

Zoom Meeting July 11 2020.

Re-Membering Retreat

Helen's Words of Wisdom:

I am the child God created and my parents named me Helen Ann Roberts and I became a Hodkins when I married my wonderful husband Bob. We are currently a members of Wyatt Park Christian Church in St. Joseph, MO. I am the president of the CWF/DWM group. Life happens and so many changes and transitions provides many opportunities for all of us. I have been so blessed. My life has been greatly nurtured and shaped by CWF/DWM women along the way through spiritual growth, Bible study, prayer, missions, issue studies and relationships which has given my much joy over the years and still does. My Re-membering is lengthy as I have been privileged to be involved many years. There are so many wonderful experiences being a part of CWF/DWM all the way to the mountain top.

My first glimpse of CWF was at my home church, Red Top Christian Church in Hallsville, MO which broadened to the women of the Northeast Area and a huge introduction to what Mid-America and the broad church was in 1974 with my attendance of the Quadrennial Assembly at Purdue University at West Lafayette, Indiana. My Great Aunt Delphine LaForce attended. The world for a farm girl from a small community was amazing. A few thousand women gathered for worship in the auditorium was extraordinary. Sisters from across the United States and Canada as well as International Guests. The theme was "God Is, Rejoice!" With music by Avery and Marsh. We certainly did rejoice! The song that sticks today was written by them, was a message "I am the church, You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus all around the world! Yes, we're the church together". Speakers, workshops, eating in the dining hall and throwing the trash out the window into the garbage truck, and just having conversation with others. The experience was an amazing mountain top one. In made an indelible impression that I get goose bumps when I think about today. I returned home a different person. My husband said we'd find a way for a return in four years. We did as I returned to Purdue for several more times and then to Louisville, Kentucky when the quadrennial location was changed to hotel-conference centers. The Quadrennials were planned by the International Disciples Women's Ministries along with the Leadership council.

I am so grateful for the women of the regional cabinet for arranging for transportation by bus from Mid-America and all of the logistics. The bus trip brought women together for fun, and lasting friendships. Many memories have flooded me with joy! The bus trip was much longer including an overnight stay on our journey to Purdue when I moved to the Northwest Area as far as you can get and still be in Mid-America. So many relationships nurturing one another as some of us reconnected with each other throughout the years.

Starting my journey in the seventies there were multiple staff in the regional office with a person on staff for Women. Kansas City was a part of the Mid-America. The first staff person I remember was June Christenson and then Nancy Tanner who became Nancy Tanner-Theis.

With the quadrennial happening every four years, there were regional retreats planned by the regional cabinet the other three years which were held at the various Disciples colleges during the summer and then later at Rickman Center in the spring and fall. My experiences at these events included a huge cloud of witnesses. Such joy to be with others! There are many that come to mind: Ellen Farmer, Peggy Grey, Carol Q. Cosby, Laura Ream, Ellen Frost, Rose Findley, Minnie Smith, Judi Linville, Clela Andesen, Katie Wodell, June Owen, LaWanda Jackson, Faye Vaughn, Paula Holiday, Karen Yount, in addition to those mentioned in my remembering and so many others that time does not allow me to name them. There were also area events that involved enrichment conferences to introduce the new materials as well as fall assemblies hosted by various churches in the area and when the schedule changed to holding them on Saturday I was able to attend. There were Interregional events for the Heartland Region frequently held at Culver Stockton College.

I became involved on the regional cabinet when I became vice-president of the cabinet whose emphasis was on planning the retreats. Sometime around this time the Kansas City Metropolitan area became their own region. Nancy Tanner-Theis was the staff person and Connie Ess the president and I was vice-president. During this time Nancy decided to retire and the region no longer had a staff person with change became a reality. Connie became the contract staff Women's Coordinator and I became president. We leaned on each other a lot. I attend the IDWM Staff Fellowship event that was a working time even in the evening. I was a part of the group outlining the study material for the Body and Soul. Finding our way toward wholeness curriculum for the 2004-2005 use. This event was a growing time for me and I am so glad to have had the experience. I do not recall (senior moments) who became the president and the following two years I became chair of the Christian Ministries Scholarship Fund (CMSF-established by Mid-America women in 1948). There are so many fond memories of fun, work, worship and fellowship that enriched my life as well as the women of Mid-America. Mid-America women also sponsored four or more women that were a part of the Woman to Woman Worldwide established in 1989. New mission projects were presented by those attending for all of the CWF/DWM groups to participate. Wonderful programs were given by the participants at the regional and local levels. What a thrill to learn ways that our sisters in other countries were using their faith and of needs that we in Mid-America could support.

Life returned to activity in the local church group as well as the Northwest Area events. I was back on the regional cabinet when I accepted the president position for the Northwest Area (designated representative along with Vice President of NWA). Martha Ruhl was the regional president and trying to do staff activities and Connie Ess was traveling with her husband and then resigned. Martha spent much time and effort with the cabinet seeking to get a Staff Coordinator for CWF/DWM. She was successful!! The cabinet interviewed candidates and welcomed Brenda Hines to become the Staff Contract DWM for Mid-America. She was passionate about the women of Mid-America. She was an amazing leader-staff person for the women of Mid-America. The transition of officers took place during this process and I became president and Martha became chair of CMSF. Brenda was able to rejuvenate the Women of Mid-America and many mission activities, retreats as usual as well as a special retreat for Young Women to attend and their time was the only cost. Brenda traveled many miles touching so many lives and as she faced health issues and I represented Mid-America at the staff fellowship meeting in Atlanta Georgia, the place would host the Quadrennial after the Greenville, North

Carolina one. During this event plans and information, training took place, and I was privileged to be on a conference call with Melvia Fields to wish her a happy birthday as Sheila Spencer had interviews for the Woman of Wisdom resource before the Women's Leadership Council was to meet. The material from that was made available to everyone as a resource on the discipleswomen.org.

In Mid-America there were problems with scheduling our retreats at Rickman Conference Center that had become the location we used. June Owen, Vice President (retreat Chair) along with Brenda's help the retreat was held at the Baptist Windermere Conference Center. Wanda Hedenburg was President and I was chair of the CMSF when Brenda's health issues caused her to resign. Once again there was a search for a contract Staff for DWM. Wanda Hedenburg was president. Due to the lack of a candidate for the president, we each extended our 2 year term for a year.

The search processed and Donna Baderstadt became the staff Contract DWM person. Retreats were to rotate from area to area, Ozark Lakes planned and held a retreat in Springfield and the next year the Northwest Area hosted a retreat in the fall at Conception Abby, Sheila Christy coordinated this event along with President, Dawna Watkins and Donna Baderstadt and we were blessed to have Pat Donahoo share with us and delivered the worship message. We worked to sew pillowcase dresses as a mission project. Due to many obligations Donna Baderstadt resigned as staff contract DWM.

Once again it was time to search for a staff contract DWM person. Theresa Hamilton was the next person to step up and out to fill this position, however she also had to resign. We were without a staff contract person the search began again and God has blessed us at this time with Jennifer Long guiding as we move forward making more memories.

I am so blessed by each woman on my journey as a Mid-America Disciples Woman. I am grateful for each of them. Change is a constant in our lives, however, God is always there as we seek to make and grow disciples of Jesus as we move forward.

Judi's Words of Wisdom:

I have lived in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area since 1973, when we moved here from Colorado for my late husband's job with Christian Board of Publication. We became members of Florissant Valley Christian Church, and in 1974 I joined a CWF group, Deborah Circle, and I am still a member of that circle today. 46 years! In 1985 Norm became pastor of the Maplewood Christian Church, and I was working full-time at UMSL, so I continued to meet with Deborah. In 2003 Norm retired, and in 2004 we joined Compton Heights Christian Church in South St. Louis, which had no active women's group so I kept meeting with Deborah. I am still a member at CHCC following Norm's death, where I am an elder and chair of stewardship and outreach.

I attended my first Quadrennial Assembly in 1986 with a group of FVCC women. It was a life changing experience for me and may have saved me from losing my religion. I had volunteered

to do Children's Worship hour which met in the Maplewood basement, and for the first three years at that church I was never in adult worship and never heard one of my husband's sermons! To hear the gospel proclaimed by women preachers who read the Bible through a new lens, and to be astounded when almost every woman in the 3500-strong group, including me, stood when asked if they or someone they knew had ever experienced domestic violence or sexual assault—was breathtaking. Thanks to CWF, I realized the power of women as Christians with full agency to bear witness to the gospel. I was blessed to attend Quadrennial again in 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2010. I was registered for 2014 but became ill and could not go. I hope I can go to the next Heartland gathering if there is one.

Some time in the 1990s I agreed to serve on the Regional CWF cabinet. I could not participate in St. Louis area (later SE Gateway area) CWF events because they were always the 4th Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. and I was teaching classes then! Regional events were on weekends. Nancy Tanner had the women's regional portfolio then. Over the years I served as Worship Director, Study Director, and Secretary, and I went to regional retreats at our colleges and later at Rickman, that were wonderful. In the early 2000s SEGA women asked me to coordinate the annual Enrichment Conference—on a Saturday! After that I could arrange my teaching schedule to make it to SEGA meetings and I served as Study Director (and Enrichment coordinator) for the area and for one two-year period also reprised that role on the Regional Cabinet. I agreed to be vice president of the SEGA cabinet for one or two terms, which made me a representative to the Regional Cabinet again. About 2016 I became Secretary for SEGA cabinet—a role I still perform although we have suspended our bylaws concerning officers. I'm now the "communication person." Because of my husband's health I stopped going to out of town events and retreats. I served on the Christian Women's Ministries Scholarship selection committee several times, as a lay representative of the Cabinet, and as a member with higher education teaching experience.

In SEGA, our women came from a long, narrow strip —St. Louis metro, Mineral area, Bootheel. In the 1980s, the cabinet had 14 elected officers, held three board meetings (cabinet plus two reps from the churches) a year, and had three assemblies a year plus the Enrichment conference. By 2016, we were having trouble filling offices, our older members were in their 80s, and we had cut back to two assemblies, retreat, enrichment conference, and two board meetings. We then combined the spring assembly with the enrichment conference, still held the fall retreat, and had spring and fall board meetings. At the spring board meeting in 2019, we suspended our rules because no one wanted an "officer" label. We still wanted a spring gathering and a fall retreat.. So a loose "committee of 7" volunteers agreed to coordinate those two remaining events. Katie Wodell volunteered to be Convener. I volunteered to do Communication. Julie Wood volunteered to Handle Money (like retreat registrations, etc.) Two others volunteered to be the coordinators for the retreat or the spring festival. We followed that plan in 2019 with two successful events, including a well-attended September retreat at St. Charles CC with Katrina Palan as our keynoter.

For 2020 we planned a Spring Festival for April 19 at Celebration Christian Church on the theme "Health, Healing and Wholeness" that would have included reflection time with Rev. Ron Routledge, Just Women Bible Study led by Katie Wodell, a Meditation workshop by Dr. Devoree Crist, and Denise Puhl, presenting "Refugees at the Border." Covid19 deprived us all of

a very great time! Maybe some of this could be incorporated into regional events in 2021 and beyond. We also had secured the Rev. Jacquelyn Foster of Compton Heights CC to lead our Fall Retreat on Compassionate Listening. She has been trained to teach and lead this technique of non-judgmental listening as an approach to conflicting situations. The retreat was scheduled for September 18-19, 2021 at Compton Heights. The service component would have been a tour of Isaiah 58 ministries, also located in the church building, and highlighting community oriented ministries of the other urban churches—Memorial Boulevard and Centennial especially, but also Webster Groves, Affton and Florissant, and the mineral area churches (Festus, Bonne Terre) and Kennett. The Kennett women never miss a retreat, and they have actually hosted the retreat in Kennett at least 3 times since Orchard Crest Camp closed.

So that is a not-too-brief account of my own involvement with DWM/CWF and also of what I know about the former SEGA area women's activities. I possess the "archives" that have been handed down, secretary to secretary, for at least the last 30 or 40 years, including histories of the presidents, major activities, etc. I would like these to be in the hands of someone who will see that they are digitized and thus preserved. I have digital versions of our flyers for events, board minutes, service projects, retreats, etc. for the past 10 or 15 years that I can also share.

As for the future: we need to remember our history from time to time, to remind ourselves of what women accomplished in the church, and how far we have come. We have passed the goal in many places of women leaders serving as CWF president and then joining the church board and then being the congregation moderator and then maybe answering a call to ministry and being commissioned or ordained. In most (I realize not quite all) of our churches, women can now be chair of the elders, moderator of the congregation, and even fill the pulpit! We have succeeded in most of our original mission! But we still have work to do!

Clearly we need a different, less restrictive structure for leadership, and I think some of the areas, including former SEGA, have explored this. Regionally we definitely need central ministry leadership in addition to a centralized volunteer lay group, and I am grateful to Ron and now Jennifer for realizing this and providing that ministerial support. We older ladies often decry the lack of interest and time that "younger women" have for this work, and yet, I was about 35 when I attended my first circle meeting, and I was 42 when I went to my first Quadrennial. I might not be all that typical, but maybe we need to define "young" as 40 or 50 or even 55 and emphasize the kind of volunteer service and leadership opportunities that women who have passed through the most demanding years of raising teenagers and getting established in careers might be ready for. That isn't the whole demographic, by any means; we should support younger women and college age and create events they can benefit from by finding out what interests them and then providing it. But as for getting them to serve on committees....not in this decade, anyway!

Paula's Words of Wisdom:

My journey through the CWF/DWM

I cannot really state a timeline of this journey, but my involvement came after my children had graduated and went off to college. This would have been about 1992. I was active in our local church CWF but not so much on the area and regional levels as our local CWF was newly

organized around 1985. My involvement first started with the Northeast Area (as we were called at the time). I met Phyllis Belt from Macon, Missouri. She was the Area President at that time. More later about her. I also talked with Mrs. Vyrle Brown, who I believe became the first African American President of the Area. Mrs. Brown tried to encourage me to become President of the Area, but I declined. I felt I did not have the knowledge to do this. However, I later became the Area President, but I know now that Mrs. Brown saw something in me that I did not.

Along the way I met Nancy TannerThies and Connie Ess. Nancy TannerThies was our contract staff person. This later became the title for Connie. Connie asked me if I would consider being secretary for the regional cabinet. I accept and served in that capacity for I believe a four-year term. Through Connie's encouragement and mentoring I became the regional president. As Regional President I attended staff fellowship in Indianapolis, IN. This meeting was for the contract staff person and I was able to go with Connie because of being the Regional president. At this event I started to meet women from across the country and Canada. Also, I met our CWF staff in our Indianapolis office and those that also serving on the International Disciples Women's Ministries. This was a great learning opportunity as I learned about the writing of our material that we used at that time which was the New Day. If I remember correctly, we also visited the site for the upcoming Quadrennial.

Some of the events/activities that the Region hosted or involved in were:

- Annual President Luncheon
- Regional retreats were held in the Spring and Fall. later changed to once a year. Attendance ranged between 75-80 women. They were usually Friday night and all-day Saturday.
- An all-day Spring training meeting for our officers [President, Vice President, Secretary, Study Chair, Worship Chair and Service Chair. This event was usually held in In March or April.
- The late Edith Taylor promoted her PATCH project for women incarcerated in jails and prisons and their children. The project originally started in Chillicothe, MO and later moved to the women's facility in Vandalia, MO.
- Some of the Service action projects were health kits, school kits, socks and undies for girls and women, beds for the homeless made from bread wrappers. Most recent were dresses made from pillowcases to send to other countries.

I am sure there are many more that I may not remember at this time. We were and still are about making life better for our sisters.

Northeast Area - I served 2 terms as president. We hosted monthly meetings, our twice a year assembly (Springfest and Fall Assembly). These assemblies were held in varies churches around the area. Kirksville, Canton, La Belle Fulton, Columbia, New London, Hannibal, Monroe City, Centralia just to name a few. It was always a wonderful time of fellowship, learning, a wonderful lunch, and just getting to know each other better. In the Spring we were taught by the

leaders who attended the Region Spring training meeting. The current materials being used was explained, how to do worship display and the meaning of items used and the service project introduced. The Fall Assembly we would have a speaker from the town that our meeting was held. They were asked to come and tell us about a program that they may be involved with. Our afternoon offering would go to help them. This was also the venue that we brought our blessing boxes for dedication and forwarding the money to Indianapolis. Our business meeting was conducted, taking care of our business, and installing any new officers. We would then have a worship and our good-byes until next time.

I was fortunate to be able to attend several Quadrennial's including the last one in Atlanta. I always found them to be a wonderful experience. Meeting old friends and making new. The worship experiences, the classes that you attended, it was an amazing opportunity. The very first one that I attended was still being held at Purdue University. West Lafayette, Indiana. We met a couple of young women from Taiwan and they presented us with a stole. At another quadrennial's was the exchange of scarves. This created an opportunity to learn about the person that you received your gift from. Also at my first one I met Jackie Compton Bunch. She was named the President of the International Christian Woman's Fellowship (ICWF).

6/22-24/2018 - Heartland Interregional Gathering held on the campus of Culver Stockton College, Canton, MO – There were seven women from the region that attended. Four were from the Saint Louis area along with the Reverend Margie Pride and two of us [Rev. M. Faye Vaughn and me] were from Second Christian Church in New London. It was truly an awesome time. Fellowship, worship, liturgical dance class that became a part of our worship. A morning lecturer, attending a retirement facility and playing bingo with the residents.

On November 2, 2019 Second Christian Church New London Missouri hosted a birthday celebration for Disciples Women. In 2019 Disciples Women turned 145 years old. We had a celebration with Rev. Dr. Pat Donahue portrayal of Caroline Neville Pearre, organizer of the women to address the mission and ministry that was then lacking in the church, and Rev. Chesla Nickelson portraying Sarah Lee Bostick a field worker for the Christian Women's Board of Missions and the National Christian Missionary Society and became one of the first African American women to be ordained to Christian Ministry in the late 19th century. There were thirty-three women in attendance. An offering of over \$700.00 was presented to Pat Donahue for Disciples Women. These offerings came from the churches in attendance and some sent or brought of \$145 birthday offering. One pastor, Rev. Bob Novell, Annada drove 60 miles to bring the check from his church after the women ended up not coming. HOW AWESOME IS THAT!! It was a wonderful event. Phyllis Belt made it to the celebration. She is in her 90's. Dr. Paul Koch, Regional Minister was in attendance we had lunch and a birthday cake with the women's pictures on it.

Through this journey I have had the opportunity to meet and hopefully learn from some truly remarkable women. Some of the women on our Zoom meeting, the late Ellen Farmer, Brenda Hines, Donna Rose-Heim, Donna Baderstadt, Phyllis Belt. the late Vyrle Brown, the women that serve on my cabinet and I am sure many more not mentioned.

Wanda's Words of Wisdom

7-11-2020 - CWF Zoom Meeting Introduction

I grew up as an only child on a dairy farm in Southwest Missouri...A son my father never had! Far from being a book worm and educator like my mother. Lots of fond memories as a child.

Until my fourth grade, I attended an Undenominational Church/Sunday School. Eighth grade through high school, we attended a Baptist Church. By that time I knew I needed to explore other avenues if I was going to continue with church.

Fast forward...Married in 1964, began going to DOC in Kansas City with my husband's brother and his wife and have remained a DOC.

Was introduced to CWF when we moved from K.C. to Raytown, MO in 1972 eventually become members of Broadview CC and there for 35 years. It was during that period of time I realized the value of being with the CWF women. Like every group, we laughed, cried, planned events, studied, had lots of fun yet served the church in different ways taking our CWF work very seriously.

In 2004 due to decline in attendance for several years, Broadview had to close which in some ways was likened to a death. Fortunately an African American church who was nesting in another DOC Church took it and remains today as a thriving and very active part of the Greater KC Region. Broadview lives on through Refreshing Springs CC.

In 2005 we moved to Nixa to be near our daughter and son-in-law and grandchildren. National Avenue CC is and has been our church home in .

TMI--

CWF-DW Zoom Meeting 7-11-2020

How do we continue on when things fall apart especially when we knew at one time by the fruits of our labor, we were on the path that many times led us where we needed to go and served us well; Then came a fork in the road. Who did we become, what did we do?

Over time as we wandered in the wilderness. I *wonder* if the successful path we once traveled is no longer the right path for us in the future and it may be a time to choose a different path. Like rebirth in part from seeds planted as we traveled on our path to where we are now; the fork in the road.

Like getting older, we find ways to adapt to a new way of doing some of the things we once did and let go of the rest as they may no longer be important or necessary. Like altering a dress, keep the dress but make the necessary adjustments to serve its purpose for the present time. This does not have to be an END ALL.

What would it look like IF: (1) We (for now) continued working in our separate groups (if there isn't a group at your church at the present time, there are other ways to help) , (2) come up with a means of reporting to Jennifer and copy the other groups so all are on the same page at the same time, (3) have an *intentional specific* prayer group, (4) Calling committee for from all and for all geographic locations, (5) Email Communication person(s) plus master list for ALL to share, (name, address, phone number and Email) (6) meetings at a central location in attempt to even out distance/time for all, (7) someone to send cards of congratulations, celebrations, sympathy, etc..... and the list could go on-

Who knows what our rebirth might look like if we open ourselves up to our imagination and of course, To GOD?

How did we get here; Changes in tech, our health or that of a spouse, family member, travel/distance and of course the virus dominated environment we now live in.

A time to laugh, a time to mourn, a time to ---refer to book of Ecc 3:4+

We've had all those times and hopefully, TOGETHER, we will find a way that will satisfy our body and spirit via re building, rebirth, etc. Too many seasons have passed and we are still at the fork in the road. Caroline Pearre, Jessie Trout and others had less or none compared to what we have to work with and they succeeded. We stand on their shoulders; who will stand on ours??

Kirby's Notes:

Helen —inspired by Ellen Farmer, Connie Ess. Brenda Hines was a woman with “passion plus.” Her first Quadrennial was 1974.

Judi —1986, first Quadrennial. Had nine CWF events a year. Highly organized. Now only 7 people doing any work at all.

Paula—(hard to hear). Biggest takeaway: DW Is a great way to meet and interact with other women.

Wanda—The closure of Rickman Center was a challenging time; CWF events were there for many years. With its demise, CWF lost its compass. We are at a fork in the road. We had a successful path in the past, but that is no longer the path for the future. Like altering a dress: keep the dress, but make alterations. Would like to start prayer groups. Share information with all women. Create calling committees. Ecclesiastes 3:4.

Sara—Sale of Rickman had a profound impact on D.W. No reason we can't re-organize!

Lots of organizations go through change; DW can change its structure, too. Need to focus on social action/justice.

We can't keep operating in silos. Women are drifting away.

Younger women don't want to join a group, but yet they are women doing Disciples things.

DW can be an umbrella organization to bring many women under it.

There is a Disciples Women fund with Disciples Home Missions named for Margaret Coulter.

All are welcome to join in the next meeting on August 8.

Topic: DW Zoom Meeting

Time: Aug 8, 2020 09:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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