

General Board Report 2026

Central Rocky Mountain Region Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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Celebrations

The Central Rocky Mountain Region continues to experience meaningful signs of vitality and imagination in the life of our congregations and regional ministry.

We look forward with great anticipation to our upcoming Regional Assembly, which will focus on themes of imagination, thriving congregations, and deepening relationships across the region. In a geography as vast as ours—spanning Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, southwest Idaho, and northwest New Mexico—intentional opportunities to gather are essential. Assembly becomes more than an event; it is a reminder that we belong to one another and that the Spirit continues to stir new possibilities among us.

Across the region we are witnessing congregations experimenting with creative responses to the realities they face. Churches are exploring new partnerships in their communities, adapting ministry models, and asking thoughtful questions about how to faithfully embody the gospel in changing contexts. Even where resources are limited, congregations are demonstrating resilience and imagination.

One particularly encouraging development is the growth of lay leadership. In congregations that cannot afford or cannot find a full-time or part-time settled pastor, lay leaders are stepping forward in significant ways. These leaders are preaching, organizing ministry, guiding congregational decision-making, and helping congregations discern their future. Their willingness to serve reminds us that the work of the church belongs to the whole people of God.

The regional board is also exploring new ways to structure its work in order to better accomplish God's mission through the church. Conversations are underway about how the board can focus more intentionally on relational leadership, discernment, and strategic support for congregations navigating transition and change.

Together, these developments reflect a region that continues to listen for the movement of the Spirit and respond with creativity and courage.

Challenges

At the same time, the Central Rocky Mountain Region continues to face significant challenges.

A persistent shortage of pastoral candidates affects many congregations. Some churches searching for settled leadership are encountering smaller candidate pools than in previous years.

This reality is accelerating shifts toward part-time ministry, bi-vocational leadership, or lay-led congregational models.

Geography also contributes to a sense of isolation. The distances between congregations can be considerable, making it difficult for leaders to gather regularly or to build relationships across the region. Because of this, regional gatherings—assemblies, retreats, and clergy events—carry heightened importance as opportunities to reconnect and encourage one another.

These realities require ongoing adaptation, creativity, and faithful discernment.

Goals for the Coming Year

In response to both the opportunities and challenges before us, my goals for the coming year include:

1. **Continuing to connect and build relationships** with congregations and clergy across the region through travel, listening conversations, and regional gatherings.
2. **Continue to expand our collaborative communication plan**, strengthening the ways congregations and regional leaders share stories, resources, and opportunities for connection.
3. **Walking alongside congregations in discernment** as they consider what comes next for their ministries—whether that means new leadership models, partnerships, or reimagined approaches to mission.
4. **Helping the region tell its story**, highlighting the ways God is at work among us and reminding one another that CRMR is at its best when we join together in that divine activity.

What the General Board Should Know

Disciples in the Central Rocky Mountain Region continue to listen attentively for God's call and to seek faithful ways of responding.

The shift toward part-time and pulpit supply clergy continues to unfold quickly; I believe it is possible that three to four additional congregations may conclude their active ministry within the next three to five years.

While these realities are sobering, they are not the whole story. Across the region there are congregations and leaders who are thinking creatively about the future of the church—exploring new partnerships, experimenting with different ministry structures, and reimagining what faithful witness can look like in their communities.

Even in a season of transition, the Spirit continues to invite us into hopeful and faithful work.

Prayer Requests

I invite the General Board to pray for the congregations, clergy, and laity of the Central Rocky Mountain Region as we seek to follow the light of Christ and discern how best to be faithful in this time.

Please pray for safe travel and meaningful relationships as I continue to connect with congregations across this large region. And I ask your prayers as well for my spouse and me as we navigate living in different states while continuing to serve the church.