



Regional Minister and President Report to the Regional Board

June 17, 2020

During the last quarter, clergy and laity in our Region have gathered at least weekly via Zoom in various configurations, around diverse issues, and many continue to gather, grateful for a safe space in which to compare notes, air concerns, be supportive and be supported. We have hosted many (though not all) of these gatherings.

- Most of our congregations are making health-conscious choices about when and how to reopen.
- Since the death of George Floyd, the reality of systemic racism – particularly manifested in policing – has gotten the attention of the American public in an unprecedented way. Disciples leaders in every manifestation of the Church are responding; affirming that black lives matter and insisting that the killing of unarmed black men has to stop now, this time with a deeper sense of urgency rooted greater awareness of the unresolved pain of people we know and love and guided by the values of Jesus.
- The Becoming Beloved Community team is providing or communicating about more opportunities to gather, learn, and act with greater intentionality to do the work of justice and to listen reverently to those who continue to experience profound injustice.
- For every hour we are engaged in prophetic work, speaking, showing up at rallies and meetings we are spending several more addressing the guilt, confusion and sadness being expressed now in many previously comfortable congregations. We are also listening to the frustration, anger, and disgust in congregations left to fight on their own on behalf of those bearing the brunt of indifference to systemic racism by the larger community.
- People willing to risk carelessness during the pandemic are dealing with the reality that they may have contributed (by their carelessness and/or indifference to racism and poverty) to the suffering and/or death of others. Many are irritated, embarrassed, and restless. Some influential leaders are threatening to split their congregations, fire their pastors, or leave for a more comfortable congregation.
- Exploration of what covenant partnership might look like post-pandemic is going on in every manifestation of the Church. Recently, the Regional Ministers (serving on the College of Regional Ministers) in Kansas, Nebraska and Greater Kansas City have met to identify areas where we could work together to better steward resources while providing needed support for clergy and congregational leaders. Our General Minister and President joined us for the latest conversation and has agreed to keep meeting with us. We would like to each invite three people from each Region who are not on Regional staff to join us for the next Zoom meeting on July 9th at 1:30 pm CST. As these conversations progress, we will share what we find with our Regional Executive Team.