



ASSOCIATION OF DISCIPLE MUSICIANS

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2019

For most places,
as we approach
Thanksgiving, trees
cold fronts are
some storms, and
the oppressive heat go
time when
having their



there's a nip in the air
Halloween and
are changing color,
bringing rain and
many are happy to see
away. It's also the
congregations are
Stewardship

Campaigns, budgets are being planned, and those of you in staff positions can put in your requests for supplies and conference expenses. ADM and the 2020 Conference Planning Team would love for you to make plans to be in Tulsa next July 26-31 and reap the benefits from the 59th Annual Conference!

Meet The 2020 Clinicians



The first clinician to be featured is Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Rev. Hord Owens will serve as the **Worship Clinician** for next year's ADM Conference. Rev. Hord Owens was elected as the General Minister and President on July 9, 2017. A Disciple since young adulthood, Hord Owens was dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School and pastor of First Christian Church of Downers Grove, IL prior to her election.

Hord Owens' resume includes more than 20 years in corporate America leading diverse teams in data management before she entered seminary. For 15 years, she served as the dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School, shepherding a varied student body in both background and theology.

Hord Owens is widely sought after as a preacher, speaker and workshop facilitator. Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and the mentoring of youth and young adults. She is married to Walter Owens, Jr., with whom she celebrated 30 years of marriage prior to her election. They are the proud parents of an adult son, W. Mitchell Owens, III.





Your 2020 Conference Planning Team of Larry Sivis, Katrina Cochran, and Randy Frieling have been hard at work pulling together an amazing group of clinicians, a wide variety of daily options, and special evening programs. There will be more 2020 conference details in future newsletters and also on our website, www.adm-doc.org.



Introducing the 2021 Planning Team



Alin Cass is Director of Music Ministry and Office Manager at North Christian Church in Fort Wayne, IN, where he directs a mixed choir, a handbell choir, and plays keyboards. Alin also handles the day-to-day work of the church office. His life in church ministry began in junior high school, when he began playing for services and rehearsing small ensembles. Alin has served in Brethren, Wesleyan, Methodist, and Episcopal denominations. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and Voice Performance from Grace College, and a Master of Music degree from Butler University.

Alin's other job is teaching private voice and piano lessons with fifteen to twenty students each week. Alin has appeared as tenor soloist with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Bach Collegium and Heartland Sings and has also appeared in community theatre musicals such as Mary Poppins, Music Man, Little Women, and Falsettos. Alin has two feline fur babies, Sampson and Delilah, and enjoys family history research in his "free time."

Sara Collins is the Minister of Worship at Faith Christian Church in Omaha, NE. Sara grew up in rural Nebraska, and has been participating in church choirs and praise teams since she was a young girl. After high school, Sara received her undergraduate degree in elementary education, but continued to stay active in music, accompanying students on the piano and playing the organ for her church. Sara continued to be active as a church organist, children's choir director, and choir member until beginning her work as Minister of Worship at Faith Christian. Sara has most recently been teaching 5th grade in Omaha, but began a new position as an elementary school librarian this fall. Sara is married, and her husband, Randall, is the lead musician at Faith Christian. They have two children.



Ed Varnum is a retired minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), having served congregations in Oklahoma, Texas, Southern California, and Missouri. Ed and his wife, Jan, now make their home south of Columbia, MO, in the village of Pierpont. The Varnums have four children, three grandchildren, and a feisty Morkie terrier.

Ed grew up in Glendale, AZ, where he was active in music both in school and community. He graduated from Arizona State University with a BA in Education with his major in music and taught high school choral music and elementary school general music before entering Christian ministry. Ed's primary musical instruments are guitar and percussion.

A Special Conference Sharing

ADMer, Rev. Larry Sivis, sent this remembrance from the 2019 Conference.....

One of the amazing experiences each year at our ADM conference is the chance to visit one-on-one around table, in the hallway, or after an option with our world-class clinicians. This was certainly true again with this past summer's conference in St. Louis. It was my privilege to get to work closely with Dr. Mack Wilberg of the Tabernacle Choir, our choral clinician and ADM Chorus director. Through the year I had corresponded back and forth with Dr. Wilberg thru his administrative assistant at the Temple Square office in Salt Lake. So needless to say, I was a bit anxious to finally meet him in person at the beginning of the conference.

I definitely wasn't disappointed and I'm sure others weren't either. His professional choral music reputation and status, not only at Temple Square, but around the world, in no way got in the way of his endearing personality. My experience was that he is the most down-to-earth, caring and collegial person you'll ever meet. Many of us who were able to sit in on his option class were able to hear about a current experience he's having that illustrates this so well. One that has renewed some real joy for him.

Not long ago a men's prison and reformatory there in Salt Lake contacted the Temple Square office and asked if there might be an assistant of Dr. Wilberg's who might be willing to come out to the prison and help them start a choir. As Mack related, the request came across his desk and he mulled it over for a while. It just happened it was the same prison he passed on his way home every day. One night at supper, he mentioned to his wife that he was considering giving it a try himself! Of course, she wasn't sure with all his pressing schedule, but he decided to go for it with her support.

As he related, the first night of rehearsal the prison officials checked him through all the intimidating security points and took him down to a room that functioned as the prison chapel. He certainly wasn't sure what to expect, but when they opened the door to the room, it was filled wall-to-wall with men! A young man, a prisoner himself and accomplished pianist, volunteered to be the accompanist. Dr. Wilberg was amazed at the men's eagerness to learn and sing, and he became pretty close with some of the guys early on. Even when some of the men got into trouble during the day and the choir privilege was withdrawn, they always sent word to him that they'd be at rehearsal the next week!

As they were preparing the first concert for the prison staff and the prisoners' families, Dr. Wilberg decided he would "stretch" the men and introduce them to a totally different choral style. He decided to introduce them to a piece by a German composer with a strange name: Buxtehude. He told them the story of the young J.S. Bach walking quite a distance to hear Buxtehude, study with him, and overstaying his leave from his church. The men eagerly tackled the piece and at the first rehearsal after the concert, Dr. Wilberg said the first thing they mentioned was, "Can we do another Buxtehude piece?"

It's stories and experiences like this that give such a "human face" to the clinicians we're so privileged to interact with and learn from each summer. I know you join me in looking forward to all the meaningful opportunities we'll have next summer at Tulsa University! Larry



A Platform For News

Your newsletter editor with help from Patty Jennings, Council President 2017-2018, has hopes of giving each and every one of you a special place in the newsletter to share something “newsy” that you feel would be of interest to all ADMers. Your article could be the description of a “special” service you’ve had in your church, an upcoming musical concert or workshop in your area, something that was especially meaningful at a prior conference (such as Larry’s story from Dr. Wilberg), or anything you’d like to share. As we approach Advent and Christmas, Patty’s first contribution not only sets the tone for what I hope will be a recurring article, but gives us all some food for thought for the 2019 Christmas Season.

“Joy to the World”

Article submitted by Patty Jennings, ADM Past-President

Choose the correct answer:

- (a) “Joy to the World” is a popular Christmas carol with words by Isaac Watts written in 1719 and based on Psalm 98:4.
- (b) “Joy to the World” is a song written by Hoyt Axton and made famous by the band Three Dog Night, originally released in 1970.
- (c) “Joy to the World” is the most-published Christmas hymn in North America.
- (d) “The View” turned religious Christmas song “Joy to the World” into an impeachment anthem this month.

If you chose (a), (b), (c) and/or (d), you would be correct! “Joy to the World” is all of the above and more. And there are complaints that religious hymns are “out of touch” and “out of date”. Wrong!

This year the Christmas classic “Joy to the World” turns 300 years old!

Isaac Watts intended the song to be sung year round. It was meant to glorify the return of Christ. However, the celebratory nature of the song makes it a perfect fit for Christmas.

It was once thought the music was written by Frederick Handel. Most scholars today refute this claim. It is widely believed the music was actually composed by Lowell Mason in 1839. Based on similarities, it appears Mason may have “borrowed” notes from Handel’s “Messiah”. Gee, that’s never been done before, has it?

So, dust off those Advent planners; refresh those anthems, organ and piano pieces; prepare some fresh new music; line-up your soloists and instrumentalists; and include “Joy to the World” this year. Who knows? There’s probably a mixture

of the religious hymn AND the Three Dog Night version in cyberspace somewhere just waiting for us to grab it. Let me know how that turns out (or not!). Remember, "Jesus is the reason for the season." Amen and "Joy to the World!"



Please remember that ADM can always use your support whether you attend a summer conference or not by renewing or re-establishing your membership. Annual dues are still just \$25.00, and it's so easy to pay by going to the ADM website, www.adm-doc.org, clicking on "Join ADM," and following the directions. If you are planning to attend the 2020 conference, annual dues will be included in the registration fee.

Updates are posted on our website, so check it often! www.adm-doc.org

Your Newsletter Editor, Brad Burnham, welcomes news items that would be of interest and help to the musicians, ministers, lay-persons, and anyone else in our email distribution lists. And, you are always encouraged to share what you receive with those you know in other churches or denominations. Brad's email address is bradb1007@gmail.com.

If you are active with Facebook, you are encouraged to join the ADM Group. Search for **ADM-Association of Disciple Musicians** and request to join the group. You'll be connected to other members all year round and can ask questions and share neat tips and tricks. It's just another way to stay connected with your ADM Family!