

Title: **Report of Christian Church in Arizona**

Origin: Dennis L. Williams, Regional Minister and President

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

Regional Staff: Dennis L. Williams – M; Kim Behm – F; Job Cobos – Hispanic M; Carol Friesen – F; Lea Nessmith – F; Heather Patriacca – F; Lyn Saint-Erne - F

Number of Congregations: 23 + 8 in formation and affiliation

Total Members: 4018

States included in Region: Arizona

Our Mission

To create an environment and relationships in which leaders and congregations are called and equipped for congregational ministries that are “transforming, growing and faithful.” We have understood this as an echo of the Mission and Vision of the whole church. As the Region seeks to do this mission, we have this year affirmed some guiding principles and values around this mission.

Guiding Principles and Values

One Mission, One Vision, Many Ministries. We are working intentionally to be One Region with a common mission and vision throughout its many ministries and not a Region made up of a number of semi-autonomous ministries proceeding with differing goals and visions. Our Mission Focus Team is responsible for calling all ministries to this principle.

Focus

A Movement for Wholeness in a Fragmented World. The Region’s last assembly worked with this theme and has seen its work in relationship to this priority for the whole church. These three elements are illustrated in some of the ministries and events described in this report.

A. Regional Priorities for 2009

Priorities for our regional mission and ministries for 2009 were set at a January visioning and planning retreat.

1) Develop a 5-year strategy for creating a true multi-cultural/antiracism region.

Leaders called for our Region’s Pro Reconciling/Anti Racism Team to lead a region-wide effort of education and work with each ministry team in developing events that represent all the cultures of our Region.

For years, Regional Assemblies have strived to be multi-cultural. We have engaged in topics that relate to a society of many cultures and desire to be inclusive. We have provided translation for Spanish speaking participants. This has been true with our Women’s events as well. We have programmed for both Anglo and Hispanic cultures, providing worship elements in both languages, and providing translation.

This priority called for a further development of those efforts. We look toward a day when all

regional events are equally available and desirable to cultures served by the Arizona Disciple Congregations. Our strategy calls for several phases of training to include regional leaders, clergy, ministry team members and participants of regional events and congregations. First steps were taken at a Regional Event in August that involved more than 130 Arizona Disciples from 20 congregations in a bilingual event to consider “what were the issues and next steps in moving toward the Region and our congregations becoming an anti-racist, pro-reconciling church. In January, an Anti-Racism *one day training event* was held for Regional leaders and staff. Next steps call for liaisons in all of our ministry teams.

2) Becoming A Global Mission Region

The Arizona Region has taken action to become a Global Mission Region. The Arizona Region has just completed a six year partnership with Mexico that culminated with the dedication of a new Disciple Church in Nogales, Sonora Mexico. It is now moving through the steps to be a formal Global Mission Region. This includes several initiatives:

In January the Region held two “Got Outreach” Events to make congregations aware of the ways they can be connected more intentionally with the Global Ministry of Disciples and to become Global Mission Congregations. Second, the Region is establishing a new Global Mission Team. That team will work in all of the areas called for in becoming a Global Mission Region, including identifying and working with our next Global Mission Partner.

B. Clergy Retreat- Alice Mann, Alban Institute

“Soul of Pastor, Soul of Place” - Engaged pastors in thinking about their calling in relationship to the power of the place (context, soul, needs, gifts) in which they and their congregations do ministry. While ministry in their communities was already a priority for many of our pastors and congregations, this retreat gave increased initiative, grounding and practical ideas for that priority.

C. Disciples in the Desert: From Our Doorsteps: Ministry and Leadership that Makes a Difference

A region wide gathering that gave pastors and lay leaders new insights and skills for reaching out from their doorsteps, into their communities for ministry and invitation. Congregational teams developed strategies for their outreach and ministry to community.

D. Congregations Reaching Out Though Vitality Efforts and Grants

The Arizona Region, through its Congregational Vitality Ministry, provides events, training and Congregational Vitality Grants (\$9,400 plus) for the advancement of Congregational Vitality and Growth. We believe that each of these have provided initiative for an outpouring of congregational program and ministry from congregations to and with their neighborhoods, community and world. These congregations identified and sponsored neighborhood events ranging from First Responder events, to Marriage Equality seminars, young adult gatherings for the city, Citywide T.V. and radio spots for Disciple churches in Tucson and assistance with a congregation in transitioning to a new pastor.

While the Arizona Region continues to find challenges with financing regional program, ministry and staff, we are grateful for the generous, committed giving of leadership, money and support from Arizona Disciples.