

GB-21-1163  
Central Rocky Mountain Region (CRMR)  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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**Leadership**

Joan Bell-Haynes, Executive Regional  
Minister  
Shelly Garrison, Assoc Regional  
Minister, Camp & Conference, Colorado  
Alicia Vasquez, Executive Assistant  
Vinetta Golphin-Wilkerson, Moderator

**2020 General Board Report**

What can we say about the year that was like no other? Charles Dickens said it best in *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” The COVID-19 Global Pandemic disrupted our lives in ways most of us have never experienced before. It forced us out of our buildings and made us scramble to figure out how to remain connected to each other without them. It forced us to engage in congregational transformation with the “fierce urgency of now”.

**The COVID Pivot**

We had to pivot in-church worship and all things related to church life. It was exciting to support and watch nearly all of our 46 congregations change to online worship platforms (Zoom, FaceBook, YouTube). The region resourced 15 of those congregations with our business Zoom account (they continue to make use of this tool). Our camp & conference staff and leadership cancelled all camp activities for the year, including the annual International Affairs Seminar (IAS). We adapted summer, fall and winter events to virtually support our youth by keeping their connections with each other and their counselors. We discerned to reschedule our regional assembly to September 3-5, 2021.

**REGIONAL PRIORITIES**

- Communication
- Congregational Transformation
- New Church/Creating New Faith Communities
- Cultivating A Culture of Generosity
- Reconciliation Ministry
- Educate and Equip
- Children/Youth/Youth Adult

## **Finance & Stewardship**

Thanks to John Goebel's (Vice President of Finance/Treasury Services) superb work on securing a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan for our region, we offered technology grants to all congregations to secure or upgrade hardware/software and highspeed internet; two grants were awarded. Throughout the pandemic, we also provided consultants to resource our congregations and related ministries. Disciples Mission Fund contributions in the Region are slowly increasing.

## **Regional Board Worshipful Work & COVID**

In May our Regional Board engaged in four sessions of spiritual discernment using the sacred text of Isaiah practicing the Lectio Divina. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, what is God calling us to with the knowledge that we cannot go back to who we were as church?

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed... They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” Isaiah 61: 1-4

It was amazing to see God move among us in the chat! We emerged from discernment with a clear sense of God calling the region to resource our congregations with hope, with tools to build up our communities, and to be agents of healing and justice in our cities. The repair of our cities calls us not to return to what we have been but to become a part of God's “new thing”. We are not sure what all of this entails, but we know that where we have been has not been working. We are committed to continue discerning together. We provided two resource webinars for pastors and congregational leaders:

- Surviving A Global Pandemic: Selfcare & Ministry – Rev. Allen Harris, Regional Minister, Capital Area Region (Metropolitan Washington, DC)
- COVID & Stewardship: What Now? What Next? – Rev. Bruce Barkhauer, Center for Faith & Giving (Indianapolis, IN)

## **Reconciliation Ministry**

The COVID pandemic also forced us to see the injustices and weakness in our communities and nation that have been ignored for far too long. The systemic racial, economic, gender, age, and ability inequalities (sadly the list is too long!) have been laid to bare in our institutions of healthcare, education, and government. We are a nation in crisis – socially, politically, and environmentally. Some say we are facing several viruses in our country. The Reconciliation Ministry feels the burden and the call to do this equity work through Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism (PRAR) in our Region. The trajectory of ministry in 2020 was to listen to our congregations to understand how they viewed race and racism in their own context. Several listening sessions were held. The Reconciliation Ministry discerned to develop regional PRAR trainers. We enrolled four persons in the Reconciliation Ministry PRAR Online Course with Rev. April Johnson

offered through Lexington Theological Seminary and the General Church (September 15-25, 2020).

The primary goals of the reconciliation ministry are as follows:

- To educate our region to the realities and impact that systemic racism and ensuing generational trauma has on all of us as God's beloved people.
- To work to eradicate racism, transforming it into love and justice-making.

### **Congregations in Transformation, Transition & Formation**

Nurturing existing congregations and creating new ones are key priorities for the region. We have invested more than \$700K in one new church in formation and three intentional congregational transformations (three in metro Denver and one in Utah). We resourced congregations in discerning whether they are called to resurrection or to legacy – whether to live or to die. Sadly, one of our congregations in Idaho discerned to leave the region/denomination. Their decision reflected the growing political polarization in our country. We continue to nurture our one new church in formation in northern Denver.

### **Commission on The Order of Ministry (COTOM)**

We virtually celebrated the call of new pastors to ministry: four ordained and three commissioned. We have active partnerships with Phillips Theological Seminary, Disciples Seminary Foundation, and Iliff School of Theology, which includes with supporting grants allocated to support DOC students. The Reconciliation Ministry recommended COTOM require Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training for all clergy. That will be decided in 2021.

### **Camp & Conference Ministry**

CRMR camp and conference ministry utilizes two camp locations. South Hills Retreat Center/Kum Bah Yah is our own 501c3 located near Twin Falls, Idaho.

- United Church of Christ Camp, Black Forest, Colorado Springs, CO  
<https://www.laforet.org>
- South Hills Retreat Center/Kum Bah Yah, Rock Creek Canyon <http://shrckby.org/>

One of our youth is on the General Church Council, Arianna DiMartino, Village Christian Church, Colorado Springs, CO. She has been active at camp her whole life and has served on ECOY (Executive Council of Youth) for two years.

### **Covenant with Regions & General Ministries**

Our regular Zoom meetings with regional colleagues, our GMP, pastors of color and general ministry leaders have been fruitful. We were able to support each other in a myriad of ways: resource-sharing, selfcare and discernment.

- Week of Compassion provided more than six Household Solidarity Grants, walked with us during the great fires in Colorado and Idaho this summer, and awarded a grant to a congregation to support their community food bank.
- National Benevolent Association provided grants to assist congregations providing ministry to their communities.

- Christian Church Foundation consulted on regional investments and recognized the lavish giving of Dee Clark, South Broadway CC with the Harry T. Ice award.
- Disciples Church Extension consulted on buildings and transformation.

## **Related Ministry**

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## **Board of Directors**

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