



New leader-development ministry grounded in partnership

Church Extension board actions create governance structure for ministries designed to strengthen missionally centered, contextually relevant congregations

For Immediate Release

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Indianapolis IN, November 14, 2011 – With an eye on the prize of Disciples of Christ congregations that are transformed into more missionally focused and culturally relevant communities of faith, Church Extension’s board of directors approved several actions at its recent meeting in Indianapolis, paving the way for significant organizational and directional change, effective January 1, 2012. These actions approved and acknowledged the appropriate filing of all legal documents to establish Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation; Board of Church Extension of Disciples of Christ, Inc., dba Disciples Church Extension Fund (formerly Church Extension); and parent organization Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources, Inc.

Other actions included:

- Election of an 11-member board for Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources, Inc. (CEFMR), with Dwayne L. Bell, Sr., Nashville, Tenn. as board chair. As the administrative general unit for the two other ministries, CEFMR will not, in itself, provide services.
- Election of a nine-member board for Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation.

Almost two years in the planning, Hope Partnership is a network of ministries, regions, organizations, congregations, educational institutions, and clergy who provide for the stewardship of resources to call, form and support courageous leaders to implement congregational mission. Hope Partnership services include skill development events for new, transforming and emergent congregational leaders; coordination of peer learning groups; leader coaching; demographic and relocation services for congregations; ministry planning; and New Beginnings Assessment Service.

Importantly, Hope Partnership will continue to carry forth the critical whole-church imperative of new church ministry through development of new church planters, coaches, visionaries and emerging church leaders.

David Emery, CEFMR director and senior minister of Middletown Christian Church, Louisville, Ky., was elected chair of Hope Partnership's board of directors. Also elected to the Hope board were Jean Vandergrift (Disciples Home Missions representative); Rachel Bell (National Convocation representative); Oscar Cruz (new church planter); and JoAnne Kagiwada (Higher Education & Leadership Ministries representative). CEFMR directors named to the Hope board include Delores Carpenter, Washington, D.C.; Don Dewey, Altadena, Calif.; David Hedgepeth, Marana, Ariz.; and Aaron Wonil Park, Glendale, Calif.

- Election of a nine-member board of Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF).

Continuing the 128-year-old mission for whom Church Extension was originally founded and funded, Disciples Church Extension Fund helps congregations house culturally relevant ministry with lending services made possible through investments and gifts. In addition, DCEF provides for the stewardship of capital resources with longstanding expertise in building planning, capital fundraising, architectural consultations, green services and financial planning to support congregational mission.

Karen Nolan, CEFMR director and retired director of gift planning for Peace College, Morrisville, N.C., was elected DCEF board chair. CEFMR directors elected to the DCEF board include R. Michael Bales, Lexington, Ky.; Chris Bowers, Naperville, Ill.; Milly Sempit, Indianapolis, Ind.; and Priscilla Alvarez Torres, Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Also elected were Jean Claude Michel, Baldwin, N.Y., and Neil Topliffe, Grand Rapids, Mich., with two more directors yet to be identified.

"In this new era of God's mission," says Church Extension Transitional President Lori Adams, "congregations will require capital and leadership resources from all corners of our denomination to do the deep work of seeking to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the place where they do ministry. The Hope Partnership network of services and the capital-resource expertise of Disciples Church Extension Fund are there to help strengthen stewardship of those resources so congregations can live out the mission that God calls them to in locations where that mission is culturally relevant." She adds, "I could not be prouder of the staff, directors and partners who have worked tirelessly and boldly to get us to this point."

The board recognized Adams for excellence in her transitional work over the past year. She is leaving Church Extension on December 31, 2011, to take the position of vice president of programs with the Fund for Theological Education in Atlanta, Ga.

Effective January 1, 2012, and until new presidents are called, Ellen Mitchell, Church Extension vice president of donor, investor and church relations, will serve as acting president of Disciples Church Extension Fund, and Rick Morse, vice president of new church ministry and mission initiatives, will serve as acting president of Hope Partnership. The board chose leaders to serve in this temporary capacity who are not candidates for the open positions of presidents of DCEF and Hope Partnership or executive vice president of operations for CEFMR.

In addition, Lynda Brooks, MBA, CPA, MDiv has been selected to fill a newly created position of assistant treasurer for CEFMR, effective immediately. She is responsible for providing oversight to the ministry's financial operations team in evaluating, implementing and improving accounting and financial information systems; overseeing the annual audit process; insuring implementation of accounting policies and budgeting process; and working with partners to create strategies for liquidity management, financial forecasting and development, securities compliance, and loan and investment-rate monitoring. Most recently, Lynda headed Brooks Financial Associates, a finance and accounting professional services firm out of San Francisco, Calif., and Atlanta, Ga.