

Living Resurrection

When we heard again stories of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, did we realize that we were rehearsing a process that all Christians experience at some time, perhaps repeatedly? No one looks forward to betrayal or “crucifixion,” but has any form of “resurrection” we may have experienced in this life ever happened without a part of our certainty, comfort or control dying?

Have you noticed the persistent symptoms of systemic racism lately? In areas of employment, income inequality, incarceration, and education, studies continue to report gross inequities on the basis of race. Hate crimes have increased. More people feel emboldened to speak out or act violently out of learned ignorance. How is it that some otherwise nice, church-going people are among them?

One reason for the perpetuation of racism and white privilege is that many of us know so little about it. (Or we think we have overcome it because we have friends who are people of another ethnicity.) Racism and white privilege were invented by people invested in retaining power and privilege. They created an artificial hierarchy among human beings based upon skin color. Some twisted Bible verses out of context to justify enslaving millions of Africans. Others fabricated narratives (like the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny). Complex civilizations in the Americas were overrun and whole populations displaced, marginalized or brutally killed. People of different ethnicities (especially the poor) were pitted against each other. Did you ever hear of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in your high school history classes when struggling farmers united across race for fair treatment during the Depression? Few have. There is great profit to be made keeping us ignorant about racism and

perpetuating white privilege.

An abundance of documentation is now available to anyone with access to the internet. A good place to begin is with our [Disciples Reconciliation Ministry resources](#).

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is deepening its work to become pro-reconciling and anti-racist in all its expressions—one of the four priorities of our denomination. Beginning, in 2020 our Region will require that all non-exempt clergy who wish to retain standing will have been in or will participate in anti-racism workshops between 2016 and 2019. In May, twelve Kansas City Disciples of Christ will complete a training course to lead anti-racism workshops in congregations and clergy gatherings.

We have new opportunities to help each other to understand the roots of racism, notice where it shows up in our Disciples history, congregations, Region, and communities. We have been invited to work with organizations in the KC Metro area that share this priority to make long overdue changes. Information is available to anyone at www.kcdisciples.org/ARPR

This is not about “political correctness” nor is it a partisan “agenda.” Jesus and his disciples addressed the combination of race prejudice and abuse of power in their day. We simply follow their lead. And yes, there is some dying and rising in this effort for all of us. It will take time and will cost our naivete, our timidity and our indifference to the suffering of too many every day. It may also result in our becoming more credible disciples of Jesus. Our congregations may yet become more welcoming to future Christians. We could see in our own time a resurrection of the Church.

Your generous support of the Disciples Mission Fund, Reconciliation Special Offerings and another recent grant of \$4,080 from Disciples Reconciliation Ministry make these efforts possible.

THANK YOU!

DEVELOPMENT WORKS!

As Disciples of Christ, we share responsibility to see that what we have inherited from the sacrifices of faithful people before us is handed on to new generations who will evangelize and equip new disciples of Jesus. The resources we manage are not ours to spend as we wish but belong to God who entrusts us to be good and faithful stewards.

When tithes and offerings no longer provide sufficient resources in congregations where membership has decreased, there are other ways to make sure that mission and ministry continue.

Development is work that many churches, colleges, and nonprofit organizations do to assure that sufficient resources continue to support God-honoring outcomes. Development involves these key elements:

- Clarity and commitment about the mission
- Trustworthy and prudent financial practices
- Communicating inspiring stories of lives changed and communities improved when the mission is carried out
- Building relationships
- Saying THANK YOU often and in creative ways

Development work can take the form of a campaign to raise funds for an inspiring purpose. Most often, however, it is more about making it simple and comfortable for people who are already inclined to give generously.

Some gifts are given regularly in small to medium amounts (much like a monthly gift to a favorite charity or public media station).

Large gifts may come from the estates of people who have been blessed with resources and inspired by the good work of their church.

Development is not about selling. Rather than fundraising, it is long-term practice of friend-raising; building trust, sharing good news.

THANK YOU!

Every year the top 100 congregations in three categories are recognized by our General Minister and President for their generous support of the Disciples Mission Fund. We join in celebrating these faithful stewards.

Country Club Christian Church

Eastgate Christian Church

Hillcrest Christian Church

Lees Summit Christian Church

First Christian Church, Olathe

Raymore Christian Church

Shawnee Community Christian Church

First Christian Church, Smithville

To see your congregation's giving to our wider Church ministries go to: www.kcdisciples.org/congregational-giving.html

Our Disciples Mission Fund offerings support the missions and ministries of the whole Church. Learn more at:

<https://disciplesmissionfund.org/what-is-dmf/>



The General Assembly in Des Moines will feature workshops to help congregations with fundraising and development. Learn more here: <https://ga.disciples.org/>



Another great resource is our Disciples Center for Faith and Giving

<https://centerforfaithandgiving.org/>