

NBA Board of Trustees Meets Virtually, Reflects on Racial Justice, Coronavirus

NBA | June 22, 2020



Members of the [Board of Trustees](#) for the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) met June 4-5, 2020, for their Spring meeting. The Spring meeting is typically held at the NBA offices in St. Louis, MO, but was held instead over video conferencing to honor travel restrictions that protect staff and trustees from COVID-19.

The session began Thursday evening and included updates of the program changes NBA made in response to the pandemic. Among the updates were the [adjustments to the XPLORE program year](#), cancellations of NBA-hosted in-person events, and the creation of the [COVID-19 NBA Response Grants](#). As part of the program pivots, the Mental Health and Wellness Initiative team provided several [SoulCare webinars](#), the [Peer Groups](#) continued to meet virtually, and the 2020 [SENT Seminar](#) will be held in a virtual classroom environment.

Also on the Thursday agenda were messages from our [President and CEO Mark D. Anderson](#), and special words from [Disciples General Minister and President, Rev. Terri Hord Owens](#). In his message, Anderson confesses, "I have come to this meeting with a loss for words." His statement reflected on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, including loss of life, economic hardships, and the systemic racism leading to deeper pains among communities of color:

"A spotlight has shined upon the racial disparities of the pandemic, with a disproportioned number of black and brown individuals being infected and dying from the virus, clearly unveiling another inequity in our healthcare system. ... When we weren't sheltering in place and slowly thinking about opening back up from the pandemic lockdown, the other disease smacked us upside the head. The disease, the sin, of racism."

Rev. Hord Owens spoke to the Board of Trustees and added her voice on the effects of inequality in racism, and what addressing those issues means for the church.

"We have to shift the narrative so that every day we're actually making choices that will move us one step closer towards a set of values that guide everything we do. Either we're all inclusive, or we're not. Either we are working to dismantle systems of racism—not only within our church but within our society—or we are not. It's not enough for us to take comfort of that being one of our

priorities, without us actively doing things collaboratively—as individuals, as congregations, as general ministries, as a whole church.”

Friday’s session included a variety of financial discussions, including a guest appearance from Rev. [Gary Kidwell](#), President of the [Christian Church Foundation](#) (CCF). Members of the NBA Board offered appreciation for the ministries of CCF as they continue to guide Disciples through financial decisions in the current market situation.

During this meeting, the Board of Trustees elected six new members to the group. The NBA is excited to welcome such a large and diverse group of Trustees to our Board. Our new Trustees include: Rev. Pedro Antonio Ramos Goycolea (Tucson, AZ); Ms. Susan Morris (Omaha, NE); Mr. Emmanuel Freeman (Los Angeles, CA); Rev. Daniel Gulden (Indianapolis, IN); Rev. Shanna Steitz (Kansas City, MO); Rev. Richie Sanchez, Regional Minister and President (Pacific Southwest Region). The NBA staff and the Board of Trustees also honored three Trustees whose terms of service were completed. We are deeply grateful and honored by the service, commitment, and leadership from [Ms. Lisa Legeer](#), [Rev. Mary Lou Kegler](#), and [Ms. Audrey Jackson](#). To learn more about the NBA Board of Trustees and their leadership with NBA, visit <https://www.nbacares.org/board-of-trustees>.

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacares.org.