

2024 Regional Assembly Workshops

“Constitutions, By-laws & Policies...Oh, My!” – presented by Josh Crabtree

You've got a great community, a strong mission, and a lot of good work to do. But then someone mentions something about "governing documents," and you're like, "What on earth is that?"

Well, fear not! Our presentation is here to save the day. We're going to break it down for you in simple terms – no legal jargon, no confusing language. We're talking about stuff like your constitution, bylaws, and policies. Sounds boring, I know, but trust me, it's important stuff.

Whether you're a small congregation or a big church with multiple branches, having these documents in place is crucial. They provide clarity on how decisions are made, how leadership is structured, and how conflicts are resolved. Plus, they can help protect your church legally and financially. I promise it won't be as dull as it sounds – and hey, you might even learn something that could save you a lot of trouble in the long run.

Joshua Crabtree is father, husband, elder, raconteur and attorney (don't hold that against him). He has been a member of the of Florence Christian Church for almost 25 years and served in about every leadership role (and they have not yet revoked his membership). Joshua delights in many things, not the least of which is Robert's Rules of Order.

"Dementia, Caregiving, and Christian Discipleship: Managing Ministry for Dementia Patients and their Caregivers" — presented by Rev. Marie Weaver

In this workshop we will discuss why this ministry is vital, who should be involved, and how to begin and manage a ministry for those with dementia and their caregivers. This discussion will be accompanied with a Bible study guide.

Marie Weaver, Commissioned minister for the Disciples of Christ in Kentucky. For the last 7 years, she has been caregiver for her husband who suffers with Alzheimer's disease. She facilitates a monthly support group for clergy who are caregivers (began over 2 years ago!). She wrote the Bible study book used in this workshop.

"When Did We See You?": An Afternoon of Service for Youth! — Presented by Rev. Michelle Ballard

This opportunity is for 6th-12th graders attending the Regional Assembly. During the workshop window, youth will journey to KEAS House of Blessing, a local clothing closet to help clean, organize, and serve. Make plans to bring your youth to the Assembly and send them out to serve during the two hour window. We will depart from Church Welcome Center at 1:30pm.

Rev. Michelle Ballard is approaching seven years of service, as the Associate Minister of Children and Youth at First Christian Church Mt. Sterling. She is currently working on her Doctor of Ministry degree from Lexington Theological Seminary. When she isn't serving the church, she volunteers at CHI St. Joseph Hospital as a Chaplain, and serves on the Board of the Montgomery County Homeless Coalition. She resides in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky with her husband, Dr. Will Tidwell, and their fur baby, Oreo.

“Fine Tuning Your Women’s Ministries” — presented by Marsha Thornton Jr.

This workshop will be helpful for churches who are hoping to revitalize their DWM groups, are looking for curriculum to deepen their studies, or are wanting more information about expanding their opportunities through such programs as Woman to Woman and Women's Action Web. This workshop will also share the importance of DWM groups and how they help to strengthen the church as a whole.

Marsha M. Thornton, Jr. is the Region’s Director of Disciples Women’s Ministries. She is a member of Third Central United Christian Church (DOC), in Louisville, KY, where she serves as a Deacon and church Treasurer. She has been a member there since April 1992. She has served on the Women’s Ministry Cabinet since around 2000 and previously served as President. In December 2022, she officially accepted the position as Director of Disciples Women’s Ministries in Kentucky. Marsha is the mother of 2 young ladies and works full time for The Salvation Army as Divisional Headquarters Accounting Supervisor for Kentucky-Tennessee Division. She has a business where she teaches the soft skills of etiquette and assists in aiding individuals in creating their professional images; ImageU, LLC. She has Bachelor of Science degree from Central State University in Business – Marketing and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Louisville in Higher Education – Human Resources.

“Focusing on Finances Today to Prepare Pastors and Lay Employees for Tomorrow” — presented by Rev. Sarah Renfro

Rev. Renfro will offer a presentation and guide conversation around the topics of financial wellness and products and programs available to not only clergy but lay employees, as well. Time will be spent on how best to save today to prepare for tomorrow and how Pension Fund lives out its mission *For the Support of Ministry*.

Rev. Sarah Renfro, Kentucky native and Lexington Theological Seminary graduate, served churches in Kentucky and Indiana before joining the Pension Fund team almost six years ago. As Assistant Vice President of Client Relations, she oversees the Enrollment Specialist team and the regions of Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois-Wisconsin, Mid-America, Greater Kansas City, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Upper Midwest. She is married to Rev. Kyle Brown and mom to almost teenager Miriam. She enjoys moving her

body, keeping her mind active with word puzzles, and cheering on the University of Kentucky Wildcats.

“What’s Too Much to Expect?” — presented by Rev. Dr. Kris Bentley and Rev. Dr. Lon Oliver

This hands-on workshop for clergy and lay people examines realistic expectations for 21st century bivocational ministers. NOTE: Workshop session limit: **25 people**

Rev. Dr. Kris Bentley has served in congregational ministry in the central Kentucky area for 20 years, part of that time serving as a bivocational minister. Since 2014 she has directed a research project concerning bivocational ministry at Lexington Theological Seminary.

Reverend Dr. Lon Oliver was called to the Christian Church in Kentucky in 2002 and served as a bi-vocational Associate Regional Minister for sixteen years. Lon currently serves as the Mentor/Mentee Coordinator and Chaplain at Lexington Theological Seminary and as the pastor of Nicholasville Christian Church.

“Do You Hear What I Hear?” presented by Dr. Roosevelt Escalante Jr.

This session focuses on integrating professional music standards into the worship experience. Attendees will be guided through the process of building an elite music program as well as ways to strengthen congregational participation.

Dr. Roosevelt Escalante, Jr., has been performing professionally for more than twenty years. His teaching experience includes being Full Professor of Music at Morehead State University, Associate Director of Choral Activities at Appalachian State University, and general music teacher Van Horn High School, Kansas City, MO. A native of Ft. Myers, FL, Dr. Escalante received a BM in piano performance from Stetson University, a MM degree in piano performance and a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While at the UMKC conservatory he studied with renowned pianist Richard Cass and choral visionary Eph Ehly..

Dr. Escalante is in demand as a choral conductor, pianist, arranger, and vocal coach. His entertainment experience includes events such as the KY- NFL Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Morehead State University Gala, and Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awards. Some of his recent conducting appearances include the Ohio Valley Choral Festival, Jeffersonville High School Gospelfest, Meade County High School Gospelfest, Scioto County Honor Choir, Adams County Arts Festival, and the Kentucky Music Educator’s In-Service Conference. Dr. Escalante’s international presence is extensive and recently includes several concerts and master classes in Costa Rica and Brazil. Additionally, Dr. Escalante is an elder at the First Christin Church Disciples of Mt. Sterling and has held several music ministry positions.

His professional affiliations include Phi Mu Alpha, Kentucky Music Educators Association, The Jazz Education Network, and the American Choral Director's Association.

“Theological Education Here and Now” presented by Dr. Charisse L. Gillett and Mr. Mark Blankenship

You are invited to hear from Dr. Gillett and Mr. Blankenship to learn more about **what** and **how** faithful leaders, lay and ordained are prepared for ministry in today's new reality. President Gillett will share with participants the latest trends and changing practices occurring theological education at LTS and other Seminaries throughout the country. Mr. Blankenship will update participants on the real cost of educating a student both lay and ordained. He will report what factors are impacting educational costs in theological education .

Dr. Charisse Gillett has been the president of Lexington Theological Seminary since 2011. She has more than 20 years of successful administrative experience in higher education, including service at Transylvania University, Midway College, Robert Morris College and the University of Northern Iowa. She holds a doctorate in education from Northern Illinois University. She is a commissioned minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Mark Blankenship is Vice President for Advancement at LTS, and provides leadership for fundraising, alumni relations, church, and community outreach. His appointment began in November 2011. He previously served in a variety of advancement roles in admissions, alumni relations and fundraising for his alma mater, Transylvania University, since 1983. He works with the President and executive leadership to address issues of institutional leadership and governance.