



THE NEW CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

www.gadisciples.org

VOLUME 83, ISSUE 2

April 2006

It's Summer Camp Registration Time!

The summer of 2006 will be a great one for Georgia Disciple campers. Registration deadlines are fast approaching as Camp Christian and Camp Kicklighter are preparing for the arrival of children and youth from across the state.

Campers at many of our camps will be studying a different word each day that highlights a unique aspect of peace. Our theme *Peace Talks* will help transform lives as campers explore ways to live as peacemakers and hear stories of others who brought peace into difficult situations. Campers will be challenged to carry peace back home with them into their daily lives.

You can see our summer schedule and some photos on page 4.

Peace
Talks

MISSION FOCUS: Camp Balaam Needs Your Support

Camp Balaam is a day camp for needy 3rd -5th graders from homes near the camp in Wilkinson County. Camp Balaam will be July 9-13 at Camp Christian Conference Center. Rising 11th and 12th graders are picked to serve as counselors for this event. These counselors get the opportunity to share the gospel with many kids who have never attended camp and some who do not have a church home. The curriculum also helps teach the kids manners and self worth.

We need some help funding this mission camp again this year. It costs a little over \$20 a day for these kids to come to camp. The total bill for the camp will depend on attendance, but with attendance around 60 the cost should be about \$3,500 which includes a Camp T-shirt for each camper. The counselors pay to attend and this takes care of their expenses and other administrative costs. We could use your help with raising the money needed to cover the day camper costs. Thank you for giving the gift of camping.

Please mail checks marked Balaam to:
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia
2370 Vineville Ave
Macon, GA 31204

Spring Conferences Cultivate Gardens

At district-wide spring garden parties, Georgia Disciple women rooted themselves in prayer and relationship with one another and God. Through worship and table fellowship, they discovered resources for growing their "spiritual gardens." Each party was graced by the presence of Women's Commission members and special guest Delores James (our 2004 Woman-to-Woman representative to Kenya) or Phyllis Byrd (our global mission partner serving in Kenya). The gracious and creative event

hosts were Chattahoochee, Columbus Central, Eastman First, and Waycross First. The final event will be at Watkinsville First on April 22nd.

Contact the regional office if you wish to attend.



IN THIS ISSUE:

First Christian, Valdosta	page 3
Camp Schedule	page 4
May 6 Workday	page 5
Church & Clergy News.....	page 6
From the Regional Minister	page 8

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 22

Women's Spring Conference - First Christian Church, Watkinsville

April 23

South East District Assembly - First Christian Church, Savannah

May 1-3

Spring Spiritual Life Retreat - Epworth by the Sea, St. Simon's Island

May 06

Camp Workday - Camp Christian Conference Center

May 06

CWF Commission Meeting - Regional Office, Macon

May 20

Regional Board Meeting - Regional Office, Macon

May 28

Pentecost Special Day Offering

June 4

Pentecost Special Day Offering

June 5

Junior 1 Camp - Camp Christian Conference Center

June 9

Young Adults Week End - Camp Kicklighter

Chrysalis Camp - Camp Christian Conference Center

June 11

Senior High Camp - Camp Kicklighter

June 12

CYF Conference - Camp Christian Conference Center

June 17

YADA - Camp Christian Conference Center

June 18

Chi Rho Camp - Camp Kicklighter

June 19

Chi Rho Camp - Camp Christian Conference Center

June 21

Mix in '06 - Indianapolis, IN

June 25

Junior Camp - Camp Kicklighter

June 26

Mid Hi Conference - Camp Christian Conference Center

July 6

Servants for Christ - Camp Christian Conference Center

July 7

Genesis Camp - Camp Christian Conference Center

July 9

Camp Balaam - Camp Christian Conference Center

July 17

Junior 2 Camp - Camp Christian Conference Center

Michael's Memo

by Rev. Michael Weeks

Someone once told me that we don't remember days, we remember moments. What I remember are moments gone but treasured. I'm six years old, camping with families from our church, and I catch my first fish on a Zebco rod and reel. Dad takes a picture, which is unearthed twenty-five years later on a Thanksgiving afternoon when my sister Jennifer hauls the picture box down from the closet. I remember that same night that I ate a lot of marshmallows and woke up with sticky fingers.

Sometimes I make the mistake of needing everything to be a memory, of straining to make every moment a snapshot—going through life with a camera to the eye, wanting the world to fall in step with my expectations. I forget that along with the marshmallows come the sticky fingers. Life isn't only about the good times, the moments gone but treasured; it's also about the tough times and the inconveniences.

I went camping once in Colorado with my youth group and tried to pitch my tent on granite. I spent a half hour pounding my plastic stakes. My friend Gregg said, *Michael, sometimes you just have to pitch your tent somewhere else.* This we call flexibility; if we're blessed, we learn it early. If we don't, life is immeasurably more difficult than it needs to be. Flexibility is what life is about for me and for many of us in this fast paced world. I continue to strive to walk in the footsteps of the disciples trying my best to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. I pray that you will continue to be blessed as you minister to those around you. Remember God is right there with you as you practice flexibility and as you serve one another.

Women's Ministry News

by Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert

BLT: The 2005-2006 Disciples Women Common Action Project, Bread and Letters Together, is ending; and your results are needed! Each women's group is asked to report on monetary contributions or the equivalent dollar amounts of food given to food pantries or other hunger projects (such as Church World Service) from January 2005 to April 30, 2006. You may have to estimate if you haven't kept precise figures. We also need the number of letters written through Bread for the World's letter campaign (www.bread.org). Our regional goal is \$15,000 in hunger giving and 250 letters. Georgia churches are very generous; now you need to report on your generosity! Please send reports to betty@gadisciples.org or call the regional office at 800-755-0485.



Woman-to-Woman: Georgia will host two Bolivian women from approximately June 7-18. Cathy Moorehead of Watkinsville First Christian Church is arranging their itinerary. Maria N. and Petrona P. come from the women's sewing community making the beautiful Mix in '06 bags. They will visit churches, enjoy sightseeing, and experience daily life in Georgia prior to attending "the Mix." Most of our Woman-to-Woman guests attending the Mix are awaiting visas. To join the advocacy campaign for the granting of visas, contact your district coordinator or Betty Brewer-Calvert. Also, contributions are needed for spending money for our guests.

Fall Travel Opportunities: Woman-to-Woman Worldwide trip to Haiti and Women's Action Web journey to Colorado (*participate in a mission trip and learn to lead one*). See www.discipleswomen.org or contact Betty B-C.

Women's Fall Retreat: October 13-15 at Norman Park, Georgia.

ICWF Name Change: International Christian Women's Fellowship is now called International Disciples Women's Ministries (*Disciples Women, for short*). For more information, see www.discipleswomen.org.

Leadership Resources for Women's Ministries: "Called, Gifted, and Sent" and "Tools for Leadership" are available for print or download from www.discipleswomen.org.

CHURCH FOCUS:

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, VALDOSTA

Servant Leaders Past and Present by Rev. Byron Wells

With a rich heritage dating back to the mid-1800's, First Christian Church Valdosta has faithfully served its community. Founded by the Dasher and Wisenbaker families who were following the march of the railroad, the church focused on studying scripture and the writing of Alexander Campbell as it planted its roots in Lowndes County.

The present 1956 building is on the site of the 1900 Georgia State Fair. While digging the foundation, workers thought they had struck oil. It turns out the site was the mechanics pit where race cars were maintained. The building cost only \$156,000 which included the pipe organ, and a debt of \$25,000 was paid off quickly. Today beautiful banners designed by the late Lee Medler Bennett, artist and mother of former Regional Moderator Rev. George Bennett decorate the interior of the church. The church is blessed with a strong music program as evidenced by the congregation's choir performing Handel's Messiah this past Christmas.

First Christian of Valdosta is a church which reflects the importance of each member to the vitality of the church. The congregation is divided into 13 or so "family groups" who maintain close nurturing contact with one another. New members receive mentors who help assimilate them into the church.



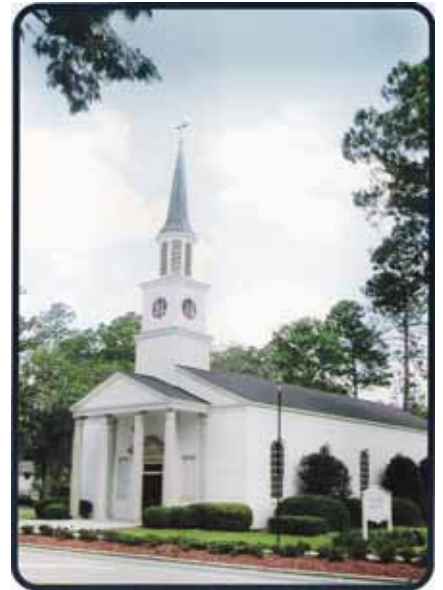
Rev. Dr.
Milton W. West

Children seeking baptism are paired with an adult mentor who assists them through the learning process about church membership.

First Christian Valdosta has been blessed with outstanding leadership. With pastors like Rev. Richard Wallace, Rev. James Gupton, Rev. Glenn Mann, Rev. William L. Thompson, Rev. George Bennett, and its current pastor Rev. Dr. Milton W. West, the congregation has always sought to make a difference. The congregation has seen the value of sharing its leadership with the Region as a number of its pastors and lay leaders have served on Regional Commissions and Boards. Our Region's immediate Past Moderator, Rev. George Bennett who recently completed his five year pastorate there. Our Region's current First Vice-Moderator is Rev. Dr. Milton West, the current pastor.

Lowndes County has rapidly grown over the past few years, and the congregation has experienced growth and change with over 60 new members in the past two years alone. Responding to this growth, the congregation underwent the Faithful Planning process to strategically plan how the congregation could meet the needs of its growing community, including Moody Air Force Base and Valdosta State University. One new program the congregation has started is a partnership with the City of Valdosta to renovate low income housing. The congregation has formed a group of professional community civic and business leaders to examine

and share "best practices" and focus upon maintaining high standards and ethics in the midst of rapid change.



Disciples Men Challenged at Retreat by Buddy Ray

Forty-five gathered at Christmount Assembly on March 17-19, for the Disciples Men's Retreat. The weather and the mountains were beautiful and the program, despite a last minute change in presenters, was excellent.

Rev. Ray Miles spoke on "Generations in the Church," leading us to consider how historical events cause each generation to approach life and the church differently. He then brought two programs on stewardship, pointing out that "stewardship is more than money, but never less than money". In his closing program on "Making Men's Ministries Work," he encouraged us not to be afraid of spirituality and to include service in our programs.

It's great to see friends from around the region each year and to welcome new men. This year several attended for the first time to enjoy the fellowship including our Ice Cream Social.

Sunday worship included Bible study from Rev. Tom Money and a sermon from Rev. Andy Campbell. Everyone left the weekend refreshed and renewed!



Peace Talks

SUMMER CAMP 2006

Registration materials are at your local church or download forms online:

www.gadisciples.org

Be sure you see our promotional DVD with 2005 highlights available in your congregation.

2006 Dates

June 5-9
June 9-11
June 12-17
June 17-18
June 19-24
June 26- July 1
July 6-9
July 7-9
July 9-13
July 17-21

Camp Christian Conference Center

Junior I
Chrysalis
CYF
YADA
Chi Rho
Mid Hi
Servants for Christ
Genesis
Camp Balaam
Junior II

Grade Completed by May 2006

3rd, 4th, 5th
1st or 2nd
10th, 11th, 12th
Young Adults
6th or 7th
8th or 9th
9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
Kindergarten
with an adult relative (over 21)
10th, 11th, 12th
3rd, 4th, 5th

Christmount, Black Mountain, NC

July 9-15 Created to Be Me 8th

Camp Kicklighter

June 9-11	Young Adults	Young Adults
June 11-16	Senior High	9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th
June 18-23	Chi Rho Camp	6 th or 7 th
June 25-30	Junior Camp	3 rd , 4 th , 5 th



Educational Workshops Held By Rev. Dr. Robert L. Harris

On April 1, 2006, Christian College of Georgia provided two "Workshops for Church Folks" for twenty-five Disciples. The workshops were held at Sandy Springs Christian Church. Dr. Burdette Wantland led an exciting and challenging workshop on "Biblical Interpretation" in which he discussed a variety of resources on Biblical Hermeneutics, including video presentations by Marcus Borg and John Shelby Spong. A workshop on "Ministry with Children" was conducted by Dr. Diane Bales. The emphasis of this practical and encouraging workshop was meaningful involvement of children in congregational life, focusing on children from birth through elementary school age. Ten Disciples congregations were represented at the workshops.

Global Mission Partner Phyllis Byrd gave a challenging presentation to the group during the lunch hour. At the conclusion, the participants shared their ideas and enthusiasm for future workshop opportunities. Both workshops offered Continuing Education Units from Christian College. For information on future continuing education opportunities, visit (<http://www.ccofga.org>) and the Regional web site.



Workday Volunteers Needed For May 6

Come to Gordon on May 6th and take part in our annual workday as we prepare for summer camp. Bring a group from your church or load up and come yourself. We will have inside and outside work for people of all ages. Plan to arrive prior to 9:00 am.

Projects will include: raking, weed eating, gardening, power washing, chainsaw work, pruning, mowing and some work for small tools. There will also be some general cleaning work. We will have coffee and donuts starting at 8:30 am. Lunch will be provided along with a brief worship service.

You can get directions to the camp on our website. Please let us know if you will be bringing a large group by calling us at 478-628-2850 or send us an email: camp@gadisciples.org.



What Has Happened Since Miracle Day

Back in 1999, a band of faithful Georgia Disciples gathered on a Saturday morning at a small church in Lake City, Georgia. They gathered with a simple, yet awesome purpose--to participate in creating a miracle for the congregation on a day aptly named "Miracle Day." The day brought folk from many of our congregations and it was spent doing all sorts of repairs on the church's structure, cleaning up the property, and giving a new appearance. Besides the physical work involved, the day also offered hope to those who worshipped there and was a sign that their brothers and sisters in Christ scattered throughout Georgia cared for them, believed in their ministry and looked with anticipation towards what God had in store for their ministry together.



Under the leadership of its pastor, Ketty Santos, Iglesia El Aposento Alto's new appearance and attitude began to have an effect upon its ministry. There was a new and exciting spirit that was present, and the community began to respond. New people began to show up for worship and other activities. The number of baptisms began to grow as people experienced the grace of Jesus Christ. New members began to join the church, and the church had to relocate into larger facilities to meet the growing need.

Today the congregation is located on Jonesboro Road just outside of Forest Park, Georgia. While the congregation shares space with another church, the church continues to share that vision of hope and care to its community that was shown to it on that Miracle Day. The pictures on this page show Iglesia El Aposento Alto's new home in Forest Park.

THE NEW CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

A publication of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia
 2370 Vineville Ave., Macon, GA 31204
 Phone: (478) 743-8649 or 1-800-755-0485
 E-mail: cginga@bellsouth.net

Co-Editors.....Rev. Bill Thompson & Rev. Michael Weeks

Graphic Design.....Outreach Graphics
www.outreachgraphics.com

REGIONAL STAFF

Dr. Ray MilesRegional Minister
 Rev. Michael WeeksAssociate Regional Minister
 Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert....Dir., Women's Ministries
 Pam MikovitzAdministrative Assistant
 Brooke OstbergFinancial Administrator
 Milton SummerallDisciples Men Coordinator

Mix In '06 Will Recognize Secretaries

They answer the phones, prepare the bulletins, keep track of important resources, and keep the community accessible and organized. Church secretaries and administrative professionals, often unsung heroes, will have special recognition at the Mix in '06 in Indianapolis in June. The women of Georgia are pleased to honor Pam Mikovitz, administrative assistant in the regional office, by making sure she is



at the Mix to be honored in person! If you have talked to Pam recently, you'll know she is thrilled to be going. She says, "I am so excited to be with other sisters in the Word through study, music, worship, fun, and fellowship and, yes, even the FOOD. I look forward to meeting Disciple and UCC sisters and sparking some new friendships and rekindling some with the ladies from Georgia. The thought of being in the midst of 5000 women sharing and learning has me very excited." Pam hopes that lots of women from Georgia will attend with her.

Each church or church agency is invited to honor its secretary/administrative professional by sending in a 5x7 photo and brief description of the honoree's special qualities. You may also send a high resolution digital photo by email. Send the photo by May 1 to Betty Brewer-Calvert in the regional office or betty@gadisciples.org. Your honoree DOES NOT have to attend the Mix in order to be recognized, but it would be a special way to say "thank you!"

Mix in '06 Women's Event
Indianapolis
Indiana Convention Center
June 21-25, 2006



Register Online Now!
For the historic combined gathering
of the United Church of Christ
National Women's Meeting and the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Quadrennial Assembly

www.dreamonsisters.com

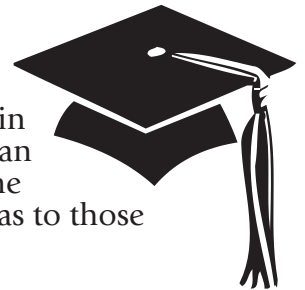
Church And Clergy News

by Dr. Charles Beadle

What's Going On Around The Region

Two of the region's ministers have had major changes in their lives. Rev. Patrick Chandler, senior minister of First Christian Church of Athens, recently married Courtney Montgomery. Rev. Roger Sizemore, minister of First Christian Church of Savannah, recently married Brenda Talley.

Rev. James Brewer-Calvert, senior minister at the First Christian Church of Decatur, will be awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree from Lexington Theological Seminary this May. His dissertation topic is, "Emerging Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Christian Church (DOC)." He is on the Commission on Ministry for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia and he hopes his work will be helpful to the Commission in its efforts to recruit and minister to candidates for ministry as well as to those already in the ministry.



Rev. Tami Groves has taken the position as Executive Director of the Interfaith Children's Movement of Metro Atlanta on March 27. ICMMA advocates and educates about the needs of children in the metro area. Interfaith truly means multi-faith—its 160 congregation members and over 700 individual members include Christians, Muslims, Jews, B'hais, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Unitarian-Universalists. ICMMA conducts cluster meetings in five metro neighborhoods. The next general meeting will inform on the exploitation of homeless youth. Visit the web site at <http://www.icmma.org/>.

Rev. Bill Mackie recently retired as Senior Minister at Sandy Springs Christian Church in Atlanta. He entered hospice care in Texas. As this goes to press, we have received word of Bill's death on April 11th. Please remember Karen and the family in your prayers.



Phyllis Byrd shares her ministry and her work serving with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa

Global Mission Partner Travels in Region

The past few weeks have seen opportunities for many people from various congregations around the Region to meet with one of our Global Mission Partners. Phyllis Byrd, serving with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, has been sharing her ministry and her work with us. Part of the challenge she set for us is to continue the relationship with her as she returns to Kenya. She says her time in Georgia was "like being adopted by the churches here." Her visit opened for us possibilities of what we can learn and how we can be transformed by the relationship. Phyllis is supported by the Disciples Mission Fund. She serves as an associate pastor in a large church there and teaches preaching at a seminary in Nairobi. Thanks to each church that hosted here and made her feel so welcome. For a glimpse of life in Kenya, read her article on the web site of Global Ministries, www.globalministries.org, and follow the links to Missionaries, Stories, Africa, Kenya. You will come to an article on life in Kenya, written by Phyllis Byrd."

Supporting the Church

Rev. Brad Miller,
Regional Moderator

We live in an age of change. Sometimes change is positive, sometimes it is negative. There are even times when change scares me. Even if things aren't great now, at least they are a known quantity. When a new boss comes into an office, when a new minister comes into a congregation, when a new opportunity requires that we move to another town, we may be simultaneously excited and fearful of the changes we are about to experience.

We in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia have experienced those feelings. At the regional level, we are excited to have Ray Miles with us as our Regional Minister, but we also wonder what kind of change will come with his tenure. In the General Church, we have seen change that encourages us, and change that disturbs us. We have witnessed the pain of the National Benevolent Association bankruptcy. We see the General units of our church sorting out how to work together for God's glory in a new age. We are excited that Sharon Watkins offers us fresh new leadership for the 21st century.

All of this means we have to face up to change in our denomination. We were comfortable with and proud of the work of the NBA. Now what? We have grown accustomed to the way things work in the General church units, but efficiency and effectiveness dictate change. Sharon Watkins' election means our church will deal with the change of a different voice, a different generation of leadership. But how different will it be?

Of course, we don't know. That is why it is so important that now, more than ever, we support our beloved church. Leadership needs to hear from all voices if we are to fulfill our mission as Christ's church. We all need to ask how we can help by volunteering for regional committees and task forces, by continuing to support our church with our Disciples Mission Fund, by supporting the leadership of the church with our prayers daily. Change is coming; but if we do our best to support our church that change will be for the good, and the cause of Jesus Christ will be strengthened because of our participation. Do give prayerful thought as to how you want to deal with the changes ahead, and then, get involved. I guarantee you, the more that we all get involved, the better that change will be.



From Georgia's Regional Minister:

Within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) one of our historic documents is the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery." The signers expressed the will that the congregation there die and disappear into the body of Christ so that God could do something new and better. Their desire to be what God wanted was so strong they were willing to work at the new expression of church and nearly 30 years later they were still discovering what the church would look like.

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), one tremendous impediment to becoming what God wants us to be is our refusal to die, our fear of dying, our tenacity to hang on to what we have. We desperately hold on to our worship style. We grasp tightly to our decision making. We cling to the constitution and bylaws we have had since the 1960s. In the world today, it seems the only things left from the 1950s and 60s are antiques, junk, and churches. God is calling us to be something new for a new world and we are caught in the world of which we used to be a part.

As we consider what God is calling us to be, a question we have to ask is "What do we have to let die in order for God to work a new thing?" For God to make congregations bloom do we have to let die:

- ...our dream of being what we once were?
- ...our tightly crafted vision of what we think God intends us to be?
- ...our understanding of church imported from another part of the country or from another denomination?
- ...the comfortable way of doing worship as we've always done it?
- ...the idea there is a "right" way to do something?

God is calling us to something new and glorious. We aren't there yet and we need to make room for that new creation. Are we willing to do that?



Dr. Ray Miles

*...and God
Adds the Growth*
Acts 2:1-2, 47b

2006 Pentecost Special Offering
Supporting the Disciples New Church Movement

**DISCIPLES
MISSION
FUND**
empowering lives

New Church Ministry

Your region and Disciples New Church Ministry equally share your gifts to Pentecost Special Offering to support the Disciples New Church movement. Church Finance Council receives and distributes the offering as part of whole church mission.