

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OREGON
GENERAL BOARD REPORT – 2009 program year**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon includes 38 congregations across the state. Of these, 7 are new and affiliating congregations, 8 have recently participated in the New Beginnings or other visioning processes, and 6 finished 2009 among the top 250 Disciples congregations in giving to Disciples Mission Fund. Disciples in Oregon witness to the love of God in the Willamette Valley, eastern and southern Oregon and in the Portland metropolitan area. Doug and Cathy Myers Wirt are Co-Regional Ministers for the Christian Church in Oregon. 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 two years, God has blessed us with visits from all three of our global and general church partners.

During 2009, Oregon Disciples celebrated partnerships in the Gospel in new ways with regional, general, international and ecumenical partners. Within the Pacific Northwest, one new congregation based in Portland, Oregon has started a Sunday worship service at a church across the river in a Disciples church in Vancouver, Washington, of the Northwest Region. Church Extension provided leadership for New Beginnings sessions that included congregations from both the Oregon and Northwest regions. A student from First Christian Church in Albany received a pre-ministerial scholarship to begin studies at Eureka College. At the end of 2009, Oregon Disciples made plans with South Idaho Disciples to use a ministry education program newly developed in the Great River Region. This program for church planters and licensed ministers has now started classes in 2010. The Women's Circle hosted an Interregional women's ministries gathering with Disciples women from all 8 regions west of the Rockies. A highlight of the year came on May 2, 2009 at our Global Mission Region celebration. Jim and Jayanthi Wilson shared about their work with Global Ministries in Botswana and Bob Shebeck presented a certificate recognizing Oregon as a Global Mission Region. Many congregations learned about current Disciples ministries in Congo and some made special gifts to the hospital construction project at Bolenge. We continued our partnership with the FEDICE ministry in Ecuador, approaching the 50% mark of our \$39,000 goal for economic development projects. On May 4, we helped to sponsor the Portland visit of Archbishop Desmond Tutu through Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Hood River Valley Church worked with other neighboring Campbell-Stone churches for a special celebration of Restoration church ministries in October. A number of Oregon Disciples attended a boundary training event planned by the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Throughout the year, our regular programs continued in full force. About 200 women attended the Spring "Pray and Play" days in six locations around the state. In the fall, 100 women came to the Spiritual Life Retreat with guest speaker Norene Goplen of Lutheran Family Services. In the summer, 135 youth attended three different weeks of summer camp at Camp White Branch in the Cascade Mountains near McKenzie Bridge. The Commission on Ministry continued to meet with an increasing number of ordination candidates while beginning work in response to General Assembly Resolution 0922. Oregon Disciples attended the a Disciples Stewardship conference in Kansas City, the Black Ministers' Retreat (DHM), the Seminarians' retreat (HELM), the Super Peer Group revival with New Church Ministry (Church Extension), and the General Assembly in Indianapolis. We are grateful for each of these experiences and strengthening of ties with colleagues.

Oregon Disciples gave almost as much to Disciples Mission Fund in 2009 as in 2008, despite a statewide unemployment rate that reached 12 %. Giving from Oregon Disciples women's groups comprised over 11% of all DMF giving in the region. Some of our other income sources however, such as the Christmas offering and the Annual Fund, did not reach the projected goals for the year. A significant financial shortfall resulted, an issue currently receiving attention for the regional Finance Commission and regional board. At the same time, the year showed many examples of God's abundant grace and presence among Oregon Disciples. The growing number of friendships and partnerships between new and established Oregon Disciples churches gives us joy and enthusiasm. An intergenerational project of the Women's Circle, the Women's Action Web, showed the wholeness possible when Disciples look beyond our generational definitions. Our events are a visible sign of our unity as one church body in Oregon.

A quick peek at the year in pictures with highlights of some of our events together.....



Women gathered for “Play and Pray Days” – three hour events for spiritual formation for women that had just over 200 women participate in six locations. These pictures are from Northwood Christian Church, March 2009.



Bob Shebeck, Global Ministries Interpretation staff, presents Regional Moderator, Kris McLaughlin, a certificate signifying Oregon as a Global Ministries Region. Presentation was made at a two day celebration in May 2009 of global mission attended by almost 100 Oregon Disciples, celebrating the history of mission partnerships of the Christian Church in Oregon. Special guests included Jim and Jayanthi Wilson, serving in Botswana.



Eight congregations in the Portland area came together for a training event for elders in June 2009.



Just over 100 people attended the first annual Regional Picnic introducing long time Oregon Disciples to new Disciples congregational members. Great food, fun and games, skits in the park were followed by communion service under the trees. The picnic spot is already reserved for summer 2010!





Thirteen women traveled for 5 days visiting Oregon Disciples Congregations responding to hungry neighbors. Funded by the Women's Ministries and the Women's Endowment Fund, this group of women visited congregations housing soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, senior feed programs, community gardens, and congregations raising funds for hunger ministries. Since the trip, the group has sponsored 3 follow up programs – the founding of a new community garden, buying dishes for a homeless shelter, and serving meals during the holidays to homeless teenagers in the state capitol.



We served 135 youth from 20 congregations in our church camp program!

Our staff consisted of 37 different people from 15 different congregations, and included students from three Disciples of Christ related colleges (Northwest Christian University, Chapman University, Eureka College), a peace intern from Disciples Peace Fellowship, 2 counselors in training, 5 local pastors, 2 regional staff persons, and 7 youth or children's staff from congregations as well as many members of our congregations.



Fall women's retreat saw approximately 100 women under the theme "One Person CAN Make a Difference" and included poetry writing, tap dancing Mary and Martha, labyrinth creation and a moving communion service.



In October we celebrated the 10th anniversary of The View Christian Church and celebrated new congregations in Oregon by presenting them with prayer shawls.

Goals for 2010

- 1) Mentoring of Leaders: ministry education, camp staff, Regional Youth Council, Women's Circle, general church opportunities for new congregations and web based training resources.
- 2) Stronger connections between congregations: form technology advisory task group, new and established churches, collegial relations between ministers, and communications among pastors of lead giving DMF churches.
- 3) Creating a sense of common mission: Global Mission Congregations, Mission Interpreters group, Interpretation of DMF and special offerings, Ecuador project, profiles of local new congregations.
- 4) Congregational services: New Beginnings, Search and Call, elders' training and problem solving.