



The Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago

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DDH Bulletin

Fall 2013

Gilmore begins work as Associate Dean

After a national search, alumna Yvonne T. Gilmore has become Associate Dean. She preached at the opening chapel service of the 2013 academic year on October 7, interpreting the quest for excellence for a new class of entering scholars and for this time and enunciating the importance of education that nurtures “thought leaders.”

As Associate Dean, she collaborates with and assists Dean Kristine A. Culp in furthering the educational work of the Disciples Divinity House and interpreting that work to key constituencies in ways that will support DDH’s mission over the long term. She will help to foster educational opportunities, vocational development, and transformative conversation among students, alumni/ae, and friends, as well as in wider venues.

She commented, “Profound scholarship, service, and creativity abounds at the House ... in concert with a great cloud of witnesses and an array of faithful and disciplined stewards of God’s grace in its midst. I am so excited to join the grand constellation.”

A 2005 MDiv graduate of DDH and the Divinity School, she was a member of the Alumni/ae Council when she accepted the invitation to serve. She is an ordained Disciples minister and founding pastor of New Song Community Church, a diverse



urban Disciples/UCC congregation in Northeast Columbus, Ohio. Since 2010, she also served as staff chaplain and decedent care coordinator for Mount Carmel West Hospital in Columbus. She previously served in the Capital Area Region as an interim pastor, associate pastor, and chaplain.

Associate Dean Gilmore is a member of the Board of Directors of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) and of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She leads anti-racism training with Reconciliation Ministry, most recently for the Michigan Region and the general church offices in Indianapolis.

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New Scholars named

Four new Disciples Divinity House Scholars have been named, all MDiv students. Recognized for their leadership potential and academic promise, each receives full tuition at the University of Chicago Divinity School (60% funded by DDH), a rent-free room, and an annual \$4,000 stipend. They join thirteen continuing scholars in an exceptional program of scholarly and professional preparation.

Keri Anderson is a 2009 *summa cum laude* graduate of DePaul University in Chicago, where she majored in Catholic Studies and was active in campus ministry. Last year, she served as the Neighborhood Liaison at her home church, Glen Oak Christian Church in Peoria, working to help address spiritual and practical needs of neighbors in East Bluff (primarily low-income households). During high school and college, she worked at, and then directed, a summer camp for low-income at risk children. After college, she was a foster parent for two years at Casa de Esperanza in Houston, Texas.

Douglas Collins is a 2013 *cum laude* Philosophy and Religion graduate of Eureka College. His numerous leadership recognitions include 2012 Eureka College Lincoln Laureate, Disciples Leadership Fellow, Eureka College Leadership Ambassador, and President of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity and election

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New scholars

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to its national Order of the Sphinx. He was a residential advisor and an assistant to the college's chaplain. He was an intern with GMP Sharon Watkins, in the Oregon region, and in his home congregation, First Christian Church, Albany, Oregon. Service learning opportunities took him to Ecuador, France, and Costa Rica. He is interested in congregational ministry and in new church planting.

Judith Guy is a 2012 *magna cum laude* Philosophy and Religion honors graduate of Eureka College. Last year she taught English in the Republic of Georgia. At Eureka she served as President of Disciples on Campus, Eureka Leadership Ambassador, Residential Advisor, and Peer Educator, and chaired homecoming activities. She was a Eureka College Ministry Fellow and a Phillips University Legacy Scholar. She studied abroad at the University of Hyderabad, India, and at Sophia University in Tokyo, and visited ecumenical monasteries in Europe. She interned at University Christian



Clockwise: Douglas Collins, Hye In Park, Keri Anderson and Judith Guy

Church, Fort Worth, and with the CCIW region's summer camping program. Her father and her mother are ministers, as are other members of her extended family.

Hye In Park is a third-year MDiv student from Gangwon-do, South Korea, and a 2011 Bachelor of Theology graduate of the elite Yonsei University in Seoul. She joined University Church during her first year in Chicago. Last year, she com-

pleted field education at First Christian Church of Downers Grove, Illinois, where she placed her membership; she also became a DDH resident and participated in the Disciples History seminar. She became eligible for full DDH funding this year. Her interests include questions of suffering and postmodern Christian identity formation. She was awarded the Soongook Choi Scholarship by the North American Pacific Asian Disciples (NAPAD).✉

Named awards

The *Edward Scribner Ames Scholarship* for high academic achievement has been awarded to **Andrew Packman**, a PhD student in Theology, who is interested in reconciliation, the arts, hermeneutics, and eschatology. Also a MDiv graduate, he is developing the Root and Branch Church in the Wicker Park neighborhood.

The *William Barnett Blakemore Scholarship* recognizes academic promise and ecumenical vision and was awarded to **Brandon Cook**. Active in the student ecumenical movement, he has served on the Executive Committee of the World Student Christian Federation. He is a fourth-year MDiv/MA in Social Service Administration student. His senior ministry project looks at church conflict theologically. He

is a native of Kentucky and a 2009 *magna cum laude* graduate of Transylvania University.

As previously reported, the Alumni/ae Council selected two *William Daniel Cobb Alumni/ae Scholars* this year: new scholar **Hye In Park** (see "New Scholars") and **Alexandra McCauslin**. Alex, a third-year MDiv student and a 2008 *cum laude* graduate of the honors college at Michigan State, is co-chairing the Annual Student Ministry Conference at the Divinity School this year. She has had significant experience in congregational ministry, beginning in her home church, Central Woodward Christian Church, Troy, Michigan, and also in non-profit organizations in the Detroit area.

The *Bernard F. and Annie Mae Cooke Scholarship*, established by a

spirited lay woman from Houston who prized excellence in ministry, was awarded to second-year MDiv **Rachel Abdoler**. She was in Jerusalem this summer as a recipient of the Divinity School Ministry Travel Grant, where she studied the interfaith work. She is a 2011 *summa cum laude* graduate of Drury University, where she was named Outstanding Senior in both Political Science and Middle East Studies. Her home congregation is National Avenue Christian Church in Springfield, Missouri.

Danielle Cox received the *M. Elizabeth Dey Scholarship*, which was established by Katherine Dey in memory of her grandmother. A second-year MDiv student and the current DDH librarian, she is a 2012 *cum laude* graduate of Lynchburg Col-

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THE DISCIPLES DIVINITY HOUSE
of the **UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

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Gilmore

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She is also a poet and a spoken word artist who, as a member of the Cornel West Theory, has performed at colleges and universities and released recordings. She has preached or spoken at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, the Ohio Regional Assembly, and the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), among other places.

Alumni/ae Council President and Drury University Professor Peter Browning commented, "Choosing Rev. Gilmore as the Associate Dean is a future-oriented move. [She is] a poet who stands up for freedom and liberation and a pastor who has started a new church.... Not only does she have the background in development and the experience of knowing the House well as a former House Scholar, but she knows the church

A better covenant

October 7 Opening Chapel Sermon by Yvonne Gilmore

1 Cor. 12:29-31 and 13:8-13; Heb. 8:5-7

In the beginning was an urban longing for voice-activated unity and sterilized hymns. Don't take too much comfort in civilities—surface proclamations or breathing will get lost in translation. I've looked in ivory towers and alleys, from the stable to the cross, in the mouths of the beloved and sometimes I still get lost. Seems like the word I need is hiding.

I'm crying save me from the limits of the terms that I know.

I'm crying save me from the limits of the gifts that I know.

I'm crying save me from the limits of the church that I know...

- From "Second Rome"

I am overjoyed and humbled to greet you as we begin the 119th academic year. I am excited to be back in this place where I learned to name my gifts honestly and critically and to name the limitations of those gifts as growing edges and formative frontiers. It is here also that I learned to acknowledge those liminal spaces in my development, at times as places

and she has a passionate voice."

Yvonne Gilmore grew up in the Michigan Park Christian Church, where in the 1950s her grandparents worked alongside Arthur Azlein, a DDH alumnus, to establish the integrated congregation in northeast Washington, DC. She attended The American University, where she earned a BA in International Relations. She has two daughters, Assata and Kharis, aged 14 and 9.

The position was newly envisioned during several months of study led by the dean and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees with the assistance of Jim Powell, former President of Church Extension, now with the Columbia Partnership. It is one of several steps being taken as DDH has recovered from the economic downturn. Dean

for creativity and growth, and, at other times, as places for me to be still because the agency of God was yet at work.

I began with an excerpt from "Second Rome," a piece I wrote. It gives voice to a hope for creativity and excellence, as does this from "Student of Endangered Species":

And the walls came tumbling down. Have you ever watched the death of a sunset, altars torn down? Self-proclaimed chapbooks burning, musical chairs is over. They no longer want to follow your music. They have gotten used to your death spit. His horizon compels contrived bravado to stop acting like it's a new release. Watch predictable light die. Those poems about poems, poems about 15 courses of fear, poems about holy, optimistic, disoriented American ears... People bored by the procession of death... like to follow in the pause before the last line where your enlightened self-interest has little to say and the lens on your camera begs you not to make it shutter proof. It is a student of endangered species.

Paul is a disciple of Jesus Christ, a servant leader to the church in Corinth. He is a student of the gifts of the people in Corinth and a student of the learning process. A student of endangered species, if you will.

He is acquainted with all of the needs that were met by their wonderful and God-given gifts and all of the entrances to unity and community created by their gifts. Yet Paul is not naïve concerning the limitations of their gifts and the potential for pride and division to threaten their functioning and their growth. Wisely, he is also aware of the transformative power of the greater gifts that connect them to still a more excellent

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Culp explained, "We have resumed a full complement of educational programs, we are thrilled that Associate Dean Gilmore is providing leadership for new opportunities. ☞

way beyond their own practice and understanding, beyond the sanctuary that is but a sketch and a shadow of the heavenly one. Paul's encomium on love directs their needs and gifts to a *better covenant*.

Think again of Hebrews 8:5-7. Excellence in ministry to congregations, to students, and to our church requires an inventory and an awareness of our gifts. While here, you will be given the gift of stimulation, focus, and knowledge, the gift of planned and pre-meditated opportunities to serve and impromptu moments for ministry to others and even to each other. You will also be given the gifts of confusion, dissent, and dis-orienting cross-cultural encounters. Normative tides will wash over you and you may be led to discover new entrances to conversations and encounters with the living God that were never adumbrated on your schedule, formally or informally. These gifts must always be reoriented and tutored and employed in conversation with the body of Christ, with the gift of our limitations, the greater gift of love, and the gift of a better covenant that unfolds as we are transformed to receive and share it.

Consider excellence as transformative process, not as a fixed event or achievement. It is always a striving, not an insecure, self-deprecating, competitive sprint, but an adaptive, holy quest and conversation with reverent, faithful, critical understandings and practices. The process of re-orienting our gifts to powerfully affect changing ministry cultures and rising coastlines even when the ground of our being does not change has been demonstrated time and again by ministers and scholars from this community.

E. S. Ames, the third dean, a professor of philosophy, and the minister of University Church, fearlessly questioned yet faithfully remained in relationship with dissenting and competing assessments about gifts and questions, sustained by the truth that Christian formation and transformation takes a variety of forms.

This notion of excellence as transformative process is perhaps further practiced when we gather at the communion table. As the body and blood of Christ are consecrated and shared, meaning is made as the community gathers around a holy and contested table. Individuals and congregations are reset, decentered, and re-centered by the gracious, death-trumping transformative process that we receive and participate in every week in our mysterious encounter with the body of Christ known as communion.

Consider excellence as canon and community. Community members—stronger, weaker, and differently gifted—are encouraged to care for and relate to one another, just as parts of the body are related and interdependent. The metaphor of the body is not a new convention, it is a gift from the wider community. Similarly, the encomium on love, many believe, is not unique to Paul, but a gift from his context that reinforces his instruction to Corinth on the constructive use of their gifts. As we are likewise attentive to other voices in this place, we are also gifted to witness voice and pedagogy meaningfully shaped by other voices, phenomena, and learning.

This text encourages us to self-reflexively converse with the rich gifts of our tradition, as well as with the ignored voices and the socially ancillary and foregrounded parts of the body. Reclaim the body, the gifts of the body, and our understanding of the greater gifts even when we dare to consider those sometimes suppressed entrances to truth in our midst.

We do this also as we engage and study a vast and yet particular canon of thought, mindful of the complex process of interpretation entailed in its being and the norming community that is formed and reformed by ongoing learning. In this way, canon is not a fixed, closed frame of reference but a nexus of anticipation where excellence is necessarily nurtured.

Finally, I invite us to **consider excellence as learning covenant** in the image of Jesus as one who *obtained a better covenant with better promises*.

Some of you will construct learning contracts this year in CPE or in other classes where you adumbrate areas of focus and exploration to structure your learning and to hold you accountable. You may call those contracts "learning covenants," and they will serve you well pedagogically. But I'm referencing a wholly different concept.

As Prof. William Schweiker observed, contracts presuppose identity while *covenants are identity-changing*. A contract with a plumber presupposes a particular set of tasks and costs, whereas a covenant with God changed the identity of the people of Israel. Learning not only exercises our cognitive faculties and renews our intellectual understanding but it has the capacity and sacred function of changing our identity.

Our hearts and minds, our gifts and our hopes are challenged and changed by the robust process of learning that we are richly afforded access to in this place. This is the tradition of excellence that we inherit and graciously extend together.

Beloved, gifted men and women of God, may the gifts of this House and our church be re-oriented and matured as we strive for a more excellent way. May God bless our commitment to walk in and study sanctuaries that are sketches and shadows, light and truth, ambiguity and contingency, uncertainty and misunderstanding. As we serve with intellectual honesty, faithful creativity, hope, and community, may we be humbly shaped by the love of God and more fully prepared to imagine, construct, and share the greater gifts.

May God continue to inspire us with pragmatic movements of love amidst and above the groanings of our time that we might discover and yet share in the gift of a better covenant that unfolds as we are transformed to receive it this year and for years to come. ☞

“The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places”: Ten things I’ve learned in ministry

Forum, January 14, 2013

by Chuck Blaisdell

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A little over thirty-six years ago, I had my first Monday night meal as a resident of these hallowed halls. Over the course of the three quarters that I was privileged to be in this House, I experienced many, many things. I learned, for example, that when you were tapped to give the blessing for the meal that there would be immediate, post-prayer theological commentary: *A bit too Tillichian, wouldn't you say?*

I also experienced many much more important things that have stayed with me over the years and which have blessed me in so many ways. The litany of that remembrance is a lovely thing:

- I remember Don Browning and how he opened up ways of thinking I never had imagined.
- I remember Langdon Gilkey's class on Reinhold Niebuhr, hearing a tear-filled lecture about his internment in China (1943-45), and then reading his *Shantung Compound*—which still is among my top five life-changing books.
- I remember Martin Marty's sign-up sheet on his door, blocked out in five minute increments, with the admonition, *Take all you need, but be very sure to need all you take*, and his fertile ways of thinking about the relationship of religion and culture.
- I remember David Tracy's classes with appreciation at the depths he not only plumbed but defined, but can only now, years later, confess how utterly lost I was on so many occasions, even though I disguised it with knowing nods and high sounding phrases.
- I remember student colleagues of the House who stretched my mind and my aesthetic and culinary tastes, who actually knew how to have fun in a non-earnest sort of way. They included Dennis Landon, Lana

Hartman Landon, Michael Kinnamon, Ana Gobledale, Mark and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Katherine Kinnamon, and Larry Bouchard.

• And while I didn't meet him here, I nonetheless remember with the deepest gratitude one whose continuing witness and work was rooted here, Clark Williamson, who I happily and truthfully say “saved my intellectual soul.” He showed me how one could indeed be a Christian and yet also be intellectually and morally credible.

As the writer of Hebrews says, *time would fail me*, if I were to continue this litany, but I am blessed indeed by those who showed me why, in Dean Blake-More's phrase, *the quest for intelligence in ministry*, is a precious and fragile and wondrous thing. Even though I only spent a year here, the Divinity House and the University provided a foundation for so much else that I have learned and been privileged to experience.

After earning the AMRS degree that year, I studied four years in the PhD program in philosophy at Vanderbilt University, then landed in Indianapolis where I both taught at a local university and did an MDiv at Christian Theological Seminary under Clark Williamson's tutelage. There, I met and married the love of my life, Barbara Blaisdell, who is the wisest pastor and best preacher I know and who has an incredibly gifted theological mind. I spent two years as the pastor of a small church in west Texas, two more in a church in rural Indiana (while also on the CTS staff), and then six years as an associate regional minister. I served as Regional Minister for the Disciples in Northern California for seven years. After that, we moved to Hawaii to serve United Church of Christ congregations—I as the pastor of a Japanese ethnic congregation and Barbara as the pastor of a Chinese ethnic congregation. In October 2009, I became the Senior Pastor at First Christian Church in Colorado Springs.

Those experiences, even adumbrated as they are here, are the laboratories from which I learned the ten things I want to share with you. I had originally told Dean Culp that my topic would be “*Seventeen* things that I have learned in ministry over 28 years, in 8 venues, 4 regions, 1 conference, and 2 denominations.” Then I told her it would be *twenty* things. However, my eyes were bigger than my stomach; *ten* things are what finally fit on to-night's plate.

Some of the *ten* are reflections and some, frankly, are admonitions—like this first one:

1. Per Clark Williamson, strive to make your preaching and teaching embody the norms of intellectual and moral credibility and coherence with the Gospel.

Clark Williamson's teaching has been utterly key for my own theological understanding and approach to the Bible. His three-fold formulation is that every proclamation, every purported Christian claim, every line of scripture, must be tested against what he calls the “norm of Christian faith”: *Is it intellectually credible, is it morally credible, does it cohere with the Gospel?* “The Gospel” here, is this: *That God loves each and every person God has made, and therefore demands justice to each and every person God has made.*

The first part of the norm frees us from dispiriting casuistry about exactly where the limits of God's love are—for when those calculations get started, disrespect, dehumanization, objectification, thingification, and ultimately genocide aren't too far behind. Because God loves each and every person, unconditionally, we need to refuse to countenance any debate whose implicit agenda is about whom God doesn't love, for that says more about human sin than about God.

The second part of that norm ensures that we will not turn that love into sloppy, syrupy sentimentality. God's love is indeed for me, but this isn't just about “me ‘n’ Jesus.” No,

we are challenged by the justice-demanding nature of that love to always widen the circle of our care beyond the boundaries of where our own sinfulness would tend to draw them.

In *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant claims that “Even the Holy One of the Gospel must be compared to our idea of moral perfection before we can recognize Him as such.” What this means, in part, is that you and I are responsible for what we claim is of God and what is not. It means, for example, that Psalm 137, with God purportedly blessing those who hideously torture infants to death, is not godly but ghastly; the psalm says a great deal about the exilic situation and provenance and nothing about God. Both Kant and Williamson have freed me in ways that I can hardly say.

2. But people often don’t know that they need these things.

Every so often, I will find some absolutely treacly story about, say, how an angel did this or that for someone, causing the person to get a parking space or something equally urgent, and I’ll email it to Clark with the comment, “So, folks want intellectual and moral credibility, huh?!”

Well, no, actually they *don’t* “want” those things. Sometimes the reason that they don’t is because the church has not taught them well about a mature Christian worldview or given them a worthy set of tools for explicating that world. But sometimes the reason that they don’t is simply because, even when the church has done a good job, it is just very, very hard to be as effective as the instruments of mass culture with their almost invariably oversimple, sentimental portrayals of the faith and theology. So, no, folks often don’t *want* that intellectual and moral credibility and consonance with the norm of the Gospel, but they surely, surely *need* it.

The pastor’s job, therefore, is gently but clearly to teach, embody, and affirm good theology. Calvin would tell you that because you are a minister you are thereby a teacher of the faith. Jesus would also tell you that because you are a minister you are a pastor of a flock, and you love them even when

they say the most un-loveable and un-lovely things.

3. Per Bernard Meland, “most people live better than they know how to think.”

Time and time again, I have seen people live better than their theologies. This is the very sort of thing that Charles Hartshorne and Alfred North Whitehead (enticingly extended by Gilkey, Tracy, Williamson, and Ogden, among others) so eloquently talked about in offering the insights of what came to be called “process theology”: In each and every moment, God places before each and every person the highest possible good. That word, “possible,” is of course key. Sows’ ears just do not transmogrify into silk purses; there are times and situations where the highest possible good is just not going to be very high.

Folks often *do* follow a higher good than we would expect, and they do transcend the things that they have always said and thought. The anti-gay parent has a *metanoia* moment when a child comes out. A church board or council decides that when legally married wife and wife come through the church doors they will be warmly welcomed. It happens. Not as often as we might hope, but often enough that one can, I believe, cite the grace and working of God. And when it does: thanks be to God.

4. Cultivate, therefore, a sense of gratitude that life gave you opportunities to learn how to think well and be gently patient with those who did not have that opportunity—and know the time and place for teaching versus nurturing.

Sometimes those *metanoia* moments don’t happen, and that can be vexing, annoying, and, too often, even tragic. If you are a pastor, you pastor on. You hope that, next time, someone will be helped to live up to the old hymn’s reminder that *new occasions teach new duties*, and that a higher possibility will then become possible because of what you have preached and taught and embodied.

In this regard, I have learned that I need to pray continually for a sense of humble gratitude for the fact that life gave me opportunities to learn how to

think better than I would have otherwise. I counsel you to do likewise. It will keep you from resenting those whom you serve or expecting them to be something that they can’t yet be. The great preacher Gardner Taylor once said, “I have never known anyone who was truly grateful who was at the same time small or petty or bitter or mean greedy or selfish or who could take any pleasure in anyone else’s pain.” Strive to be that person.

5. Pastors do not have “friends”—in the ordinary sense of that word—in the congregations they serve.

There is a venerable theological tradition that says that all language about God is necessarily analogical. I would maintain that there is something similarly and necessarily analogical of pastors seeing their congregants as “friends.” Your congregants, at some point, will be in a position to judge, for better or worse, your compensation, your efficacy, and your tenure in a way that has virtually no analog with “real” friendships.

Where this sometimes comes to a head is when a minister is asked to do a funeral for someone in his or her former congregation. The former minister rightly says, “I can’t do that; I’m no longer your pastor.” And the former congregant says in hurt puzzlement, “But I thought you were our friend?” No, you were their *pastor*. It is crucial for the pastor to set the ethical boundaries, even when that is painful. Your decision about such a request must always couched in terms of what you owe your successor.

Given the ubiquity of the “feelings” culture we live in and the cultural message that feelings are always “valid” and self-certifying, it’s not surprising that some seminarians and pastors can’t say why they shouldn’t do that funeral. Some may even argue that the depth of the widow’s or widower’s feeling trumps “the rules.” But it doesn’t. Clergy must set and maintain the boundaries for the sake of the congregation’s ministry.

Now, none of this is to say that you can’t have deep and beautiful relationships with some of your congregants. You can and should. I do—and those relationships are among minis-

try's greatest and most humbling gifts to me. Every good pastor I know has folks in the congregation whom he or she especially trusts, especially values for their wisdom, irenic spirits, or ability to be principled and yet non-judgmental.

In every church you serve you should figure out as soon as possible who some of those folks are. They will be your "think tank" and your, if you will, support group, precisely because they are mature Christians who honor and cherish your pastoral role in ways that are wonderfully different than just "friendship." You will count on them for wisdom and remember them for years.

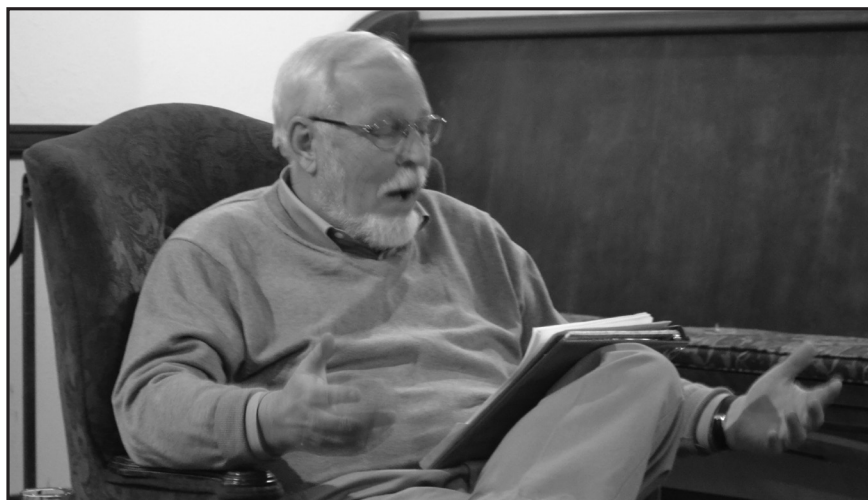
6. Do have friends and a hobby or two outside of your congregation.

If you have clarity about only having "friends" in the congregation in that analogical sense, that clarity needs to propel you to make sure you *do* have friends who are not part of the congregation and that you keep those friendships strong and supple. Make sure that you have regular in-person contact with close friends, those with whom you can truly step "out of role," the sort of friends who can finish your sentences for you and who will be honest with you and who, precisely because of shared trust and history, are able to tell you where you are screwing up when everyone else is too polite to mention it.

One of the underappreciated and under-explicated images in the Bible is that of *friend*. When Jesus calls Lazarus friend (John 11:11), he is making no casual claim. When Jesus says to the disciples, "I no longer call you servants but friends" (cf. John 15:15), we ought to pay attention. Sallie McFague has argued for the power of the image of God as friend, but the image has not gotten the attention that it deserves. Instead, it has become dumbed down and sentimentalized in too much popular religious culture, exemplified by some contemporary Christian music that deserves the label that one wag once gave it: *Jesus is My Boy-friend* songs. (That doesn't mean that all "contemporary Christian music" is such, far from it. But that's a topic for another day.)

The image of *friend* is powerful precisely because of what we know about human friendships and which we can therefore gratefully, if analogically, apply to God. It is a wondrous thing to have friends who know you from the inside and love you anyway; it is a healing thing to have friends who do not judge you in a harsh way, but who nonetheless are willing to give you honest assessment of where you messed up and can yet be a better person; it is a sacred thing to know friends whose door would open to you no matter what time of day or night. *Such friends embody the very way that God loves us.*

In addition to true friends outside the congregation, you also need a hobby. Preferably a hobby that allows you to do, make, bake, construct, fix,



design, or whatever something where the results are tangible and the outcomes unambiguous. One of the most stressful things about ministry can be the utter ambiguity of it, including not knowing on so many occasions if the seeds you have planted will ever take root. Actually having something that has a definite beginning and ending is wonderfully *unlike* ministry in that way. There can be immense and energizing satisfaction in something tangible that you started, was under your control, and now is finished and needs nothing else. Ministry has its satisfactions, but that is not one of them. Friends and hobbies will feed your soul, and your avocation can energize your vocation.

7. If you're serving a Disciples congregation, know whether its provenance is Stoneite or Campbellite. It will explain a lot.

What is the most famous phrase of Alexander Campbell regarding ministers? "Hireling clergy." And that was one of the nicer things he said. "Settled pastorates" were only beginning to take root near the end of Campbell's life; he inveighed against the practice and thought it didn't fit the purported New Testament pattern of church and ministry.

For Campbell, "traveling evangelists" were to go here and there, rounding up like-minded individuals, preaching—in the quaint phrase of the day—a "protracted meeting," maybe getting a building started, and convening a

group (always men, of course, in that day) out of whom came the elders of the nascent congregation. One person usually got identified as the "preaching elder" and a few others were identified as the "ruling elders." And rule they did, in all matters.

Now, if this seems to downplay the role of preaching, it did indeed. What was most central to Sunday worship was meeting at the Lord's Table, a table that was always presided over by an elder. There are many frontier accounts of how churches sometimes went months with no preaching, but always had worship—composed of singing, prayers, scripture, and communion presided over by an elder.

Last month, Barbara and I worshiped at a congregation in California founded by a Campbellite. The minister was not at the table. He did the words of institution, but from the pulpit. The symbolism was vintage Campbell: this is the *elders'* table. I know other congregations where the minister has no role whatsoever at communion. Such congregations often have vestiges of the "ruling elder" pattern too.

It may seem that traits from 180 years ago would not be yet so pronounced, but all of us also know something of family systems theory and understand how entrenched and long-lived certain "family patterns" can be.

Compare all that to Barton Stone, who generally had little trouble with the notion of "settled pastors." He said that the pastor is himself (even for Stone, it was still "him") to be an elder, in fact, the "first among equals in the elders." Rather a different point of view, no? Sometimes I wonder how the Disciples and the Christians ever got together in 1832!

To paint with a very broad brush, Stoneite churches tend to trust the office and authority of the pastor from the start, whereas Campbellite churches tend to be much more akin to Missourians: *Show me*. Stoneite churches almost always have the pastor play a central role in presiding at the Lord's Table, *along with* the elders.

On the *helpful* side of the Campbell "family dynamic" (and with a broad brush still in hand), Campbellite churches tend to be somewhat more interested in theology, scholarship, and reasoning things out, where Stoneite churches tend to be somewhat less concerned with matters theological, and more interested that we all feel good about being there and that we all get along.

8. Do not add your voice to the much-too-common complaint that "seminary didn't teach me the things I 'really' [sic] needed to know."

Why? Well, it's both tiresome and inaccurate. It is tiresome to hear ministers whining that seminary should have taught them about spreadsheets, business plans, marketing, how to choose a carpet shampooing machine,

and so on. No. If you need to learn about budgeting and how to read a balance sheet (and you should), if you need to learn about marketing (and you'd better!), if you need to do some work in conflict management, there are a million sources out there where you can pick up those things.

For you see, theological education—when it is doing what it should be doing—does the one thing that no other education will and which is the most important thing for teaching ministers to carry out their vocations with efficacy and integrity: *to teach theology*. Now, by that I don't mean to exclude, say, history of Christianity or religion and literature, etc. What I mean is that *all* the disciplines that prospective pastors can and should encounter in their education ought to be oriented towards knowing how to think about things theologically.

When horrible, tragic, or unjustified evil strikes individuals or a community, the pastor had surely better be able to think clearly and theologically about what that experience does and does not mean, lest those events become defined and explained by the harshest or shallowest voices around us. On those occasions, some version of "there, there," spoken with sonorous and soothing "pastoral" intonations, just won't cut it.

What theological education can provide is the collective wisdom of the church universal, grafting you onto that tradition, giving you the resources to use the tradition itself to transcend it where it is faulty or myopic—and, oh my, it can indeed be faulty and myopic in places.

The most comforting theological thing I ever learned—when I have pastorally messed up, preached a turgid sermon, forgot to make that call on the woman in the hospital and hoped a Facebook message might be sort-of sufficient, or made a mistake that I just shouldn't have made—was the doctrine of *ex opere operato*. That doctrine, promulgated in the face of a situation so much more dire than mine nonetheless reminds me that, while I can be a vessel of God's grace, the reality and effectiveness of that grace does not depend on me, thank goodness.

Or, when I am faced with those who claim that Jesus is mostly or even only concerned with allegedly "spiritual" things and not with those folks who ask us on the streets for money because they haven't eaten in two days, or when the mayor wants to forbid homeless folks from being in a certain area of town because they make tourists and businesses "uncomfortable," I take solace and edification in the proclamation that docetism was a heresy 1700 years ago and that it is a heresy now.

When faced with those who say that it is some "special" sort of knowledge or belief that saves, which these days so often appears as a fundamentalism from the right or the left, it is helpful to be reminded that the church has dealt with this before and that Gnosticism is a misguided reification of the Gospel.

Those are just three indications of the importance, for the church and the church's pastors, of teaching theology. You and I should be grateful that this institution, and this university, have clung tenaciously to the commitment to teach theology and the history of Christian thought—wonders, warts and all—thereby better equipping us both to convey the Gospel in this day and to go beyond the tradition where that is needed.

9. About preaching, two quick points: a) How many ideas should a sermon have? At least one, preferably an interesting and important one. b) The lectionary is overrated.

Regarding the first, too many times as a regional minister I met with congregational search committees who told me some variation of "we really liked our former pastor but his sermons just kind of told us a lot of stories, and we were never sure what the point was." Folks are yearning for there in fact to be a point! They have the intuition that the Gospel has something to teach them about how to *think* about their lives, and stories—as powerful as they can be—call out for interpretation and for saying *how* they embody norms for faith.

One good tool is to follow Ron Allen's advice and rigorously work to articulate succinctly the one "big idea"

that you hope will be taught through your sermon.

Regarding the lectionary, I seldom use it. Clark Williamson and Ron Allen have done a good job of saying why the lectionary may not always be the best way to preach, but they have also written some powerful homiletical helps for those who do lectionary preaching. I am aware of the arguments for lectionary preaching, particularly as a discipline that can keep one from becoming lazy or unconsciously shrinking one's "canon-within-the-canon" over time.

My biggest problem with the lectionary comes from something that Barbara observed, and that I have come to experience as well. People are hungry for thematic preaching that helps them deal with the perennial perplexities of life. Yet, more often than not, the lectionary simply doesn't give a good platform for that kind of preaching.

10. Are we having fun yet?

Former Kansas Regional Minister Ralph Smith, one of my mentors in ministry, once counseled me, "At least once a week, you need to ask yourself: Am I still having fun?"

The question is not as frivolous as it may at first sound. For if, on many more days than not, you can truly say that your vocation, and the particular setting in which you are practicing your vocation, gives you a sense of satisfaction, a sense of doing something worthy, a sense that your God-given gifts are of helpful service, then those indices suggest that you are yet where you should be. If, on the contrary, on more days than not you find that you are bored or feeling like your gifts are going half-used, or if you are feeling first flushes of resentment for those to whom you minister, then you are not having fun, and you may need to do some serious thinking and praying about your vocation.

Earlier I spoke of the need for pastors to have friends who know you so well and love you so much that you can't imagine being who you are without them. I am so blessed to have my wife Barbara be that to me.

I want to close with her reflec-

tions on Psalm 16. Barbara has a beautiful way of talking about the deep satisfactions that are to be found in ministry even amidst the undeniably hard things that inevitably come.

The psalm reflects the context of the twelve tribes arriving in the promised land and having the land apportioned—that is to say, boundaries drawn up—between those tribes. Some land was better than others, some boundaries fell in ways that were advantageous to some but not to others. The tribe of Levi, the "clergy," if you will, got no land; for them, Deuteronomy and Joshua tell us, *the Lord will be their portion; the Lord will be their land*. Thus, the psalmist writes: *LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance* (Ps 16:5-6, NIV).

Barbara reflects on those lines: "You and I may not get everything in our lives and in our ministries that we've ever wanted. Believe it or not, that's not the formula for happiness anyway...."

"The psalmist is not asking us to deny our disappointments or even our despair. But the psalmist is asking us to be honest with ourselves about what we do have, what we have been given, to look at what is delicious and delightful and magnificent about our ministry and our lives together; that we might be able to say: *I am glad of my life. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. I am delighted that the Lord is my chosen portion and my cup*" (UCC Clergy Retreat, Hawaii Conference, March 2008).

There is so much more I could say about the things I've learned in ministry, but that can be for another occasion. I will close tonight by saying that my hope and prayer is that you too, on most days of most weeks, will be able to sing with the psalmist that your lives, your work, your ministries, have indeed *fallen in pleasant places* to the glory of God. Amen. ☪

Named awards

(continued from page 2)

lege, where she provided significant campus leadership. She is completing her field education at Downers Grove Christian Church, where her gifts for ministry are already apparent. She is from Houston, and "grew up" in the First Christian Church there.

The *Florence Drum and Eleanor Tenant Scholarship*, established by Katherine Dey in honor of dear friends, was awarded to **Allie Lundblad**, a second-year MDiv student. A 2012 graduate of Oberlin College, she received the Religion Department's Clyde Holbrook Memorial Prize and was a Haskell Fellow in Ancient Near Eastern Studies. She interned with the Summer Service Partnership at UC's Pritzker School of Medicine this summer. She is coordinating chapel worship at DDH this year, and with Rachel Abdoler, serving as co-president of the House Council.

The *Henry Barton Robison Scholarship* for promise in biblical studies has been awarded to **Andrew Langford**, a PhD candidate and an AM alumnus. He focuses on early Christian literature and is interested in ancient pedagogy, rhetoric, pseudepigraphy, canon formation, and early Christian biblical interpretation. He is serving part-time as the interim minister of Lakeview Church of Christ and also teaching Greek at the Divinity School this fall.

Second-year MDiv **Jeremy Fuzy** was awarded the *M. Ray and Phyllis Schultz Scholarship*. The scholarship recognizes promise for congregational ministry. He is a 2011 *summa cum laude* graduate of Drury University, where he was named Outstanding Senior in Religion and Philosophy. His home church is National Avenue Christian Church, Springfield, Missouri; he is completing field education at First Congregational Church of Glenn Ellyn.

The *Oreon E. Scott Entering Scholar* is **Douglas Collins**, the *William N. Weaver Entering Scholar* is **Judith Guy**, and **Keri Anderson** received the *Roland and Laura Frances Sheafor Scholarship* (see "New Scholars"). ☪

Annual Report:

A recognition of generosity

The Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago is grateful for gifts received from the following individuals, churches and foundations between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013. Annual gifts from individuals and organizations totaled \$91,313. We received additional annual support of \$49,459 through the Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and \$34,588 in permanent gifts last year. These generous donors helped to foster excellence in ministry, leadership, and scholarship.

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Established in 1994, the Sutcliffe Society recognizes individuals who ensure the mission of Disciples Divinity House by providing for a gift through their estate. It is named in tribute to the woman whose vision and gifts built the original endowment, furnished the building, and completed the chapel. The Society encourages others to follow her example and honors those who carry forward the tradition of vision and action.

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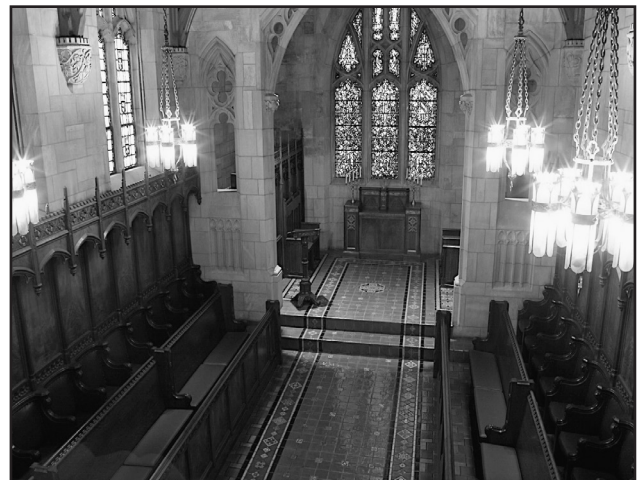
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| Chapel 75th Anniversary Renewal | 2005 |

News

Find more news and more details at ddh.uchicago.edu and on Facebook

Constance Battle, MD (trustee) received the Caritas Award from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, on October 25. She volunteers with the Kennedy Institute's Early Head Start program. Dr. Battle recently retired from The George Washington University, where she taught public health.

Current scholar Kristel Clayville is the author of "Landed Interpretation: An Environmental Ethicist Reads Leviticus," in Brenner and Lee, ed., *Leviticus and Numbers*, Text@Contexts Series (Fortress Press, 2013).

Julian DeShazier (trustee) was ordained in the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on October 6 at University Church where he is Senior Minister. His father, Robert M. Franklin (former resident), who is President Emeritus of Morehouse College, preached at the regular morning service that day.

Congratulations to Ayanna Johnson (2000) and Richard Watkins, who were married October 27 at Covenant United Church of Christ in Chicago.

On October 1, Cheryl Jackson (current scholar) became the Transitional Minister of United Christian Church of Country Club Hills, Illinois.

Summer ordinations

When McKinna Rae Daugherty (2010) was ordained August 2 at Saint Andrew Christian Church in Olathe, Kansas, a choral ensemble sang: This is the day the LORD has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it. Her uncle, Monty Carter, had written the setting for the psalm, which underscored the joy and gratitude of the day. Julian DeShazier (trustee), Senior Minister of University Church, Chicago, preached, and Angela Kaufman (1995), Minister to the University at TCU, presided at communion. Many other mentors, friends, and family members participated in the service, including Dean Kris Culp.



Thandiwe Gobledale (2009) was ordained August 24 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her parents, Tod and Ana Gobledale (1975), pastors in London, England, traveled to the celebration along with many others. Lee Hull Moses (2001; trustee), Senior Minister, reflected: "There's something breath-taking about all of us gathered to affirm Thandiwe's ministry. We do it because we love Thandiwe and believe her to be called into this life.... [But also] we believe in the future of the church. We trust and believe that the work we do together as the body of Christ is good and true and important and life-saving. Our prayers for [her] will also be prayers for the church, prayers of hope that the good news will continue to be spread and shared, prayers of wholeness for a broken world."

Fierce hope for a broken world was also a theme in the ordination of Alexis Vaughan (2010) It took place September 14 at the United Christian Parish, Reston, Virginia, where Joan Bell-Haynes (1995) is the Senior Minister there; Lari Grubbs (trustee), Regional Minister of the Capital Area, officiated. Alexis is now Associate Minister of Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ in Bethesda, Maryland. ☞



Thank you, Laura! Students led by Allie Lundblad and Danielle Cox surprised Laura Jennison Reed with a party on September 27. She served as Assistant to the Dean beginning on a half-time basis during her MDiv studies in 2011, and then on a full-time basis after her graduation in 2012 through this September. She coordinated DDH's General Assembly presence, corresponded with prospective students, worked with the Alumni/ae Council and alumni/ae class representatives, prepared the Bulletin for publication, managed the Facebook page, and ensured development records. We are grateful for her and for what her work has meant for the Disciples House and its students and friends.



In memoriam

Rolland G. Pfile died August 19 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was 74.



Throughout his ministry and during an era of significant social change, Rolland Pfile provided prophetic leadership and critical support for other prophets. After serving congregations in Lone Pine and LeMoyné, Pennsylvania, he was called to be the executive secretary of the Department of Church in Society in the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). From 1974-91, he and his colleagues led the church in addressing racial and economic justice, peace, religious liberty, refugee resettlement, and divestment in South Africa, among other issues.

Alumnus Tom Quigley, a leader in ecumenical ministry who often worked with Church in Society, recalls that Rolland “modeled ... the importance of addressing the most pressing issues facing the human community in systemic ways and as a normal and expected part of the church’s ministry.”

He served interim ministries in Illinois, Indiana, Florida, and, for two years, in Indiana regional ministry. He served as convener of DDH’s centennial celebration and campaign committee (1993-94).

Mr. Pfile received his BA from Bethany College and entered the Divinity School as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar in 1960, earning his BD in 1964.

In 1961 he met Leverne Barlow, another Divinity School student. (Women were not admitted to DDH in those years, but she would later become one of the first women trustees.) They married in 1963—fifty years ago in September—and raised two children, Angela and Kenneth.

In 2011, Angela Pfile and her spouse, Doug Job, who met at DDH where both were scholars, decided to establish a scholarship fund in her parents’ honor. An October 2012 service at Downey Avenue Christian Church in Indianapolis recognized Rolland and Leverne’s leadership and the scholarship’s creation. His memorial service was held there a year later.

He is survived by Leverne, Angela and Kenneth and their spouses, a granddaughter, and two brothers.

Carl B. Robinson died October 21 in Ojai, California. He was 95.

His ministry was “person-centered” and consistently combined care for individual well-being and integrity with community-based action for the common good. He ministered with special distinction in Fresno, California, from 1962 and through many “retirement” years.

Born February 6, 1918, in Iowa, Carl Robinson’s ministry began in 1938 when he was a business college student and began serving three churches on a part-time basis. The next year, he enrolled in Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. On the weekends, he hitchhiked 160 miles to the churches and took the train back to Canton.

Carl and Esther married in 1942. In 1944, when Carl enrolled in the Divinity School, married men were ineligible for House scholarships; Dean Ames granted a provisional scholarship for the summer, which he subsequently extended. Mr. Robinson graduated in September 1946, completing the three-year BD degree program in 27 months.

After serving congregations in Missouri and in Iowa, he became

the minister of Belmont Christian Church in Fresno in 1962. He was fired when some church leaders became unhappy with his community involvement—Carl and Esther had marched with Martin Luther King Jr and organized for low-income housing. They then started the Fresno House Church.

He became the first chaplain at



Fresno Community Hospital in 1968 and established a chaplaincy training program and an interfaith seminar. When he retired in 1983, three chaplains were hired to replace him.

The Robinsons founded the Fresno Metro Ministry in 1970, which addressed gaps in community services and advocated for those in need. That organization, with two others, established the Carl and Esther Robinson Award for the Common Good in 2005.

Reflecting back over his ministry in 1998, he wrote: “Personal relationships formed over the years makes sixty years of ministry incredibly rich. We [Carl and Esther] continue to embrace the Gospel which implicitly focuses on individuals as persons worthy of love, respect, fair and just treatment at all times.” Carl Robinson lived a long, richly related life. The Disciples Divinity House and his classmates were among those who enjoyed long and faithful friendships with him.

He is survived by Esther, their daughters, Jean and JoAnn, son-in-law David Bean, and a grandson. ☞

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Disciples Divinity House, fall 2013. First row (l-r) Brandon Cline, Tish Duncan with Edythe and Vivian, Allie Lundblad, Keri Anderson, Associate Dean Yvonne Gilmore, Dean Kris Culp. Second row (l-r) Cheryl Jackson, Jeremy Fuzy, Brandon Cook, Rachel Abdoler, Kiva Nice-Webb, Andrew Langford. Third row (l-r) Kristel Clayville, Mandy Burton, Doug Collins, Danielle Cox, Alex McCauslin, Gail Goldsmith, Jem Jebbia, Prof. Clark Gilpin. Fourth row (l-r) Administrator Marsha Peeler, Hye In Park, Hannah Campbell Gustafson, Andrew Packman, Kathryn Ray. Not pictured: Sun Bok Bae, Jaewoong Jeon, Noriko Kanahara, Bethany Watkins Lowery, and Anne Lynch.