

The Indiana Christian



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Summer • 2017

Anti-Racism and Pro-Reconciliation Trainings Beginning

One of the goals for our region this year is to be faithful to Resolution 1601, which passed during our the 2016 Regional Assembly. The resolution, which addresses the need of Anti-Racism and Pro-Reconciliation (ARPR) will be a requirement of all commissioned and ordained ministers to maintain standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana. According to Resolution 1601, these trainings will begin within 18 months of the resolution having been approved. Hear the good news! We will host the first training of the series on November 11, 2017 in Indianapolis. The training



format will be similar to Healthy Boundaries, and will be a safe space for all clergy to explore today's pressing issues related to race and how we, as individuals and as the church can be the change in the movement towards wholeness. As we want the conversation and program to be rich and positive for everyone, seating will be limited to 30 people per training; we anticipate by the end of 2019 all commissioned and ordained ministers will have taken the ARPR training sponsored by our Region.

Save dates for trainings in 2018:

- **February 10, 2018**
(Indianapolis, IN)
- **May 5, 2018**
(Rochester, IN)
- **August 11, 2018**
(Bedford, IN)
- **October 5, 2018**
(Indianapolis, IN)

Registration will be available online at www.indianadisciples.org, or you can also call our office at 317.926.6051. We encourage congregations, when possible, to cover the \$45 registration fee which includes, materials and lunch.

In addition to the ARPR Trainings, the Reconciliation

TRAININGS

Continued on page 6

Indiana Disciples Host General Assembly and Install New General Minister and President



Over 3,700 Disciples from across the country and around the world converged on Indianapolis in July for the General Assembly. Many thanks to **Dale Pellman** from Geist Christian Church and the many volunteers who worked with him on the Local Arrangements Committee.

A highlight of the Assembly was the installation of **Terri Hord Owens** as the eighth General Minister and President of our church, and the third native Hoosier in that group alongside Sharon Watkins and Dick Hamm. Terri called on the church to claim the gift of unity that is a gift of God.

See more coverage of the General Assembly on page 5. †

Region Calls Two New Staff Persons

Bere Gil Soto



We are pleased to welcome to the Indiana Regional staff Bere Gil Soto, who will serve as the Reconciliation Program Minister for the Christian Church in Indiana and Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She started this position on May 1, 2017. This is a shared position with the General Reconciliation Office and the Regional Office. Bere was born and raised in Central Mexico, in the beautiful town of San Luis Potosí, where she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Psychology. As a lifelong member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), she was involved in many expressions of the church in Mexico. Bere came to Indianapolis in 2012 to pursue a dual degree at Christian Theological Seminary and graduated in December 2016 with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Marriage & Family Therapy. Bere's passion resides in people's stories and the beauty and power that come out of them. In July she married her CTS classmate Ronnie Bell in her hometown in Mexico. We are excited about her joining our staff. You can reach her at bere@indianadisciples.org.

Maribeth Westerfield Blackman



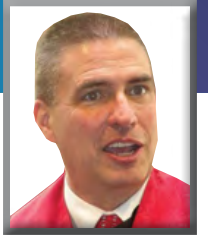
We are also delighted to welcome back to the Indiana Regional staff Maribeth Westerfield Blackman to serve as the part-time coordinator of women's ministry beginning July 1, 2017. Maribeth is known to many in Indiana having served as Associate Regional Minister from 1981-1988 with responsibility for women's ministry. Following her earlier tenure on our staff she served as the Senior Minister of University Place Christian Church in Enid, Oklahoma for 7 ½ years and has just retired after 21 years of service as Vice President of Disciples Church Extension Fund.

Women's ministry has continued to be an interest and focus of her ministry throughout all these years. She has been a writer, retreat leader, and speaker across the life of our denomination and a valued consultant to congregations as they consider their mission, finances, and building needs.

She is a graduate of TCU and she holds an M.Div from Phillips Theological Seminary and a D.Min from Lexington Theological Seminary. A member of First Christian Church in Martinsville she recently married Joe Allison, a member of Geist Christian Church. You can email her a greeting at maribeth@indianadisciples.org. †

In The Spirit

Richard L. Spleth, Indiana Regional Minister



Creating Wholeness in a Fragmented World

Last May I had the opportunity to travel to Colombia with a delegation of Disciples and United Church of Christ leaders to gain insight into the work our church supports in that country. One Sunday we worshipped in the small town of Toribio. This community of 4,000 people is located high in the Andes mountains above the city of Cali. It is composed almost entirely of the Nasa Native American tribe and the town sits in the middle of their native territory. It is an idyllic setting in many ways, but the last few decades of life there has been extraordinarily challenging.



The Nasa are a peaceful people who eschew weapons. Their security personnel carry batons festooned with ribbons that look like a piece of liturgical art. Sadly, this little town has been a crossroads for guerilla troops, paramilitary organizations, drug cartels, and government troops who have battled each other again and again in that territory. There have been way too many deaths, and way too many losses over the years.



We give thanks for a peace accord that was signed last November 30 and is holding so far.

When our delegation visited Toribio the first thing they said to us was thank you. The minister's wife said, "we know you are the ones who send Luz to us. You need to know how grateful we are, and what a difference she makes." Indeed we are the ones. Through the Colombian Evangelical Council of Churches, our mission partner in Columbia, our Disciples Mission Fund dollars regularly send a young woman named Luz to this town to work with the women of the community. Luz helps them confront their losses and claim their dignity. And she helps them organize projects that build up their sense of empowerment by creating microcredit loan opportunities.

So, in many ways I was visiting a mission outpost of your congregation. A place not likely on your consciousness, but a place, albeit far flung, that your offerings have reached.

Our church, through our long time missionary Michael Joseph, and our mission partners are engaged in other significant work as

well. In the peace accord that was negotiated between the Colombian government and the FARC guerilla our partner, DiPaz, has been assigned some specific roles. They are helping oversee the respectful return of the remains of thousands of persons who "disappeared" during the long war. They are organizing public events where painful stories are shared, and confessions made, as a step to reconciliation. And they are bringing together persons



who have been victimized with their offenders in a process to help both understand the ways in which they were harmed by the war. In the town of Granada we saw a road that is being jointly built by former combatants and families whose loved ones died at their hand. It is a pathway to peace.

Though this peace process is still fragile, its value is so apparent that the representatives of the Colombian government and

the FARC with whom we met all said that their commitment to this process is "irreversible." They, too, thanked our church for being a helpful intermediary.

Your congregation's gifts to Disciples Mission Fund are helping this happen in a nation recovering from decades of war.

And if peace prevails there, we know there is hope for the rest of the world, including our own cities and towns where despair and discord too often reigns.

Did you know that every year our 160 Indiana congregations contribute over \$1 million to Disciples Mission Fund and our special day offerings? That is amazing. Thank you. Your gifts help us embody our identity as "a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world," and allow us like Jesus to "proclaim peace to those who are far off and peace to those who are near." †

Blessings on you and your congregation,

Richard L. Spleth
Regional Minister

2017

Regional Calendar

AUGUST

- 23 Regional Board Meeting at Camp Geneva
- 26 Commissioned Ministers Nurture and Certification

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Regional Office Closed
- 2 Nurture and Certification Meetings
- 14 Regional Elders Meeting
- 19 Commission on Ministry
- 29 Congo Guests Arrive

OCTOBER

- 10 Nurture and Certification Meetings
- 16 Congo Guests Depart
- 20-21 Financial Literacy Academy

NOVEMBER

- 9 Regional Elders Meeting
- 11 Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciling Training
- 14 Nurture and Certification Meetings
- 21 Commission on Ministry
- 23 & 24 Regional Office Closed
- 29 Regional Board Meeting at Interchurch Center

DECEMBER

- 14 FLOURISH! Graduation Celebration Dinner
- 12/22, 2017 to 1/1, 2018 Regional Office Closed

Unless otherwise indicated, meetings will be held at the Indiana Interchurch Center. All times, unless otherwise indicated, are for the Eastern Time Zone. You can also view the regional calendar by visiting our website at: <http://indianadisciples.org/upcoming-events>.

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**FALL
ISSUE
DEADLINE
November 16**



India Bobadilla Represents Christian Church Foundation in Indiana



India Bobadilla has joined the Christian Church Foundation's executive staff as Assistant Vice President for Development. She will be working with individuals and congregations in Indiana, joining Vice President Enrique Ocasio.

"India brings with her a great depth of knowledge and love for the Christian Church," Kidwell said. "Her professional expertise in finance combined with her personal commitment to the church, make her the perfect addition to our staff. She will serve Disciples donors and congregations with passion and excellence."

A native of Indianapolis and a graduate of Indiana University, India and her husband Jose have two sons—Gianni and Stefano.

"I'm eager to work with donors in helping them make a difference with their legacy gifts," India said. "I look forward to helping Indiana congregations position themselves to be good stewards of those gifts, and to understand the added value the Foundation can provide."

India can be reached at (800) 668-8016 or via e-mail at indiab@ccf.disciples.org.

The Foundation is a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with the mission of encouraging legacy gifts and responsibly managing endowment funds owned by Disciples ministries. It is a donor-directed foundation designed to benefit Disciples ministries and institutions, currently managing \$654.8 million in assets. †

Rest and Renewal for our Regional Minister

By Matt Rosine, Moderator

We offer our prayers for Regional Minister Rick Spleth as he begins a well-earned sabbatical on July 15. A sabbatical (also known as "education leave") is a season of rest, study and spiritual renewal for ministers, typically provided by a church after several years of service. Our Region's personnel policy states that regional ministers will receive a paid leave-of-absence for education after five years of full-time service. In September, Rick will celebrate 16 years of service as Regional Minister in Indiana. This will be his third sabbatical during that period.

Rick will be out of the office and unavailable from July 15 through September 30. During that time, Carolyn Reed will serve as Acting Regional Minister.

An education leave (or sabbatical) is a gift to both the minister and the church. During the time away, the minister renews his/her commitment to serving the church; and the church also finds new insights and deeper relationships. It is often a rewarding experience for both the pastor and the congregation.

If your church already has a sabbatical policy, wonderful! Be quick to abide by it and do not wait for your pastor to ask about taking a sabbatical. If your church does not already offer this benefit to your pastor, then put a sabbatical policy in place. There are several sources for grants which can help both the pastor and the church pay for this time of renewal. You can learn more about a sabbatical policy by visiting the Disciples Home Missions website at: http://disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Sabbatical_Guidelines.pdf You might also take a look at the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations funded by the Lilly Endowment and administered by Christian Theological Seminary: <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal/apply/-indiana-program>.

One way we can care for our pastors is to provide them time away from the daily demands of ministry so they can hear the voice of God saying to them, "Beloved, you are my child and in you I well pleased."

Rick, we join with you in prayer—both for your rest and renewal, and for the ministry of our region. May God bless your time away and we'll see you in October! †



North Christian Church, Fort Wayne, holds services at Bottle and Bottega, a wine and canvas venue

North Christian Church Fort Wayne: On a Journey to Find a New Home

By Rev. Kate Penney Howard, Pastor of North Christian Church, Fort Wayne

North Christian Church, Fort Wayne is on a journey. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are learning more about ourselves, and we are reminded that God journeys with us, calling us to a land of promise.

About 18 months ago, we began a very faithful and very scary conversation. Our beloved building was too big for our needs, and there weren't enough of us to take proper care of it. Big repairs loomed ahead of us, and sometimes it seemed we prayed as much for our members as we prayed for the roof and mechanicals.

The leadership quickly concluded that they had two options. The easiest: maintain the status quo until finances forced us to close (2019). The hardest: do something drastic in hope that we could ensure that our congregation would continue to share the Gospel in Fort Wayne.

In 2016, this brave congregation voted to sell their building and begin working with Hope Partnership's Mission Pathways. On May 7, 2017, during our morning worship, we passed the keys to the pastor of the Myanmar Indigenous Christian Church—a congregation well suited to the building and able to be good stewards to the cherished property.

When we received the offer (for the building and contents), we began to draw on the future story that we had developed with Hope Partnership as we scrambled to find a location for our office and our worship. We packed up essential and cherished items and moved into a commercial office space, but we still needed a place to worship. The short story is, we ended up at what seemed to us to be an unlikely worship space: Bottle and Bottega, a wine and canvas venue.

Please join with us in prayer as we continue on our journey to discern—not how or where—but why we are church. †

Ministry Milestones

MINISTRY CHANGES

Mark Matheny concluded his ministry at Trafalgar Christian Church on April 1.
Haley Asberry began serving as Transitional Minister at Wabash Christian Church on April 1.
Jane Stout began her ministry at Trafalgar Christian Church on April 2.
Bob Riester and Sue Shadburne Call concluded their ministry as Co-Interim Ministers at Danville Christian Church on April 16.
Jim Hollis concluded his interim at the First Christian Church, Flora on April 28.
Richie Sanchez concluded his Interim Ministry at New Castle Christian

Church and began his new position as Transitional Minister at Danville Christian Church on April 30. He began as Interim Regional Minister in Arizona on July 24.
Ross Walters concluded his ministry at Smartsburg Christian Church on April 30.
Patti Case began her Interim ministry at Central Christian Church, Lebanon on May 1.
Alecia Gross began her ministry at First Christian Church, New Castle on May 1.
Lanny Lawler concluded his ministry at Mt. Summit Christian Church on May 21.
Ben Brandt began his ministry at Mt.

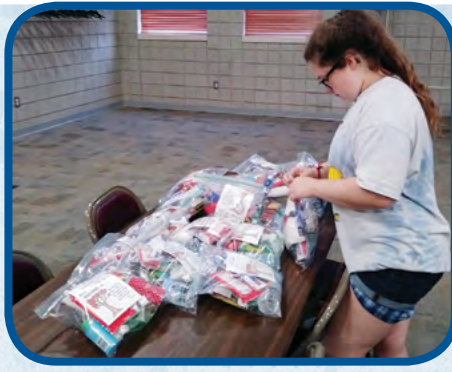
Summit Christian Church on May 22.
Ken Rickett retired from his ministry at First Christian Church, Bargersville on May 28.
Rae Karim concluded her ministry at Northwood Christian Church on June 18.
MARRIAGES
Haley Asberry, Transitional Minister of Wabash Christian Church, married Oluwatobiloba "Tobi" Moses Oguntoye on April 23, 2017.

CLOSINGS
Seventh and Eighth Christian Church, Indianapolis held their final worship service on Easter Sunday, April 26, 2017.

CHANGES OF NOTE

Main Street Christian Church in Winchester, Indiana began worship in their new building at 1212 East 100 South, Winchester on Easter Sunday.
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana in Hobart has officially made a change in their name to Genesis Christian Church.
North Christian Church, Ft. Wayne has sold their building and is worshipping in temporary space at Bottles & Bottega at 2870 E. DuPont Road, Ft. Wayne.

BIRTHS
Stephen and Joanna Yarbrough welcomed son Oliver Joseph, April 11. †



First Christian Church, Lafayette Commits Over \$20,000 to the Flourish! Project

Norm and Cay Long of First Christian Church, Lafayette, Indiana attended a luncheon about the Flourish! Project last year and connected deeply with this program to bring financial stability to pastors. Like many in our church they were unaware how far too many clergy, particularly young pastors, struggle with educational debt and inadequate compensation. "We need to tell our congregation about this," Norm said.

So, Norm and Cay invited Cynthia Newman and Rick Spleth from the Regional staff to meet with 50 members of First Christian Church. The gathering was held over a dinner on March 7, graciously prepared and served by members of the Christian Women's Fellowship. After the partnership with the Lilly Endowment was described and the program explained, Norm made an appeal to his fellow members. "Our current pastor's finances are stable, but who knows what the situation may be for the next minister we want to call?" he said. "We need to do this for the health of our whole church." That night the individuals present responded with gifts and pledges exceeding \$20,000.

The commitment of the Longs and the generosity of these Disciples in Lafayette gives a considerable boost to the Region's effort and responsibility to raise \$243,000 by December 31, 2018 to match the funds we have received from Lilly. If you too would like to help, contact Cynthia Newman at cynthia@indianadisciples.org or you can make a gift online at <http://indianadisciples.org/donate> †

Hazelwood Christian Church Youth Group Give Back to Local Community

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

(Colossians 3:17)

Every year Hazelwood Christian Church youth group goes on a summer mission trip. We have participated in the General Assembly missions, done various projects in D.C., and participated in the Give Kids the World Village in Orlando, FL. They have enjoyed these trips and worked hard without complaint. In planning this year's mission trip, we decided to stay a little more local. Many of the youth had expressed a desire to bring change to our own community...and that is what we did.

We contacted several local missions and ministries in the Muncie area. They were all excited about our youth group taking an interest in the community. Our youth were given tours, allowed to be part of the community, and educated on the needs of each particular group. We ate breakfast at the church before the day's work, and packed a sack lunch to eat on the service site. We had a couple of host families that served us dinner and allowed the youth and adults to take showers if needed. With the money we would have spent getting to a distant mission trip, planning meals, and finding a place to sleep, we decided to invest part of it in these local groups with the items each needed the most.

Our first stop was with the Muncie Mission. We each brought items to make a healthy trail mix. We mixed the ingredients Wednesday morning when we first met and bagged them to be passed out during lunch. This was something they could take with them outside the Mission and snack on when needed. We also put together hygiene kits for when the men first arrive at the Mission. The kits are in a nylon bag with a pull string that can be closed up and carried as a backpack. Each bag contains shampoo, body wash, a comb, shaving gel and a razor, toothpaste and a toothbrush, and deodorant.

On Thursday, the youth worked with ARF (Animal Rescue Fund). In addition to cleaning and organizing their donation

shed, we helped to plant several flowers that were donated in memory of a 6-month-old child of one of the volunteers who recently passed away. We also brought donations of Pine-Sol, hotdogs, canned dog food, and other much-needed items. Of course, we got to give special attention to the dogs and cats that were waiting for the right home.

On Friday, we headed over to the YWCA women's shelter, where we cleaned, sorted, and organized their donation store.

Many women and their children come to the shelter with nothing but the clothes on their backs. This donation store is where these women and children can pick up items they need. We purchased and donated several needed items from the local Goodwill Store and purchased box fans, twin sheet sets, hair dye, and hair styling products for the shelter.

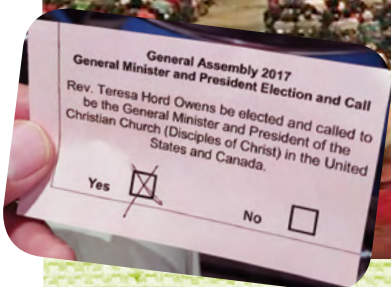


Our Summer Missions concluded on Saturday as we teamed up with the Hoosier Environmental Council for their White River Cleanup. The director talked to our youth about why this clean-up is important and pointed out several trees and brushes that needed to be cleared because they are harmful to the eco-environment.

In addition to these community projects, we worked on putting together more Blessing Bags for our congregation to pass out to the homeless, helped remove a wall to expand our preschool area, and rearranged classroom furniture as our church was laying down new flooring in several rooms.

It is such a blessing to be helping the men, women, children, and animals of our own community. If you would like more information on our service projects, the organizations we are working with, or a complete list of donation requests for each organization, contact Rev. James Petty in the church office, or send an email to him at hccjpetty@gmail.com. †

2017 General Assembly Highlights



Together



Youth Project on Race

By Glenda Survance, Pastor of First Christian Church, Mooresville

The Manna Process reiterated the need for our region to renew relationships and connections with one another. Staffing is now configured to intentionally nurture relationships throughout the region. Some of our congregations have already found ways to share ministry. Other congregations are seeking these opportunities. This "Together" column is a space to celebrate the bridges being built and the ministries being shared. It will feature stories of coming together to be the region. If you have something you would like to highlight, send to Carolyn Reed, Associate Regional Minister.

The difference between talking with adults and talking with youth is indescribable. Once trust building has started, youth will make strides in a short time in both continuing to build that trust and also in opening up in conversation. This has been especially true in the Youth Project on Race. This is a coming together of small groups (3-5 youth) from four Indiana Disciples congregations. The congregations involved are: Casa Del Alfarero, Indianapolis which is primarily Hispanic, Central Christian Church, Indianapolis which is multi-racial, Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis which is primarily African American and First Christian Church, Mooresville which is primarily Caucasian. The goal was to work with a small group of youth who could get to know one another well enough to dig deeper than normal—to ask questions and explore scenarios in a safe place for open honesty.

Starting at Camp Jameson, the group spent some time in team building games and a challenge course then moved to a circle for sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences on the issue of racism. It was eye-opening to many to hear stories from others that either mirrored or differed so greatly from their own experience. The second session was primarily youth led and following more getting acquainted games, the youth shared a scenario that then ended with...is this racism? For example, if two girls are leaving a store where receipts are checked but only the African American girl's receipt is checked is this racism? The youth talked about stereotypes, trends, racism, and how sometimes we look for things because we have been taught to. At the third session the youth shared questions with one another—questions few adults would ask. And they were answered with sincerity and respect.

These youth are teaching all of us and are leading the way into a world that is different than today. This group also shared their experience with other youth at the General Assembly in an after session. It seems they are just getting started. †



Empowered Clergy... Empowered Region

Flow...Prosper...Thrive! That has been the desired outcome of the FLOURISH! Project and participants of this innovative program. Through both financial education and anticipated receipt of grant dollars, our goal has been to empower and equip clergy within the Indiana Region with knowledge of personal and congregational finances, provide support through peer coaching, and monetary assistance through grant funds.

Now, 18 months into the program, the impact is becoming evident. Rev. Lee Huckleberry, Sr. Pastor of Park Christian Church said, "Receiving a FLOURISH! grant has been so beneficial to me. The workshops and peer group sessions have increased my competence and confidence in the areas of personal finance, congregational stewardship, and pastoral leadership. As a result, I am less fearful and more hopeful in my approach to money and life itself."

We believe that these types of stories are emerging around our state!

Coming soon is the fourth installment of the Financial Literacy Academy, scheduled to take place in Indianapolis on October 20-21. Nearly 150 clergy and lay leaders will assemble to learn more about preaching and teaching stewardship (Friday, clergy only) and technological advances in Fundraising (open to clergy and lay leaders). Our guest facilitators are Disciples Pastor, Rev. **Lee Hull Moses**, author of "More than Enough, Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess" and **Rev. Adam Copeland**, Director, Center for Stewardship Leaders, Luther Seminary. Commissioned Ministers may use these classes for continuing education purposes. All sessions are open to the public.

As the year progresses, we continue to seek matching funds for this worthy cause. If you would like to support us as a donor, or gather information, contact cynthia@indianadisciples.org.

Thank you for your support.



CONGO CONNECTION



Friends From Afar!

Congolese Disciples Arriving in September

By Sarah Riester

The Indiana Region will again host our Congolese friends and partners this fall when two visitors from the Mbandaka District of the 10th Community Disciples of Christ in Congo arrive in Indiana on September 29, 2017. Reverend Ilumbe and Oscar Pekombe were with us in the fall of 2016 and were present for the 2016 Regional Assembly. This year we will host Jean Robert Likuwo and Rosette Matezolo. Both have been active members of the Mbandaka/Indiana Partnership Team and we are looking forward to having them as our guests.

The Mbandaka partnership began in 2008 when a partnership agreement was signed between the Indiana Region, the Mbandaka District, and Global Ministries. Since then, visits to Mbandaka and visits to Indiana have been a regular part of the sharing between our churches. When the Indiana Disciples visited Mbandaka in 2008, 2011, and 2014, our partners included us in many events that represented various important activities in their ministry: choirs, youth, women's groups, cooking, seminary, and more.

Between September 29 and October 15, we have the opportunity to share all the aspects of our ministries in Indiana with Rosette and Jean Robert. We want to



Jean Robert Likuwo and Rosette Matezolo

make plans to include them not only in worship services, but in all kinds of weekday events that represent the life of your church. Here are some ideas: youth groups, women's Bible studies, service projects like food pantries or home repair, children's events, overnight retreats, whatever you have going on in your congregation between September 29 and October 15.

Please direct your requests to Sarah Riester (sarah@indianadisciples.org), who will be maintaining the calendar. We will be grouping activities geographically as much as possible, so consider working with neighboring congregations. Early requests, congregations that have not recently hosted a Congolese visitor, and those who have supported the partnership financially are likely to be prioritized. There are only three Sundays and two visitors available, but there are many weekdays to fill with visits.

Financial support is also needed both for the expenses related to the visit and for the many projects carried out by the church in Mbandaka. Over the years, Indiana Disciples

have supported the Nutrition Center and Pharmacy, both of which Mama Rosette oversees, the purchase of musical instruments, Bibles, and song books for churches, and construction of a secure district office, among other projects. Current priority projects can be found on the Indiana Disciples website at <http://indianadisciples.org/commissions/commission-on-unity-witness/>. Scroll down to the Congo heading for materials related to the partnership.

Mark your calendars for the evening of September 29 as we welcome our guests to the Indianapolis airport. Details of arrival times will be confirmed and announced closer to their arrival. Watch the Indiana Disciples eNews and the Indiana Disciples Facebook page for the most current news and details.

Sarah Riester is a member of the Congo Partnership Task Force and has travelled to Congo with Woman-to-Woman Worldwide in 2011 and leading the 2014 Indiana delegation to the Mbandaka District. †

TRAININGS

continued from page 1

Program will host "Conversations on Race," with congregations who are willing to start talking about race, and developing open but safe spaces to grow better relationships with one another. This is a project of the general expression of Reconciliation Ministry called "One Bag of Tea, One Conversation,

One Relationship." Gather in conversation over tea, to start a dialogue to develop a new or stronger relationship, and broaden the chances to get involved in the work of reconciliation by building community and breaking down the walls that separate us.

The work is plentiful, the writing space is limited, but I hope the laborers are many! If you want to know more about what we are doing, or if you want to get involved in any way, please feel free to contact, Reconciliation Program Minister, Bere Gil Sot via email at bere@indianadisciples.org

Group from First Christian Church of Bloomington Travels to Cuba Through Partnership with Global Ministries

By Carmie Hamilton

In November 2016, I traveled with nine members of First Christian Church of Bloomington to Cuba through a partnership with Global Ministries to connect with people across boundaries of faith and culture. There, we met with department heads of many agencies, which was informative and eye opening, but it was the experiences of meeting with individuals in their everyday life that still stand out in our memories.

One such experience was at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Mantanzas. We met Daniel Montoya, a professor there for many years. He shared with us the history of the seminary and its purpose. What surprised us was the diverse backgrounds of the students there including Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Baptist, and even Santería. It began to strike us how interconnected we all are and that we share a core foundation despite our differences. As Daniel spoke about the seminary, one could see the goodness and Holy Spirit radiate from him.

Many meaningful experiences were had at the Centro Martin Luther King in Havana, our home base for most of the trip. Here we met with the founder of the Center, Rev. Raul Suarez. He shared many moving events in his life, both personal and political. He was a Southern Baptist trained pastor and after the revolution was one of the 30% of pastors who stayed in Cuba. The changes of the revolution caused him to re-frame his understanding of the Bible. The Kingdom of God, the light of the world, was not only within the church but must also be in the family, community, and world. It is wherever you are. He used a metaphor of removing his conservative glasses while reading the Bible to reading it more broadly. The Center is moving into more community action and training of future leaders. Later in the week—the morning we learned of Fidel Castro's death—we met with the youth of the church—the future leaders. Some were still in school and some were in the workplace, but all were very forthcoming in sharing their faith. It was a very moving experience at a fascinating time.

Finally, one of the most memorable experiences was a visit to a farm that was part of a human development program committed to caring for the earth. The head farmer, Pedro, had such energy, passion and commitment about the farm. He explained the organic farming methods they use to keep pests away and provide sustainability in a small area. There were pigs, chickens, fruit trees, an earthworm farm, and many types of vegetables. A wonderful meal was prepared for us from the farm's products. They also prepared a decorated cake to celebrate the new friendship between us as Christians, whether Cubans or Americans.

Our visit with the Cuban people came to an end too quickly. We were sad to leave but made promises to continue our friendships, which we have. We highly recommend a trip to Cuba through Global Ministries and hope to return again with new travelers, but we will always remember the many wonderful people we met and the connections made on this journey. †



New Stewardship Campaign Materials: Journey to Generosity— The Way of Jesus

We want to say "Yes!" to mission. Sometimes limited resources can keep us from living into the full vision for ministry that God has granted to our congregations. Studies have shown that an effective annual campaign will produce as much as 2 ½ times more financial support for a church than no annual emphasis at all. This suggests that doing a campaign matters if we want to underwrite costs associated with ministry and mission.

The Center for Faith and Giving, a ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), creates effective and proven materials to assist you in this annual endeavor. This year the campaign theme is "Journey to Generosity—The Way of Jesus." Based on the Revised Common Lectionary, *Journey* includes resources around ten biblical texts that give you the flexibility to do either short (traditional) or year-round campaigns.

Ron Allen, from Christian Theological Seminary, has authored the preaching resources with over 100 pages of exegesis and homiletical help for the pulpit emphasis of the campaign. Additionally, there are supporting materials for worship planning and children's sermons so that everyone in the congregation can go on the "journey" together.

An effective campaign, however, is more than just the Sunday morning experience. It takes a reinforcement of the texts explored from the pulpit through education opportunities such as Sunday School or small groups to take hold in the church. "Journey" offers a companion curriculum to help your congregation do exactly that and more. The materials layout a plan that is easy-to-follow with guides for leaders, campaign calendars, information about how to communicate with your supporters and to even help you explore issues like electronic giving and the generational differences of your contributors. All of it is designed to help you tell your story and motivate your members to give out of desire to achieve your vision rather than guilt or obligation.

The bonus materials in "Journey" include materials to visually interpret the theme, generosity stories to inspire and guide the process, a sample of Bruce Barkhauer's new book *Community of Prayer*, as well as bulletin covers, inserts, letterhead and pledge cards that you may print for your needs.

These are resources that have a track record of increasing financial support and you can order yours at www.centerforfaithandgiving.org. Two free webinars are included with your purchase—one for the preacher, and one for the campaign committee. For more information you can contact Bruce Barkhauer at bbarkhauer@disciples.org or by calling 317-713-2404. Be bold and take the Journey to Generosity this year! The Center for Faith and Giving is supported in part by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund. †

NEWS

From Our Minister of Faith Formation Rev. Maggie Archibald...

IYC

The Indiana Youth Council (IYC) is a group of young people from around the state who serve as representatives for youth throughout the region. IYC plans and coordinates all youth events in the region except summer camps. Persons applying for IYC positions should be active in their local church, attend regional camps and other regional CYF activities, show an interest in being part of the youth ministry of the region, exhibit leadership qualities, be able to work together with others as a team, and have good references from their minister, local youth advisor, and other adults. All CYF who have finished 8th grade are eligible to apply for IYC. Applications can be found on the Christian Church in Indiana website. For more information please contact Maggie Archibald.

Spring Assembly

From April 28th to 30th over 90 youth and youth leaders from around the region gathered together for Spring Youth Assembly. The theme for Spring Youth Assembly this year was "One" and the focus scripture was John 17:20-21. Our keynote speaker for the weekend was the Rev. Julian DeShazier "J.Kwest" the senior minister at University Christian Church. Rev. DeShazier led our youth in thinking about how they can be One with God, One with the Other, and One with the World. Youth and leaders had the chance to meet "Flat Terri," engage in interactive keynotes, have meaningful small group conversations, explore the Geneva Center grounds, and worship with First Christian Church in Rochester. We hope you will join us next year for this meaningful weekend!

Camp

The Christian Church in Indiana hosted 15 camps at Geneva Center and Bedford Christian Camp this summer with over 400 campers in attendance! Geneva Center camps brought Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian campers and counselors together for a great ecumenical camp experience. Our theme this summer was "Branching Out" and we branched out into new camp locations, new ways of doing camp, deeper relationships with Christ, and new relationships with each other. Campers, counselors, and directors from all over the region had a wonderful time! †

