



Dear Oregon and Southwest Idaho Disciples Friends:

As this new year begins, your Regional Ministers have news to share. We intend to retire as your Regional Ministers in the summer of 2023. We have informed Regional Board Moderator Pam Knight of our intention to complete our employment effective July 31, 2023. We will use remaining vacation time in July to follow our final working day which will be on June 30.

Before knowing the exact dates, your Regional Board leaders have prepared well. The board already has approved a detailed transition plan. Our "Future Story" plan has led to a capable group of part-time staff and Regional Elders, all of whom have our gratitude and admiration. The regional church Covenant and Guidelines call for the Personnel Committee to recommend to the board a candidate for Interim Regional Minister. The Interim Regional Minister search process will begin soon with support from the College of Regional Ministers. Regional Moderator Elect Rev. Sandy Berry will serve as Chair of the interim search process. The regional Executive Committee will meet on January 31 and the Regional Board will meet on February 4.

We give thanks for the many ways that God has blessed us in these past twenty-two years. Thank you to all who have given generously to Disciples Mission Fund, the Christmas offering, the Annual Fund and in other ways. Your giving has meant that Oregon and SW Idaho Disciples could depend upon one another, supporting local and general church ministries at the same time. Your giving has meant that the regional church could contribute to the Pension Fund of the Christian Church on our behalf. This is a great blessing for us and many other Christian Church employees.

The time for a change has come. We began first as Co-Regional Ministers for the Oregon region in 2001 and then in 2014, we began a new partnership with the Oregon SW Idaho regional church. We have so much enjoyed the people and congregations, the land and the scenery, and many kinds of rewarding experiences. The coming year will mark forty years of ordained Christian ministry for each of us and forty-four years of married life. We have been blessed to live near many of our family members in this area. Being near them will be very important to us in the years to come.

Upon completion of our regional ministry positions on June 30, we will step away from involvement in regional church life. We will greatly miss the ministries and the people that have given us so much love and encouragement. At the same time, we have seen the difficulties that can come to a ministry when pastors and people do not make a complete and healthy closure. In keeping with ministerial ethics, we will need to make room for your future regional ministry leaders. In the next six months, we will continue our involvement as Regional Ministers feeling grateful for each of you.

The words of Paul in Philippians 1 come to mind:

"I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, for all of you are my partners in God's grace."

May God continue to bless you and your community, the church and the world through you. The gifts of faith, hope and love endure; the greatest of these is love.

Yours with love and gratitude,

Cathy Myers Wirt

Cathy Myers Wirt
Regional Minister

Douglas A. Wirt

Douglas A. Wirt
Regional Minister

245 S Bancroft Suite F
Portland, OR 97239

PO Box 19466
Portland OR 97280
503.226.7648

www.oidisciples.org
#oidisciples

Rev. Dr. Cathy Myers Wirt
Rev. Dr. Douglas A. Wirt
Regional Ministers
cathy@oidisciples.org
doug@oidisciples.org

Liz Cronin
Bookkeeper
bookkeeper@oidisciples.org

Bernice Rivera
Leadership Development Associate
bercintro@comcast.net

Rev. Stacy Shelton
Communications Associate
office@oidisciples.org

Rev. Renee Windsor-White
Office Administrator
office@oidisciples.org

Rev. Monica Myers Greenberg
Planned Giving Representative
Christian Church Foundation
mgreenberg@ccf.disciples.org

Rev. Rosario Ibarra
Building & Capital Services Advisor
Disciples Church Extension Fund
ribarra@disciplescf.org

Blanca Puma
Global Mission Partners
Ecumenical Foundation for Integral
Development, Training and
Education (FEDICE)
Quito, Ecuador
blancapuma@hotmail.com

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