

Report of the Virginia Christian Missionary Society, dba/ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia



Regional Staff:

Alisha Bennett	Craig Springs Camp and Conference Center Manager – full time
Josh Bell	Associate Regional Minister for Youth and Outdoor Ministry – part time
Ken Burger	Executive Director, the Summit – adjunct staff
Melinda Floyd	Financial Assistant – part time
Jerry Fuqua	Capital Campaign Director and Minister for Licensed Clergy – part time
Sue Gordon	Office Assistant – ¾ time
Ray Gryder	Director of Disciple Men’s Ministry – part time
Sékinah Hamlin	SERF Minister for Anti-racism and Reconciliation – shared staff
Amy Moore	Editor of the <i>Virginia Christian</i> – part time
Lee Parker	Regional Minister – full time
Rita Rodenbaugh	Administrative Assistant - full time
Donna Webster	Director of Disciple Women’s Ministries – part time

NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS: 152

TOTAL MEMBERS: 23,936

1. THE WORK OF THE REGION IN FULFILLING PARAGRAPH 20 OF THE DESIGN

Extending the Ministry

The Capital Campaign, "Together in Ministry, Forward in Faith" is the Capital Campaign for the Region begun during 2008. The goal for the Campaign is \$1,277,500, \$1,100,000 for ministries in Virginia and \$177,500 for ministries beyond the Region. We are now moving forward with the campaign and are in the congregational phase.

Virginia Spring Women's events continue to be reborn as SPA (Self-Care Prayer and Action) Days. In 2010, four events will be held around the state and provide opportunities for encountering resources, direct communication, fellowship, mission, and leadership development.

Women’s Mission in the Region continues to take on three Spring Projects each year (one related to the study country, one local Virginia project, and one “hands on” project). Last year they contributed over \$8000 to special projects, and over \$15000 to Blessing Box, as well as Scholarship, Library, and Woman to Woman Scholarship funds. Donna Webster has been called as the Director of Women’s Ministry. She is quickly coming up to speed and providing quality leadership.

Disciples Men had their biggest retreat ever, bringing in nationally recognized speaker and author Phillip Gulley as the retreat leader. The men raised extra funds to do this. They are doing it again for 2010. Derek Maul will be the retreat speaker which will be held at the Smith Mountain Lake 4H facility.

GAP Conference

Last summer introduced “GAP” conference for college students. College age adults often feel unconnected to the church. The week was focused on environmental issues and global connections. A highlight of the week was having Laura Hall to lead music. She will be returning in 2010.

Congregational Growth and Nurture

The Regional Renewal and Nurture Committee has new leadership this year and is being reshaped to better serve the needs of the Region. The Committee has been collecting “success stories” from congregations and putting those stories in forms that can be shared with other congregations. Many Virginia congregations are pastoral size or smaller and

much of the published resources are for congregations larger than the Virginia norm. This sharing of what works promises to be a great resource.

Licensed Ministry continues to be a more vital component of ministry in Virginia. The Commission on Licensed Ministry has developed a training program and a greater effort is being made to link clergy who are seeking additional education with opportunities. The first COLM education conference took place in 2009 and focused upon Disciple History with the Reverend Dr. Richard Harrison as the presenter. A verity of workshops rounded out the event. There were one day follow-up events. In June of 2010 another training will take place with the Reverend Dr. Lisa Davison presenting. The focus will be on Theology and Bible. **Regional Assembly** will be held again held at Lynchburg College June, 2010. Eddie Hammett and Randy Pierce will be keynoting and serve as workshop leaders for the Assembly. "What's Church Got to do With It?" is the question we want to pursue, challenging all of us to look at how the church relates to the diverse culture in which we find ourselves. Maintaining the region's traditional long term relationship with Lynchburg College is a part of what the Christian Church in Virginia deems important. The College is a generous and gracious host for the regions biennial assembly. Some of the workshops for participants are: "Ministry Planning that Makes Sense" led by Rick Morse, "Reconciliation" led be Sékinah Hamlin, "Yes You are Really Welcome: Becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation" led by members of FCC in Lynchburg, "Solving and Preventing Conflict in the Church" Led by Carolyn Rodenburg, "Equipping the Saints" led by the Commission on Licensed Ministry CCinVA, "Being a Global Mission Church" led by Bob Shebeck, What Disciples Home Missions Can Do For the Local Congregation led by Ron Deggs, and a number of others.

A Children's Ministry Task Force has been working to raise awareness about new directions in ministry with children. The Task Force has developed a Regional Child Protection policy which is serving as a model for congregations writing their own policies. Final approval of this document is anticipated at the 2010 Regional Assembly.

The Long Range Planning Committee had proposed three areas of focus and priority for the coming year:

Improve Communications

- An emphasis on improved technology in the Regional Office will improve communications between the Regional Office, congregations and individuals. All of the support staff will receive increased training. Two volunteer technology coordinators have accessed and made recommendations for data base upgrades as well as hardware upgrades. We will also consider employing a consultant if necessary. The webpage has been in need of review and upgrade. This process has begun and will continue to improve as a ministry tool.
- Our newsletter, "The Virginia Christian", has improved in quality and we are weighing the need for communication against increased costs of adding two issues a year.

CCINVA.ORG

Facilitate Virginia becoming a Missional Regional Church

- This priority evolved out of a discussion centering on the importance and the life enhancing and energizing dynamics of the church being focused on mission. At the present time we are looking at the possibility of establishing a network of mission trips that are being undertaken by various groups. In February a group went to South Africa to spend time with Jon and Dawn Barnes and to be involved in the work the Barnes are doing through DOM. The



Barnes were ordained at Seventh Street Christian Church in Richmond and are seen as Virginia's missionaries.

Congregational Transformation

- It was felt that the Extreme Makeover: Church Edition” event in 2007 was very helpful to those in attendance, but that there was no method for continuing follow-up or support. We talked about the possibility of another such event and the Renewal and Nurture Committee is developing and has begun implementation of plans to enable congregational transformation.

2. VIRGINIA MINISTRY AROUND THE FOUR MISSION PRIORITIES

New Church

The Region offers limited financial support to two new congregations, Shaw Christian Church, Eden, NC, and Olive Branch Christian Church, Lynchburg, VA. Both of these congregations remain small, but committed to ministry to their communities.

Transformation

The work of the Renewal and Nurture Committee is focused on transformation and renewal. The leadership this committee has been in many ways “outside the box” as it has explored ways to facilitate communication and mutual support between congregations.

Leadership Development

Developing **Youth Leadership** is vital to the life of the region. The Youth Ministry Committee is elected and facilitated by the youth themselves, with adults acting as resource people. Youth Congress, an event held each winter, continues to give youth a voice for change in the region. Youth continue to model commitment to Reconciliation for the Region and have taken it upon themselves to make sure Piedmont District congregations are present at regional camping events and that youth of European descent are present at the Piedmont camp. Youth also organize and lead Nature Camp each summer at Craig Springs which provides a rural camping experience for at-risk children.



Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism

In partnership with the SERF regions, The **Rev. Sékinah Hamlin** was called as the first joint Minister for Anti-Racism and Reconciliation. The combined regions are able to fund this position through the Reconciliation Offering. Rev. Hamlin was led the the inter-regional SERF staff retreat last fall, and we continue to work together in developing programs and events that will further Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism work specifically tailored to the South East.

3. TRANSFORMATION QUESTIONS

- A. The Virginia Region works formally with congregations in partnership with Church Extension’s New Beginnings Program, Disciples Congregational Services, Claiming God’s Vision and Faithful Planning. We hope to plan a follow up event to 2007’s Extreme Makeover: Church Edition. At least two congregations in the Region have worked with the Lazarus Project. Transformation is a significant topic at Women’s events, encouraging new formats, new structures, and new ways of nurturing women’s groups. Each Regional event has some transformation component.
- B. Disciples Congregational Services and New Beginnings
- C. Pastors trained in transformation work, congregations interested in change

PARTICULAR HIGHLIGHTS AND/OR CHALLENGES IN THE REGION

Staffing continues to be a significant issue. The Virginia Region concluded its second year using multiple contract staff positions to provide ongoing support for the ministries that were previously directed by two full time associate ministers. It has worked well, but has limitations. The Region reduced support staff as well, eliminating a full time Office Manager

position now staffed with a part-time financial assistant. An additional contract position has been created for women's ministry after associate Stephanie McLemore left the region to accept the position of Chaplin and Director of Church Relations at Lynchburg College.

REGIONAL OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY

The 2009 figures are unaudited. The audit will be complete and sent in before the Board Meeting.

Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Total Income	626,295	629,237	587,153	535,953	501,138
Total Expense	621,324	667,190	635,433	631,953	595,138
Surplus (Deficit)	4,971	(38,952)	(48,330)	(96,424)	(94,661)

Submitted by George Lee Parker, Regional Minister and CEO