



THE NEW CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

www.gadisciples.org

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A Season of Change

The winds of change are blowing throughout the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in local congregations, in the region and in the general church.

Search committees are forming as pastors reach retirement, interim ministers are being called, and congregations are extending calls to new pastors.

Change is not limited, however, to local congregations. The Christian Church in Georgia is welcoming Dr. Ray Miles as its new Regional Minister.

In addition, as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meets in General Assembly this summer, Dr. Sharon Watkins will be presented as the candidate to become the next General Minister and President, and several resolutions will address issues facing the church.

New Regional Leadership

Dr. Ray Miles officially began his ministry as Regional Minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia on June 1. Dr. Miles was elected by unanimous voice vote at a called Regional Assembly on April 16. In accepting the call from the region, Dr. Miles expressed how encouraging it was to see such a large turnout for the assembly, indicating the depth of the Region's commitment to being a faithful, growing church.

New Churches

During the assembly, Rev. Dean Phelps, Director of Church Development, reported that since launching the mission to start 1,000 new churches by 2020 four years ago, the Disciples have started over 350 new

congregations. The church is more than a third of the way to a 20-year goal in four years. In response, attendees gave an offering for new church ministry in excess of \$1,000.

New General Leadership

During July 23-27, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will meet for its biennial assembly in Portland, Oregon. One of the major items of business will be the election of Dr. Sharon Watkins as General Minister and President. Dr. Watkins is presently serving as senior minister of Disciples Christian Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. According to information released by Disciples News Service, Dr. Watkins brings a broad range of ministry experience to leadership of the general church.

General Assembly

In addition to electing new leadership, the Assembly will focus attention on proposed changes to The Design for the Christian Church (*Disciples of Christ*), which has been the organizational and procedural document for the church since 1968. The Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform proposed changes that were approved by the General Board in April.

The changes are intended to enhance accountability between the general units of the church and to clarify the dual roles of the General Minister and President.

In addition, the language used in The Design shifted away from organizational and institutional language to better reflect the covenantal relationships within the church. The proposed changes also decrease the size of the General Board to 74 voting members and intentionally include representatives of racial/ethnic ministries as voting members.



The sanctuary of First Christian Church, Macon, was nearly full to capacity as the Region met in a called assembly to elect Dr. Ray Miles as Regional Minister.



The transition of leadership began at the communion table as Dr. Zena McAdams, Interim Regional Minister, and Dr. Miles broke the bread and shared the cup with the regional church.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

June 17-19

Young Adult Camp
Camp Kicklighter

June 19-24

Junior Camp
Camp Kicklighter

June 20-25

CYF Conference
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

June 26-July 1

Junior Camp
Camp Kicklighter

June 27-July 2

Mid-High Conference
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

July 1

Online Registration Opens
Mix in '06

July 1-5

UCC General Synod
Atlanta

July 4

Regional office closed

July 10-16

Created to Be Me Conference
Christmount Assembly
Black Mountain, NC

July 11-15

Junior 2 Camp
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

July 15-17

Chrysalis 2 Camp
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

July 18-21

Camp Balaam
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

July 20-22

NEW2005
Doubletree Hotel
Portland, OR

July 23-27

General Assembly
Portland, OR

August 5-7

YAC Retreat
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

August 6, 10:00

Disciples Men Commission

August 13, 10:00

Women's Ministry Commission
Regional Office

August 20, 10:30

Christian Education Commission
Camp Directors Celebration
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

August 26-27

Georgia Disciple Clergy
Women's Retreat
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

August 27, 10:00

Camp Ministry Advisory Team
Camp Christian Conf. Ctr.

It's Time For Summer Camp!

The summer camping programs are underway at Camp Kicklighter and at Camp Christian Conference Center. See the calendar at left for the schedule of upcoming camps. Also, visit <http://camp.gadisciples.org> to see daily camp reports or to send e-mail to a camper.



Women's Ministry News

Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert

Spring Conference 2005

Women's Spring Conferences were attended by 225 women representing 32 congregations. Participants gave more than \$750 for women's ministry in Georgia, with an additional \$135 for the Martha Faw Woman-to-Woman Fund. The river trip format with outposts for study, worship, and service provided a little of everything for travelers. Guides led music and gave theological musings to uplift and encourage women on the journey. Travel breaks allowed shopping for books, study materials, and "Mix in '06" t-shirts.

Women's Commission members, host churches, and other participating churches joined together to create a fun, worthwhile experience of learning, worship, food, and fellowship. A special thank you is extended for the warm hospitality of First Christian Church of Atlanta, Dublin, Valdosta, and Glennville and to Athens Friendship and Macon St. Andrew.

Fall Retreat 2005

Coming soon: Registration materials for Women's Retreat (October 7-9 at Norman Park) with inspirational speaker Petie McLean, crafts bazaar, healing service, bookstore, time for yourself and your sisters in Christ!

2006 Women's Event

Online registration opens July 1 for the "Mix in '06." Plan to travel to Indianapolis next summer (June 21-25) for our joint women's ministry event with the United Church of Christ. It promises to be a spirit-filled celebration of sisterhood in Jesus Christ replete with music, uplifting worship, mind-stretching and heart-opening interest groups, international gift shop, fellowship with women from around the world, and more. Come and bring a friend. For details, registration information and publicity visit www.dreamonsisters.com.

Book Club Update

Book club coordinator Frances Shumake recommends *If Grace is True* by Phillip Gulley as your next book choice, saying, "It will probably challenge the reader's belief about God's grace - hopefully for the better!" Be sure to visit the online discussion to share your response: www.gadisciples.org/organizations/CWF.

CHURCH FOCUS: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WATKINSVILLE

Building the Future on a Rich Heritage

The Christian Church in Georgia is blessed to have churches with rich heritages that reflect the diversity of the Region. The colorful history of First Christian Church in Watkinsville begins even before the church was chartered. The sanctuary of the church was originally built in 1861 to house a Methodist church. During General William Tecumseh Sherman's March to the Sea nearing the end of the Civil War, a flank of General Sherman's army broke off from the main group and came into Watkinsville. Led by Major General Stoneman, the group bivouacked in Watkinsville, and legend has it that the cavalry unit stabled their horses in the church building while in the area.

In the 1890s the Methodists who were using the sanctuary built a new church across the street, and they sought to sell their old building. Having difficulty finding a buyer, the best bid came from a group within the community that planned to turn the building into either a "juke joint" or a whiskey store. Some of the community leaders became upset with the idea of a church being used for such purposes, so they pooled their resources and purchased the building in May of 1897. In June of 1897, families that had been attending Antioch Christian Church and Union Christian Church came together to form First Christian Church of Watkinsville.

Under its current pastor, Rev. Brent Reynolds, the congregation is looking to build upon this rich heritage and is seeking to fulfill its call as a church of Jesus Christ. Rev. Reynolds, a native of Indiana, was ordained at First Christian Church in Valdosta, and he has immersed himself into offering the church effective and vital leadership.

In January of this year Rev. Dean Phelps, Regional Director of Church Development and Communication, led the board of the congregation in a retreat where several points of emphasis were selected as the church seeks to serve its rapidly growing community outside of Athens. Board chairman Larry Gunter is helping the board share its vision with the rest of the congregation as it strives to put these plans into motion.

First Christian Church offers many quality programs. Church musicians Teresa Guthrie and Mary Venable offer an excellent music program that includes Adult and Children's handbell choirs, an annual Christmas production, and weekly inspiring hymns and anthems. Katie Hawkins is presently serving the congregation as Youth Director. Katie, a student at the University of Georgia, brings a wealth of experience from her days as a youth in the Region, and she is challenging the Youth of the congregation with her creativity and energy.

With the combination of such a rich heritage, spiritual gifts, and visionary leadership First Christian Church in Watkinsville looks to the future with excitement and anticipation.

First Christian Church is located at 4 North Main Street in Watkinsville. You can visit the church on the web at www.firstchristianwatkinsville.com.



First Christian Church has met at its Main Street location since it was founded in 1897.



Rev. Brent Reynolds serves First Christian as its pastor.

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Peggy Payton, Sylvia Hamlin and Barbara Sims-King participate in worship during the spring conference in Macon.



Ann Haines, CWF Commission president, led praise and worship during each of the conferences.

AROUND THE REGION: Spring Conferences

Each spring, the Women's Commission takes its "traveling road show" to the region's six districts. Women learn about the newest study material, share ideas for ministry, and enjoy worship and fellowship with one another. Conferences this year were hosted by: First Christian of Atlanta, Tucker; Friendship Christian, Athens; St. Andrew, Macon; First Christian, Dublin; First Christian, Valdosta; and First Christian, Glennville.



Three women from First Christian, Albany, present a skit promoting the Mix In '06. Mix in '06 will be a national gathering of women from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. The Mix will be held in Indianapolis, June 21-25, 2006.



Barbara Powell, Frances Shumake, Pat Brannen and Amanda Durden visit the bookstore during the spring conference in Glennville.



Linda Tiller and Karen Boyd of Central Christian, Augusta, browse the bookstore during the spring conference in Dublin.



The women of First Christian, Valdosta, hosted the Southwest District conference. Shown here are three of the women from the host congregation.

A Parting Glance From Behind The Windshield

with Dr. Zena S. McAdams
zena@gadisciples.org

When I left Georgia last Friday afternoon, I felt like a Gypsy—heading to places unknown with my car packed full to the brim with all my worldly objects. Well, not exactly. Most of my “stuff” is in Macon in storage. As I headed west toward Dallas, I was filled with mixed emotions. On one hand, I was elated that I was heading home to my family, friends, and two precious grandchildren. On the other hand, I was sad to leave behind the many special relationships that I have formed while in Georgia.

Along the way, I had lots of time to talk to the windshield, a prolonged visit with God. I prayed for signs of what the future might hold for me. Surely God must have been chuckling as I encountered Mr. Lowery at the Welcome Center in Mississippi, sharing his life story with me as he joined me on a 20 minute walk. Then again, when I stopped for lunch, a teenage girl shared her profound sadness about the death of a friend. Reflecting on these encounters, I knew that I had encountered the Holy, small God moments along the journey of faith

Even when we “shake the dust off our sandals” in one place, the story does not end.



Dear Zena,

Thank you for the love you shared with us and the memories you left with us. May God richly bless your path in ministry just as your ministry has richly blessed us.

With our love,

The Christian Church in Georgia



CHURCH AND CLERGY NEWS

What's Going On Around The Region

Rev. Wendy Miles begins serving First Christian Church, Eastman, as pastor on June 12. Prior to accepting the call at Eastman, Rev. Miles served as Senior Minister of Altoona Christian Church in Altoona, IA.

Rev. Stan Hickman has resigned as pastor of Eagles Landing Christian Church effective May 31. The congregation is forming a search committee and seeking interim pastoral leadership.

Rev. Gerald Demarest has resigned as pastor of Guyton Christian Church. Rev. Demarest preached his concluding sermon on April 17. The congregation is forming a search committee and will be seeking interim pastoral leadership.

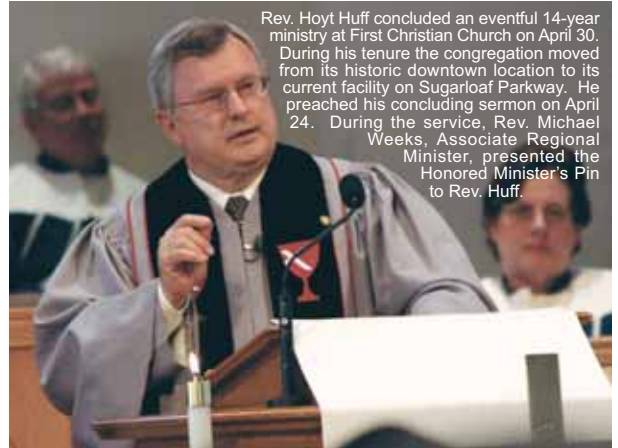
Revs. Linda Whitmire and Bill Thompson are serving as Co-Interim Ministers of First Christian Church, Griffin.

Rev. Jack Hudson is serving as Interim Minister at First Christian Church, Glennville.

Dr. Roger Sizemore, in conjunction with the elders of First Christian Church, Savannah, has developed a study resource on prayer entitled, "How Do We Pray for Our Troops?" The study is biblically based and politically neutral. Dr. Sizemore hopes the study will be helpful to congregations, elders and ministers striving to be faithful and unified in troubling and divisive times. For more information about this resource, contact First Christian Church at (912) 236-9420 or fccdcsavannah@juno.com.

Carolynn Miller, was ordained to Christian ministry at Brookhaven Christian Church, Atlanta, on May 22. Rev. Miller recently received her M.Div. from Emory University's Candler School of Theology. See photo below.

Ailsa Guardiola Gonzales will be ordained to the Christian ministry at Community Christian Church, Fayetteville, on June 25. She earned the Master of Divinity degree at the Duke University Divinity School.



Rev. Hoyt Huff concluded an eventful 14-year ministry at First Christian Church on April 30. During his tenure the congregation moved from its historic downtown location to its current facility on Sugarloaf Parkway. He preached his concluding sermon on April 24. During the service, Rev. Michael Weeks, Associate Regional Minister, presented the Honored Minister's Pin to Rev. Huff.



Carolynn Miller was ordained to the Christian ministry on May 22 at Brookhaven Christian Church in Atlanta. Participants in the ordination service shown above are (l. to r.) Rev. Dr. Helen Peason-Smith, Rev. Dr. Brad Miller, Rev. Carolynn Miller, Rev. Dr. Zena McAdams, and Rev. Tami Groves.

Rev. Katie Hays to Serve Lawrenceville Church

Rev. Katie Hays has accepted the call to serve First Christian Church, Lawrenceville, as Interim Minister. Rev. Hays will begin her ministry with the congregation on Sunday, June 19. Rev. Hays and her family will be relocating from Long Island, New York as her husband, Lance, begins Ph.D. studies at Emory University.

Katie and Lance are both ordained ministers in the Church of Christ and have been co-pastors of the West Islip Church of Christ for several years. Originally from Texas, Rev. Hays has also served as pastor at Cahaba Valley Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama. They have two children, Lydia, 6, and Jack, 4.

Rev. Hays accepted the call to ministry while studying engineering at M.I.T. She completed her Master of Divinity degree at Yale Divinity School in 1994. She is currently pursuing a D.Min. at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Disciple's Men Announce Lifetime Achievement Award

The Disciples Men's Commission is excited about what they have planned for the coming year. The Disciples Men in Georgia will begin honoring those men in the Region who have over their lifetimes provided leadership and encouragement. The Lifetime Achievement Award has been created for this purpose.

A nomination form for the Lifetime Achievement Award is available on the Disciples Men page of the regional website, <http://www.gadisciples.org/organizations/Men>. The Men's Commission will meet in July to review nominations and to make selections. No set number will be awarded, so please nominate all from your church that you feel meet the qualifications.

For additional information about the Lifetime Achievement Award or other ministries of the men in the Region, please contact Archie Jenkins, Disciples Men's Commission President.

New Name in Norcross

On May 1, the congregation of Peachtree Corners Christian Church met in the same location in which they had met many times before. This day, however, the congregation had renewed energy as it met to celebrate a new name and renewed purpose. Founded in 1986, the congregation had previously been known as the Kirk of the Corners.

Rev. Joe Faulconer, pastor at Peachtree Corners, brought a message entitled, "What's in a Name." Rev. Dean Phelps, Director of Church Development for the Region, was on hand to celebrate with the congregation and to advise them that the work of transformation was just beginning.

Although the congregation had considered the change for years, the impetus to proceed at this time came out of the church's efforts to refocus and re-energize its ministry. The renewed purpose of the congregation is summed up as, "Together seeking God's plan through Jesus Christ."

Information about the congregation is available on the church's web site, <http://www.peachtreecornerscc.org>



The sign on Spalding Drive in Norcross reflects the new name and renewed purpose of Peachtree Corners Christian Church.

The Shadow of The Almighty

George H. Bennett, Regional Moderator

We are not alone.

As your moderator I am cradled by a diligent Executive Committee and Board. The staff and leaders of your Regional Church are encouraged by a faithful region with many committed congregations. I stand on the shoulders of Sandra Barnhill, Linda Whitmire and other past moderators. In addition, I have had the honor of serving with a most extraordinarily gifted Interim Regional Minister, Dr. Zena McAdams. No one knows the lengths to which Zena has gone in service and love. Thank you, Zena!

The Search Committee, under the leadership of Bob Alvarez, has brought us Dr. Ray Miles to serve as our Regional Minister. On June 1 Ray and his wife Wendy arrived in Macon. Ray has spent his first week in prayer and discussion with Zena and with the staff preparing for his years of ministry in Georgia. Wendy has found a place to serve at First Christian, Eastman.

We abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91:1 says, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High abides under the shadow of the Almighty." I feel like a desert Palestinian who can sink down in the shade of a mighty rock. As we enter the summer heat I know where we will be restored.

On November 18 we will gather at Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur to worship and celebrate the care of God for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia. Dr. Fred Craddock and Dr. Cynthia Hale will be preaching. Dr. Sharon Watkins, soon to be elected as General Minister of President of the Disciples of Christ will be honored. Dr. Ray Miles will be installed as our Regional Minister.

So much has come to pass that we cannot help but claim, "With God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

**General Assembly
2005**
Portland, Oregon
July 23-27

Special Events:
July 23, 1:00,
New Church Ministry
Spirit Walk

July 25, 7:30,
Clergy Women's
Breakfast

July 26, 12:15,
Atlanta United Divinity
Center Luncheon

July 27, 7:30,
Clergy Women's
Breakfast

Around The Region



The Southeast District of the Christian Church in Georgia held its annual convention on Sunday, May 16 at Camp Kicklighter, Shellman's Bluff. During the closing worship, Interim Regional Minister Zena McAdams installed the district officers: (l. to r.) Greg Durrence, president; Denver Taylor, vice-president; Billy Bennett, treasurer; Mary Ward, secretary; Don McClellan, parliamentarian; and Jackie Griner, trustee.

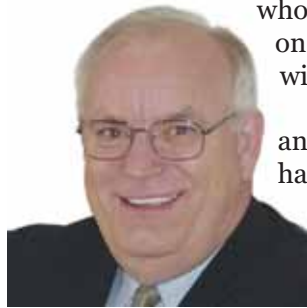
From Georgia's Regional Minister:

PLAYING OUR POSITION

Let me begin my ministry here in Georgia by saying how excited and grateful I am to be in this position. When I stood during the Regional Assembly and saw the full sanctuary at First Christian in Macon, I was overwhelmed that so many people felt it was important enough to give up a spring afternoon and come to be part of a church meeting. It was a great vote of confidence indicating that you believe in the future of the Christian Church in Georgia.

Part of the realization that we are ready to step into the future is a credit to Zena McAdams and the ministry she has done here as Interim Regional Minister. Her work within this Region has done much to heal and set right the relationships between congregations and the larger church. Thank you very much, Zena. Because of you, we are ready to step across the threshold into the future.

My grandchildren as preschoolers are learning to play soccer. At the tender age of 4 or 5, though, they tend to play a game more like "bunchball." Everyone runs in a large group to where the ball is and tries to kick it. Then the whole bunch moves to the next place and tries to kick the ball. Coaches teach the idea of playing one's position. It involves learning to trust that everyone will do their job and the whole team will succeed.



Dr. Ray Miles

As we cross the threshold into the future, we will depend on each other to do the ministries and follow the call. Each of us is gifted by God and called to help the whole church be all God has called it to be. I need you to live that. The Region can only be faithful if you are faithful in doing the ministries to which God has called you. Then, as a team, the Body of Christ will succeed. I will trust that you will live your ministry while I live mine among you. Together we will make this Region into what God has envisioned it to be.

I hope to see you in church. Until then, I ask you to pray for me as we begin this ministry together.

