



New Church Ministry

# Sparks

Igniting the passion to start new Disciples churches

## Share the Chalice

### Pentecost Offering collected May 4 and 11

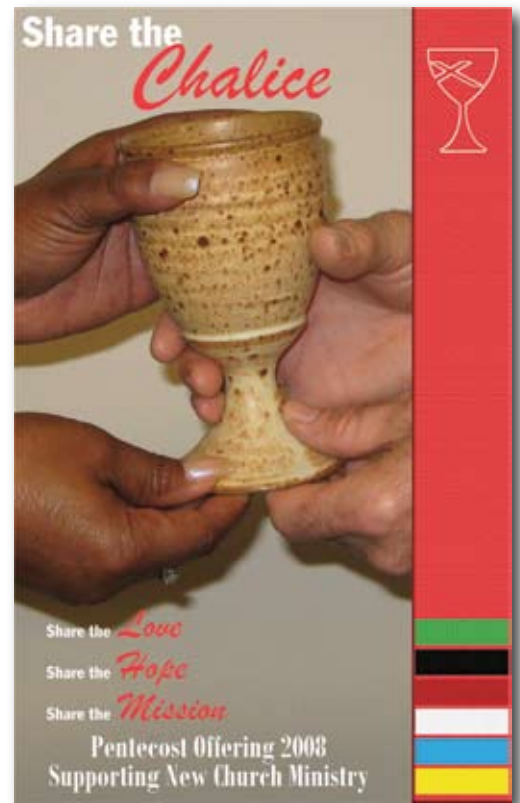
Much of the New Church Movement is funded through the Pentecost Offering: the new church planter training events, Super Peer Group, grants, cluster meetings, and the additional services that are provided by New Church Ministry. It is also important to note that half of all monies raised stay in the region where the offering is collected.

Sharing the chalice is sharing the love, the hope and the mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with those who may not otherwise know of God's unfailing grace. It is sharing the wealth that we have been so richly blessed with, in order to bless others.

God has utilized the Disciples of Christ to start 542 new churches since 2001. It is about more than just numbers. In those new churches, God has come to bless more than 38,000 people who have come to the faith. While some are transfers from other congregations, most are new to the faith. Most have come by a confession of the faith for the first time as adults. God is doing a new thing in the Christian Church. God's Spirit is visiting our house like a mighty wind. Can't you feel it?

By sharing the chalice, Disciples are unleashing the spirit to work in lives. We are showing thousands of individuals the grace behind our belief of an open table. We are helping Christ's light shine through this act of partnership.

Be a part of the movement; give to the Pentecost Offering May 4 and 11, 2008. **Mail offering collections to Church Finance Council at: P.O. Box 1986 Indianapolis, IN 46206. For more information on the Pentecost Offering call Charlie Wallace, New Church Ministry, at 800.274.1883.**



## Liz Myer Boulton develops vital ministry in new church movement



Liz Myer Boulton

she developed an exciting ministry in the Boston, Mass. area where the Disciples had no witness. She began before New Church Ministry had a coaching program in place.

When the new church movement launched in 2001, Elizabeth Myer Boulton was one of the first pastors to hear the call. A recent graduate of Disciples Divinity House in Chicago,

Today, Myer Boulton (Liz to those who know her) is pastor of Hope Church, located in Roslindale, Mass., a vital and growing Disciples/United Church of Christ (UCC) congregation. The congregation celebrated its fifth anniversary in December 2007. This ministry has flourished under her leadership. Hope Church infuses a relational element throughout its programming, because community is a big part of what they are about.

"We are a diverse community of hope, learning and growing together in faith, love, and joy," said Myer Boulton. "With God's help, we seek to struggle together for God's

— continued on next page

# Hamm sets lasting legacy in New Church Ministry

On Pentecost Sunday, Dick Hamm will return to the church where his family became charter members some 50 years ago to celebrate the church's anniversary and the congregation's commitment to the mission field.

Hamm's first encounter with the new church movement was at the age of 10 years. In 1957 his family relocated to St. Petersburg, Fla. His parents, Harold and Mildred, made the decision to unite the family with Mirror Lake Christian Church. It was less than one year later that the leadership of Mirror Lake decided to plant a new church in the suburbs of St. Petersburg. On Pentecost Sunday in 1958 with approximately 50 members, Palm Lake Christian Church was established in a renovated building that was formerly a chicken coop.

Being a charter member of Palm Lake was a great experience, reflects Hamm. "I remember the warmth of the congregation and that young people had a voice," he said. "With the new church there was a spirit of adventure," said Hamm. "The congregation was interested in me and provided encouragement." But one of his most impressive experiences was when he met his first mentor, Kenneth G. Dean, the first pastor of Palm Lake. "He was a warm person and a wonderful human being," said Hamm. The next pastor, J.W. Cate, was also a great influence.

After graduating from Butler University in Indianapolis, Hamm attended Christian Theological Seminary where he received both his masters of divinity and a doctorate of ministry.



Harold, Charles, Mildred and Dick Hamm in 1958.

When Hamm graduated from CTS, he served as an associate minister in Kansas City, Kan. It was

during this time that he encountered the New Church Ministry movement again. The Kansas City Area approached him about starting a new church. "They thought that I was a good person to do this," said Hamm. In 1975 Hamm planted North Oak Christian Church in Kansas City, Mo. During the seven years that he pastored, he watched the church flourish and become a vital mission field in the community.

While Hamm loved the New Church experience, an opportunity opened in Fort Wayne, Ind. "Jim Powell was on regional staff in Indiana and mentioned that a senior pastor position was open at First Christian Church. He suggested that I look at the position." Hamm became senior pastor of First Christian and served there for eight years. However, he never lost his passion for the new church movement.

In 1990 Hamm became regional minister of Tennessee. It was while serving in this position that he received the call to become general minister and president of the denomination. During his appointment, he established a lasting legacy, which included supporting the growth of the new church movement. He remembers one of the important parts of his legacy as general minister and president was being involved in the call of Rick Morse to lead the charge of the Disciples New Church Ministry. "Rick has been essential to the growth and success of the new church movement," said Hamm.

Hamm believes that the new church movement is critical. "New Church Ministry provides an essential part of that mission. It is vital to our life as a church," he said. "The more new churches of different ethnicities that we start across the United States, the more our denomination will look like the face of America."

Though Hamm has completed his tenure as general minister and president (he says with a grin that his tenure was 10 years, three months and two days), he continues his work in the ministry passing on his experience through preaching, teaching and writing several books.

## Boulton *(continued from page 1)*

peace and justice, to explore practices of Christian spirituality, and to serve our neighbors in greater Boston."

With her husband Matthew, Myer Boulton is developing a strong, mission-minded congregation. "At Hope Church, we believe God's peace and justice are intimately connected with our faith, and our lives together," she said. "We have been called to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned."

In 2005, Myer Boulton preached during New Church Ministry's Super Peer Group in Lexington, Ky. Her use of

language held the fellow ministers captive. "Liz has a gift," said Charlie Wallace, organizer of the event. "She can take a very complex topic, and transform it into something anyone can relate to," he said. "Because of this ability, she is able to reach out to those who may not have grown up in a church setting."

Today there are 25 major U.S. cities that do not have a Disciples presence. New Church Ministry is looking for other courageous souls who can walk in Myer Boulton's footsteps to start a Disciples ministry.

# Fruits of New Church Ministry training yield future churches

In mid-February, 94 people came together in rainy Burlingame, Calif., to develop a vision, a mission and core values, which would guide them in starting new Disciples of Christ churches throughout the U.S. and Canada. These projects represented 19 of the Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

It was a display of unity among those gathered with one common dream—of one day opening a church that will challenge and transform lives. African-Americans sang together with Koreans. Haitian brothers held hands with pastors originally from Vietnam. An enthusiastic and engaged group of Filipino descent shared stories with new friends from Puerto Rico. And Anglos, old and young, dared to dance during worship. For the four nights in which all were joined together for training, they looked remarkably like the face of the nation.

“Our nation is changing,” said Rick Morse, vice president for New Church Ministry and Mission Initiatives. “As a result, the way we do church is changing,” he said. “New churches that reach out to previously unreached popula-



tions help us stay relevant as a denomination. The diversity and experiences that these churches bring to the table enrich all of our lives.”

The fruits of this training may yield as many as 30 new congregations for the Disciples. And the seeds planted through those congregations, only God knows where they will be spread.



*New Church Ministry training in Burlingame, Calif.*

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## Upcoming NCM Events

**Super Peer Group, May 20-22, Bethany, W.Va.**

**Revival, May 20-23, Bethany, W.Va.**

**New Church Barnabas Training, Sept. 7-8, Indianapolis**

**New Church Planters Initial Training, Sept. 8-12, Indianapolis**

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Inspirational excerpts written by a few of the pastors, minister's spouses, and core leaders who attended the New Church Ministry training in February 2008.

“I have come to training this week to act upon a passion. I am in the discernment phase of church planting. I relish in the thought of leading people to Christ, developing a vision and mission for my church and working with a team of like believers with ultimate responsibility resting on God, through me.”

“Our mission is to teach and prepare the people of God for His coming. To heal and feed those who have no hope, baptizing them according to Matthew 28:19 with no conditions.”

“I watched my husband struggle with career options and troubles many times during the first 10 years of our marriage, culminating in a 13-month period where he was without work. This crisis and subsequent recovery with the help of church friends, planted the seeds for our next venture.”

# A partnership that reaches beyond regional lines



*Don Vanzant*

Don Vanzant pastored Central Christian Church in Danville, Ill., for five years. The church was very involved in the community. Things were going well. However for Vanzant, it wasn't enough. He had a strong yearning on his heart to do a new thing.

Vanzant answered his call to plant a church in Lexington, Ky. According to Vanzant, when he

uprooted his family to do this new thing, it was an act of faith. "My wife, Nina, and I relocated to Lexington in July 2007," said Vanzant. "We simply stepped out on faith."

While the congregation is in formation standing, The Gathering, as the church is called, has 20 members and meets twice a week at Midway College's new satellite campus in Lexington.

Scott Woolridge, associate regional minister for the Illinois and Wisconsin Region, knew Vanzant and admired his spirit for the ministry. "Don Vanzant was very faithful and effective in his ministry in Danville," said Woolridge. "He was an active Disciple in the Region and had certainly

proven himself as a great pastor." However, Woolridge, who knew Vanzant personally, had sensed a calling on his life to serve God in a new way by planting a church.

The New Church Establishment Committee in the Illinois and Wisconsin Region wanted to do something to demonstrate support for Vanzant's calling in Kentucky. "Vanzant had the commitment and ability to start a new church and be successful," said Woolridge. The Illinois and Wisconsin Region provided the Kentucky Region with a grant to specifically be used to help Vanzant plant a church in Lexington. The check was presented to representatives of the Kentucky Region at the New Church Ministry Summit in Nov. 2007. Meanwhile the Kentucky Region reciprocated the gesture by matching the grant for Vanzant. "We worked with the Kentucky Region to make this possible," said Woolridge. "It demonstrates how one region can work with another and provide a great partnership."

"We recognize the tremendous faith of Don Vanzant," said Greg Alexander, general minister, Kentucky Region. "The Kentucky Region was proud to work with Illinois and Wisconsin Region to provide a matching grant to The Gathering. This has been a great working partnership that we hope will set an example for other regions," he said.



## **New Church Ministry**

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