

Hi, I'm Cherilyn Williams from the Office of General Minister and President. You'll be hearing from our general minister and president, Rev. Terri Hord Owens, later in the week, but I want to bring greetings early on and a reminder of what it is that brings Disciples together in **covenant**.

We have lots of resources on disciples.org from brochures to identity studies, but I want to highlight this document called the Design that lays out what binds us. It begins with a beautiful statement known as the preamble.

If you look on the back of this brochure in your packet you can say it together with me as an affirmation of our unity.

PREAMBLE

*As members of the Christian Church,
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the living God,
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.
In Christ's name and by his grace
we accept our mission of witness
and service to all people.
We rejoice in God,
maker of heaven and earth,
and in God's covenant of love
which binds us to God and to one another.
Through baptism into Christ
we enter into newness of life
and are made one with the whole people of God.*

*In the communion of the Holy Spirit
we are joined together in discipleship
and in obedience to Christ.
At the Table of the Lord
we celebrate with thanksgiving
the saving acts and presence of Christ.
Within the universal church
we receive the gift of ministry
and the light of scripture.
In the bonds of Christian faith
we yield ourselves to God
that we may serve the One
whose kingdom has no end.
Blessing, glory, and honor
be to God forever. Amen.*

This covenant we share is manifested in so many ways.

We work together as local faith communities, as regions and in general ministries and gatherings, three expressions of our call to be Church.

We support one another in covenantal bonds through giving of time and talents through participation in the work of the general Church across the United States and Canada and indeed the globe, through participation in the life of our regions and our local congregations.

We are accountable to one another, whether it is the annual reports faith communities share for the year book or the annual reports the general ministries and regions share with the general board or the reports that are shared with the whole body at the General Assembly.

We also support one another through the gifts of treasure through our shared Disciples Mission Fund which funds our general and regional expressions of Church.

Yes, we Disciples are a diverse lot, proud of our heritage of self governance in our congregations and regions, but also proud of our heritage as a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, welcoming all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

Thank you for giving of yourselves. For hearing the call to be here. For being leaders in this particular community of faith we call the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).