

December 2009

Dear Church,



Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

In this season of expectant joy, I write to express profound sadness. As you may be aware, *DisciplesWorld Magazine* is ceasing its operations. From the *Christian Baptist* and *Millennial Harbinger* to *DisciplesWorld*, our church has been served for almost 200 years by print publications. From our earliest days forward, we have been blessed by theological reflection, editorial insight and news of the church through our journals. Since 2002, *DisciplesWorld* has raised critical issues, given us a place to express concerns of the church, and challenged us to be better Disciples with a more passionate witness. All those involved with the magazine have served the church valiantly.

During this time of transition, I would ask three things of you. First, please hold Publisher and Editor Verity Jones, the staff of *DisciplesWorld*, and its Board of Directors in your prayers. As these faithful servants move through this time of transition, they deserve the ardent prayers of the church.

Second, I ask your prayers and patience for a period of discernment to discover sustainable alternatives to the journals that have served us so well. *DisciplesWorld's* closing makes it clear that maintaining a print journal is not financially feasible, and yet our church needs mechanisms for communication beyond the more narrowly focused publications provided by our various ministries. Certainly digital communication is part of the answer. However, as we seek to serve seven generations of the church, we know that digital technology enhances access for some and prohibits access for others. I will be working with colleagues across the life of the church to carefully and prayerfully find alternatives to meet our communication needs.

Finally, I invite us all to focus on the very themes of Advent during this season of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Surely when we are most challenged, and most ready to welcome God into our lives, is when God accomplishes some of God's best work!

This very week I will be in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Standing in the midst of this sacred but broken land, I will be remembering that God has come into the world to save the world. It's up to us, through all our challenges, to witness to God's saving love. May the blessings of God, the peace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you in this season.

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon E. Watkins".

Sharon E. Watkins
General Minister and President

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