

GB-22-1206

Name of ministry: The Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ)

Ministry

Executive/Regional

Minister name:

Rev. Kenneth Don Marston

Ministry

Executive/Regional

Minister email:

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

One of the ways our region is thriving is being able to provide high quality adaptive leadership training at an extremely affordable cost (\$25) thanks to partnership grants from the Kansas Leadership Center and the Kansas Bible Chair Endowment fund. This training helps people to understand the difference between technical challenges and adaptive challenges and develop the necessary leadership skills to make progress on the adaptive challenges of church life. This year we are able to extend some of the (KLC) grant to money to the Christian Church in Nebraska as well as the Christian Church in Greater Kansas City.

A second way our region is thriving is being able to continue to provide spiritual formation and faith formation. Due to continuing concerns with COVID 19 infection rates we instituted recommended mitigation protocols of wearing of masks and social distancing when meeting in person and continuing to utilizing Zoom Video conferencing when possible. In this way, we were able to continue to have a Monday evening region prayer gathering throughout the first half of the year, provide an on-line affinity group for those interested in developing the spiritual discipline of prayer journaling, provide five clergy cluster group meetings each month, provide

summer camp experiences that reached 219 people, retreats for Clergy, Disciples Women, and Disciples Men.

A third way we are thriving is by taking the next step in our on going re-visioning process by finishing work on the re-writing of our Constitution and Bylaws, as well as our Personnel Policies. This was done to bring written polies in line with the new practices and policies we have been living into over the past couple of years to become more lean and flexible in our organization. We recognize that this is not a one time thing but that we are committed to a time of constant change and adaptation.

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

The biggest challenge we have been facing in 2021 has been the number of staff transitions we have been experiencing.

The year begin with interviewing a number of candidates for a Regional Minister of New Church Ministries. After getting to the point to offer the position to a candidate, the negotiation on compensation became a sticking point. One point the candidate was invested in was the freedom to work three months a year remotely. This was something we had trouble seeing how the work for New Church Ministries could be done effectively without being present in the Region. So, the negotiations eventually fell through.

Next, Steve Martin, one of two of our co-Regional Ministers, decided it was time to retire and at our April Regional board meeting announced his intention to do so after being on staff for 24 years. We said farewell to Steve at our August Connect and Equip event and celebrated his ministry with a presentation of a commemorative plaque, a custom made quilt, and the planting of a new tree in his honor at our camp facilities. Rev. Martin was instrumental in overseeing our camping program and facilities for his entire tenure on staff, which included the selling of two camp sites, the purchase of a

more centrally located site the development of most of the buildings we now utilize.

Third, our Regional Bookkeeper of 20 years, decided to take a new job and announced her resignation mid-year. After exploring a number of different options, a decision was made to join 20 other regions in utilizing Treasury Services for our bookkeeping needs. This transition began happening in August and will be fully completed as of January 2022 with Treasury Services taking on the processing of payroll.

Fourth, Susan White, our Administrative Assistant in our main office and Corporate Secretary announced her retirement after 25 years of service. Utilizing an employment service we have been able to find and hire, Joanne Weddle, to assume these responsibilities. She began working for the Kansas Region December 1, 2021.

Finally, on December 16, we received a letter of resignation from Camp Manager that stated stated 2022 will be his last camping season due him getting married and plans to move to Oklahoma while his wife finishes her college education.

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

The three top priorities for the Kansas Region in 2022 are to call a new Co-Regional Minister to work along side our current Co-Regional Minister, Ken Marston; hire/call a new Camp Manager or caretaker, depending on the direction we go with this position; and call a Regional Minister of New Church ministries.

Once these three priorities are met, we will focus on staff development, New Church Ministries, ramping up our Anti-racism /pro-reconciliation work, continue with the our tri-regional conversations with the Christian Church in Greater Kansas City and the Christian Church in Nebraska which are exploring how we can partner with each other to better nurture our congregations, and

continue pushing leadership training through our Kansas Leadership Center grant.

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

The Christian Church is a healthy region that is debt free and all bills being paid. Within our congregations there is a diversity of theological and political perspectives that is often surprising, and does not reflect preconceptions outsiders often hold about the state of Kansas. As a whole, the churches that make up our region, provide a place for people to come together in the name of Christ to provide healing for those who are hurt, hope for those who are discouraged, and an opportunity to find and nurture their calling from God.

How can we pray for your region/ministry?

Please pray for us to have the peace and wisdom needed to address our staffing needs and the best ways nurture congregations and pastors that make up the Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ).