

GB-26-1356

Regional Report of OR/SWID

An Accomplishment from 2025

We currently have three congregations participating in Lexington Theological Seminary's "Thriving Congregation" program. All three congregations report a lot of work involved, but also very good results.

Hope for 2026

That we will be able to call a new settled Regional Minister. We are starting to put together the Search and Call Committee.

Challenges Ahead

The Interim Regional Ministers have been tasked with implementing a Programmatic (Networking) style of ministry for the Region, and to help the Region come to a better understanding of its finances. Change is challenging even at the Regional Level.

A congregational story of strength or hope in your Region that the General Board members can share with their own congregations.

It is hard to select just one. We have many stories that show the strength and resiliency of our congregations.

The story selected is really two stories woven into one. One of our congregations had been in supply preaching for three years. Their attempts to hire a pastor had not worked out.

One of our young adults, who was active in a congregation felt called to ministry and was encouraged by our former Regional Ministers to pursue her call. She decided to go to seminary. During her time in seminary, her local Disciple Minister group encouraged her to attend their meetings. Friendships and support developed between experienced pastors and the seminarian.

The congregation had accepted the offer of a community church pastor to serve as their preacher every Sunday. The church was introduced to a different faith tradition. The pastor and congregation appreciated each other, and it was a good arrangement. However, the congregation missed their Disciple tradition and teachings.

The young seminarian graduated. One of the early things the new Interim Regional Minister did was share in an Ordination Service for this new Disciple Minister. While preparing for the Ordination Service, the seminarian shared that she felt called to Interim and Transitional Ministry with struggling congregations. The new Interim Regional Minister had recently visited the congregation, which had been in pulpit supply for three years. This newly ordained minister (who had been encouraged and nurtured by some of the Region's pastors), and the congregation were introduced to one another.

The young pastor has been serving this congregation (which struggled to find a minister) as the Interim/Transitional Minister for eight months!