

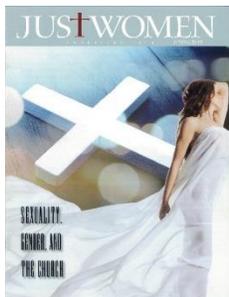
## National Convocation Board Meeting Report

Rev. Chesla T. Nickelson, Program Director and Merger Staff

December 6 – 8, 2018

While the 2018 theme for Disciples Women is “Called for God’s Purpose” what comes to mind as I reflect on the year is lyrics of an old hymn, “Time is filled with swift transition, Naught of earth unmoved can stand, build your hopes on things eternal, hold to God’s unchanging hand.” This year has been full of changes. We are transitioning into a ministry fully integrating its mission into its daily actions. With change there is always grief, loss and struggle even when it is a good change. When times are difficult we have to remember our purpose, our call and remember to put our hope in things that are eternal. Our journey is not complete and yet as we cling closer to God we get to see glimpses of God’s glory.

### Just Women Changes



After much prayer and contextual analysis, *Just Women* printed its last issue of the magazine iteration of the publication. *Just Women* will continue as an annual bible study and primary resource for you. It will include #DWConnections, the Woman to Woman Worldwide Report and a few other tidbits in addition to the scripture based lessons written by Disciples Women scholars.

Additionally, to be wise stewards of time and finances, the Just Women Editorial team will now meet via multiple video calls throughout the year instead of traveling to meet in person.

*Time is filled with swift transition,  
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,  
build your hopes on things eternal,  
hold to God’s unchanging hand*

*Disciples Women’s Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call. (Micah 6:8)*



### **Biennial Session: Women make changes**

The convocation women had a dynamic standing room only luncheon that included dancing, a dramatic presentation of the gospel and the commission of new officers. The women used their meeting time to make hygiene kits to be distributed to local women in Hoover, Alabama, choosing to forego the normal meeting format. They are changing from “what is always done” to “what is God calling us to that works best now.” The clergy



women were inspired by Rev. Yolanda Norton at the Clergy Women’s Breakfast and Rev. Shannon Walker Dycus closed the session with a charge to honor what was, recognize what is and move forward in more relevant and effective ways to serve God and serve the people of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

*Trust in Him who will not leave you,  
Whatsoever years may bring,  
If by earthly friends forsaken  
Still more closely to Him cling.*

### **Fighting for Social Change**



On behalf of Disciples I participated in various rallies and protest. I met with politicians and signed petitions. We continue to fight for the rights of women, black women in particular and for immigrants. Fighting for just treatment of immigrants is connected to our continued fight against human trafficking.

*Covet not this world’s vain riches  
That so rapidly decay,  
Seek to gain the heav’nly treasures,  
They will never pass away.*

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## Building Relationships

I continue to work on building relationships with National Convocation constituents and especially with the conventions. This year I paid a visit to churches new to me in Tennessee, Maryland, Arizona, California and Virginia. Additionally, while attending various Disciples Women's events, retreats, interregionals, ordinations and other celebrations. I hosted or made a special effort to connect with the African American women and with leaders who are connected to African American Disciples. This allowed me to connect with African American pastors and their congregations. I also attended the 136<sup>th</sup> Piedmont District Convention as a participant. I hope to participate in more conventions in 2019.



*When your journey is completed,  
If to God you have been true,  
Fair and bright the home in glory  
Your enraptured soul will view.*

## LAP change

The Leader Appreciate Program also has seen some changes. With the group from IL/WI. I integrated the Enneagram test into the weekend of training which made a powerful and revelatory impact on the participants. I was delighted this group was mostly women who I did not know, who are active and hold leadership roles in their local churches but largely disconnected from the regional and general church. It was a beautiful experience getting to know these women and helping them get connected to the other two expressions of



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the church. I am encouraged as I am in conversation with the women of Southern California and Indiana about 2019 LAP opportunities.

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Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

### **Woman to Woman Worldwide**

#### *2018 – Cuba*

A journey to a country in the midst of changing their constitution while having unstable relationship with the US turned out to be an eye opening experience for the participants. Many learned, for the first time about Cuba and Cubans from Cubans. We traversed much of the country meeting many partners, engaging projects and having conversations about faith and life in Cuba with all kinds of Christians.



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2019– Morocco \* will be led by Pat Donahue

2020 – Southern Asia \* will be led by Chesla Nickelson

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### **Special Projects**

#### *Wisdom of Women*



Disciples Women received a grant to create more Wisdom of Women Resources. I have spent quality time with Rev. Dr. Delores Carpenter who will be sharing her story and wisdom in the project. To save on cost, I have taken on the task of learning how to record and create video. I hope to release the project before General Assembly 2019.

#### *Our Whole Lives Training*

DHM and Disciples Women have been in discussion about Disciples becoming official partners with the UCC and the UU in their Our Whole Lives sexuality and faith training program. As an initial step, I completed one of the trainings and already have tons of ideas related to how to adapt the program for Convocation congregations as we seek to help our churches have a healthy understanding of and relationship with sex, sexuality, sexual identity and faith.

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