



Regional Ministers' Report

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June 5, 2021

Contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in February 2021

Ministerial Groups:

- College of Regional Ministers 6 times C
- Santiam River 4 times C
- Scenic Rivers 4 times C
- Columbia Gorge 3 times C
- Blue Mountain Rivers 3 times C
- Ecumenical Ministries Bishops and Executives 2 times D

Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings

- Disciples Seminary Foundation Committees/Board 5/1 times D
- Commission on Ministry 4 times D
- General Board, Christian Church DOC 3 day meeting C
- Week of Compassion Calls with Staff for projects 3 times C
- Anti-Racism Team 2 times D
- Outdoor Ministries Task Force 2 times C
- Pastoral Relations Committee 2 times D/C
- Interchurch Center Board 1 time D
- Commission on Finance and Administration 1 time D
- New Church Team 1 time D
- Oregon Disciple Foundation Board 1 time D
- Regional Assembly Planning Group 1 time C

Work with Congregations:

- Silverton Pastoral Search Committee 9 times C
- Eugene Transition Cte/Governing Docs Rewrite Team/ Board/Personnel 4/1/1/1 times C
- Pendleton Search Process Meetings/Congregational Mtg 3/1 times C
- Salem Associate Minister Search Team 2 times D
- Portsmouth Union Search Process 4 times D
- Calls for Consultation on Other topics to both Regional Ministers:
Red Rock, McMinnville, Lynchwood, Springfield/Glenwood, Portsmouth,
Hood River Valley, Albany, Allison Park

Events:

- Regional Clergy Boundary Training Online February D/C
- Don Frueh Memorial April D
- Online Regional Women's Event April C
- Lynchwood/Giuseppe Amato Installation May D/C
- Portland FCC Hate Group Informational Webinar/Women's Bib St April/May C
- New Church Pastors Online Event May D/C
- Brandy Daniels Ordination May D
- Gathering to shoot video for General Church Event May C

This season has been busy for your regional ministers. However without all of the car travel, we have been able to meet more specific needs and spend more time with pastors and leaders on the phone and in zoom meetings, many of which are not in this listing as they were individual conversations.

In 2021 you have moved from 1 ¾ regional minister FTE to 1 1/3 regional minister time. This has made for slower response times and less presence in some of the places we were used to being with you for work and fellowship. It means the newsletter comes out 6-8 times a year instead of 8-10. This means you sometimes need to wait a week or so for an appointment to talk with one of us. And the list goes on. We are all getting used to this new reduced staff footprint. This is likely to be ever more apparent when we are headed back out into in person events and you see us less than you did before the pandemic that made the change perhaps less visible to some.

While this is the 4th of 6 regional board meetings for the 2020-22 regional board, we have yet to be in a room in person for one of our meetings. We hope to do this in November and perhaps add a Friday night community building portion to our meeting to make up for all of the time we have not had to get to know each other more fully.

The year since the May 2020 Regional Assembly when you were elected has been tumultuous. We have faced a global pandemic, extreme wildfire season and a time of social unrest and the culmination of an election cycle in our federal and state governments. While our intention had been to spend this year in visioning for the 2021-23 work ahead, we did well over the pandemic to stay connected through clergy zooms, online workshops/trainings, keeping our regular meetings of commissions and committees going as well as celebrating ordinations, installations and working to help call pastors to new ministries. The work as we emerge from pandemic season will be to take stock of who we are in the latter half of the pandemic and to build on what we did accomplish in our last set of goals and to work to see what God will call us to do in the coming years together.

From time spent working with Week of Compassion staff during the last few years we have learned that disasters have a cycle. There is the initial event over days/weeks in which we seek to survive and endure the event. The second set of tasks are around clearing the rubble of the disruption and taking stock of what we have now that the storm has passed. The third set of goals are made in how to rebuild stronger and more resilient than before. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold of Week of Compassion says that if the storm lasted for 6 days, it takes 60 – 90 (2-3 months) days to clean the rubble and get the lights back on and streets cleared. She says it takes 10-15 times as long to rebuild as it did to clean the rubble, so in this example 600-900 days (20-30 months/1.5-2.5 years to rebuild structure). And this is from a 6 day event! We have been living in pandemic for 15 months, so it will take a long time to clear the rubble and rebuild our routines/institutions/congregations/family lives after this event. This rebuilding required deep patience and grace with one another. We will not be able to just pick up where we left off. We are people reshaped by a shared tragedy, yet not shared equally in the cost, as we suffered in differing amounts from the pandemic.

In the months that come next, we will reemerge from our physical isolation from one another and have to rebuild the networks of friendship and community between our congregations. We have trust and faith as your Regional Pastors in the connections of the Body of Christ, of which this regional church is a part. We are 44 congregations, speaking 3 languages, some congregations less than 3 years old and others of 175 plus. We live in one geography, but we live in that geography with different vantage points. This can be a great advantage. When visiting the wildlife park in San Diego years ago with our boys, the person driving the tram around the park pointed out a rise on the ground where a group of animals were all sitting together. The guide pointed out that this was an “alertness circle” – that each of the animals was looking in a different direction so that together they had full vision of their surroundings in all directions. This formation is what gave them safety and resilience. Our diverse regional church is an alertness circle with vision in all directions. Together we will be able to assess our situation and bring all that wisdom into the circle to move forward.

For we read in Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapter 8:35....”Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” As a Regional Church we will spend the months/years after pandemic to rediscovering the connections that are visibly intact and discover all the ways that God has already connected us like the river systems from which we take our district names – together in one purpose, to be nourished by the love of God and to reshape the world through the power of our work together guided and fueled by the Holy Spirit we celebrate in this Pentecost season.