



SEPTEMBER 2023
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

DISCERNMENT AND WAITING

This year's theme for the Christian Education Network is IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL. We've been exploring areas of spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional health. Spiritual practices have been lifted up that help us live into deeper relationships with God and those around us. Waiting is a spiritual discipline that is hard to practice. We live in a fast-paced world with information coming in from many places. Attention spans are short, as soon as we finish one program or event, we move onto the next, often without time for reflection.

Reflection helps us discern what is next and when we are moving through the church seasons we often don't take time for discernment. Communal discernment is also important – we are intentionally discerning with others where we are going. God is good at bringing out the gifts in people and we as God's people need to be in continual conversation about gifts and where they can be used. New things we cannot predict come out of this process. Faith formation leaders are constantly creating and recreating as we empower others to grow in their faith.

The Board of the Christian Education Network has been in a process of discernment about our future and ways we could partner with other organizations. We've had to ask hard questions and do some waiting. This process is ongoing, and we are working hard on asking questions, finding answers, and seeking out people who can help us. This takes time. I am comforted by the fact that many others are waiting, we are not the first ones to do this.

I attended the installation of a new pastor in our area recently, and I celebrated with the congregation that waited a long time for their new pastor. The congregation where I am a member is in transition and our Call Committee is hard at work. We've had one interim and our second just started. This is hard on the congregation, but I see people still engaged in ministry and serving our community. There have been changes and grief and anxiety along the way, but during this, we still serve.

I invite you to enter discernment, however and wherever you need it. Call a trusted colleague and spend time together praying and asking one another where God may be leading. Several years ago, a process of discernment led me into a role I never had thought of, because of the invitation of a colleague. God created something new in my life and service, and I would not have entered that opportunity without discernment.

God is up to something!
Deacon Diane McGeoch

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"...that they may be encouraged
in heart and united in love..."

Colossians 2.2 (NIV)