

GB-21-1185
Christian Church in the Southwest

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Report to the General Board
April 2021

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is One.” The people of Israel had come to a threshold moment. They had made their way into Egypt out of necessity. They became a captive people. Then God led them out of their captivity through Moses. They journeyed 40 years in the wilderness. They had come to the place where they were ready to cross over into the Promised Land. The narrative storyline of Deuteronomy is that Moses—their leader—was giving the final speech to them. He was trying to give all the important instructions they would need to lead them into the next phase. The people were stepping out of what was and stepping into what would be.

The Christian Church in the Southwest has been through our own wilderness wandering of restructure and redesign. With COVID, rising consciousness of pervasive racism, and a contentious election less than a month away, we may still feel like we are in a wilderness wandering. In the midst of our own wilderness wandering, the Christian Church in the Southwest needs the prophetic and comforting word—Hear! Listen! The Lord is our God. The Lord is one.

Here at our threshold moment, the Regional Ministry staff have compiled this state of the Region to acknowledge God's guidance in the past. We believe our purpose is to equip Disciples congregations as we walk through the thresholds before us toward the call of God in this time. We value prayer in place of worry, collaboration in place of isolation, hope as we face the future, and the power of Christ's transforming work.

A little over a year ago, we met and named six initiatives that we believe carry the work of the region forward. These initiatives were affirmed by the Regional Council and they have become the guiding structure for the programmatic work of the region.

CCSW Pray

Prayer is at the heart of all of ministry and especially the ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest. As a region, we seek to create meaningful experiences of retreat and worship for CCSW pastors and congregational leaders. CCSW Pray is visible in our commitment to celebrate installations, ordinations, and commissioning services and as we encourage fellow Disciples to be present at significant milestone events of fellow clergy.

We have experienced several beautiful moments of prayerful ministry over the past two years. One of those was the ordination of Maggie Mossler via Teleconference. It was Maggie's desire to proceed with her ordination service, one month into the pandemic shutdown. Maggie and Christal Fisher crafted a virtual ordination service. The pattern has become familiar to us now. The in- person congregation consisted of 8 people—musician, family, and representatives of Maggie's current congregation of service. Each of these participants were projected on the screen at the front of the sanctuary so Maggie and all present could fully see them. When it came time for the ordaining act and the laying on of hands, Rev. Dr. Jack Myers placed a hand on Maggie's head. All of those participating via zoom and watching on Facebook live placed hands on their digital devices as Christal spoke the words "Maggie Mossler, We Ordain You to the Ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." It was a Spirit filled holy moment.

Over the past two years, the Region has ordained or recognized the ordination of the following ministers:

Rev. Nick Koontz, November 11, 2018, First Christian Church, Lubbock, TX
Rev. Joshua deSteiguer, April 6, 2019, Central Christian Church, Weatherford
Rev. Anthony Chatman, May 11, 2019, Community Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
(Recognition of Ordination & Transfer of Standing)
Rev. T. J. Shoop-York, March 31, 2019, First Christian Church, Midland, TX
Rev. David Bartlett, June 2, 2019, First Christian Church, Corpus Christi
Rev. Logan Fraser, May 25, 2109, Azle Christian Church, Azle, TX
Rev. K. J. Kim, May 12, 2019, Ridglea Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
Rev. Maggie Mossler, April 18, 2020, First Christian Church Beeville in collaboration with Western Hills Christian Church, San Antonio

Rev. Cheryl Scramuzza, May 19, 2019, Northway Christian Church, Dallas, TX
Rev. Joey Stewart, June 8, 2019, Rush Creek Christian Church, Arlington, TX
Rev. Baek Hee Kim, December 15, 2019, University Christian Church, Fort Worth
Rev. Tracey Anderson-Tellado, February 23, 2020, South Shore Christian Church, Corpus Christi
Rev. Daniel Simmons, March 14, 2020, Central Christian Church, Weatherford, TX
Rev. Laura Jean Allen, August 2, 2020, The Welcome Table Christian Church, Arlington, TX
Rev. Lacie Jefferson, August 22, 2020, East Dallas Christian Church, Dallas, TX
Rev. Tyler Araki, August 23, 2020, Galileo Church, Fort Worth, TX in collaboration with First Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
Rev. Meredyth Jones, August 29, 2020, Arlington Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
Rev. Don Tatlock, September 27, 2020, South Hills Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
Rev. Matt Bomhoff, October 3, 2020, River Oaks Christian Church in collaboration with First Christian Church, Woodson, TX

We said a sad good-bye to Rev. James M. Smith in January, former TRA Area Minister and most recently as Pastor of First Christian Church, Ruidoso, New Mexico. Jim also served on the Regional staff of Kansas in Youth Ministry and was a pastor in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Jim will be remembered for his commitment to youth, having served for as Interim Director of Black River Center for Learning, his dedication to justice and for his wry sense of humor. His wife Sandy now lives with their son, Jim, Jr. and family.

CCSW Learn

CCSW Learn reflects the teaching ministry of the region. We have come a long way in our continuing education programs. We began offering the same classes and level of instruction across the entire region. Usually CCSW Learn classes are six-hour one-day experiences. CCSW Learn has developed into a source of education for all in the region. We had to adjust and move to classes through teleconference platforms with the pandemic. This has given us the ability to bring more voices together for our events like Theology, Practical Ministry and Disciples History.

The year began with CCSW Learn event on evangelism led by Rev. Dr. Katie Hays and involving Rev. Kentry Ellison and Rev. Dr. Chad Mattingly.

Our CCSW Learn Disciples Identity class was a collaborative effort that included interviews with Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President; Rev. April Johnson, Reconciliation Minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Dr. Timothy James, Association General Minister and Vice President and Administrative Secretary of National Convocation; Rev. Chung Seong Kim, National Pastor and President of NAPAD; and Rev. Lori Tapia, National Hispanic Pastor and President of Obra Hispana.

During the Practical Ministry event we were able to have three different keynoters, who had applied knowledge in each of the areas: weddings, funerals and baptisms. With the

Rev. Janet Maykus, Rev. Dr. LaVerne Whitehead Reed, and Rev. Dr. Chris Wilson as keynoters, not only were they able to bring experience, the event gave us a space to be able to ask questions on how others were handling things during the pandemic. CCSW Learn has helped not only build the community and connections in the region, it is also a resource to help us all have successful ministries.

At the end of 2018, the Regional Committee on Ministry developed a pattern of courses that would be offered on a five-year cycle to address each of the sixteen competences in the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry.

A (2019)	B (2020)	C 2021	D	E
Scripture and the Practice of Ministry	Theology	Scripture and the Practice of Discipleship	Ethics	Mission of the Church & Ecumenism
Education and Leader Development	Disciples Identity	Pastoral Care Personal	Cultural Sensitivity /Anti-Racism	Proclamation of the Word
Communication	Practical Ministry 1	Spiritual Development	Pastoral— Congregational	Practical Ministry 2
Transformational Leadership	Evangelism	Stewardship	Church Administration	Worship

CCSW Gather

Under the heading of CCSW Gather, we work to expand the quantity and quality of clergy cohort groups (clusters) and to facilitate the work of Disciples Women’s Ministries, Disciples Men’s Ministry, Disciples Youth Ministry, Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship (TCMF) and the Southwest Hispanic Convention. And we work to bring congregational leaders (Elders, Deacons, and Ministry Team Leaders) together for meaningful collaborative and supportive experiences.

Some examples of this include our work in developing clergy support networks. In the Northeast Area, we witness a real desire and commitment for a surer sense of community among our clergy – commissioned and ordained. This has been best expressed through a regular schedule of Clergy Retreats at Disciples Crossing and other gatherings. Just last Christmas, through the leadership of the Area Council, there were over forty (40) clergy and their spouses that gathered for lunch and fellowship at a Christmas Clergy Appreciation Lunch.

In the South Central Texas Area, Capital, Alamo and Coastal clergy clusters gather monthly to share ideas, to commune and break bread together. In the LRGVD clergy gather as a board to support and worship together, especially during Lent and Advent.

Pecos Cluster, including ministers in Alamogordo, Artesia, Carlsbad and Ruidoso, New Mexico, have begun meeting regularly over the last year, after several years of not meeting, joining the Mountain and Border Clusters in learning, supporting and sharing information in the Tres Rios Area.

The youth of Tres Rios have hosted two retreats per year over the past two years at Black River Center for Learning and FCC Ruidoso, New Mexico. Our Area Youth Officers, Adult leaders and clergy helped make all the learning, singing, praying and playing happen. Each event included a service component, one of which was planting fifty new trees at Black River to replace several lost in flooding.

Our third Annual (formerly Albuquerque) Disciple Identity Gathering (ADIG) crosses into categories of Learn, Gather, Justice and Witness as we gathered online to explore Ecology and Theology.

Several ministers learned about Old Testament myths of our human role in the created order through outstanding presentations from Rev. Dr. Lisa Davison at part one, our clergy continuing education event. We continued in part two hearing thoughtful challenges from Rev. Dr. Leah Schade, and workshop leaders, including Rev. Dave Wilson Rogers, Pastor of FCC, Carlsbad; Allison Lanza, Associate Pastor of Ridglea CC and leader of Connect Fort Worth; and Carol Divine, co- director of Disciples' Green Chalice, each encouraging us to make commitments to care for our earth in very practical and sustainable ways for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. Participants gathered online from Kentucky, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. We closed in participatory online worship. This is a program initiated in our geographic locale by lay people and pastors, including our Regional Connection Minister, with the initial gathering idea offered by our CCSW Treasurer, Ray Morgan.

This year most camp and conference opportunities had to be significantly modified. The CCSW Regional Staff put together CCSW Adventures that provided online camp experience in the form of worship and keynotes around weekly themes. Knowing that the installation service for the new youth members of the Regional Youth Ministry Council (a highlight of the annual Christian Youth Leadership Seminar) would not happen this year, Regional staff and representatives convened pods of youth and adults in Amarillo, Midland, McKinney, Corpus Christi, Wichita Falls, Seabrook and through a teleconference connection, that was also made available through social media, the region dedicated youth leaders.

Both the Disciples Women's Ministries and Disciples Men's Ministry had retreats through teleconference in 2020. Even as we look forward to convening these groups in face-to-face settings soon, we celebrate the new-found skills the region is developing.

In response to COVID, the Region has hosted a number of teleconference support gatherings and information sessions covering topics like Payroll Protection Program, worship space sanitization, and online worship. Yet, more significantly, the weekly and monthly teleconference calls have provided time and space for congregational leaders to connect and share concerns and hopes.

The regional staff has partnered with motivated youth ministry leaders to provide a four-part Anti- Racism training. The program reached a maximum capacity (over 100 registered participants) long before the launch on October 4.

In January 2021, based on the model generated by the youth, the Region will be offering a 4-week elders training that will provide elder training for worship leadership, congregational decision- making, caring for fellow members, and faith development.

CCSW Justice

CCSW Justice Initiative is the work of the region to work toward equity, fairness, and compassion within our congregations, ministries and to advocate for justice within the world.

This year has brought an increased awareness of pervasive racism in our culture. The TCMF representative to Regional Council continued to hold the Regional Council accountable for our efforts to be Pro-Reconciling and anti-racist. In response to his influence and the gospel's commands, the entire regional council participated in a Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism (PRAR) training as part of our April Regional Council meeting.

The Region conducted a four-part "Dismantling Racism" webinar series that remains among the most watched and important works of 2020.

The Regional Committee on Ministry has approved the plan to require the CCSW Anti-Racism training for Clergy of all ministers (commissioned, ordained, and active retired) in order to maintain standing. These classes will begin in 2021 and will be offered in varying locations throughout the Christian Church in the Southwest.

Most importantly, in 2020 the Region formed the Christian Church in the Southwest Regional Reconciliation Committee. This committee, currently led by Rev. Alfred Walker of Bonnie View Christian Church, Dallas, will be responsible for developing the region's approach to Reconciliation and Anti-Racism work, guiding the regional Reconciliation grant process, and serving as an advocate within the region and from the region for greater equity in our church and our culture.

As we look forward to 2021, put January 8 and 9 on your calendar for Winter Talk. This is an awesome opportunity to learn more about the Doctrines of Discovery (essentially, I "discovered this land, so it is mine, says the church and government, even though Indigenous people had already lived here for centuries). Rev. David Bell, our Disciples Indigenous Ministries staff will speak, along with representatives from the Apache,

Navajo and Pueblo nations. Participants will have opportunities to discuss their learnings and feelings about our ancestors' contributions and the oppression of our Native neighbors as we discuss ways to be more sensitive to our friends. An ecumenical team, led by Rev. Kim Fields-Haley, continue to plan the event. Resources have been allocated from both the Tres Rios Area and CCSW Reconciliation funds to support this illuminating gathering.

CCSW Serve

CCSW Serve reflects the initiative of the region to make a meaningful difference in meeting real human needs. One way the region does this is through collaborative work with ministry partners within the region. The region has maintained historic ties to educational institutions like Brite Divinity School, Jarvis Christian College, and Texas Christian University. We maintain ties to Juliette Fowler Communities, and Disciple Homes. Our lives are deeply connected to the work of the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries in Los Fresnos, Texas. Yet over the past two years, the Region has also sought to better understand and be faithful to other Disciples-related ministries within our region. We are still trying to understand our place within ministries like Reach Beyond Mission. However, we encourage new ministry formation and desire to more wisely connect with emerging ministries within the region.

CCSW Serve also happens organically. For example, last fall in East Texas when storms wreaked havoc in Longview, TX, it took only one phone call and the wheels were set in motion to get supplies and relief to the residents of our three (3) Disciple Homes there. From generators to hot food, loving Christian service was expressed. And that hands-on help, was in addition to the blessing of grants from the Week of Compassion. Thanks be to God.

CCSW Witness

Finally, CCSW Witness reflects our region's commitment to making Christ known especially in accessible worshiping communities. Our commitment here is to channel new and transforming church resources toward innovative new congregations.

As is true of several of our other initiatives, this work is newer to many of us. We have relied on Area new church committees for the past several decades. Today, we are learning how to support new congregations as a region. The newly-formed Regional New Church Committee participated in the 2020 New Church Summit sponsored by New Church Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Over the next few months, this committee will be developing the regions approach for regional new church support.

Benevolent institutions related to the Church through the Southwest Region

Disciple Homes Management Group
327 Eden Dr Apt 328
Longview TX 75605-3338
903-234-8171, FAX: 903-234-8703
admin@disciplehomes.org
disciplehomes.org

Juliette Fowler Communities
1234 Abrams Rd
Dallas, TX 75214-4850
214-827-0813
Nicole Gann, President and CEO
nicoleg@fowlercommunities.org
www.fowlercommunities.org

Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries
PO Box 273
Los Fresnos, TX 78566-0273
(956) 233-5198
F. Feliberto Pereira, Director
info@swgsm.org
www.swgsm.org

Inman Christian Center
1214 Colima Street
San Antonio TX 78207-6102
(210) 222-9641
receptionist@inmancenter.org
www.inmancenter.org

Other Ministries of the Christian Church in the Southwest

Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship
Robert Loftis, President
7334 Eisenhower Rd
Houston TX 77033-3435
Loftisrobert60@gmail.com

Southwest Hispanic Convention
Jose Garza, Moderator/President
Donations: c/o Aurelio Lopez, treasurer
PO Box 7915, Corpus Christi TX 78467
Correspondence: David Huegel,
secretary
djhuegel@gmail.com (281) 451-9235
www.hispanasw.org

Camp Grounds

Black River Village for Learning
1159 Black River Village Rd
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(575) 785-2361; FAX: (575) 785-2344
Don & Jane Chilcutt, Co-Managers
jane@brlcarlsbad.org
www.brclcarlsbad.org

Disciples Conference Center, Inc.
dba Disciple Oaks Camp & Retreat
673 Private Road 3381
Gonzales, TX 78629-6430
(830) 437-2900
Rev. Scott Miller, Camp Director
discipleoaks@gmail.com
www.discipleoaksretreat.net

Disciples Crossing Camp & Conf Ctr
3693 State Highway 31 E
Athens, TX 75751-3991
(903) 675-3692; FAX: (903) 677-5753
Matt Chandler, Executive Director
matt@disciplescrossing.org
www.disciplescrossing.org

Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat
9030 Retreat Rd
Brownwood, TX 76801-0587
(325) 784-5133; FAX: (325) 216-8510
Matt Hammock, Executive Director
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Ceta Canyon Camp & Retreat Center
37201 FM 1721
Happy, TX 79042-3417
(806) 488-2268 or (800) 593-1992
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