

The Virginia Christian

June 2023



Prayer Concerns

Send continued prayers for **Rev. Easley's husband and his journey**. His tubes and stints have been removed and there is another follow-up in 8 weeks. Please send Rev. Easley a note of support at - shawchurch@centurylink.net.

Rev. Kathy Thomas's (Moderator of the Piedmont District Convention) husband was found dead in Raleigh, NC. Please keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Please send her a note of support and prayer at - pastorkjtg21@gmail.com. We are the Body of Christ together and during these moments, knowing we are not alone is essential.

Rev. Crawford Harmon passed away on February 7, 2023. He was 90 years old. A memorial service was held Saturday, June 24, 2023 at Macedonia Christian Church in Orange, VA. Crawford served in churches in Danbury, CT and Gordonsville, VA. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Liz, and their two sons, Robert and Daniel and their families.

Rev. Marilyn Taylor passed away on May 26, 2023 at The Summit Health & Rehabilitation Center in Lynchburg. She graduated from Hiram College in Ohio and received two degrees, Master of Religious Education and Doctor of Ministry - from Lexington Theological Seminary in Lexington, Kentucky. In 1979 she was Ordained to the Christian Ministry and in 1980 was called as Associate Minister of First Christian Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 1987 she moved to Lynchburg, where she became Associate Regional Minister for the Christian Church (DOC) in Virginia. She served in that position for more than 15 years. She was a life-long member of the Disciples of Christ and belonged to First Christian Church in Lynchburg.

Retirement of Rev. Tommy Wilcockson from Zion Christian Church in Beaverdam. In part, these are his departing words, " June 25th will be my last Sunday at Zion. This is a truly bittersweet time in our lives. On one hand, we are looking forward to retirement - but on the other, it is a hard thing to step away from such a wonderful congregation. It was 10 years ago that I was called as interim pastor at Zion, while the church's search committee continued to seek out God's minister for the church. A few months later, we came to the joint realization that, in spite of the challenges of meeting ministry needs while working another full-time job, we were a fit for each other and that God had clearly put us together.

Retirements are major transitions in life full of joy and grief...send Rev. Wilcockson a note of support at tommyzioncc@gmail.com. Together we are stronger!

Two Churches Vote to Call New Pastors:

First Christian Church, Lynchburg, voted to call Rev. Jarret Banks

Boones Mill Christian Church, Boones Mill, voted to call Rev. Jordan Smith-Arrington.



DOCTALKS Video Series on "Who are we as Disciples of Christ?"

I have begun a new series of DOCTALKS that will focus on who we are as Disciples. As I travel around I find that we too often don't know our history or identity...we are not neutral or even NON-Denominational...We have a very difficult and messy ministry that was inspired by the LIFE OF CHRIST. Our founders believed that human beings (like all of us) are prone to isolation and a desire to establish rules/ doctrines/beliefs that, though created out of faithfulness, have caused great division in the Body of Christ. Just look at the amount of churches in your own community. Each church believes it has the only right answer. Disciples are different - we really are! Take a listen to this first one and plan to catch the next episode when it arrives....<https://youtu.be/ZoYZVyiNM5s>

BSD



FREE TO ALL CLERGY - Spiritual Rest Housing Accommodations at Craig Springs - A Gift to all Disciples Clergy in Virginia!

In recent months/years, the property team and many volunteers have focused on the remodeling of Oak Lodge at Craig Springs Conference and Retreat Center. There is now a year-round apartment available for all clergy to get away for rest or study. This area contains a kitchen/living room for preparing your own food and two bedrooms with private bathrooms. ***These spaces are available during non-camp season, but other spaces can be arranged even throughout the summer. Send an email to Ron Schwarz at admin@craigsprings.org for further information and reservation. Please take time to rest so that you can care of those in your ministry orbit!



Grant Request Funds Available:

Please consider applying for a grant to help your ministry. The Administrative Council will review all requests during their every other month meetings. Dream Disciples Dream!

(Anti-Racism actions and events, New Church Exploration Grants and the newly established Ministry Dream Seed Grants made possible through sale of the Summit)

Apply now at: <https://forms.gle/6Uqqi2atPrLyMModA>



First Christian Church Hampton Dream Fund Grant

Submitted by Debbie Ott

On November 18, 2022, I arrived at church to find 2 U-Haul trucks and a HELP van in our back parking lot. It was move-in day for HELP, an organization that works with the unsheltered in our area. Within a few hours that day, our classrooms were set up with sleeping mats and blankets. Food was stocked in our freezers and non-perishables filled our meeting space. Roughly 8 hours later we opened our doors to our unsheltered guests for the first time.

No one, aside from God himself, could have known what the next 100 days and nights would look like. At the time, we were walking into uncharted territory, fueled by the simple desire to be a blessing. Boy, did God open our eyes. Here we thought we were being a blessing, but in reality, we were the ones being blessed. Over the course of the next few days and weeks, several of our guests became friends. Familiar smiles when our church ladies prepared for the unsheltered on Wednesday mornings. Familiar smiles in our Worship Services. Familiar voices holding bible study in the fellowship hall and one familiar voice that sang like an angel echoing down our hallway.

The guests we most connected with were African American men. Many volunteered with HELP and stayed at our church 24 hours a day, to cook and do laundry for the other guests. For them specifically, First Christian was home, and we were family.

One Sunday morning, I will never forget, I offered an invitation to discipleship. (As I knew one of our guests wanted to join our congregation.) Imagine my surprise when he came forward along with four other unsheltered men. A few weeks later another guest joined, as well as his teenage son, whom I later had the privilege of baptizing. These men have been such a blessing to our congregation. They have volunteered to update our landscaping, cut the grass, redesigned flowerbeds, and taken out bushes so everyone can see our sign. They jump in when we have church meals, taking over the cooking and the cleanup. And recently when we held a neighborhood event, they showed up before they went to work, to do the heavy lifting so our older men didn't have to do it.

Thanks to their insight we now have a room in our building where anyone unsheltered who gets a housing voucher can come pick out furniture and household items, to make their new house a home. We have been able to restart our community feeding ministry "The Welcome Table," as one of our new members spearheaded the initiative to bring organizations throughout the community to support our church in this ministry.

As a congregation we have learned a lot and have taken huge leaps. In just a few days, our congregation will vote to make one of our new "unsheltered" members a deacon. We offered coaching sessions to prepare our guests for success when the shelter closed. We partnered with an exchange club to obtain 100 backpacks filled with tents, sleeping bags, blankets, hats, socks, pots, pans and other survival essentials. (Those were handed out to every guest on the day the shelter closed.) We are already in discussion about one day turning one of our many bathrooms into a shower room, as well as brainstorming about new ministries to engage in, to support this population within our community.

It is exciting to share that First Christian held the most successful sheltering partnership last year that HELP has ever seen and we are already in conversation about becoming a shelter next fall. It is with gratitude that we receive the new ministry grant. We are eager to see where God will next lead us in our ministries with the unsheltered in our community.

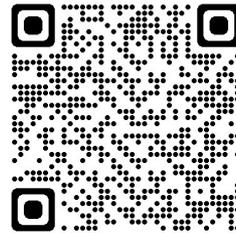
First Christian Church Hampton Dream Fund Grant



KINDOM OF GOD WITHIN US AMONG US

GENESIS 11:1-9 • LUKE 17:20-21 • 2 PETER 1:3

July 29 - August 1, 2023 • Louisville



[General Assembly 2023](#)

Mark your calendars and start making plans - the 2023 General Assembly "The Kingdom of God Within Us, Among Us" will be held in Louisville, KY, July 29 - August 1. Engage in the dynamic discernment of the church, gather for energizing worship and deepen your faith with bible study and workshops.

Register here: <https://ga.disciples.org/>

[Clergy Retreat at Eagle Eyrie, September 24-26, 2023](#)

Clergy - please come, rest, relax and renew.

Congregations - please treat this as a gift for your ministers to keep them physically, mentally and spiritually healthy in order that they can take care of their congregations.

BSD
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19FS6mbG1GNdgZ9jdDTCsNmZJ0w6OiVoR/view>

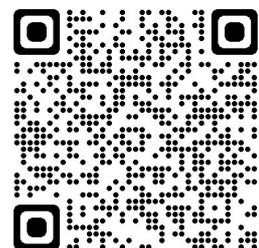


[Virginia Camping Ministry Opens Up Registrations](#)

This year we have camps that take place at Craig Springs, University of Lynchburg and other locations. There are camps for youth and adults. We are expanding our camping ministry because a positive Spiritual/Camp experience is a good thing for all of us! Check out the online registration page here.....keep checking back as we are continuing to add new camps.

<https://www.ccinva.org/viriniacampingministry>

BSD



Regional Mission Trip being added to Virginia Camping Ministry Opportunities
(for both youth and adults)

July 4 - 8

Western Kentucky Tornado Rebuild

Looking for a way to make a difference and get members in your congregation excited about how church can really make a difference in the world? The Christian Church in Virginia (Disciples of Christ) is adding a mission trip to the 2023 camp schedule. Participants will do tornado relief work in Western Kentucky from July 4 - 8. The group will stay at First Christian Church, Princeton, KY.

CrossRoads Missions will provide most of our meals. The lodging and meals are provided by generous donors. This is open to middle school students (rising 6th graders or at least 11 years old), high school students and adults of any age. The participants need to have the ability to go up and down stairs to the bunk rooms and work outside during hot and humid days. Those over 16 years of age will build homes with Habitat for Humanity in Dawson Springs, KY and those 11 years of age to 15 years of age and their chaperones will do other tornado recovery work and community development work. The cost is \$100.00 if you ride in the van, \$50.00 if you provide your own transportation.

Additional costs will be lunch on the way and on the way back and ice cream and other snacks. You can register through the Craig Springs camp portal. For more information, contact Rev. Dr. Jonathan Webster at jonathanwebsterbcc@gmail.com or 270-963-8527.

You can register for this camp on the Virginia Camp Ministry page:

<https://www.ccinva.org/virginiacampingministry>.

Here is a video about where and why we are headed to Western Kentucky to help our sisters and brothers and show how CHURCH can make a difference!

<https://vimeo.com/693227008>

BSD



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN
VA REGIONAL
2023 MISSION TRIP**

Western Kentucky to help with
Tornado recovery efforts

**TUESDAY, JULY 4-
SATURDAY, JULY 8**

Accommodations are provided by
First Christian, Princeton, KY.
16 years and above will be building
Habitat for Humanity Homes for Tornado families,
11 to 15 years old will be doing other tornado recovery
and community development with our chaperones.
We will have devotionals each day and end the week
with an evening at Kentucky Lake.

**The cost is \$100 per person or \$50 per person if
you provide your own transportation.**
Registration is on the Craig Springs Camp Portal

Virginia Camping Ministry | Ccinva



Use the QRCode to learn a little
bit about our partner and their
work



SAVE THE DATE!

**PIEDMONT DISTRICT CONVENTION
AUGUST 3 - 5, 2023**

**NEW COLLEGE INSTITUTE
191 FAYETTE STREET, MARTINSVILLE, VA 24112**



Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

The 141st Session of the Piedmont District Convention that will be held August 3, 2023 to August 5, 2023, each day beginning at 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. There will be no night services nor Sunday service this year. There is a change in venue. The convention will be held at the New College Institute, 191 Fayette Street, Martinsville, VA 24112.

**The Theme: Servants of the Master, Don't Quit in Hard Times - (Keep Your Fire Burning).
Scripture: Romans 12:11 & 12 (MSG).**

Continental Breakfast and Boxed Lunches will be provided on Thursday and Friday.

Saturday Lunch will be held at the Fieldale Park, 188 Field Avenue, Fieldale, VA 24089.

These Hotels are recommended for the Convention:

Hampton Inn Martinsville, 50 Hampton Drive, Collinsville, VA (276) 647-4700
Hampton Inn Eden, 724 S. Van Buren Rd, Eden, NC (336) 627-1111

Convention 2023 will focus on training and workshops that are guided by scripture and God's Holy Word, The Bible, for The Body of Christ. Please encourage all congregants to attend. Worship Services are scheduled to be held Thursday - Friday from 2:00 - 3:00 pm, Saturday 12 noonday to 1:00 pm. The Disciple Men will be in charge of Worship on Thursday, August 3rd. The Youth will be in charge of Worship on Friday, August 4th. The Disciple Women's Ministry will be in charge of Worship on Saturday, August 5th.

Registration Fees are as follows: Adults Early Bird \$80 until Jul 7, 2023 after 7/7 \$100. Youth will be half price at \$40.

Note: The cost of continental breakfast and lunch will be included in the registration fee.

To Register please contact Deacon Mildred Preston (276) 638-7011, Rev. Kara Fleurizard (336) 986-8115, Pastor Kathy Thomas (276) 692-5350 or email pd141session@gmail.com

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Rev. Kathy Thomas -Grant, Moderator PDC
Rev. Kara Fleurizard, Moderator-Elect PDC
Rev. Dr. Tijuana Hayes, Assistant Secretary PDC

Schedule

9:00-9:30 am Thursday - Saturday Registration & Continental Breakfast

Thursday

9:30-12:00 Groups
12:00-12:30 Lunch
12:30-12:40 Bathroom Breaks
12:40 - 2:00 Mental Health
2:00 - 3:00 Worship (Disciple Men's Ministry)

Friday

9:30 - 12:00 Groups
12:00 - 12:00 Lunch
12:30 - 12:40 Bathroom Breaks
12:40 - 2:00 Mental Health
2:00 - 3:00 Worship (Christian Youth Fellowship)

Saturday

9:30 - 10:30 Business Mtg
10:30 - 11:00 Breakout Groups
11:00 - 12:00 Presentations
12:00 - 1:00 Noon Worship (Disciple Women's Ministry)
1:00 - 1:15 Closing Communion Service
1:15 - Head to Fieldale Park for Convention Celebration!

Classes and Facilitators:

1. Armor-bearer / Ushers	Rev. Dr. Tijuana B. Hayes
2. Disciple Men	Rev. Dr. Kenneth Davis
3. Elders/Deacons/Trustees/Communion	Rev. Dr. McHenry
4. Music/Worship Leaders	Bro. Jarrett Hagwood
5. Pastors/Ministers/Clergy/Spouses	Rev. Dr. Bill Lee & Rev. Kenny Hooker
6. Finances	Rev. Merinda Easley
7. Disciple Women's Ministry	Sister Wanda Redd
8. Mental Health - Burnout	Rev. Dr. Montenique Finney

All Presidents and/or Chairs of these groups are asked to use opportunities to speak and talk about needs, necessities, reflections, and give final words to their members. Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 is specifically set aside for final words of encouragement from the Leadership Heads.



To register for the ARPR training, go to <https://www.ccinva.org/arpr>

Anti-Racism & Pro-Reconciliation Ministry
Schedule Workshops

Please register at www.ccinva.org, under the Anti-Racism & Pro-Reconciliation Ministry. Lunch will be provided at each workshop.

District 3 - Loudon Avenue Christian Church

730 Loudon Avenue, Virginia 23221

Pastor Anthony Holmes

Contact Person: Reverend Eva Hughs

Workshop Date: July 08, 2023

Time: 9:00am-3:00pm

District 7- Seventh Street Christian Church

4101 Grove Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Pastor Hollie Woodruff

Email: revhollie@seventhstreetchristianchurch.org

Contact Person: Pastor Hollie Woodruff

Workshop Date: September 9, 2023

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Anti Racism/ Pro-Reconciliation Ministry, Youth Picnic

Location: Timberlake Christian Church, Pastor Ben Moore
20261 Lynchburg Highway, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502

Anti Racism/ Pro-Reconciliation Team, Hosting

Contact Person: Regional Office, ccinvaoffice@gmail.com

Picnic Date: Saturday, August 12, 2023

Time: 10:00 am-4:00pm (Parents and guardians welcome)

Anti Racism/ Pro-Reconciliation Ministry, “Table Talk”

Location: University of Lynchburg

1501 Lakeside Drive, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502

Anti Racism/ Pro-Reconciliation Team

Contact Person: Regional Office

Event Date: Saturday, August 26, 2023

Time: 1:00pm-4:00pm (No Lunch)



AR/PR Regional Youth
Cookout!
August 12, 2023
11AM- 4:00PM

- Place: Timberlake Christian Church
- 20261 Lynchburg Hwy, Lynchburg, VA 24502
- Bring your middle and high school youth to come out and enjoy a fun filled day with games and workshops
- RSVP through the Regional Office @ virginiachristian@ccinva.org
- Phone: 434.846.3400



LET'S TALK! IS THERE HOPE AT THE TABLE? PANEL TALKS

AN ANTI-RACISM/ PRO- RECONCILIATION MINISTRY EVENT

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LYNCHBURG |
AUGUST 26, 2023, |1PM-4PM | FREE EVENT
LET'S HAVE THE CONVERSATION! HERE'S AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO ASK YOUR QUESTIONS, IN
A SAFE PLACE. LET'S COME TOGETHER AND PUT A
STOP TO RACISM!

REV. BILL SPANGLER-DUNNING

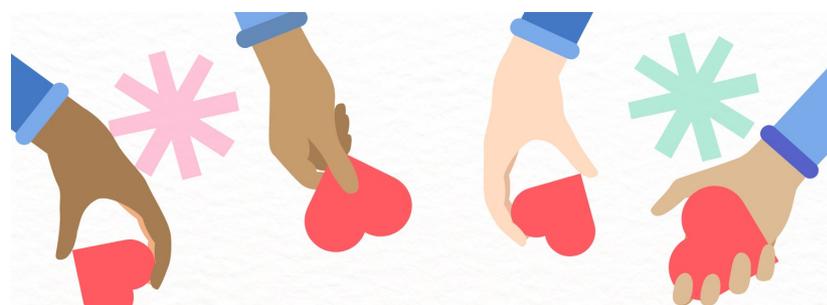
MR. DAVION
WASHINGTON

REV. RUTH DUENEZ-HARRISON

REV. DAN HARRISON

DR. ROBERT L.
CANIDA II

REV. CHRIS DORSEY



ANTI-RACISM/ PRO-RECONCILIATION TRAINING

**September 9, 2023
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

The Pro-reconciliation/Anti-Racism Initiative was founded upon the need to make visible God's beloved community. It invites the church to listen to the once silenced voices of its racial/ethnic communities, learn from their wisdom and gain insight from their leadership. It calls the church to discernment and prayer, study of the scriptures and reflection, dialogue and table fellowship. The true goal is to transform, strengthen and deepen the church's spirituality, resulting in a community that understands its mission to be about bringing justice and salvation to the world.

**Seventh Street Christian Church
4101 Grove Ave., Richmond, VA 23221**

Lunch Provided

Clergy and Lay Leaders invited. Ages 16+

Please register by August 28 at:

<https://www.ccinva.org/arpr>

For more information: revhollie@seventhstreetchristianchurch.org

To register go to www.ccinva.org

THIS IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
Virginia Disciples Women's Ministry (VDWM)
2023 Fall Retreat October 6-8
Hilton Garden Inn, 4025 Wards Road, Lynchburg, VA
REGISTRATION
Registration Deadline August 31, 2023

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Phone (Cell) _____ (Home) _____

Email _____ Home Church _____

Registration Fee: \$155.00
includes all programs, 3 Saturday meals, Sunday breakfast

Dietary restrictions _____

NOTE: Your registration fee provides a significant conference room discount.

*Please make checks payable to & mail check & registration form directly to:
Christian Church in Virginia; 1290 Enterprise Dr; Lynchburg, VA 24502-5744*

Hotel Reservations must be made on your own.
Hotel Discounted Rate Deadline: September 6, 2023

The VDWM rate: \$151/night, including all taxes.

Phone Reservations-Call: 434-239-3006 (front desk)

Use group code VDW or Virginia Disciples Woman's Retreat for discounted rate

Book Online-use the following link to get the discounted rate:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=LYHLVGI&groupCode=VDW&arrivaldate=2023-10-06&departuredate=2023-10-08&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT>

Please let the hotel know of any mobility challenges that may require attention.

~see over for hotel amenities & driving directions

- Each room is equipped with a microwave, a refrigerator, Keurig® coffee maker, hair dryer, iron and ironing board.
- Wireless and High Speed Internet are complimentary in every room.
- Enjoy the hotel's indoor heated pool with spa and state-of-the-art fitness center featuring Precor® fitness equipment
- 24-hour complimentary access to our business center which includes copies, faxes and the use of two PC terminals for our registered guests
- The Garden Grill and Bar® offers sumptuous dining and features upscale American cuisine. It is open daily for breakfast and dinner.
- 24-hour Pavilion Pantry® convenience mart.

Driving Directions

Driving South US-29 BUS S/Lynchburg Expressway:

- 1) Take Left Hand Exit for US-29 BUS S/Wards Road (Signs for Danville)
- 2) Stay Right at the fork, continue on Wards Road
- 3) Drive 1.3 miles and turn left at Aspen Dental
- 4) Follow service road .02 miles to HGI entrance on left

Driving North on US-29:

- 1) After passing the entrance of Lynchburg Regional Airport turn right after 2nd light
- 2) Travel .02 miles past Aspen Dental to HGI entrance

Driving East on RT 460:

- 1) Take Exit for US-29 BUS N ramp to Lynchburg
- 2) Travel .04 miles turn right at Aspen Dental
- 3) Follow service road .02 miles to HGI entrance on left

Driving West on RT 460:

- 1) After Passing Liberty University take exit for US-29 BUS N
- 2) Stay in right hand lane and make an immediate right at Aspen Dental
- 3) Follow service road .02 miles to HGI entrance on left



Virginia Disciples Women's Ministry
2023 Fall Retreat October 6-8
Hilton Garden Inn Lynchburg, Virginia
Guest Speaker

This is the First Day of the Rest of your Life



FAITH

LOVE

Hi y'all! I'm Rev. Kelsey Creech, and I am really excited to join the Disciples Women for their retreat this fall!

Some of you may remember me from last year. I spoke on the social justice panel, and it was the day before I started at my current (and first ever) Church!

A Virginia native raised in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), I am a 26-year old recent graduate of Yale Divinity School, ordained in June of 2022, and serve as the Pastor of Virginia Beach Christian Church. I live in Virginia Beach with my golden retriever, Scout, and when I'm not engaged in ministry of some sort, I enjoy going out for karaoke, playing video games, and of course, walking on the beach with Scout or a friend and some iced coffee.

As we look towards the Disciples Women's Retreat this fall, with the theme of: 'This is the First Day of the Rest of Your Life,' I'm looking forward to digging into the Book of Ruth with all of you! Ruth is a book about two women who make a choice that marks the first day of the rest of their lives, a choice that dramatically changes the course of their lives, a choice that marks their decision to take charge of their own destiny in a "man's world." It tells of the power of relationships between women, the importance of self-care, and the pursuit of justice in a world that insists on ignoring the existence of some people. I am so eager to talk about it with all of you and hear your thoughts on the ideas God has been leading me to discuss with you!

This retreat will be fun, thought-provoking, and intergenerational, and I am enthusiastic about the presence and action of Disciples women. As our guiding scripture tells us, when women get together to talk about faith, hope, and love, just "wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens" (Ruth 3:18a)!

HOPE

Joyfully yours,
Kelsey

JESUS

**2023 VA Disciples Women Seminary Scholarship
Deadline is postmarked by August 15, 2023**

The Virginia Disciples Women Scholarship Fund was established to assist women preparing for the Christian Ministry.

The amount available each year is determined by the amount in the fund. The amount of the award is based on financial need, and the number of applications (up to \$2,500).

GUIDELINES

1. The applicant must live in Virginia.
2. The applicant must be a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for a least one year prior to making application.
3. The applicant must currently attend an ATS accredited seminary and be under the care of the Commission on Ministry in Virginia at the time of the application.
4. The applicant must show financial need.
5. A completed application form and transcript, if available, must be mailed to Virginia Disciples Women Scholarship Fund, 1290 Enterprise Drive, Lynchburg, VA 24502. A picture for publicity will be required if a scholarship is awarded.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Permanent Address: _____ School or Temporary Address (if applicable):

Email: _____

PLEASE STATE BRIEFLY YOUR PLANS AND GOALS

EDUCATION

Current Institution (Seminary):

Address: _____ Entrance Date: _____

Number of credits or classes completed _____ Anticipated Graduation Date _____
Previous Institution(s): please list each institution and the dates you attended.

CHURCH ACTIVITY

I am under the care of the Commission on Ministry in _____ Region.

Local: Please identify home congregation(s):

District:

Regional:

General Church:

FINANCIAL NEED

Cost of education for one year

Financial Resources available:

Tuition: _____

Scholarships: _____

Books: _____

Savings: _____

Housing: _____

Yearly Net Income: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Please explain any unusual circumstances or expenses that may affect your situation.

Melissa Garrett Timmons Terrell

by Dr. Lisa Barnett, DCHS Trustee



MELISSA TERRELL

Recent interest in the ordination of women into parish ministry settings—e.g., the recent [controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention](#)—has prompted members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to examine our own history into ordaining women. Although Clara Babcock has often been cited as the first in the Christian Church (ordained in 1888), Debra B. Hull's work into women's history in the Stone-Campbell Movement (SCM) identified earlier examples of women pastors being officially ordained into congregational ministry settings.[1] While many women in the SCM were actively involved in ministry and may have preached sermons, to our current historical knowledge, the earliest woman officially ordained

as a minister "by the Christians" was Melissa Garrett Timmons Terrell in 1867. Then known as Mrs. Melissa Timmons, she was ordained pastor of the Ebenezer Christian Church in Clarke County, Ohio, on March 7, 1867, and was expected to earn a salary of \$500-600 a year. She had already been preaching for this congregation for six months before the congregation decided to hire her permanently and ordain her.[2] According to John Franklin Burnet, a minister in the Christian Church, who wrote a booklet in 1921 for the Department of Publishing of The American Christian Convention, Rev. Terrell was probably the first "to be ordained by any denomination by direct authority of a Conference or local congregation." [3]

Burnet writes that Melissa Garrett was born in Clinton County, Ohio, in 1834.[4] Melissa began preaching in 1856, and the 1860 census lists her as a minister for the Christian Church at age 26 for the Jefferson Township in Clinton, County, Ohio.[5] She was a member of the Southern Ohio Christian Conference when she married Rev. William Henry Harrison Timmons and withdrew from the Conference prior to her ordination but rejoined afterwards.[6] In 1877, the Conference held its annual session in Ripley, Ohio, and Rev. Melissa Timmons preached the Annual Conference sermon. Her text on that occasion was, "And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." [7] Timmons became a noted revivalist in southern Ohio and during her time preaching in the area, was called to be the minister at the Christian Church in Xenia, Ohio for a year.[8] Shortly after beginning her pastorate on March 1, 1881, Melissa divorced her husband W.H.H. Timmons on the grounds that he had been willfully absent for more than 3 years and that he was "now incarcerated in the penitentiary at Lincoln, Nebraska." [9] Sometime later she married and became Melissa Terrell but by the 1900 census is listed as widowed. Besides her work in Ohio, she held pastorates at First Christian Church in Forest Home, Iowa and Springfield, Missouri.[10] Rev. Terrell was also active in suffrage and temperance causes using her ministerial position and credentials to speak in favor of both.[11] Rev. Melissa Terrell died on May 10, 1924, in Mason City,

Iowa and her funeral was held in the Forest Home Christian Church (IA) of which she served as the pastor for several years.[12]

This brief synopsis of the life of Rev. Melissa Garrett Timmons Terrell demonstrates that with continued research, more information can be known about her life. However, more work is still needed to reveal more about her life and ministry. The same needs to be done for other women ordained within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Meanwhile, we celebrate the fact that the Stone-Campbell Movement does have an early history of ordaining women into congregational ministry.

Notes

[1] See *Christian Church Women: Shapers of a Movement* (1994, Chalice Press) and Hull's entry in the *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia* (2005, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

[2] *Detroit Free Press*, March 26, 1867, 2. The newspaper story contains information written by Rev. E.W. Humphreys, former editor of the *Gospel Herald*. See *The North Missourian* (Gallatin, MO), March 28, 1867, 2; and *The Conneautville Courier* (Conneautville, PA), July 2, 1924, 5.

[3] John Franklin Burnet, *Early Women of the Christian Church: Heroines All* (Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1921), 26, https://webfiles.acu.edu/departments/Library/HR/restmov_nov11/www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/jburnett/ewcc/EWCC.HTM#Sec3.

[4] Dawn Albrecht, Find a Grave, Memorial ID: 92491937, Forest Home Cemetery, Poweshiek County, Iowa, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/92491937/melessa-terrell#source>.

[5] "Women as Preachers," *The Kansas City Times*, November 4, 1896, 4; and 1860 United States Census, Jefferson Township, Clinton County, Ohio, digital image s.v. "Melissa Garrett," *Ancestry.com*.

[6] Burnett, *Early Women of the Christian Church*, 25. See also Debra B. Hull, *Christian Church Women: Shapers of a Movement* (St. Louis, Chalice Press, 1994), 29.

[7] Burnett, *Early Women of the Christian Church*, 27.

[8] *The Xenia Gazette* (Xenia, OH), November 19, 1880, 8; *The Xenia Gazette* (Xenia, OH), February 18, 1881, 8.

[9] *Clinton Republican* (Wilmington, OH), March 10, 1881, 2.

[10] Burnett, *Early Women of the Christian Church*, 27; "Some of the Women," *The Oskaloosa Herald* (Oskaloosa, IA), November 7, 1889, 1; "Women Urged to Take Courage," *Chicago Tribune*, May 22, 1893, 2; and *The News-Herald* (Hillsboro, OH), November 14, 1901, 8.

[11] "Report of the Iowa Annual Meeting," *The Woman's Tribune* (Beatrice, NE), November 19, 188, 7; *Xenia Semi-Weekly Gazette* (Xenia, OH), August 19, 1881, 1; "The Woman Suffragists," *Sioux City Journal* (Sioux City, IA), September 22, 1892, 1.

[12] *The Conneautville Courier* (Conneautville, PA), July 2, 1924, 5; and Albrecht, Find a Grave, Memorial ID: 92491937.

Image from John Franklin Burnet, *Early Women of the Christian Church: Heroines All* (Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1921), 24, https://webfiles.acu.edu/departments/Library/HR/restmov_nov11/www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/jburnett/ewcc/EWCC.HTM#Sec3.