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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City

September 15, 2019

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Regional Minister and President

REGIONAL MINISTER REPORT

This report will be brief. Much of what would be reported here is covered in the Fall 2019 newsletter. I have asked that copies be made available to each Board member.

In the past three months, the workload of the staff has increased due to a confluence of initiatives like the fundraising campaign, Anti-Racism education projects, and clergy standing renewals in addition to normal ministry, commission, and committee support. We are working through the closing of a young congregation (South Summit Christian Church) and it appears that this is the beginning of a trend as more congregations come to terms with their inability to remain sustainable (and their reluctance to ask for help until it is too late for any effective intervention). Several members of the clergy are now talking with me about career changes rather than considering one of the few other ministry openings. This is happening in all Regions and denominations as the Church goes through a major course correction.

This is a season of pruning the “branches” on the Vine. We are all feeling it at some level and most of us are prayerfully asking God, “What must I let go, that I may bear better and more fruit for You?” This is a time to be honest, open, and mutually supportive in our covenant relationship with Christ and this Church. It is also a time to seek where the Spirit is already at work and join in that work:

- Starting new congregations
- Reclaiming our individual and corporate charge to make and equip new disciples of Jesus Christ
- Equipping individuals and congregations to more effectively challenge racism and participate in efforts for economic equity

You may be pleased to know that the General Church, via the Governance and Structure Committee on which I am privileged to serve, is taking seriously the challenge by our General Minister and President to better align our way of being the Church with God's design for the Church. We are crafting a two-year process that will involve every Disciple who is willing to participate. Our goal is to bring to the 2021 General Assembly recommendations for some needed restructure while reaffirming the strengths of the Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Working also with the General Commission on the Order of the Ministry, I am pleased that soon we will bring from our Region recommendations that may change for the better the way we help clergy to remain well-equipped for maintaining good pastoral ethics and working with their congregations to eliminate vestiges of racism in church and local community.

Our College of Regional Ministers will meet in Toronto in October but I will participate by Zoom, saving some travel and lodging costs. We will be working on several initiatives. As 2nd VP, I am pulling together Regional Moderators to prepare a meaningful program when they meet with the College and on their own next summer in Dallas.

I will be working with a team of Disciples called together by our General Minister and President to look at the future of our Reconciliation Ministry.

We are waiting for word back from the office of Rev. Terri Hord Owens about a date when we can schedule our next Regional Assembly with her present.

I plan to be away and mostly offline from September 16-October 3, traveling to New England with Donna and Rev. Dale and Debra Parson to visit family and friends and spend more time in prayer, scripture study, even as we tour historic sites in New England.

May God bless you as you meet on September 23rd and give you wisdom, courage, and peace. I remain grateful for the good work you and our staff do for the sake of the Gospel and I am confident that we have reason to hope even as we face new challenges.