Disciples Women
Of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

As Disciples Women we provide opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the church of Jesus Christ and to provide a channel through which women in the congregation and the regional Women’s Ministries in the United States and Canada may be joined in fellowship and find means for effective participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We work to fulfill this purpose through the four priorities of the 2020 Vision.

We provide anti-racism training to regional staff and representatives as well as to the Executive Committee. We celebrate and reflect the diversity of the Church in all we do working to ensure that voices from all our variety are heard. We continue to approach our ministry as a joint effort where all voices are heard and valued.

Because of the changing needs and our desire to be more inclusive of a wider variety of women we are currently reviewing our policies and procedures to determine how our Executive Committee might better serve the ministry including ways we gather, operate, and make decisions. As we provide more flexible ways of gathering we open up the possibilities for the leadership of women with additional commitments.

We are represented and participate in events dealing with New Church, Seminarians Conference, Black Ministers Retreat, National Convocation, Hispanic Convenciones, and North American Pacific Asian Disciples. We lead, train, present, and participate at local, regional, interregional and general events. Through these connections we participate in the 2020 vision of resourcing new congregations and transforming congregations, and modeling and encouraging anti-racism and pro-reconciliation, all the while developing and identifying leaders for the Christian Church.

Disciples Women adopted Human Trafficking as its social action emphasis for the quadrennium 2010-2014. Additionally, a resolution was introduced at the 2011 General Assembly which passed unanimously to bring this before the whole Church. Disciples women in all expressions of the church have been working to educate, advocate, and eradicate Human Trafficking. Bible studies and informational presentations have been prepared and shared widely. Updates are shared through social media and blast emails on important votes in Washington so phone calls and letters can be used to encourage political representatives to vote to improve current laws. Women in the United States and Canada have worked shelters, donated to national and international agencies, and provided hands on mission support to local efforts.

Disciples Women provides resources for local, regional, and general women’s activities and emphases. The staff is available to lead in the use of the resources and/or to train
others in their use. Most of our media resources are available online for free download and many are available in Spanish, Korean, or French.

The 2012 Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (WWW) journey sent a delegation of fourteen women to the People’s Republic of China. The delegation was led by Pat Donahoo and Xiaoling Zhu (Global Ministries) to renew our relationships as well as to learn about the changing state of the church in China. The delegation became connected to one another while building relationships with the women of China and their lives are forever changed by their experiences while in China. This journey was an eye-opening reminder to the delegation that what we hear from other sources and what we experience may be completely different. The women who are part of these journeys go with the expectation that upon their return they will share their experiences and insights with others in their congregations and communities.

Disciples Women continues to explore the needs of young women and how they may be completely included in women’s ministries in both leading and in learning roles. There continues to be a focus on tangible expressions of God’s love for the people we do mission with and on behalf of. Disciples Women’s Endowment Funds continue to be awarded to women, individually and in groups, to support new and creative ways of doing ministry that reaches out to women of all ages. Through these various acts of service, women are learning leadership and other skills that they continue to use in all expressions of the Church and in all areas of their lives.

**Just Women** is the official study resource for Disciples women provided by Disciples Women’s Ministries and is a quarterly publication. This magazine offers information about the WWW journeys, WWW studies, women’s issues, church issues, and offers the opportunity for a variety of women to be heard through their own writing. This publication supports leadership development through information shared as well as the opportunity for a variety of voices to be heard.

Leadership development also occurs through the shared wisdom of a variety of women in ministry. One way of sharing this wisdom is through a DVD series called *Wisdom of Women* and its accompanying study materials. Representatives from each region and constituency meet together annually to share concerns, blessings, and best practices, giving and receiving the wisdom of their partners in ministry.

Historically Disciples women have contributed, on average, 10% annually of all Disciples Mission Fund giving. Funding for Disciples Women's Ministry is through a portion of what Disciples Home Missions receives from Disciples Mission Fund and through a portion of the giving through Blessing Boxes. These funds are budgeted and administered by the Disciples Women Executive Committee.

The Quadrennial Assembly of Disciples Women will be held in June of 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Marriott Marquis. These plans are well underway with dozens of women working with hundreds of volunteers to ensure that this event continues to be a blessing and a learning opportunity for women all over the United States and Canada as well as sisters from all over the globe.
Disciples Women’s staff currently includes Pat Donahoo, Executive Director; Sheila Spencer, Program Director and Merger Staff; Arlene Pimentel, Quadrennial Coordinator; Beverly Ledwon and Regenia Smith, Ministry Associates; and Jasmine Sanchez, Assistant to Quadrennial Coordinator.

The Executive Director has a voice in the Cabinet of the OGMP and at the Justice Table. She also serves as the Cabinet representative to the Administrative Committee of the General Board. The Program Director works with the National Convocation and as Merger staff. We work together with ecumenical and social action partners to serve the ministry of Disciples Women.

As Disciples Women work to support the priorities of the 2020 vision, we are seeking to share who Disciples Women are and what they do in all their variety of thought, skills, interests, and expressions of mission. Disciples Women are women growing into ever wider circles of love and inclusion.

Respectfully,

Pat Donahoo                        Sheila Spencer
Patricia A. Donahoo                Sheila Spencer
Executive Director, Disciples Women Program Director & Merger Staff

The General Board has reviewed Report No. 1311 from Disciples Women. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time 12 minutes)