



The New Christian Messenger

www.gadisciples.org

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New regional staff adds depth

Two Georgia ministers have joined the staff of the Region as regional program directors.

Rev. Betty C. Brewer-Calvert began work as the regional Director for Women's Ministries on Jan. 1. Rev. Dean Phelps joins the staff on Feb. 1 as Regional Director of Church Development and Communication.

As Director of Women's Ministries, Rev. Brewer-Calvert will give pastoral leadership to the regional CWF Commission and be available to train and assist local women's groups. She looks at her ministry among the women of the region as an opportunity to grow in faith and to learn and to serve in ministry alongside her sisters. She brings an open, supportive, and enthusiastic presence and a deep commitment to the church of Jesus Christ.

Betty is a native Georgian, but she tried out some other parts of the country for a few decades before "coming home" in 1998. She was born into First Christian Church of Albany where her father was pastor, but she now makes her home in Atlanta and is a member of Decatur First Christian, where her husband, James, serves as senior minister.

Raised mostly in Tennessee and North Carolina, Betty received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from North Carolina State University in 1981 and her Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York in 1984. She was ordained and married the following year at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City.

Betty and James have 2 children, Henry (age 13) and Katie (age 9). Betty enjoys reading, hiking, bicycling, music, art, and travel.

As Director of Church Development, Rev. Phelps will work with new church starts and be a resource to local congregations and leaders to help



From left to right: Pam Mikovitz; Betty Brewer-Calvert; Dean Phelps, and Brooke Ostberg listen to Zena McAdams (right) during a staff meeting.

revitalize ministry. He will be available to congregations as a teacher, consultant or facilitator, and will be able to work in a variety of settings where ministry needs to be "unstuck." As Director of Communication, Rev. Phelps will work with the Macon office and regional staff to improve communication and enhance ministry throughout the region.

Rev. Phelps brings a background in business and information technology to his position with the Region. After attending the University of Kentucky, he began a career in data processing that culminated in 11 years with L'eggs Products and Hanes Hosiery in

information systems support and management.

Dean has served as Minister of Music and Education at First Christian Church, Marietta, as Associate Minister at Cherry Log Christian Church, and as pastor of Community Christian Church in Fayetteville. He earned a B.S. in Mathematics from Kennesaw State University and a Master of Divinity from Emory University's Candler School of Theology. He is presently completing coursework for an M.S. in organization behavior and development at Georgia State University.

Our Mission is to be Christ's witness in the Georgia region, growing, building, and equipping vital faith communities.



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

6 Regional Board Reports due
 7 Camp Directors' Training, TBA
 10-11 Voices - formerly known as VoCare, Camp Christian Conference Center
 21 Regional Board Meeting, Regional Office - Macon
 26 Minister's Mailing Deadline
 27-29 Camp For Big Kids, Camp Christian Conference Center
 27-29 Southeastern Regional Fellowship of ICWF, Christmount Christian Assembly

MARCH

12-14 Directions, Camp Christian Conference Center
 15 Copy Deadline for March Christian Messenger.
 19-21 Disciples Men's Retreat, Christmount
 29 Minister's Mailing Deadline

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CAMP CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER

Sign up for an Adult retreat today online or get a registration form at church on Sunday. Find out about the full slate, schedule, and keynoters of each of these retreats offered by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia from your pastor or online at www.gadisciples.org.

Take note that this list of retreats features a retreat for High School Juniors and Seniors. All other retreats are for adults.

Feb. 10-11 VOICES Clergy Retreat
 Sponsored by the Christian College of Georgia
 Register deadline was 1/28/04. Registration: \$50

Feb. 27-28 Camp for Big Kids Winter Retreat
 Registration deadline was 2/6/04.
 Registration: \$45

March 12-14 Directions: Planning for the Journey of Life Sponsored by the Christian College of Georgia
 11th and 12th graders are invited to spend a weekend exploring:

- how your career path and your faith are related
- the spiritual gifts and special talents God has blessed you with
- how to recognize what God is calling you to do

Featuring: keynotes, worship, singing, small group discussions, games, fun, and free time. Workshop Sessions will be split for first-timers and returning participants.

Registration on or before 2/15/04: \$50
 After 2/15/04 but before 3/1/04: \$60

March 19-21 CHOICES: Adult Career Retreat
 Sponsored by the Christian College of Georgia
 What does God want you to do with your life? Through worship, keynotes, professional career and personal assessment materials, and from the insights of staff and other participants, you will gain new insights into your career choices and the impact those decisions make on your life.
 Registration on or before 2/15/04: \$85
 After 2/15/04 but before 3/1/04: \$95
 Scholarships are available based on need. Call 1-800-755-0485 for information.

April 26-28 Seniors Retreat
 This is a weekday event for Seniors to check out the new Camp Christian Conference Center.
 What was the second half of life like in Biblical times? Take a journey through the Bible examining the second half of life. You will find your own story interfacing with the ancients of our Biblical faith, as you examine the gifts of the second half of life.
 Registration on or before 3/1/04: \$100
 After 3/1/04 but before 4/12/04: \$110

Disciples Men's Retreat



DISCIPLES MEN

The Disciples Men's Retreat will be March 19-21 at Black Mountain, North Carolina Christmount as in the past will be handling registration for us. Men may register for the 2004 retreat by calling Christmount at 828-669-8977, ask for Helen Johnson. Speaker will be Associate Regional Minister Kentucky J. Gregory (Greg) Alexander who has been serving as Associate Regional Minister for the Christian

Church in Kentucky since July 1, 1992. Room prices and more information on Rev. Alexander at www.gadisciples.org.

CLERGY CORNER

Attention all ministers and other Disciple leaders: Please join the Regional staff for a very special retreat at Epworth-by-the-Sea on St. Simon Island from the evening of May 3 until noon May 5. The topic is "Stepping Stones: From Loss to Wholeness". This is an extraordinary opportunity for seminarians, clergy, music ministers, youth ministers and lay leaders to share in the healing of our church, our world and ourselves. We will have powerful speakers, inspirational music, meaningful worship, healing conversations, sincere fellowship, and time to reflect surrounded by the beauty of the Georgia coast. For more information, contact Rev. Carol S. Mallon, mallonj@bellsouth.net

Attention Disciples Clergy in the Georgia Region! **Just a reminder that you can attend the Pastoral Institute's Distinguished Lecture at no cost under the Ministry Assistance Program (MAP).** The event is 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m. March 12. The lecturer this year is our own Fred Craddock. Under the broad theme, "Sunday Morning," Dr. Craddock will explore four important elements of the worship service and their relationships to the sermon: the congregational song, pastoral prayer, The Table, and the reading of the scriptures. How can the preacher and other worshipers be transformed through the many relationships between the sermon and other elements of the service? Also, participants will have the opportunity to dialogue with Dr. Craddock and with each other. Register today by calling the Turner Clergy Center at the Pastoral Institute (800) 649-6446 or by FAX (706) 649-6363. If you have questions, contact Barrett Smith at the above numbers. (Registration Deadline is March 8).



FOCUS ON / CHESTNUT RIDGE

Well rooted and branching out

The new steeple tower with the shape of the cross reiterated in its windows and on its spire draws the eye of the passing motorist to this small neighborhood church nestled comfortably among the pines of a busy Cobb county intersection. Located in the prosperous northern suburbs of metropolitan Atlanta, Chestnut Ridge Christian Church proudly unveils her new Educational Building. The completion of this building marks for members and staff their entrance into a time of transition, excitement, and growth. Pastor Byron H. Wells describes it as "a time of uncovering what God has in store for us as we find our particular niche for ministry in Cobb County."

Rev. Wells explains that Chestnut Ridge has in many ways served as a way station for persons needing a place of solace and healing amidst a community known for their inclusive family fellowship. However, once the healing has been accomplished, persons have tended to move on to larger, more traditional churches. Now, Chestnut Ridge seeks to retain those who come by not only offering the embrace of this loving community, but also offering programs that engage members in deeper levels of spiritual growth and shared mission. Moreover, some of the traditions that have served the membership when the church was smaller are no longer feasible, so new ways of being church together are slowly formulating.

Though located in a predominantly white, upwardly mobile community of neighborhoods, Chestnut Ridge prides itself on drawing a diverse population for such a small worshipping community. The Church averages about eighty-five



Chestnut Ridge and Pastor Byron H. Wells

in worship most Sundays with members and visitors representing several ethnic and denominational backgrounds. The church also has a strong commitment to be a tithing church, giving ten per cent of every dollar that comes in to support their covenant relationship of mission and ministry with the Regional and General manifestation of Disciples. "It is interesting to note," Rev. Wells says, "that when the Church reached its goal of giving 10% to the Disciples Mission Fund, our own financial concerns fell in place. We finally were able to burn our original note in August of 2000."

Chestnut Ridge was born in 1979 out of the need to provide a worshipping community for growing Cobb County. Sandy Springs Christian Church was its primary sponsor in the

formative years when Rev. John Faircloth served as Pastor-Developer. The support given by Sandy Springs, as well as the Regional and General Church, is part of the reason Chestnut Ridge has committed to give back as a tithing community. Additionally, one goal for Chestnut Ridge as they move toward the future is to become increasingly active in the various Regional ministries in Georgia.

Rev. Wells has served the church for the past six and a half years and retains a great love and joy in serving with this community. Rev. Wells is a native of North Carolina and a graduate of North Carolina State University. He received his Master of Divinity Degree from Lexington Theological Seminary in Lexington, Kentucky. He is married to Jena Kennedy. They live with their

three children in Woodstock.

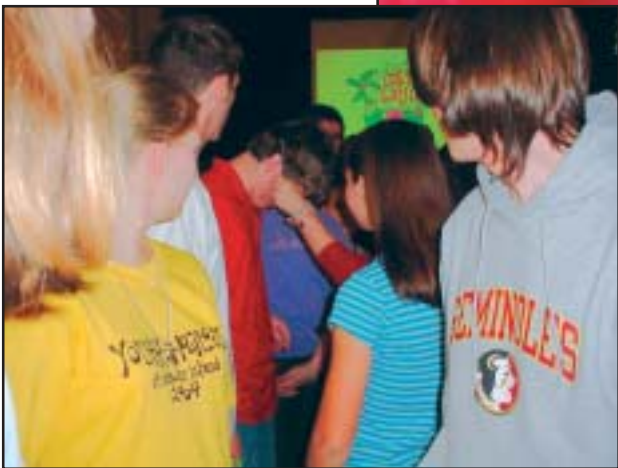
As Rev. Wells and Chestnut Ridge continue to look toward the future, they hope to add a new and enlarged sanctuary on their five and a half acres within another five to ten years. The Church enjoys being adjacent to a ten plus acre nature center and park as well as sharing its educational space with the Swift School, a school serving children with mild learning disabilities in grades K through 4.

"Come visit us and see what our Lord is doing with and through us as we strive to grow in God's light," Rev. Wells invites. Indeed, Georgia Disciples can share with joy in Christ this active, growing, committed representation of our faith. Thank you Chestnut Ridge for being so beautifully about our Father's business!



Organized Chaos on Saturday featured plenty of outside games to go along with the wonderful weather.

During the YAC installation service members of the 2003-2004 YAC pass on their crosses to next year's group



YOUTH-A-PALOOZA

st. simons island
2004



The YAC Pack! Youth Activity Council 2003-2004 planned Youth-A-Palooza.

A **LOUD** 384 youth and adults gathered for Youth-A-Palooza, Jan.16-18. Rev. Russell Peterman, associate minister Sandy Springs Christian Church and Dr. Kathy Whitson, Professor at Eureka College, talked to the youth about sharing their faith with others. **Get Loud** was our theme and we each got ideas about how to share our faith with friends loudly!

Thanks to the churches that assisted the youth in attending and to all the adult leaders who worked so hard to make this a spirit filled weekend for the youth. This event is held in January every year and features time for small groups, worship, recreation, fun, singing, and island sight-seeing. Youth-A-Palooza is planned and implemented by the Youth Activity Council of our region.



WHAT YOUTH HAD TO SAY

What did you discover at Youth-A-Palooza?

To get loud for God and never be afraid of what you believe. I need to focus more on my faith and try to keep what I learned here with me throughout the year. That I can be myself and still be a Christian.

When did you feel the closest to God?

When I was outside by the fountain at night and the lights in the water reflected off the trees. During the Worship Services During Small Groups During my time to laugh and talk with others

How important are the friends you meet here?

The friends I make here are polar opposites of the friends I make at home and they allow me to look at God and my faith in a brand new way. They are not afraid to let you know they love God.



Worship was held each day in Strickland Auditorium.



There was plenty of time to renew old friendships



Group Gatherings times were full of singing, games, and commercials about upcoming youth events and college opportunities

YOUTH-A-PALOOZA

st. simons island
2004



PRAY FOR ...

Pray for congregations as they continue to grow and reach out to all in their city with the word of God.

Feb. 7
Centennial Christian Church, White Plains

Feb. 14
First Chinese Christian Church, Norcross

Feb. 21
High Shoals Christian Church, High Shoals

Feb. 28
The Rock Christian Church, Tucker

March 6
Pine Hill Christian Church, Quitman

March 13
The region and staff.

...PRAISE FOR

Rev. Dean Phelps, who joins the Regional Staff as the Regional Director of Church Development and Communication

Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert who joins the Regional Staff as the Regional Director of Women's Ministries.

First Christian Church in Eastman on their Annual Homecoming Celebration

Rev. Patrick Chandler on his installation as the Senior Minister at First Christian Church in Athens

Youth Activities Council on a well attended and successful Youth-a-palooza

Disciple Mission Fund offerings up 31% in 2003

Georgia's Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) offerings continued to increase in 2003.

These offerings, which support ministry both in the Region and in general ministries of the Disciples, registered a total of \$656,306. DMF offerings from all sources in 2003 were up 31% from 2002 contributions.

Georgia congregations gave \$606,136 to Disciples Mission Fund in 2003, an increase of 36% over 2002 giving (\$444,841). DMF offerings from congregations in 2003 nearly doubled congregational support given in 2001 (\$311,334), continuing a very positive trend in financial support from Georgia congregations. Thirty-nine congregations contributed regular DMF offerings, and forty-eight participated in one or more of the special day offerings.

The Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur led the way, contributing \$306,695, 47% of all DMF offerings received in Georgia last year. Based on participating membership, First Christian Church of Sandersville contributed the most per capita. Sandersville First's offerings for the year, including special day offerings, averaged \$217.55 per participating member. Even Georgia's newest congregation, Eagles Landing Christian Church in McDonough, supported Disciples Mission Fund, giving \$11,991.

In addition to congregations, women's groups contribute a notable portion of DMF support. However, support from women's groups has declined each of the last two years. Women's

groups in Georgia contributed \$37,782 during 2003, down 14% from 2002 giving (\$43,760) and down 30% from 2001 (\$53,066).

Contributions from women's groups represented 6% of the total regular DMF offerings.

2003 was the first year of a new funding system for Regional and General Ministries of the Disciples Church. The new system features designated purposes for the six special day offerings taken during the year. Georgia's Week of Compassion offering of \$36,650 and the Reconciliation offering of \$7,829 will support the church's relief ministries and its pro-reconciliation, anti-racism efforts. Georgia supported the work of Disciples' general units with an Easter offering of \$18,796.

The Pentecost offering provided \$13,887 for new church ministries in Georgia and nationwide. The Thanksgiving offering supports higher education with \$16,590 from Georgia. Christmas offerings received in 2003 entirely support the ministry of the Christian Church in Georgia. The \$21,604 received in 2003 is 16% ahead of the 2002 levels.

Georgia retains 60% of regular DMF offerings and the entire Christmas offering. Gifts to Disciples Mission Fund provided over \$415,000 to support mission and ministry in the Christian Church in Georgia. The congregations, clergy and staff of the region thank you for your support in 2003.

DISCIPLES MISSION FUND OFFERINGS

	2001	2002	2003
DMF from Congregations	\$311,334	\$444,841	\$606,136
DMF from Women's Groups	53,066	43,760	37,782
Blessing Box	11,201	9,797	11,165
Other DMF	6,338	1,870	1,224
TOTAL	\$381,939	\$500,268	\$656,306

SPECIAL DAY OFFERINGS

	2001	2002	2003
Week of Compassion	\$70,631	\$38,553	\$36,650
Easter	18,919	20,869	18,796
Pentecost	15,144	14,410	13,887
Reconciliation	6,715	15,970	7,829



A NEW THING

George H. Bennett
Moderator

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God said through Isaiah 43:18-19, "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. See I am doing anew thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceived it?" The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia is discerning and articulating a vision for the sacred mission of Jesus Christ.

The board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia will be doing a new thing by discerning answers to two questions. *What does it mean to be the Body of Christ as the regional church in Georgia? What is God calling us to be for the next three to five years?*

What is at stake here? Rev. Ed Kane has been working with churches and regions with their **Vision for Mission**. He points out that there are two deaths that regions may experience: one is of their own making. It is the kind of death which occurs because the churches avoid the difficult questions. These regions become insular, focused on what serves them best. They will not die with Jesus Christ. They will not let die what is not serving the Kingdom of God. Tragically, when these regions (or congregations for that matter) die, there is no resurrection, no rising from the dead.

The second kind of death is experienced by regions (or congregations) which constantly ask the difficult but faithful questions about being the Body of Jesus Christ: These regions die with their Lord. And because they die with their Lord, they rise with Him. These regions are vibrant and spirit filled because they have a history of testing and claiming their heritage. These regions keep on rising from the dead because they are not afraid to die with their Lord.

Your regional board's approach will not be a formula for success. Ours will be one path that will enable the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia to test and claim our heritage and to faithfully



wrestle with God about the mission and ministry entrusted to us by Jesus Christ.

At the Feb. 21 board meeting at Peachtree Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Atlanta I will be appointing three mission teams.

A mission team for the new Regional Minister of 5-7 people, representative of the Christian Churches of the region, will be commissioned to search for the new regional minister and will be expected to bring their recommendation to the board and to you be our Regional Assembly, November 2004 in Saint Simons.

- A mission team for Transformational Ministries (strategic planning) of 5-7 people will be commissioned to present a plan to the assembly by the same date. Regions or churches that fail to plan, plan to fail. The Christian Church (DOC) in Georgia is making plans to be a faithful church. Your church is a part of that plan.

- A mission team for Reconciliation of 5-7 people will be commissioned to conduct an antiracism program for our region by the time of our regional assembly.

I will need your up most assistance in prayer and recommendations as I appoint these three mission teams to move the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia forward. You may contact me directly with your recommendations. I will also seek the direction and advice of the Executive Committee and the Board in these appointments.

Campbell-Stone Notes

By Janice Johnson Hume

The Chaplaincy Program at Campbell-Stone Christian Centers continues to develop thanks to several forms of support. Very important among these is support from the Christian College of Georgia which has been a partner in ministry for six years. A step-down grant has allowed a Clinical Pastoral Education Resident to be placed at Campbell-Stone as Visitation Chaplain.

We are in the last year of that grant which will cumulatively amount to \$100,000 at the end of 2004. The Christian College's intent has been a continuation of its educational mission "...to educate, prepare and nurture Disciples for ministry and service...to encourage initiatives, strategies and programs which develop and nurture leaders in the Church...and provide education for congregations and other entities in the region of Georgia." This grant has been given in the hope that individuals, churches and foundations will continue with gifts to underwrite this program

The Visitation Chaplains are all seminary graduates who participate in specialized chaplaincy training through being C.P.E. Residents at Campbell-Stone. They have felt Campbell-Stone to be a wonderfully diverse and supportive environment in which to deepen their skills for ministry. Three of the six Residents have been ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Steve Scott, Jerrie Bason, and Mike Bryant.

An update on the closing our regional church's capital campaign

By Roger Sizemore

At the end of November, the Sowing Seeds Capital Campaign for new churches, our church camps and to recruit talented clergy for the future, had received \$516,756.81 with an additional \$169,275 pledged, for a total to be received of \$686,032.47. We are still talking to potential donors who will help us finish out the campaign.

Though the three-year capital campaign came to a conclusion, December 31, many contributors have asked to continue their pledge payments through next year.

Those needing to do so may do this, sending contributions directly to the regional office in care of the Sowing Seeds Capital Campaign. The regional office has now taken over the management and record keeping for the campaign. Gratitude is expressed to the many individuals and churches who participated, sowing together seeds of growth for our Region and beyond.



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FROM BEHIND THE WINDSHIELD / REV. ZENA S. MCADAMS

Seeing winter, spring and a horizon

Driving through the Georgia countryside this last week, I was reminded of a recent conversation that I had with a woman while sitting in the airport. It started casually and soon turned serious. Her husband had died two years ago. She had health problems. Her children lived a long distance from her. She spoke of loss and grief. Although she did not know that I was a pastor, I listened carefully and responded empathetically. Unexpectedly, she turned and said, “In spite of the fact that this has been a terrible year, I see things more clearly now than ever before in my life.” About that time, we were interrupted. It was time to board the plane. I still wonder about her insights.

Georgia is a beautiful place. I am continually amazed at the trees and the vegetation, but I am a little claustrophobic here in Georgia—especially in the spring and summer. I miss the horizon. I was born in the Texas Panhandle where there are few

trees and lots of flat land (and you can see the tornadoes coming)! However, I have discovered in the starkness of winter, I can see more clearly beyond the tree line—houses, churches, lakes, rivers, and on occasion, the horizon!

While I was a young mom with three small children and attending seminary, I was divorced. It was a very difficult time. At times, my life was overwhelming! During that period of time, a new sitcom, *One Day at a Time*, started a nine year run on TV—a story about a young divorcee raising a family on her own. As I watched their silliness and craziness, it helped me laugh and put into perspective my own family situation! In other words, I begin to see more clearly what was important in my life and the life of my family.

In the long dark nights of January, I find myself more inward and reflective—waiting for the first signs of spring to burst forth from the cold of winter. The words that echo

through my head are the reprise from a favorite musical, *Godspell* by Stephen Schwartz:

Day by day, Oh Dear Lord
Three things I pray
To see thee more clearly
Love thee more dearly
Follow thee more nearly
Day by day

Daily I am seeing clearly more of Georgia Disciples through the stark and barren tree line with an occasional glimpse of the horizon.

Amazed and thankful. . . behind the windshield!

Zena McAdams
Interim Regional Minister
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