

Title: Report of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) In West Virginia

Origin: Thaddaeus B. Allen

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Regional Staff: (Listing by name, with gender, whether ethnic minority)

Thaddaeus B. Allen	Regional Minister (M/Caucasian)
David T. Chafin	Associate to the Regional Minister (M/Caucasian)
Mary Uhl	Associate to the RM for Women’s Ministry (F/Caucasian)
Joel Potts	Assistant to the RM for Men’s Ministry (M/Caucasian)
Andrea Brownlee	Youth Mentor (F/Caucasian)
Kevin Snow	Youth Mentor (M/Caucasian)
Kenneth Hardway	Youth Mentor (M/Caucasian)
Laura Foust	Administrative Assistant to the Regional Minister (F/Caucasian)
Parris Whitte	Staff Secretary (F/Caucasian)
Jennifer R. Allen	Newsletter Editor (F/Caucasian)

William B. Allen Regional Minister Emeritus (M/Caucasian)

Number of congregations: 44

Total Members: 7,107

The region includes most of West Virginia and the Western Panhandle of Maryland

Questions to be answered:

1. How has your region fulfilled the region’s primary purpose as stated in paragraph 20 of ‘*The Design*’?

This region is an active and vital church in the geographic bounds of our region. Together we serve and live as church sharing the gospel in mission, teaching, witness and service among the people of our region. Through a strong ecumenical witness we work with our brothers and sisters in Christ from various traditions to promote wholeness in our context where brokenness is often the rule. We are engaged in work with those who have not enough; we are active with the WV Council of Churches in our advocacy responsibility with the leadership of our state. We continue to provide many and varied opportunities for Christian formation within our region. We work with people of all ages and contexts as we seek to be and share the good news (to be the regional church.) We are aware of the role of the “teaching office” that is the region’s and we seek to honor this as we teach, serve and witness.

The care and nurture of congregations is a joy for our region. We are actively engaged in the care of clergy and congregations. We had a first class retreat for clergy and mates in January. We continue to work with search committees and make pastoral visits regularly.

Pastoral visits are made in times of joy and sorrow. We are undertaking a new initiative to work with small congregations with one of our Associates, and will be leading them with competent interim ministry and transformation services. The recruitment and retention of excellent ministers to our region is a high priority going forward. We are working towards an awareness and understanding of church that makes it difficult to see where the congregation begins and the region ends. Our size and deep relationships make for a “high touch” environment in our corporate life. We receive this as a gift. We continue to value the linking of our congregations with general units and honor our role as middle judicatory in the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.)

2. Particular highlights or challenges of ministry in your region since the last report.

Since the last report, a great deal has changed in our region. Our regional minister of nearly twenty years retired. Thaddaeus B. Allen was elected to the office. We called a full-time associate with a new portfolio that will include but not be limited to ministries of Reconciliation, Communication, Stewardship and Mission Interpretation and Interim Ministry in a congregation. We have received four (4) young clergy persons into our life who are working in their first calls out of seminary. We have engaged our seminarians to work with us in our camp and conference life.

A particular joy occurred when the region gathered for a grand celebration of life. At a party in November we honored our retired regional minister and accorded The Reverend Doctor William B. Allen with the office of Regional Minister Emeritus. We celebrated our newly called staff. We gave thanks to God that we survived the search process, and continue to celebrate the deep and abiding unity in our regional church that is a gift from God.

Like many in his seat, our regional minister will lose some sleep this year over finances and resource management. But given the generous nature of our people, historically and presently, and the state of our affairs as we have received them, we can handle this in ways that are faithful and marked by integrity that honors the church.

We need more excellent ministers. We will continue to identify and nurture those who have gifts for the ministry of Christ’s Church. This need cannot be overstated.

3. Current goals related to the mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.)

New Congregations – We are excited about our new church in Charleston, WV. The United Disciples of Christ Church is a fine example of light in this region. We are beginning to sense more energy in this area; although, our shifting demographics and aging population are considerations to honor. We participate in the Pentecost Offering and have left certificates invested with Church Extension as a sign of our participation in this movement and priority of the church.

Transforming Congregations – We have some wonderful examples of church growth and revitalization in our region. Our initiative to work with small congregations in the interim period will be just one of the ways in which we approach this priority.

Leadership Development – We are extremely pleased and proud of our seminarians and potential leaders in the church. We are working closely with each to help them grow into the leaders that may potentially become. Leadership is both caught and taught and we are

active in both of these modes of development. We will be aggressive in this area of the church through providing retreats, internships, ministerial calls and moments of personal touch.

Pro-Reconciliation and Anti-Racism – We have a team that is refocusing their work. The addition of a staff person to be our Reconciliation Officer is a sign of deep commitment to this important priority of our Christian life. We support and participate in the offering.