a balanced budget, handling money, accountability and transparency, financial examinations. This is designed for the pastor, board chair, and treasurer (or two church appointed designees)

Clergy Preaching and Teaching Stewardship
(Fall Day 1)
Creating compelling sermons on tithing and giving, stewardship as a holistic approach to managing God’s resources, pastoral ethics and integrity in stewardship, outreach and missional giving, and leaving a legacy for future generations. This is designed for clergy only.

Congregational Fundraising
(Fall Day 2)
Finding alternate sources of income, creating a culture of generosity, effective use of building resources as a stream of income, creating green by going green, programs that pay, and cultivating and managing estate gifts. This is designed for the pastor, board chair, and treasurer (or two church appointed designees)

NOTE: Not all topics will be covered in each session. Consequently, it is imperative that the participants attend each session over a two year period

For more information about the Financial Literacy Academy, visit our website indianadisciples.org/flourish
Or contact Cynthia@indianadisciples.org

Congo Partners share in supporting Week of Compassion

Rev. Ilumbe, Principal Supervising Pastor of the Mbandaka District of the Disciples of Christ in the Congo, recently contacted the Indiana Regional office with a question. “What is the theme for the Week of Compassion offering this year? It is time to promote it again.” We relayed to him that it was Ruth 1:16, “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.” He understood the reference and emphasis quickly to be a focus on refugee ministry.

A few weeks later Rev. Ilumbe challenged his congregations to give so that they could share in this vital ministry of our church. They raised over $500 U.S. It is a gift of great generosity and abundance. Relative to the comparative resources of the people of those Disciples congregations it is not an exaggeration to say that the Mbandaka District Disciples congregations contributed the most to Week of Compassion this year than any other set of congregations in our church. Thanks be to God!

We continue to learn and receive from our partners. We are delighted that Rev. Ilumbe and Oscar Pekombe will be with us at our Regional Assembly on October 1. We look forward to seeing them, and you, there.

Disciples Church Extension Fund inspires and empowers congregations to create Holy Places where people connect with God, each other and the community.

Reprinted with permission of the Disciples Church Extension Fund

The same, but more. Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) has always been about church places, as the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that provides congregations with building planning and capital funding services for their church facilities, with loans for new construction, renovation, repair, relocation and more. The need to provide these services still exists, but in this time of monumental change for churches, Disciples Church Extension Fund is called to be and do more.

The new mission statement above reflects DCEF’s reinvention as a ministry that helps congregations create, recreate, fund and use church places, conventional and otherwise, as a tool for connecting with the Holy, places to come together to be formed as Christians who are called to love and serve each other and their neighbors, inside AND outside church walls.

We are excited to share stories with you in the months ahead about congregations who are responding to our challenge to think first of how their Holy Places can serve their ministry and not the other way around.
2016 SPRING YOUTH ASSEMBLY

"Connecting the Dots" will be the theme of the 2016 Youth Spring Assembly on April 15-17. This youth-led event will include a day of hands on service (Saturday) and conversation about the mission of the Church with Regional leaders. Downey Avenue Christian Church in Indianapolis will host the event with hotel blocks available at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites-East, and Best Western-Crossroads. Check-in will start at 7pm at DACC on Friday and end after worship on Sunday morning, about 11:30am. Questions can be directed to Lee Yates at Lee@IndianaDisciples.org.

LAVISH HOSPITALITY
SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 2016
9:30am-2:30pm

Rev. Kathy McDowell, Editor of Just Women Magazine will lead a Bible Study on God's hospitality. Indiana Woman-to-Woman Participants will share their 2015 journey to Israel and Palestine, and we will worship and learn about service opportunities. Morning refreshments and lunch will be served.

Child care provided.

Contact
Rev. Carolyn Miller
for information
404-281-5607.

Please register for $15 at:
https://wmt.suran.com/main/preview/5040

2016 SPRING YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Christian Church in Indiana

SUMMER 2016
CAMP AND CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Camps

Grandparent & Me: Completed grades K-3 and grandparent
New Beginnings: Completed grades 2-3
Young Disciples: Completed grades 4-5
Chi Rho: Completed grades 6-8
CYF: Completed grades 9-12
CYF Mission Camp: Completed grades 9-12
Music, Art & Drama (MAD): Completed grades 6-12
Christian Rec & Outdoor Sports Skills (CROSS): Completed grades 6-12

Dates

June 13-18 CYF Mission Camp-Barbee
June 20-25 CROSS (SPORTS AND REC)- Barbee
June 20-25 Young Disciples- Bedford
June 27- July 2 MAD (Creative Camp)- Bedford
June 27- July 2 CYF- Bedford
July 6-8 Grandparent and Me- Barbee
July 6-8 New Beginnings- Bedford
July 11-16 Young Disciples- Barbee
July 11-16 Chi Rho- Bedford
July 18-20 Grandparent and Me- Bedford
July 18-23 Chi Rho- Barbee
July 25-27 New Beginnings- Barbee

If camp dates do not fit your Church or family schedule, visit our ministry partners in the United Church of Christ at:
www.ikcucc.org

For more information, please visit: www.indianadisciples.org