



DHF

Connection

WINTER 2021

A New Ministry Season

There is a lake in the middle of our city. It serves as the community's reservoir, created by a dam built 100 years ago across the Sangamon River. The lake boasts of more than 30 miles of shoreline and is Illinois' most extensive body of water.

There's not much recreation available at the lake this time of year. As I recently drove on a bridge over the lake, I noticed areas covered by ice, only broken in the middle as the river winds its way along the original river bed.

The lake mirrors all the seasons of mid-western Illinois and appears unfazed by the changes. Winter is frigid. Fall and spring are mildly pleasant. Summer is, well, hot. Water flows regardless of the air temperature, either under the ice of winter or blown along by gentle summer breezes.

Ministry may also be described as seasonal. There are periods when ministry is blazingly hot, such as a heat-of-the-moment church board meeting or the burning frustration with denominational hierarchies and bureaucracies. There are moments when ministry is chilly because a congregation has grown cold in evangelism or icy in relationships.

Clergy and congregants long for mildly pleasant days of ministry when all is sunny; the congregation is neither too

fazed at the ever-changing cultural setting nor too passive toward novel ministry outreach efforts.

Yet, four seasons are God's created order for nature's rhythm here in North America. God knew we could adapt to summer's heat and winter's cold.

Perhaps then, God shows up in the struggle with your congregation's icy apathy or your denomination's wild and heated idiosyncrasies. Apparently, you and I can adapt.

That has certainly proven the case for my ministry career, which began in 1978. God has shown up in every season for more than 40 years.

It is always at the right moment, making sense of the heated struggles and bringing new days of refreshing ministry following difficult seasons.

So, spring is on the way in Decatur. The lake's ice will soon melt, and a new season is coming.

Grace for you today.

Wayne

Contact
DHF for help
regarding a new
ministry season

rgrace@discipleheritage.org
217.875.3350



Wayne Kent | wayne@firstdeatur.org

Wayne is the Executive Director of Disciple Heritage Fellowship and Lead Pastor of First Christian Church, Decatur, IL. He has theological degrees from Phillips Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

DHF'21

DHF National Conference | Thursday & Friday, April 22-23, 2021

Teaching. Fellowship. Breaking bread. Prayer. Praise. These five aspects of the life of the early church became benchmarks. Every time they gathered to worship God, these five elements were present. Alexander Campbell, an early Restoration Movement leader, called them "the five orders of the church." These aspects remain present when DHF churches gather today.

These five orders will be experienced during the **Disciple Heritage Fellowship National Conference on April 22-23, 2021 at First Christian Church in Decatur, IL**. We will gather in person, observing COVID-19 guidelines for our area. The goal is to celebrate Jesus corporately for two days.

Participants can expect teaching based squarely on the Word of God. Speakers include:

- ▶ Pastor Kim Holley, new DHF Board President and Pastor of La Grange Christian Church in La Grange, NC
- ▶ Tony Kirkman, LCPC, Executive Director of the Piatt County Mental Health Center in Monticello, IL
- ▶ Dr. Ken Moberg, Interim Pastor Ministries
- ▶ Pastor Raphael Starr, Associate Pastor of East Main Street Christian Church in Elwood, IN

- ▶ Dr. Wayne Kent, Executive Director of DHF and Lead Pastor of First Christian Church in Decatur, IL

In addition, we will offer three breakout sessions which will provide practical information on aspects vital to today's ministry setting.

April 22-23
2021
Decatur, IL

The Worship Arts team of our host, First Christian Church, will lead worship throughout the two-day event. Attendees will be divided into smaller groups to share a meal Thursday night. The intent is to network, meet, and make new friends. In short, to fellowship and share life.

I am looking forward to the 2021 DHF National Conference. Your prayer support for our conference is appreciated. Consider attending as we celebrate what God is doing in and through DHF. See back for registration information.

Contact me at rgrace@discipleheritage.org or call 217-875-3350 if we can support you in fulfilling Christ's mission for your church. I look forward to seeing you in April!

Rick

JESUS



Rick Grace | rgrace@discipleheritage.org

Rick is the DHF Church Liaison. He and his wife, Nancy, have served in pastoral ministry for more than 45 years. Rick earned his doctorate from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.



The Fountain Christian Church

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA



*Top: Leading worship outside during
COVID-19 restrictions
Right: Pastor Sam & Heather Sears and their
children Leliana & Avery Joe*



The Fountain's story began in August 1857 when pioneers gathered in a grove of oak trees. This meager beginning established First Christian Church in the village of Visalia, California, believed to be the oldest Christian Church between Stockton and Los Angeles. It is the second oldest church in Visalia.

In 163 years, First Christian Church of Visalia grew and moved buildings several times, finally settling in the current location in 2000. It became clear the body of believers worshipping at FCC Visalia were not on the same path as the Disciples of Christ denomination. On October 23, 2005, the congregation voted to remove itself from the Disciples of Christ to join Disciple Heritage Fellowship.

Pastor Mike Messenger faithfully served the congregation for 17 years before passing the baton to Pastor Sam Sears in 2018. Sam and his wife Heather came from Mississippi, where Sam served as a full-time missionary apologist at Ole Miss. He graduated from Luther Rice with an M.A. in Apologetics and has been in preaching ministry since the age of 18.

One of Pastor Mike's last suggestions for the congregation was a name change for the church. A beautiful fountain in the church courtyard served as inspiration. The congregation

desires to be a fountain through which the living water of Jesus flows into the community of Visalia. In 2019, First Christian Church became The Fountain.

Pastor Sam leads The Fountain alongside Associate Carrie Guy, Worship Pastor Chuck Romer, Office Administrator Sheila Ronk, with the recent addition of Contemporary Worship Leader/ Next Generation Pastor Romy Sagastume.

The Fountain honors its rich heritage through active seniors, a traditional service, and an onsite library containing touchstones of our long history. We have embraced change with social media, a new logo and website, updated technology for streaming services, and a contemporary worship service.

A renewed emphasis at the Fountain is worshipping God with our minds (Mark 12:30). Our desire is for our community to find depth at The Fountain. We anticipate great days of ministry ahead in our partnership with Disciple Heritage Fellowship.

To find out more about The Fountain Christian Church in Visalia, California, visit their website at:

thefountaincc.org



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ILLINOIS

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TEXAS

DHF'21

DISCIPLE HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
APRIL 22-23, 2021 IN DECATUR, IL



KIM HOLLEY



TONY KIRKMAN



KEN MOBERG



RAPHAEL STARR



WAYNE KENT

About

The DHF 2021 National Conference is a two-day event for all pastors, church leaders, and any believer who wants to be encouraged to fulfill Christ's mission in their local church. We will feature top notch speakers, relevant and practical breakout sessions, engaging worship, and time to build relationships.

Registration

Registration for the DHF National Conference is \$50/person or \$75/couple. Visit **discipleheritage.org** for registration as well as hotel and travel information. We will observe COVID-19 guidelines according to our region so watch for updates on our website and social media. Questions? Call 217.875.3350.

DETAILS & REGISTRATION AT
discipleheritage.org