



January 2020

FROM: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

TO: THE GENERAL BOARD OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

1. We are privileged to share in the “movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, welcoming all to the Table of the Lord as God has welcomed us.”
2. Sadly, we saw the closing of South Summit Christian Church which dedicated its permanent campus in 2007. New Song Christian Church voted to conclude its thirteen-year ministry at the end of December 2019 (although we just learned that they may attempt to follow the Glendale, AZ First Christian Church model and create something new). Blue Ridge Boulevard Christian Church is selling its campus to another local congregation and the remaining 20 members are worshipping at Eastgate Christian Church. THIS IS BUT THE BEGINNING OF MORE CONGREGATIONAL



“Challenge and support— the two must go hand in hand. Do you have a sense of the ways your own setting might need to be safer to insure that anyone and everyone who takes up this work is not making a mistake in doing so?”

Kegan, Robert; Lahey, Lisa Laskow. *Immunity to Change (Leadership for the Common Good)* (Kindle Locations 4826-4828). Harvard Business Review Press. Kindle Edition

CONSOLIDATIONS AND CLOSURES THAT WILL NOT BE ENTIRELY OFFSET BY NEW CHURCH STARTS OR CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF EXISTING CONGREGATIONS IN THIS REGION. By implication (and looking at trends in congregational support of Regional ministries) over the next two years our Region must reassess its reason for remaining as it is currently configured, staffed and funded. We continue to explore with other Regions the standardization

## GOOD NEWS FIRST

- Four pastors in Region’s Church Planter cohort
- Three congregations in deep transformation – one awarded an NBA grant
- Two congregations exploring affiliation
- Rev. Dr. Le Anne De Tar Newbert was ordained and five clergy under care and in discernment
- Hosted inter-Regional ARPR Train-the-Trainer workshop and other related anti-racism events to help over 150 clergy to meet new standing requirements
- Regional Assembly with our General Minister and President June 2020

and centralization of some administrative functions to free up deployed Regional staff to provide closer support of pastors and lay leaders in the near term. With the availability of resources and services inline and the self-organizing networks of pastors, some of the most highly valued ways that Regions once served congregations are no longer wanted or welcomed in many congregations. As we experiment with re-engaging the symposium models of the early Church, we may want to revisit the configuration of middle judicatory ministry in the same era.<sup>1</sup> Discontinuous change requires an adaptive response from church organizations that will serve and lead for the next several decades.

3. Our Region has formed a team to oversee Reconciliation grant applications, workshops and events, and a pilot program to bridge trauma awareness to healing and hope in anti-racism work that served 74 clergy, social workers, and educators (thanks to a matching grant from Reconciliation Ministry). Our clergy must have completed anti-racism continuing education within the last three years to renew standing. Instead of dictating what form that education must take, we took the path of publishing Learning Objectives ([kcdisciples.org/ARPR](http://kcdisciples.org/ARPR) (Click on Clergy ARPR for Standing Renewal)). This has resulted in clergy organizing several creative continuing education initiatives with practical application in their ministry contexts and whetted their appetite for the kinds of deeper analyses offered by Reconciliation Ministries. With eleven newly trained Intro to Anti-Racism workshop leaders, we are planning to offer the 1-day workshops in at least four congregations in 2020. We will continue to equip others for community action. Our Region will host its first Juneteenth celebration this summer. Finally, we are exploring what a Region-wide service of repentance for violence done with the blessing of the myth of white supremacy and the violent application of white privilege to First Nations people, descendants of those brought from Africa into slavery here, and all others who have been hurt by false narratives and practices perpetuated since the 1400's. The service would include articulation of specific commitments for reparation. This will require careful planning but our hope is that in the following year we may be able to help organize the Churches of Christ Uniting communions to offer a similar city-wide service on Pentecost Sunday, 2021 Groundwork for that is beginning with a new middle-judicatory leader group here.
4. We continued to develop relationships with middle judicatories in the UCC, PC-USA, ELCA, and UMC to share opportunities for continuing education in safe sanctuaries, pastoral ethics, and anti-racism.
5. A pilot program based upon the Immunity to Change process will be introduced to employ the wisdom, skills and availability of under-utilized interim ministry specialists to help congregations after a discernment process has provided clarity about their future. We will seek grant funding for that.
6. Conversations are underway to explore having Disciples Church Extension Fund organize a capital campaign for our Region in 2020 in a way that honors our covenant with the wider Church
7. A feasibility study by United Camps, Conferences, and Retreats Inc. has been completed for our Tall Oaks Conference Center with recommendations on ways to reduce expenses, expand market share for environmental education, and get that mission to become self-supporting through usage fees. Our Region has not yet made a decision about whether to contract with UCCT, however, the very act of obtaining a positive feasibility study confirms that the Tall Oaks campus is meeting needs well for a nonprofit market that is wider than what we have served so

far. We are making the transition from “our church camp” to a mission of service to the wider community to provide facilities and services to support transformative experiences and encounters with God.

### **Regional Board Officers**

Moderator: Rev. Mary Lou Kegler

Moderator-Elect – Mr. John Steinmetz

Secretary – Rev. Mark Willis

Treasurer—Rev. James Vertreese

Immediate Past-Moderator—Rev. Dr. James Crowe

Regional Representative to the General Board – Rev. Laura Phillips

### **Regional Staff**

Office Administrator – Ms. Jessica Lopez (full time)

Finance Manager—Mrs. Gwen Brown (¼ time)

Disciples Women’s Coordinator – Rev. Veronica Fallah (1/6 time)

Camp and Conference Coordinator – Rev. Shandra Yost Soltani (½ time)

Regional Minister for New and Transforming Congregations –Rev. Dr. Delesslyn Kennebrew (full time)

Regional Minister and President – Rev. William Rose-Heim (full time)

### **Tall Oaks Staff**

Executive Director – Ms. Martha Pierce

*Tall Oaks is now a wholly owned subsidiary, 501.c.3. nonprofit corporation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City as the sole member. Our Regional Board appoints the members of the Tall Oaks Board with now oversees the personnel, operations and program development on the campus.*

<sup>1</sup>See Michael Graves, [Table Talk: Rethinking Communion and Community](#), 2017 and Alistair Stewart, [The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities](#), 2014