



# Regional Ministers' Report

Doug Wirt and Cathy Myers Wirt

November 5, 2022

Our 2022 Regional Assembly theme of “*Recalculating*” continues to apply to our regional and congregational ministries. In the regional church and in our congregations, Disciples are seeking and discovering the best ways to share our faith and use our resources. We do this in the wake of Covid-19 disruptions, economic challenges and the changes that normally come with the territories of life. Here are some ways that we are recalculating together:

**2023 Budget.** The most obvious calculations are in the budgeting process. As with other congregational and personal budgets, the regional Finance Committee has looked at the challenges of increasing costs during a time of stock market uncertainty. With the federal Cost of Living Adjustment set at 8.7% for the new year, the Finance Committee is recommending a 9% increase across the board for regional church staff. At the same time, a significant share of our operating income comes from investment earnings which had decreased about 20% of value in 2022 as of September 30. October however brought record Dow average gains so we will hope to see some improvement by the end of the year. Disciples Mission Fund remains our largest source of financial support for regional ministries. As of the end of September, regional DMF giving had increased by 3.9% compared to September 2021. However, regional DMF giving had dropped 10% twice in 2020 and 2021. Sometimes you recalculate again right after the last recalculation. We live in such times. To illustrate the challenge of the 2023 budget, your Regional Ministers proposed to the Finance Committee a further reduction in Regional Minister staffing mid year in 2023. The committee decided not to go this direction now, although it may be necessary at some point in the future. We will recalculate in future budgets to see whether the Oregon SW Idaho regional church can afford only one full time Regional Minister position.

**Youth and Outdoor Ministries.** Over the past three summers, we have seen temporary solutions for how to do youth ministries, especially as it relates to summer camps. In 2020, many summer events had to be cancelled. In the next two summers, Disciples dealt with uncertainty about Covid, repairs at Cascade Camp and how to project enrollment numbers. SW Idaho Disciples joined with the UCC camping program for 2022. West of the Cascades, local congregations at Hood River and Keizer hosted youth summer camp events in 2021 and 2022. For 2023, the regional church received a request to support a return to summer camps at Suttle Lake. The Finance committee has approved a plan to advance money for a deposit, supporting this request and limit financial exposure to the regional church. At present, the 2023 staff budget does not include an onsite summer camp presence or someone to process registrations.

**Travel Expenses.** Years 2020-2022 have had much less spending on travel for Regional Ministers, board meetings, and committees. The budget proposal for 2023 includes \$12,000 for Regional Minister travel expenses compared to \$25,000 in 2019. Board and committee travel is budgeted for slightly less than in recent pre-pandemic years. In 2020 and 2021, reduced travel expenses were a major factor in producing a positive operating balance at the end of the year. In 2023, the travel budget is still reduced but we have projected an \$18,000 deficit. Going forward, the board will need to evaluate the pros and cons of increased travel for relationship building as compared to the value of current staffing levels. Resuming a higher level of Regional Minister, board and committee travel may require adjustment elsewhere in the budget, with the personnel budget being the largest category of expense. We now use video conference much more than in the past. We also have a value added from being together in person. So the future will require some discussion about how to balance increased travel expenses with other expenses in the budget.

## ***Contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in June 2022***

### **Ministerial Groups:**

- College of Regional Ministers Regular meetings zoom 3 times
- College of Regional Ministers 3 day zoom meeting zoom 1 time
- Western Regional Ministers Fellowship Group zoom 3 times
- Scenic Rivers zoom 2 times
- Blue Mountain Rivers zoom 3 times
- Columbia Gorge District, in person (1), zoom (1) 2 times
- Specialized Ministries/Chaplains annual Regional Picnic in person 1 time
- Contacts one on one with different pastors by phone/in person 15 Doug/23 Cathy

### **Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings**

- Regional Elders zoom 1 time
- Covenant Conversation Zoom with Office General Minister 1 time
- New Church Team zoom 4 times
- Verne Catt McDowell Foundation Board zoom 1 time
- Commission on Ministry hybrid/zoom 3 times
- FEDICE USA Board/bylaws cte zoom 1 time
- Anti-Racism Team zoom 2 times
- Interchurch Center Board zoom 2 times
- Commission on Finance and Administration zoom 3 times
- Regional Assembly Local Arrangements Evaluation Meeting, in person 1 time
- Division of Homeland Ministries Leadership Team zoom 1 time

### **Congregational Visits in Person**

Salem FCC Worship, Hood River Valley Preaching, Northwood (3 services – mission interpretation), Lynchwood CC Preaching, Portland FCC Preaching, Peniel, Lebanon

### **Conversations with General/Regional Church/Educational Ministry Staff**

Rosario Ibarra **Disciples Church Extension Fund**, Monica Myers Greenberg **Christian Church Foundation**, Christal Williams **Christian Church in Tennessee**, Raiza Spratt **Week of Compassion**, Rebecca Hale & Dani Loving Cartwright **National Benevolent Association**, LaTaunya Bynum, **Christian Church in Northern CA/NV**, Lonnie Graves & Olivia Updegrove, **Division of Homeland Ministries**, Nancy Brink, **Church Relations Chapman University**, Bill Robey **Northern Lights Christian Church Region**, Sandy Messick **Christian Church in Florida**, Johnny Vega **Western Seminary**, Bruce Barkhauer, **Center for Faith and Giving**. Doug has started a new role as Chair of the **Disciples Seminary Foundation** Executive Director Search Committee.

### **Work with Congregations since last meeting:**

- **Search Processes, multiple contacts:** Silverton FCC, Lebanon FCC, Grants Pass FCC, Red Rock CC Boise, Albany FCC, Portsmouth
- **Property issues** with McMinnville FCC, Myrtle Creek Property
- **Governing Documents** with Silverton (1 committee meeting), Dallas (2 conversations with pastor), Lynchwood (1 committee meeting)

### **Congregational consultations other than the categories listed above:**

Albany FCC Personnel, Eugene FCC Personnel, Murray Hills CC Property/Pastoral Relations, LaGrande Mission Outreach, Pendleton Personnel, Springfield Personnel, Ontario Property, Hood River Valley Property, Lynchwood Property, Portland FCC Internship, Nueva Vida Property

## Communications Sent:

- 4 newsletters
- **Constant Contact mailings:** 11 emails to Regional Board, 11 emails to prayer concerns list, 10 emails about women's ministries, 14 general information emails to the large email list, 1 email appeal for Reconciliation offering, 2 emails inviting participation in Annual Fund, 3 reminders to clergy about boundary training
- **Facebook Page posts:** 30 posts to regional Facebook page, 12 posts to regional women's ministry Facebook page

## Events attended:

- June 2, Disciples Seminary Foundation Celebration online
- June 18 Online Women's Event
- June 19, Salem FCC Recognition of Ordination for Rev. Geonyul Byeon, in person
- August 10, Tulsa Talks 1 online
- September 23, Online Boundary Training online
- September 24, Online Stewardship Event online
- September 24, North American/Pacific Asian Disciples Convocation online
- September 25, Peniel Ministries Pastoral Installation, in person
- October 7-8, Western Districts Women's Retreat, Beaverton, in person
- October 12, Tulsa Talks 2 online
- October 16, Preached Installation for Eric Eide, Silverton FCC, in person
- October 30, Ordination for Rev. Chuck Varner, Corvallis FCC, in person

