



Regional Ministers' Report

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Contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in June 2021

Ministerial Groups:

• College of Regional Ministers	2 times	C
• Santiam River	3 times	C
• Scenic Rivers	4 times	C
• Columbia Gorge	5 times	C/D
• Blue Mountain Rivers	4 times	C/D

Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings

• Disciples Seminary Foundation Committees/Board	1 time	D
• Commission on Ministry	2 times	D
• General Board, Christian Church DOC	2 times	C
• Anti-Racism Team	1 time	D
• Interchurch Center Board	2 times	D
• Commission on Finance and Administration	2 times	D
• New Church Team	2 times	D
• Regional Assembly Planning Group	2 times	C
• Executive Committee	2 times	C/D
• National Benevolent Association Board Alum Council	1 time	C
• Week of Compassion Webinar/Church World Service Webinar	1 time each	C
• Wild Women of the West Event Planning	1 time	C
• Budget Committee	1 time	D
• Meeting with Christian Church Foundation Staff	1 time	C/D
• Verne Catt McDowell Foundation Board	1 time	D
• Volunteers Organized to Assist in Disasters	1 time	C
• FEDICE USA Board	1 time	D

Work with Congregations:

• Silverton Pastoral Search Committee/Transition Committee	8/4 times	C
• Eugene Search Team/Board/Personnel	5/3/3 times	C
• Red Rock Boise Executive Committee on zoom	5 times	C
• Rio de Dios staff transition	3 times	D
• Keizer CC, Governing Documents Committee	1 time	C
• Murray Hills Pastoral Installation Committee	1 time	C
• LaGrande FCC, Governing Documents Committee	1 time	C
• Albany FCC, Governing Documents Committee	1 time	C

Congregational consultations one or more time during this period

- Grants Pass FCC, Dallas FCC, Albany FCC, Glenwood CC, Corvallis FCC, Lebanon FCC, McMinnville FCC, Pendleton FCC, Midway CC, Ontario FCC, Treasure Valley CC, Murray Hills CC, Nampa FCC, Salem FCC, Parkview, Ione

Events attended:

- June 26 Memorial for Allene Hays, Presiding, Lynchwood CC
- July 17 Online Women's Event
- August 7 Disciples of Christ Online Gathering
- September 12 Lynchwood Christian Church 60th Anniversary, Preached
- September 18 Disciples Church Extension Webinar on Building Usage
- September 25 Governing Documents Webinar, Keynoted
- September 26 Billy Strehlow Ordination
- October 9 Online Disciples Women Event
- October 16 Karyn Dix Installation, Preached remotely
- October 20 ALEX Data System Webinar
- October 23 Murray Hills CC, Installation, Preached in person
- October 27 FEDICE Virtual Pilgrimage orientation
- October 31 Salem FCC Pastoral Installation, in person
- October 31 Eugene FCC, Jerri Handy Farewell, in person

We have now completed about twenty months of ministry during the Covid-19 pandemic. Just as congregations have gone through great changes, your regional ministry has done so as well. Our board had already planned to begin reducing Regional Minister staff time before the pandemic. None of us planned to have such a major reduction in Regional Minister traveling time and visits in congregations so suddenly. Coming to almost two years of adjustments, in congregations, in the regional church, and in our personal lives, we have some observations to share briefly.

- 1) More than many regions, the Oregon SW Idaho regional church has put a high value on the Regional Minister presence in congregations. In recent years, we have paid for this in part by going without an Administrative Assistant position. Strong Disciples Mission Fund giving in congregations also made this level of staffing possible. As we prepare to enter 2022, you can see that frequent contacts between the Regional Ministers and congregations have continued. The big difference is that most of these contact hours have been online during the past two years. Reduced DMF giving has also brought a reduction in Regional Minister travel budget as well as staffing time. When the pandemic risks decrease, the Regional Board will need to think about the pros and cons of online Regional Minister contacts vs. in person visits within the parameters of reduced budget and staff time constraints.
- 2) Less Regional Minister travel time has pros and cons already. On the plus side, we have been able to complete more administrative tasks because of spending less time in the cars. For example, we now have the first revision of our Employee Handbook in twenty years. A proposal regarding properties owned by the regional church has come to the board. We have less clutter and storage in the regional office. We have been able to give more time to the Regional Minister evaluation process. We have been able to be engaged with more congregations on internal matters and pastors with individual concerns because of less car time and more zoom and phone contact time available. The data base records are coming more up to date after several years of reduced staffing for this purpose. The region has built up cash reserves as a "rainy day" fund that will help in case of future financial downturns. We have been able to be more present to search processes, meeting with committees more often because the meetings no longer entail hours in a car to get there. We made these changes while continuing a schedule of events and minister gatherings at a rate near comparable to pre-pandemic times, with the exception of youth ministry events. On the other hand, few things take the place of face to face contact. Whether

by coincidence or not, a significant decrease in DMF giving occurred at the same time as we reduced Regional Minister travel. Sometimes it has seemed easier to dismiss the Regional Minister's counsel when given by phone or Zoom.

- 3) Other forms of giving have partially offset the decrease in DMF giving from congregations. Investment income, individual gifts, designated congregational gifts and the Christmas offering have shown great strength. In the long run, these forms of income could continue to go up and down. For example, if the value of investments went down sharply, along with the current decreased DMF pattern of income, the impact on our regional church budget would be significant.
- 4) As in other parts of society, working remotely has increased for the regional church staff during the pandemic. On a typical weekday, you will find only a few people working on site in the five offices at the Interchurch Center. Our Disciples office rarely has more than one person at a time working in the office.
- 5) With our work and travel patterns, online meetings of ministers and regional church events and committees, we can see how virtual gatherings can help us stay better connected even after the pandemic risks decrease. This is true in many forms of regional church life, though probably not so much for regional youth ministries which will need to find creative new options.

As with congregational life, regional church ministry has transformational work to do and has many opportunities for ministry to claim as we seek the Spirit's leading for the future. We are grateful for your faithfulness to Christ and to the Church as we prepare for the New Year.