



Chrisitan Church in Kansas General Board Report
Rev. Tom Stanley, Regional Minister and President

Summary:

The transition from 2023 into 2024 was met with a sense of joy and anticipation. Our staff is finally complete, and we have on board all called staff. Rev. Dr. David Dubovich accepted the call to serve as the Associate Regional Minister for the Central and High Plains area.

What is your Region celebrating:

The Disciples Center at Camp Tawakoni hosted 300 plus children and counselors in 2024. The Disciples Center continues to grow; more than 65% of its revenue is from non-Disciples organizations. The Oklahoma Region brought their CYF Camp to Disciples Center in 2024 and had a fantastic experience. This has proven to be a fabulous partnership, and we will likely expand this into other camping areas. We want to continue to share resources and not duplicate efforts.

The Kansas regional youth retreat hosted 30 teens at Disciples Center in 2024. We are looking forward to the 2024 spring and fall retreats and further integrating with our camping program in 2024. The focus this year will be on youth leadership! Our Regional Youth Council has reformed and making great strides in meeting the needs of the youth in our region.

Zoom has been and continues to be an excellent tool to connect and touch lives; however, there is no substitute for in-person gatherings. Zoom learning opportunities helped the church through the COVID-19 pandemic, but being able to restart in-person learning opportunities is a blessing. The Kansas region has resumed in-person boundaries training, Anti Racism training, spirituality retreats, and clergy retreats. Continuing education is vital for any minister to remain up to date, but the opportunity to share burdens, challenges, and successes with colleagues is just as important. Rev. Jerry Zerr keynoted the 2024 Clergy retreat with 30 clergy in attendance.

The Region hosted three in-person boundaries training and one Zoom training, with 60 clergy and laity attending. The Regional Committee on Ministry celebrated ordaining Rev. Cana Moore at Gorham Community Church in Gorham, Kansas. The committee continues to work with 10 candidates for ordination, and two new candidates have joined the under-care program. Additionally, we have ten ministers under care as commissioned ministers.

Disciples Women, and Men have resumed meeting in person. The Kansas Disciples Women hosted over 120 women in two sessions of their retreat in 2024. The Kansas Disciples Women also celebrated having women from the Greater Kansas City Region and the Nebraska Region present at the event.

Disciples' men hosted their annual retreat with 32 total men attending; the Rev. Paxton Jones was the keynote speaker. The topic for the Disciples men is "Confronting Christian Nationalism." The Disciples Men also invited the Nebraska and Greater Kansas City regions to participate in our 2024 retreat.

The Kansas regional communications team continues to develop ways for our churches and widespread members to remain connected. A new addition to our staff is Zach Gingrich-Gaylord who has many years of experience in building communications across multiple platforms. Our social media, and communication engagement has more than doubled since the beginning of 2024.

The Rev. Travis Smith McKee has given the Region a new and fresh look at what it means to be a new church and start a new church. We have founded a new congregation in Lawrence, Kansas, called the Fringe. This congregation will be open and affirming and a place for those for whom a more traditional church does not fit.

The Tri-Regional Partnership between Nebraska, Kansas, and Greater Kansas City is alive and well! We continue to explore how to share resources, continue education, and people. This past year, we shared 60 scholarships to the Kansas Leadership Center between the three regions. "The KLC path teaches that anyone can lead anytime and anywhere. Our leadership path will teach you how. Change the way you manage yourself and mobilize others. Transform your leadership skills and become more effective in solving problems with our three-step leadership development path." With the passing of Rev. Chris Mortin and the Retirement of Rev. Bill Rose-Heim the TRI will be looking at what is next for 2025 and beyond.

Biggest Challenges:

Our biggest challenges currently are search and call; the number of pastors in search and call is insufficient for the needs of the whole church. We continue to seek those called by God to serve the church and plan to expand our lay ministry program. Phillips Theological Seminary's lay ministry program is a natural gift for meeting this need. However, it is nearly free to attend seminary between regional scholarships and PTS scholarships, so there is some pushback from our Regional Committee on the Order of Ministry as to why people don't go to seminary.

Additionally, growing the ministry at Disciples Center is challenging. We are nearly at capacity for beds, days, and events. Last fall, the Disciples Center was not booked for three weekends. We must continue to develop staff, resources, and infrastructure to support this level of activity. We added staff to support camp operations in 2024, however, one of the largest camper groups invested in a camp of their own and will not be returning to Disciples Center in 2025.

What we want to accomplish:

As a region, we want to develop a path leading to ministry for individuals who wish to serve. Working within the framework of TIFFCOM, we want to develop a path towards ministry that does not seem so daunting right from the start. This may be not developing something new; it may be as simple as presenting it differently. For example:

We have an individual who is now in search and call who began exploring commissioned ministry but is now on the seminary track. The candidate did not believe seminary was possible for her at this stage in life, but that changed as we explored scholarships, aid, and the reality of online learning. Vienna's experience can be modeled for other people who wish to serve either their local congregation or the wider church. As we explored what she wanted to do, it became clear she wanted to explore ministry, education, and credentialing beyond commissioned ministry.

How can we pray for your ministry:

Please pray for our pastors, congregations, and regional ministers. Pray for God's guidance, strength, and presence. More than that, is that we, the Christian Church in Kansas, will follow God's lead into the future.

Financials:

Please see the attached files.

Moderator Contact:

Our Moderator for 2025 is Ruby Brower, her phone number is 785-532-8621 and her email address is moderator@kansasdisciples.org.