

CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

The Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) equips, enables, and edifies the ministry of 311,000 square miles of Disciples, consisting of 47 congregations in Wyoming, Utah, Southeast Idaho, Northwest New Mexico, and Colorado.

Our congregations serve communities that are composed of ethnically diverse and mono-ethnic memberships. Our congregations serve in urban, suburban, and rural locations. Our congregations meet in large downtown edifices, small chapels, living rooms, and hotel rooms. Our congregations are conservative, moderate, progressive, and open & affirming.

MISSION AND VISION OF THE CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

The Central Rocky Mountain Region is a web of relationships committed to ministries of justice and compassion as disciples of Jesus Christ. As individuals and congregations, with our Regional Ministry Team and Board, and in connection with the General and Ecumenical Church, we create, sustain and renew these relationships and ministries through a shared commitment to our four Core Values and our three Core Ministries.

Core Values - Diversity, Innovation, Communication, Empowerment.

Core Ministries - Congregational Life, Ministerial Life and Regional Life

CRMR REGIONAL PROFILE

We know that across the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) the challenges of a new context for ministry are causing all manifestations of the denomination to evaluate how to be church together. The long established definitions of regional life that include region-wide programming and a centrally located Regional staff providing various congregational services, may no longer be viable.

The CRMR Search Team has conducted a self-study of the region to determine the regional priorities for the next three to five years, the needs and challenges of the region, along with our strengths and opportunities. Through prayerful collaboration and the guidance of the Holy Spirit we have compiled the results of this effort. They are presented here in the context of the Region's Core Values.

Diversity:

- Priorities for our region:
Our region's priorities around diversity are learning more about the various cultures and ideas and learning to relate to each other.
- Hopes for our region are:
 - We hope our region will be intentional about our diversity in its many forms – context (rural/urban, size, etc.), theology and praxis, race, age, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation.
 - We hope to learn to recognize and use our differences to strengthen and build our region.
- A strength of our region our growing acceptance of diversity as a gift that will help us accomplish our hopes and priorities for the region.
- Realities for our region that may present obstacles
 - Challenges to building community such as geography, economy, weather, and theology
 - Challenges of generational gaps, differing needs, expectations, hopes, and worship practices
 - Challenges of the “you must be like me” attitude, unwillingness to accept and value differences
 - Challenges of those who focus on differences, not unity.

Innovation:

- Priorities for our region:
 - New ideas and new strategies for accomplishing the work and mission of the region
 - Innovative ideas for maintaining and or increasing the region's financial stability and health
 - Innovative ideas to assist congregations with developing strategies and resources for congregational growth, evangelism
 - Creating a technology network and structure (podcasts, webinars, etc.) to make virtual connections with each congregation possible
 - Review of current strategic vision and plan
- Hopes for our region are:
 - To help churches engage in the communities they serve, which in turn will help them to grow, thus ministering outward.
 - Improved use of technology and ways to connect all churches
 - Increased collaboration between and/or among congregations
 - Intentional diversity—racial/culture/ethnic/ multilingual
 - Increased focus on ministries of justice and compassion at the community level
 - To name, claim, and promote our Disciples of Christ identity in new ways across the region
- Strengths of our region are:
 - Our sense of the need for change
 - Our dynamic pastors
 - Our strong laity.
- Realities for our region that may present obstacles:
 - Lack of a shared vision of the purpose and role of region in relationship to congregational ministry
 - While we have a sense of the need for change, there is not consensus on the nature of change
 - A mixture of expectations for the evolving role of the Executive Regional Minister
 - The perception of scarcity of resources has led to functional disconnect between mission and faithful stewardship
 - The recent change to a virtual office format has been received with acceptance and clarity by some and with discomfort and uncertainty by others
 - Denominational structure and purpose are perceived by some as irrelevant to needs and focus of local congregations

Communication:

- A priority for our region is connecting people and congregations to the region.
 - A communication strategy that promotes cohesion within the region
 - Encouraging consistent partnership and collaboration in ministry between congregations
 - Encouraging congregations to share ministry ideas, experiences, and lessons learned
 - Encouraging congregations to understand themselves in relationship to the region
 - Encourage open communication with pastors
- Hopes for our region are:
 - To name, claim, and promote our Disciples of Christ identity
 - To implement a communication system using various technological tools such as podcasts, webinars, etc.
 - To encourage participation in mission trips facilitated by the Regional or General church

- Strengths of our region are:
 - The potential for developing a communication network using the existing pastoral leadership within the region.
 - Tools that support regional communication such as “Constant Contact”, “Pews News”, and our regional website.
- Realities for our region that may be obstacles:
 - Communication infrastructure is not uniformly in place across the region.
 - Inward focus on individual congregational needs:
 - May lead to a lack of collaboration and or a failure to share ministry accomplishments as learning tools
 - May lead to trust issues

Empowerment:

- Priorities for our region:
 - Develop skills, talents, and resources to empower congregations for:
 - Interchurch collaboration
 - Leadership development
 - Church growth in mission & ministry
 - Expanding participation of underserved groups
 - Identify tools and strategies to empower congregations
 - Bring unity to the region both geographically and spiritually.
 - Support the financial health and stability of congregations and the region.
 - Target ministry programming for youth, seniors, families and other groups.
 - Engage in Ecumenical ministry with local communities.
 - Provide resources and support to congregations in crisis.
- Hopes for our region:
 - Provide assistance with programming and training that will lead to increased young adult leadership.
 - Provide the necessary tools that will equip pastors and laity to be strong leaders.
- Strengths of our region:
 - Strong laity who bring many gifts
 - Our current membership senses of the need for change and is dedicated to accomplishing the hopes and priorities of the region
- Realities for our region that may be obstacles:
 - The widespread geography of region
 - Barriers to revival and recovery for stagnant/declining congregations
 - Community issues and concerns that local congregations face like drugs, gangs, etc.
 - Differing perceptions or understandings of
 - Covenant relationship between congregations, region, and the General Church.
 - Role of region in congregational life (needs, expectations, and hopes)