

October 2019

A GATHERING OF WOMEN

In Gratitude and Love, to Susan...

Did you all take a good long breath? I know I did. I had to take the time to reflect on what I wrote for the month of August and then with life happening around us, as it tends to happen, I needed to take a moment to just catch my breath. So, those of you who regularly read these might have noticed that there wasn't an update for the month of September. In that month, I caught my breath and am now feeling in a more centered space. Thank you for your grace and understanding. I hope that those of you reading this will be able to also take moments to give yourself grace and just breathe, if that's what you need to do.

But as life continues, things happen. Seasons change, people move, they take on new challenges, new job opportunities, they move further along in their studies, and they also transition into new phases of ministry and life. That is the subject of this letter. It is a letter of gratitude, a letter of appreciation, and a letter of hope to Susan Gonzales Dewey, and to all of the Susan's of our region and of our world.

Susan, you have been a Minister, Disciples Woman Staff Leader, a mentor, a spiritual advisor, a sister, a mother, and a friend to so many women in our region and beyond. And, not just to the women, but to our denomination. The work you have done to help our regional ministry gain its structure, its passion, its mission focus and to maintain its creativity and connection to God and to each other has been a truly generous gift and work.

You began your time with the Women's Ministry as a volunteer looking to simply help, to draw women together. You began as a young woman who was excited, had ideas and the desire to serve. Your energy dedication and obvious gifts for leadership, organization and true worshipful service to others opened the doors for the position of Disciples Women Staff to be created. This position was later funded as a permanent position here in our Region. But you didn't stop there. You stepped into that role and through that door to then build and strengthen relationships which would help bring resources and opportunities for growth to the women of our region. You traveled and said yes to the things that you knew could create new possibilities for others. In your courageous yes' we gained a network of sisters and leaders who are still connected today.

Women in our region are still being equipped, they are still being encouraged to find their voices, their calls, and they are stepping into their authentic selves serving, giving, going, and doing so much more than they ever imagined for themselves. Because of your passion and energy, the position that was for a staff person to oversee and facilitate Women's Ministries continues to help women today. This is a ministry that not only touches the lives of women the Pacific Southwest Region, but beyond. There are countless women who share a similar story or

encounter that begins with the phrase, “I got here because I got a call from Susan..” or, “I had no idea I could’ve started that ministry”, “I had no idea I cared that deeply about that issue and now I’m doing something about it because Susan”.. “after I spoke with Susan”... “Susan asked me that question and then”...

This letter, this moment, could be extended and dragged on and on. For how can you possibly put into words the many ways that you’ve helped to create something so transformational? So, I won’t try to do that. Instead I will channel my inner Susan and say to you, and to all the women who are Susan-like to their daughters, to their sisters, to their congregant, to their friends... Thank you. Thank you for simply answering God’s call and allowing the Spirit to lead you. For that is what you’ve ultimately modeled for so many of us. And you will continue to do so.

We don’t say good-bye; we say thank you Susan. And we at the same time thank all the Susan’s of our Region, for answering God’s call and allowing the Spirit to lead. It is this that makes Disciples Women the force that it is. It is this yes that has encouraged so many others to do the same. To say yes. So, Susan, thank you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your service, your dedication, your passion and stamina in helping to strengthen the Disciples Women’s Ministries here in the Pacific Southwest Region, and beyond.

You have helped so many other Susans, Tanyas, Siobhans, Jenices, Shirleys, Luras, Carols, Pats, Youngs, Nancys, Michels and so on and so on to say yes to God’s call.

We are forever grateful to you and we will continue to serve and lead for the many women we know are yet to discover their call and are waiting for us to help them in their journey.

In life’s biggest moments and in the small ones too, thank you for everything Susan!
(Taken on May 12, 2007 at Tanya and Al Lopez’ Wedding)

In Much Gratitude, Admiration and Love,

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P.S. Updates for WWOW coming soon! Website with speaker information, registration costs and more details almost finalized for all of you to get connected and make plans to attend our amazing Women’s Gathering in Las Vegas Next June!

Look out for the e-blast that will help you guys get all up to date information that our amazing planning team has been working on!

See you at Gathering! Don’t forget to connect with us at the Disciples Women’s Booth in the Exhibit Area to connect with me and your Regional Women’s Ministry Leadership.