

GA-2512
CONCERNING CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) CONGREGATIONS
RECEIVING A SILVER CHALICE DESIGNATION
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

WHEREAS, the mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is “to be and to share the good news of Jesus Christ witnessing, loving, and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.” This mission is for all people and all generations...not just those who are young and able-bodied; and

WHEREAS, the scriptures underscore how a person’s advanced age is equated with honor and respect– including the years of Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Methuselah, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Job, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna;¹ and

WHEREAS, older adults (referring loosely to those 65 and older) have much to contribute to the life of the church. Not only do many of them hold the historical knowledge and experience of being the Church, but they have many talents and gifts that may be mistakenly overlooked or minimized due to their age; and

WHEREAS, the richness of wisdom and knowing from Disciples Older Adults include retired clergy, retired clergy spouses, and lay leaders; and

WHEREAS, since its beginning, the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (NBA) has played a significant role in creating and sustaining ministries of care for older adults, to include senior housing facilities, senior community centers, supporting chaplains serving older adults, and supporting congregational care of older adults. In more recent years, the NBA has carried forward this in efforts such as the West Virginia’s Gift of Years Program, funds or the expansion of Mid-America Region’s Older Adult ministries, and through grant funding for older adult ministries across the church including congregational projects and initiatives of health and social service organizations such as Kansas Christian Homes, Christian Care Communities of Kentucky, and Juliette Fowler. NBA now seeks to further amplify this work and the leaders who have given shape to it through a 2-year Older Adult Ministries (OAM) initiative. The purpose of the Silver Chalice Ministry is to encourage, support, and celebrate Disciples of Christ congregations, general ministries, assemblies, gatherings, organizations, regions and facilities (hereafter collectively referred to as Ministry) who have a strong desire to live out their Christian faith by caring for, assisting and utilizing the gifts of wisdom of older adults; and

WHEREAS, earning a Silver Chalice designation means a Ministry has reached established goals regarding programming and services that focus on adding meaning and values to the lives of older adults as well the life of the larger Church; and

¹ *“Not only accepting but celebrating getting old, this inspirational and illuminating work looks at the many facets of the aging process, from purpose and challenges to struggles and surprises.”* Joan Chittister, The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully.

WHEREAS, a growing church identifies opportunities to utilize the gifts of older adults and helps identify unmet needs of older adults within the Church as well as the community at large and offers resources to help meet those needs; and

WHEREAS, many older adults in our congregations are currently suffering from discrimination in the public sphere, linguistic and employment discrimination, lack of access, isolation, neglect, financial exploitation, physical and psychological violence and the withholding of basic needs, among other injustices; and

WHEREAS, the issue of violence and abuse is considered a priority of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, (a position mandated by the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 33/5 to investigate, monitor, and recommend solutions to human rights violations against older persons). This issue is consistently addressed in thematic reports in the United Nations and several other international organizations.² We are called to be responsive and act; and

WHEREAS, instead of lamenting how the church is dying (physically and spiritually), we include the amazing resource of our older adults in “witnessing, loving, and serving” our communities as we continue to find ways to bring hope to this “fragmented world.” We seek to better engage the older adults in our communities and to help older adults grow in their faith; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that congregations and regions implement the necessary steps to live into our Silver Chalice Covenant to lift up ministry to, for, and with older adults.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly encourage the starting of more intergenerational programs where children and teens interact with older adults in meaningful and joy-filled ways.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Disciples seek to serve those in our congregations and communities living with dementia as well as possible and to have more resources for caregivers and support groups.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Silver Chalice offers two levels to indicate a congregation’s/organization’s commitment to older adults. Silver Chalice congregations/organizations will have access to a designated Silver Chalice Mentor to

² See UN General Assembly, *Resolution 33/5 adopted by the Human Rights Council on 29 September 2016, The human rights of older persons*, [1617221 \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/en/resolutions/1617221-un.org), “Older People’s Rights” Amnesty International. [Older People - Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/en/older-people/), Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, Organization of American States, Resolution A-70 (June 15, 2015), UN Registration: 02/27/2017 No. 54318, [OAS :: SLA :: Department of International Law \(DIL\) :: Inter-American Treaties](https://www.oas.org/en/sla).

walk through the process, to encourage brainstorming and to implement what would work best for the setting and connect to available resources.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly, meeting in Memphis, Tennessee July 12-15, 2025 calls on the church to support educational and advocacy initiatives that affirm and defend the right of older adults to health, social security, participation, independence, and adequate housing, as well as to be protected from discrimination, abuse, and any other form of violence, and to ensure that older adults live with dignity, respect, and love – by designating a Silver Chalice Ministry.

The Christian Church in Mid-America, Springfield Missouri
The Christian Church in Florida, Ocala, Florida
National Benevolent Association, St. Louis, Missouri

BACKGROUND

Silver Chalice Pilot Congregations:

West Street Christian Church, Tipton IN
First Christian Church, Jacksonville FL
United Churches of Lycoming County, Williamsport PA
Hillsville Christian Church, Hillsville VA
Countryside Christian Church, Winchester IN
Oakview Christian Church, Wichita KS
Blue Valley Christian Church, Overland Park KS
First Christian Church, Utica KS
First Christian Church, Frankford MO
Red Top Christian Church, Hallsville MO
Community Christian Church, Kansas City MO
Park Hill Christian Church, Kansas City MO
Affton Christian Church, St Louis MO
First Christian Church, Republic MO
Riverside Avenue Christian Church, Jacksonville FL
Murray Hills Christian Church, Beaverton OR
Affton Christian Church, St Louis, MO