The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin



The Christian

A Disciples of Christ Quarterly Publication





















Girls' Education in Afghanistan -How your Gifts Live ON

Week of Compassion's work rests in core values of accompaniment, community and integrity - not only when it flows easily, but especially in times of crisis. Alongside global partners, Week of Compassion is expanding education for girls, bringing **GIFTS TO LIVE ON** in rural Afghanistan, communities that are marginalized and vastly underserved. Partners envision education centers, teacher training, parent and community councils, playgrounds, and school supply distribution, reaching more than 13,000 in outlying communities . These are the fundamentals every student deserves. Week of Compassion continues to work with partners to bring this possibility to women and girls worldwide.

When we give, we know that our gifts are not the only ones that matter - the true gift of compassion and connection lies in the resilience of the communities we serve. **GIFTS TO LIVE ON** live in the dreams of eager and bright girls going to school in Afghanistan.

In the generous widow, we see every Disciple who is part of Week of Compassion, and every person we hope to serve. Her generosity sparks a response in us: we give what we have, what we can offer as our very best, what is uniquely ours to bring. That's what Week of Compassion does - what Disciples do. We bring what we have to live on, which becomes a resource for others to live on - and that mutual giving is how our story lives on, too.

Please give freely and generously...YOUR gifts matter.

Week of Compassion Feb. 18 & 25, 2024 Easter Special Offering March 24 & 31, 2024

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February 2024

Regional Minister's Moment

Our mission; To connect and empower Disciples congregations for lifechanging and life-giving ministries in our evolving world.



Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 reminds us "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (NRSV)." Pete Seeger, of "Peter, Paul, and Mary" fame, actually wrote the song in 1959, but the version you are probably singing in your head was made popular by "The Byrds" in 1965.

Perhaps I have been thinking about change (and the Byrds) because of the unexpected departure of our own Angelique "Angee" Jordan Byrd to the General Church office of Communication. We are all truly proud to have shared Angee's talent and gifts with the whole church, but it did catch us by surprise.

Ministry and church life is like that. We think we know the road map and the journey ahead of us, and we start to get comfortable, when BAM! Change happens. We know a lot about change in the region. If this article publishes on February 1, 2024, it will be day 123 of my 458 day contract as Interim Regional Minister. During the first 123 days we have seen a staff transition, two board meetings (one for CCIW one for CCMR), and reacted to a number of challenges. Change happens. My guess is that change is going to keep happening.

In the 90's I was on the leadership team of a youth event themed "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." That's too many words for a poster, so the big poster theme was simply "Whole-Hearted". Trusting God with our Whole Heart means knowing that God not only holds the future, but is calling us toward a hopeful future.

I believe whole-heartedly in the work we are doing as a region. I am excited about announcements that are to come soon regarding our communication ministry, as well as our covenant partnership with the Michigan Region. Late February and early March will be big times of prayer, work, and possible change as we continue the journey. I am thankful to be on this journey with you and to be able to do what I can to lead and love through this time of anticipation and change.

Thank you, Disciples, for being willing to trust God with your Whole Heart and for your faithfulness in this season (turn, turn, turn – you know you were thinking it).



Rev. Dr. N. Alex Ruth, Associate Regional Minister for Transformation alex@cciwdisciples.org 217.415.4447

Gathering tools

Through the years, I've taken an interest in woodworking. Over 25 years ago, I bought a portable table saw, a router, and a dovetail bit. With those few tools and some hand tools I had accumulated in my teens, I set about building a display cabinet for my father-in-law's knife collection. That fall, I spent many hours on the lawn in front of our tiny apartment in Missouri, carefully cutting, routing, and assembling that cabinet. Pat left that cabinet to my son, Mason, and I am happy to say that it is in excellent shape to this day. The blood, sweat, and tears that went into building it don't show to most people, but I still see them.

Over the last quarter century, I have accumulated more and more tools. Some I inherited from my father, others I purchased myself, and still others were gifted to me. Those tools make the work that I love to do easier and possibly faster. But I am in awe of woodworkers I see online who build beautiful works of art with just a few tools. With time, patience, and intention, a craftsperson can take a saw, a chisel, and a few other tools and create something truly aweinspiring. At the end of the day, the tools are just that: tools. The creativity, persistence, and vision all come from the person, not the tools.

I believe the same is true in the church. The "right" tools, programs, worship style, ... can make transformation and vitality *easier*, but the passion, the faithfulness, and the relationships don't come from programs; they come from people. The energy and ability to become who God calls us to be comes from you and me, and is rooted in our relationship with the one who calls us by name.

As I travel around the region talking with churches and church leaders, I have seen a deep faith and commitment to God. I have also seen uncertainty, and even fear. In all my conversations, a few things have become abundantly clear:

God is at work and moving in the world.

God is calling us to work together bring about wholeness and healing.

You, our church leaders, are dedicated, passionate, gifted people.

In our uncertain world, it is easy to lose heart. There are times when all of us (yes, even me) wonder if we have what it takes. That is understandable, especially if we focus on what we, as individuals or as individual churches, can do. The stark reality is this; if we try to follow God's call on our own, we are destined to fall short. BUT, if we engage the partnerships we have in community with one another, and if we nurture and dwell in our relationship with God ... then we have all that we need to thrive!

Rev. Dr. N. Alex Ruth, Associate Regional Minister for Transformation alex@cciwdisciples.org 217.415.4447

This year, the transformation team is working to create a resource to help congregations unveil the "Threads of Transformation" that connect us to God and to one another and empower us to become the people and churches God is calling us to be. As we do this work, we need your help! We need you to share your stories with us. Where have you found connections that have given life to you, or your church? Where have you seen God at work, in your life, in the community, in the world?

Please email me, or call me, and share your story with us! I can't wait to hear and share these awesome stories of faithfulness and transformation!

Journeying Together,

Alar Zith

2024 Spring Clergy Retreat April 2-4. 2024 Tower Hill Camp and Retreat Center Sawyer, MI

The 2024 Spring Clergy retreat has new dates and a new location! In reviewing the feedback from the 2023 spring retreat, the planning committee decided to make several changes to the spring clergy retreat. Most notable are the



new dates, and a different location. This year the retreat will begin on Tuesday (April 2nd) and run through Thursday (April 4th). This change was made to allow for congregational pastors to have a day to recover after the busy Easter season before traveling to the retreat. (Even pastors have to do laundry!) The new location was chosen because it is a little more "central" to both regions and a desire to be intentional about spending our money with a center more closely aligned with the Disciples. (Tower Hill is a UCC campground.) The planning committee also listened to the feedback we received and included more opportunities for rest, relaxation, and renewal.

We hope clergy will register for the event and join us as we build the relationships that will sustain us, and help us to thrive in ministry. And, we hope and pray that congregational leaders will encourage their pastors to take this time for intentional sabbath.

CCIW DISCIPLE'S WOMEN

Rev. Dr. Beth Rupe

The Spring Gathering: April 13, 2024 Ties that Bind

For generations, women have gathered in sewing circles created both practical and beautiful works of art by piecing together small pieces of fabric. The quilts that they created have warmed babies and provided comfort on cold winter nights as families made their way to new homes on the frontier. They provided a map for individuals seeking freedom from slavery and paths to homes where they could live with dignity. In more contemporary times, women have sewn quilts to provide comfort for sick children, to acknowledge the contributions of a lifetime of senior citizens, and much more. Katherine Bell in her book Quilting for Peace: Make the World a Better Place One Stitch at a Time writes, "The act of piecing a patchwork quilt is both utterly practical and powerfully symbolic. It's an act of reclaiming, saving, mending, and unifying. The result, the quilt itself, solves a basic problem - the need for warmth - but it represents much more: the quilt makers resourcefulness, wishes, and fierce opinions; an attempt to made something beautiful out of what might have been wasted: and a desire to make some kind of peace."

This year at the CCIW Disciples Women's Spring Gathering, through our theme **Ties that Bind** we will consider quilting as a metaphor for the spiritual life. In the morning we will consider the history of quilting as well as how the act of quilting helps build community and provides a powerful countercultural message of hope. In the afternoon, we will join together in hands on mission to cut, piece and sew quilts that will be donated to the Linus Project in Central IL. The Linus Project provides handmade blankets to children ages 0 - 18 who have been seriously ill, traumatized or experience other needs. These quilts will meet a basic need while at the same time symbolically demonstrate our desire to provide comfort and care. No experience with sewing or quilting is necessary as individuals of all skill levels can participate as we work together to create a blanket that will be given to others.

The Gathering: Ties that Bind will be held on April 13, 2024, from 9 AM - 4 PM at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 6400 North University St. Peoria, IL. Lunch will be provided, and the day will conclude with the dedication of the Blessing Box Offering and worship to include communion. Women with all levels of experience with quilting are invited to attend as there will be opportunities to individuals of all skill levels to participate as we make the quilts. The cost of the event is \$60. This will include the cost of batting, thread, and backing materials for the quilts as well as lunch and other event expenses. Each registrant is asked to bring one (1) yard of cotton or cotton flannel fabric with a children's theme in green, yellow or purple.

A special offering for the Smoked Fish Microcredit Project of Ghana sponsored by Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This empowerment program provides opportunities for women and families to earn a sustainable income by learning how to cook smoke fish and run a small business. Through these efforts many families in Ghana will no longer need to make the difficult choice of sending their children to work or sending their children to school as the opportunity to earn a fair wage allow the children to go to school rather than work to supplement parental income. In addition to providing sustainable income, the project has helped to raise awareness of occurrence of child labor and violence against children is being raised and to advocate for policies to reduce child labor and human trafficking.

Rev. Dr. Beth Rupe, Disciples Women Coordinator bethr@cciwdisciples.org

Petie McLean Petie (Petrae) Filson McLean will be our keynote speaker. Petie is the married to Jim McLean, a retired Disciple Minister. They are the mother of 3 grown children. Rev. McLean is a graduate of Lynchburg College and Lexington Theological Seminary. She has served as a Social Worker for Child Welfare in Kentucky for 4 years, Chaplain at Midway College, taught field placement at Lexington Theological Seminary, served as part time Associate Minister at First Christian Church, Georgetown Ky for 17 years. She has worked for Birth to Three Early Intervention Program for 7 years in Mt. Vernon, Ill. And finally, while Jim served FCC in Centralia, Ill, she served as their interim for 1 year and served for 13 years as Associate Minister of First Christian Church, Glasgow, Ky. Petie has written two study books for Disciples Women, "I am, You are a Gift" and "Children: Loved or Lost". Petie officially retired in 2010. Since then she has created the Quilt/Knit/Craft Retreat in Kentucky



The **Quilt Project** for the Gathering will be a 9 patch Coloring Square Quilt. Each women will be asked to bring 1 yd. cotton or cotton flannel material in children's theme in green, yellow or purple to complete top with coloring squares.

Disciples Women
Fall Retreat
September 28 - 29
Camp Walter Scott
Theme: Bless These Lips

The Disciples Women Fall Retreat at Camp Walter Scott Gathering 9:30 AM on Saturday September 28 with program beginning at 10 AM and ending with brunch following worship



on Sunday September 29 at approximately 11; 30 AM.

Discussion of 2023 Fall Women's Retreat / Planning 2024 event

Theme for base on Bless These Lips: Days of Spiritual Renewal by Sharla Fritz. Heather Blasé.

CCIW DISCIPLES WOMEN

A Call to See and Respond to the Crisis of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence October 19, 2023 9:30 am—Noon

Gathering begins at 9:30 and presentation and discussion begins at 10 AM with Rev. Armanto This will be in conjunction to Regional Assembly and individuals will be able to register just for this event at no cost or through the RA paying RA registration fees with no additional charge for this event.

In this concluding portion of our two part workshop on addressing and implementing initiatives around education, support and reduction of domestic and partner violence, Rev. Courtney Armanto co-author of the General Assembly Resolution GA- 1928, A Call to See and Respond to the Crisis of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence, will lead us in a discussion of how to establish safe sanctuaries in your congregations for those fleeing from situations of domestic and partner violence The October 19 workshop will be a part of the educational offerings of the CCIW Regional Assembly.

Reminder: You may register through this event at no charge on the Registration page for Regional Assembly (not yet available). There is a cost to attending Regional Assembly.

SLAM

What can we do Together?

Service...Learning...Advocacy...Mission

We are serving together on work trips. We are preparing together to help in times of disaster. We are looking to partner on service and learning opportunities across our regions. Will you join us in this work?

SLAM is a ministry of the Christian Church in Il & WI and the Christian Church in MI Email slam@cciwdisciples.org Facebook /slam.cciwmi /slam.cciwmi





Rev. Eli Rolón Jeong, Associate Regional Minister for Children, Youth, New Church eli@cciwdisciples.org

Fireside Fall Retreat Recap

This past November, over two dozen youth and youth leaders from nine regional congregations gathered at Walter Scott Camp & Learning Center for our first Fireside Fall Retreat. Rev. James King, pastor of United Christian Church in Country Club Hills, shared an excellent and powerful message, reminding youth that "you are not alone!" Brandon Jamison led worship during the weekend, playing inspiring and engaging music. In addition to keynote messages and worship, youth had generative conversations about prayer, care for God's creation, and even about ethics and superheroes!

Youth also had plenty of opportunities for fun and fellowship during the weekend. The basement at camp was transformed into a gaming room for youth to play some video games, and a room just for cardboard fort building, along with other very imaginative cardboard box creations! One of the yurts was transformed into a challenging yet fun-loaded escape room.

In recent years, regional youth had gathered for the biennial Summit Retreat in November. This time around, Camp Walter Scott hosted the 2-night event marking a change in location from our last in-person event in 2019. With a new location, we decided to change up the name a bit to "Fireside Fall Retreat." Overall, we had a lot of fun returning to our campgrounds for our fall youth event. We are grateful to all youth who participated, the adults who served as youth leaders, the Regional Youth Council for all their hard work in planning for the event, Clayton and Alix at Camp Walter Scott, and our invited guest for a wonderful event!

Ready for Summer Camp! See the Camp listings and dates on page 12

Upcoming Regional Youth Event in March!

Save the date for our next regional event for youth in 6th to 12th grade and adult sponsors - Saturday March 16 to Sunday March 17, 2024 at First Christian Church in Springfield, IL! CCIW is partnering with Disciples Home Missions for a weekend event that you will not want to miss! We'll have a wonderful keynote speaker, thoughtful workshops, good food, and, as always, great fellowship! More information about this event will be available very soon. But mark your calendars and be ready to be there! In the meantime, contact Pastor Eli - eli@cciwdisciples.org - if you have any questions about this event.

Rev. Eli Rolón Jeong ,Associate Regional Minister for Children, Youth, New Church eli@cciwdisciples.org

Regional Youth Council Needs Your Help!

The Regional Youth Council (RYC) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin plans, implements, evaluates, and resources the Regional Youth Ministry program including events such as the Fireside Fall Retreat, Regional Assembly, Midwinter Retreat, Mission Trips, and additional events or resources intended to nurture and develop young disciples in the region.

If you are a youth in 9th to 11th grade with ideas – however big or small – and want to continue developing your leadership skills, RYC might be for you. Or, if you're an adult who is committed to helping young people continue in their leadership development, RYC might be for you as well.

We would love to have you as part of the RYC team! Please contact Pastor Eli eli@cciwdisciples.org with any questions related to RYC, or visit us online www.cciwdisciples.org/ryc.

We love our Workday volunteers, check out the dates to come Leave Your Mark



Walter Scott Camp & Learning Center Reflection **Rev. Clayton Summers**



Winter often functions as a reset on the level of Creation. Along with plummeting temperatures, trees stand bare and dormant, insect populations are reduced by the hard freezes, and even the constantly moving fish of our waterways decrease their metabolism. Winter is the deep inhale that comes before the warm breath of spring. As much as we might wish for spring to arrive as soon as possible, we need the winter just as a body needs the inhale before the exhale. Winter provides that deep breath of oxygen that makes what is coming next possible.

While the ministries at Walter Scott live into the rhythms of what might seem like an irregular schedule, it is instead embracing our synchronicity with the seasons and natural world. In the cold and dark of winter, this pregnant and expected breath of spring, we focus more on the non-visible yet vital aspects of our ministry. Program planning (like our Camp Ambassadors, local eccumencial focuses on Creation Care, and a Sabbath of the Stovetop program), project planning (like new signage throughout the property, interior refurbishments, and raised garden beds), administrative work (launching a newsletter, creating schedules for major infrastructure replacement as well as painting and staining of structures, and moving to carbon neutrality), and less visible maintenance tasks (like annual servicing of appliances and lighting upgrades). These breathe life into this sacred place as we tenderly care for it and all who find rest here.

You are invited to join us on this journey however you are able. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and TikTok (@CampWaltersScott). Let us know you're interested in being on staff¹ for our summer youth camps or pitch a new type of event at Walter Scott which we can help you facilitate! For ministers, take a Sabbath of Service with our Sabbath of the Stovetop Program². Walter Scott is ultimately a piece of Creation which we are called to care for together, just as we care for all people in the manner of Christ.

Peace on the Journey, Rev. Clayton Summers, Resident Minister & Caretaker

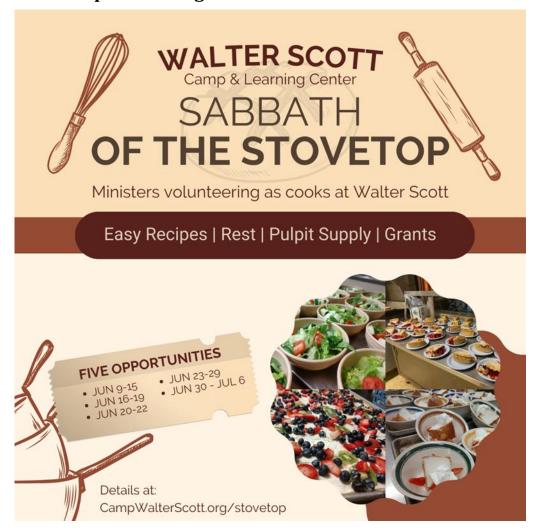
Social Media: @campwalterscott

www.campwalterscott.org

campws@cciwdisciples.org 501.570.6685

¹ <u>http://bit.ly/StaffCWS</u>
² <u>CampWalterScott.org/stovetop</u>

Walter Scott Camp & Learning Center Reflection



We are pleased to announce another way for ministers to become involved with our ministry at Camp Walter Scott. During our five core youth summer camps, we are inviting ministers in CCIW congregations and other ministries to volunteer as cooks at the camp. Along with another kitchen volunteer and under the supervision of our resident minister and caretaker, you'll prepare simple food that will nourish the bodies of our campers and staff and then clean the dishes using our industrial dishwasher. We are asking for congregations to allow their ministers to participate without using any vacation time or continuing ed, but as a way to nourish their ministers and the larger church. To facilitate this, some of our regional staff will be available to fill the pulpit in your congregation the Sunday following your time at camp. Additionally, we will be offering grants to congregations/ministries who participate to use for their youth, intergenerational, or Creation care ministries in their local contexts (up to \$500/ea).

We ask you to prayerfully consider this program or contact us to learn more about it! CampWalterScott.org/stovetop





Apr 13	Workday (All Ages) + Open House (All Ages)
May 11	Workday (All Ages) + Open House (All Ages)
May 23-27	Memorial Day Family Camp (All Ages)
TBD	Potential LGBTQ+ Retreat (TBD)
Jun 2-8	Handyperson Skills Week (All Ages)
Jun 9-15	CYF Camp (9th-12th)
Jun 16-19	You & Me Camp (K-5th & Adults)
Jun 20-22	Beginners Camp (K-3rd)
Jun 23-29	JYF Camp (3rd-5th)
Jun 30 - Jul 6	Chi-Rho Camp (6th-8th)
Jul 12-14	Potential Activism Retreat (TBD)
Jul 26-28	Young Adult Weekend (18–30)
Aug 29 – Sep 2	Labor Day Family Camp (All Ages)
Sep 7	Workday (All Ages)
Sep 27-29	CCIW Fall Women's Retreat (Multi-Generational, Post-High School, Women)
Nov 2	Workday (All Ages)

@CampWalterScott

+501-570-6685

CampWalterScott.org 15290 E. 300 Ave., Dieterich, IL 62424

Gifts to CCIW—2024 - Thank you for your continuous generosity

The following churches and individuals have contributed to in the last quarter of 2023 and 2024 mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the Annual Fund, Designated and Undesignated gifts to the Regional, Camp Walter Scott and other ministries.

Your continual prayers, support and generosity to the Region, Camp Walter Scott, New Church Ministries, DW ministry and the special offerings is beyond measure. Who and where do you impact...everyone and everywhere.

Churches

Villa Park Christian Church **Gibson City First Christian Church Sullivan First Christian Church Danville Central Christian Church Niantic Christian Church Illiopolis Christian Church Niantic Christian Church** Fifteenth Ave Christian Church **Canton First Christian Church Lomax Christian Church Bloomington First Christian Church Petersburg First Christian church** Lincolnshire Community Christian Church **Disciples of Christ Community Church** Lynnville Christian Church **Clayton Christian Church Hoopston FCC Trustees Creve Coeur First Christian Church Galesburg First Christian Church** Jacksonville Lynnville Christian Church **Arrowsmith Christian Church Washington Sunnyland Christian Church**

New Church Starts Lincolnshire Community Christian

Church

Individuals

Eugene and Nancy Lamport James and Carol Pinson Herb and Duffy Knudsen **Karon Knodt Neil and Katherine Duepree** Rebecca Kirby Marla McElrov Michael and Karen Kindred **Patrica and William Crowl Ieff Zimmerman Martha Shine Kevin Benford** Rebecca Kirby **Kenneth Purscell Tyler Coleman Yvonne Gilmore Larry Colvin Judith Ridlen**

Kelly and Anne Ingersoll Teresa Dulvea-Parker **Shauna Smith Amanda Butterick**

Joe and Ellen Culpepper

Donald Taylor and Kris Light

Eron Deupree Rachel and Alan Moore Greg and Martha Jean Fitch

Shirley Swarthout Doug and Margaret Merritt, Jr. **Ricky and Melissa Williams**

Michael and Peggy Dixon **Dwight and Diane Winnett**

Lois Whitaker

Brittany Barber and Kevin

Metzner **Arvil Bass Britany Barber Jane Cahill**

Patricia and William Crowl

Larry Colvin



Individuals Patti Meyer **Harry Meyer**

Camp Walter Scott

Iane Cahill Arrowsmith Christian Church Pontiac First Christian Church Mackinaw Christian Church Benton Christian church First Christian Church of Robinson **Pekin First Christian Church Iacksonville Central CC Heather Rinderer Casey First CC** Ken and Patricia Crawford Franklin and Carol Miller **Doris Beckerman Charles and Nancy Miller Deborah Owen Pearl Witte** Karen Merrick Champaign, University Place CC **REKindle Foundation**

James Niebrugge First Christian Church, Springfield

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Prayer Concerns: Rev. Jeff Nielsen, Tammy Slankard, daughter of Rev. Brenda Culver

Deaths: Rev. Jim Holiman; Rev. Deborah Own; Jean Hall, mother of Rev. Suzanne Stout; Rev. Tony Salisbury; Pastoral Changes: Rev. Danny Bradfield, begin ministry at First Christian Church, Bloomington;

Retirements: Rev. Keith Tilford has concluded ministry at Metropolis

Ordination/Commission: Rev. Vicky Woolridge, Central Christian Church

CAMP WALTER SCOTT DIETERICH, IL

The Annual Fund

Our Regional church is committed to high quality partnership with local congregations, providing ministry services not available elsewhere – helping congregations in times of crisis, providing camps for our children and youth, helping congregations call their next pastor, joining in global ministry together. We invite you to support the Annual Fund and join us as partners in lifechanging ministry!

One way to show support in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in IL & WI's Mission is through a donation to our Annual Fund. Gifts to the Annual Fund enable us to grow Disciples congregations for healthy vital ministry!

Your support is appreciated

3	Yes! I believe in the Christian Mission and I want to help!	n Church (D	isciples of	Christ) in I	L & WI's	
	□ Enclosed is my gift to the An	nual Fund	□ \$100	□ \$250	□ \$500	Othe
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3	Address					
	Email	City		State	Zip	
	Congregation		City			

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