

## Regional Profile

### Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

#### Associate Regional Ministers for Louisiana and Mississippi

The Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, is blessed with great diversity in our ninety-two congregations located in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. According to the published information in the 2021 Yearbook, the Great River Region has a combined church membership of approximately 5,776. Total outreach giving is \$360,058, designated giving \$63,336.29, and operational funds \$2,802,153. Our churches are located in the delta area of the Mississippi River in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi and extend north to the Missouri border in Arkansas and south to the shared Gulf of Mexico shoreline of Louisiana and Mississippi. This vast geographical area is a blessing and a challenge for the Great River Region, secondary to the absolute miles represented in the three states as well as the diversity in culture and heritage. Our ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and deep-south traditions present additional challenges we have only begun to understand.

Our vision statement moves us forward as “We are the Great River Region, a movement that empowers Disciples congregations to transform the world through the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Our mission is to “reach, teach, and transform lives through Christ’s love.” Our Future Story (<https://grrdisciples.org/who-we-are/>) develops transformational clergy leaders who foster good collegial relationships, teach each other, and resource congregational program life. We are called to nurture, support, and engage congregations as unique entities and as gatherings of congregations related to one another in their mission. Furthermore, we seek to strengthen the vision, witness, and mission of congregations through networking, providing resources, and assisting congregational leaders and clergy.

Great River Region Disciples, like many mainline denominational churches, are experiencing drastic changes. These changes include a reduction of participating members, aging of the membership, decrease in offerings, increases in operational expenses, and a general decrease in denominational loyalty. We have some new church starts and congregations going through revitalization and transformation that are helping to energize the Region in new ways. Our congregations are looking for new ways to be faithful in today’s post-pandemic world while being true to our beliefs, fiscally responsible, and good stewards of all our resources.

We experience a rich ministry in this Region among, through and with our congregations. There is a strong network of covenantal relationships in the Region, however they need strengthening, especially in Mississippi and Louisiana, which will bridge connections to the wider denomination. It is through these covenantal relationships that we will find our way forward under the guidance of two additional part-time staff devoted to spiritual and administrative support and nurture for thirty-seven congregations in Mississippi and twenty congregations in Louisiana. We have a foundation upon which to build, and we are positioned to move forward to strengthen our capacity to minister and provide sustainability to congregations throughout the Great River Region.