

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OREGON**  
**GENERAL BOARD REPORT**

April 18, 2009

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon includes 39 congregations across the state. Of these, seven are new and affiliating congregations. Disciples in Oregon witness to the love of God in the Willamette Valley, eastern and southern Oregon and in the Portland metropolitan area. Our global mission partners are Blanca Puma and Victor Vaca of the FEDICE ministry in Ecuador. Our general church ministry partner is Kaye Edwards of Disciples Home Missions. In the past year, God has blessed us with visits from all three of our global and general church partners.

1. As defined by the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), regional church ministries have two purposes: (1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the people and social structures of the region; and (2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region. The fulfillment of this mission takes many forms.

Oregon Disciples extend the ministry of Christ by:

- Creating fellowship events such as annual youth camps and multiple congregationally based retreats, six spring gatherings for women's spiritual formation, a fall retreat for women, a ministers and mates retreat at the coast and new church potlucks bringing together long time and new Oregon Disciples churches.
- linking congregations with the worldwide mission of Christ's church by raising funds for economic development projects with our partners in Ecuador.
- providing accurate and current information about the giving opportunities through Disciples Mission Fund, Week of Compassion, Reconciliation, Blessing Boxes, and seasonal special offerings.
- sending one of our Regional Ministers on a trip with Global Ministries to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo to bring greetings.
- becoming a Global Mission Region and creating a two day celebration honoring our history of global mission involvement and looking to our future as global mission partners with brothers and sisters around the world.
- joining together several Portland area Disciples congregations to staff a shelter for homeless people.
- emphasizing evangelism by inviting congregations to study the *Unbinding the Gospel* books by Martha Grace Reese, and bringing her to a pre-assembly gathering for leaders in May of 2008.
- planning a Women's Action Web program emphasizing hunger issues and ministry responses in Oregon congregations to empower congregations to learn to respond effectively as providers of nourishment in our communities.
- organizing youth in nearby communities to perform acts of service together.

Oregon Disciples act as stewards of congregations in the Oregon by:

- establishing the ministries of Calvary Christian Church (Portland), Trees of Righteousness (Portland) and Iglesia Cristiana Escudo y Fortaleza de Molalla (Mollala).
- affiliating the ministries Zion Ministries and Peniel Ministries (both of Portland), Iglesia Cristiana Escudo y Fortaleza (Salem) and Ione Community Church (Ione).
- providing a small amount of support to a self-sustaining bilingual ministry, First Christian Church in Forest Grove.
- nurturing congregations in the pastoral search process (placing 12 pastoral staff positions), visioning and planning, programmatic resourcing, problem solving and pastoral visitation;
- maintaining a prayer calendar inviting congregations to pray for one another;

- keeping current a website and newsletter with information of importance to the regional partners

2. Oregon Disciples pursue the mission priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the following ways:

***Leadership Development:***

- Elders trainings in single and multi congregational methods.
- Children's Worship and Wonder trainings (two this year).
- Youth Ministry Skills and Spirituality Project sponsored by the Oreon Scott Foundation which included six sessions with ten youth pastors for skill building and spiritual formation and 12 individual sessions of spiritual direction for each participant.
- Participation in 2008 International Christian Youth Fellowship event at Chapman University by both Regional Ministers, 7 members of the Regional Youth Council, four additional youth, one local pastor, and two lay leaders/youth sponsors.
- Nurturing women seminarians in non-Disciples seminaries in Oregon through two grants allowing three women to attend the HELM seminarians conference and receive five session of spiritual direction each -- grants were received form HELM and Office of Disciples Women Women's Endowment Fund.
- Under Care relationship for ministerial candidates meeting in two locations, Portland and Eugene, on a regular basis.
- Training our leaders to provide safe and healthy environments in the church through a two day training event for pastors and key lay leaders led by Karen McClintock, published author in the field of healthy boundaries in congregational life.
- Nominating a woman of color from this region's board to join in the Office of Disciples Women Leadership Apprentice Program.
- Financially supporting Oregon Disciples to attend the National Convocation, Church Planter Training, International Disciples Women's Cabinet training, the General Ministers' Pastors' conference and Mission Interpreters training through Global Ministries.
- Participating in three monthly cluster meetings of clergy in Portland, Albany, and Eugene.

***Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism:***

- Cross cultural fellowship, service and worship events for new and existing congregations
- Support Bi-lingual fellowship at FCC Forest Grove
- Co-sponsorship through Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon visit of Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- Congregational learning and serving trips with anti-racism training at Yakama Christian Mission

***New Church Ministry:***

- Three ministries in formation.
- Four affiliating congregations.
- Regional New Church Ministry team meeting monthly.
- Growing emphasis on linking new and established church participants with each other.
- Participation in planter training, Super Peer Group and Church Planter Mission trips.
- Newest emerging ministry, Trees of Righteousness, specializes in ministry with those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction.

***Church Transformation:***

- Unbinding the Gospel workshop with Martha Grace Reece and encouraging congregations to read Rev. Reece's books in congregational groups before the event -- approximately half of the congregations did this.
- Follow through from 2007 New Beginnings program with Church Extension.
- Re-introducing New Beginnings in 2009 for additional congregations.
- Eugene FCC visioning process with Dick Hamm.

- Faithful Planning process in three congregations currently in process, Salem, Corvallis, Silverton.

3. Church Transformation ministries in Oregon recognize that congregations become ready at different times and paces. In view of this, regional church ministry offers a variety of options to congregations. General skills trainings can enhance the quality of ministry in each congregation. This includes elders' workshops, Christian education and youth ministry training, resources for prayer and small group studies and continuing education for ministers.

Congregations seeking a major review of their mission and ministry are encouraged to participate in the New Beginnings program of Church Extension.

Those seeking a short-term planning process may engage in the Faithful Planning process led by Cathy Myers Wirt. Long range planning may be assisted by contract with consulting specialists.

The Search and Call process, assisted by the regional church and Disciples Home Missions, is also a critical factor in congregational health and effective witness. Good pastoral matches with congregations and communities increase the likelihood of long, effective pastorates which can allow for major transformation.

Congregations nearing the end of their visible ministry may work through the process with Doug Wirt and general church partners.

On site and web based resources for transformation are the most helpful tools for Oregon Disciples. Due to the long distances and high costs of travel, general church events based resources are difficult to access.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Oregon Region.



Women gathering for a “Play and Pray Day” – three hour events for spiritual formation for women that see 175-200 women per year in six locations



Regional Minister, Doug Wirt, while on trip with other regional ministers sponsored by Global Ministries participating in an ordination service.



One of three blankets the youth at the annual snow rally in Hood River, Oregon made to donate to the Linus Project



This is a picture taken at Aloha Christian Church after a potluck held to introduce members of established congregations to members of new and emerging congregations held last April