



Kansas Messenger

Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ)

www.kansasdisciples.org

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Kansas Regional Office

Financial Office

[Steve Martin](#), Regional Minister
[Susan White](#), Executive Secretary
[Barb Koelling](#), Treasurer
2914 SW MacVicar Ave.
Topeka 66611-1787
785-266-2914
Fax: 785-266-0174

Central & High Plains

Satellite Office

Clergy Care Office

[Ken Marston](#), Regional Minister
[Krista Donaker](#), Admin. Assistant
5230 Broadway Avenue
Great Bend 67530-3208
620-792-6490; Fax: 620-792-1268

South Central Satellite Office

Communication Office

[Steve Hart](#), Communications Director
[Jessica Marston](#), Communications Spec.
8492 SW Tawakoni Rd.
Augusta 67010-8111
316-775-1236

Disciples Center at Tawakoni

[Sid Rutland](#), Camp Manager
8492 SW Tawakoni Rd.
Augusta 67010-8111
316-775-1222
www.tawakoni.org

Fellowship Groups

[Carla Pearson](#), Disciples Women
[Luis Mendez](#), Disciples Men

TBA, Regional Minister of
New Church Ministry

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING SUPPORTS REGIONAL MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS



Every person who is a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation is automatically a member of the Region in which that congregation is located. Regional ministries exist to cultivate growth in congregations by demonstrating true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice.

We as the Kansas Region are blessed to know the support of many dedicated and caring individuals throughout the region. Each year, the Christmas Special Day Offering received by Kansas congregations supports the ministries and programs of your region.

This annual gift to the region provides for many varied ministries. Included are:

- Clergy support including nurturing those who are following a call to parish ministry
- Our recent establishment of Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation work
- Calling a new staff member to lead New Church Development, with hopes of leading new congregations into the future
- The Region's camp and conference program including work at Disciples Center, where children, youth and adults meet for programs of nurture
- Disciples Women and Men have programs and are blessed to have a director for each of these ministries

The richness of our devotion to connect and equip disciples throughout the region makes this offering particularly important, and again, all monies received will remain in the Kansas Region.

Please consider the many ways we can share God's love during this season and dig deep to share. Together, we are the Body of Christ! Together we equip disciples for mission and ministry. Together we connect disciples to spread the love and grace of God.

In this season of Advent hope, remember the regional church in your prayers and offerings that we together might strongly meet the opportunities of being a regional church in 2021. On Dec. 13 and 20, support these ministries and more through the Christmas special offering. Give generously through your congregation, your ENGAGE account, or at kansasdisciples.org/give.

2020 YEAR END GIFTS

The regional offices will be closed Dec. 24-Jan. 1, so please submit 2020 Annual Fund and other Kansas Plan year-end giving to the Topeka Regional Office by:

Tuesday, December 22

Give online using your ENGAGE account, at www.kansasdisciples.org/give or mail your checks payable to the Christian Church in Kansas.

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

KANSAS MESSENGER ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

We are glad to receive your news articles and photographs for publication. We reserve the right to edit all materials. Submit your items online at www.kansasdisciples.org. Article submission deadline for the January issue is:

Monday, Dec 21.

Check us out on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR REGIONAL MINISTER

“You Cannot Recreate the Past”



BY KEN MARSTON, REGIONAL MINISTER

As I have reflected on the year that has been, I see 2020 as a year of great challenges and great opportunities. It has been a year of great heartache. The sudden death of loved ones (my mother being one), 250,000+ of our citizens dying from COVID-19 and related diseases, the killing of minority citizens that has raised the specter of systemic racism, and the strain of economic hardship have all strained our ability to cope. It has also been a year of sacrificial care by health care providers as people lay dying while family members

could not be by their side. And it has been a year of significant adaptations in daily living as we have figured out how to utilize virtual conference calls to do business, worship, and to connect with each other in ways we had not considered before. In the face of these extremes we can find ourselves pulled in two directions.

On the one hand we can long for and try to recreate life the way it was before the pandemic. The problem is that we are no longer the same people now as we were before the pandemic. And recreating the past, even if it was the recent past will not help us adapt to the new reality of the post pandemic world.

The other direction we can go is to meet the challenge before us and choose the path of adapting to a changed reality. Yes, there are times when we need to be in the physical presence of each other, but we should not forgo utilizing Zoom and other electronic means of connecting and communicating. Such means for carrying out the work and ministry of the church saves both time and money and allows us to meet even when the roads are too bad to travel, to meet, or worship. Financially, providing multiple ways for people to support the life and work of the church will open revenue streams that will be vital for the life of the church. Another advantage is that this new means of connecting opens new connections with the wider church that provides resources quicker than we ever had before.

So, let us go into the new year with a renewed hope. For God is transforming the church around us. There is a bright future ahead and as we step into it in faith, we will find God leading us to new life and a vitality that will sustain the church for generations.

SIGN UP FOR REGIONAL TEXT ALERTS

To keep you up to date on the latest regional news and events, we will begin implementing a new text alert system. These alerts, about 3-5 per month, will connect you to registration information, affinity interest groups, camp program updates and other regional ministries.

To sign up, go to our website, www.kansasdisciples.org, click on “News” and fill out the “Join CCK’s Text Alert System” form at the bottom right of your screen. Then, Click “Submit.”

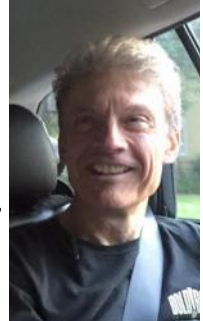


MESSAGES OF RACE & RECONCILIATION

ARPR Task Force Update

BY KENT DORSEY, ARPR TASK FORCE CHAIR

The Region’s Anti-racism/Pro-reconciliation team completed its on-line training. Our trainers, David Bell, Director of Yakama Christian Mission, White Swan, Wash. and Pedro Ramos-Goycolea, Pastor of Desert Dove



Christian Church, Tucson, Ariz. were also panelists for the “Love Is an Action Word” webinar on lingering racism toward indigenous peoples hosted by the Office of General Minister and President. Our training highlighted the power of racist ideas in the spread of Christianity in North America – including the Restoration Movement.

At this Advent and New Year everyone is eager to tear 2020 from the calendar. Could our haste to put the past behind us include ignorance and apathy about peoples who have experienced year after year, decade after decade of terrible circumstances, resulting from unexamined racist ideas, institutions, and practices?

The hope of Emmanuel (God-with-us) which binds us all together in 2021 rings hollow if we ignore the continuing legacies of conquest, slavery and white supremacy in church and society that have been revealed in this troublesome year. We welcome the Christ Child as the incarnation of *God so loved the world*. Our hope of being made whole is born in this divine love for the whole world.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

NEW BUILDING CHURCH CAPACITY PROJECT TO FOCUS ON GROWING CHURCH COMMUNITY

Each congregation has unique gifts to offer, but sometimes it can be difficult to see those unique gifts if they have never been framed as such. A part of equipping church leaders and congregations includes preparing church communities to imagine a future differently than the present they are living and harnessing their current capacity to make this happen.

Parsons First Christian Church as developed a *Building Church Capacity Project*. The project is based on the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at Kansas State University student grant projects, where university students design innovative projects based on their passions for creation care.

Parsons FCC along with participants from Manhattan FCC, and Faith CC, Wichita, kicked off this project with a Nov 12 - 14 retreat called *Building Church Capacity, Tending the Garden*. This online retreat was geared toward teaming with key church stakeholders in our congregations to identify the focus and direction for our future ministry.

Four 30-minute evening online sessions were led by Christian Watkins, Ecumenical Campus Ministries Director and Pastor, Manhattan; Ross Allen, Disciples pastor; Diane Watkins, Regional Representative to the General Board and former Kansas Regional Moderator; and Debra Mikulka, Grant Writer and Consultant.

Participants focused on identifying and sharing our unique ministry story, based on our community, to faithfully move forward into action. Peer congregation cohorts met so participants could learn from other innovative congregations in the Kansas Region.

Participants received "Workshop in a Box" materials (see picture right) as well as a project stipend for seed money for the invigorated or reimagined vision. Many ideas were discussed for future conversations in our region.



SOARING EAGLES INSPIRE CHAINSAW ART



In rural Jackson County - at the home at the home of Horton FCC pastor, Ron Cobb - local artist Sheila Roberts created a chainsaw carving of an eagle using a dying elm tree as source material.

"I so enjoy carving stumps and logs," said Roberts. "I feel I give them another life."

"Two days before I called her to do it, Sheila told me she

had heard in her spirit, 'I am sending you to someone who will help you'" said Cobb.

When the eagle was finished, Ron's wife Kathleen saw two bald eagles fly down so close she could hear their gentle noises to each other. When a reporter from the *Holton Recorder* came to interview Roberts two more bald eagles were seen soaring up from Banner Creek Lake.

"I could see in the form of the tree (stump) it was an eagle landing," said Roberts. "(Ron) liked my idea. He was wanting an eagle carved like the others he has."

THANK YOU!

KEN SCHWARZ, TAWAKONI VOLUNTEER



One way Tawakoni is able to keep operational cost low, is through the faithful service of its army of volunteers. The pandemic has put a halt to many of our traditional programs and events held at Tawakoni this year. Tawakoni volunteer, Ken Schwarz, Pine Valley

Christian Church, hasn't let it detour him from volunteering his time and talents at camp.

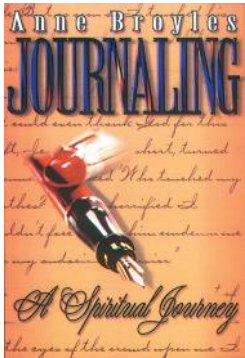
Over the last nine months, Swartz has put in over 500 volunteer hours mowing, hauling fallen tree branches, painting, and doing other maintenance around camp.

Thank you for your ministry, Ken!

NEWS FROM YOUR REGION

CCK EVENT COVID-19 NOTE: We plan to begin meeting in-person at the Disciples Center at Tawakoni. Therefore, face masks and social distancing precautions will be expected of all participants. If health authorities indicate it is not wise for large gatherings, we will move events online or cancel the event and refund registration fees.

PAGE AFFINITY GROUP TO BEGIN JANUARY 7 PAYING ATTENTION TO GOD EVERYDAY



Explore the spiritual practice of Journaling with Regional Minister, Ken Marston, in P.A.G.E., a six week spiritual growth affinity group Thursday evenings beginning January 7.

As Ann Broyles, author of *Journaling: A Spiritual Journey*, writes, "Journaling is about discovering. Throughout the ages, men and women have kept a record of their lives." These records help them and

future generations to gain insight.

As such it can be an important tool in learning to identify who has been present in our lives, who continues to be present, and showing us when God is speaking to us, or nudging us in certain directions.

The event is free. Attendees are responsible for purchasing their own book. A minimum of six participants is needed and is limited to ten participants. Register at kansasdisciples.org or through ENGAGE today.

IMPROVE YOUR CHURCH'S COMMUNICATION AT 2021 AOCC WORKSHOPS

Develop effective church communication strategies and goals and become a better steward of your church's communication resources at the 2021 Art of Church Communication workshops.

Join Communications Specialist, Jessica Marston for this five-week workshop series taught Wednesday mornings, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., in March. Both in-person and video options are available. In-person participants will meet at Tawakoni.

Each workshop will include an interactive presentation, guided hands-on activities, and real-world church applications. Workshops are for anyone (not just church office staff). If you're interested in church communication ministry, regardless of skill level, you are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Individual cost is \$30 per workshop or \$120 for all five workshops. Church groups of three or more from the same church can register for \$100 per person when they sign-up to attend all five workshops. Registration opens January 4.

YOUTH INVITED TO 2021 SPRING RETREAT

CCK's annual spring youth retreat March 5-7, 2021 at Tawakoni will include both Chi Rho (grades 6-8) and CYF (grades 9-12) and their sponsors.

The 2021 theme is "Where is God in my Struggles?" with keynote messages featuring Brad Greene, Interim pastor and youth minister at Atchison FCC. The program will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday and ends at 10:45 a.m. on Sunday. Remember to eat before you arrive.

Cost is \$80. Registration will open Jan. 4, 2021.

STRESS AND HOW IT IMPACTS YOUR MINISTRY 2021 HEALTHY LIFESTYLES BOUNDARIES TRAINING



The first of three 2021 Boundaries Trainings will be from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 25, by Zoom video conference. The remaining two sessions will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 22, at the Disciples Center at Tawakoni; and 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

on Tuesday, October 19 at First Christian Church of Great Bend.

All clergy are invited to participate in one of these sessions this year, though if you have not attended a boundaries training since 2018 you are required to attend this year in order to have your standing renewed at the end of the year.

The theme, "Healthy Lifestyles," explores how the stress of ministry affects the body, mind, and spirit, and how that impacts the choices we make in our professional and personal relationships with others. Participants will gain strategies for managing stress from the body, mind, and spirit perspectives. Because of this, we invite church leaders and spouses to join their ministers and mates for this training.

The cost is \$10 for anyone attending the virtual Zoom session. For the two in-person sessions the cost for ministers is \$35 and \$10 for church leaders and spouses.

SAVE THE DATE:

KDM Odyssey Retreat

April 17 — Disciples Center at Tawakoni

NEWS FROM YOUR REGION

ANNUAL R³ CLERGY RETREAT TO FEATURE DR. JOE BESSLER

The 2021 Rest Relax Renew Clergy Retreat will be Tuesday, April 27, through Thursday, April 29, at Tawakoni. The retreat begins with dinner around 6 p.m. on Tuesday and goes through mid-morning on Thursday.

Our visiting scholar is Dr. Joe Bessler, the Robert Travis Peake Professor of Theology at Phillips Theological Seminary where he is currently serving as Interim Chief Academic Officer and Dean.

The four topics he will speak on are:

1. Mapping our Constructive Theologies: How the major topics of Christian theology are interrelated and why it matters.
2. Sacred ground: How and Why Political Discourse overlaps with the Theological
3. Coming Apart: Tribalism in Politics and in Faith Communities
4. Developing Constructive Theologies in the Face of Cultural and Religious Tribalism

This is a great time for clergy of the region to get rejuvenated after the very busy time of Lent and Easter.

The cost is \$70 for overnight lodging at our camp and four meals (lunch on Wednesday is not provided). The cost is \$50 if a participant is not staying overnight at the camp. Registration opens January 4.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH

DISCIPLES CHURCH EXTENSION OFFERS COVID-19 ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOANS



A goal of Disciples Church Extension Fund is to keep Disciples congregations aware of the financial relief options available to them. During the pandemic, one such resource is the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL).

This federal lending program can benefit churches that have exhausted their working capital or anticipate doing so due to the prolonged challenges presented by COVID-19. The deadline to apply is Dec. 21.

To prevent fraud, each applicant must provide personal information, including social security number, of a responsible party to be connected to

the loan. A credit background check will be performed on this person and the loan could be denied on this basis. In providing their information, this individual is not personally guaranteeing the loan, nor will they carry any liability for it.

The EIDL application process is simple and done on the Small Business Association website. Needed documents include your federal identification number, 2019 financial statements, and an accurate employee count as of Dec. 31, 2019. Many applications will be approved and funded by Automated Clearing House within five business days.

Before deciding to apply for a loan, congregational leadership should consider the church's current financial health, operating cash on-hand,

potential impacts on giving through another possible pandemic shut down, and operational funds needed through June, 2021. All options, including loan terms and conditions, should be considered.

For more information on the EIDL program, email your questions to CaresAct@DisciplesCEF.org.



NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH

GREEN CHALICE ONLINE EVENT



Join Rev. Carol Devine, Creation Care Alliance, Rev. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Week of Compassion, and Rev. Scott Hardin-Nieri, Green Chalice for a workshop for lay leaders and clergy to explore the relationship across creation care and climate related disasters.

Our Part of the Covenant: Congregations, Climate Disasters and the Climate Crisis
January 28, 2021
3 p.m. ET/2 p.m. CT

As covenant people we are called to care for both creation and our neighbors, and to invite our congregations to be hubs of hope in the midst of crisis.

In this workshop you will receive tips and tools to prepare congregations and communities for disasters and to encourage creation care within your context. Participants will also receive lectionary reflections to use for Lent worship and education planning.

To register for this event, go to: <https://secure.everyaction.com/QoUovpBfUkW6wWcpvwfHeA2>. Register soon, space is limited.

Is your church winter-ready?

Protect your facilities against damaging ice, snow and freezing temperatures by following a few simple tips:

1. Have your heating system inspected and serviced by a licensed contractor experienced with your kind of system.
2. Know the location of your building's main water shut off valve.
3. Wrap water pipes exposed to freezing temperatures with pipe insulation.
4. Examine your roof system for cracking, cupping or peeling.
5. Install soffit vents to improve attic ventilation.



For more winterization tips, [visit our blog](#). Or, contact Disciples Church Extension Fund for **Building Evaluations that locate problems and low interest loans that fund solutions.**



800.274.1883 • www.disciplescef.org • info@disciplescef.org

SPECIAL EDITION OF DOCTALKS FEATURES ALEX DATABASE

A special DOCTALKs Zoom presentation for Clergy and Laity beginning at 1 p.m. Eastern/ 12 p.m. Central on Thursday, Dec. 10, will discuss the new online yearbook reporting and database system, ALEX and more.



What is Alex?

You know we have a DOC yearbook, but did you know we are moving some of that data online AND collecting all 2020 data online?

Meet ALEX: Data for Disciples! This free tool for all congregations is being implemented right now. You can capture your weekly attendance and giving data to see trends. From January through March 15, you will be able to enter all your other yearbook data through the same simple dashboard.

DOCTALKs will host Rev. Terri Hord Owens and staff working on this new way to gather and share data about our congregations. If interested, contact your regional office for the Zoom link.

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MINISTRY TRANSITIONS

Renee Goodwin has been called as the pastor Girard First Christian Church as of July 19.

Craig Robertson ended his ministry at Ottawa First Christian Church on Aug. 9.

Atchison First Christian Church has called **Brad Greene**, director of children and youth ministries, as Interim pastor beginning Aug. 27.

Matt Broxterman, ended his ministry at Atchison FCC on Aug. 20.

Dighton First Christian Church has called **Steve Payne** as interim pastor beginning Aug. 23.

Titus James, Sr. retires as of Aug. 31 after 41 years of ministry at North Heights Christian Church in Wichita.

Andy Newbrey ended ministry at Faith Christian Church, Wichita as of Oct 14.

Haysville First Christian Church called **Greg Hamlin** as their new pastor beginning Oct. 15.

Ottawa First Christian Church called **Bob Colerick** serving as Interim pastor as of Oct. 27.

June Stoker ends her ministry at Marysville First Christian Church on Nov. 8.

Garden City First Christian Church has called **Shawn Fletcher** as their interim pastor beginning Nov. 15. **Ron DeVore** ended his ministry there on July 6.

TJ Long, associate youth pastor at Great Bend FCC, will end his ministry as of Dec. 18.

IN CELEBRATION

Cody Graves, pastor at Baxter Springs First Christian Church, and his wife **Tiffany** welcomed baby boy, Ezra born Nov. 29.

IN MEMORIUM

Margaret McCullum, retired clergy at Kansas Christian Home, died November 24. She served as Senior minister at churches in Illinois and Cimarron, Kansas from 1987-1996, then worked with children's ministries at West Side Christian Church, Topeka from 2003-2010.

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED THE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL?

Your gift can benefit the church for years to come. For information about bequests, contact the Christian Church Foundation at 1-800-668-8016, by email at kgould@ccf.disciples.org or on the web at www.christianchurchfoundation.org.