

Title: Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Montana

Origin: Ruth Fletcher, Regional Minister

Regional Staff

Regional Minister: Ruth Fletcher, female Caucasian
Part-time Administrative Assistant: Kathy McKerrow, female Caucasian
Part-time Caretaker, Cane Ridge West: Judy Johnson, female Caucasian
Disciples Women Staff (volunteer): Jean Muir, female Caucasian

Established Congregations: 14
Total Members: 2038

Congregations in Formation: 2
States Included: Montana

OUR MISSION: To strengthen congregations to effectively share Christ's Ministry with the world

Extending the Ministry of Christ in Mission

This year, the Montana Region gave \$498 to the Yakama Mission, \$691 to the Foods Resource Bank, \$600 to the support of the Ecumenical Lay Ministry Institute of Montana, \$1500 to the Montana Association of Churches and \$492 to the Week of Compassion Seeds Project. We collected bedding and other supplies for the Tennyson Center at the Colorado Christian Home.

Extending the Ministry of Christ in Teaching

Through our camps, Festival of Faith, ministers' continuing education event, retreats for the eldership, boundaries training and retreats for Disciples Men and Disciples Women and our Regional Assembly, we nurture faith and train leaders to serve Christ's mission.

Extending the Ministry of Christ in witness and service

A team from Montana offered their services to the Yakama Mission last summer. This spring, a team from Montana is going to work in New Orleans out of one of the Disciples Mission Stations.

Establishing Congregations

The Regional Church continues to financially support the New Day Fellowship, a regionally initiated new church start in northwest Missoula. Seeker's Harbor, a self-supporting individually initiated new church, continues its ministry in Billings. This year, we also initiated a project aimed at establishing small groups in isolated communities where no Disciples congregations exist. Eventually, we hope to periodically bring those groups together as one congregation in a retreat setting.

Nurturing Congregations

We just completed a three-year process of congregational transformation called "Leaven" in which six congregations came together quarterly to learn principles of church revitalization, to equip themselves to take steps toward renewal, to pray for one another, to network and share resources, to hold each other accountable and to support each other, sharing sorrows and celebrating successes. Several congregations have notice increased vitality as a result of their participation.

I continue to work with search committees who are seeking to secure pastoral leadership for their congregations. I preside at installation services on behalf of the Regional Church. I assist congregations who are trying to navigate change and to plan for the future.

Relating Congregations to the Mission of the Whole Church

Our priorities in the region are shaped by the 2020 vision: leader development, new church establishment, transformation of existing churches and anti-racism. We communicate regularly with our mission partners in Paraguay. We lift up the ministries of the General Units in our communication with congregations.

Financial Information

The Montana Region uses a cash accounting method. A professional audit is done annually on our books. The 2007 audit will be completed this summer. The 2006 audit has been sent to the Office of the General Minister and President's Office and is available for the General Board's review.

General Operating Fund	2007	2006	2005
Actual Total Income	\$ 211,039	\$ 211,366	\$ 234,328
Actual Total Expenses	\$ 218,527	\$ 320,599	\$ 280,378
Surplus/Deficit	\$ (7,488)	\$ (109,233)	\$ (46,050)

In 2007, \$46,505 was spent on new church establishment. In 2006, \$134,854 was spent on new church establishment. In 2005, \$83,017 was spent on new church establishment.

Deficits are covered by draws on invested funds.

Currently, 25% of the regional budget comes from earnings on invested funds. Over the next ten years, the regional board hopes to increase the assets in the region's endowment funds to such an extent that 63% of the budget eventually will be underwritten by the earnings from invested funds. The Christian Church Foundation is helping us work toward that goal.