

Mission is Sacred, Strategy Is Not Guides DCHS Board Meeting

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board of Directors gathered in Nashville, TN Oct. 27-29, 2014. The board established the context for their worshipful work with Rev. Arnold Nelson, Board Chair, quoting George Bullard, "Your mission is sacred, your strategy is not."

Sara Harwell, archivist and librarian, gave leadership to the meeting when she reported on the condition of the archive and the important role an archive plays in telling God's story. Harwell said, "The archive documents the work of the Church in its many manifestations and voices; it keeps and tells the story of a community of faith following God's call." Ensuring the security and future of the archives was the predominant theme of the board meeting.

The board approved a 2015 budget based on conservative income estimates. "Our target was to reduce the draw on funds functioning as endowment and endowed funds to 4.5% as recommended by the Christian Church Foundation Board," said Dr. Todd Adams, interim president. The final budget reduces operating expenses by \$462,000 versus the 2014 budget. It anticipates a 5.5% draw, a dramatic reduction from the last three years where the draw averaged in excess of 25%.

The board determined there are insufficient funds to maintain both an archive and the T.W. Phillips Memorial Library building and took actions to ensure continued security and viability of this important collection. After lengthy discussion and a conference call with directors who could not be present in Nashville, the board voted to sell the building and will seek a partnership with a Disciples-related college or university to house the archives.

The proceeds from the sale of the building will provide sufficient funds to build or modify an existing building for the collection while providing operating funds. A letter requesting proposals from the colleges, universities, seminaries and divinity houses has been submitted to each president or dean. DCHS will continue to work with the descendants of T.W. Phillips regarding the repurposing of the proceeds and the location of the future archive. Nelson stated, "This move will allow us to continue our sacred mission of receiving, archiving and making available for research the documents that tell the story of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Stone-Campbell movement."

In other business, the board elected a new class of directors including: Jim Johnson, Indiana; Charisse Gillette, Kentucky; Bill Newton, Tennessee; Marsha Smith and Bob Williams, Texas; Siobhan Lopez, California (PSWR), and Thad Allen, West Virginia. The board adopted the General Assembly's Open Meetings Policy. In its final action item, the board requested that the Administrative Committee of the General Board appoint three directors for two years to partner with the board in determining the new strategy for the Society and strengthening the partnership with the church.

Questions regarding the society's future, location or current challenges should be directed to Interim President Todd Adams at tadams@disciples.org.