



# Regional Ministers' Report

**Doug Wirt and Cathy Myers Wirt  
February 6, 2021**

Summary of contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in June 2020...

## Ministerial Groups:

- **College of Regional Ministers** 6 times C
- **Columbia Gorge** 3 times C & D
- **Blue Mountain Rivers** 3 times C
- **Santiam River** 3 times C
- **Scenic Rivers** 3 times C
- **Snake River** 3 times C
- **Ecumenical Ministries Bishops and Executives** 1 time D

## Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings:

- Disciples Seminary Foundation Committees 7 times D
- Commission on Ministry 3 times D
- Anti-Racism Team 2 times D
- North American/Pacific Asian Disciples Bd./Convocation 2 times D
- Oregon Volunteers Organized to Assist in Disaster Team 1 time C
- Meetings about FEDICE USA transition work 1 times D
- Interchurch Center Board 1 times D
- Commission on Finance and Administration 1 time D

## Work with Congregations:

- Murray Hills CC, Pastoral Search Cct/Board/Personnel 13 meetings C
- Silverton Congregational Zoom Search Orientation 5 times C
- Eugene Transition Committee/Governing Docs Rewrite Team 4 times/3 time C
- La Grande First Christian Pastoral Search Team 2 times C
- Salem First Christian Orientation of Assoc. Minister Search Team 1 time D
- Albany FCC, Planning/Preaching Installation plus 1 meeting of governing docs. Cte. C
- Calls for Consultation on Other topics to both Regional Ministers:  
Red Rock, McMinnville, Grants Pass, Lynchwood, Springfield/Glenwood, Ontario,  
Portsmouth, Lebanon, Peniel Ministries, Hood River Valley, Allison Park,  
Puyallup, WA,

## Events:

- Memorial for former Interim Regional Minister, Wayne Bryant November C&D
- John Bowling Ordination, Northwood CC, Springfield December D
- Wild Women of the West online gathering for 6 regions January C
- Fellowship of Regional Moderators January C
- International Disciples Women Cabinet January C
- Memorial for Claire Widener, mother of Grants Pass FCC Pastor January C

Since our last Regional Board meeting in November 2020, the areas of most time spent have been pastoral search processes for Cathy, and routine yearend financial operations for Doug. Normally regional church activities slow down for a couple weeks at the end of the year, but as we know, a lot of things were not normal for most of last year. For regional finances, both income and expenses both decreased by around \$30,000. Disciples Mission Fund and rental income saw the largest decreases in income (reflecting congregational budget challenges) although the Annual Fund giving from individuals finished at the highest total in years. On the expense side, decreases in travel and personnel were the main factors that kept costs close to revenue.

Over the past three months, we have worked on various issues with our regional general church partners. These are Rosario Ibarra (Disciples Church Extension Fund), Rod Witte (Pension Fund), and Monica Myers Greenberg (Christian Church Foundation). Each of these partners serve the western regions for Disciples. Monica began her duties on January 1 and follows Jerry Lang who has just retired. Our long time Global Ministries partner, Jane Sullivan-Davis has also just retired. We will try to schedule each of the three continuing general ministry partners to share something at upcoming board meetings. Monica will be introduced at the February 6 meeting.

While the pandemic has changed much of what we can do as a regional church, we also want to use some of the time for "housekeeping" matters that can get overlooked when in times of more travel and programs. Cathy has been working with some congregations on updating their bylaws. We also have looked at the regional documents. For the February 6 meeting, we will have three breakout groups to discuss youth ministries, women's ministries and succession planning. The board training video shown during our June 2020 meeting (<https://www.propelnonprofits.org/resources/board-roles-video/>) talks about "succession planning" as a responsibility for every non-profit board. The regional Covenant and Guidelines provide a basic plan but leave some questions unanswered. The most important unanswered question is whether a Regional Minister candidate needs more than a simple majority to be approved by the Regional Board. Most congregations require at least a 2/3 vote for approval, and some are higher. As the Covenant and Guidelines now read, the Board could approve a Regional Minister by a margin of only one vote. We would never recommend this for a congregation calling a pastor. A second unanswered question is whether the regional church would have an interim Regional Minister before making a long term call. Again, we would recommend to congregations that their documents speak to this question. We are asking the board to consider this for the regional church. Changing the Covenant and Guidelines takes some time for notification and approval, so it is good to do this when we are not in a hurry.

The pandemic has also brought changes to regional youth and women's ministries. Two breakout groups on February 6 will talk about where we are and what we want to do going forward in these areas. Each board member can choose which of the three breakout groups to attend. We will have these groups online as part of our Zoom meeting. We will ask you to give your preference in advance so that you can be placed where you want to be.

Matthew 7:24-27 tells us the importance of a good foundation that is built upon rock and not upon sand. For Disciples ministries, our governing documents are part of the foundation for our mission. We need to review those documents from time to time in the regional church as in congregations. Active board members such as yourselves who give generously of their time are also an essential part of the foundation. 1 Corinthians 3:9 says "we are God's servants, working together... You are God's building." At the beginning of 2021, with the attack on the US Capitol, we saw that social divisions caused by politics and racism can threaten the foundations of society. The pandemic of 2020 and now 2021 has put at greater risk the social connections that make us a nation. So, we are called to "hear these words of mine," (Matthew 7) and continue to build up one another, the church of Jesus Christ, and the nation in which we live. It takes much work and much wisdom. We are grateful that God is providing the love that is needed in this world through you and the ministries we share.