



## The Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

---

October 1, 2018

To: Church Board Chairs, Pastors and Lay Leaders, and Members

From: Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton  
Executive Regional Minister

RE: Regional Assembly 2018 Business Docket

We are fast approaching the Regional Assembly to be held November 2-4<sup>th</sup> at Kings Highway Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Shreveport, LA. Our theme, *"We are Message Bearers"* confidently and humbly calls our attention for study and reflection to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NRSV:

*"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are Ambassadors for Christ."*

We are presenting the following materials to you on behalf of the Regional Board as approved at our August 2, 2018 Zoom Conference Call. Items on the Regional Assembly Docket include:

1. 2016 Regional Assembly Minutes
2. Treasury Services Financial Report and 2019 Proposed Budget
3. State of the Region Report
4. Future Vision and Capacity Building Report
5. Nominating Committee Report

Moderator Elect	Robert Palmer, Cross Street CC, Little Rock AR 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice
Moderator	John Johnson, East Percy Street CC, Greenwood, MS
Treasurer	To Be Determined
Secretary	Judith Rizzo, Disciples Bayou CC, Lafayette, LA
RCOM Chair	Ryan Pfeiffer, FCC, Fayetteville AR
General Board Rep	Charlie Wallace, FCC, Little Rock, AR
Member at Large	Ruby Howard, Bethel CC, Coila, MS
Member at Large	Linda White, Park Hill CC, North Little Rock, AR
Member at Large	Carol Johnson, FCC, Hot Springs, AR
Member at Large	Carole Montgomery, Covenant CC, Byram, MS
Member at Large	Megan Craven, FCC, Gulfport, MS
Member at Large	Jason Ferguson, FCC, Sherwood, AR
Member at Large	Gina Anthon, FCC, Hammond, LA
Member at large	To Be Determined
Youth Representative	Ryan Brooks, FCC, Rogers, AR
Young Adult Rep	To be Determined

Other Constituency Group Presidents (Not a part of Slate):

MCMC President	Rufus Edwards, Christian Chapel, Port Gibson, MS
GRR Disciples Women	Renee Eakin, Kings Highway CC, Shreveport, LA
AR State Fellowship	To Be Determined
Disciples Men President	Charles Curtis, Utica CC, Utica MS

6. Committee Reports

- A. Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM)
- B. Regional Elders
- C. Pinnacle Outreach Ministry
- D. Youth Report
- E. Disciples Women
- F. Disciples Men
- G. Arkansas State Fellowship

7. General Assembly Resolutions

- A. Prior to the August 2, 2018 zoom conference call, David Britt, Moderator, asked board members to complete an online survey of resolutions that were brought before the 2017 General Assembly, and to indicate which of these we would bring before the Regional Assembly in November, 2018. Five of the resolutions received enough votes from those who responded to the survey to warrant bringing them to this Business slate for action. The five Resolutions voted for approval are listed below:

- 1. **GRR Resolution #2018-1** – Resolution to Celebrate and Reaffirm our Commitment to the Vision of Planting 1,000 New Congregations by 2020 (GA-1717)
- 2. **GRR Resolution #2018-2** – A Renewed Commitment to Reconciliation Ministry (GA-1721)
- 3. **GRR Resolution #2018-3** – On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Congregations (GA-1723)
- 4. **GRR Resolution #2018-4** – Stewardship as a Spiritual Discipline and Its Applications in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (GA-1732)
- 5. **GRR Resolution #2018-5** – Advocacy For the Poor

*(See Appendix for all Resolutions)*

8. Time and Place Resolution

The 2020 Regional Assembly is slated for the state of Arkansas. We invited First Christian Church in Fort Smith, AR to host the 2020 Regional Assembly. We are waiting for a response from the Leadership.

9. Recognition for Host Congregation

Full text of the above items will appear in the Regional Assembly docket. This memo serves as notification of Assembly Business Items which will require a vote. All others, unless deemed an emergency, shall be received as reports.

**GREAT RIVER REGION**  
**Regional Assembly Business Meeting Minutes**  
**8:30 P.M., November 11, 2016**  
**Northside Christian Church, West Point, MS**

The 2016 Regional Assembly business meeting was opened at 8:30 P.M. on Friday, November 11, by Acting Moderator David Britt, who, following prayer, thanked all the members of the Regional Board for their hard work during the last two years. Minutes of the 2014 RA business meeting were introduced as being printed on pages 13 – 17 in the RA book. Barbara Driscoll moved that these be approved, Jennie Gregory seconded. Motion passed.

**State of the Region Report**

Dr. Britt called on Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton, Interim Executive Regional Minister, for the State of the Region report, found on pages 18 – 23 of the RA book. She began by reporting that she had traveled 33,000 miles in the Region from September 2015 to September 2016 and visited 44 congregations. She said she plans to visit the rest of the congregations by the end of the year. She also emphasized that she had been welcomed and treated well by the congregations visited. She praised FCC Baton Rouge for its response to the violence and then the flooding during the 2016 summer.

She then addressed the internal office problems she had encountered when she became Interim, beginning with an unsecure computer system which she could not log onto for her first two months in office. Service with GoDaddy.com and Comcast couldn't accomplish the "secure" set up we were looking for, so we contracted with Datamax for an "in-house" server, backup system, three notebooks, and an anti-theft Sonic Wall security system, with which she and office personnel have been well satisfied. Then in April 2016 the regional office flooded, necessitating staff working from home for several months while mold abatement and structural repairs were being done, costing just over \$16,000 which was not budgeted. The Regional Board named a building planning committee which explored the feasibility of selling the office, and the Executive Committee in September 2016 approved for the building planning committee to move forward to develop an action plan to place the property on the market. Dr. Burton also worked with a personnel committee to review the workflow processes and compensation for the three office staff. As a result the Administrative Assistant position was eliminated. Three days before Christmas 2015 Dr. Burton was informed that cash flow was not sufficient to meet payroll and that they would have to borrow from the savings account and then pay it back. This crisis led to further discussion with Treasury Services and action by the Regional Board in January 2016 to contract with them for financial and payroll functions in order to get a handle on the Region's financial situation. After the lengthy process of transferring information from the Region's QuickBooks records to Treasury Services, a realistic view of finances was provided at end of May 2016, showing a deficit of \$40,000. Dr. Burton stated that additional information would be forthcoming in the financial report and budget report. She continued by saying that she began looking at ways to cut expenses. The elimination of the Administrative Assistant position was one measure. Then the Youth Coordinator resigned. These two cuts will hopefully produce savings in the fourth quarter of \$16,000. She also

cut back on travel expenses by staying in homes wherever possible and began more closely monitoring monthly expenses.

Dr. Burton reported that she had attended four RCOM meetings over the past year and they are working together on a clergy misconduct policy for GRR. She complimented the Commission's work, saying that they have worked with forty to fifty candidates in the past two years.

Since the resignation of the Youth Coordinator Alisha Gourley, Dr. Burton said she has been working with a youth task force for next steps regarding youth ministry in the Region. Members of the task force have taken leadership roles for the scheduled events of Fall Fandango and Snoasis. An interim summer camp plan for 2017 has been worked out with Disciples Crossing at Athens, TX. This provides time for the task force and the new Settled Regional Minister to do critical thinking and strategic planning.

Dr. Burton reported that five Mission First Gathering sessions were held throughout the Region in the summer of 2016.

Regarding Search and Call she said she discovered that the process we have been using in GRR is outdated and time-consuming and the plan is to do on-site training with CDM Plus Technical Expert Dean Phelps.

She touched briefly on church closings and transitions affecting Broadmoor CC in Shreveport, LA; Grace Disciples of Christ in Covington, LA; Real Faith CC in Clarksdale, MS; and FCC in Arkadelphia, AR. More details can be found in the printed report on pages 22-23 of the RA book.

Dr. Burton stated that she has been very involved with the Regions constituency and fellowship groups during her time as Interim. She has met with Northwest Arkansas Clergy, Central Arkansas Clergy, Mississippi Clergy Gathering, MS Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC), Arkansas State Fellowship, and Southern LA Clergy, as well as Disciples Women Retreats in LA and MS, and ROSES International Leadership Training, also Black Ministers' Retreat, National Convocation, and MCMC Convention.

Dr. Burton concluded her report by expressing her gratitude to GRR for calling her to serve as Interim Regional Minister.

### **Other Staff Reports**

Written reports from RCOM (Regional Commission on Ministry), Regional Elders, Pinnacle Outreach Ministry, Disciples Youth, New Church (Jerusalem CC), Disciples Women, and Arkansas State Fellowship were included in the RA book pages 24-44.

### **Acting Moderator's Report**

Dr. David Britt reported that he was recruited to serve on the GRR Board by previous Executive Regional Minister Barb Jones, because they shared concerns regarding board

governance. While serving, he had introduced a policy governance model based on the Carver Model of Board Governance, which was adopted by the GRR Board in 2015. Dr. Britt provided training for Board members in 2015-2016.

### **Financial Report and Budget (RA-2016-2)**

The financial report and proposed 2017 Budget were presented by Board Treasurer Don Johannes with the aid of John Goebel of Treasury Services and Dr. Nadine Burton.

The financial reports (pages 46-48 in RA book) indicated that the Region, as of September 30, 2016, had a net deficit of \$68,305. There were a number of questions and concerns voiced by RA attendees relating to how this happened and what steps need to be taken to get the Region to a stable financial position. Attendees heard that the Region has been operating for a number of years from a deficit position. Money has been borrowed to meet expenses. Contributing factors included the decrease in monies received by the Region from DMF, Christmas Offering, and contributions to the Annual Fund. Giving by congregations has declined across the board, not just in our region, but others as well. Another contributing factor to the deficit was the unexpected \$16,000 expense of office building repair as a result of flooding. Dr. Burton reiterated the expense-cutting measures that have already been put in place; the elimination of the Administrative Assistant position, not filling the youth coordinator position, reducing travel expenses where possible. and reducing cost of employee healthcare insurance. She also emphasized the necessity of individuals and congregations stepping up to help by contributing to the Region's Designated Operating Fund and Annual Fund, as well as to the yearly special Christmas Offering.

The proposed 2017 Budget (page 45 in RA book) was presented with the comment from Dr. Burton that it is a "hopeful" budget and shows a break-even situation, rather than a deficit, as it shows increased income from Annual Fund and the Christmas offering. Motion was made by Marilou Coins of Parkview CC and seconded by Pernella Shortie of Indianola CC to approve the 2017 Budget. Motion passed.

### **Nominating Committee Report (RA 2016-3)**

Prior to presenting the proposed slate of Board members for 2017-18, Dr. Burton asked current Board members to stand and be recognized. She thanked them for their work during the 2015-16 term.

Dr. Burton then read the list of 2017-18 nominees:

**Moderator** – David Britt

**Moderator-Elect** – Robert Palmer

**Treasurer** – Carol Johnson

**Secretary** – Linda White

**RCOM Chair** – Don Morrow

**General Board Rep** – Zedric Clayton

**Members at Large:** Laura Cosgrove, Renee Eakin, Carole Montgomery, John Johnson, Charlie Wallace, Megan Craven, Jason Ferguson, Gina Anthon

**Youth Rep** – Ryan Brooks

**Young Adult Rep** – Tamara Smith  
**DW President** – June Pierce  
**DM President** – Charles Curtis  
**AR State Fellowship** - Rita Richardson  
**MCMC** – Freddie Harris

Jacque Johannes of Park Hill CC moved to approve this slate of Board officers and members; Russell Myers of United CC seconded. Motion Passed

### **Executive Regional Minister Search Committee Report**

Jennie Gregory, Search Committee Chair, reported on the process the committee has been going through. At the time of this Regional Assembly, the field of candidates is down to two and live interviews with these two are scheduled for November 19. After those the Committee will deliberate, pray, and listen for God's leading to a call to move forward into formal negotiations with one of them. When one candidate is recommended to the Board, the Board can then conduct their own interview. The Board has the final say in the process.

### **Resolutions**

Dr. Britt presented Resolution RA 2016-5 (pages 55-56 in RA book), Becoming A People of Welcome and Support to People with Mental Illness and/or Mental Health Disorders. Denny Vowell of FCC Jonesboro moved to approve this Resolution; Pernella Shortie of Indianola CC seconded. Motion passed.

Dr. Britt then introduced RA 2016-6 (pages 57-58 in RA book), Revised GA-1521 Substitute Resolution from the General Board on Gun Violence. Joe Hodges of Park Hill CC moved that this Resolution be removed from the table; Regina Herren of Utica CC seconded. Motion passed.

RA 2016-7, Resolution to express Appreciation to Host Church, Northside Christian Church was presented. Don Johannes of Park Hill CC moved to approve this Resolution; Carole Montgomery of Covenant CC seconded. Motion passed with a round of applause.

The final Resolution on agenda, RA2016-8, Resolution of Time and Place for the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 2018 Regional Assembly, naming Kings Highway Christian Church in Shreveport, LA as the location and November 3-5, 2018 as the date, was presented to the Assembly. Khadijah Tucker of FCC Bossier City moved to approve this Resolution; Ronny Nowell of FCC Rogers seconded. Motion passed.

There being no further items of business, Dr. Britt adjourned the 2016 Regional Assembly Business Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Currie, Acting Secretary

**The Great River Region of the Christian Church**  
**Statement of Financial Position**

Year-to-Date 8/31/2018

	<u>8/31/2018</u>	<u>8/31/2017</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>	<u>12/31/2017</u>
<b>Assets</b>				
Current Assets				
Cash held by (due to) OGMP	61,820	202,201	(140,382)	250,293
Accounts Receivable	278	809	(531)	8,138
Prepaid Expenses	45	4,059	(4,014)	45
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>62,143</u>	<u>207,070</u>	<u>(144,927)</u>	<u>258,476</u>
Investments				
Investments held at Church Extension	349,073	242,541	106,532	244,645
Investments held at CCF	203,198	189,928	13,270	203,461
Investments held at NSC	219,436	229,435	(9,999)	221,721
<b>Total Investments</b>	<u>771,707</u>	<u>661,904</u>	<u>109,803</u>	<u>669,826</u>
Fixed Assets				
Land	113,850	113,850		113,850
Building and Improvements	154,704	154,704		154,704
Furniture and Fixtures	74,191	74,191		74,191
Vehicles	45,855	24,410	21,445	24,410
Accumulated Depreciation	(248,195)	(243,622)	(4,573)	(248,195)
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>140,405</u>	<u>123,533</u>	<u>16,872</u>	<u>118,960</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><b>974,254</b></u>	<u><b>992,507</b></u>	<u><b>(18,253)</b></u>	<u><b>1,047,262</b></u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>				
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Accounts Payable	9,573	14,212	(4,640)	7,573
Line of Credit	74,372	74,372		74,372
Note Payable	2,475	6,792	(4,317)	5,373
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>86,421</u>	<u>95,377</u>	<u>(8,956)</u>	<u>87,319</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Unrestricted	49,680	65,799	(16,119)	85,583
Temporarily Restricted	340,844	365,543	(24,698)	375,473
Permanently Restricted	497,309	465,788	31,521	498,888
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>887,834</u>	<u>897,130</u>	<u>(9,296)</u>	<u>959,944</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u><b>974,254</b></u>	<u><b>992,507</b></u>	<u><b>(18,253)</b></u>	<u><b>1,047,262</b></u>

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Detailed Net Asset Activity

Assets less Liabilities representing Fund Balances

	Beginning of year	Income	Expenses	Unreal. Gain/ (Loss) on Inv.	As of 8/31/2018	Total Liabilities	Total Assets	Fixed Assets	AR/ Prepays	Cash	CE	NSC	CCF
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
Unrestricted Net Assets - Regional Office	(33,377)	144,032	(197,566)		(90,724)	(86,421)	(4,303)		323	(6,707)	2,081		
Snoasis		5,745	(6,910)										
Magnolia			(72)										
Other Events			(350)										
Women's Events		9,058	(937)										
DW Service Projects		1,669	(530)										
Men's Events			(200)										
Clergy Events		5,075	(5,531)										
unConference		1,865	(1,530)										
Regional Car Purchase		10,280	(21,445)										
Net Fixed Assets Fund	118,960	21,445	-		140,405		140,405	140,405					
	<b>85,583</b>	<b>199,169</b>	<b>(235,071)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>49,681</b>	<b>(86,421)</b>	<b>136,102</b>	<b>140,405</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>(6,707)</b>	<b>2,081</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
FCC Cleveland Fd-Investment (CCF 1724)	11,705	222	(222)	(228)	11,477		11,477			467			11,010
New Church Fund (CCF 1083)	52,224	4,488	-	(77)	56,635		56,635			14,313	<b>38,612</b>		3,710
Disciples Bayou CC New Church Fund	112,626	220	(30,200)		82,646		82,646			(19,624)	<b>102,270</b>		
Reconciliation	9,679	547	-		10,226		10,226			10,226			
Pinnacle	9,870	56,700	(66,150)		420		420			420			
Mission Insite	(2,395)	65	-		(2,330)		(2,330)			(2,330)			
Youth New Program Trust (CCF 999)	52,192	205	(400)	(184)	51,813		51,813			40,892			10,921
Disciples Men	753	-	-		753		753			753			
Regional Endowment (CCF 892)	88,105	864	-	(114)	88,855		88,855				<b>82,123</b>		6,732
Special Memorial Fund (CCF 1082)	5,557	134	(500)	(139)	5,052		5,052			(1,600)			6,652
Church Renewal Fund (CCF 1477)	21,143	398	-	(357)	21,184		21,184						21,184
Great River Region Ozark Fund (CCF 2096)	13,281	267	-	(276)	13,272		13,272						13,272
Women's Activity Fund	732	575	(466)		841		841			841			
Total Temporarily Restricted	<b>375,473</b>	<b>64,685</b>	<b>(97,938)</b>	<b>(1,375)</b>	<b>340,844</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>340,844</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44,358</b>	<b>223,005</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>73,481</b>
<b>PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
Lane Ministerial Fund (CCF 1085)	61,529	459	-	(84)	61,904		61,904			16,018	<b>41,868</b>		4,018
Miller Scholarship Fund (CCF 963)	3,141	158	-	(163)	3,136		3,136			(4,728)			7,864
Pickering Scholarship Fund (CCF 1608)	36,514	931	-	(420)	37,025		37,025			16,845			20,180
Rozzell Lectureship Fund (CCF 1298)	24,280	498	-	(516)	24,262		24,262			(500)			24,762
Scholarship Fund (CCF 1084)	31,124	1,767	(1,860)	(719)	30,312		30,312			(4,243)			34,555
Young Ministerial SchlrsHp Fd (CCF 1931)	18,084	364	-	(376)	18,072		18,072						18,072
Disciples Walk Endowment	221,721	3,055	(2,049)	(3,291)	219,436		219,436					219,436	
Paragould Leadership Fund (CCF 504)	51,657	507	-	(94)	52,070		52,070			777	<b>46,798</b>		4,495
Committee of 500 (CCF 1081)	15,783	317	-	(329)	15,771		15,771						15,771
Don Embree School Fund	25,691	193	-		25,884		25,884				25,884		
Disciples Men CD	9,364	73	-		9,437		9,437				9,437		
Total Permanently Restricted	<b>498,888</b>	<b>8,322</b>	<b>(3,909)</b>	<b>(5,992)</b>	<b>497,309</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>497,309</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,169</b>	<b>123,987</b>	<b>219,436</b>	<b>129,717</b>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>959,944</b>	<b>272,176</b>	<b>(336,918)</b>	<b>(7,367)</b>	<b>887,834</b>	<b>(86,421)</b>	<b>974,254</b>	<b>140,405</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>61,820</b>	<b>349,073</b>	<b>219,436</b>	<b>203,198</b>

\$200,000 of the above CE is restricted as collateral for Real Faith's CE loan.

# The Great River Region of the Christian Church Budget Report

	Year to Date			Annual Budget	Prior YTD
	Actual as of 8/31/2018	Budget as of 8/31/2018	Over (Under) Budget		Actual as of 8/31/2017
<b>Income</b>					
Disciples Mission Fund	86,690	116,242	(29,552)	189,000	118,014
Easter	474	474	0	800	474
Christmas Offering	7,612	9,200	(1,588)	18,000	10,617
Thanksgiving	147	200	(53)	450	308
Blessing Boxes	757	1,200	(443)	1,500	1,342
Annual Fund	18,995	20,100	(1,105)	26,000	9,765
Distributed CCF Income	11,167	10,466	701	18,500	10,803
Designated Operating Income	17,672	26,600	(8,928)	43,000	29,501
Regional Capital Program	150	150		175	125
Honoraria	200	300	(100)	800	650
Interest Income	19	19	0	40	19
Miscellaneous Income	150		150		39
Rental Income				7,800	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>144,032</b>	<b>184,951</b>	<b>(40,919)</b>	<b>306,065</b>	<b>181,658</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Salaries & Benefits					
Salaries	96,937	101,795	(4,859)	152,693	95,467
Pension	11,337	12,017	(680)	18,025	11,337
Payroll Taxes	3,085	3,248	(163)	4,872	3,025
Ins-Wrkr Comp & Employer Liab	2,830	2,000	830	2,000	1,429
Insurance - Other	129	129		129	129
Continuing Education				600	
Total Salaries & Benefits	114,317	119,189	(4,872)	178,319	111,387
Travel					
Transportation - ERM	5,424	5,000	424	8,000	3,279
Meals - ERM	2,236	1,810	426	3,700	1,837
Lodging - ERM	6,019	6,100	(81)	7,000	6,526
Registration for Events Expense	862	957	(95)	1,500	1,183
Travel & Exp - Office staff	333	2,000	(1,667)	5,000	4,368
Youth Travel/Meals				600	
Insurance - Auto	3,918	3,500	418	3,500	2,326
Relocation Expenses	3,349		3,349		
DW Travel Pool Dues				350	
Total Travel	22,140	19,367	2,773	29,650	19,519
Facilities					
Rent	900	1,200	(300)	2,400	
Maintenance & Utilities	1,510	1,650	(140)	4,000	2,002
Service Contracts	902	1,700	(798)	3,000	1,591
Property Taxes				700	183
Repairs & Maintenance	2,554	2,000	554	2,000	
Landscaping	1,153	1,200	(47)	2,500	1,677
General Liability Ins	5,975	6,000	(25)	6,000	3,905
Total Facilities	12,995	13,750	(755)	20,600	9,358

## The Great River Region of the Christian Church Budget Report

	Year to Date			Annual Budget	Prior YTD
	Actual as of 8/31/2018	Budget as of 8/31/2018	Over (Under) Budget		Actual as of 8/31/2017
Office Expenses					
Telephone	2,775	2,600	175	3,900	2,647
Cell Phones	153		153		
Postage	1,506	1,110	396	2,500	1,121
Office Supplies	335	500	(165)	1,500	472
Books & Resources	717	300	417	300	199
Paper/Printing/Ink Cartridges	652	630	22	2,000	324
Meetings/Flowers/Celebrations	186		186		10
OGMP Yearbook				1,400	
Bank Charges	12	100	(88)	100	39
CRMM Allocation	2,315	2,315	0	2,315	2,577
Christmas Offering Promotion				1,500	
Miscellaneous Expense	218		218		266
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>8,868</b>	<b>7,555</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>15,515</b>	<b>7,656</b>
Computer Supplies					
Online Services	2,080	2,000	80	2,340	1,485
Computer Hardware & Software	343	500	(157)	500	354
Equipment Leases	9,310	9,333	(23)	14,000	9,377
<b>Total Computer Supplies</b>	<b>11,733</b>	<b>11,833</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>16,840</b>	<b>11,217</b>
Professional Services					
Accounting Services	11,933	11,933	0	17,900	11,267
Consulting Services				700	
Legal Fees				35	
<b>Total Professional Services</b>	<b>11,933</b>	<b>11,933</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18,635</b>	<b>11,267</b>
Board & Committee Expenses					
Board Meeting Expense	6,711	6,800	(89)	10,200	7,842
DW Cabinet	3,566	5,000	(1,434)	5,000	4,391
<b>Total Board &amp; Committee Expenses</b>	<b>10,277</b>	<b>11,800</b>	<b>(1,523)</b>	<b>15,200</b>	<b>12,233</b>
Partnerships					
Louisiana Interchurch Conf	550	550		550	413
AR Interfaith Pledge	750	750		1,000	750
Special Gifts & Emergency Aid	927	700	227	1,000	915
<b>Total Partnerships</b>	<b>2,227</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>2,078</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>194,490</b>	<b>197,428</b>	<b>(2,937)</b>	<b>297,309</b>	<b>184,714</b>
Other Expense					
Interest Expense	118	100	18	4,524	237
Interest Exp - CE Line of Credit	2,958	2,600	358	3,900	2,586
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>3,076</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>8,424</b>	<b>2,823</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(53,534)</b>	<b>(15,177)</b>	<b>(38,358)</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>(5,879)</b>

**The Great River Region of the Christian Church**  
**Statement of Financial Position**

Year-to-Date 12/31/2017

	<u>12/31/2017</u>	<u>12/31/2016</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>	<u>12/31/2015</u>
<b>Assets</b>				
Current Assets				
Cash held by (due to) OGMP	250,293	96,471	153,821	553
Centennial Bank				61,459
Accounts Receivable	8,138	9,915	(1,777)	1,934
Prepaid Expenses	45	2,957	(2,912)	45
Total Current Assets	<u>258,476</u>	<u>109,343</u>	<u>149,132</u>	<u>63,991</u>
Investments				
Investments held at Church Extension	244,645	240,407	4,238	246,058
Investments held at CCF	203,461	182,409	21,052	167,589
Investments held at NSC	221,721	219,218	2,502	255,238
Total Investments	<u>669,826</u>	<u>642,034</u>	<u>27,792</u>	<u>668,885</u>
Fixed Assets				
Land	113,850	113,850		113,850
Building and Improvements	154,704	154,704		154,704
Furniture and Fixtures	74,191	74,191		74,191
Vehicles	24,410	24,410		24,410
Accumulated Depreciation	(248,195)	(243,622)	(4,573)	(238,411)
Total Fixed Assets	<u>118,960</u>	<u>123,533</u>	<u>(4,573)</u>	<u>128,744</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>1,047,262</u></b>	<b><u>874,911</u></b>	<b><u>172,351</u></b>	<b><u>861,619</u></b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>				
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Accounts Payable	7,573	14,885	(7,311)	13,036
Line of Credit	74,372	74,372		74,372
Note Payable	5,373	9,571	(4,198)	13,595
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b><u>87,319</u></b>	<b><u>98,828</u></b>	<b><u>(11,510)</u></b>	<b><u>101,003</u></b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Unrestricted	85,583	74,501	11,082	71,952
Temporarily Restricted	375,473	251,806	123,667	265,880
Permanently Restricted	498,888	449,776	49,112	422,784
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b><u>959,944</u></b>	<b><u>776,082</u></b>	<b><u>183,861</u></b>	<b><u>760,616</u></b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b><u>1,047,262</u></b>	<b><u>874,911</u></b>	<b><u>172,351</u></b>	<b><u>861,619</u></b>

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Detailed Net Asset Activity

Assets less Liabilities representing Fund Balances

	Beginning of year	Income	Expenses	Unreal. Gain/ (Loss) on Inv.	As of 12/31/2017	Total Liabilities	Total Assets	Fixed Assets	AR/ Prepays	Cash	CE	NSC	CCF
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
Unrestricted Net Assets - Regional Office	(49,032)	310,217	(293,036)		(33,377)	(87,319)	53,942		8,183	43,697	2,062		
Snoasis		5,775	(4,592)										
Magnolia		449	(763)										
Youth													
Fall Fandango		4,536	(5,572)										
Women's Events		28,590	(27,374)										
DW Service Projects		1,863	(5,502)										
Men's Events		2,250	(3,215)										
Clergy Events		1,615	(6,275)										
Regional Assembly		885											
Transfer from Capital Projects fund		5,804											
Net Fixed Assets Fund	123,533	-	(4,573)		118,960		118,960	118,960					
	74,501	361,984	(350,902)	-	85,583	(87,319)	172,902	118,960	8,183	43,697	2,062	-	-
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
FCC Cleveland Fd-Investment (CCF 1724)	10,603	424	(426)	1,104	11,705		11,705			466			11,239
New Church Fund (CCF 1083)	47,510	6,153	(1,800)	360	52,223		52,223			10,240	38,271		3,712
Disciples Bayou CC New Church Fund		160,145	(47,519)		112,626		112,626			112,626			
Reconciliation	7,311	3,284	(915)		9,680		9,680			9,680			
Pinnacle	9,460	113,400	(112,990)		9,870		9,870			9,870			
Mission Insite	-	255	(2,650)		(2,395)		(2,395)			(2,395)			
Youth New Program Trust (CCF 999)	48,917	3,033	-	243	52,193		52,193			41,293			10,900
Capital Projects	5,804	-	(5,804)		-		-						
Disciples Men	1,476	-	(723)		753		753			753			
Women's Activity Fund	-	732	-		732		732			732			
Regional Endowment (CCF 892)	85,875	1,847	-	382	88,104		88,104				81,385		6,719
Special Memorial Fund (CCF 1082)	4,664	398	-	495	5,557		5,557			(1,100)			6,657
Church Renewal Fund (CCF 1477)	18,686	743	-	1,715	21,144		21,144						21,144
Great River Region Ozark Fund (CCF 2096)	11,500	494	-	1,287	13,281		13,281						13,281
Total Temporarily Restricted	251,806	290,908	(172,827)	5,586	375,473	-	375,473	-	-	182,165	119,656	-	73,652
<b>PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>													
Lane Ministerial Fund (CCF 1085)	60,247	892	-	390	61,529		61,529			16,018	41,490		4,021
Miller Scholarship Fund (CCF 963)	2,085	293	-	762	3,140		3,140			(4,729)			7,869
Pickering Scholarship Fund (CCF 1608)	38,418	2,864	(6,723)	1,956	36,515		36,515			16,321			20,194
Rozzell Lectureship Fund (CCF 1298)	20,956	923	-	2,401	24,280		24,280			(500)			24,780
Scholarship Fund (CCF 1084)	29,941	1,288	(3,454)	3,350	31,125		31,125			(3,454)			34,579
Young Ministerial SchlrsHp Fd (CCF 1931)	15,658	674	-	1,752	18,084		18,084						18,084
Disciples Walk Endowment	184,038	12,806	(3,475)	28,352	221,721		221,721					221,721	
Paragould Leadership Fund (CCF 504)	50,236	984	-	436	51,656		51,656			776	46,382		4,498
Committee of 500 (CCF 1081)	13,666	588	-	1,529	15,783		15,783						15,783
Don Embree School Fund	25,310	381	-		25,691		25,691				25,691		
Disciples Men CD	9,221	143	-		9,364		9,364				9,364		
Total Permanently Restricted	449,776	21,836	(13,652)	40,928	498,888	-	498,888	-	-	24,432	122,927	221,721	129,808
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>776,083</b>	<b>674,728</b>	<b>(537,381)</b>	<b>46,514</b>	<b>959,944</b>	<b>(87,319)</b>	<b>1,047,262</b>	<b>118,960</b>	<b>8,183</b>	<b>250,293</b>	<b>244,645</b>	<b>221,721</b>	<b>203,461</b>

\$200,000 of the above CE is restricted as collateral for Real Faith's CE loan.

## The Great River Region of the Christian Church Budget Report

	Year to Date		Over (Under) Budget	Prior YTD
	2017 Actual	Annual Budget		2016 Actual
<b>Income</b>				
Disciples Mission Fund	191,871	180,000	11,871	188,478
Easter	508	800	(292)	825
Christmas Offering	20,880	28,618	(7,738)	17,173
Thanksgiving	597	900	(303)	279
Blessing Boxes	1,996	800	1,196	1,518
Annual Fund	20,817	25,618	(4,801)	27,721
Distributed CCF Income	19,258	18,000	1,258	19,286
Designated Operating Income	52,232	35,617	16,615	51,779
Regional Capital Program	200		200	175
Honoraria	900		900	900
Interest Income	37		37	55
Miscellaneous Income	920		920	598
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>310,216</b>	<b>290,353</b>	<b>19,863</b>	<b>308,786</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Salaries & Benefits				
Salaries	145,495	144,100	1,395	175,060
Pension	17,005	17,005	0	20,431
Payroll Taxes	4,627	7,317	(2,690)	6,121
Ins-Wrks Comp & Employer Liab	1,986	1,500	486	295
Insurance - Other	129		129	
Continuing Education		600	(600)	586
Payroll Expenses				229
Total Salaries & Benefits	169,242	170,522	(1,280)	202,723
Travel				
DONT USE-Travel, Lodging, Meals				4,151
Transportation - ERM	7,181	8,000	(819)	9,313
Meals - ERM	3,020	3,700	(680)	2,772
Lodging - ERM	8,522	7,000	1,522	4,694
Registration for Events Expense	1,753	1,500	253	
Travel & Exp - Office staff	5,425	600	4,825	831
Youth Travel/Meals		600	(600)	518
Insurance - Auto	3,431	3,000	431	2,728
Relocation Expenses	9,062		9,062	
DW Travel Pool Dues	335		335	
Total Travel	38,729	24,400	14,329	25,007
Facilities				
Rent	200		200	
Maintenance & Utilities	2,837	4,500	(1,663)	4,340
Service Contracts	2,672	4,000	(1,328)	2,281
Property Taxes	183	1,200	(1,017)	695
Repairs & Maintenance	382	2,000	(1,618)	18,721
Landscaping	2,096	2,500	(404)	2,515
General Liability Ins	5,858	5,800	58	4,307
Total Facilities	14,229	20,000	(5,771)	32,859

**The Great River Region of the Christian Church  
Budget Report**

	<u>Year to Date</u>		<u>Over (Under) Budget</u>	<u>Prior YTD</u>
	<u>2017 Actual</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>		<u>2016 Actual</u>
Office Expenses				
Telephone	4,141	3,800	341	3,320
Cell Phones				617
Postage	2,005	2,000	5	2,724
Office Supplies	650	2,000	(1,350)	1,806
Books & Resources	351	400	(49)	260
Paper/Printing/Ink Cartridges	395	2,800	(2,405)	2,949
Professional Memberships		50	(50)	50
Meetings/Flowers/Celebrations	87	100	(13)	100
OGMP Yearbook	1,312	1,500	(188)	1,445
Bank Charges	61	750	(690)	522
CRMM Allocation	2,577	2,660	(83)	2,660
Christmas Offering Promotion	1,526		1,526	1,482
Miscellaneous Expense	1,133	3,000	(1,867)	4,663
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>14,235</b>	<b>19,060</b>	<b>(4,825)</b>	<b>22,599</b>
Computer Supplies				
Online Services	2,060	1,900	160	1,934
Computer Hardware & Software	506	500	6	661
Equipment Repair		500	(500)	
Equipment Leases	14,032	14,000	32	14,859
<b>Total Computer Supplies</b>	<b>16,599</b>	<b>16,900</b>	<b>(301)</b>	<b>17,454</b>
Professional Services				
Accounting Services	16,900	16,900	0	15,900
Consulting Services		2,800	(2,800)	1,571
Legal Fees	35	2,400	(2,365)	35
<b>Total Professional Services</b>	<b>16,935</b>	<b>22,100</b>	<b>(5,165)</b>	<b>17,506</b>
Board & Committee Expenses				
Board Meeting Expense	10,795	7,800	2,995	7,737
Search Committee		200	(200)	2,283
DW Cabinet	4,341		4,341	
<b>Total Board &amp; Committee Expenses</b>	<b>15,136</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>7,136</b>	<b>10,020</b>
Partnerships				
Louisiana Interchurch Conf	550	500	50	500
AR Interfaith Pledge	1,000	1,000		1,000
Special Gifts & Emergency Aid	2,165		2,165	
<b>Total Partnerships</b>	<b>3,715</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>2,215</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>288,820</b>	<b>282,482</b>	<b>6,338</b>	<b>329,670</b>
Other Expense				
Interest Expense	326	4,524	(4,198)	500
Interest Exp - CE Line of Credit	3,889	3,347	542	3,615
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>4,215</b>	<b>7,871</b>	<b>(3,656)</b>	<b>4,116</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>17,181</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,181</b>	<b>(25,000)</b>

# The Great River Region of the Christian Church 2019 Budget

## Year to Date

	Actual as of 7/31/2018	Budget as	2018 Budget	7/31/2017	Actual as of 12/31/2017	12/31/2016	2019 Budget
<b>Income</b>							
Disciples Mission Fund	77,599	105,442	189,000	107,070	191,871	188,478	188,000
Easter Offering	474	380	800	474	508	825	800
Thanksgiving	147	200	450	308	597	279	450
Christmas Offering	7,612	8,200	18,000	10,617	20,880	17,173	19,000
Blessing Boxes	104	100	1,500	238	1,996	1,518	1,500
Designated Operating	11,664	21,600	43,000	22,862	43,639	35,359	32,000
Regional Capital/Capital Ca	150	175	175	125	200	175	175
Endowment Income benefiti	11,134	10,466	18,500	10,770	19,258	19,286	19,500
Distribution from non-owne	4,573			2,702	8,593	16,420	9,000
Rental Income			7,800				-
Contributions	18,105	18,100	26,000	8,780	20,817	27,721	24,000
Interest Income	19	19	40	19	37	55	37
Honorarium	200	800	800	650	900	900	800
Miscellaneous Income				39	920	598	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>131,780</b>	<b>165,482</b>	<b>306,065</b>	<b>164,654</b>	<b>310,216</b>	<b>308,786</b>	<b>295,262</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
Salary	84,820	89,071	152,693	83,545	145,495	175,060	149,049
Youth Coordinator - part-time							25,000
Pension	8,503	10,515	18,025	9,920	17,005	20,431	17,515
Payroll Taxes	2,699	2,842	4,872	2,647	4,627	6,350	4,750
Ins-Wrks Comp & Employm	2,830	2,000	2,000	967	1,986	295	2,200
Insurance - Other	129	129	129		129		129
Continuing Education			600			586	600
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>98,980</b>	<b>104,556</b>	<b>178,319</b>	<b>97,078</b>	<b>169,242</b>	<b>202,723</b>	<b>199,243</b>
<b>Travel</b>							
Transportation - ERM	4,510	3,000	8,000	2,744	7,181	9,313	8,000
Meals - ERM	1,847	1,410	3,700	1,665	3,020	2,772	3,700
Lodging - ERM	4,584	4,000	7,000	4,729	8,522	4,694	7,000
Registration for Events Exp	862	957	1,500	1,058	1,753		1,500
Travel & Exp - Office staff	333	2,000	5,000	3,536	5,425	831	5,000
Youth Travel/Meals			600			518	600
Insurance - Auto	3,918	3,500	3,500	2,050	3,431	2,728	3,500
Relocation Expenses	3,349				9,062		
DW Travel Pool Dues			350		335		350
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>19,403</b>	<b>14,867</b>	<b>29,650</b>	<b>15,783</b>	<b>38,729</b>	<b>20,857</b>	<b>29,650</b>
<b>Facilities</b>							
Rent	900	1,200	2,400		200		2,400
Maintenance & Utilities	1,287	1,050	4,000	1,675	2,837	4,340	3,000
Service Contracts	852	1,450	3,000	1,418	2,672	2,281	3,000
Property Taxes			700		183	695	700
Repairs & Maintenance	2,554	2,000	2,000		382	18,721	2,000
Landscaping	944	800	2,500	1,467	2,096	2,515	2,500
General Liability Ins	5,975	6,000	6,000	3,417	5,858	4,307	6,000
<b>Total Facilities</b>	<b>12,512</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>20,600</b>	<b>7,977</b>	<b>14,229</b>	<b>32,859</b>	<b>19,600</b>

# The Great River Region of the Christian Church

## Year to Date

	Actual as of 7/31/2018	Budget as	2018 Budget	7/31/2017	Actual as of 12/31/2017	12/31/2016	2019 Budget
Office Expenses							
Telephone	2,775	2,275	3,900	2,338	4,141	3,320	4,700
Cell Phones	153					617	-
Postage	1,502	1,110	2,500	1,121	2,005	2,724	2,500
Office Supplies	210	250	1,500	345	650	1,806	1,000
Books & Resources	403	250	300	199	351	260	300
Paper/Printing/Ink Cartridge	632	230	2,000	293	395	2,949	1,500
Professional Memberships						50	-
Meetings/Flowers/Celebrati	114			10	87	100	-
OGMP Yearbook			1,400		1,312	1,445	1,400
Bank Charges	12	20	100	29	61	522	75
CRMM Allocation	2,315	2,315	2,315	2,577	2,577	2,660	2,315
Christmas Offering Promotion			1,500		1,526	1,482	1,500
Miscellaneous Expense	183			589	1,133	4,663	-
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>8,298</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>15,515</b>	<b>7,502</b>	<b>14,235</b>	<b>22,599</b>	<b>15,290</b>
Computer Supplies							
Online Services	1,956	1,500	2,340	1,300	2,060	1,934	4,000
Computer Hardware & Soft	308	500	500	241	506	661	600
Equipment Leases	6,983	8,167	14,000	8,214	14,032	14,859	6,000
<b>Total Computer Supplies</b>	<b>9,246</b>	<b>10,167</b>	<b>16,840</b>	<b>9,755</b>	<b>16,599</b>	<b>17,454</b>	<b>10,600</b>
Professional Services							
Accounting Services	10,442	10,442	17,900	9,858	16,900	15,900	17,900
Consulting Services			700			1,571	-
Legal Fees			35		35	35	35
<b>Total Professional Services</b>	<b>10,442</b>	<b>10,442</b>	<b>18,635</b>	<b>9,858</b>	<b>16,935</b>	<b>17,506</b>	<b>17,935</b>

# The Great River Region of the Christian Church

## Year to Date

	Actual as of 7/31/2018	Budget as	2018 Budget	7/31/2017	Actual as of 12/31/2017	12/31/2016	2019 Budget
Board Meeting Expense							
Regional Board	4,222	3,000	3,000	2,612	3,705	3,138	3,000
Ministry Committee	2,489	2,000	4,200	1,736	4,207	4,195	4,200
Regional Elders			3,000	2,765	2,765		3,000
CYF Cabinet				119	119	404	200
DW Cabinet	3,566	4,400	5,000	4,391	4,341	4,151	5,000
Search Team						2,283	-
<b>Total Board &amp; Committee E</b>	<b>10,277</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>15,200</b>	<b>11,623</b>	<b>15,136</b>	<b>14,171</b>	<b>15,400</b>
Partnerships							
Louisiana Interchurch Conf	550	550	550	413	550	500	550
AR Interfaith Pledge	750	500	1,000	750	1,000	1,000	1,000
Special Gifts & Emergency	637	700	1,000	415	2,165		1,000
<b>Total Partnerships</b>	<b>1,937</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>3,715</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>2,550</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>171,095</b>	<b>170,132</b>	<b>297,309</b>	<b>161,154</b>	<b>288,820</b>	<b>329,670</b>	<b>310,268</b>
Other Expense							
Interest Expense	108	100	4,524	213	326	500	40
Interest Exp - CE Line of Cr	2,579	2,275	3,900	2,255	3,889	3,615	8,400
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>2,687</b>	<b>2,375</b>	<b>8,424</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>4,215</b>	<b>4,116</b>	<b>8,440</b>
Other Income - Draw from Disciples Walk Endowment Fund							25,000
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(42,001)</b>	<b>(7,025)</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>17,181</b>	<b>(25,000)</b>	<b>1,554</b>

**GREAT RIVER REGION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)  
STATE OF THE REGION REPORT  
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
November 3, 2018**

One of the highlights at the end of 2016 was being called as the Great River Region's "Settled" Executive Regional Minister. Special thanks to the tireless work of the Search Committee: Jennie Gregory (Chair), David Britt (Moderator), Robert Palmer, Gail Akins, Margaret Shelton, Lester Brooks, and Ronny Nowell. Thank you to the GRR for trusting my leadership. And thank you for creating the space for God's presence to be shared through our lives touching one another. With the permanent call to this position, I took my two weeks of vacation and an additional week approved by the Search Committee for rest (the last week in December 2016 and the first two weeks in January 2017). I spent three days at Christview Ministries, Eureka Springs, AR on retreat with Revs. John and Judy Turner.

During my retreat, I reflected on our rich Disciples history and the identity that we share. We stand on the shoulders of powerful leaders who forged a way to spread the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who intentionally trained lay and clergy leaders, and raised financial capital in order to create vital and sustainable congregations. Our ancestors were unashamed and unafraid to make bold and daring moves to further the mission of the church. Congregational pastors and members showed up for the work! They experienced some hard times, transitions, and shifts in leadership in phenomenal ways. And where they ended, someone else began and carried on the work. And here we are – we are called to continue the journey.

My desire is to model leadership in the Great River Region in this way: to continue our rich legacy of training and development, prepare influential leaders with courage, gifts, and the call to work on the front lines in transforming communities of faith. I have faith and joy in my heart for the Great River Region.

**Values, Future Vision Story & Capacity Building Report**

For the past two years the Regional Board has taken on the task of visioning and identity, in seeking ways to strengthen the work of three states with distinct cultures, traditions and personalities. We believe that God put us together to support each other. Now it is time to strategically plan for a future with hope. Through small group work in core value exercises and prayer, evolved a list of core values. It was challenging work in clarifying how we want to live together, and in living out of these values. We offer a draft for engagement and discussion over the next two years (Also available with descriptions in the docket):

- Authentic Spirituality: 1 Pet. 2:4-6
- Excellence: II Corinthians 4:7
- Justice/Outreach: Micah 6:8
- Relationships: Philippians 2:5
- Freedom: II Timothy 1:7
- Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-22
- Communication: Psalms 80:9
- Relationships: Philippians 2:5
- Love: Luke 10:27
- Unity: Psalms 133
- Inclusivity & Diversity: Galatians 3:26-28
- Faith: Hebrews 11:1

We are thankful to Rick Morse, Hope Partnership who over the past eight months, worked with the Regional Board in developing a Future Vision Story and Capacity Building Report (included in Docket).

The future story is a fictional story that allows us to “imagine” how transformation could happen, individually and communally, if a leader or churches makes a conscious decision to share time, talent, and resources with and from other churches and partners. The testimonies of individuals in the future story are true to life statements of what can happen when we work together.

The Capacity Report is the nuts and bolts of how we will get the work done. It includes four strategic goals. We are excited about the possibility of starting a Great River Region Institute, using the gifts of our pastors and lay leaders, and developing more effective means of communications and technology. It also calls for a financial commitment for new positions, and building a resource and networking bank for congregations. We believe that this plan, if we work it right, will help to strengthen congregations, who are actively seeking ways to revitalize and transform their current contexts for mission and service.

The Board learned through this process that we are stronger together, **“three are even better, a three braided cord is not easily broken (Eccl.4:12).”** We are living into a new era of ministry where we need to be connected and hold on to each other. Our vision is to move away from the idea that we are separate – one state, not just thinking of getting our own church to vitality, but thinking of how we can help each other get there as well. I encourage us to move away from the notion that we do not have enough for our own – toward, we have God’s full abundance. Some difficult decisions will have to be made as we seek to be lights in a dark work, modeling loving relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and each other.

For example, this past Sunday we ordained Rev. Angie Kretzer, Pastor of First Christian Church, Hammond LA, Pastor Lester Brooks and members from his congregation at First Christian Moss Point MS, drove 2.5 hours to celebrate with Pastor Angie in this accomplishment. When I saw them come in, something within me leaped (as the baby leaped in Elizabeth’s womb when she saw Mary) – this is one of the ways we can support and encourage each other not feel so isolated in our ministry. We have to make a choice to be “present.”

While we offer the Capacity Report for prayerful consideration, we know there is much more work to do around vision and mission. We pray that our vision and mission will be something that we will “catch” together. Through the work of congregations, leaders, and general unit partners, let’s engage the Capacity Report and see what God will say to us. We will report back to the Regional Assembly in 2020 with an evaluation and affirmation, and hopefully a vision and mission statement that will point the way forward. Thank you to the GRR for trusting my leadership over these past three years. Thank you for creating the space for God’s presence to be shared through our lives touching one another. *“We Are Stronger Together.”*

## **Financial Report**

At the Regional Assembly in November 2016, we challenged congregations and individuals to support the mission and witness of the Great River Region. Many stepped up and gave to the Christmas Offering, Annual Fund, and Designated Operating Fund. We ended the year with a deficit of (\$25,481), which was originally at (\$75,000).

The end of December 2017, we saw a surplus of \$19,497, total income of \$312,745, and total expenses of \$289,033. The white Impala started having mechanical problems in January 2018. A sub-committee was pulled together to search for car recommendations: Joe Hodges, Senior

Minister at Park Hill Christian Church and Miles Cook, Regional Elders Coordinator. The finance team submitted a recommendation to the board, who approved a recommendation to purchase a 2016 Honda Accord at a cost of \$20,000. We sold the Impala to Victory Motors for \$1400.

The year-to-date financial report for August 2018 includes: total income of \$ 144,032, compared to YTD August 2017 \$181,658; total assets and liabilities of \$974,274, compared to August 2017 \$1,047, 262. YTD expenses for 2017 were \$194,490 compared to August 2017 expenses of \$184,714. Currently, we have a deficit of (\$53,534). The Word of God in Luke 14:28 cautions us to sit down and count the cost before building a new foundation). We offer a conservative proposed budget for 2019 (see financial report in the docket).

As we move forward, our personal and collective stewardship has to become the seeds by which we do the work. We value the ministries that are taking place throughout the GRR. We have a strong foundation of clergy fellowship groups, shepherding groups, RCOM mentoring of ministerial candidates, youth and women's ministries. Some of us will have to make a commitment to **start** giving to Disciples Mission Fund, to our Annual Fund, and/or to the Designated for Operating fund. Some will be inspired to give over and above what we are already giving.

DMF is an important component of our giving. When we give to the denomination's vision, we receive 56% of funds that are given come back to the Region; the value that we receive back through lives being touched, a global witness that strengthens our partner churches, and our service to the communities we serve *"from our door steps to the end of the world."*

My prayer is that we would see that the ministry to others in our communities is needed, necessary, and valuable for every congregation, every member and every pastor who loves this Region and denomination, according to our Core Value named as *"The Great Commission."*

Our bylaws call for Long-Range Planning, Investment, and Mission Committees. Reviving these committees will strengthen the operations and practices of our region as we prepare to discern and engage in a future vision story. My prayer is that new volunteers would step out in faith and support our region.

I want to give a shout out to Members of the finance team: *Carol Johnson, Treasurer, Rob Robuck, John Goebel, Treasury Services, Wendy Paquette, and Nadine Burton.* Thank you using your gifts for this most vital ministry.

### **Update on Church Properties**

- *Real Faith CC (The City of Truth), Clarksdale MS.* A new loan with Real Faith CC, Clarksdale, MS was approved by Church Extension Fund in December 2016. Church Extension Fund agreed to walk down \$400, 000 of the \$800, 000 loan, as long as Real Faith's leadership continues to make timely payments (\$2500 per month) and does not leave the denomination. The Great River Region is still liable as a co-signor for a \$200,000 liability held against several of our temporarily and permanently restricted fund accounts.
- *Broadmoor CC, Shreveport, LA.* The building that housed Broadmoor CC in Shreveport, LA has been empty for two years is on the market to be sold. The leaders of Broadmoor entered into a new real estate agreement Spring 2018 in an attempt to get the building sold. Ministers Barbara Driscoll, Laura Savage and some of the members of the church joined FCC Bossier City, with Graham Riggs, Senior Pastor. They are excited to be together and moving forward to do vital ministry in that community.

- *Disciples Bayou Christian Church, Lafayette LA*. Ashley Sherard resigned in July 2017. Judith Rizzo was called as the Transitional Pastor in August 2017. During the fall 2017 Regional Board meeting, we voted to invest the balance of the Disciples Bayou Gift agreement into an interest bearing account. Based on the history, the original balance was \$112,626.21. The congregation is withdrawing \$10,575.12 quarterly to cover payroll and facility expenses.
- *Regional Office Building*. Rocky Herman, Access Realty Company, has shown the regional office property at 9302 Geyer Springs Road, to several prospective tenants. Minor repairs to the building included changing out the lighting in the men's restroom and the administrator's office. We will revisit next steps with the building committee as we are beyond the timeline for getting the property rented.
- *First Christian Church Maumelle, AR* cell tower negotiations hit a snag when the company found an outstanding lien against the property. The total on the lien was \$16,655. We researched and found that the lien was satisfied. The cell tower agreement was signed in July 2018. The congregation will take the extra funds to put towards the Church Extension Mortgage.
- *First Christian Church Arkadelphia, AR*, Attorney Larry Cook, and real estate agent D. Scott Tatman, Broker Coldwell Banker Tatman, Realtors, are working with the last two members of the congregation (William Henshaw and Judy Schmigdall) and obtained a quiet title that gives them authority to sell the property.
- *First Christian Church, Tupelo MS* closed their visible ministry on June 2, 2018. Charlie Wallace, Chair, New Church Committee, shared a proposal with their board on April 4, 2018, on starting a new church with proceeds from the sale of their building. They are also in conversation with Bobbie Hawley and the Christian Church Foundation about the possibility of setting up a Legacy Endowment Fund.
- *First Christian Church, Newport, AR* closed its visible in ministry in June 2017. They donated their facility to "Seeds of Faith" Ministry. They made a contribution to the Great River Region designated for Youth and Women's ministries.

## **Personnel**

The administrator and I have been juggling to produce the amount of work necessary to support 106 congregations. We are challenged with taking vacation time, and attending to the routine and daily functions of the office. Some duties are put on the back burner, such as website development, communication and computer technology.

During the December 19, 2017 Regional Board conference call, a motion was made for a 3% cost of living increase for staff to the 2018 budget. Because of the deficit, we have yet to realize the 3% increase. The increase will be retroactive to January 2017.

At the June 2, 2018 Board meeting, the Regional Board approved a recommendation to use the invested funds from the Disciples Walk Endowment Fund to hire a part-time, temporary Youth Coordinator over the next five years. The plan is to withdraw \$20,00 per year (drawn quarterly), over the next five years to support the position. We also strategically ask for donations to shore up the Endowment Fund so that we can build up the account. If we stay on target with the Future

Vision Story and Capacity Report, we will have funding to hire an Associate Regional Minister that will include the Youth Portfolio.

The Great River Region expanded our contract with SURAN for Membership Services. We currently contract with them for our Search and Call network (for clergy). Adding the membership service to our technological needs will streamline our communication efforts with other regions and the Office of Christian Vocation, as we monitor, update, and network congregational and ministerial files; direct mobile access to congregational and ministerial files. This will allow us to have real time information at our finger tips. Time constraints have not allowed for training and development for transitioning of files.

### **Nominating Committee Report (See Attached in Docket)**

The following individuals will rotate off the Regional Board at the end of the 2018 Regional Assembly: David Britt, Moderator, and Laura Cosgrove, Member at Large. We thank God for their service and commitment to the Great River Region. David Britt taught me the nuggets of non-profit administration at a time when we were struggling in transition. I appreciate his wisdom, fortitude, and passion for the work.

### **New Church Committee**

Charlie Wallace agreed to chair the New Church Committee. This team supports congregations in working with demographic studies, researching targets for possible new church targets, and resourcing the process of closing with options for new life. Over the past year, we have been working with a remnant group from Grace Disciples of Christ in Louisiana. We are currently recruiting a New Church Planter to start a new church in Covington, LA. This is a fully-funded, full-time opportunity and project.

Nadine Burton and Glen Schory shared a "Choose Life" Presentation at Covenant CC, Byram MS on May 9, 2018. We had 27 members from the following congregations: Covenant CC, Byram, MS; United CC, Jackson; FCC, Jackson; Northeast CC, Madison, MS and Utica CC, Utica, MS. The intent was to plant seeds for four congregations to think about their future as they are struggling financially and with declining membership. We shared the Mission Insite Demographics Report and will follow up with the four congregations in the future.

### **Activity & Programs Report**

#### **Congregations Visited from Winter 2017 to Fall 2018**

We started new clergy fellowship groups in the following areas: Northern Louisiana, Northeast Arkansas, and Northern Mississippi. We were able to pull in and connect with clergy who would otherwise be disconnected from support and encouragement. These visits included preaching engagements, installations, meetings, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship, clergy gatherings, search and call orientation, visioning, and greetings

Highland CC, Bella Vista AR  
FCC, Benton, AR  
FCC, Bentonville, AR  
FCC, Berryville, AR  
FCC, Blytheville AR  
FCC, El Dorado AR  
FCC, Fayetteville AR  
FCC, Fort Smith, AR  
FCC, Harrison AR  
FCC, Hot Springs, AR

Rock Hill CC, Hot Springs, AR  
Highland Drive CC, Jonesboro AR  
Cross Street CC, Little Rock AR  
FCC, Little Rock AR  
Pulaski Heights CC, Little Rock AR  
FCC, Maumelle, AR  
FCC, Mountain Home, AR  
Park Hill CC, North Little Rock AR  
FCC, Newport AR  
FCC, Ozark, AR

FCC, Pine Bluff AR  
 FCC, Rogers, AR  
 FCC, Russellville, AR  
 FCC, Searcy, AR  
 FCC, Sherwood, AR  
 FCC, Stuttgart AR  
 Antioch CC, Tull AR  
 Cephas Chapel, Wrightsville AR  
 First Christian, Baton Rouge, LA  
 FCC, Bossier City, LA  
 Mt. Beulah CC, Frogmore, LA  
 Disciples Bayou CC, Lafayette, LA  
 FCC, Greater New Orleans, Metairie LA  
 FCC, Monroe LA  
 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA  
 FCC, Pineville, LA  
 Kings Highway CC, Shreveport LA  
 Yellow Pine CC, Sibley, LA

FCC, Slidell LA  
 FCC, Sulphur, LA  
 Covenant CC, Byram MS  
 New Hope CC, Camden, MS  
 Real Faith CC (City of Truth), Clarksdale, MS  
 Bethel CC, Coila MS  
 FCC, Gulfport, MS  
 Central Christian, Hattiesburg, MS  
 Dorsett Drive CC, Indianola, MS  
 Indianola CC, Indianola, MS  
 FCC, Jackson MS  
 United CC, Jackson MS  
 Northeast CC, Madison, MS  
 FCC, McComb, MS  
 Pine Grove CC, Pattison, MS

### **Search and Call**

The following pastoral calls were extended and affirmed by congregations:

FCC, Hammond, LA:	Angie Kretzer, Senior Pastor
FCC, Mountain Home, AR:	Walter Rogero, Senior Pastor
FCC, Little Rock, AR:	Charles Wallace, Senior Pastor
E Percy Street CC, Greenwood, MS:	Rena Baker, Senior Pastor
FCC, Jonesboro, AR:	Michael Hamilton, Senior Pastor
FCC, Russellville, AR:	Scot Crenshaw
FCC, Fort Smith, AR:	Jarrett Banks
FCC, Stuttgart AR:	Donald Warren
FCC, Jonesboro, AR:	Don Martin
FCC, Blytheville, AR:	Holly Jo Engle
Bethel Christian Church, Coila, MS:	Kenneth McClung
FCC, Hot Springs, AR	Don Hubbard

### **General Board & College of Regional Ministers Meetings**

- I attended the Mission Council Meeting in December 2016. The focus was on reviewing the data from the Mission Gatherings held around the country, to pray and discern, and name the priority for the denomination. It was important to note that the Mission Priority was not to replace the 2020 Vision; the 2020 Vision would continue with a focus on the new priority. The group submitted to the General Board the following for consideration, which was approved. (See Attached Statement).
- I attended the Christian Church Foundation's Donor Development Conference January 18-20, 2017 in San Diego, CA. I picked up some basic principles to be implemented in my every day work of raising monies and working with Donors.
- I attended the General Board Meeting in Newton, IA, April 14-19, 2018. This was my first official General Board Meeting. I sensed excitement and passion, expectations, and a willingness to move into uncharted waters to work on our DOC identity, vision, funding and governance structures. Rev. Dr. Cynthia Lindner,

challenged our understanding of DOC identity: “for us, the question is not “who are we?” That question can only separate us from one another and from our true source of life, and love, and power. The real question, the only question, for people of faith is not who are we, but whose --- whose are we?”<sup>1</sup>

General Minister and President, Terri Hord-Owens, shared her “State of the Church Report.” Vision and goals include: a foundation for biblical literacy, a deep and abiding spirituality, theological grounding for mission and justice, connections, mission, operational objectives, and communications. She offered two opportunities to serve on the front lines of justice and mission:

1) *The Poor People’s Campaign*, led by Rev. Dr. William Barber, Senior Pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church, Goldsboro NC. The initiative, “40 Days of Action” that culminated with an event on Capitol Hill, Washington DC, on June 23, 2018, and

2) “*ACTNOW*” *United to end Racism*. This work is also just beginning, led by our former General Minister and President Sharon Watkins. For more information, please visit (please insert link to website).

We celebrated the close of the Mission First Pilot! Remember the gatherings we had across the life of the region in 2016? Well, that work is complete. There will be a Mission Festival at the 2019 General Assembly to highlight congregational mission and outreach projects. Our charge is to share the statement and find ways to live into this statement throughout GRR congregations:

“The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is called to participate in God’s mission and move people and communities toward wholeness. We work together across generations to: Equip leaders grounded in Scripture, centered on Christ, and immersed in the Spirit, create communities of inclusion and care, attend to the needs of the vulnerable, and overcome structural and systemic injustice.”

The Governance Committee and Mission Funding Council were charged with forging ahead to develop proposals to bring back to the General Board in 2019. We passed Resolution GB-191-108: To Enter Full Communion with the United Church of Canada.

We hosted the Heartland & ROSES (Regions of the Sun Equipping & Serving) Gathering of Regional Ministers on May 21-22, 2018 in Little Rock AR. The timing was perfect, as we were able to participate in the Poor People’s Campaign Press Conference at the State Capital. We also toured the Clinton Library, and shared reflections, updates, and sought wisdom and council regarding our respective areas of ministry. Wendy Paquette did an excellent job with logistics and home-made goody bags! *Regional Ministers who attended included:* Rick Spleth, Indiana; Teresa Dulyea-Parker, Illinois-Wisconsin; Chris Morton, Nebraska; Bill Rose-Heim, Greater Kansas City; Penny Ross-Corona, Mid-America; and Pam Holt, Oklahoma. This retreat is funded through the College of Regional Ministers. Our gathering next year will be at Tall Oaks Conference Center in Greater Kansas City, MO, May 20-21, 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lindner, Cynthia, Director of Ministry Studies and Clinical Faculty for Preaching and Pastoral Care at the University of Chicago Divinity School. From the Sermon, The Power of “Of,” General Board Meeting, April, 2018.

### **Ecumenical Ministries**

Southern Christian Services asked me to be their keynote speaker at their annual banquet in January 2017 and I also attended the Annual Banquet in January 2018.

One of my quiet passions is the work and partnership with the ecumenical community. Arkansas Interfaith and the Louisiana Interchurch Conferences are settings that allow me to learn and share with our ecumenical partners. The GRR continues to support these ministries financially. Engaging with other communities of faith keeps us attuned to the realities that we face in our work. In August 2017, I attended an annual gathering of judicatories with the Arkansas Interfaith Conference. We sat around the table and shared our joys and challenges, what we see happening in our local faith communities. I also participate on the Anti-Racism Initiative task force – we are working to implement plans for dialogue and discussions around race. I introduced the book, “Anxious to Talk About It, by Carolyn Helsel, to the group.

In March, 2017, I was the keynote preacher for the Louisiana Interchurch Conference Annual Assembly held in Monroe, LA. This year, our fall board meeting was held at the St. Charles Retreat Center in Lake Charles, LA. Our time focused on “Living Out the Word Through Advocacy.” Our workshop facilitator, Rob Tassman, Executive Director of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops, presented biblical principles for advocacy and facilitated a conversation with legislative officers around faith and advocacy in public policy.



## A FUTURE STORY

# DISCIPLES MAKING IT HAPPEN

THE GREAT RIVER REGION IN 2023

## ALICE'S NOTEBOOK

It is 2023, and Alice is a 22-year-old anthropology major at Texas Christian University. Alice grew up in First Christian Church and was a product of the Region's youth and camping programs over the years. She is playing also with the idea of going into ministry.

In her senior year, Alice was invited by her professor to do a case study on an organization that has gone through significant change and improvement. The assignment was to name a group of people who have defied the current trends and how they got there.

Alice immediately thought about the Great River Region and their journey. She began to organize her interview schedule, and then began a trek across the region to discover how they did it. The following are entries from her journal.

### APRIL 8, 2023—FCC, GULFPORT, MS

*Today I attended two worship services and a Sunday school class. During the visit, I had three interviews with members of the congregation to see what they knew about the Region and how it related to their congregation.*

**Evelyn:** Aged about 50, church member for 23 years.

Reports that FCC is a satellite church. Their church simulcasts sermons to some of the region's smaller congregations who cannot afford a full time pastor. These churches are led by pastors who receive training at the Institute. They lead worship every week and preach twice a month. FCC streams in their sermons twice a month. This provides worshippers a variety of preaching and gives the part time pastor more time to provide pastoral care rather than preparing a sermon. Evelyn is obviously proud of her church's ability to provide this kind of outreach to other Disciples in the region.

**Nick:** Aged mid 40's, church member for 5 years.

Reports that his kids, who are now teens, are engaged in Regional summer camps. He says that their kids used to have to travel outside of the region for camp, but after a couple of years of hard work the GRR has been able to provide camp within 200 miles of the church at another conference center. The GRR provides staff for the program. While the camps are small, and include a wide range of ages of campers, Nick reports that they have had a huge impact on his daughters. That

they can't wait to go, and that they learn so much more about what it means to be a Christian by participating. He also recalls his youth as a representative how hard it was to keep a camping program going without a Regional Associate.

Nick also reports that he was a little jealous of what his daughters were learning. He could see their faith deepening. He felt the church was providing great learning opportunities...but he relished the chance to expand his horizons and be challenged in his faith. That is when he discovered that the Region provided numerous community connection experiences. He began that journey by attending a leadership training at the Institute. This training helped him see how he could identify missional needs in the community around his church, and how he could ignite the passion of others around him to join him in making a difference in the community.

"The work we do is local, and done by the congregation. The GRR provides us with help in discovering HOW we can do it. They basically help us meld our passion with God's mission. I'm a very different Christian as a result of this."

**Jon:** Late 60's, church member for 5 years.

Reports that he began exploring Christianity after retiring. He had nominal church experience before that. Once retired, he wanted to make a difference with what was left of his life. He extolled his enthusiasm about his local congregation, its pastor, and programs. He added that when he read about a regional mission trip to Haiti he was all in. During that week in Haiti he met other newly retired people from around the region who shared his passion for helping others. They worked hard together that week in Haiti, helping with a well project in a rural area. After returning, the group has worked on local projects around the GRR, helping more of the rural congregations with building projects. He reports that he has never felt better about retirement.

*At the conclusion of my day with First Christian, I noted that this was a healthy church, that was made stronger by its relationship to regional programming. While the church was leading in many areas, it found that its program life was enhanced by experiences they could not offer as an individual church. Thanks to a healthy Region, they were serving in more ways than ever, connecting people to God's mission.*

APRIL 15, 2023—FCC, PINEVILLE, LA

*This Sunday I attended the worship service in Pineville with about 35 other people. This is a smaller congregation that has struggled for survival periodically. Today, the church is still small, due to community dynamics, but there is a lot of spiritual growth happening in the congregation. I met with several members during the coffee hour.*

- **Ted:** in his 70's, has been a church member for 50 years.

Ted reports having the longest tenure of any of the members of this church. Having worshipped here for so long, he felt he had achieved spiritual maturity. That was before he was invited to attend the Institute for lay leaders. This session was offered in partnership with Hope Partnership. He reports that he was thinking that this would be a typical event designed to teach people how to lead meetings. Boy was he wrong. Instead the group was exposed to new

prayer practices, and challenged to lead their congregations in spiritual grounding practices that were transformative.

Perhaps the thing that changed most for Ted was that he began listening to God, instead of telling God what was on his mind. Once he began opening his heart in that way, he also began to look at the community around him through God's eyes, and began to ask himself what God's mission was in that place. Ted reports that his leadership in the church has shifted significantly as a result.

- **Alice** a 30 something member of 10 years overheard this conversation and took me to a corner to add to Ted's report. She confided that Ted was something of an old curmudgeon. "He was that old guy that always stood in the back and said 'that will never work' yet never offered any help. I can attest that this has been life changing for Ted and I have to say for me as well. When Ted came back, I saw a Christian who was refocused on his faith. Well, if that old dog could change his tricks then I thought I could too. I've always loved my church, but the Institute has done things for us we couldn't have done for ourselves. You need that outside voice to challenge you once in a while."
- **Ben** is a 60-year-old who has been a member for 20 years. He is the technology coordinator for the church. During the past 5 years, the church has added monitors to the sanctuary, and the church live streams preaching from Gulfport FCC. "We only have a part time pastor, and he does a great job preaching—but he is only part-time and needs a weekend off once in a while. So...we lead worship, sing our hymns, and at the appointed moment we switch to the sermon from Gulfport."

Ben gave credit to the Region for providing help that helped him do the technical work to get the systems on-line and working. They now use the monitors for video clips, pictures, sermon enhancement and song leading. "It is like we are now in the computer era!"

- **Greta**: a very happy 60+ woman. She sings in the choir, and sings all of the time. When I met her she was humming Blessed assurance, and then broke into her own version which I quickly wrote down:

**Blessed assurance, your church won't die!  
We care too much to sit idly by!  
We have resources, like distance preaching  
Sister churches can partner, it's our yearning.**

**This is our story, to help you along  
Working together, we cannot go wrong  
This is our story, to help you along  
Working together, your church will be strong!"**

*While the church is small, I discovered a congregation where people were hopelessly in love with God and seeking to be a part of His mission. They did not apologize for being small. They reported that the community looks at them differently now, and that visitors are increasing (several joining this year). While an older congregation in a small town, I felt like this would be a place where I would be welcome. This is a church who really believes that all are welcome – that “All means All.”*

APRIL 22, 2023—FCC, NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

*First Christian has been serving this community for 60 years. 10 years earlier, the church had a divisive pastor and the church split following an involuntary termination. The congregational leaders doubled down on trying to revive its old programs despite being much smaller, and spent down most of the church's reserves. They are now in Search and Call with the Region, and wondering about what is next.*

- **Harold** is a 60-year-old who has been a part of the church for 15 years. He was chair of the congregation when the split occurred. He reports that he almost left the church. “I never saw so many mean spirited Christians in one place. I just wanted to scream ‘Can’t we all just get along?’ I have to admit, I was angry at people, and angry at God for putting me in this position. I was really mad at the Pastor. We were fractured. Little money. No mission. Worse yet, we were drifting from God.”

“The first thing I did was call the Regional Minister. Nadine was out here within a week and met with our board. It was amazing watching how she transformed this anxious group of angry and hurt Christians away from our fear—towards trusting God again to move us in the right direction. She got us engaged in conflict management with resources the region had screened—and they were really helpful.”

“After we worked through the conflict, we put things in place to ensure we wouldn’t get in that fix again. One of our biggest problems was that we had gone outside of the Regional system to call our last pastor. That is what got us in the fix in the first place.”

Harold then outlined how they put their profile together and sent it out to Search and Call. There was a problem however since most clergy knew what happened to the last pastor and many were reluctant to consider serving their church.

“That is when we decided to partner with another regional partner who helped us develop our ministry plan. They helped us redevelop our leadership while organizing our future story. Once we added that plan to our profile, we had a lot of pastors interested in serving us.”

Harold stated that the church has called a new pastor and eagerly awaiting their arrival. “It is different this time” he said. “This time, we know where we are going and called a leader who has skills to get us where God is calling us, rather than just finding someone who can preach.”

*I regret that I didn’t get to visit more people since Harold was so talkative. It was obvious in my visit though that this church was in high spirits. The building was being cleaned, the Pastor’s study was being readied for a new pastor. The church did not resemble any of the anger or fear Harold suggested was there early on. I couldn’t help but feel the Region had made a big difference here.*

*Today I visited the Regional office to meet the staff and learn about their journey from their perspective.*

- **Wendy Paquette** is Regional Administrator. She has served the region longer than anyone. Wendy reports that there were significant changes in the Region once Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton was called. She saw there was a real shift from organizational work towards trying to connect congregations to each other in a way that allowed them to strengthen each other.

She reports that they were really short staffed compared to previous years—but they were not short on spirit—and that they worked together as a team, committed towards serving God, through congregations. Wendy also reported that her job had shifted. “We were so short staffed, I had to do the program work for the Regional Women. I was really glad when I finally was able to shift that to our Associate RM. “She was able to get some classes in Social Media and was now working to help keeping people connected through social media and other technology.

“I think another big shift is how we do our work together. I can remember years ago, we would have meetings or events...and we segregated ourselves. We would segregate by race, or by state, or by men or women, or youth...We don’t tend to do that as much anymore. It doesn’t matter what kind of event it is, a Clergy Care Group, Board meeting, planning team, or a work trip...we look like one church now.”

I thanked Wendy for all of her years of service...and noted that she teared up a little as she reflected on all the progress she had seen on something she loved so dearly.

- **Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton** is a 20 something Regional Minister. Known for her passion for God, and her heart for justice, Nadine has now served the Region for the past 7 years. I shared with Nadine the comments I had heard from my interviews, and she was humbled and grateful for the chance the Region has had in making a difference in congregational life.

I asked Nadine what she thought made the biggest difference in their Region. After she thought for a while, she offered several ideas.

- 1- For one, when we think of being church, we think about more than just the four walls of our church building. Instead, we now think of the Region, the General Church, and the Ecumenical Church as the body of Christ. The biggest shift in our congregations is moving away from thinking of our churches as a church for “us” to being a church for God’s mission. It sounds simple...but it is a huge shift. People in our churches are no longer asking each other what they want to do, but asking God how God wants to connect us to mission.
- 2- I think another big change is in our leadership. We no longer limit our thinking to just the people in the room. We have learned to reach out and develop partnerships throughout the entire church that can help us out. We don’t have to keep a huge staff...just a smart one.

- 3- Technology was a huge leap for us. We are now the most technologically wired region in the whole church. The boundaries that used to separate us by geography no longer really exist...and I think we are thinking of ourselves as one Region now finally, the Institute was a crucial development. We realized if our churches were going to be successful, we need to develop great leadership. Our biggest investment is in leader development, and the Institute allows us to do that. We offer classes for lay and clergy alike, that are high quality and transformative. We wouldn't be able to do that without our Program Coordinator. She has a gift for discovering resources that help us all grow, and then making them available for others. We have webinars, retreats, clergy groups supporting each other, and special interest groups. Every week, we have some sort of offering to help people ALL across the Region."

Nadine said the acronym she uses to help the Region remember its mission is: **GLOW**

**G** – We Are Grounded Spiritually

**L** – We Love each other 500 miles and Beyond

**O** – We Organize ourselves for ACTION..." we don't just talk about things...we do them!"

**W** – We Work in Communities Together

- **The Associate Regional Minister** is a 40 Something person who works full time for the Region. (Yet to be named) She has been working on the staff now for 3 years.

She reports that she has a wide range of program development that she is engaged in at this time. It includes coordinating the robust camping programs at three sites within the Region. She works at training staff, coordinating with retreat centers, and promoting camp for children and teens throughout the Region. "I love this work; we can really make a difference in the lives of kids who are at the most formative time of their lives." She also coordinates volunteers who work with youth in between camping seasons. They usually have a mid-winter retreat gathering for the entire Region that is a blast.

She also coordinates the Institute. This runs leader development programs throughout the year...usually at a central location, sometimes in different venues. Some of these programs include: Boundary Training, Reconciliation Training, Courses on Theology, Spirituality (contemplative prayer and practice). She partners with the General Church, utilizing services from the Christian Church Foundation, Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Women, Church Extension, Hope Partnership, and the Pension Fund.

By putting together a rigorous calendar, using technology and church buildings around the Region, it is easy to see how the Great River Region is now the most resourced Region in the denomination.

*I left the meetings with Regional staff after lunch. They talked about the financial struggles they face, but churches were committing themselves to this common ministry. When Southern CC closed several years ago, the assets totaled \$350,000 and were given to the Region which leveraged that gift into providing annual budget support which pays a portion the Associate RM salary. Churches increased their giving to the DMF because they could see the benefit to their congregations...and because they could see it would bless others.*

*Of all the organizations that have transformed...truly this is one of the best stories ever!*

---

## CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STORY

### **Goal #1: To develop transformational Clergy Leaders who foster good collegial relationships and teach each other.**

A Transformational leader is a person who can inspire a group of volunteers to do more than they ever imagined. This is different from calling leadership that “manages” good congregations, but persons who can help congregations adapt to this new period of ministry.

Regions can have profound influence on the type of leaders it calls through the search and call process. It can empower transformational leaders through training, resourcing and strong peer group relations. The region can also be helpful to congregations in the Search and Call process look at their candidates through different lenses. In order to do so, consideration of the following capacities would be recommended for the region to discuss:

#### Implications:

- Development of the INSTITUTE with an Associate Regional Minister as Director
- Development of formal/informal Peer Groups and providing training and resourcing for group leaders (Possibly connecting with Hope)
- Creating an atmosphere for continuing education so that Clergy are always growing. This atmosphere can also foster the concept that we are in ministry together with clergy around the region, eventually eliminating the notion that a Pastor stands alone.
- Search and Call clarity to incoming candidates that this is a connectional region.
- Regional Minister, primary staff for S/C and clergy development.

#### Adaptive Skills to develop:

1. The continued development of clergy will make the largest difference in the quality of the Disciples witness in the GRR. Clergy are often eager learners, who are hampered by their ability to pay more tuition, or high fees for events. Congregations need to discover that by supporting the Region, they are supporting the development of their pastor.
2. Clergy are required to take courses in Boundary Training, and Anti-Racism, Pro-Reconciliation training. These are proven development courses that Region’s offer that address some very serious issues facing the church today. When these courses are done poorly, or half-hearted by a busy staff, they become a phenomenal waste of everyone’s time. Providing an Associate RM who can take the time to get these events up and running is essential.

3. Another proven developmental process is for clergy to meet with Peers on a regular basis. Studies show that clergy that participate in these groups out-perform their peers in every sector. Currently the Regional Minister is engaged in helping establish these groups—this is not sustainable however, and groups will need to take more responsibility for setting their organization and inclusion of new clergy.
4. Finally, the GRR has some very gifted pastors who can teach each other. A shift needs to take place in thinking that the Region has to provide all expertise. Region's that capture the giftedness of their clergy, and provide platforms for clergy to teach each other create chances for growth.

#### Technical Skill Development:

1. There is some skill in offering on-line resources that could be further developed in offering on-line events for both lay and clergy.
2. Development of a curriculum takes some intentional work. I would suggest review of the 15 areas of development suggested by the Commission on Ministry for commissioned minister development as a starting point.

#### Leadership Development:

1. The need for staffing and coordinating through an Associate RM
2. The ARM will need to receive some initial training in resource development and management.

#### Resources:

1. The Region will be encouraged to form a "NEW INITIATIVE FUND". This fund of \$100,000 would be raised to help finance the development of all the ideas that emerged from this Future Story.
2. \$10,000 of this fund should be designated for the development of PEER Groups. Some of this can be used in training facilitators.
3. About \$20,000 of this fund could be used annually to support the salary of the ARM.
4. The Region would benefit from a Permanent Fund which would receive Funds from assets of congregations that close. This fund is described later in this report.

### **Goal #2: To facilitate and resource congregational program life through the development of the Institute**

The Region has numerous talented pastors and leaders who excel in areas of ministry. By providing a network, the region can provide a conduit for inspiration and the development of leaders. Rather than the Region being the sole source for resourcing, this would require the discovery of skills and providing platforms for resourcing the program life of a congregation.

This could include standard church programming like Youth groups, children's ministries, or women's ministry groups. It could also include innovative program offerings that some churches in the region are already offering. This is clearly an arena where the close proximity of congregations could really benefit each other.

The program development network could also include bringing in occasional resource people from other units of the church like Global Ministries, Hope Partnership, the Disciples Church Extension Fund, the CC Foundation, or even the Pension Fund. These units offer workshops and services that could benefit a congregation's program life—and usually just need a platform.

The platform developed would include web-links for live streaming and archiving of the courses so that they can be accessed throughout the year.

#### Implications:

- Discovering congregations that excel in program areas and recruiting them to resource other congregations.
- Eliminating structures for ministry groups—but facilitating digital networking
- Providing at least 12 events annually for lay leader and clergy development in areas i.e.:
  - Youth Spiritual and relational development.
  - Young Adult Spiritual Development
  - Children Spiritual Development
  - Cong. Financial Development
  - Women’s ministries
  - Men’s ministries
  - Music Ministry
  - Senior ministries
- Camping program development including retreat
- New Staff position would also manage social media and resource platform

#### Capacities:

#### Adaptive:

1. Shift in thinking that the region has to be the sole provider of program resourcing for congregations.
2. Shift in thinking for congregational leaders to think about resourcing each other, rather than just serving their own congregation. This also involves the sharing of clergy time with the wider church to share their gifts and talents outside of the local congregation.
3. Platforms for delivery should rotate around the Region, which may require congregations to open their doors for other churches to participate.
4. Since events will be live-streamed and archived, success cannot be measured by participation at events.

#### Technical Skill Development:

1. A lot of the success of this process will be determined by the Network Coordinator. This staff person would need to develop the skills to gather information from congregations about programs and resources that would be of value to the entire region.
2. The network coordinator may have to develop the technical skills for linking congregations with digital resources to make workshops and program offerings archived, and live streamed for broader participation of leaders.

#### Leadership:

1. The Network Coordinator position is a new position. This staff position would likely be full-time and could be connected to the Social Media/Web Master position that would expand the duties of this person significantly.
2. The other reason for making this a full-time position is that the person in that seat needs to have the time to learn what congregations are doing, and evaluating the needs for program development in congregations.

3. This person would also have responsibility for the development of Peer Groups and leadership training.

Resources:

1. From the new initiative Fund, this initiative would receive \$10,000. This would be primarily for developing the web platform and live-stream capacities.

**Goal #3: To redevelop congregations through strategic partnerships, and start new congregations.**

Congregational development is very seductive work. At any one time a regional staff can be swamped with dozens of congregations that suddenly have great need for redevelopment or are in financial crisis. The results are often an over-taxed staff that can help with band aids instead of the concentrated work required to be effective, or trying to put a lot of congregations through programs that may or may not fit their needs.

There are significant changes that congregations need to make if they are to redevelop. Most congregations just want to believe if they get a good pastor or \$10,000 their church would revive again. What we learn over and over again is that these solutions only lead to short term gains. Unless we reorient the leadership of these congregations, they cannot achieve sustainability. New church work in the region has been fairly reactive. As congregations have come to the region seeking affiliation, the NCD committee has been responsive. However, due to lack of funds, the committee has been reluctant to pick targets and start intentional new starts.

The purpose of this goal is to give focus to the teams, and help provide concerted efforts. This will also benefit congregations who must commit up-front to receiving extra help from the region. We have learned that if services are offered for no charge, the congregation invests little into the process.

Implications:

- Consideration for integration with Hope services and resources (i.e. Leadership Academy/New Beginnings etc.) to share in service development Hope could invest in training local resource people.
- Redevelopment Congregations would be selected in a competitive manner and selected based on their passion for mission.
- New Church development. The region has few identifiable resources for new church development. The Foundation however could provide some impact in this arena. The Region would need to become proactive in naming sites and recruiting planters.

Adaptive Development:

1. Understanding that if your congregation is in need of intensive help, there may be fees involved because of the intensive use of regional resources.
2. Development of an application process for congregations seeking redevelopment, and a selection process for working with those congregations.
3. Existing congregations may need to consider other uses of their space to generate income.
4. Existing congregations need encouragement to open their doors for new and emerging Disciple congregations in their communities.
5. New church needs to become proactive by setting internal goals. A list of at least 6 "hot" targets should be developed as priorities for New Church development and a plan for allocating resources for a plant every 3 years.

6. Hope Partnership will provide help for the Regional Committee at no charge for new church development goals.

#### Technical Skill Development:

1. The Region has skilled people in this area around the Region, however the GRR has not engaged strategically in congregational development. The Region currently does not offer specific approaches that can be replicated with congregations around the region that have developmental needs.
2. Consideration of the development of a partnership with Hope would move the region quickly into a position for working directly with congregations in an integrated fashion (not a vendor fashion).

#### Leadership:

1. Either the ARM or Regional Minister would become primary contact for congregational developmental issues.
2. Hope would make an investment in training of that named person to ensure seamless delivery to GRR congregations.

#### Resources:

1. The New Initiative Fund would provide \$10,000 per year towards scholarships for congregations to engage in developmental services.
2. The Pentecost Offering would provide funding for New Church Development.

#### **Goal #4: To seek Racial Reconciliation and justice and full participation of all churches in regional life.**

Woody Allen once stated that 90% of success is just showing up. It is one thing to talk about our ideal of Christian Unity, it is another thing to live it out. The GRR has a deep sense and desire to live out the Disciple Value of Unity.

In a time when our nation has been marked by deep divides, the church can provide a counter-cultural view of what it means to be one by showing the world it can work across the many human constructs that divide us so deeply.

Reconciliation is not just about race, but how we divide ourselves geographically, by family composition, or sexual orientation. Disciples are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented age.

#### Implications:

- Digital network would need to be developed
- Since no organization can speak to ALL of the social justice issues of our time, a decision making process that would allow the Region to determine areas of focus.
- Freeing the Regional Minister to represent Disciples on the broader ecumenical and interfaith stage.

#### Adaptive Needs:

1. It is not clear to me if there is a process for naming issues the Region plans to address (there are so many needs). A process for naming issues for Regional response would foster healthy debate and learning. The Regional Assembly could be the platform for this kind of conversation.

2. There would be a need for setting ground rules for civil discourse.
3. It should be noted that there may be issues we disagree on; this would not preclude people from acting on their own conscious. The purpose of this kind of debate is to find our common ground.
4. Freeing Regional minister time and encouraging the Regional Minister to engage in interfaith and ecumenical partnerships around the region.

#### Technical Skill Development:

1. Discovery of places of potential partnership on social, interfaith and ecumenical circles.
2. Discovery of ground rules for civil discourse.
3. Review of the Regional Assembly process for resolutions, and encouragement of congregations to participate in naming issues of common concern.

#### Leadership:

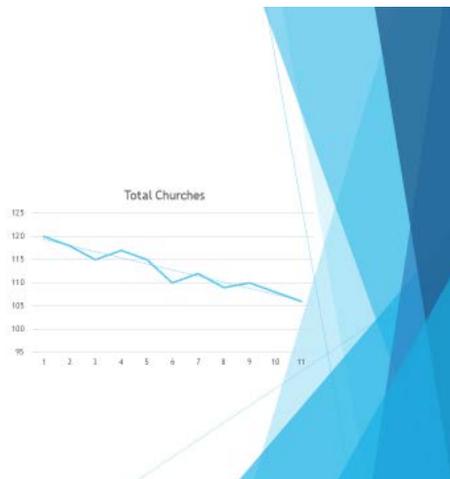
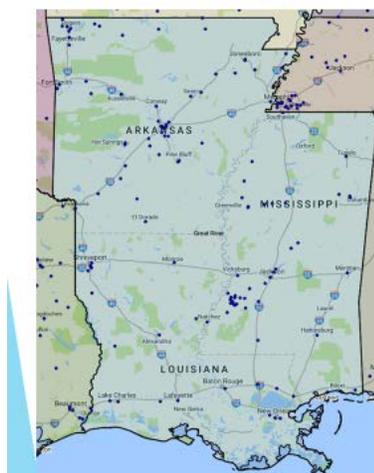
1. Often time's issues come up with little warning. The Executive team should be empowered to give permission for the region to utilize resources and encourage others to be active in social justice as needed.
2. Empowerment of the Regional Minister to "represent".

#### Resources:

1. There is a need to link the social justice initiatives to the website, and to keep those concerns at the front of regional partner's minds.
2. Development of links to other partners on the website to provide better cross fertilization of ideals associated with these issues.

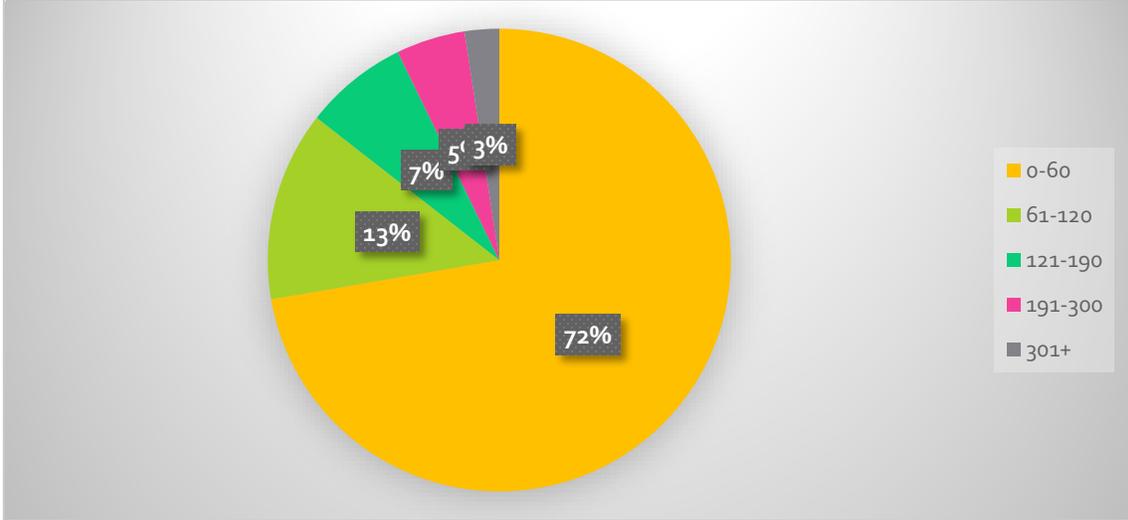
## WHY WE THINK THESE GOALS ARE IMPORTANT

#1 - The region is declining in size, and not able to meet the congregational development issues with its current staffing. During the past 11 years we have dropped from 120 congregations to 108.

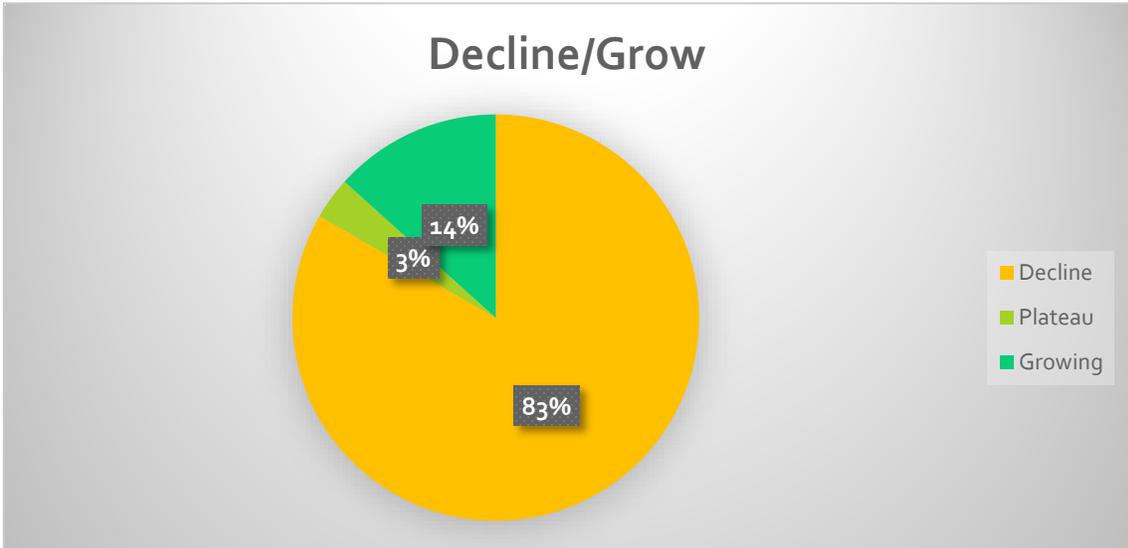


#2 Our congregations are small. 85% are struggling with sustainability—and need additional support in developing programs that meet the needs of their context.

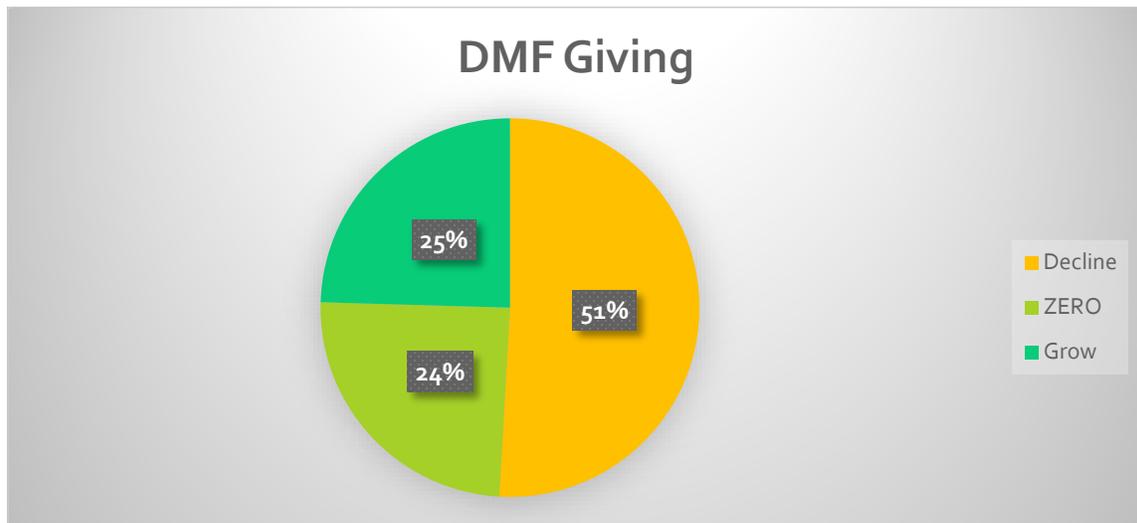
Congregations by Size



#3 83% of our congregations are in decline which indicates a need for deeper clergy development and support.



#4: Because of financial stress, congregations are not supporting DMF—even though robust fund support would provide resources that would help their congregation develop.



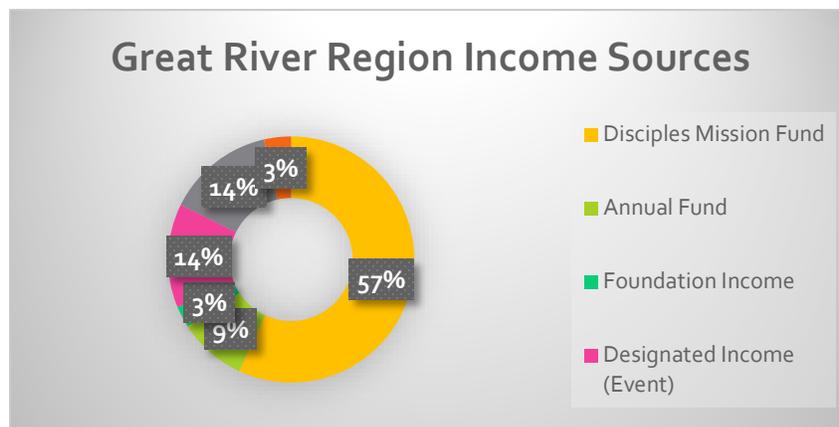
This contrasts the Great River Region:

- The Region's population has grown by 3.43% (now 10 million people)
- 357,000 new people have moved into the region over the past 7 years.
- 75% of the population is below 37 years of age.

#### BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:

**Regional Income:** During the past decade, or perhaps longer, the Great River Region has been fighting a battle of attrition. This has forced the board to make difficult decisions along the way in order to balance the budget. Like a local congregation, it has cut all the fat out of the budget, to where it can no longer do more than the bare minimum. Its small staff is overworked, and the demands of serving congregations has grown exponentially. The Region has reached a tipping point unless congregations in the Region step up to the plate.

The Region is limited in its sources of income. As the chart below demonstrates:



**Disciples Mission Fund:** The Region receives a generous percentage of income from congregational gifts to the Disciples Mission Fund. This represents the largest source of income for the Region.

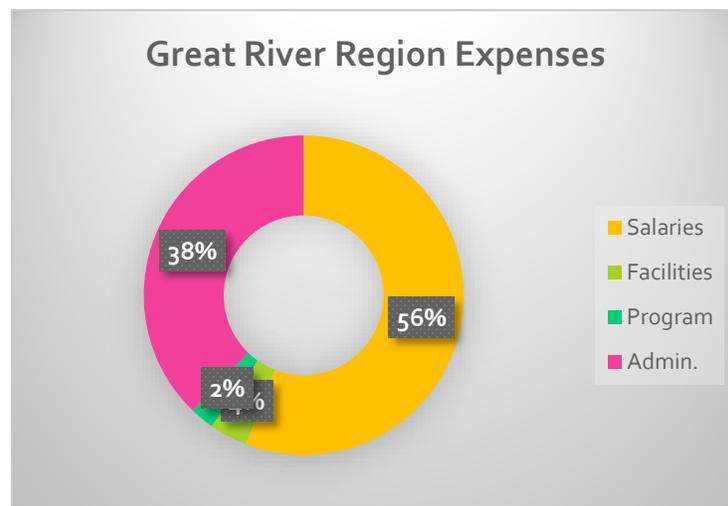
**Annual Fund:** Each year, individuals from around the Region contribute direct gifts to the Region which help support its annual budget.

**Foundation Income:** Some saints within the church have contributed permanent gifts to the church at large. These funds are invested, and the returns from those funds are distributed around the entire church. The GRR receives income from these large gifts people have made to the church, even though most of the donors did not live in the GRR.

**Designated Income:** is income derived from designated giving or event income given to the Region.

**Special Offerings:** When congregations contribute to the Christmas and Pentecost offerings, the region gets additional support.

**Regional Expenses:** The Region spends its funding in these categories:



**Salaries:** Includes benefits for 2 FT staff people

**Admin:** This is for travel, phones, computers, legal fees, and other essentials for operating a Regional Office and search and call resources.

**Program:** This is deliverables for Regional programs. Usually, any program generates enough income to cover the expense, this is all that was used for providing program to congregations. (Normally, a region would provide at least 13% of its budget in this area.)

**Facilities:** The Region has a sweet deal on its rent, and has been able to lower its facilities costs considerably.

This analysis proves that the Region is at a tipping point and has nothing to spend on deliverables, despite a staff and board that can see the potential of this region.

**Staffing:**

CURRENT	Title	PT/FT	For Consideration
Nadine Burton	Regional Minister	FT	No Change
Wendy Paquette	Reg'l Administrator/Disciples Women Coord.	FT	No Change
NEW	Associate Regional Minister	FT	Currently not funded

## STRATEGIES FOR GETTING THERE FINANCIALLY

**A. Develop a New Initiative Fund: Goal \$100,000**

A direct appeal to individuals within the region to contribute above and beyond giving for a period of 3 years for the New Initiative Fund which would support the development of the Institute, camping programs and additional staff. This should be run like a capital campaign, with a campaign period in each congregation.

**B. Develop a Permanent Fund and Policy for Closing Church Assets: Goal \$300,000**

The Regional Board should give consideration for developing a policy for churches that close and how to handle their assets. The Foundation may be of help in developing this policy. We would hope that it would include distribution to the Regional church development initiatives, capital for new church development, but not support Regional operational budget since this is capital. This fund once up to \$300,000 would produce about \$10-\$12,000 annually.

**C. Challenge each other to support DMF**

The Region's best opportunity for financial growth is to challenge congregations to grow in their DMF giving. According to Yearbook reports, there is capacity for congregations to participate in this offering. Participation would benefit congregations in their program development.

**Closing Note:**

*It has been an honor for Hope Partnership to work with the GRR on this plan. It has been my pleasure to work with a small group who got up early, and met on-line over the past two months. These dedicated people did this work while driving to work, caring for kids, caring for parents all while working in demanding church situations. Great folks...thank you David Britt, Megan Craven, Laura Cosgrove, and Nadine Burton.*

*It has also been insightful working with the GRR Board. Over the past 20 or so years, it has been my pleasure to work with this board off and on with a number of issues. I cannot put my finger on it, but there is something really different about this board, and their spirit. I cannot tell you what it means to be able to work with people dedicated to your working life together.*

*Hope has done this work for very little cost to the Region because of our affinity with your Regional Minister. It is our hope that our working together will give us opportunities to partner with the Region and congregations for Ministry services in the future, and that you will see us as a resource for ministry and building planning.*

*Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Rick Morse  
VP of Hope Partnership*



Regional Committee on Ministry Report  
Regional Assembly 2018  
Kings Highway Christian Church  
Shreveport, LA

Members of the Regional Commission on Ministry include: Ryan Pfeiffer, Chair, David Chisham, Bobbie Yellott, Don Morrow, Ann Pickett-Parker, Roosevelt Howard and Nadine Burton.

Let me express my appreciation to each of the team members, as they commit the equivalent of a week of their time each year to meet in person with candidates in each of the states. There is travel time, business session time, and candidate dialogue. This is necessary work on behalf of the region and denomination and I am thankful for the gifts and talents each person brings with them.

The years 2017 and 2018 were very busy years for RCOM. We spent time continuing to live into the GRR Order of Ministry Policy and feel confident that the way we are doing things is a consistent process.

We continue to meet once a year in each of the three states that make up the Great River Region. In the winter we meet in Louisiana, summer in Mississippi, and fall in Arkansas. This gives candidates needing to meet with us an option closer to where they live.

RCOM reviewed executive summaries from the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM) which allows us to evaluate policies of how we do our work. In particular, we reviewed Resolution 1601: Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Required Training. We reviewed the work of other regions who have implemented the training as a requirement for standing. We discussed the intricacies involved in providing such training in our vast geographic region.

Nadine Burton spoke with other Regional Ministers and helped us create a timeline of making the training available in each of the three states of our region. We also discussed allowing ministers to attend training in another region if that would be more realistic based on time and/or distance. We presented all of this to the Regional Board at the meeting of the board in June 2018 in Mississippi. The Regional Board discussed and voted favorably to RCOM's recommendation to offer Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training to all clergy in the Region and to require the training for standing.

We are coordinating with the Office of Reconciliation Ministries to facilitate these training events. We sent the resolution, cover letter and the training schedule to all Commissioned and Ordained clergy, along with a letter of invitation to the Regional Assembly Pre-Event Training on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Friday Regional Assembly pre-event, offers the first pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training event in the Great River Region. All clergy who attend this six-hour event, will get credit for the training.

Over the past two years, RCOM met with a total of 54 candidates. There were candidates approved for ordination, commissioning, transfer of standing, and candidates we continue to see “under care.”

The following candidates **were approved for Ordination:**

- Glen Schory – FCC Greater New Orleans, Metairie, LA
- Angie Kretzer – FCC, Hammond, LA
- Cheryl Sybrant – FCC, Fayetteville, AR
- Soniyah Key – FCC, Ft. Smith, AR

The following candidates **Ordination was Reinstated:**

- Ray Morton

The following candidates **were approved for Transfer of Ordination Standing:**

- Joseph Bryant – Mt. Beulah CC, Pine Bluff, AR
- Donald Warren – FCC, Stuttgart, AR
- Odette Woods – Mt. Sinai CC, North Little Rock, AR
- Mark Garner – FCC, Harrison, AR

The following candidates were **approved for Commission Standing:**

- Glen Hudspeth – Disciples Christian Fellowship, Texarkana, AR
- Patty DeVille – FCC, Sulphur LA
- Brad Hartzog – Utica CC, Utica, MS
- Judith Rizzo – Disciples Bayou CC, Lafayette, LA
- Laura DeMann – FCC, Bossier City, LA
- Barbara Driscoll – FCC, Bossier City, LA
- Cheryl Sybrant – FCC, Fayetteville, AR
- Jeffrey Murdock – FCC, Rogers, AR
- Sara Rudolph- Pollard – Mt. Sinai CC, N. Little Rock, AR
- Kelly Craft – Highland Drive CC, Jonesboro, AR
- Billie Dreher – Park Hill CC, N. Little Rock, AR
- C. Shawn Allen – FCC, Slidell, LA

The following candidates are **under care for Ordination:**

- H. Gaylan Williams – FCC, Ozark, AR
- Guadalupe Martinez – FCC, Rogers, AR
- Peggy Catron – FCC, Fayetteville, AR
- Holly Jo Engle – FCC, Blytheville, AR
- Vince Endris – FCC, Lake Charles, LA
- Sara Rudolph-Pollard – Mt. Sinai CC, North Little Rock, AR
- Dennis Bell – FCC, Benton, AR
- Kenneth McClung – Bethel CC, Coila, MS
- Ricky Harrington – Chaplain, Pine Bluff, AR
- G. Scot Crenshaw – FCC, Russellville, AR
- Rena Baker – E. Percy Street CC, Greenwood, MS

- Harvey Anderson – Bethel CC, Coila, MS
- Nearline Anderson – Bethel CC, Coila, MS
- Jeffrey Foster – Kings Highway CC, Shreveport, LA
- C. Shawn Allen – Chaplain, Slidell, LA
- Shelly Wilson – FCC, Ozark, AR
- Rufus Edwards – Christian Chapel, Port Gibson, MS
- Jeffrey Murdock – FCC, Rogers, AR

The following candidates are **under care for Transfer of Ordination Standing:**

- Walter Rogero – FCC, Mountain Home, AR
- Canaria Bell – New Hope United CC Camden, AR
- G. Scot Crenshaw – FCC, Russellville, AR
- Michael Hamilton – Jonesboro, AR
- Orlando Richmond – Northside CC, West Point, MS

The following candidate is **under care for Commission Standing:**

- Karl Lowry

We received Transfer to the Great River Region Standing letters from other Regions for the following:

Douglas R. Miller  
Terry Rothermich  
Kaycee Young  
Dwight Bailey

Jarrett Banks  
Victor Coriano-Gomez  
Linda James  
Jonathan Farler-Hoyt

Rick Hendricks  
David Grandgeorge

The following clergy moved out of the Great River Region, some by letter of transfer to another region:

Susan Miller  
Dean Luther  
Claudell Wilson

John Sexton  
Ralph Wright

Byron Singleton  
Victor Coriano-Gomez

We also remember ministers who transitioned to be with the Lord:

Robert Brown, Little Rock  
Elver Hoefer, Lake Charles  
Dana Hoover, Russellville

Bill McWha, Hot Springs  
Delores Stroud, Pine Bluff

Submitted by

Ryan Pfeiffer  
RCOM Chair

Nadine Burton  
Executive Regional Minister

**Regional Elders  
Report to Regional Assembly  
November 3, 2018**

The ministry of Regional Elders was initiated and commissioned at the 2012 Regional Assembly, held at First Christian Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Our purpose and duties are as follows:

**Purpose**

Regional Elders shall serve the Great River Region as pastoral leaders, supporting the Executive Regional Minister and offering pastoral support and friendship to all ministers and their families in the Region.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

1. With guidance from the Executive Regional Minister, divide all ministers in the region into geographical shepherding groups with each Regional Elder providing pastoral support to her/his group.
2. Pray consistently for the Executive Regional Minister and support staff and be available to the Executive Regional Minister for counsel and clarity as needed.
3. Pray consistently for the ministry and mission of the Great River Region.
4. Pray consistently by name for each minister, family and congregation in their particular shepherding group.
5. If feasible, make at least one face to face visit with each minister in the shepherding group per year, and make contacts by phone, email, cards, etc. (Possibilities for face to face visits can include the use of Skype, Zoom, Face Time, visiting at a regional or area event, etc.) Mileage can be reimbursed as needed and as funds exist.
6. While being sensitive to confidentiality, share with Executive Regional Minister “need to know” information learned, and/or invite ministers in the shepherding group to share such information with the Executive Regional Minister.
7. Create an ongoing network of communication for the purpose of support to each other and accountability to our duties and responsibilities.
8. Be a resource to pass on helpful information and new ideas for ministry to the ministers in their shepherding group.

Regional Elders and the Executive Regional Minister have monthly Video Conference Calls on the first Tuesday of each month for the specific purpose of praying for the joys and concerns from our shepherding groups and any prayer needs of the Region.

We have had some turnover of Regional Elders since its inception, and I want to express sincere appreciation to all who have served and those who are currently serving. It is truly an honor for us to serve as Regional Elders, and we appreciate your prayers and support.

The following are our Regional Elders along with each one's home church and geographical area they serve:

- **Rev. Miles Cook** – Park Hill Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR, serving Central Arkansas
- **Rev. Laura DeMann** – First Christian Church, Bossier City, LA, serving Northern Louisiana
- **Rev. Holly Jo Engle** – First Christian Church, Blytheville, AR, serving Northeast Arkansas
- **Rev. Zena Marshall** – First Christian Church, Ft. Smith, AR, serving Western Arkansas
- **Rev. Carol Miles** – Pulaski Heights Christian Church, Little Rock, AR, serving Northwest and Northeast Mississippi
- **Rev. Russell Myers** – United Christian Church, Jackson, MS, serving Central Mississippi
- **Rev. Bob Parks** – First Christian Church, El Dorado, AR, serving Southwest Arkansas
- **Rev. Ryan Pfeiffer** – First Christian Church, Fayetteville, AR, serving Northwest Arkansas
- **Rev. Ann Pickett-Parker** – New Generation Christian Fellowship, Pascagoula, MS, serving Southern and Northeast Mississippi
- **Rev. Glen Schory** – First Christian Church, Greater New Orleans, LA, serving South and Southeast Louisiana
- **Rev. Bobbie Yellott** – First Christian Church, Sulphur, LA, serving Central and Southwest Louisiana

Respectfully and in Christ's service,

Rev. Miles Cook  
Coordinator, Regional Elders

**Pinnacle Outreach Ministry  
Report to Regional Assembly  
November 3, 2018**

- + *Pinnacle Outreach Ministry officially began May 6, 2013, following approval of the Regional Board of the Great River Region on March 15-16, 2013.*
- + *Pinnacle Outreach Ministry is an extension of Pinnacle Structures, Inc. of Cabot, Arkansas, Rev. Will Feland, President, and the Great River Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Dr. Nadine Burton, Executive Regional Minister.*
- + *Pinnacle Outreach Ministry is fully funded by Pinnacle Structures, Inc. (pinnaclestructures.com)*
- + *Our Mission Statement is: **Helping Equip the Faithful for the Work of Christ.** Pinnacle Outreach Ministry gives support to clergy, congregations and secular organizations as they help meet the needs of God's people.*

**Since our inception, projects have included the following:**

- Purchased copies of Dr. M. Eugene Boring's **An Introduction to the New Testament** for all Senior Ministers/Pastors of each congregation in our region as well as those who serve in chaplaincy or any other Christian ministry.
- Purchased copies of Dr. M. Eugene Boring's and Dr. Fred B. Craddock's **The People's New Testament Commentary** for every minister actively serving in the Great River Region.
- Sponsored and funded a Pre-Regional Assembly Seminar in November of 2014 for ministers and congregational leaders in the Great River Region who have responsibilities for preaching and/or teaching. The seminar was led by Dr. M. Eugene Boring, Professor Emeritus of Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University.
- Sponsored and funded a Pre-Regional Assembly Seminar in November of 2016 for ministers and congregational leaders in the Great River Region who have responsibilities for preaching and/or teaching. Seminar was led by Dr. M. Eugene Boring.
- Sponsored and funded the 2018 Great River Region's Minister's Retreat, April 9-11 at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, Little Rock. The retreat was led by Dr. M. Eugene Boring.
- Sponsored and funded a Pre-Regional Assembly Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training November 2, 2018 for ministers and congregational leaders in the Great River Region. Seminar was co-led by Rev. Sandhya Jha, Director of the Oakland Peace Center in Oakland, CA, and Mr. John Goebel, Vice President for Finance with Treasury Services of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- Purchased a year's subscription of **Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology** for the ministers of all congregations in the Great River Region.

The goal of the above projects comes from our calling to do something annually for the ministers and leaders of the Great River Region, specifically to help them to be more proficient at faithful leadership and faithful interpretation of the Bible for preaching and teaching.

**Other projects have included the following:**

- Financial and other assistance to various congregations throughout the Great River Region for specific projects and needs.
- Financial assistance for ministers needing tuition help for continuing their ministerial education.
- Financial and other assistance to the Great River Region and to the Region's Youth Ministry.
- Covered the cost for two regional youth so they could attend Chi Rho Camp and CYF Conference.
- Financial assistance to Week of Compassion.
- Provided scholarship for one of our GRR clergywomen to attend Disciples Women's Quadrennial.
- Financial assistance to an area youth project in the United Methodist Church to help build wheel chair ramps for the needy.
- Financial and other assistance to the Arkansas Organization of Partners Against Trafficking Humans and purchased for them a new van for transportation for those they serve.
- Financial assistance to Habitat for Humanity of Pulaski and Lonoke Counties in Arkansas.
- Financial assistance and support to the Battered Women's Shelter in central Arkansas.
- Financial assistance to help a family in Pulaski County that suffered extensive damage from a house fire.
- Funded a new 63 passenger bus for the children at the Khayelihle Children's Village in Zimbabwe.
- Financial assistance to Bethany Fellowship Ministry to help support young Disciples of Christ ministers.
- Financial assistance for major renovation project at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale.

**Additional projects since the 2016 Regional Assembly include:**

- Financial Support to First Christian Church of Pineville, LA to help bring Dr. Diana Butler Bass to a two-day speaking event in central Louisiana.
- Financial support to Beyond Boundaries Equine Assisted Therapy Center for people with disabilities.
- Financial assistance to Cabot United Methodist Church (Cabot, Arkansas) for their annual Christmas Feast to needy families in the area.
- Financial assistance to annually fund a Rape Crisis Center in Helena-West Helena, Arkansas through the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA).
- Continuing annual support to Bethany Fellowship Ministry.

- Ongoing financial and other support to the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA).
- Ongoing support to the Great River Region staff, ministers and congregations.
- Financial help to the Great River Region to help purchase an automobile for the Executive Regional Minister.
- Supporting the Autism Project in Helena/West Helena, AR through Partners for Inclusive Communities (Arkansas' University Center on Disabilities).
- Sponsorship for annual Benefit for the Arkansas Autism Resource and Outreach Center.
- Sponsorship for Community Connections Benefit, which provides free services and activities for children with special needs and their families in central Arkansas.
- Financial support for mission projects for women and children in Nicaragua through Evangel International Outreach and Rev. Thom Walker, retired Minister of First Christian-Russellville, AR.
- Financial support for Week of Compassion to help meet needs from the 2017 hurricanes.
- Financial support for various individuals/families in need throughout the year.
- Financial support for needy families in Lonoke County, AR for Christmas.

With Pinnacle Outreach Ministry being an extension of the Region, I am privileged to serve as Coordinator of our Regional Elders. Also, as one of our Regional Elders, I have approximately 40 active and retired ministers to shepherd. These ministers represent 17 different congregations in central Arkansas. I rotate, as I am able, to these churches for worship on Sundays.

In addition to working on the above projects and others upcoming, I am involved in the following:

- Regional Board Member
- Board member of the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Preaching, officiating weddings and funerals, counseling, etc. as requested and as time/distance allows
- Regular Bible study and prayer
- Hospital visits
- I have also participated in Ordination and Installation services and had the honor of being Nadine Burton's "stand in" during her trip to Africa.
- It is such an honor and a joy to serve in ministry alongside Rev. Will Feland and Dr. Nadine Burton.

Respectfully submitted in Christ's service,  
 Rev. Miles Cook  
 Director, Pinnacle Outreach Ministry  
 501-743-0068  
[milescook@outlook.com](mailto:milescook@outlook.com)

**Great River Region of the Christian Church**  
**YOUTH MINISTRY/CAMP AND CONFERENCE REPORT**  
**NOVEMBER 3, 2018**

We continue to operate the Youth and Camping Ministry without a staff Youth Coordinator. Ronny Nowell and Cody Robertson, along with the Youth Commission, and adult volunteers, provide leadership for the Fall Fandango and Snoasis events. In 2017, a youth task force looked at creative ways to move forward with the overall camping program. We met strategically for six months and made a recommendation to the Region for moving forward. In evaluating the Disciples Camps, we found that we need a variety of camping experiences. We are a vast geography, and we cannot expect the extensive travel that would be needed for everyone to attend one camp.

In 2017, we entered into a partnership with Disciples Crossings in Athens, TX and the Southwest Region for summer camping opportunities. We have seen great participation by many of our campers from churches in Northwest AR and Louisiana. The Magnolia Camp, directed by Josie McClorine through the MCMC (Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention) continues to offer a vibrant camping experience for Mississippi Campers of all ages. The theme of the camping experience was *“Beyond Belief: The Universe of God.”* I was able to attend two days and offered a morning devotion.

Snoasis and Fall Fandango are important camping events as they allow campers to continue to meet and foster friendships and relationships throughout the Region. Campers attended Snoasis February 16-18, 2018 at Camp Couchdale, Hot Springs AR. The theme **“We”**, Philippians 2:14 and Hebrews 10:24-25, challenged campers to invest in the community and interest of others and not selfish ambitions. This year, we are trying something different with Fall Fandango. With this being a Regional Assembly year, and with the events being close in dates, we decided to use the opportunity to get the Fall Fandango campers and all youth in our Region involved in Regional Assembly by folding the two events into one, and offering an affordable Youth Track on the Regional Assembly registration form.

Plans for the future include hiring a temporary Youth Coordinator to help facilitate the various youth leadership development and camping opportunities that are currently in place. With available funding, we hope that the youth portfolio can one day be a part of an Associate Regional Minister’s portfolio. Part of the future vision story is to provide camping experiences within a 200-mile radius of major cities between the three states. This is a robust goal that we can take on with sufficient paid staff, volunteers and adult directors committed to the vision.

We have a dynamic 2018-2019 Youth Commission Team that includes: Martha Arambel, Lark Sybrant, Cole Langham, and McKenzie McTier. Lark and Martha attended the Christian Youth Leadership Summit in Brownwood Texas in July 2018. They were able to engage with youth leaders from the Southwest Region and bring back ideas for Snoasis, Regional Assembly, and Fall Fandango.

Members of the Youth Task Force include: *Ronny Nowell, Cody Robertson, Stacy Eastwood, Renee Eakin, Steven Sherrill, Josie McClorine, and Nadine Burton.* Your passion for our children and youth are apparent in all that you do. Thank you for serving, sacrificing, and keeping Jesus Christ at the center of spiritual development and training for our youth. We also thank *the Southwest Region and Emily Williams, Director of Disciples Crossing,* for welcoming the GRR as an important part of your camping fellowship.

Presented by

Nadine Burton  
Executive Regional Minister



# Currents

A publication of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)

## Great River Region Update

4724 Hillcrest Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72205

August 21, 2018

grrdisciples.org

### In this issue

- 2018-2019 Youth Commission
- Magnolia Camp & Conference
- Disciples Crossing Camps
- Christian Youth Leadership (CYLS) seminar



### Regional Assembly 2018

November 2-4, 2018  
Kings Highway Christian Church,  
Shreveport, LA  
Host Pastor: Rev. David Brice



*Ryan continues to serve on the Regional Board as our Youth Representative, while attending college in Wyoming!*

### What A Way to End the Summer!

With an appreciation and celebration of our camp and conference ministries, it is wonderful to know that we are blessed with wonderful campers who love Jesus Christ? They display it in their commitment to venture out every summer (and fall and winter) to camp to explore their spiritual walk, build relationships, and develop leadership skills. Camp provides the holy space that children and youth can explore spiritual journey. The GRR has the responsibility to equip, train, nurture, and plant seeds for an authentic spirituality, that will prepare them for what is ahead. You know, people often say that our youth are the leaders of the future. We say that they are the leaders of today! They inspire us to be church in new ways, they have the courage to face the world they live in (which is different from us boomers and gen Xers), and they desire to serve a God who loves all. I visited FCC, Jonesboro this past Sunday. Their steps in front of the pulpit was not big enough for the kids to sit and hear the children's sermon! David Hurley, worship leader shared, "what a wonderful problem to have!"

Did you know that we have a Youth Task Force who has worked over the past several years, paving the way for the camping ministry to thrive? I want to give a shout out to Ronny, Cody, Renee, Stacey, Josie, Betty, and Steven, for their passion and commitment to serve our kids! We continue to work with and experience a variety of campers, geographically located through the GRR! Our vision is to develop a camping model that strengthens and support camping opportunities all over the region. While we do not own a camp site, we have resources and partners willing to provide holy and fun spaces for camp to happen. Plans are forthcoming, as we seek to build on the foundations already in place. We ask that you pray for our camping

ministry, for new campers, for programming, and for a future vision what will allow campers to “soar and grow.”

We want you to meet a wonderful group of new leaders who will serve as the 2018-2019 Youth Commission Leaders!

We thank God for Emma Crider, FCC Fayetteville; Emily Smith, FCC, Lake Charles; and Clint Parr, FCC Sulphur, LA (who served as Youth Commission Members for the 2017- 2018 school year). We wish them well in their future endeavors. We pray that they would “Stretch your wings and soar to new heights.”

---

### Fall Fandango Update:

This year we are combining the Fall Fandango Youth event and Regional Assembly – Youth, grades 6-12, please join us at Regional Assembly for a NEW youth experience!! The registration fee for Youth, grades 6-12, will be \$60 per youth and will cover their registration fee, activities and meals at Regional Assembly. Registration information coming soon.

---

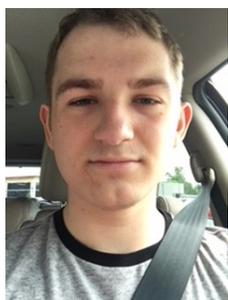
## Great River Region Youth Commission 2018-2019



### Martha Arambel

My church family has always been a part of my life from day one, they watched me grow and helped form me into who I am. I've had lots of experience of leadership through my church from

being worship leader to help put together Youth Sunday, as well as helping out in the nursery and helping organize and lead VBS.



### Cole Langham

“Cole is a young man who is continuing to grow in his faith and maturity. The experience of serving the regional church as a youth commissioner would allow him the opportunity to grow as well as the ability to give

back. His personality is playful and caring which are attributes that allow others to want to participate when the commission leads in worship and other activities.” *(Ryan Pfeiffer, Senior Pastor, FCC Fayetteville)*



### Mackenzie McTier

Another goal I have is to strengthen my relationship with the Lord. When Ronny handed me the application for Youth Commission, I was like “what does this entail?” When I read the first page, I knew that I wanted to be a part of the Youth Commission.” The last goal I want to reach is to bringing the Lord to many more people.”



### Lark Sybrant

“I believe that by being emerged with others striving for wholeness, creates a comfortable setting to ask questions and grow together. Youth Commission is an opportunity like no other in

this aspect. Along with growing my connection with God, I would also be creating a greater connection with my fellow peers and leaders.”

Adult Leaders: Betty Arambel, Stacy Eastwood, Ronny Nowell, Cody Robertson & Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton

---

**The CYLS (Christian Youth Leadership Summit)** is an annual conference that brings together youth from the Southwest and Great River Regions to mentor and train our youth with the tools, the sharing of ideas, and helps them to build confidence to provide leadership throughout our Region. Martha Arambel and Lark Sybrant (Youth Commission Members) got the opportunity to attend this conference in July.

Here is what Lark shared about her experience at CYLS:

*My name is Lark Sybrant and I'm from First Christian Church of Fayetteville. When I first heard about this conference, I was really excited. As it got closer though, I began to get nervous. I wasn't sure what to expect and the added flight down to Dallas wasn't helping either. I'd never been to the leadership conference or on a plane! However, everything went smooth and when I arrived in Texas with my friend Martha, we were well provided for and got where we needed to go. The camp experience itself was amazing. Everyone there was unique and fun to be around. I met so many people and made so many friends. I'm very grateful that I was able to attend and got the opportunity to learn more about being a leader. I come back feeling empowered, excited, and ready to have a great year!*

---

Pics from some of our campers:





Magnolia Camp & Conference Coronation



CYF Youth small groups at Disciples Crossing, Athens TX



Disciples of all ages enjoying Magnolia Camp & Conference



Communion at this one-of-a-kind Communion table created at CYF conference 2018

**Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)  
Disciples Women Report to the Regional Assembly  
November, 2018**

Our regional cabinet met at FCC Monroe, March 2-3, 2018 and had 2 follow-up phone conferences. Since our inception, the ladies have pretty much continued as 3 individual states, but having the cabinets serve on the regional cabinet as well.

Under Rev. Nadine's leadership we have begun a transition to consolidate and condense our DWM State cabinets into one Regional cabinet, with state teams to help follow through on our vision. We are no longer just individual states, we are a region with sisters in Louisiana, Arkansas and Mississippi. Part of the reason we are undergoing this Transition is to be better stewards of our finances and better stewards of our Regional staff's time and our cabinets time as well.

We changed the format of our Spring Workshop to be more of a mini-retreat and changed our practice of three Regional DWM retreats to only two locations during Assembly years. This allows the Louisiana cabinet to spend more time with DWM luncheon preparation at Assembly hosted by Kings Highway in North Louisiana. This is part of the plan that whenever your state is host of assembly, there will only be retreat locations in the opposite states. There was a wonderful mix of each state at the Arkansas and the Mississippi locations this year. We are also hoping to have one Regional Retreat in the years opposite of Regional Assembly.

Our interim 2018-2020 Women's Executive Team on the cabinet will consist of the following:

- Renee Eakin (LA) GRR DW President
- Carol Rhein (AR), GRR DW Vice President
- Patricia Currie (MS), GRR Secretary
- Stacy Eastwood (LA), Event Coordinator
- Rachel Selby (AR), Publicity

Please know that we are prayerfully considering these changes and appreciate any comments and prayers from all of our ladies throughout the Great River Region.

Since the last Assembly we have continued being supportive of our individual churches and our global, regional and state Service Projects.

Global Service Proj 2017	Smoked Fish Microcredit Project of the Council of Churches in Ghana	\$555
Regional Service Proj 2017	Feeding America	\$780
AR State Service Proj 2017	Duffle Bags for Foster Kids	200 duffles filled!
MS State Service Proj 2017	So. Christian Services/Children*	\$183
LA State Service Proj 2017	North Lake Crisis Pregnancy Center*	\$175
Global Service Proj 2018		\$555
Regional Service Proj 2018	Feeding America	\$780

AR State Service Proj 2018	Emergency kits for Family Promise	200 duffles filled!
MS State Service Proj 2018	So. Christian Services/Children*	\$183
LA State Service Proj 2018	Room in The Inn, Lake Charles*	\$175

*\*Monetary donations and "in kind" donations*

- 2017 Blessing Box - \$7057
- 2018 Blessing Box - \$2854
- 2017 – 132 ladies attended retreats
- 2018 – 99 ladies attended retreats

Please join me in prayer for our regional transformation!

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Eakin,  
GRR Disciples Women President

**Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)**  
**Disciples Men Report to the Regional Assembly**  
**November, 2018**

In June 2017 we had a men's retreat at Eagle Ridge conference center in Raymond, MS. This was a time of fellowship and relaxation for those in attendance.

In March 2018 I attended the General Conference of Disciples Men in Marysville, Ohio. There were men from throughout the U.S. in attendance. This was a great chance to meet men from other states and discuss the things they were doing in their areas. While on this trip I had the opportunity to transport some of our Regional archives from the Great River Region to the Disciples Historical Society in Bethany, WV. It was a long but enjoyable trip.

Charles Curtis  
President, GRR Disciples Men

**Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)**  
**Arkansas State Fellowship Report to the Assembly**  
**November 2018**

The Arkansas State Fellowship meets every fifth Sunday. Members of the fellowship churches enjoy a meal and fellowship prior to an afternoon service of worship. The worship service includes musical selections from each church, scripture reading, prayer and a sermon. The State Fellowship churches include Central Christian in Russellville, Cephas Chapel in Wrightsville, Cross Street in Little Rock, Mt. Beulah in Pine Bluff and Mt. Sinai in North Little Rock.

Highlights from 2017-2018:

Vice President Rev. Rita Richardson was elected as President following the resignation of Rev. Robert Palmer, due to his nomination as regional Moderator-elect. Elder John Brown of Cross Street was elected to fill the vacant Vice President position. Sis. Shirley Mahone serves as secretary.

In addition to the fifth Sunday gatherings, the State Fellowship congregations attend and support each other at special gatherings at the fellowship churches throughout the year.

2018 milestones announced at fellowship gatherings: Mt. Sinai Christian in North Little Rock's 117<sup>th</sup> church anniversary celebrated on March 11, 2018. Central Christian Church in Russellville's 150 years of ministry celebrated at a special service August 5, 2018.

The Rev. Robert L. Brown of Little Rock, a retired pastor who had served churches in Arkansas and other states, died February 23, 2018 at the age of 90. Rev. Brown had extensive knowledge of the history of the fellowship and its member churches.

**Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)**  
**Proposed Resolutions**  
**Regional Assembly November 2018**

GRR Resolution #2018-1 – [RESOLUTION TO CELEBRATE AND REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE VISION OF PLANTING 1,000 NEW CONGREGATIONS BY 2020 \(GA-1717\)](#)

In this resolution, submitted by Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation, the partners celebrate the initiative that counts 975 plants and affiliates with greater than 60 percent still bearing Christ's witness 5 years past their inception.

GRR Resolution #2018-2 – [A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION MINISTRY \(GA-1721\)](#)

Six congregations from Missouri, Ohio and Oklahoma bring this resolution to the General Assembly to encourage the Church to renew its commitment to being a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church as laid out in a resolution from the 2007 General Assembly and to support Reconciliation Ministry in its work.

GRR Resolution #2018-3 – [ON BECOMING IMMIGRANT WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS \(GA-1723\)](#)

Disciples ministries including the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, Refugee and Immigration Ministries of Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Women, Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, National Benevolent Association, National Convocation and Iglesia Alas de Salvacion (AZ) and Iglesia Christiana Emanuel (TX) are calling on congregations to consider becoming "immigrant welcoming congregations" by engaging in prayer and action around issues of immigration, providing supportive resources and programs to their local immigrant communities and building bridges between congregations that are majority immigrant and majority non-immigrant.

GRR Resolution #2018-4 – [STEWARDSHIP AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY \(GA-1732\)](#)

At the 2015 General Assembly, the Center for Faith and Giving was authorized to write a study document on stewardship as a spiritual discipline. The resulting study document is being put forward for issuance to the Church by the 2017 General Assembly. Included are biblical reflections, chapters on care for the earth and ourselves, generosity and transformation. The Church is invited to enter into a season of study and consider recommendations in the document.

GRR Resolution #2018-5 – [ADVOCACY FOR THE POOR](#)

The Regional Board offers this resolution entitled "Advocacy for the Poor." While we recognize that Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana are in the top 10 states for poverty, we desire to speak to the need for advocacy and service to our local communities, local, and national government regarding advocacy for the poor.