Tales of young, cunning, courageous underdogs who overwhelm old, powerful, and confident opponents occupy a mythic place in Western culture.

When Goliath, literal giant, veteran warrior, victor of hundreds of battles, decked out in full battle gear with all the trimmings, challenges the Israelites to battle, their soldiers cower in fear. It is David, the young, scrappy shepherd boy, to whom God gives the courage to face the giant.

Marshall Ganz’s 2009 book, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, nods to the story. Ganz, one of the godfathers of community organizing pedagogy, was deeply involved in the United Farmworkers Movement, in which Filipino farmworkers were joined by other workers to become a national movement led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. His book describes the importance of strategic resourcefulness in social movements, and it traces David’s success to his motivation, preparation, and commitment.

I cut my teeth as an organizer working on various environmental campaigns. As a freshman at Duke, I participated in a protest of the university’s decision to lift its boycott of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company after only a few months of support.

Members of Students Against Sweatshops decided to dress up in head-to-toe green foam to look like sad pickles, and marched to the president’s mansion chanting about justice for farmworkers and demanding the university find another pickle provider. That was 2002, three years into a national boycott that had been launched in response to instances of wage theft, abuse, and unsafe working conditions for cucumber pickers.

We didn’t move the university president to change anything but her locks that night, however, I’ve been active in community organizing efforts pretty much ever since. I’ve celebrated some wins, and I’ve taken some losses. I’ve learned a lot about strategy, targets, and tactics—the tools needed to build any kind of successful campaign. Times like these cause me to reflect on how the tools in my spiritual toolbox, made

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
M is for Monday Dinners

Pull up a chair and gather around the table.

On May 31, the graduates gathered with their families and friends around tables in the backyard, enjoying a cookout before the Convocation service.

Alumna and trustee Alexis Vaughan gave the Convocation address in the Chapel of the Holy Grail, engaging the story of David and Goliath. There are Goliaths afoot in our own world—if now more often met in environmental threats and embedded structures than as literal giants. She reflected on readying oneself to meet formidable challenges against seemingly impossible odds. How can a next generation steady and seize what is possible amidst the challenges of our time? Students at the Disciples Divinity House hone ways of thinking, living, praying, and working within the given world and reaching beyond it. They gather at Monday Dinner tables, backyard tables, library tables, and tables of remembrance and communion.

Around these tables, we come to know ourselves and learn from one another. We are reminded that hunger can be satisfied, that impossible but that just might be around the bend—or gathering around the dinner table.

With gratitude, Kristine A. Culp, Dean

On the back page of this issue, you’ll find an A to Z review of the winter and spring. Fittingly, Monday Dinners fall at the center of the alphabet. A bit of necessity together with a bit of whimsy led to the abecedarian photo collage. Sheet metal ductwork and large stainless steel cooking hoods are not particularly photogenic—hence, “C is for contractors, construction, and cooking.” They aren’t ends in themselves either, but they signal something crucial. Inadequate ventilation meant that Monday Dinners couldn’t continue in the kitchen and dining room during the pandemic. In addition, the renovation addressed overheated conditions, replaced large gas stoves with induction ones, and refitted dining room lighting with LED fixtures for an environmentally responsible approach.

Many things have been part of the alphabet of life during this past academic year. This issue celebrates seven graduates, an internship and senior ministry projects, the trusteeship of Venita Jones, the work of Jack Veatch and Heidi Haverkamp, the ordination of Alexa Dava, and so many other people and events. It remembers the lives of Warren Copeland, Richard Hunt, Cynthia McCran, and Bob Welsh. Finally, Alexis Vaughan’s speech and a sermon by Virginia Vaughan’s speech and a sermon by Virginia White urge us to look beyond the giants in front of us to another possible practice of being together, to reach for change that is seemingly impossible but that just might be around the bend—or gathering around the dinner table.

Seeing possibilities beyond the challenge

In the Convocation service on May 31, the graduates sounded themes of dialoguing, traveling, changing, and becoming.

The seven graduates included two Disciples Scholars and five other members of the Disciples Divinity House community. This year’s service in the Chapel of the Holy Grail brought an especially cohesive and diverse participation by all the graduates, reflecting both the variety of traditions present and the individual strengths nurtured at DDH this past year. Themes emerged through the graduates’ planning—traveling, changing, dialoguing, and becoming—all ringing salient in the broader cultural moment.

To open the service, Kate Myers read “Perhaps the World Ends Here,” by US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo. Harjo imagines a kitchen table as an everyday yet possibly utopic place where people are gathered and life is sustained and transformed. An invocation, hymns, a reading from 1 Corinthians 12, an excerpt from Octavia Butler’s Parable of the Sower, and reflections on dialogue followed. Ben Dorfman recited “The Traveler’s Prayer,” Tefillat Haderech, in Hebrew and then in translation. Dean Kris Culp congratulated the graduates. Organist Charles Hayes accompanied the service. By special request, continuing DDH Scholar Nate Travis sang Eric Bibb’s bluesy song, “Don’t Ever Let Nobody Drag Your Spirit Down,” accompanying it on his steel resonator guitar.

The themes were further highlighted by this year’s speaker, DDH Trustee and alumna Alexis Vaughan, who engaged the story of David and Goliath. She had the rare courage that allowed David to take on Goliath. Rather, he had readied himself for such moments. David is able to accept the challenge from Goliath because he has a vision of life on the other side of the battle, she said. She charged the graduates to face the Goliaths of our messy world with a David spirit.
Senior Ministry Projects: Cultivating a life’s vocation

Three graduating students and three alums reflect on their capstone MDiv projects.

Joanna Zabiega, a 2024 graduate and ecumenical resident, compares the process of writing the ministry thesis to composting. “Composting as a process of sifting and layering, is a messy one—albeit absolutely necessary to create life-giving soil in which a multitude of plants may grow,” Joanna explains. Joanna should know, their MDiv placement was with the Urban Growers Collective in South Chicago. “This process can be thought of as akin to the messy and, at times, overwhelming work of parsing through our conversation partners’ ideas, reflecting on our own hunches, and letting things churn in our minds and on paper in order to mold one’s attempt at a public theology. This is the work of the culminating year of the MDiv degree!”

Senior Ministry Projects are an important feature of the Divinity School’s MDiv program, as well as an opportunity for vocational exploration and theological expression. Involving both a written thesis and a public presentation, they are true capstones. Three students, Joanna Zabiega, Thi Diem Nguyen, and Disciples Scholar Charlie Platt presented their projects this spring. The three discussed their work in a panel, “Senior Ministry Projects, Now and then,” held on April 26 in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and Alumni/ae Council meetings. Thi Diem Nguyen, a Dominican sister and skilled catechist, powerfully invited those gathered to listen. Her chaplany work with the Vietnamese community in Chicago informed her project, Providing Pastoral Care for Vietnamese Refugees to Whom Past Harrowing Experiences Heavily Impact: Listening as the Most Powerful Remedy of Healing. Joanna Zabiega introduced composting and reflected on how an urban farm can infuse spirituality and solidarity in Crafting a Queer Spirituality: Embodiment and Emplacement as a Means of Enacting Solidarity Across Difference. DDH Scholar Charlie Platt shared about his ventures into a spiritual health platform, “to take the best of ancient practices and form, “to take the best of ancient practices and form, More Meaningful Lives.”

Board of Trustees news

Gratitude for Verity Jones’s leadership: welcome to Alexis Vaughan.

Verity Jones enriched the Disciples Divinity House in many ways during her dozen years as a trustee, from January 2012 through December 2023. Her leadership as chair of the Development Committee was instrumental in the success of DDH’s 125th Anniversary Celebration and Campaign. She worked alongside Chad Martin, who chaired the anniversary, to plan the celebration in 2019 and to guide a campaign that surpassed its goal to raise $5 million in gifts and future commitments. She also served as a member of the Scholarship Committee. She brought keen insight, creativity, and critical understanding about Disciples ministry and theological education.

Jones is currently a program director in the Religion Division at the Lilly Endowment, Inc. She earned the MDiv from the Divinity School as a trustee, from January 2012 through December 2023.

Alexis Vaughan became the newest member of the twenty-one member board in January. She also joined the work of the Scholarship Committee—and accepted an invitation to be this year’s Convocation speaker. She has long sought to combine commitments to local communities, community development, social justice, economic sustainability, environmental advocacy, and interreligious leadership in congregational and nonprofit contexts. She was the inaugural Director of Racial Equity Initiatives at Interfaith America and the Social Justice Coordinator for the National Benevolent Association. Since January, Vaughan has been the Managing Director of Domestic Operations for the Week of Compassion, the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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An ordained Disciples minister, she earned the MDiv from the Divinity School as a Disciples House Scholar in 2012, and an AB from Duke University. She previously served as the co-president of the DDH Alumni/ae Council with Thandie Gobledale.
Nina Simone and the book of Revelation

The “always-present otherwise” appears in a strange biblical text.

Virginia White

DOH Scholar and PhD candidate
Chapel of the Holy Grail, November 9, 2023

I have Nina Simone to thank for my appreciation for the book of Revelation. Before my encounter with her song, “New World Coming,” I was mostly unenthusiastic about it. John of Patmos’s notorious kaleidoscopic vision of a world’s unfolding and reherb has, for centuries, puzzled interpreters, propelled extremists, and provided solace for those who yearn for endings that make way for new beginnings. I had been working (likely in the DOH library) and was desperately searching Spotify for music to inspire further writing when I came across Simone’s song one afternoon.

It starts simply with a triumphant yet serene, major-key piano progression that, before long, gives way to Simone’s epic and mellifluous voice, singing: “There’s a new world coming; and it’s just around the bend.” Then, as if from the heavens, floating in on the bright warmth of a Hammond organ, another woman’s voice responds, joy, joy, joy, joy! By this point, I am happily swaying along, and so, when Simone repeats a phrase that, if spoken out of the mouth of fire-and-brimstone preacher would immediately put my guard up—This world’s coming to an end—I’m singing too. What would otherwise be terrifying, now feels like a welcome possibility.

Midway through the song, the tempo rapidly speeds up, and a choir joins to build a luscious soundscape harkening Simone’s reading from the fifteenth chapter of Revelation: I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues—for in them is filled up the wrath of God! I can’t help but Bible-thump right alongside her. When xylophones enter, I am downright excited to hear: And I saw what looked like a sea of glass, mingled with fire and those who had been victorious over the beast; and over his image; and over his mark; and over his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God all around them! By now I am yearning for this fantastic place. With this joy, this beauty, fear can’t be but a memory, and I just want to dance along.

I am pretty sure that we are supposed to hear Revelation sung with soul and to feel it in our bones. Remember that this story was written for and by a people who were undergoing persecution and unbearable suffering, and who, like anyone anguished, downtrodden, and tired, must conjure the strength to keep going via the discipline of hope.

The book wrestles with the ways that the world is not what it ought to be. With the obstinacy of empires more concerned with protecting their power and sharing up their coffers than with honoring life. It knows that absolutely unjustifiable harm and destruction has been wrought and that struggles abound. It stales evil in the face and calls it out. And yet it proclaims: There’s a new world coming; it’s just around the bend. In fact, we can already see it, gosh darnit, we’re building it, no matter what you say. Get on board—the train’s already moving.

One of the first questions that John’s apocalypse should raise is how the idea of a radically new world sounds to you. Does it sound like salvation? Or like horror? If the latter, then you might do well to listen to those who are yearning for change.

Yes, even if we find ourselves crying out for change, we would be wise not to presume that we know exactly what this change should entail. Remember, John, Revelation’s seer, makes a point to tell us that he was “in the spirit” when he received this whacky revelation. He heard the vision as if coming from a blaring trumpet, spoken by a person who appeared out of the ether amid the light of seven magical lampstands. With that, we might entertain the possibility that he was really tripping on a God-given vision, and then pause and consider again whether what he saw was just the inverse—the antithesis of whatever we think has got to go, or if maybe, instead, what was unveiled is more complex, more subtle, more challenging.

The second chapter of Revelation comes right between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals. Up to this point, each seal has brought intensifying horror—the four horsemen, famine, swords, earthquakes. Just when we think we cannot stand it any longer, we are given a reprieve: a vision of a great multitude gathering around God’s throne. John makes a special point to tell us that the people come from every nation, every faith, every tribe, every language. Too many people to count are joined together in celebration and peace. Waving palm branches, angels encircle them, singing, “Salvation belongs to God!” Not the world’s seats of power, not our earthly ways, not “us” at all, but God. Earth’s markers of value, strength, and success aren’t it. They won’t get us to this place where everyone dances together, where every need is met, where every tear is wiped away.

To get there, you’ll need a different approach. Because this other place is stranger and more wonderful than what the norms of this world can fathom, it is a place where the Lamb shepherds. Verse 17 gives us a strange picture of a lamb sitting on the throne as shepherd. Of course, the Lamb symbolizes Christ, but we can’t gloss over the strangeness of this image with an analogical reading. Imagine it, a lamb, shepherding. In John’s spirit-induced vision, a queer reframing of roles, and of what matters, occurs. We aren’t merely glimpsing some future when an enemy has been vanquished, the victory fantasy of a select few. Instead, we receive insight into other-and-always-possible counter-reality where leadership and victory look different. Where in listening we speak, in forgiving we are graced, in giving we receive. Where the lamb shepherds.

What is possible when the roles that confine us, the illusions that separate us, the fears, habits, and lies that discipline us, are healed, redrawn, and burst wide open? What is uncovered in apocalypse is less another world or another time, but instead other possible ways of being and of being together. We glimpse in it that there is more than enough, that former enemies and strangers can share a table, that life can be claimed out of death. The seventh chapter of Revelation comes right between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals. Up to this point, each seal has brought intensifying horror—the four horsemen, famine, swords, earthquakes. Just when we think we cannot stand it any longer, we are given a reprieve: a vision of a great multitude gathering around God’s throne. John makes a special point to tell us that the people come from every nation, every faith, every tribe, every language. Too many people to count are joined together in celebration and peace. Waving palm branches, angels encircle them, singing, “Salvation belongs to God!” Not the world’s seats of power, not our earthly ways, not “us” at all, but God. Earth’s markers of value, strength, and success aren’t it. They won’t get us to this place where everyone dances together, where every need is met, where every tear is wiped away.

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New writer-in-residence, program director

Heidi Haverkamp will begin a fifteen-month “residency.”

Haverkamp will join DDH’s full-time staff as Program Director, Writer-in-Residence, and Assistant Administrator beginning July 8 through summer 2025.

Haverkamp is a 2006 MDiv graduate of the Divinity School and the author of five books, including Everyday Connections: Reflections and Practices for Year C (2019), Year A (2022), Year B (2013), and Holy Solitude (2012). She is an award-winning contributor to the Christian Century, a spiritual director and retreat leader, an Episcopal priest, and a former parish rector in Bolingbrook and Chicago. She writes an occasional newsletter, Letters from a Part-time Hermit. She grew up in Hyde Park and recently returned to the area.

As Writer-in-Residence, she will pursue her own writing, offering an example of scholarly inquiry and writing as spiritual practices, and creating opportunities to support student writing. As Program Director and Assistant Administrator, she will attend to the flow of life through the building and help to interpret DDH through various media. She will oversee Monday dinners and work with students and the dean to enrich worship, the arts, critical inquiry, and theological dialogue through Monday programs.

Haverkamp won’t actually live in the building, but she will attend to the daily rhythms at DDH as a physical place, ethos, student residence, and educational institution. Through ongoing student interactions, her lived example of being a writer, and programmatic initiatives, she will help to build community capacity for living, learning, thinking, worshiping, and working together.

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and that despite rains, we can behold one another right on into another world.

Revelation does not end with the multitudes gathered around the lamb-shepherd. This is just the seventh of twenty-two chapters, after all. We are in for a harrowing ride. Catastrophes—personal and global, secret and center-stage—will come. They are already here, unfolding even as I speak, in faraway places, and in this very room.

When we find ourselves—like those to whom John’s Revelation was given—hurt, scared, enraged, exhausted, overwhelmed, heartbroken, yearning for change that seems impossible, worried about a future that seems nothing but bleak, it’s not easy to remember this topsy-turvy vision where all are together, every need supplied. But, in those moments, that dream is what we and our world need, more than anything, to guide us.

We remember that we aren’t alone. That there’s more of us who want peace than war.

That trees turn red, orange, and yellow, is a blessing too. That laughter sometimes breaks out amid tears; that our tears can be a salve for someone else’s. Noticing the inconceivable breadth of even this very moment, the depth of this very place, can’t help but reveal that God’s love is here, even now, breaking through.

In that turning to the always-present other, which, frankly, I struggle with more days than not and which the world rarely supports and seems actively to inhibit, we find that the chasm separating trial from triumph, the world from that world, might not be so much about distance at all. It might be about perspective and about growing in trust that the gifts we have been given are more than enough—and that we are already powerful and daring and gracious and loved enough to share them with open hands. That’s the new world that’s coming, now and always.

Amen.

Jack Veatch to Chapman

He takes up an exceptional opportunity in college chaplaincy. It’s a bittersweet but proud moment for DDH.

As Director of Student and Alumni/ae Relations, Jack Veatch has been the daily face of DDH for students for the past year and a half. Jack’s care for community and especially for Monday dinners and programs made him an essential and beloved member of DDH’s full-time staff.

On July 15, he becomes the new Director of Church Relations at Chapman University in Orange, California. His new position combines campus chaplaincy, young adult leadership development, and relations with the Disciples of Christ and the UCC. He will work under the aegis of the Fish Interfaith Center and its Executive Director Nancy Brink.

As an undergraduate at Kent State University, Jack was a leader in ecumenical campus ministry and interned with the Inter-religious Task Force on Central America. He participated in the National Benevolent Association’s XPlore program, where he worked with the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry. He has also been a student of the ecumenical movement, studying at the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, and participating as a GETI scholar at the 2022 WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. He was minister of Evergreen Christian Church in Colorado before joining the DDH staff.

Jack and his spouse, Aneesah Ettriss Veatch, served as resident heads in one of the University’s undergraduate houses. Students, staff, alumni, and friends gathered for a farewell celebration in the backyard on June 21.

Contemplation and visual art

Bethany Fellows welcome Aneesah Ettriss Veatch.

Effective August 1, she will become Director/Pastor of Bethany Fellows, which helps young pastors transition from seminary to sustained ministry.

An ordained Disciples minister, Aneesah has developed transformative practices for contemplating art.

As Academic Engagement Coordinator at the Feitler Center at the University’s Smart Museum of Art, Aneesah led several programs at DDH and at the Divinity School on visual art. She facilitated “Smart Sightings,” a series for the Martyr Center’s publication, Sightings, that ran in conjunction with Smart Museum’s exhibition, Calling on the Post. Aneesah and Jack are both alumni and MDiv graduates. They married in the Chapel of the Holy Grail. Congratulations and best wishes, Jack and Aneesah.
Preaching and learning at FCC Tacoma

A current DDH Scholar interns in a creative, community-facing congregation.

Justin Carlson is a fourth-generation member of the First Christian Church in Minneapolis who has completed two years of the MDiv program. However, being deeply engaged in the life of a congregation—and in his home region, the Upper Midwest—is not the same as having the chance to minister with and learn in a congregation full-time. The partnership of First Christian Church in Tacoma, Washington, and the savvy mentorship of senior minister Doug Collins, together with DDH’s sponsorship, made that experience possible. Visual, liturgical, and musical arts enrich Sunday worship at FCC Tacoma. A synergy of this universe can illuminate the scriptures we’ve preserved and shared.

Doug Collins and Justin Carlson

world and his appreciation for the wild beauty of Puget Sound.

The church’s ministry includes a Tiny House Village and other opportunities for working and learning with the wider Tacoma community. Collins and congregants provided on-going mentorship and keen, imaginative examples of ministry and community engagement. At the conclusion of worship service, Collins commented, “Justin has a knack for showing up and being present with the people he finds; he has a heart for creative wonders, a sense of humor that keeps everyone in touch with their playfulness, and a way of asking questions that inspires awe and marveling at the mystery of our God.” Carlson will be back in Chicago this fall for his final year of study.

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One of the mantras that I live by is ”Clear eyes, full hearts, can’t lose.” Yes, it comes from the TV show Friday Night Lights, but it may be another way to understand the Apostle Paul’s declaration that when we go up against the principalities and powers of this messy world, the most important weapons are spiritual.

To win, you need clear eyes and a vision of victory. David is able to accept the challenge from Goliath because he has a vision of life on the other side of the battle. The Israelite soldiers in the story can only see the problem—namely, Goliath in our way. They are unable to move forward because they can’t see a vision of life without the problem.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was known for telling Civil Rights workers to “keep your eyes on the prize.” In order to challenge overt racism, segregation, and capitalism, you have to be able to conceive of a reality beyond these principalities and powers. You have to be able to see a better life for your children, a world where every job earns a living wage. Dr. King told them, “I have a dream.” It sounds simple, but it’s a radical move because vision and discouragement go hand in hand. There is always someone to tell you what you can’t do, that your vision is wrong, that you won’t succeed, and perhaps that you are a fool for trying.

David doesn’t defend himself against the soldiers who mock him. He doesn’t even argue his point. He just ends the conversation and moves forward.

David knows that to win, you also need a full heart, one that holds your motivating memories, be it a tennis match from fifteen years ago or something else. You need a memory that will remind you of who you are and all you are capable of. David is about sixteen years old in this story, the other soldiers are likely in their twenties, thirties, and forties. David may be young, but he’d been a shepherd all his life. When he meets King Saul, he recounts: Whatever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth, and if it was a tiger or a bear, I struck it down, and killed it… The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the bear, and from the paw of the lion, will save me from the paw of this Philistine.

In other words, David was a shepherd, yes, but he wasn’t no rookie. He had seen some things. He’d had to fight. He’d had to strike something down before. He knew that no matter what everyone else was saying about his chances, this was not his first rodeo, nor would it be his last.

Finally, David understands that you can’t lose if you have the right weapons. King Saul blesses him and gives David his armor, his sword, and all the other battle accessories because that’s what Goliath has. But David wasn’t wearing the armor when he defeated the lion and the bear, and he wasn’t going to start now. He knew he had to do something different because if he fought like his enemy, he would lose.

Evil always has another level to go to. David decided not to let the size of the battle change the strategy of success. He would do what he did with the lion and the bear, all while calling on the name of the Lord. And so, he went into the valley, struck Goliath down on his first try, and was celebrated in victory. That’s a nice way for the story to end, but it’s important to remember that David took five stones with him. He understood that sometimes we don’t win on our first try. Your faith must be able to endure a failure. Sometimes when we believe God is on our side, we assume that we will be successful on our first attempt. But David knows that if the first prayer doesn’t get it, he will have to pray again. All his hope can’t go into one stone. He’s going to have to keep throwing them until the world is different.

Remember that: pickles boycott I was telling you something. It took the years of commitment and organization. The turning point came when faith communities began to endorse the boycott and built an interfaith coalition that couldn’t be ignored. It became harder and harder for M. Olive to avoid negotiating with the workers. Five years after the boycott began, it was called off after 8,000 farmworkers signed a deal for union representation and a three-way agreement, which was struck down by the National Labor Relations Board. Olive Pickle Co., the corporation, then filed an anti-trust suit against me, I would catch it by the tail, strike it down, and kill it… The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.

The day I came down here for the Board of Trustees meeting in April was the same day the UChicago Popular University for Gaza launched their Palestine Solidarity Encampment. I visited the welcome tent, chatted with some of the participants, and listened to what was motivating them to be there. I was encouraged by their witness and their willingness to risk their academic safety. From what I heard, several student activists may have the possibility of their diploma withheld and not graduate tomorrow because of their activism.

That’s a real shame and my heart breaks for them, but risk is a real part of this work. I’d like to think that our ordination today helps to continue that great tradition of journeying to the margins of the communities with a calling of human dignity, health, and unity.

The service took its theme from Billie Eilish’s song, “What was I made for?” Yes, it’s from the Barbie movie—and that’s an insight into the lively congregation. Gilead is a storytelling church that reclaims mainstream stories, contemporary songs, biblical texts, and lived theology. Alexa Dava found her way to the Disciples through Gilead and became one of its leaders. Now she is empowered to a global calling of human dignity, health, reconciliation, and unity.

I pray that you approach those challenges with a David spirit. Remember Goliath showed up in the same place at the same time and made the same challenge for forty consecutive days before David accepted the challenge on the forty-first day. There’s a lesson here. Avoiding the problems of this world will not make them go away. Averting your eyes won’t make the giant in front of you go away. You have to do it. Some things don’t get better with time. Some things only get better with direct confrontation. Some challenges we face show up every day—and the only way to deal with it is to face it. Unfortunately, there is no instruction manual on how exactly to do that. Sometimes it’s not clear what strategy will work in a particular context. Your faith must be able to endure a failure. Sometimes you have to try some things and learn as you go along. One thing I’ve learned is that when you are confused about what God has called you to confront. And though you may not always win, know that you will not lose.
Cynthia Rice McCrae died February 18 in Indianapolis. She was 97. A teacher, church and community leader, partner, mother, and friend, she was a person filled with gratitude whose love and joy for life touched many lives.

Cynthia was born in Durban, South Africa, to parents who were members of the Congregational Church. She arrived in the US at the age of eight years old. Music became a big part of her life, she played flute and piano and loved singing, especially finding a harmony part.

She graduated from Whittman College and enrolled at Chicago Theological Seminary. In 1977, Cynthia met her lifelong love and partner, Ian McCrae, a native of Toronto who was studying at DDH and the Divinity School. He would become an important theological voice and leader in social and economic justice and human and civil rights. After marrying in 1979, they lived in Des Moines and Los Angeles before settling in Indianapolis in 1983. During these years, Cynthia and Ian’s five children were born.

She was one of the founders of the Downey Avenue Cooperative Preschool in Indianapolis in 1965. After one year as a “co-op parent,” she became the teacher, a role she held for more than two decades. At Downey Avenue Christian Church, Cynthia and Ian started and led the Explorers Class for young adults. Over the years, they opened their home to many, including exchange students, international visitors, and anyone who needed a place to stay. Their home was a place of welcome and acceptance.

In retirement, Cynthia and Ian joined friends who met at DDH in the late 1970s, Dayle and Betty Miller and Walter and Myra Abel, and they all moved to a senior living community in Raymore, Missouri. One of their joys was to participate in St. Andrew Christian Church in Olathe, Kansas. Returning to Indianapolis in 2020, Cynthia revolved in living near family and in making new connections.

This is survives by her children, Bruce (Betsy), Doug (Sue), Carol (Tim), Linda (Beverly), and Maureen (Lloyd); nine grandchildren; and thirteen great-grandchildren. She was preceded by her husband, Ian, in 2011. She is survived by DDH’s Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2007; Cynthia remained part of the wider DDH community until her death. A memorial service was held on February 25 at Central Christian Church in Indianapolis.

Robert L. “Bob” Welsh died December 1, 2023, at home in Iowa City, Iowa. He was 97. He served First Christian Church in Iowa City from 1965 until his retirement in 1992. He was lauded for his public service at local, county, and state levels.

Born October 5, 1926, the son of Rev. James H. and Pauline Welsh, he attended Phillips University and received his AB from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He entered the Disciples Divinity House in 1948; later he served on the Alumni/ae Class of 2006.

He was a committed ecumenist and chaired the local council of churches, ministerial association, and ecumenical consultation. He chaired Iowa’s CB from a housing commission, which planned for Section 8 housing and resulted in building Ecumenical Towers that serves older adults.

Bob was a life-long advocate of providing support to help all people within the church thrive. Locally, he was the founder of the Volunteer Service Bureau, Common Fund, and Ecumenical Housing Corporation. He was a chaplain for the fire department, a strong advocate for persons with disabilities, and a leader of the county program that delivered meals to seniors. He chaired the Johnson County Task Force on Aging and worked with the Iowa City Area Agency on Aging. He served on the Governor’s Childcare and Early Education Task Force and the White House Conference on Aging.

He received many recognitions, including the Senior of Distinction in Iowa in 2021; a Westminster Outstanding volunteer service, advocacy, community service, contributions to human rights; and the Betty Grandquist Lifetime Achievement Award in Service to Older Iowans. The Iowa City Community Center dedicated the “Bob Welsh Bobkob Community Room” in 2018; the joint County Board of Supervisors celebrated “Bob Welsh Appreciation Day” in 2019.

He was also a huge supporter of University of Iowa athletics and the arts, with a very special affinity for Iowa women’s basketball.

Bob was survived by his wife Eunice; they celebrated their thirty-first anniversary in March 2023. He is also survived by his oldest son, Mark (Nancy), grand-daughter Sarah Welsh Nelson, step-children Becky Scherschell and Warren Hanlin (Bannier), and extended family.

Ken (1948) and Emily (1948) Brooker Langston on the death of their mother, Betty Jean Langston, on February 7 in Tennessee. She was 92. “Even though she didn’t go to college, Mom always encouraged me,” Ken recalls. “She would say, ‘No matter what you come from, you can be just as good as anyone else as long as you work at it.’”

Colton Lott (2010; Trustee), whose grandfather, Ted Hedrick, died on June 10. Colton’s grandparents moved to El Reno, Oklahoma, when Colton began his ministry at First Christian Church there.

Stephanie Pauselli (1986), Kevin Madigan (former resident), and family on the death of William O. Pauselli, Stephanie’s father, on April 14 at age 88. He was the former dean and president of Lexingtonological Seminary. A minister, scholar, and author of eight books, he enriched Disciples thought with his work on spirituality and mysticism. He is also survived by his spouse, Sally Pauselli, another daughter, Diane, and two grandchildren.
SUMMER 2024