



Regional Ministers' Report

Doug Wirt and Cathy Myers Wirt

June 3, 2023

¹² *May God reward you for your deeds, and may you have a full reward from the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!*" Ruth 2:12

A frail old woman stood begging outside a popular ice cream shop in Ibarra, Ecuador. A visitor from los estados unidos gave her a dollar. She smiled and said, "*dios se lo pague.*" Victor Vaca, co-founder of the FEDICE ministry in Ecuador, explained that her words in English meant, "God will pay you." This common phrase in Spanish expresses the profound conviction that blessings shared will multiply over time. As in this brief encounter, blessings come in both words and actions. At this time, as your outgoing Regional Ministers, we also want to say "thank you" for your words and actions that have blessed so many people so many times. It is truly awe inspiring to see your witness as Christ's church.

Thank you, Oregon and SW Idaho Disciples, for your giving to Disciples Mission Fund, special offerings, the Annual Fund and other designated gifts for regional and general church ministries. You have made it possible for us to do what forty years ago, we could have only dreamed – to do meaningful Christian ministry in places and with people we love, with a breadth of vision that can bless and be blessed by people around the world. Your steadfast support in words and actions, in your prayers and your giving, have allowed us to follow our passion for Disciples of Christ co-ministry near and far, in new and familiar places with people who have made us feel at home wherever we go. We have had many a "*Happy Sunday,*" as the Chuukese churches say.

Twenty-two years ago, we returned to the greenery of the Pacific Northwest after eight years in the desert. Re-calculating these twenty-two years, about half has involved active relationships with South Idaho Disciples, taking shape in a new regional church, confirmed by the General Assembly ten years ago. All of these years have included new congregations and long established congregations. You have not grown tired in doing good and you have produced many benefits (Galatians 6:9) "*from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).*" Looked at personally, twenty-two years is the length of our co-regional ministry, half of our married life, and a third of our total lives.

In our seminary years, we saw the retirement of our Regional Minister Karl Irvin in the Northern California-Nevada regional church. At his last Regional Assembly, he called forward people representing various ministries to serve Communion. As the Assembly shared the bread and the cup, Karl departed from the Assembly, leaving the regional church to continue their calling as Disciples in the future. Our own transition has been more gradual, first in advanced preparations, then with Covid precautions and reduced Regional Minister staffing, and now with a half year of deliberate transition. We will have a closing worship together on July 15 and First Christian Church in Portland. Your giving through Disciples Mission Fund and in so many ways allowed us to witness so many wonderful things with people who mean so much to us. Your giving has also allowed us to have memberships in the Pension Fund of the Christian Church, which will bless our family for the rest of our lives. Thank you. *Dios se lo pague,* May God bless you always and continue to multiply the blessings of all of our lives.

Doug and Cathy Myers Wirt, Regional Ministers

Contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in February 2023

Ministerial Groups:

- College of Regional Ministers Regular meetings zoom 3 times
- Western Regional Ministers Fellowship Group zoom 2 times
- Scenic Rivers District zoom 2 times
- Blue Mountain Rivers District zoom 2 times
- Columbia Gorge District zoom/in person 2/1 times
- Santiam District in person 1 time
- Snake River District in person 1 time

Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings

- New Church Team zoom 4 times
- Disciples Seminary Foundation Executive Director Search 3 times
- Commission on Ministry hybrid/zoom 1 time
- Anti-Racism Team zoom 1 time
- Interchurch Center Board zoom 1 time
- Commission on Finance and Administration 1 time
- Personnel Committee on zoom 1 time
- Oregon Disciple Foundation Board 1 time
- Regional Elders on zoom 2 times

Congregational Visits in Person

Northwood (2 times – once for worship and once for new building foundation blessing), **Springfield FCC** presentation of Honored Minister Pin to David Waggoner, **Salem FCC** 4 times worship, once preaching, farewell for James Brooks, congregational board meeting, all church listening event plus 5 in person meetings involving search process with additional zoom meetings, **Portsmouth Union** to install new pastor, **La Grande** to present commissioned ministry certificate to pastor, **Red Rock CC** to install new pastor/preaching, **Nampa FCC** for worship and present honored minister pin to Charlie Griffith, **New Hope CC** for worship, **Eugene FCC** preaching and personnel cte meeting, **Albany FCC** to install new ministers, preaching, **Murray Hills/Rio de Dios** joint service of baptism, **Rio de Dio** evening worship, **Junction City FCC** for worship, **Portland FCC** for worship.

Conversations with General/Regional Church/Educational Ministry Staff

Rebecca Hale, **National Benevolent Assn**, Rosario Ibarra **Disciples Church Extension** Bill Robey **Northern Lights Christian Church Region**, Pam Holt **College of Regional Ministers Search and Call Committee**, Doug has continued as Chair of the **Disciples Seminary Foundation** Executive Director Search Committee, Dani Cartwright, **National Benevolent Association**, Vy Nguyen and Raiza Spratt **Week of Compassion**, Monica Myers Greenberg, **Christian Church Foundation**. Angele Johnson, **Disciples Women**, Blanca Puma and Luis Jara **of FEDICE Ecuador**.

Work with Congregations since last meeting:

- **Search Processes, multiple contacts: Lebanon, Red Rock CC** Boise (completed and preached at installation), **Albany FCC** (completed and preached at installation), **Portsmouth Union** (completed and led in installation), **Salem FCC** (helped secure interim pastor, guided transition team in multiple meetings culminating in report to congregation board attended by RM, met with pastoral search team 4 times, held two listening events, Preached first Sunday after pastor left, attended pastoral farewell, consulted with leadership and staff by phone many times) **Eugene FCC** (met with Personnel committee 3 times, preached after one of the Co-Pastors left, helped to place interim co-pastor, met with staff by phone multiple times), **Silverton FCC** conversation with Elders and Staff
- **Property issues** with Myrtle Creek -- completed the sale of the property! Conversation about reversion documents with **John Day, Red Rock, and Lynchwood**.

- **Governing Documents:** met with **regional church task force** to review governing documents for revision a prepared report for the Regional Board of proposed next conversations, met with **John Day FCC** leadership to prepare to frame new governing documents, met with **Lynchwood CC** to move along the process of by-law revisions, met with **Red Rock CC** to discuss changes to governing documents and reversion property documents.

Communications Sent:

- **Constant Contact mailings:** 12 emails to Regional Board, 14 emails to prayer concerns list, 6 emails about women's ministries, 6 general information emails to the large email list, 1 for Tulsa Talks events, 8 Transition mailings to the large list
- **Facebook Page posts:** 20 posts to regional Facebook page, 12 posts to regional women's ministry Facebook page

Events attended:

- Feb. 8 Tulsa Talks on line
- Mar. 4 Bill Brown Memorial Murray Hills CC in person
- Mar. 10 Janice Ahl Memorial Murray Hills CC in person
- Mar. 21 Farewell for Disciples Home Mission Staff member, Warren Lynn, online
- Mar. 29 Leman and Inez Messley Memorial (attended online)
- May 20 Officiated at memorial service for Edith Parrish in person

