

GB-22-1205

Name of ministry: Christian Church in Indiana

**Ministry
Executive/Regional
Minister name:** Richard L. Spleth

**Ministry
Executive/Regional
Minister email:** rick@indianadisciples.org

(The answers to this and the following questions were crafted by breakout groups of the Regional Board at our December 4, 2021 Board meeting. A scribe was appointed to record the comments of Board members for submission for this report)

**In what ways is your
region/ministry thriving?**

- Pastoring the pastors. Although it was good pre-pandemic, the pandemic brought up a more keen and empathetic sense from leadership towards the pastoral body of the region.
- Supporting pastors in their financial freedom through FLOURISH! Program
- Seems like we're thriving comprehensively: from financially to programmatic, from clergy to lay leaders, from nurturing to commissioning and ordaining.
- Understanding and living up to the region being the region (as in the people, not the office staff)
- Raising up young Disciples through faith formation (at camp and Sunday School programs)
- Building on the foundation of those who came before us and entrusted us with resources for the future, which is now. And how now we are setting a stronger cornerstone for the future generations to continue building on.
- Our global partnership in the last decade has helped us

to learn more about ourselves and the Church

---Bere Gil Soto, Chair, Commission on Ministry

What are the biggest challenges facing your region/ministry this year?

1. The pandemic/COVID has had a lasting impact on how we do church.
2. How we attend church has shaped how we connect.
3. Finding new ways of connection across generations.
4. Lack of connection, the limitations on being outside of the church walls
5. Being isolated- the emotional impact of isolation during COVID.
6. The need for more clergy. We don't have enough people to staff our open pulpits. Do we have enough new people coming under care?
7. Our bi-vocational pastors. Their need to have secondary employment.
8. The desire for cross cultural connections

--Candace Boyd Simmons, Ministry Associate and Reconciliation Program Coordinator

Our group found the theme of online presence to be ubiquitous in our discussion.

What is something you hope to accomplish in the next year?

Every congregation has "two campuses," one being brick and mortar, and the other being virtual. Churches need to look at in-person ministries and imagine what the "online version" of that ministry would look like. What would an "online Elder" be? How would that person do the work virtually?

Stewardship of congregational resources: In this time of seeking virtual outreach to our communities, and finding a wider community through virtual means, what do we do with our buildings? Should our buildings be opened to become community resources beyond just being the meeting house for worship?

How can we do the work of faith formation using the online infrastructure in ways beyond our in-person models? Now that we are Zooming, holding online services, studying the Bible etc. in virtual space, how can we harness this to be more effective in forming people of faith, and our future leaders?

---Rick Abbott, Regional Board Secretary

What is something you would like the General Board to know about your region/ministry?

1. We most importantly want the General Board to know about FLOURISH! It would be great for them to be aware of a summary of the details and demographics of individuals, churches, etc. that have benefited from the program. Additionally, it would be great to highlight the perceived benefits to stewardship which we believe may be a result of the FLOURISH! program and ministries.

2. Secondly, but also very important, we would like to highlight the diversity of churches and voices involved in our region. We see this as a major point of celebration of who we are and something which those outside of our region may not be aware.

--Jared Trullinger, Regional Board Treasurer

How can we pray for your region/ministry?

Our team responses seemed to bridge our past, present, and future...

- Church's pain with closing(s); overall difficulties (attendance, finances, COVID-19, etc.)
- FY22 plans and opportunities; budget, operations, leadership, and incoming staff.
- Future generations and future leaders.
- Pastor/Pulpit exchanges between diverse & multicultural congregations/settings.
- Retired Clergy.
- Bi-Vocational Pastors.

--Steve Garrett, Regional Board member