

NATIONAL CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

D. Duane Cummins, Chairperson (January-July, 2008)
John D. Arterberry, Acting Chairperson (July-December, 2008)

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For 78 years National City Christian Church has sought to live out Alexander Campbell's vision to uphold a momentous church facility in the city known for its national and world leaders so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ might be proclaimed. National City Christian Church Foundation is honored to be one of the recognized organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. It holds in trust the ownership of the church property and its facilities on behalf of the wider church. It is led by a national board of trustees and reports to the General Assembly. The Foundation is yoked in partnership with the congregation of National City Christian Church to provide a national facility for worship, study, ministry, and mission in the U.S. capital. *The 2008 Promise* communicates this unique national witness in photos and words. Complementary copies are available by writing to rcarey@nationalcitycc.org.

MINISTRY AND MISSION IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Two thousand and eight began with great expectations. National City Christian Church had concluded a discernment process that culminated in calling its settled senior pastor and Foundation president, Stephen W. Gentle. Dr. Gentle had been serving as transitional senior pastor for those two years. In addition an invitation was extended to Steven B. Moore to be associate pastor in stewardship and vice president for development for the Foundation. The capital campaign for the Foundation was in full swing and its goal was met. A new and impressive web site went online. The congregation and Board of Trustees met in a listening conference to focus on that which they hold in common, namely their love for Christ and National City Christian Church.

As a multiracial, multicultural, bilingual, open and affirming congregation, National City Christian Church is seeking to nurture leadership, partner with other expressions of the church, and be a pro-reconciliation / anti-racism church. The following is a snapshot of the fruit of our labor in Christ:

- National City Christian Church Foundation took its story to the National Hispanic and Bilingual Conference in Hasbrouck, New Jersey, the National Convocation in Memphis, and the World Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

- Hundreds of young people "bunked down" in the facilities to participate in a life-changing mission trip or International Affairs experience.

National City enjoyed welcoming the U.S. Conference of the World Council of Churches for an interfaith prayer service and dinner celebration that included denominational heads from many of the faith communions in the United States.

- Partnering with the Capital Area Christian Church, National City hosted a leadership development event for church leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

- Over 40 community children experienced a superb five-week summer enrichment program.

- Thousands entered the sanctuary on several Saturday mornings as families sought help for restructuring their mortgages through the services of the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA)

- The Hispanic congregation nested at National City continued to see growth in worship numbers and in small groups, thanks to the very capable leadership of its pastor, Noemi P. Mena.

- The young adult fellowship (Yada) grew in its weekly Bible study, community ministries, and its number of participants.

- The LGBT Fellowship continued to grow in its participation and ministry to the community.

- On the portico steps of National City, hundreds of people joined in a lively organ concert, popcorn, and warm welcome following the Capital Pride parade.

- On those same steps the congregation greeted neighborhood pet owners and their dogs for a second annual community blessing of the animals.

- Hilda's International Fair Trade Gift Shop received a complete face-lift and expanded its hours at the close of the year. This shop run by volunteers raises awareness and money to support artists in developing countries.
- Thousands of neighbors were fed through the weekly food pantry ministry.
- The ordination of Gethsemane mission year alum, Nathan Hill, was hosted by National City.
- National City celebrated the lay leadership of trustee emeritus, Oscar Haynes, when the Disciples of Christ Historical Society named the Oscar Haynes Exhibit Hall.
- The stained glass artist of the Hastings Memorial Window, Rowan LeCompte, spoke on Heritage Sunday as the congregation remembered with thanksgiving the ministry of J. Warren Hastings.
- With nearly 400 in attendance at Easter, and then again on Christmas Eve, National City Christian Church celebrated with two of its largest numbers of worship participants in many years.
- Numeric growth has been enjoyed in all three Sunday morning worship experiences – Gospel, Traditional, and Spanish-speaking services.

The year was not without significant challenges. For the nations around the world and the United States of America, it became increasingly clear that we were entering into a global economic crisis. The financial and economic crash of 2008 was perhaps the worst in over 75 years and a tremendous setback for many institutions that relied heavily on invested endowments for their general budgets. National City Christian Church was not spared this dreadful downturn. In addition, a Foundation audit committee was put in place to negotiate the work between the auditor and the chief financial officer. As a result, the CFO is no longer employed at National City and an outside accounting firm, Raffa Financial Services, was secured to put the financial books in order for 2007 and 2008. Thanks to the work of this accounting firm and the industrious vitality of Rev. Moore, the financials are better organized than they have been in years. Yet with this knowledge came the bleak news that our institutional spending has been greatly outpacing its income. Irregularities were discovered in the summer of 2008, and much of the senior staff's time, energy, and emotions have been engaged in a forensic audit and setting into place best accounting practices. While this labor continues into 2009, National City Christian Church is greatly indebted to the many staff persons and church leaders who have given generously of their time, skill, and money, as well as the meticulous and difficult work of the audit committee of the Foundation.

An additional challenge came in the summer of 2008 when Foundation chairperson, D. Duane Cummins, retired early because of family health concerns. National City Christian Church is greatly appreciative of the brilliant leadership and untiring energies of Dr. Cummins. His leadership was sorely missed in the remaining months of the year. Thankfully vice chairperson, John D. Arterberry, has stepped into the role of acting chairperson. Mr. Arterberry has been invaluable in this time of considerable challenge. During these taxing times, National City Christian Church is greatly appreciative and truly humbled by the tremendous generosity and faithful support of the Foundation trustees, congregational leadership, and Disciples around the world.

THROUGH IT ALL

In the words of the hymn often sung at the early morning Gospel worship service:

We thank God for the mountains, and we thank God for the valleys.
 We thank God for the storms that God has brought us through.
 For if we'd never had a problem, we wouldn't know God could solve them.

Through it all, through it all,
 We've learned to trust in Jesus, we've learned to trust in God.
 Through it all, through it all, we've learned to depend upon God's Word.

In the good times and those times that fall appreciably short of that, National City Christian Church is at its most excellent when it remains focused on ministry and mission. Through it all, National City has sought to do just that: stay focused on God and seek to embody God's presence in this world.

Through it all, National City Christian Church enjoys greeting and worshiping with Disciples from all around the world each and every Sunday. National City is your church. Tours of these facilities are available during the week upon request. All are invited to learn more about this unique Disciples witness by visiting www.nationalcitycc.org. Come and share in your national witness in the U.S. capital.