



Regional Ministers' Report

Doug Wirt and Cathy Myers Wirt

February 4, 2023

By now, you have heard of the life change that we have planned for later in the year. Shortly after New Year's, we shared our decision to retire as Regional Ministers on June 30 of this year. As a board we have discussed this and prepared over a good deal of time. Even so, it still surprises us sometimes to be talking about leaving the ministries we have loved to do. In discussing this at home, we agreed that though it is hard to make this change, it is good that we still enjoy so much of the work and so many good relationships in the Oregon SW Idaho regional church.

In this brief report, we want to focus on some signs of hope for the Oregon SW Idaho regional church.

Regional Board leadership: The Oregon SW Idaho regional church has a capable core of solid and faithful leaders. Thank you for who you are! This has made our work much easier and enjoyable. We have faithful attendance from all five districts. Even through this time of online board meetings, you have worked together remarkably well. We have had a series of excellent board officers, directors and committee chairs. Thanks be to God for each of you!

Pastoral leadership: Congregations in this regional church have many excellent pastors. They minister in several languages, in multiple cultural settings and in groups large and small. This includes a balanced group of young pastors, church planters, ministers with over twenty years of experience, and retired clergy. The regional church also has many gifted ministers in specialized ministries such as chaplains and counselors.

Regional Staff: It's not just Cathy and Doug, you know. For several years, we have followed our Future Story plan to build a strong team of part time staff. It's happened now! Each of our staff, Bernice, Stacy, Liz and Renee are very good at what they do, faithfully contributing their skills and encouragement. Like our regional board leaders, they make our work easier, more enjoyable and more effective.

Openness to New Ministries: For years, we have averaged 20-25% of our congregations as having started or joined Disciples since the year 2000. We are also starting to see more relationships between new and long established churches in the areas of Boise, Salem and Portland. Bernice has done great work in this area, and now we are seeing important next steps of congregations making their own connections with each other.

Unity and Diversity: Disciples in this region worship in three languages every week. The 2022 Regional Assembly showed a sample of this diversity. We have many different worship styles and a range of perspectives on Christian faith. The Anti Racism Pro Reconciliation team and trainers share numerous opportunities to grow in our understanding and witness.

New Directions for Camps and Youth Ministries: Conversations have started across the regional church and within districts about how to serve the needs of youth. A recent generous financial gift to the region provides very timely momentum and support. Youth have met together from several congregations in new ways in several of our districts.

Income Streams: Many congregations and individuals give generous and faithful support to Disciples Mission Fund, Annual Fund, Christmas offerings, other special offerings and permanent funds. Regional operating funds come about half from DMF and half from other sources.

Oregon and SW Idaho Disciples have a good team in place as regional board members, regional elders, our ministers and other leaders to carry forth the Disciples of Christ witness in Oregon and Southwest Idaho. You have given us much joy and reasons to thank God day by day and year after year. Thank you one and all.

Doug and Cathy Myers Wirt
Regional Ministers

Contacts since the last Regional Board meeting in November 2022

Ministerial Groups:

- College of Regional Ministers Regular meetings zoom 2 times
- Western Regional Ministers Fellowship Group zoom 2 times
- Scenic Rivers zoom 2 times
- Blue Mountain Rivers zoom 2 times
- Columbia Gorge District zoom 2 times

Zoom or Phone Conference Meetings

- New Church Team zoom 1 time
- Verne Catt McDowell Foundation Board zoom 1 time
- Commission on Ministry hybrid/zoom 2 times
- FEDICE USA Board/ 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
- Disciples Home Mission Task Force on Leadership Resources on zoom 2 times

Congregational Visits in Person

Salem FCC/Earnest Freeman memorial and Interim Search Committee twice, Peniel preaching, Keizer worship, Albany search committee 2 times, worship twice/ preaching once and Pastor Emeritus presentation other time, Dallas/governing document conversation at potluck, Lynchwood governing document committee, Pacific Islands Family Church worship, Murray Hills Worship

Conversations with General/Regional Church/Educational Ministry Staff

Rosario Ibarra **Disciples Church Extension Fund** Lonnie Graves, **Division of Homeland Ministries**, Bill Robey **Northern Lights Christian Church Region**, Pam Holt **College of Regional Ministers Search and Call Committee**, Sharon Watkins and Dick Hamm, **Former General Ministers**, Bill Spangler-Dunning, **College of Regional Ministers Search Coach**, Doug has continued as Chair of the **Disciples Seminary Foundation** Executive Director Search Committee, Christal Williams, **President Elect of College of Regional Ministers** to help write budget for CRM, Dani Cartwright, **National Benevolent Association**

Work with Congregations since last meeting:

- **Search Processes, multiple contacts:** Lebanon FCC, Red Rock CC Boise (9 meetings or calls), Albany FCC (11 calls/meetings), Portsmouth, Salem FCC (8 calls/meetings)
- **Property issues** with Myrtle Creek
- **Governing Documents** with Dallas (2 conversations with pastor/one in person visit), Lynchwood (1 committee meeting on zoom and one in person), Iowa congregation (1 zoom call)

Congregational consultations other than the categories listed above:

Eugene FCC Personnel, Nueva Vida Property, John Day Elder Training,

Communications Sent:

- **1 Newsletter**
- **Constant Contact mailings:** 9 emails to Regional Board, 7 emails to prayer concerns list, 2 emails about women's ministries, 8 general information emails to the large email list, 2 for Tulsa Talks events
- **Facebook Page posts:** 18 posts to regional Facebook page, 6 posts to regional women's ministry Facebook page

Events attended:

- Nov. 7 Online event with Phillips Seminary celebrating Vine Delora, Jr. anniversary
- Nov. 9 Tulsa Talks 3
- Nov. 27 Pacific Islands Family Church Celebration
- Jan. 21 Boundary Training make up Session
- Jan. 28 Women's Online Event with Sharon Watkins and Mikah Neff

