



c/o Merriam Christian Church, 9401 Johnson Drive, Merriam, KS 66203

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December 26, 2018

Report to the General Board

We celebrate the wisdom and faithfulness of God, the witness, work, and example of Jesus, and the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit leading the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada into a time of deep transformation. We give thanks for the illumination of Holy Scripture, the courage, imagination, and sacrifices of the saints who have gone before us, and for the encouragement and inspiration of our colleagues across the life of this denomination who continue to proclaim and embody Good News in a culture confused about “fake news.” We remain hopeful and are committed to adaptive servant leadership, believing with the apostle Paul, “I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”



We remember that our work is that of a partnership with the whole Church that includes every person and ministry from local to international. Therefore, we appreciate opportunities to deepen and honor relationships including but not limited to:

- The Obra Hispana which has welcomed two of our Hispanic Disciples to the Junta Directiva representing one of the newest convenciones. We are particularly grateful to the Pastora Nacional who has worked closely with our Hispanic pastors, providing encouragement and teaching a class on pastoral ethics for pastors and lay leaders in 2018.
- HOPE Partnership which continues to work with two of our congregations to discern a future story that honors God, inspires discipleship in Christ and serves communities, and, which has offered to our Region an opportunity under consideration to equip local facilitators and coaches for congregations in discernment and building capacity to live into divinely inspired mission and vision
- The Minister for New Church Strategies (with HOPE Partnership) who provides encouragement and support to our Region's New and Transforming Church Commission and hosts frequent webinars that broaden and strengthen the network of Disciples engaged in church planting
- Global Ministries which is working with our congregations and Region to encourage People to People pilgrimages and welcome visiting Global Ministry Partners and Interns as a part of discipleship formation. Their staff has helped our Regional Minister to better appreciate the work of Global Ministry Partners in Ghana and South Africa and understand more clearly the need to persist in calling out and working to diminish the power of systemic racism in the Church.
- Reconciliation Ministry that is supporting our Region's hosting of an Anti-Racism/Power Analysis workshop and a Train-the-Trainer workshop in early 2019, both of which will be open to the whole Church. In 2018, Rev. Sandhya Jha led a workshop on Faith-Rooted Community Organizing which helped participants to do more with their privilege to weaken systemic racism.
- Our General Minister and President who is keynoting the January 2019 Kansas City Interfaith Celebration in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and, who is making time to meet with our Region to share vision and to engage in dialogue about how we may be more faithful disciples/Disciples together.
- The Disciples Church Extension Fund which continues not only to provide loans to support ministry but also to take bold action that has inspired congregations investing in new forms of witness, mission and service to persevere and keep faith.
- The Christian Church Foundation staff who continue to create opportunities for the stewards of resources among us to help assure the continual development of new and existing ministries that outlive them. We are grateful to CCF Vice President Kirby Gould whose advice regarding giving and her willingness to offer instruction and encouragement have been invaluable in our Region.

- The Pension Fund which has conducted seminars, interviewed dozens of new and newly installed pastors, and whose excellent stewardship has inspired hope and confidence among those in or nearing retirement. They are also bringing Pete the Planner to Kansas City in May of 2019 for a clergy workshop on Financial Wellness as part of an offering to Disciples in our own and contiguous Regions from their work with the Lilly Foundation.
- The General Commission on the Order of the Ministry which encourages new efforts to better support our clergy to thrive in ministry and to promote the ethical discharge of duties.
- The National Convocation and its Board which has made a welcome place for leaders like our new Regional Minister for New and Transforming Churches and our Regional Treasurer – both of whom have also benefitted from equipping that the Convocation has sponsored and from relationships with faithful disciples of Jesus who serve in leadership of the Convocation.
- The Week of Compassion which continues to reach out when there is a community-wide emergency in our Region and provides us with opportunities to share in their work around the world. We celebrate with them the calling of our Regional Moderator, Rev. Erin Wathen, to serve as the Associate Director for Marketing and Communications.

Our partnership with congregations has allowed us to witness the work of the Spirit in familiar and creative ways. Here are just a few:

- Blue Valley Christian Church meets in and serves in a senior living facility. They are becoming equipped to better identify and respond in love to the spiritual needs of residents, staff, and family members.
- South Summit Christian Church has repurposed their campus to house a nonprofit business incubation center and child care for entrepreneurs who are parents of young children in that program. Welcoming SymbioBiz and FlexPlay has put this small congregation on the community map and they are working with Disciples Church Extension Fund to expand their mission and evangelism efforts.
- New Vision Christian Church offers a comprehensive program of financial wellness capacity building for members of the church and community and led by professionals from the community
- The Associate Ministers Institute, created by the MOKAN Fellowship offers classes taught by clergy leaders from the ecumenical Christian community to benefit those in associate pastoral roles in urban congregations
- The Micah Ministry – a collaboration of ecumenical and interfaith partners hosted at the Independence Boulevard Christian Church – feeds, clothes, befriends and provides medical care for NE Kansas City's homeless, the

unemployed or underpaid, and local neighbors. Its offshoot, Johnson County Food Ministry, has served over 73,000 meals since its inception.

- Raymore Christian Church serves as a spiritual home for many including retired Disciples clergy and spouses residing at Foxwood Springs - formerly an NBA facility which continues the ministry of the Fellowship of John and helps to subsidize the rents of any resident with financial challenges. With the blessing, financial support and volunteers, the congregation helps many in Cass county with basic needs and social services
- Community Christian Church and Swope Parkway United Christian have become gathering places for Kansas City's ecumenical and interfaith champions of racial justice, and economic equity
- St. Andrew Christian Church and Country Club Christian Church are just two of several Disciples congregation that continue to host efforts to welcome refugees, immigrants, and Global Ministry partners. Kansas City Disciples are well-known in the Metro area for welcome, inclusion, support and advocacy.
- Merriam Christian Church has been generous to our Regional Board and staff, allowing us access to office and meeting space at no cost. Our Region has entered into a creative cost-sharing plan that benefits both the congregational and Regional budgets.

Our Regional Board and Commissions are working in 2019 to:

- Make Anti-Racism, Cultural Competency, and Faith Rooted Community Organizing a larger part of how we carry out the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20), fulfill the Great Commandments (Mt. 22:36-40), and, "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11-16)
- Expand the options for clergy to fulfill continuing education requirements in ways that honor our partnership with the whole Church, inspire those who serve and improve our capacities to serve in specific contexts
- Continue to discern the nature of sustainable ministry in the future within an increasingly secularized culture
- Increase the number of congregations becoming better equipped and collaborating for transformation, consolidation, and mission
- Equip a cohort of new church planters for five churches over the next five years
- Help more Disciples to know, practice and grow their spiritual gifts
- Practice and teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline and engage in more grant-writing and legacy gift development in our congregations and to improve participation in the Disciples Mission Fund
- Increase participation by GKC Disciples in the 2019 General Assembly and other whole Church initiatives
- Complete the transition of our Tall Oaks Conference Center to a wholly-owned subsidiary, 501.c.3 non-profit organization led by a board appointed by our

Region. The goal is to expand offerings and numbers of people served in collaboration with other camp and conference centers in this area.

Our Regional representative to the General Board is the Rev. Laura Phillips, Senior Minister for the Overland Park Christian Church.

2018 Regional Board Executive Officers

Rev. Erin Wathen, Moderator
Rev. Mary Lou Kegler, Moderator-elect
Rev. Suzi Goldt, Secretary
Rev. James Vertreese, Treasurer
Rev. Dr. James Crowe, Immediate Past Moderator

2018 Regional Staff

Ms. Gwen Brown, Financial Manager (part-time)
Rev. Veronica Fallah, Coordinator for Disciples Women (part-time)
Rev. Dr. Delesslyn Kennebrew, Regional Minister for
New and Transforming Churches (full-time)
Ms. Jessica Lopez, Office Administrator (full-time)
Ms. Martha Pierce, Director, Tall Oaks Conference Center (full-time)
Rev. William Rose-Heim, Regional Minister and President (full-time)