GREAT RIVER REGION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)
Business & Mission of the GRR
Saturday, November 14, 2026 ~ 9:30 a.m.

Business Session Call to Order…….……...Bill Lacy, Moderator
FCC, Conway, AR

RA 2026-1 2024 Regional Assembly Minutes
RA 2026-2 2025 Annual Gathering Minutes
RA 2026-3 2026 August Regional Board Minutes
RA 2026-4 September 2026 Financial Report and 2027 Proposed Budget……..….....John Goebel
Vice President, Treasury Services

State of the Region Report…….…Rev. Alison Robuck
Executive Regional Minister

RA 2026-5 Program Ministry Reports……..…..……..……...……..Bill Lacy, Moderator

1. Regional Committee on Ministry	Rev. Shawn Wallace, FCC, Rogers, AR
2. Regional Elders	Rev. Laura DeMann, FCC, Bossier City, LA
3. Pinnacle Outreach Ministry	Rev. Miles Cook, Park Hill CC, N. Little Rock, AR
4. Camp and Conference	Betty Arambel, FCC, Fayetteville, AR
5. Disciples Women	Stacy Eastwood, Grace Point Christian Fellowship, Lake Charles, LA
6. Disciples Men	Minister Harvey Anderson, Indianola CC, Indianola, MS
7. Disaster Response Coordinator	Rev. Ronny Nowell, GRR Staff
8. MCMC	Pamela Dubose, New Generation Christian Fellowship, Pascagoula, MS
9. Arkansas State Fellowship	Marion Carter, Cross Street CC, Little Rock, AR
10. Associate Regional Minister MS	Rev. Dr. Nearline Anderson, GRR Staff
11. Just Love – Northshore	Rev. Zac Ritchie, Just Love-Northshore, Covington, LA
12. Just Love – Greater New Orleans	Rev. Sam Hubbard, Just Love-(GNO), New Orleans, LA
13. General Board	Rev. Cheryl Sybrant, FCC, Fayetteville, AR
14. Executive Committee Report	Rev. Zena Featherston Marshall, FCC, Fort Smith, AR

RA 2026-6 Nominating Committee Report…….……..Bill Lacy, Moderator

Moderator	Rev. Dr. Ryan Pfeiffer, First Christian Church, Fayetteville, AR
Moderator Elect	Rev. Zena Featherston Marshall, First Christian Church, Fort Smith, AR
Treasurer	Alfreda Brown, Cross Street Christian Church, Little Rock, AR
Secretary	Carol Madere, First Christian Church, Baton Rouge, LA
RCOM Chair	Rev. Corey Harrison, First Christian Church, Hot Springs, AR
General Board Rep	Rev. Cheryl Sybrant, First Christian Church, Fayetteville, AR
Member at Large	Rev. Bonnie Simerly, First Christian Church, Hammond, LA
Member at Large	
Member at Large	Linda Hampton, First Christian Church, Sherwood, AR
Member at Large	Rev. Mike Snell, Park Hill Christian Church, N. Little Rock, AR

Member at Large	
Member at Large	Beverly Utnage, First Christian Church, Berryville, AR
Member at Large	
Member at large	
Youth Representative	Rev. Mark Dingler, FCC Bentonville & WaterWay, Bentonville, AR
Young Adult Rep	

Other Constituency Group Presidents (Non-Voting Slate):

MCMC President	Pamela DuBose, New Generation Christian Fellowship, Pascagoula, MS
Disciples Women President	Deborah Spring, Mt. Sinai Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR
AR State Fellowship	Marion Carter, Cross Street Christian Church, Little Rock, AR
Disciples Men President	Minister Harvey Anderson, Indianola Christian Church, Indianola, MS
Regional Elders	Rev. Laura DeMann, First Christian Church, Bossier City, LA

Old & New Business……..……Bill Lacy, Moderator

Special Presentation

RA 2026-7 Recognition of Outgoing Board Members & Installation Covenant…….....Rev. Alison Robuck

RA 2026-8 GRR Resolution……...……..……..Recognition of Host Congregation

Adjourn

Regional Assembly 2024 Minutes
First Christian Church, Baton Rouge, LA
Saturday, November 2, 2024 ~ 10:00 a.m.
Amended March 14, 2025, by the Regional Board

Bill Lacy, Moderator, called the business session to order. Bill thanked the Regional Assembly Planning and Technology Team for a wonderful job planning the Assembly.

RA 2024-1 2022 Regional Assembly Minutes were presented in the program book. Min. Dan White made a motion to adopt the minutes; it was seconded by Thomas Arrington. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

RA 2024-2 2023 Annual Gathering Minutes were presented in the program book. Betty Watson made a motion to adopt the minutes; it was seconded by Rev. Rena Baker. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

RA 2024-3 2024 August Regional Board Minutes were presented in the program book. Rev. Vanessa Bostick made a motion to adopt the minutes; it was seconded by Rev. Donna Rountree. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

RA 2024-4 September 2024 Financial Report and 2025 Proposed Budget
John Goebel gave the financial report for September 2024. The Region currently owes $37,000 to Treasury Services, but with the CCF quarterly distribution received on October 4, the actual deficit is only $6,000. This will be monitored, and to make it positive, funds may be drawn from the region's Church Extension Investments. The OGMP intentionally invested $1 million in cash in Church Extension to take advantage of favorable interest rates at the time while supporting that ministry (CE). John noted that they are safe investments.

The Region's net worth is $3.5 million, with $2.3 million for restricted/specific purposes (funds) and $1.1 million for operating reserves. A more detailed breakdown of the different purposes is available on page 21 of the program book. Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) is $6,000 behind budget, with three months remaining to make up the difference. The Annual Fund is also behind by $6,000. Despite those two being behind budget, the interest income from Church Extension Investments is up by $12,000, already receiving more than we budgeted for the year, with another distribution is expected in December. The total income is above budget by $4,000. Overall expenses are just $2,768 over what was expected. John stated that we expected a deficit of $9,739 and were only at a $8,500 deficit, so we're in the good by $1,236. John projected that we would be able to meet the surplus that we budgeted of $1,591. Contributions for 2024 will be accepted until January 8, 2025, allowing time for congregational and individual contributions.

John stated we have a break-even budget proposed for 2025 and believe these are good numbers. We are expecting a little bit of a decrease in Disciples Mission Fund (DMF), but we still have the investments at Church Extension. Interest rates may go down a little bit, but John feels like they're going to maintain this 42,000(interest income). In the facility section, expenses increased due to a whole year's worth of rent for the new office space. Office, treasury services(accounting fees), and board and committee expenses will remain the same, with computer expenses having a slight increase.

Included in the salaries are the two Associate Regional Minister positions. The Maumelle Fund has funded them for the last several years, and that fund will be down by $36,000 by the end of 2024. 2025 will be the last year we are able to fund the Associate Regional Ministers positions from the Maumelle funds. We have to keep on tracking the Regional and Disciples Walk Endowment.

Rev. Casey Shawn Allen made a motion to accept the September 2024 Financial Report and 2025 Proposed Budget; it was seconded by Cinder Bailey-Dorsey. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

State of the Region
Rev. Alison Robuck, Interim Regional Minister, highlighted key points from her State of the Region report. Staff changes have occurred since we last gathered. Alison recognized Ronny Nowell as the new Disaster Relief Coordinator. In his first few months, Ronny wrote a grant and received $15,000 from the Oreon E. Scott Foundation for disaster response efforts. Teonicka Russell also returned to the Great River Region; we are grateful to have her back.

Alison stated that one of her personal goals was to find a new home for the Great River Region. The Region has been looking for several years, and back in 2018, Pulaski Heights CC was going to be a temporary solution when the Region left its Geyer Spring location (the building being sold). It is 2024, and we're still in that temporary location; it is not conducive for Regional Ministry work. We have entered into a six-month lease agreement with First Christian Church of Sherwood, Arkansans, and will move in a few short weeks.

The Narrative Project continues as we (the region) are part of it. We will learn more about it in the upcoming months as they continue to talk to Regions across the United States.

The ministry Mission campaign set a goal of $100,000 but raised only $8,000. The campaign started within a week of Dr. Burton announcing her resignation. Although it did not do well, it will help fund the Regional Minister search committee costs.

Alison thanked Min. Dan White, minister at FCC Berryville, for his presentation regarding the Pearidge cemetery. The presentation included Dan presenting a check from his congregation to Alfreda Brown and Deborah Spring, Pearidge Cemetery board members. The Region recently gave the remaining funds it held to the Pearidge Board to use as needed to continue the upkeep and preservation of the cemetery.

Alison stated that her report includes the regional highlights since the 2023 Annual Gathering, including preaching engagements and general ministry events. Alison will be part of the Pension Fund Cornerstones Project, which provides funds to take care of pastors' mental, spiritual, physical, and financial health. She encouraged pastors to attend future gatherings.

Alison noted that she made a mistake under the 'Changes in Congregations' section. On June 30th, 2024, First Christian Church Greater New Orleans transitioned their ministry from a traditional building into the Just Love Greater New Orleans community, not Northshore. Alison shared pastoral updates. See page 29 in the program book.

Moderator Bill Lacy opened the floor for the acceptance of Rev. Alison Robuck's State of the Region Report. Rev. Vanessa Bostick made the motion, and Thomas Arrington seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

RA 2024-5 GRR Resolution "Concerning Food Waste, Food Insecurity, and Environmental Justice" was presented by Rev. Vanessa Bostick.

Rev. Vanessa Bostick made a motion to accept the resolution; it was seconded by Rev. Casey Shawn Allen. The floor was open for discussion. Charles Curtis stated that he spent his career working for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, part of the USDA. Based on his experience, he asserted that row crops are much more destructive to the air and water than beef cattle production. Because of this, he expressed that he could not accept the resolution. The motion to adopt the resolution passed.

RA 2024-6 GRR Resolution "Compelled to Witness: Answering the Cry of our Palestinian Siblings" was presented by Rev. Steve Thompson. Steve Thompson responded to someone in the audience asking if the conflict was a religious war. Steve stated that it was a "red herring." He stated that among Middle Eastern countries where there is Islam, Palestinians are among the most secular. Thompson explained that when Hamas first emerged as a political entity, it was initially supported by Israel as a way to counteract the Palestinian Authority, which wanted to make peace.

Rev. Steve Thompson made a motion to accept the resolution; it was seconded by Dan White. The floor was open for discussion. A member of Utica CC in Utica, MS, expressed that she shares a love for the Christian Church and why it was founded, emphasizing sorrow over the large number of people who have left the denomination due to these political issues. She provided historical context on the conflict, recognizing the suffering on both sides and expressing concern over the division it has caused within the church. She believes the church was built for unity and not to get into these kinds of discussions. Rev. Jeff Murphy, Pastor at FCC Vicksburg, sought clarification on the resolution being discussed, emphasizing that many Israeli citizens oppose the current policies to the extent that it poses a threat to Netanyahu's government. His

concern was that some might interpret the resolution as anti-Israel, but he understood it to be that Israelis want a different policy towards Gaza; therefore, it's more dealing with a particular policy of this particular government of Israel, which is unsteady. Steve Thompson stated that things are changing in Israel, faster than outside perspectives might recognize. He referenced a Palestinian graduate of Ohio State University and Tel Aviv University who noted that within Israel, discussions focus on making peace and resolving the conflict internally, but you won't hear this level of dialogue outside of Israel in the press. He pointed out that the Netanyahu government is attempting to defang Israel's Supreme Court. Jim Robinson, a member at FCC Conway, pointed out that being against government or political policies of any state is not the same as being racist. It is about political policies that create a sense of injustice, and it's not just about Hamas—it's been going on since 1948, and even further back, referencing the Old Testament story of Abraham sending his son and concubine into the desert. He acknowledged that some official policies in the U.S. are also racist and dehumanizing, suggesting that this resolution is part of a universal plea for religious bodies to focus on humanizing people and recognizing their humanity. The motion to adopt the resolution passed.

RA 2024-7 GRR Resolution "Calling the Church to Oppose Christian Nationalism" was presented by Min. Kristen Beach. Min. Kristen Beach made a motion to accept the resolution; it was seconded by Bonnie Simerly.

The floor was open for discussion. Thomas Arrington expressed concerns about the conflation of nationalism with personal choices, such as LGBTQ identity, in the resolution. He stated he had no problem with saying we are not nationalist, but he took issue with the idea of bending the church to personal choices. When personal choices become national decisions, he felt the church couldn't stand with those decisions because the church's loyalty should be to God and Christ, not to personal decisions. A member of FCC Hammond responded by sharing that, as a gay person in a committed relationship for 40 years, one of the biggest challenges of adulthood is finding a place where she can be her true spiritual self. She explained that being gay isn't a choice for her—it's how she was born. She raised concerns about the nationalist movement, saying it targets many people, including immigrants, and lumps them into large, labeled groups. She sees this as counter to Christianity, which calls for understanding and compassion, not labeling people and making assumptions about them. Barb believes this is a dangerous aspect of nationalism—putting people in boxes and then stopping there, without thinking deeper about what those labels mean. She concluded by stating that she doesn't think God wants us to judge people by putting them into boxes. Bill Lacy explained to Sara Rudolph-Pollard that the first preamble defines Christian nationalism, so the resolution is based on that definition, not our common belief about what nationalism is, but about what Christian nationalism is. The motion to adopt the resolution passed.

RA 2024-8 Program Ministry Reports

RCOM Report (see report in the program book)
Rev. Shawn Wallace was not present. See the report in the program book.

Regional Elders Report
Rev. Miles Cook reflected on the work and significance of the Regional Elders in the Great River Region. He began by emphasizing the importance of the gathering, noting that the Regional Assembly 12 years ago was held at First Christian Church in Baton Rouge, which is where this journey began. Miles announced his transition out of the role of coordinator of Regional Elders, passing the responsibility to Holly Jo Engle, the pastor at First Christian Church in Blytheville, Arkansas.

Pinnacle Outreach Report
Rev. Miles Cook noted that it has now been over 11 years since its inception in May 2013. The ministry is an extension of Pinnacle Structures, a business owned by retired Disciple minister Reverend Will Feland. The mission of the ministry is to meet the needs of individuals, not only through churches and ministers but also by supporting secular organizations that help with various community needs.

Youth Camp and Conference Report

Kristen mentioned that they are currently planning for Fall Fandango, which will take place in two weeks, and highlighted that these events have consistently attracted about 50 participants. Kristen addressed the need for more structured policies for youth events. She explained that, in the past, decisions were made at the discretion of camp directors, but a task force was formed before Kristen's tenure to create youth policies. These policies were presented to the board in 2023, revised based on feedback, and will go into effect starting with Snoasis in 2025.

Disciples Women Report
Pernella Shortie began her report by acknowledging that it marks the end of her two-year term as president of Disciples Women. She also expressed confidence in Stacy Eastwood, who will be the next president, and expressed excitement for Stacy's leadership, having worked together for several years.

Disciples Men Report
Min. Harvey Anderson's report provides an overview of the men's ministry activities for the year. He highlighted their second annual men's retreat, which was held at First Christian Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. During the retreat, attendees brainstormed ideas to support the regional efforts of Ronny Nowell in addressing regional disasters. Additionally, Harvey reported on a project that involved providing essential items to the Nehemiah House at the Union Rescue Mission.

Disaster Response Coordinator Report
Rev. Ronny Nowell shared updates on his work. He announced plans for regional mission trips starting in 2025, with a focus on Rolling Fork, Mississippi, a town devastated by a tornado. Ronny also connected the region to State VOADs to enhance disaster response coordination. He highlighted ongoing efforts in Northern Arkansas, where tornadoes hit on Memorial Day, and the formation of a long-term recovery group. Additionally, he secured a one-year grant from the Oreon Scott Foundation, with the potential for renewal. Ronny expressed gratitude for the support from the men's group and Week of Compassion and looked forward to continued collaboration in disaster response.

Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC) Report
Rev. Rena Baker, the president of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC), shared highlights from the past year's convention. The event, held at Indianola Christian Church, saw a strong turnout of over 80 participants, including 30 youth who played a key role in the worship and youth programs. Additionally, a District 4 choir was formed, bringing together members from three churches to provide music for the worship service. The Disciples Women organized a successful service project, assembling 80 bags with neck pillows and throws for kidney dialysis patients. The Disciples Men's fellowship grew so large that it had to move outdoors due to space limitations.

Arkansas State Fellowship Report
Rev. Rita Richardson was not present. See the report in the program book.

Associate Regional Minister of Mississippi Report
Rev. Dr. Nearline Anderson emphasized visiting at least one church per month, with 28 active churches in the state. As a bivocational leader, she prioritizes churches based on need and is currently scheduling visits for the fall. A highlight of the past year was offering Elder training through the Bailey Institute, which included 18 participants. Nearline also mentioned her ongoing work to ensure ministers have proper standing in the state and her availability to assist churches with pulpit supply and leadership updates.

Associate Regional Minister of Louisiana
See the report in the program book.

Just Love – Northshore & Greater New Orleans Report
Min. Zach Ritchie and Min. Sam Hubbard from "Just Love Your Neighbor" shared their gratitude for the support they've received from congregations like Grace Disciples in Mandeville and First Christian Church in New Orleans, as well as the

Great River Region. They highlighted their five-year bold experiment of trying to figure out how to take this church that Jesus loves to the people that Jesus loves.

Settled Executive Regional Minister Committee Report
Rev. DC Sills shared an update on the Settled Executive Regional Minister Search Committee. The committee has a timeline and is collecting surveys from congregations to gather feedback on the qualities desired in the next Regional Minister. These surveys are open through February 2nd.

Nominating Committee Report
Bill Lacy read the names of the elected members of the Regional Board.

Rev. Casey Shawn Allen made a motion to accept the committee reports; it was seconded by Vanessa Bostick. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Special Presentation - Rev. Alison Robuck presented a plaque to Rev. Miles Cook in grateful recognition of his dedication to our Regional Elder Ministry since 2012.

RA 2022-10 Recognition of Outgoing Board Members & Installation Covenant
Rev. Alison Robuck recognized outgoing regional board members and led the installation covenant for new and returning members of the Regional Board. They came to the front to participate in the covenant and were Commissioned for the work of the Regional Board.

RA 2024-11 GRR Resolution Time and Place Resolution: 2026 Regional Assembly
The 2026 Regional Assembly will be hosted by First Christian Church in Sherwood, AR, on November 6-8, 2026.

Rev. Robuck made a move to confirm the location of the 2026 Regional Assembly. It was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

RA 2022-12 GRR Resolution - Recognition for Host Congregation

Rev. Robuck made a move to confirm this resolution. It was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted by:
Rev. Vanessa Bostick
Secretary

Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Regional Board Meeting Minutes
11/08/2025
Park Hill Christian Church, Sherwood, AR

Present: Harvey Anderson (Zoom), Betty Arambel (Zoom), Cinder Bailey-Dorsey (Zoom), Rena Baker (Zoom), Alfreda Brown, Miles Cook, Stacy Eastwood (Zoom), Holly Jo Engle, Zena Featherston-Marshall, Linda Hampton, Jeffrey Murphy (Zoom), Sam Hubbard (Zoom), Bill Lacy, Carol Madere (Zoom), DC Sills, Mike Snell, Cheryl Sybrant, Beverly Utnage, Shawn Wallace (Zoom), John Goebel (Zoom), Patricia Ball

Absent: Marion Carter, Zac Ritchie

Representing Staff: Kristen Beach, Teonicka Russell, Alison Robuck, Ronny Nowell, Nearline Anderson (Zoom)

Visitors: Amy Blackman, Corey Harrison, Erin Aylor

Quorum: Yes

I. **Welcome & Opening Prayer/Introductions:** Bill Lacy called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Alison Robuck gave a welcome, introductions, devotion, and prayer.

II. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**
DC Sills moved to accept the minutes. It was seconded by Mike Snell. The motion carried.

III. **Financial Reports:**
John Goebel, VP, Treasury Svs. gave the financial report. He noted the following:

- He promised to provide more timely notice to the team when a draw is necessary.
- Disciples Mission Fund is almost 80,000, which is about $8,000 more than in 2024; the Annual Fund is above where it was last year. Salary expenses are under budget due to not filling the position of the second associate regional minister.
- The Region is at a surplus. We spent less than was expected, even though income was down.
- When asked why the Region invests so much in Church Extension, he replied that Church Extension is locked in, has shorter terms, earns less interest, but is actually more liquid.

Alfreda Brown moved to approve the September Financial Report. It was seconded by Cheryl Sybrant. The motion carried.

- **2026 Budget Proposal:**
  - Disciples Mission Fund is set at $120,000
  - Improved the distribution from the Foundation (CCF)
  - Salaries line item includes the open associate regional minister position as well as 5% increases for staff.
  - Facilities expenses have decreased slightly.
  - Accounting services will stay the same.

- Total expenses increased by about $3,000 from salary increases.
- Almost all of the Maumelle Fund has been used.
- The Region has the reserves it needs to continue supporting its ministries.

A discussion was held about the purchase of a new regional car.

Alfreda Brown moved to approve the 2026 Budget Proposal. It was seconded by DC Sills. The motion carried.

IV. **Operation Monitoring - Interim Regional Minister Board Report presented by Rev. Alison Robuck:**

Safe Conduct Policy - Alison stated that the Abuse Prevention Task Force is recommending adoption of the Safe Conduct Policy and noted that, after conversations with Kristen and others who were not part of the task force, she would also like to recommend that any Constituency Fellowship Groups, Disciples Men, Disciples Women, Youth, MCMC, Arkansas State Fellowship, and Regional Elders that want to utilize the GRR special event insurance will be required to adhere to the Safe Conduct Policy. Alison added that if Youth are involved in any Constituency Group events using the Region's special event insurance, Youth Policies for events sponsored by the GRR must also be followed. She explained that this is intended to ensure that what is filed with the insurance is consistent and that everyone is on the same page. Ronny Nowell added that the Safe Conduct Policy has been written to work with the Event Policy and should be merged with it eventually.

Linda Hampton moved that the Region adopt the Safe Conduct Policy and that all Constituency Fellowship Groups that want to utilize the GRR special event insurance must adhere to it, and if Youth are involved in any Constituency Group event utilizing the Region's special event insurance, Youth Policies for events sponsored by the GRR must be followed. It was seconded by Jeffery Murphy. The motion carried.

Disaster Coordinator Position - Alison said that we are already halfway through the pilot program with Ronny Nowell, Disaster Response Coordinator, run with Week of Compassion. She noted that she and Ronny had a Zoom meeting with Vy and Caroline recently, and that Vy is excited about the possibility of extending the program past March 2027. However, he needs a commitment from the Great River Region that we see the value not only in Ronny as a person and regional staff member, but also in the position itself. Alison explained that Week of Compassion currently takes on the majority of the financial commitment, but if the program continues, the Region would need to move toward a larger financial obligation. She emphasized that while a full plan isn't required right now, they are asking for a vote of confidence that the Region is committed to continuing the program beyond March 2027 and to developing a plan to adjust the financial responsibility.

Ronny Nowell briefly explained what he has been doing as the disaster coordinator, including recently responding to tornadoes in Tyler Town.

DC Sills moved to express our commitment beyond the termination of the Week of Compassion pilot program. It was seconded by Cheryl Sybrant.

Board members noted Ronny's contributions in their areas.

The motion carried.

Vehicle for Regional Minister - Alison noted that the car provided by the Region is experiencing frequent problems. It uses oil without a leak. She has been given an estimate of $3,000 to take everything apart, and that doesn't include fixing it. Miles Cook added that the regional minister must have reliable transportation, and Bill Lacy added that he preferred the Region buy a new car. Mike Snell volunteered to help Alison choose a car.

Cinder-Bailey Dorsey moved to replace the Region's car and then authorize the Executive Committee to approve the final purchase. It was seconded by Linda Hampton. The motion carried.

Donation of FCC Slidell Building - Alison shared that First Christian Church Slidell, Louisiana, will be closing at the end of the year. She visited the church in September and met with the board chair and the executive director of Community Christian Concern. The church is requesting to donate one of its three buildings to Community Christian Concern to open a women's shelter, which is greatly needed in that area. This ministry has been supported by the congregation for many years and is central to how they hope their legacy will continue in the community.

While the church intends to make this gift, the property is legally owned by the Great River Region due to an incomplete transfer from the time of the regional merger, so approval is required. Alison expressed strong support for honoring the church's intent and recommended approving the gift of the building, noting that additional work will be needed to address the remaining property.

It was discussed whether Community Christian Concern should pay the property transfer expenses.

Betty Arambel moved that the Region donate one of the buildings on the property of FCC Slidell to Community Christian Concern for use as a homeless women's shelter, with the donee bearing all the costs and expenses of the property transfer. It was seconded by Cinder Bailey-Dorsey. The motion carried.

V. Decision Monitoring:

RCOM - Shawn Wallace reported that RCOM had one meeting since the last regional board meeting. Having lost two committee members, RCOM added Nearline Anderson and Corey Harrison. They plan to meet with candidates in person in June. The February and October meetings will be via Zoom.

After Shawn's report, board members took a break.

Regional Elders – Nothing new to report since August.

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry – Miles Cook reported that Pinnacle was taking on new projects. They made contributions to Project Hope, which provides healthcare relief in 25 countries around the world. They will also provide one of the tiny homes in a new homeless village being constructed in Little Rock. They are also contributing to the Arkansas Food Bank, the United Nations World Food Program,

and the World Refugee Program. Lastly, they will be expanding their support starting this week, bringing increased attention and new projects to care for the Pea Ridge Cemetery.

Camp & Conference Ministries – Betty Arambel reported that they are busy planning Fall Fandango, at which Zena Featherston-Marshall will be the keynote speaker. They hope to improve contact with churches around the region to promote the program. They have added Mark Dingler from Bentonville and Chrys Beckley from Rogers to the committee, but hope to attract more people from throughout the region. Alfreda Brown asked can youth who are not Disciples attend. Betty answered that youth who are not members of a Disciple of Christ church may attend Camp & Conference events, but they typically need to be sponsored by a church.

GRR Disciples Women – Stacy Eastwood reported that there were three openings on the cabinet, but they were filled easily. The retreat was good, and the keynote speaker, Rev. Millie Anderson, was awesome.

GRR Disciples Men – Harvey Anderson reported that the Disciples Men had formed the Men's Collaborative, which meets by Zoom to discuss men's ministry around the region, with the goal of improving participation in each meeting.

Disaster Response Coordinator – Ronny Nowell reported that the Children's Disaster Services training planned by Carol Madere had to be rescheduled, but a new date hasn't been set. We are in Phase 2 of the Pointe-au-Chêne project. The Mennonites will build the structures of 4-5 houses starting in January, and there will be opportunities for groups to come in and help in different ways after it is complete. There is a regional mission trip scheduled for May 31-June 5 in Rolling Fork, MS. Lutheran Disaster Services will host a skill-based disaster training in Jackson, MS. Ronny will send out information about the training.

Arkansas State Fellowship – Marion was not present to report. See the report in the docket.

Associate Regional Minister Report – Nearline Anderson reported that her church has been working with Dorsett Drive Christian Church in Indianola, MS, to provide food packages to food pantries being slammed by the pause in SNAP benefits. She added that 8,000 homes in the Mississippi Delta have been affected. She said they have the funds to provide resources, but need boots on the ground. She plans to visit Covenant Christian Church in Byram, MS.

Just Love Northshore – Zac was not present to report. See the report in the docket.

Just Love GNO – Sam Hubbard reported that Just Love GNO has concentrated on three categories: body, mind, and soul. Under the Good Samaritan Initiative, they worked with six churches and four denominations to have an impact on behalf of the unhoused. Their Little Free Libraries have been very productive. They also had an interfaith event with Muslims and Catholics. Their intention is to start to get together as an interfaith alliance. Their engagement snapshot includes: 426 people who have engaged in the ministry; 31 people who are invested, 35 community partners, and 10 leaders. His Curious Krewe podcast will be coming out this month.

Executive Regional Ministry Search Committee – DC Sills reported that the committee had completed its work and recommended hiring Rev. Alison Robuck for the permanent position. Bill Lacy added that the Executive and Personnel committees had received and approved the recommendation.

DC Sills moved that the board accept the committee's recommendation and call Rev. Alison Robuck to the permanent Executive Regional Minister position. It was seconded by Beverly Utnage. The motion carried.

Alison thanked everyone for the vote of confidence and mentioned that her installation would occur at the next Regional Assembly in November 2026.

DC Sills added that the committee recommended that the Region create a support group for the Executive Regional Minister.

Personnel Committee – Zena Featherston-Marshall reported that the committee is grateful for all contributions of the staff and recommended that the board approve 5% raises for Teonicka Russell, Kristen Beach, Nearline Anderson, and Alison Robuck for 2026. She added that the 5% raises represented cost-of-living adjustments for two years, since the staff didn't receive a raise last year.

Zena Featherston-Marshall moved that the board approve the Personnel Committee's recommendation of 2026 calendar year compensation increases at 5% for Teonicka Russell, Kristen Beach, Nearline Anderson, and Alison Robuck. It was seconded by Mike Snell. The motion carried.

Zena Featherston-Marshall said Shawn Wallace had provided an example of a Pastoral Success Committee. There was a conversation with the Executive Committee, which was to lean heavily on the members of SERM to serve as the group's first members, and that this discussion would be brought back to the board at a later date.

General Board – Cheryl Sybrant reported that she had attended the first meeting of the General Board since the implementation of GA2517, which altered the composition of the board and changed General Assembly to meetings every three years instead of every two years, with digital assemblies in off years. She said she would soon make available information on how to host a digital assembly for area churches. The first one will occur on July 10-11, 2026. The next in-person assembly will be held in 2028. It will be a hybrid assembly.

VI. **Board Self-Evaluation: Governance Policies:** G-1, G-2, L-3, and L-4. It was mentioned that "shareholders" should be changed to "stakeholders". Any concerns should be brought to the Personnel Committee.

VII. **Evaluation, Next Steps, Calendar Next Meetings:** The next Regional Board meeting is set for March 7, 2026.

Betty Arambel stated that she forgot to mention something in her report.

Betty Arambel moved that it is the recommendation of the Youth Commission that if the Safe Conduct policies are adopted, the Youth Events Policy for events sponsored by the Great River Region be amended to add the adopted Safe Conduct Policy to the end of our current policies to be in effect beginning January 2026. It was seconded by DC Sills. The motion carried.

VIII. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned. The meeting was followed by a World Cafe-style visioning event.

Respectfully Submitted By
Carol M. Madere, Ph.D.
Regional Board Secretary

Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Regional Board Meeting Minutes

8/15/2026 – Zoom Meeting

Present: Harvey and Nearline Anderson, Betty Arambel, Kristen Beach, Alfreda Brown, Marion Carter, Miles Cook, Laura DeMann, Stacy Eastwood, John Goebel, Linda Hampton, Sam Hubbard, Bill Lacy, Carol Madere, Jeffery Murphy, Ronny Nowell, Zac Ritchie, Alison Robuck, Teonicka Russell, DC Sills, Mike Snell, Cheryl Sybrant, Beverly Utnage, Shawn Wallace

Representing Staff: Nearline Anderson, Kristen Beach, Ronny Nowell, Alison Robuck, and Teonicka Russell

Quorum: Yes

I. **Welcome and Opening Prayer:** Bill Lacy called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Alison welcomed attendees and offered an opening prayer. She also introduced Rev. Laura DeMann, who will coordinate regional elders.

II. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**
Linda Hampton made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. The motion was seconded by Laura DeMann. The motion carried.

III. **Financial Report:** John Goebel, VP, Treasury Systems, gave the financial report. He noted the following:

- At the end of the year, we've used some church extension funds. Also, the Foundation investments had a good second quarter and recovered loss value in first quarter.

- Net Assets with donor restrictions is down $157,000 from a year ago. That's a good thing. We want to spend those gifts that came in with donor restrictions.

- The bigger section is the assets with donor restrictions. We've had the funds to support Just Love. We're spending more than we're bringing in, as anticipated. That's why the net assets and church extension are going down.

- The foundation investment is over a million dollars. That value has increased over the first two quarters, so good news there.

- Bottom line as shown on p. 11: We're at a deficit through six months of $22,843. We expected the deficit, but thought it would be under $20,000. How did we get here? 9. DMF is down $6400 and down $10,000 from a year ago. Still we have six months to see how things are going. DMF Day/Week is coming up Sept. 12-18.

- We're close to where we were a year ago, so that will probably recover soon. Salaries are under budget, because we have not filled the associate regional minister position. It offsets some of the income decrease.

- Betty Arambel questioned what the Youth New Program Trust line item on the budget is for. Goebel said it can be used for youth programs or maybe to establish a new program. Alison said she would find the cheat sheet that explains each item and send it to Betty. Kristen explained that the money was acquired from the sale of a retreat center in Louisiana. One-half of the money was to be invested. It is kind of a niche for Louisiana youth, but can also be used to regional youth. There were also previous discussions about using that money for regional retreat center, but nothing was decided.

- DC Sills moved to approved the financial report. Betty Arambel seconded. The financial report was approved.

IV. **Executive Regional Minister's Board Report:** Alison Robuck

- Teonicka has been focusing on the region's social media presence and website. We're only sending out *Currents* once a month. We feel this is a better use of her time.

- I've talked with Week of Compassion about continuing Ronny's position through 2027. We have a draft of an MOU that is still being fine-tuned. We will vote on this in November. In the following year, we'll be responsible for 51% of Ronny's position.

- Slidell Property – We will not be able to gift the building to the local nonprofit. I'm trying to get an appraisal on the property. We plan to donate a large portion to Community Christian Concern for the purpose of opening a homeless shelter.

- We are down to 19 congregations who are living out of covenant. They haven't reported to Alex or given to ministries within the last five years. We need to continue to work towards an understanding of what it means to live in covenant.

- Fayette Christian Church has dissolved. Covenant Christian Church in Byram, MS, is closing, in the process of getting their property on the market and will donate money to Disciples ministries. I recommend that we not stand by our deed but rather allow the church to sell and to do what they want with the money. The region will get some, other Disciples ministries will get some and other local charities.

  Bill Lacy said the executive board will need to vote on that.

- Regional Assembly—The region is finalizing details. The theme will be Rooted in Love. At the end of the assembly, we'll go out to Pea Ridge Cemetery and have a service of dedication for the improvements. It is a beautiful cemetery now. We're going to go

celebrate. We're working on transportation to the cemetery for the dedication ceremony.

- The region has received a request from the Pea Ridge Board to be included as a constituency fellowship group of the GRR. This was actually done when Barb Jones was here, but it fell through the cracks. Pea Ridge wants us to consider that today.

- Bill Lacy asked if there were any policy items related to Alison's position. Hearing none, Shawn Wallace moved that Alison's report be accepted. Betty Arambel seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- Alison asked the board to vote on extending an invitation to Pea Ridge to serve as a constituent fellowship with a board seat. Betty Arambel made a motion that Pea Ridge be added to the board and invited to be a constituent fellowship. The motion was seconded by Alfreda Brown, the motion carried. Bill Lacy added that the bylaws draft being prepared must reflect the addition of Pea Ridge to the board.

- Clergy Retreat is being postponed to a date in probably in 2027, so we can have Terri Hord Owens there.

V. Decision Monitoring Reports

- **RCOM:** Shawn Wallace reported that RCOM met with eight candidates in June; four were new. We had two candidates approved for ordination: Philip Smiley and Amy Blackman. He has handed the chairmanship of RCOM to Rev. Corey Harrison.

- **Regional Elders Ministry:** Rev. Laura DeMann has assumed the leadership position previously occupied by Holly Jo Engle. She reported that the Regional Elders continue to meet monthly, the first Tuesday of every month.

- **Pinnacle Outreach Report**: Rev. Miles Cook noted that Pinnacle Outreach is an extension of Pinnacle Structures, in Cabot Arkansas. It is part of the Great River Region. They are involved in some projects. Providence Park is a model/village to help people who have been chronically homeless. It is a 50-acre park located in Mabelvale, an area of Little Rock close to former location of the old regional office. Eventually, it will offer resources, such as a medical clinic, dental clinic, and different kinds of services. It is in formation. The groundbreaking occurred in 2024. It opened earlier this year.

- **Camp and Conference:** Betty Arambel reported there had been a great gathering of adults and youth on the Youth Commission to plan youth events for the upcoming school year. They got off to a good start for the Fall Fandango event in November.

- **Disciples Women:** Stacy Eastwood reported that the Disciples Women have been busy getting ready for our retreat next month. They have also been working on planning for the ROSES retreat next summer in Little Rock, which will also include a visit by Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. They are also working on the luncheon and program for Regional Assembly, where Dr. Debra Reid, Assistant Regional Director for Women, will be in attendance.

- **Disaster Response:** Ronny Nowell reported he has been looking at grant opportunities unsuccessfully and asked if anyone is familiar with grant writing, to please get in touch with him. He continues to meet with Point au Chene tribal leaders once a month to work on plans for Phase 3 of rebuilding to build three more houses with Mennonite Disaster Services and Week of Compassion after the first of the year.

  The mission trip in June to Rolling Fork, MS was a huge success. A total of 17 attended, and they worked on three different homes. One home in which they completed the flooring was dedicated last weekend. That family is moving in.

  He went over to Bethel Christian Church and met some of leadership there. They are forming a long-term recovery committee in Carroll County since the ice storm there. Two members of that committee are members of Bethel Christian Church.

  In northwest Arkansas, following a tornado here, they have formed the Northwest Arkansas COAD (Community Organization Active in Disasters). They had their first meeting in Benton County and will meet next month in Washington, County and later in a third county. It is a good opportunity to see how we can all work together.

  Caroline Arnold with Week of Compassion led a workshop with community leaders about how to form a long-term committee. Then the Accelerate Foundation got a $1 million grant from Walmart and decided not to form a long-term committee and that worked ok. But now to be ready in the future, they have formed the COAD, all as a direct response of Ronny getting Caroline to lead the workshop.

  There was a meeting in Louisiana after Tropical Storm Arthur, which produced some tornados and flooding. They have just now received approval from FEMA for assistance. He's looking for places where we can get volunteer groups. The FEMA Rep for Mississippi is Carlos Martinez. Ronny has had several meetings with him. He coordinates those long -term recovery groups.

  Ronny attended the first ever online General Assembly. There are some technical difficulties that made it frustrating at times, but overall, it was better than he expected. Over 1,000 people logged in just about every time he did.

  He attended the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention, spoke to the assembly on Thursday and led a workshop for men on Friday. He made lots of new connections there and pushed some of them to keep us updated.

He also met with the FCC Sherwood congregation, which is dreaming about putting together a plan to be used at a moment's notice for a disaster.

He continues to be available to lead workshops in churches or preach and is continuing to look for new mission trip opportunities. We are probably done with Rolling Fork. We will finish up the four houses we're working on. Then, we'll be looking for other places we can go.

The region is also going to offer $500 congregational grants for mitigation projects It is part of the money we received from the Oreon E. Scott Foundation. It can be used for gutter replacement or repair, window seals, heat tape to prevent ice dams, French drain or retaining walls, or other typical mitigation projects. He is in the process of creating an application process. Watch for that proposal coming soon.

- **Arkansas State Fellowship: Marion Carter -** reported they've had two state fellowships, which are discussed in the board report. The next one will be Aug. 30. They'll be traveling to Pine Bluff. All five churches have been participating except Cephas Chapel, but they plan to come to Pine Bluff.

- **Associate Regional Minister Report: Nearline Anderson—**The ladies of her church have been creating blessing bags for the men and women at the local Sunflower County Transitional Shelter. They have also been working on setting up a food pantry for the county. Nearline has also involved a group of students she works with in preparing blessing bags and collecting items for the food pantry.

  She continues to mentor Bethel. They have an elder installation next month. She'll be there with them. Freddy Harrison will be installed as the senior pastor this fall at Christian Chapel Church.

  She has been in communication with FCC Vicksburg. They're doing very well. Jeffery Murphy is on here and Carol Byrnes Murphy. There are good folks there.

  United Christian Church Jackson has been having challenges. They're having trouble with HVAC and some financial concerns. Nearline has been working with their elders.

  Nearline attended MCMC and reached some pastors she has had trouble reaching. She was able to update contacts.

- **Just Love Northshore: Zac Ritchie** reported on the recent Disability Disaster Preparedness Workshop. It was eye-opening to see how many people are affected. Wednesday nights are running out of space. They have study, communion, and fellowship. The church is going well.

  They now have a furniture ministry. A board member, who had been working with nonprofits, got a grant to get a trailer. He helps provide furniture for many people. People in this area are always changing their furniture. There are a lot of people in need. They donate furniture that is being given away or buy it from local nonprofit thrift stores.

- **Just Love GNO: Sam Hubbard** reported that the rhythm is curiosity, care, and connection. They set a benchmark of 70 people, but they've been running at about 250. Good Samaritan is serving over 1,000 guests. They've had 350 volunteer engagements. Kurious Krewe moved from 57 to 80 participants. Our podcast has 28 episodes.

  A man named David, who comes to the Good Samaritan meals, mentioned he has an app on his phone that tells him where to find free meals in the area. We're not on it. David was a chef at some restaurants. He gave us his book of recipes. We're now building an app with several faith-based organizations in the city. He's also helping us identify resources.

  They've done a lot of interfaith work. They got connected to the African American community and merged with them to do lots of work. There are 200 faith leaders. They have been chairing a Muslim-Jewish dialogue about the Palestinian question. They got invited by the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. to do a workshop with them in New Orleans.

  Sam has been in chaplaincy certification focusing on community chaplaincy. There are 12 coaches going through it. It will be available to all Disciples congregations; Sam will be available throughout the region.

  They have been approved for $7600 to cover that for rest of time, but it needs board approval. They are still doing good on reserves. They had $70,000 at the beginning of the year. His salary is funded through 2028.

  It is part of the accountability agreement that the board approves what Sam's board has approved. Betty Arambel made a motion to approve Just Love GNO's board decisions. Jeffery Murphy seconded. The motion carried.

  Jeffery Murphy mentioned that he is a certified mentor for the Association of Professional Chaplains and offered to serve as a mentor for anyone seeking the coaching certification.

- **General Board – Cheryl Sybrant** reported that the General Assembly had great preaching and teaching, but some technical difficulties. The tech team is trying to work the kinks out for the next time we gather. She was excited to see how many people attended. Eight resolutions were passed at General Assembly. Some will be on our Regional Assembly agenda in November.

  General Board will meet in October or November. Alison will send her the date.

All the Decision Monitoring reports were approved.

VI. **Governance Policies –** Bill Lacy noted that the board will meet Saturday morning during regional assembly to amend the bylaws. They must be approved by two-thirds vote by the regional board. Alison said the board might need to vote by email as soon as the draft is approved by the Executive Committee.

VII. **Old Business**

- **Alfreda Brown** asked if people on the board needed more information on the request from Pea Ridge to join the Great River Region as a constituent fellowship. Bill Lacy agreed that it might be a good idea to send out the rationale to assembly participants before the vote in November. Alfreda added that Pea Ridge planned to have at least two "meet and greets" by Zoom to introduce themselves.

- **Alfreda Brown** inquired as to how data reported to Alex is used and whether it could examine the data on churches that are closing to find some indicators when a church is not going in a good direction. Sam Hubbard said the region doesn't have enough data to do anything with it, and the data they do have doesn't ask the right questions. It shows decline. That's all. The initial problem is simply getting the data. We have several congregations who do not report regularly.

New Business

- **Camp-**Mike Snell said his church has been talking about the camp issue recently. They have been sending their kids to Eagle Sky, but the kids have had mixed experiences that emphasized the camp was not Disciples. The camp sent out a letter that identified one of our kids. The closest camp is Athens for them. He suggested that if the region didn't want to use a large amount of money to purchase a camp, maybe the churches could use the money to charter some buses to take kids to a Disciples camp. He said his understanding is that for 12 people, it would be $1,000 per person, but above 12, the number goes down. It's not cheap but wanted to present it as a consideration for getting our kids better connected to Disciples camps.

  Some kids are going to Athens, but others are going to Tall Oaks in Kansas City. It's a shame that we can't get our three states together in one semi-central location. It would be nice. Twice-a-year meetings just don't let you really get to know the kids.

  Laura DeMann suggested renting the use of a camp, but she doesn't know if anything like that is available in a desirable area.

  Shawn Wallace said he wasn't sure if the region has the numbers to do our own camp. We were renting Couchdale, but the numbers got low and rental went up. We haven't had churches from Mississippi and Louisiana going to camp, which is why churches in Arkansas started going out of state. Maybe we could pay a driver to drive down and back.

  Mike Snell suggests that the region needs to be working on this now for next summer.

  Alfreda Brown suggested creating a taskforce to work on the issue. Mike, Shawn, and Betty were asked to serve on the taskforce. Shawn said his associate, Chrys, would be better. Stacy Eastwood also volunteered to participate in the taskforce.

Kristen noted that the region has bounced ideas with doing things at Camp Magnolia, which is right on the Gulf, but it's a long trip for the Arkansas congregations. We have had conversations, but no traction. She added that they need some ethnic diversity and representation from Mississippi and Louisiana.

Alison will get a call out and get a task force together in the next few weeks.

- **Public Relations --** Mike Snell also proposed that the region investigate some aggressive PR evangelism stuff that would work for the whole region. We could invest together in a region-wide evangelistic campaign. It could be a significant faith growth experience.

  Shawn Wallace added that the Executive Committee has also been talking about doing this with having Teonicka do a social media push about who are the Disciples. Individual congregations could use it.

  Mike Snell said we could be a model for other regions if we do it well.

  Alfreda Brown asked if he envisioned employing professional PR firms? Mike said he would suggest a task force as a potential option, but it's worthy of consideration. "A lot of us think we're experts, but we're not. It would be worth it to spend the money," he said.

  Laura said she was glad Mike had suggested it. She has been trying to get public relations in Shreveport/Bossier, but it costs $900 for a full week of billboards. She thinks the Disciples need more online exposure.

  Carol Madere volunteered to look for grant money to support the effort.

  Shawn added that if this effort brings new people to the church, the region should make sure that church sends more money to the region.

  Alison said follow-up letters will go out in a few weeks to request that people serve on these task forces. Kristen asked if the board should ask for volunteers at Regional Assembly. Alison said she wanted to start with the people on the board and be able to report on it at Regional Assembly.

Calendaring Next Meetings – The next meeting is November 13 & 14, Regional Assembly.

VIII. **Adjournment –** The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol M. Madere, Ph.D., Regional Board Secretary

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Statement of Financial Position

	09/30/2026	09/30/2025	Increase (Decrease)	12/31/2025
Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash held by (due to) OGMP	(53,797)	(166,726)	112,929	(8,522)
CCF Distribution in Transit	33,485	42,356	(8,871)	54,818
Prepaid Expenses	1,350		1,350	
Total Current Assets	(18,962)	(124,370)	105,408	46,296
Investments				
Investments held at Church Extension	1,112,270	1,566,095	(453,825)	1,339,935
Investments held at CCF	2,060,484	1,965,140	95,344	1,960,048
Total Investments	3,172,755	3,531,236	(358,481)	3,299,983
Fixed Assets				
Furniture and Fixtures	1,410	1,410		1,410
Vehicles	32,213	21,445	10,769	32,213
Accumulated Depreciation	(3,926)	(21,680)	17,753	(3,926)
Total Fixed Assets	29,697	1,175	28,522	29,697
Total Assets	**3,183,490**	**3,408,041**	**(224,551)**	**3,375,976**
Liabilities and Net Assets				
Liabilities				
Accounts Payable	13,693	13,190	504	8,494
Total Liabilities	**13,693**	**13,190**	**504**	**8,494**
Net Assets				
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	1,200,341	1,196,346	3,995	1,220,584
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	1,969,455	2,198,505	(229,050)	2,146,898
Total Net Assets	**3,169,797**	**3,394,851**	**(225,055)**	**3,367,481**
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**3,183,490**	**3,408,041**	**(224,551)**	**3,375,976**

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Detailed Net Asset Activity | **Assets less Liabilities representing Fund Balances**

	Beginning of year	Income	Expenses	Unreal. Gain/ (Loss) on Inv.	**As of 9/30/2026**	Total Liabilities	Total Assets	Fixed Assets	AR/ Prepaids	Cash	CE	CCF
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions												
Unrestricted Net Assets - Regional Office	1,189,845	227,992	(282,403)	35,211	1,170,645	(13,693)	1,184,340	-	34,835	(51,332)	167,556	1,033,281
Maumelle Property Fund	1,043	-	(1,043)		-		-				-	
Net Fixed Assets Fund	29,697	-	-		29,697		29,697	29,697				
Total Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	1,220,585	227,992	(283,446)	35,211	1,200,342	(13,693)	1,214,037	29,697	34,835	(51,332)	167,556	1,033,281
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions												
Pinnacle	757	102,050	(102,050)	-	757		757			-	757	
Regional Endowment (CCF 892)	45,211	1,088	(1,265)	1,592	46,626		46,626			-	7,119	39,507
Church Renewal Fund (CCF 1477)	35,445	1,323	-	1,257	38,025		38,025			-		38,025
Ozark Fund (CCF 2096)	22,891	876	(2,240)	697	22,224		22,224			(2,241)		24,465
Disaster Relief Fund	41,194	7,100	(4,668)	-	43,626		43,626				43,626	
Regional Disaster Response Coordinator Fd	30,227	44,893	(65,511)	-	9,609		9,609				9,609	
Oreon E. Scott Grant	20,550	-	(20,550)	-	-		-			-	-	
Bailey Institute of Learning	4,597	-	(1,727)	-	2,870		2,870				2,870	
Disciples Men	653	-	-	-	653		653				653	
Reconciliation	7,444	859	-	-	8,303		8,303				8,303	
Youth New Program Trust (CCF 999)	52,603	560	-	820	53,983		53,983				33,647	20,336
FCC Cleveland Fund (CCF 1724)	14,521	446	(895)	520	14,592		14,592			(224)	-	14,816
Parkview Christian Church Fund (CCF 8355)	308,761	8,993	(109)	10,277	327,922		327,922			-	35,200	292,722
New Church Fund (CCF 1083)	172,758	5,604	(31,091)	3,358	150,629		150,629			-	52,230	98,399
Just Love-Northshore Disciples	400,118	1,986	(70,751)	-	331,353		331,353			-	331,353	
FCCGNO New Church Fd - Just Love S Shore	274,454	-	(70,538)	-	203,916		203,916			-	203,916	
FCCGNO Reserve Fund	70,370	-	(16,730)	-	53,640		53,640				53,640	
FCC, Jonesboro, AR Disciples Women Fund	5,532	-	-	-	5,532		5,532			-	5,532	
Committee of 500 (CCF 1081)	27,898	875	-	1,017	29,790		29,790					29,790
Disciples Men CD	11,278	183	-	-	11,461		11,461			-	11,461	
Don Embree School Fund	30,521	553	-	-	31,074		31,074			-	31,074	
Pea Ridge Cemetery	-	1,535	-	-	1,535		1,535			-	1,535	
Lane Ministerial Fund (CCF 1085)	89,796	3,994	(312)	259	93,737		93,737			-	86,150	7,587
Miller Scholarship Fund	282	-	-	-	282		282			-	282	
Pickering DW Scholarship Fund (CCF 1608)	55,917	5,514	(5,263)	1,953	58,121		58,121				900	57,221
Rozzell Lectureship Fund (CCF 1298)	41,028	1,802	-	980	43,810		43,810			-		43,810
Scholarship Fund (CCF 1084)	54,294	1,704	-	1,979	57,977		57,977			-		57,977
Young Ministerial Schlrshp Fd (CCF 1931)	31,965	1,003	-	1,165	34,133		34,133					34,133
Disciples Walk Endowment (CCF 8332)	231,287	6,345	(20,649)	7,369	224,352		224,352				24,857	199,495
Paragould Leadership Fund (CCF 504)	64,543	2,025	-	2,352	68,920		68,920			-		68,920
Total Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	2,146,895	201,311	(414,349)	35,595	1,969,452	-	1,969,452	-	-	(2,465)	944,714	1,027,203
TOTAL NET ASSETS	3,367,480	429,303	(697,795)	70,806	3,169,794	(13,693)	3,183,489	29,697	34,835	(53,797)	1,112,270	2,060,484

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Budget Report

	Year to Date				Prior YTD
	Actual as of 09/30/2026	Budget as of 09/30/2026	Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget	Actual as of 09/30/2025
Income					
Disciples Mission Fund	66,582	74,052	(7,470)	120,000	79,658
Easter		97	(97)	130	86
Christmas Offering	4,549	6,985	(2,436)	11,000	5,167
Thanksgiving		150	(150)	200	66
Blessing Boxes	865	750	115	1,000	1,033
Annual Fund	20,325	31,400	(11,075)	46,000	32,585
DMF Contributions via CCF	20,406	16,634	3,772	25,500	16,306
Designated Operating Gifts	11,684	11,821	(137)	23,500	8,741
Regional Capital Program	250	225	25	300	262
Just Women Sales					40
Honoraria	350	1,125	(775)	1,500	1,892
Distribution from FCCGNO	30,345	26,625	3,720	35,500	27,306
Interest Income	19,024	25,000	(5,976)	50,000	26,052
Total Income	**174,381**	**194,864**	**(20,484)**	**314,630**	**199,194**
Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits					
Salaries	152,583	165,333	(12,750)	220,444	146,599
Pension	15,717	15,717		20,956	14,968
Payroll Taxes	2,641	2,588	54	3,450	2,493
Workers Comp Insurance	1,283	1,300	(17)	1,300	1,258
Total Salaries & Benefits	172,224	184,937	(12,714)	246,150	165,319
Travel					
Transportation - ERM	2,689	6,000	(3,311)	8,000	3,636
Meals - ERM	1,833	2,250	(417)	3,000	2,106
Lodging - ERM	3,724	4,500	(776)	6,000	4,831
Registration for Events Expense	803	1,125	(322)	1,500	1,636
Travel & Exp - Office staff	2,004	1,500	504	2,000	2,113
Youth Travel/Meals	634	375	259	500	424
Insurance - Auto	3,853	2,500	1,353	2,500	2,233
DW Travel Pool Dues	387	300	87	300	333
Travel & Exp - Assoc RM - LA		750	(750)	1,000	
Travel & Exp - Assoc RM - MS	63	750	(687)	1,000	751
Total Travel	15,990	20,050	(4,060)	25,800	18,063
Facilities					
Rent	12,150	12,150		16,200	12,150
Service Contracts	2,873	3,750	(877)	5,000	2,288
General Liability Ins	8,504	8,400	104	11,200	8,179
Total Facilities	23,526	24,300	(774)	32,400	22,617

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Budget Report

	Year to Date				Prior YTD
	Actual as of 09/30/2026	Budget as of 09/30/2026	Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget	Actual as of 09/30/2025
Office Expenses					
Telephone	705	750	(45)	1,000	639
Cell Phones	1,910	2,100	(190)	2,800	1,986
Postage	891	975	(84)	1,300	823
Office Supplies	1,476	1,500	(24)	2,000	1,010
Books & Resources	223	375	(152)	500	150
Paper/Printing/Ink Cartridges	80	150	(70)	200	159
Meetings/Flowers/Celebrations	989	1,875	(886)	2,500	1,347
OGMP Yearbook	1,631	1,600	31	1,600	
Bank Charges	127	75	52	100	23
College of Reg Min Dues	3,101	3,101		3,101	2,353
Christmas Offering Promotion				1,500	
Miscellaneous Expense	845		845		54
Just Women Expenses					74
Total Office Expenses	11,978	12,501	(523)	16,601	8,619
Computer Supplies					
Online Services	5,621	9,000	(3,379)	12,000	8,017
Computer Hardware & Software	930		930		
Equipment Repair		250	(250)	250	
Total Computer Supplies	6,551	9,250	(2,699)	12,250	8,017
Professional Services					
Accounting Services	15,300	15,300		20,400	15,300
Total Professional Services	15,300	15,300		20,400	15,300
Board & Committee Expenses					
Board Meeting Expense	1,127	2,400	(1,273)	7,800	2,768
Search Committee					805
DW Cabinet	2,000	2,000		2,000	71
Total Board & Committee Expenses	3,127	4,400	(1,273)	9,800	3,644
Partnerships					
Louisiana Interchurch Conf	550	550		550	550
Special Gifts & Emergency Aid	330	500	(170)	1,000	807
Total Partnerships	880	1,050	(170)	1,550	1,357
Total Expenses	**249,576**	**271,788**	**(22,213)**	**364,951**	**242,936**
Draw from Maumelle Fund	(1,043)	(1,043)		(1,043)	(27,153)
Transfer to other funds	2,107		2,107		
Draw from Regional Endowment					(5,090)
Draw from Disciples Walk Endowment	(18,750)	(18,750)		(25,000)	(12,327)
Total Transfer In	(17,686)	(19,793)	2,107	(26,043)	(44,570)
Events					
Snoasis					
Snoasis Income	8,780		8,780		
Event Income					9,120
Snoasis Expense	7,219		7,219		

The Great River Region of the Christian Church

Budget Report

	Year to Date				Prior YTD
	Actual as of 09/30/2026	Budget as of 09/30/2026	Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget	Actual as of 09/30/2025
Event Expense					9,392
Net Snoasis Event	1,561		1,561		(272)
Disciples Clergy					
Dis Clergy Income	125		125		
Dis Clergy Expense	1,893		1,893		
Net Disciples Clery Event	(1,768)		(1,768)		
Regional Assembly					
Regional Assembly Income	639		639		
Regional Assembly Expense	5		5		
Net Regional Assembly	634		634		
Fall Fandango					
Fall Fandango Income	2,340		2,340		
Event Income					585
Fall Fandango Expense	43		43		
Event Expense					42
Net Fall Fandango	2,297		2,297		543
DW Retreat					
Disciples Women Retreat Income	21,085		21,085		
Event Income					9,338
Disciples Women Retreat Expense	20,925		20,925		
Event Expense					1,099
Net DW Retreat	160		160		8,239
DW Service Projects					
Net Louisiana	(211)		(211)		(305)
Net Mississippi	(218)		(218)		(437)
Net Arkansas	(286)		(286)		(195)
General DW Service Projects	500		500		100
Net DW Service Projects	215		215		837
Net Events	**3,098**		**3,098**		**9,346**
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	**(54,410)**	**(57,131)**	**2,721**	**(24,278)**	**10,174**

Great River Region

Proposed Budget for Next Year

	Actual 09/30/2026	Budget 09/30/2026	Actual 09/30/2025	Budget 12/31/2026	Budget 12/31/2027	Actual 12/31/2025
Income						
Disciples Mission Fund	66,582	74,052	79,658	120,000	115,000	129,690
Easter	0	97	86	130	0	100
Christmas Offering	4,549	6,985	5,167	11,000	9,000	8,368
Thanksgiving	0	150	66	200	0	72
Blessing Boxes	865	750	1,033	1,000	1,000	1,061
Annual Fund	20,325	31,400	32,585	46,000	40,000	40,210
DMF Contributions via CCF	20,406	16,634	16,306	25,500	28,500	25,042
Designated Operating Gifts	11,684	11,821	8,741	23,500	26,000	28,854
Regional Capital Program	250	225	262	300	300	337
Just Women Sales	0	0	40	0	0	40
Honoraria	350	1,125	1,892	1,500	1,500	2,367
Distribution from FCCGNO	30,345	26,625	27,306	35,500	40,000	37,227
Interest Income	19,024	25,000	26,052	50,000	40,000	46,600
Total Income	**174,381**	**194,864**	**199,194**	**314,630**	**301,300**	**319,968**
Expenses						
Salaries & Benefits						
Salaries	152,583	165,333	146,599	220,444	225,104	195,466
Pension	15,717	15,717	14,968	20,956	21,584	19,958
Payroll Taxes	2,641	2,588	2,493	3,450	3,530	3,324
Workers Comp Insurance	1,283	1,300	1,258	1,300	1,300	1,258
Total Salaries & Benefits	172,224	184,937	165,319	246,150	251,518	220,006
Travel						
Transportation - ERM	2,689	6,000	3,636	8,000	8,000	4,682
Meals - ERM	1,833	2,250	2,106	3,000	3,000	2,409
Lodging - ERM	3,724	4,500	4,831	6,000	6,000	5,859
Registration for Events Expense	803	1,125	1,636	1,500	1,500	1,636
Travel & Exp - Office staff	2,004	1,500	2,113	2,000	2,400	2,360
Youth Travel/Meals	634	375	424	500	600	424
Insurance - Auto	3,853	2,500	2,233	2,500	4,000	2,408
DW Travel Pool Dues	387	300	333	300	350	333
Travel & Exp - Assoc RM - LA	0	750	0	1,000	1,000	0
Travel & Exp - Assoc RM - MS	63	750	751	1,000	1,000	1,336
Total Travel	15,990	20,050	18,063	25,800	27,850	21,447
Facilities						
Rent	12,150	12,150	12,150	16,200	16,200	16,200
Service Contracts	2,873	3,750	2,288	5,000	4,000	3,318
General Liability Ins	8,504	8,400	8,179	11,200	11,700	10,907
Total Facilities	23,526	24,300	22,617	32,400	31,900	30,425

Great River Region

Proposed Budget for Next Year

	Actual 09/30/2026	Budget 09/30/2026	Actual 09/30/2025	Budget 12/31/2026	Budget 12/31/2027	Actual 12/31/2025
Office Expenses						
Telephone	705	750	639	1,000	1,000	861
Cell Phones	1,910	2,100	1,986	2,800	2,800	2,640
Postage	891	975	823	1,300	1,200	964
Office Supplies	1,476	1,500	1,010	2,000	2,035	1,290
Books & Resources	223	375	150	500	400	356
Paper/Printing/Ink Cartridges	80	150	159	200	200	271
Meetings/Flowers/Celebrations	989	1,875	1,347	2,500	2,000	1,645
OGMP Yearbook	1,631	1,600	0	1,600	1,650	1,505
Bank Charges	127	75	23	100	100	34
College of Reg Min Dues	3,101	3,101	2,353	3,101	3,200	2,353
Christmas Offering Promotion	0	0	0	1,500	1,200	1,100
Miscellaneous Expense	845	0	54	0	0	76
Just Women Expenses	0	0	74	0	0	74
Total Office Expenses	11,978	12,501	8,619	16,601	15,785	13,168
Computer Supplies						
Online Services & Software	5,621	9,000	8,017	12,000	11,000	9,874
Computer Hardware & Software	930	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment Repair	0	250	0	250	0	0
Total Computer Supplies	6,551	9,250	8,017	12,250	11,000	9,874
Professional Services						
Accounting Services	15,300	15,300	15,300	20,400	21,000	20,400
Total Professional Services	15,300	15,300	15,300	20,400	21,000	20,400
Board & Committee Expenses						
Board Meeting Expense	1,127	2,400	2,768	7,800	6,500	5,466
Search Committee	0	0	805	0	0	3,283
DW Cabinet	2,000	2,000	71	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Board & Committee Expenses	3,127	4,400	3,644	9,800	8,500	10,749
Partnerships						
Louisiana Interchurch Conf	550	550	550	550	550	550
Special Gifts & Emergency Aid	330	500	807	1,000	1,000	807
Total Partnerships	880	1,050	1,357	1,550	1,550	1,357
Total Expenses	**249,576**	**271,788**	**242,936**	**364,951**	**369,103**	**327,425**
Benevolence/Gifts Expense	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
Total Other Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
Draw from Maumelle Fund	(1,043)	(1,043)	(27,153)	(1,043)	0	(36,204)
Transfer to Response Coordinator	2,107	0	0	0	20,000	32,213
Draw from Regional Endowment	0	0	(5,090)	0	0	(6,787)
Draw from Disciples Walk Endowment	(18,750)	(18,750)	(12,327)	(25,000)	(26,500)	(16,436)
Total Transfer In	(17,686)	(19,793)	(44,570)	(26,043)	(6,500)	(27,214)
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	**(57,509)**	**(57,131)**	**828**	**(24,278)**	**(61,303)**	**9,757**

Letter of Understanding
on Accounting Services provided by OGMP-Treasury Services
to the Great River Region of the Christian Church (DoC)

This letter is to set forth the terms and objectives of our engagement, and the nature and limitations of the services **OGMP-Treasury Services** (OGMP-TS) will provide to the **Great River Region** (Region) starting with the year 2026.

Deliverables provided by OGMP-TS:

1) Monthly financial statements using accrual basis of accounting (GAAP):
   a) Statements of Financial Position, which includes tracking of fund balances.
   b) Budget Report, which includes actual vs. budget vs. prior year actual.
   c) Preparation of general ledger, all necessary journals, and reconciliations.
   d) As requested, details of accounting transactions as related to the Region.
   e) Maintain fixed asset schedules.
2) Provide the OGMP's audited financial statements annually.
3) Provide an annual report prepared by OGMP's auditors detailing the results of the additional testing they did on transactions performed by OGMP for the Region.
4) Provide an annual year-end financial statement for the Region.
5) Assistance with cash management.
6) Withdrawals from Regional Funds held as permanent or designated funds will require approval by the Regional Minister and one of the following, Regional Moderator or Treasurer. Approval can occur via e-mail.
7) Coordinate payroll service through OGMP-TS approved payroll company.
8) Filing of annual governmental compliance forms as provided by the Region.
9) Assistance with preparing annual budgets and adjustments as needed.
10) Available to virtually attend board or committee meetings with reasonable advanced notice to present and discuss the financial activities of the Region.
11) All information and data will be managed with the utmost confidentiality.
12) Maintain qualified and competent staff with at least one CPA on staff.

Requirements of the Region:

1) All transactions flow through OGMP-TS's checking account.
2) OGMP-TS will hold funds provided by the Region in a separate account on OGMP-TS's books and in the name of the Region. (The Region will retain all its rights, titles and interests in such funds).
3) This separate account must always maintain a positive balance. OGMP-TS cannot accept responsibility for financial shortfalls from regional activities.
4) Investments will remain in the Region's name, and the Region will have complete signature authority.
5) Region will use net assets with donor restrictions for their intended purposes and will communicate those purposes to OGMP-TS when the assets are received. Region will not borrow from assets that have donor restrictions.
6) Region will send to OGMP-TS appropriate payroll documentation for hourly and salaried employees on a mutually agreed schedule.
7) Adhere to OGMP's internal control policies and procedures (below are significant ones):
    a) The Region uses OGMP's expense reimbursement form, check request form, payroll change forms, and cash count form as needed.
    b) The Region appoints a designated board member to review the Regional Minister's expense reimbursements on a quarterly basis.
    c) The Region provides the names of the people who are authorized to code invoices and check requests with account numbers and sign invoices, acknowledging approval. OGMP-TS will not pay from statements or process payments without appropriate authorization.
    d) All income items received should be deposited weekly into OGMP's Fifth Third Bank account via a scanner with an electronic scan of the deposit details forwarded to OGMP-TS. Income instruments can still be made payable to the Great River Region. Offerings received at regional events should be held in dual custody and counted onsite by at least two individuals, using the OGMP-TS Cash Count Form. The currency portion will be placed in a tamper resistant bag and deposited in a local bank as coordinated with OGMP-TS. A signed cash count form will be sent to OGMP-TS within three days of the closure of the event if it was deposited with the bank.
    e) OGMP-TS reserves the right to add, amend or revoke any of the internal control policies and procedures. OGMP-TS will give one month advance notice before the change becomes effective.
8) Maintaining the Region's 501(c)3 status with the IRS and non-profit status with the state of Arkansas. Region has the responsibility of providing OGMP-TS with all forms required by Arkansas in a prompt fashion.
9) Provide OGMP-TS with true and complete information necessary for OGMP-TS to perform its services. Because of the importance to OGMP-TS's services of relevant, accurate and complete information being furnished by the Region, OGMP-TS shall not be liable for any loss, damage, costs or expenses arising from the Region's failure to disclose such information or the Region providing incorrect or incomplete information to OGMP-TS.
10) Responsible and liable for all managerial decisions and guarantees made by the Region including investment decisions as these do not fall under the accounting services OGMP-TS provides.

Fee Schedule:

- Fees based on number and complexity of transactions and services provided.
- Fees will be assessed monthly from the Region's funds by $1,700 for 2026 (which is $20,400 annually). For 2027, the monthly amount will be $1,750 ($21,000 annually) and will continue annually at this level unless a new agreement is made.
- Fees for payroll software services by a 3rd party vendor are passed on to the Region.

With a 90-day notice, either party may end this agreement by action of the Regional Minister and Treasurer or Vice President of Finance for OGMP-TS to be effective at the end of the fiscal year.

We have read the Letter of Understanding and agree to have OGMP-TS provide accounting services under the terms of this intent.

Rev. Alison Robuck _____ 10-8-2026

Signature (Rev. Alison Robuck, Executive Regional Minister) Date

W R Lacy _____ 10-8-2026

Signature (William Lacy, Moderator) Date

We agree to provide accounting services under the terms of this intent to the Region.

_____ _____

Signature (John Goebel, CPA, VP of Finance, OGMP-TS) Date

State of the Region Report

Rev. Alison Robuck – Executive Regional Minister

Regional Assembly – November 14, 2026

It seems nearly impossible that a year has already passed since the Regional Board accepted me as the Search Committee's nominee to serve as your Executive Regional Minister. I remain grateful and blessed as I seek to serve each day with joy, commitment and passion for this beautiful Body of Christ we call the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only...seeking to share the love, compassion and heart of Christ with all we meet.

This past year has brought both celebrations and moments of grief. I have celebrated with congregations beginning new chapters with newly called pastors in their pulpits, and I have looked into the watery eyes of church members grieving the potential closure of their beloved congregation. I have had the joy of celebrating milestone anniversaries of pastors and milestone anniversaries of congregations who have survived and thrived for over 100 years. And I have held in prayer the unspeakable grief of two of our pastors whose grandchildren were murdered. Ministry is painful and messy. I am so grateful that God has given us to one another, to hold each other up when life feels so extraordinarily heavy. May God comfort all who grieve losses of all kinds.

When I look at where we are as a region in 2026, I am both hopeful for the opportunities we have to grow in faith and expand our circle of connections between congregations and clergy. One of the many challenges we face as a region is the sheer distance between us. And although the season of Covid taught us the valuable gift of Zoom, it just isn't the same as being together in person. It is my hope that as we look for opportunities to gather in 2027, we also might seek to find areas where we can combine our resources and collaborate in reaching out to a hurting world. We need one another. None of us does the work of Christ on our own.

This past year, we celebrated the following:

<u>Ordinations:</u>

Rev. Amy Blackman, FCC, Fayetteville (9/13)

<u>Commissioning:</u>

Minister Erin Aylor, FCC, Russellville, AR (9/20)

<u>Installations:</u>

Rev. Dr. Nearline Anderson - Senior Pastor, Indianola Christian Church, MS (4/19)

Dr. Karen Cooke - Minister of FCC, Sherwood, AR (6/21).

Celebrations:

Rev. Dr. Ryan Pfeiffer's 20th Anniversary as Senior Pastor of FCC, Fayetteville, AR

FCC, Harrison, AR 150th Anniversary celebration (10/17-18)

Legacy Dinner on April 30th (27 attendees)

Preaching Engagements:

FCC, Sherwood, AR

Indianola Christian Church, Indianola, MS

Park Hill Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR

First Christian Church, Rogers, AR

First Christian Church, Conway, AR

First Christian Church, Blythville, AR

First Christian Church, Russellville, AR

One of the many joys of serving as a Regional Minister is becoming a member of an extraordinary collegial partnership known as the College of Regional Ministers. This body of faithful servants has proven to be an invaluable resource for me as a new regional minister and the GRR has benefited greatly from the wisdom I have gained from this amazing group of both seasoned and new regional ministers. Included in my responsibilities as Regional Minister is my participation in CRM (College of Regional Ministers) events. In 2026, my participation in CRM events include:

- Attended the installation services of colleagues, Rev. Michael Davison (Oklahoma) and Rev. Kevin McNeil (Tennessee).
- Attended the General Board meeting and the CRM meeting in the spring
- Participated in the first triennium General Assembly (Zoom) 7/10-11
- Attended the New Church Ministry Summit in Nashville, TN hosted by New Church Ministries, with Sam Hubbard and Morgan Szeligowski
- Attended the Disciple Home Mission event in Chicago (8/17-19) where I had the honor of sharing the message during our final worship service.
- Attended the fall General Board meeting (Zoom) 10/23-24
- Attended monthly CRM meetings (Zoom)

I'd like to highlight one of my visits from this past year. On September 19th, I met with the Cabinet members of FCC, Hot Springs, as they began a process to envision what their next chapter in ministry might look like. Although it was just a beginning point, it is important to note that the energy about possible change was palpable...in a good way. I will be heading to FCC, Blytheville later this month to have a similar conversation. If you would like for me to come have a – "What Might our Future Ministry Look Like" conversation with your congregation, please reach out to me soon!

Update on FCC, Slidell:

FCC Slidell ended their visible ministry at the end of 2025. Due to a clerical error more than a decade ago, the Great River Region now owns their property. I worked this spring/summer with remaining members to get the property on the market. The property was listed in August. We have received two offers, which the Executive Team turned down as the property is worth more than nearly twice the lowball offers. The offers also carried an expectation of a bond for deed which the Executive Team does not want to entertain. We can afford to wait for a fair and appropriate offer. The property is valued at $805,000.

2 Additional closures:

We have received communication from two congregations of their intent to close: Covenant Christian Church (Terry, MS) and Thomastown Christian Church (Thomastown, MS). A formal letter from Thomastown might be received prior to our Regional Assembly. A formal letter from Covenant Christian should be coming soon, as well. Once these closures are finalized, we will downsize from 87 to 85 congregations. However, we have recently received a proposal from Andy Burdge (RCOM candidate) for a New Church Start to address the spiritual and humanitarian needs of the Hispanic community in Springdale, AR. This proposal will be considered at our Spring Regional Board meeting and will be addressed by a newly forming New Church Task Force following our March meeting.

Topic for Education, Discussion and Prayer: Economic Justice

During our online General Assembly this summer, we were introduced to (TEDP). Instead of voting on resolutions, valuable time was spent in important conversations and presentations focused on Economic Justice.

Louisiana Interfaith Prayer Vigil

You will hear more about this on Saturday. (Please plan to arrive prior to 9:00 on Saturday morning.) Thank you!

National Initiative to Strengthen Christian Campus Ministries at Colleges and Universities. The Lilly Foundation has an extraordinary grant opportunity for us to explore. Rev. Corey Harrison and I attended an informational Zoom session on November 2nd and will be sharing some exciting information about how the GRR might be a good candidate to apply for one of twenty grants. More to come.

Camp for Disciples Youth

Connecting our youth with Disciples camps continues to be a challenge, since the GRR no longer has a campground of our own. The Regional Board has been asked to consider covering the cost of transporting our

youth to either Athens (in Texas) or other bordering states. A long-term solution will take some creative planning, but we do have funds that we could utilize this summer.

Pea Ridge Church & Cemetery

Saturday afternoon will be a bittersweet celebration as we rededicate Pea Ridge Cemetery to the glory of God. Rose Marie Bryant Jones served as the President of the Pea Ridge Church & Cemetery Association for 40+ years. Her vision for the renewal of the cemetery has been realized through the generosity of Pinnacle Structures. Please join us Saturday afternoon as we caravan to the Cemetery to rededicate to God the holy resting place of Rev. Sarah Lue Bostick, the first African American female to be ordained in our tradition, along with her husband Rev. Mancil Bostick, along with the multitude of other saints resting there. (We have received a letter from the Pea Ridge Church & Cemetery Association requesting their addition to the GRR as a Constituency Fellowship Group. This request will be a part of the Regional Board's work in March as we rewrite the Bylaws & Operating Guidelines.)

Clergy Retreat

We are so grateful that our GMP, Rev. Terri Hord Owens, is able to join us for our Regional Assembly. We are also thrilled that she will be meeting with our pastors at our clergy retreat this coming Spring.

I am so looking forward to being with each of you during the weekend of our 2026 Regional Assembly. (An updated version of this report will be included in the Program Book.)

Faithfully submitted,

Rev. Alison Robuck



Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Regional Committee on Ministry (RCOM) Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

RCOM "Commissions" ministers to serve in a particular ministry in a particular location on a three-year basis. We "Ordain" ministers to serve in ministry wherever their call takes them. Both "Commissioned" and "Ordained" ministers are licensed to serve as "ministers." We evaluate every minister and grant "Good Standing" on an annual basis. In order to remain in "Good Standing" every minister must complete a Healthy Boundaries Training and an Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciliation Training, once every 5 years. It is the mission of the RCOM team to walk alongside candidates on their paths toward serving in ministry, while encouraging and guiding them through the necessary steps in that process.

The RCOM team met with 20 total candidates in 2025—February (8), June (3), and October (9). The RCOM team met with 20 total candidates in 2026—February (3), June (8), and October (9). The RCOM team currently consists of Shawn Wallace (chair), Roosevelt Howard, Nearline Anderson, Corey Harrison, and Alison Robuck (Interim Regional Minister). Shawn Wallace ends his term this year, and we are asking the assembly to call Corey Harrison to serve as the RCOM chair. DC Sills is considering joining the RCOM team.

The following are some highlights from our meetings with candidates over the past 2 years:

> **Corey Harrison** (FCC Hot Springs, AR), **Angela Wrentz** (FCC Whitehall, AR), and **Amy Blackman** (FCC Fayetteville, AR) were approved for Ordination.
>
> **Ellis Robinson** (FCC Fort Smith, AR), **Phillip Smiley** (FCC Fayetteville, AR), and **Ademola Sodeinde ("Dr. D")** (Highland Drive CC, Jonesboro, AR) were approved for Transfer of Ordination.
>
> **5 candidates** were new and met with RCOM for the first time in 2025, seeking Ordination or Commissioning in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An additional **8 candidates** were new and met with RCOM for the first time in 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Shawn Wallace
RCOM, Chair

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Regional Elders Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

New Regional Elder Coordinator, as of Sep. 2026, is Laura DeMann (FCC Bossier). We continue to meet regularly on the first Tuesday of each month, at 10:30am and 7:00pm.

Below are the Regional Elders, their home churches, and the geographical areas they serve.

+ **Rev. Dr. Nearline Anderson,** Indianola Christian, Indianola, MS, serving Northwest and Northeast Mississippi
+ **Rev. Miles Cook,** Park Hill Christian, North Little Rock, AR, serving Central Arkansas
+ **Rev. Laura DeMann,** First Christian, Bossier City, LA, serving North Louisiana
+**Vacant Position**, serving Northeast Arkansas
+ **Rev. Zena Marshall,** First Christian, Ft. Smith, AR, serving Western Arkansas.
+ **Rev. Rita Richardson,** Central Christian, Russellville, AR, serving Southwest Arkansas
+ **Rev. Percy Terrell,** St. Elmo Christian and King David Chapel Christian, Hermanville, MS, serving Central Mississippi
+ **Rev. Dr. Ryan Pfeiffer and Rev. Cheryl Sybrant,** First Christian, Fayetteville, AR, serving Northwest Arkansas
+ **Rev. Ann Pickett-Parker,** New Generation Christian Fellowship, Pascagoula, MS, serving Southeast Mississippi
+ **Vacant Position**, serving Central and South Louisiana

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Laura DeMann
Coordinator, Regional Elders

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Pinnacle Outreach Ministry Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026
First Christian Church, Sherwood, Arkansas

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry officially began May 6, 2013, following unanimous approval of the Regional Board of the Great River Region on March 15-16, 2013.

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry is an extension of Pinnacle Structures, Inc. of Cabot, Arkansas, Rev. Will Feland, President; and the Great River Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Alison Robuck, Executive Regional Minister.

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry is fully funded by Pinnacle Structures, Inc. www.pinnaclestructures.com

Our Mission Statement is: Helping Equip the Faithful for the Work of Christ

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry gives support to clergy, congregations and secular non-profit organizations as they help meet the needs of God's people.

Through financial and other means, examples of what we have supported include:

- Ministers in the Great River Region by supplying biblical commentaries, professional periodicals and sponsoring seminars and retreats to help them become more proficient at faithful leadership and interpretation of the Bible for preaching and teaching
- Congregations regarding specific needs
- The Great River Region regarding specific projects and needs
- Pea Ridge Cemetery in Lonoke County, Arkansas
- Week of Compassion of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Bethany Fellowship Ministry which helps support ministers through the early years of their ministry
- Local, state, national and world hunger relief
- Efforts to help meet needs resulting from natural disasters
- Efforts to help meet the needs of those in Ukraine
- Purchased a new 63-passenger bus for the children at the Khayelihle Children's Village in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- Phillips Theological Seminary
- Battered Women's Shelter of central Arkansas
- Harmony Health Clinic, providing medical and dental care for those without healthcare
- Home for Healing, providing free housing and resources for those of town and state who are receiving treatments at area hospitals
- Partners for Inclusive Communities, Arkansas' Center for Developmental Disabilities, education, research and service
- Providence Park, providing affordable housing and a supportive community for those coming out of chronic homelessness
- New Day New Life, providing housing for those in rehab from chemical dependency

In addition to connections with the above, I serve in the following ways:

- Pulpit supply
- Regional Elder
- Regional Board member
- Regional Assembly Planning Team
- As available, support and attend “Fifth Sunday Fellowship and Worship” of the Arkansas State Fellowship
- Officiate/Assist funeral services
- Officiate/Assist weddings
- Pea Ridge Cemetery support

It is a great blessing and honor to serve alongside and under the direction of Rev. Will Feland and to be of support to Rev. Alison Robuck and the Great River Region.

Respectfully submitted in Christ’s service,
Rev. Miles Cook
Pinnacle Outreach Ministry

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Youth Camp & Conference Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

Our youth commission, consisting of 4 Youths and 4 adults, with Kristen Beach, our staff representative, has been hard at work meeting and planning for our Fall Fandango Retreat. Our message will be about 'Being the Change.'

By the time you get this report, we will have had our retreat!

We continue to talk about how to improve our planning and create an event that is spiritually uplifting for our Youth. We are creating a space for traditions but also a place where they can transform the event to meet their needs of now.

It is good to share that 2 of our Youth from the GRR have been invited to join the Greater Kansas City Youth Commission. Emsley Blackman and Sara Kate Michaels have been attending summer camp at Tall Oaks Christian Camp for several years. Congratulations to both of them, and we hope we will have some good ideas from them and maybe get them to join the GRR Youth Commission next year.

Thank you for your support of our Youth in the region.

Submitted by,
Betty Arambel, FCC Fayetteville
Disciples Youth Representative

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Disciples Women Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

The Great River Regional Disciples Women Cabinet meets monthly via Zoom to plan for our state and regional DW Events. We have a subgroup from the cabinet who serve on the ROSES Interregional Gathering Planning Committee, which meets via Zoom on the first Tuesday of odd months. They meet to plan for the event, which will be hosted by the GRRDW on June 25-27, 2027, at Park Hill Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR.

Planning for the 2027 Interregional ROSES is ongoing. A team from across the three regions meets in odd months to make general plans. The DW Cabinet will take over the hospitality portion of the planning while the interregional team focuses on programming and workshop presenters. We are excited to announce that our General Minister and President, Rev. Terri Hord Owens, will bring the message in our opening worship. Rev. Dr. Debra Reid, Executive Director of Disciples Women's Ministries, will also be featured during the event. Our own Executive Regional Minister will bring the message during our closing worship. The DW of Park Hill Christian Church has agreed to host this event. Promotional materials are available on the webpage devoted to the ROSES gathering. Registration will start in January. A grant application for $5,000 was submitted to the DW Endowment Fund Committee on October 14, 2026. We should know if we will receive this grant by December 1, 2026.

Dr. Debra Reid was the keynote speaker for the Fall Retreat, which was held in Woodworth, LA. The theme, "Milestones in Power, Justice and Faith," was well received, and momentum is building around the justice portion of the GRRDW ministry.

We had sixty-four women register, with fifty-three attending the retreat. Several of those were late cancellations, which caused the retreat to not bring in enough funds to cover the expenses of the event. The cabinet met to discuss that situation, and we have created a policy that will be stated on the registration from here on out about late cancellations. We also sent a request for donations to the Pickering Scholarship fund to help offset the shortage caused by this year's cancellations. Our nominating slate for new cabinet members was approved during the retreat, and those positions will be installed at this Regional Assembly Disciples Women's Luncheon.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy Eastwood, GRRDW President



Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Disaster Response Report August-October 2026 to Regional Assembly
Rev. Ronny Nowell, Disaster Response Coordinator
November 13-14, 2026

It continues to be a blessing for me to be able to do this important work around our Region. I have been blessed to meet so many wonderful people and help some when they were in great need. What a blessing it is to be able to show up and remind people they are not alone, but God, the Church, and our Region are with them. Below, I've just hit some of the highlights of my activity. As always, I am available to come meet with your church to talk about disaster preparedness and how to make a plan. Because we all know it's not a question of if, but rather when, a disaster will affect your community.

Disaster Response Coordinator Activity:

- I continue to work closely with Bethel Christian Church in Coila, MS. Their community has great damage from the ice storms early this year. Then this summer they had extreme heat. Working with Week of Compassion and Pastor Millie Anderson, the church was able to have a fan and water giveaway for people without air conditioning during the heat dome event. I've also been working with the Long-Term Recovery Group that is still dealing with the ice storm damage in town.
- I met with the Board of FCC Sherwood, AR, to begin the process of making a disaster plan for their church.
- Working with Church World Services to have an event at the Regional Assembly where we will pack Hygiene Kits and Period Packs for distribution in times after disasters. We are also planning another event in February to make Disaster Go Bags and hope to have a Disaster Preparedness Fair in conjunction with it for the Week of Compassion emphasis weeks in late Feb.
- Some very exciting news for those in LA and MS: LAVOAD, working with Via Link, now has some amazing tools online to track storms and help locations. Open to the public at https://vialink.org/resident-disaster-resource-map/.
- I had the honor of speaking at the Arkansas Emergency Manager Conference with the ARVOAD group, sharing what faith groups can offer and how emergency managers from around the state can find us through the VOAD.
- I currently meet bi-weekly with the tribal leaders and rebuild leaders for the Pointe Au Chien Indian Tribe in South Louisiana. We are starting Phase 3 of the rebuild down there after Hurricane Ida. We will build 3 more homes with the Insurance Board's Hurricane Fortified Standards. Work will begin in early 2027.
- I am planning for another Mission Work Week in late spring. I'm coordinating with a group called R3SM in Mississippi to coordinate the work. More details to come.
- Rev. Allison Robuck, Rev. DC Stills, Rev. Lyndon Marcotte, and I all had the honor of attending the Prayer Vigil outside the new ICE child and family detention center in Alexandria, LA. It was a powerful time of witness and prayer. There will be more info available at the Week of Compassion table in the exhibit area of the assembly.




I will leave with just a couple of things you can start working towards right now to make sure you and your congregation are better prepared for the storms that may come.

1. We have received grant money that is allowing us to offer a few Mitigation Grants to congregations that want to do some work around their church property to prepare for weather events. Some ideas might be to replace weather stripping around doors, repair gutters, address drainage problems on your property, trim trees that are dangerous, etc. These grants will be for $100 or $500 depending on the scale of your project and are designed as an incentive to get started on the work. Grant Applications are available now here at the assembly and will be online soon.

2. Think about what your local churches do or offer after a disaster?
    a. Open as a shelter with Red Cross,
    b. offer food/pantry,
    c. open as a cooling/warming/charging center,
    d. distribution centers, warehouse supplies or donations,
    e. offer space for a Case Manager to have an office,
    f. Other ideas…

If you are interested in any of these ideas or want to talk more about preparedness, please reach out and let's set a time for me to come visit your congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronny Nowell

Rev. Ronny Nowell
Regional Disaster Response Coordinator
(Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi)
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
(479) 633-7611 cell
ronny@grrdisciples.org

ARKANSAS STATE FELLOWSHIP REPORT TO REGIONAL BOARD (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

For Assembly on 11/13-14/26

Blessings on Blessings GRRDOC Board:

We have had two meetings of the Arkansas State Fellowship since the last board meeting. We convened on May 31, 2026 at Cross Street Christian Church in Little Rock, AR. Rev. Odette Woods brought the message. We also met on August 31, 2026 at Mt. Beulah Christian Church in Pine Bluff, AR. The speaker for this fellowship was their Interim Minister. Both fellowships were inspiring with uplifting music from the fellowship churches. There was also an informative presentation from the Pea Ridge Cemetery Committee at both Fellowships. The food provided by Cross Street and Mt. Beulah was delicious. All five churches were represented.

The next Arkansas State Fellowship will convene on January 31, 2027, at Mt. Sinai Christian Church in North Little Rock. We are looking forward to having a wonderful time in the Lord.

The Arkansas State Fellowship churches are Central Christian Church in Russellville, Cephas Chapel Christian Church in Wrightsville, Cross Street Christian Church in Little Rock, Mt. Beulah Christian Church in Pine Bluff, and Mt. Sinai Christian Church in North Little Rock.
The fellowship is held each 5th Sunday, except in November & December.

Submitted by Marion Carter, Arkansas State Fellowship President

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Associate Regional Minister of Mississippi Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

The following report covers the period of February 2026 - August 2026. Ongoing updates are provided for each initiative/activity planned for the first half of the year through Fall 2026. As support is being provided to our churches, efforts continue to keep our churches connected to the region. Through Jesus Christ, the church continues to be the "rock" for those seeking to be transformed.

Ministry Accomplishments / Highlights last six months:

- **Indianola CC continues to work to bring together the plan for an organized Food Pantry** for needy families! This supply pantry will also provide **"Blessing Bags"** for men and women. Dorsett Drive CC, our sister church on the north of Indianola, has committed to donating funding to help with this cause. Indianola CC space will be used to provide disaster relief for our community as well as area communities that may be affected by natural disasters. While the kickoff date is still to be determined. The DW August meeting will entail finalizing the steps to realize the goal.

Church Leader Updates (concerns) from the past six months:

- Continue to mentor Bethel Christian Church supporting Rev. Millie Anderson, Pastor. There is an Elder installation planned for September 2026; details are being planned by Rev. Millie and her leadership staff.
- Christian Chapel Church, Port Gibson, MS – has secured a Disciples of Christ interim, Rev. Freddie Harris. He anticipated installation services Spring 2026. The update from Rev. Harris is that he experienced a family crisis that set them back on the installation, but they are back on track with planning a date, hopefully sometime in Fall 2026.
- Dorsett Drive CC, Indianola, MS – still meeting with a small congregation of about six. Has committed to assisting Indianola CC, with supplying a food pantry to help the community.
- Communication with FCC Vicksburg is that things are going well.
- United CC Jackson, MS has been having some challenges, prayers are needed.
- Attended Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention Pre-Event Healthy Boundaries Training where I was able to connect with several ministers who were in need of ministerial collaboration regarding standing, etc.
    - Rev. Rufus Edwards – United CC, Jackson, MS
    - Rev. Claudell Wilson – Rose Hill CC, Pattison, MS
    - Rev. Walter Chambers – Fayette Chapel CC, Fayette, MS
    - Elder James Divine – Pine Grove CC, Port Gibson, MS

Ministry - Next six months:

- Provide pulpit supply for churches in need according to the available schedule.
- Endeavor to continue fellowshipping with a church each month (Mississippi Clergy).
- Continue to provide regional support to the best of my ability as a bi-vocational minister.
- Shift focus back to elders training in our region's churches – particularly to those churches who continue to need help where senior pastors are not present, as well as to churches that may have new pastors.

The ARM-MS maintains spiritual growth and fellowship with the Disciples of Christ body accordingly:

- Keeping regular communication with the regional office staff
- Maximizing opportunities where possible to nurture trust and to reach, teach and encourage disciples to become a transformative agent for the local and extended DOC church.
- Attending Regional functions in covenant with Christ, our DOC churches as well as the Greater Church.
- Fellowshipping with DOC ministries to learn and share in the joys, needs and outlooks for the GRRCC, ***e.g.,*** Disciples Women, Black Ministers Ministry, Disciples Men (in support of Rev. Harvey as Disciples Men President)
- Seeking personal and professional training opportunities to sharpen the Ministry of Pastoral Counseling.
    - Board of Professional and Pastoral Counselors certification.
        - Continue to receive training via American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC).
        - Complete Healthy Boundaries and Pro-Reconciliation/ Anti-Racism trainings as required
        - Share in learning experiences with the DOC body (local, state, regional and general church)

Concerns regarding continuation of Associate Regional Minister – MS position; these concerns remain:

1. I remain in deep prayer about how to help our churches (leaders in particular) revive their covenant with the region. In doing this, they reconnect to the vine of Christ to ensure nurturing of their congregations (church families).
2. Many of them truly have the sense of Christian community, but as they are often led by those who either do not desire to transfer their standing, or who outright decide they will lead according to their personal ideals about what church is and should be (while continuing to carry out the order of business under the DOC affiliation).
3. I have experienced some spaces that were hospitable, others not so much. But considering the experiences Jesus Christ and the disciples had to weather, what I experienced was a breeze. Our churches continue to struggle with the social, emotional and spiritual challenges as we continue to struggle with the troubles of a fragmented world.
4. There are systemic barriers that under-gird various church business protocols. In some cases, leadership is open to exploring options for improvement, while others feel there is no need to consider any other options. That is perfectly fine, as we have the option of choice. Those challenges can only be fasted about and prayed over and handed to the Lord for a more excellent intervention.
5. Lastly, at the end of the day, the story we are expected to tell is the story of Christ. We are committed to tell the story and live out our stories by *"Walking in sync with God" with His help, to live our lives in alignment with God's will, actively seeking to understand and follow His guidance in every aspect of our daily decisions and actions, essentially living a life that reflects His values and teachings through prayer, studying scripture, and seeking to discern His presence in our lives.*

This report was updated and respectfully submitted for the reporting period of February 2026 - August 2026 – for the August 2026, GRRCC Board Meeting.

Dr. Nearline Anderson, Associate Regional Minister of Mississippi

Just Love

The Power of Selfless Love Can Change The World.

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Update Just Love-Northshore Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026
Offered by: Rev. Zac Ritchie

Vision

Is to love and serve our neighbors through compassionate action that empowers our community and empowers neighbors to love others.

Mission

We Just Love our Neighbors **COMPASSIONATELY**, meeting their basic needs. (Contemplative Action)

We Just Love our Neighbors **CONNECTIONALLY**, developing deeper relationships and trust. (Faith-Rooted Organizing)

We Just Love our Neighbors **COMPLETELY**, empowering and releasing them to Just Love others. (Prophetic Advocacy)

Strategy



Updates:

- We completed our Strategic Planning with multiple goals that have been reached or are part of our long-term plan.
- Our Wednesday Night Gatherings have reached 25 participants. We are doing 5th Wednesdays at a host's home for more visibility in local neighborhoods.
- We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Family Reach Alliance to move into their facilities and share resources.
- In addition to sharing facilities and resources, we will provide Spiritual Care to their clients as needed. (Zac is a board-certified chaplain).
- We added a new board member and are looking to grow our reach into differing areas of expertise.
- Our Furniture ministry is a big success. We partnered with Family Reach Alliance, West 30's Redemption Project, and Northshore Food Bank Re-Sell Shop to provide for families in need. Particularly, we focus on getting all the necessary furniture by picking up old furniture and donations. The Re-Sell stores (Family Reach Alliance has one as well) give us a deal when we need to buy furniture. This has raised our visibility in the community.
- We are working on grants to provide an extra day of hot meals starting in 2027.
- Working with local community organizations on Trunk or Treats and Fall Fest.
- We established a used jewelry ministry for children and youth, so they can give a Christmas gift to their parents. We focused on Abita Middle School and their Special Education classes. We have done this for two years, and each year it continues to grow.
- We are in talks about expanding into Tangipahoa Parish (Ponchatoula, LA) with other local non-profits and organizations to provide a resource center.
- We focus on being the church without walls as we continue to grow and expand in our area.

Respectfully Submitted by: Rev. Zac Ritchie (10/23/26)

Just Love
Greater New Orleans

JL-GNO 2026 Report to the Great River Region Assembly

Oct 22, 2026 · @Sam Hubbard

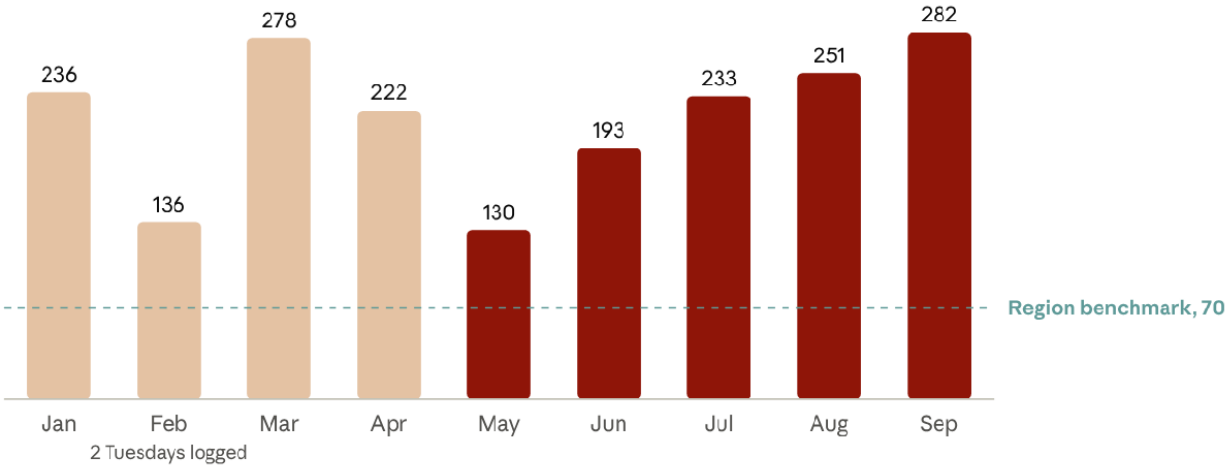
The year so far

Nine months into 2026, Just Love – Greater New Orleans is gathering more than 200 people a month across our programs, about three times the Region's benchmark of 70, and participation has grown every month since May.

Since launching in January 2024, JL-GNO has been building a faith rooted movement for the wounded, the wondering, and the wandering. If our first two years were about starting things, 2026 has been the year we stopped adding and started clarifying.

Participation has grown every month since May, reaching 282 in September

People at our tables each month, 2026: Tuesday meal guests plus program gatherings



Planning Center, January through September 2026 · GSI guests plus group gathering attendance

Most of each month's count is the Tuesday meal. Our program gatherings drew their largest crowds in July and August.

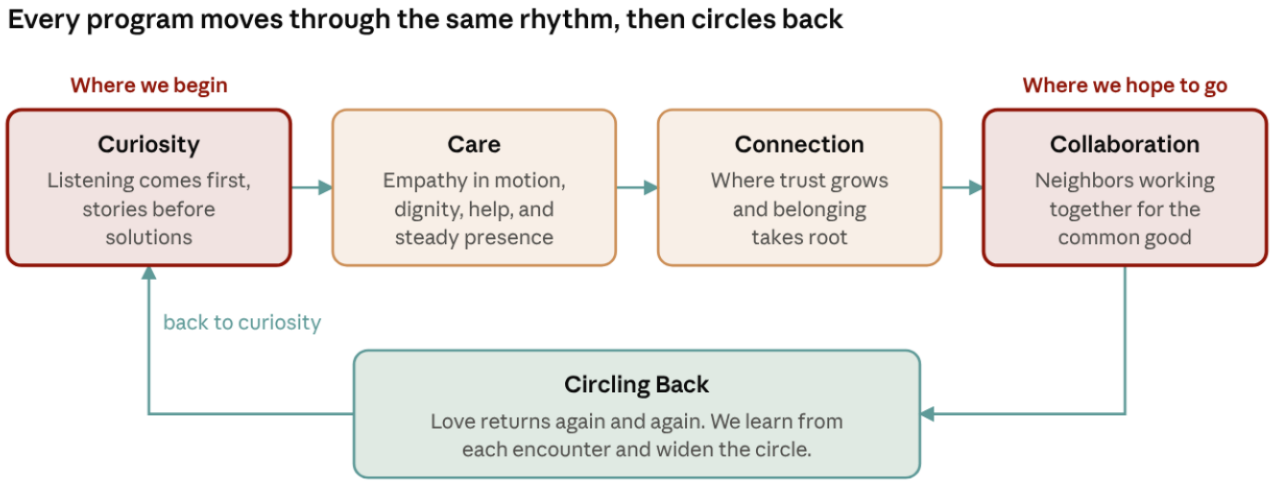
Measure	January through September 2026
Meals served at the Good Samaritan Initiative	1,885
Guest visits at the Tuesday meal	1,482
Volunteer shifts at the Tuesday meal	490
Shelter vouchers connected, each a night indoors	468
Curious Conversations logged since the April launch	80
Curious Krewe gatherings	15
Seasoned Curious Krewe gatherings	15
Foster the Families gatherings	9
Different people at our group gatherings	88
Curious Krewe podcast episodes published	9
Books shared through Curiosity in the Wild	218
Care cards sent	1,163

Every circle we track has widened this year.

Circle	Start of 2026	September 2026
Faith leaders in the GNOIA network	90	almost 300
Curious Krewe roster	57	85
Foster the Families roster	23	32

The Just Love Rhythm

Everything JL-GNO does now runs through one rhythm and two program pillars, the clearest way we know to describe how trust forms and how neighbors move from isolation toward shared life.



the Just Love Rhythm · five movements, one loop

Curiosity names where we begin, and Collaboration names where we hope to go. It follows the pattern of Jesus, who asked questions before he offered answers and shared tables with people long before he asked anything of them. Disciples will recognize the instincts underneath it... Christian unity, freedom of conscience, the open table, and covenant. The language is contemporary. The convictions are ours.

Curiosity: where we begin

The Curious Krewe roster grew 49 percent this year, from 57 to 85, and 525 more people now follow it online. Curiosity is where we make room for real questions, honest stories, and trust across difference.

The Curious Krewe is our signature monthly gathering, where neighbors sit at small tables around real questions, held together by the Curious Code. It meets as Meet the Krewe for newcomers and as the Main Gathering for the wider table. Forty nine different people have attended at least once this year.

The Curious Kouncil is forming now. Several Krewe members have stepped up to help shape where the Krewe goes next.

The Seasoned Curious Krewe is our gathering for older adults. A faithful core of 14 people meets twice a month. Shirley Johnson, one of our founding members, started sending care cards during COVID to stay close to friends and family across the country, and she has sent more than 1,000 cards this year.

Curious Neighbors began at the invitation of our Muslim friends: a small group where Muslim and Christian men gather across difference around one curious question.

The Curious Krewe podcast carries our table conversations to neighbors who cannot make it in person and to people who have not found us yet. It has reached 504 downloads across 32 states, 17 countries, and four continents.

Curiosity in the Wild, our Little Free Library in Central City, has shared 218 books this year, nearly half of them with children.

Collaboration: where we hope to go

The biggest surprise of 2026 is that curiosity keeps producing collaboration. People tell us plainly that they want to practice this, and then they bring their neighbors, congregations, and organizations with them.

The Good Samaritan Initiative gathers every Tuesday at Mt. Zion United Methodist in Central City, alongside partner congregations from four traditions, for neighbors experiencing homelessness, especially elders.

Curious Conversations launched at that table in April, funded by a National Benevolent Association Mission and Ministry grant. It places one inviting question on every table and equips volunteers to sit down with guests rather than process them. One guest, a former fine dining chef, now shares his recipes with us, hoping some will be served at the very meals he attends. NBA has just renewed its support, and the next season will deepen the practice at GSI and pilot it with the Seasoned Curious Krewe.

Foster the Families shares meals, spiritual care, and space with foster families, caregivers, and their therapists. It has averaged about 22 people a gathering this year, with 83 visits from families not yet on our roster.

Interfaith work has grown faster than anything else. The Greater New Orleans Interfaith Association, which I convene, has more than tripled this year, and now gathers faith leaders from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Baha'i, and Hindu traditions alongside the Communities of Hope Interfaith Coalition. In September more than 150 people gathered for the Blessed Are the Peacemakers Interfaith Vigil, an afternoon of prayer centered on human dignity.

That same month, twelve of us from across Greater New Orleans traveled to Washington at the invitation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. We studied how religious communities responded when human dignity came under assault, and came home with an assignment. That group is now bringing the Museum's exhibition *Some Were Neighbors: Choice, Human Behavior, and the Holocaust* to New Orleans in 2027, first at Dillard University and then at Loyola University New Orleans.

Mutual aid communities

The newest thing we are building is mutual aid: neighbors in every JL-GNO circle sharing everyday care, skills, and time with one another, so care flows in every direction across the community.

Care already happens inside each of our circles. Mutual aid connects them, so someone who found belonging at the Seasoned Curious Krewe can help, and be helped by, someone from Foster the Families or the Tuesday meal. It is reciprocal by design: everyone has something to offer, whether a skill, a ride, a meal, or an hour, and everyone will at some point need something back.

We will pilot it inside our own groups first. Once it takes root, we want to offer the same model to our partner and interfaith congregations.

It is an old practice. The earliest church shared what it had so that there was not a needy person among them (Acts 4:34).

Who we know, and how well

We began tracking relationships this year, and by the end of September, 24 people had stepped into leadership, the number we care about most.

Relationship	People, September 30
Curious	167
Connected	73
Collaborating	24
Circling Partners	60
Total	324

Someone moves from Curious to Connected when they begin showing up regularly, giving, or serving, and from Connected to Collaborating when they step into leadership. Circling Partners are the leaders and organizations we keep returning to.

We are also learning where the rhythm strains. Interest is easier to grow than presence, and we are treating that gap as our central design question for the year ahead.

Abby's story

Abby found us through the podcast. She had been hurt by the church and was cautious of anything close to it, so she researched the Curious Krewe and JL-GNO carefully before she ever walked in, making sure we were not setting her up. She kept coming, brought her partner, and is now one of our most active members.

She once told me that even the word "service" is spoiled for her, though the desire to care for people never left. This summer I sent her a video of national news coverage of our interfaith immigration work, the way you send something to a friend. She posted it on her own social media. The whole video says "interfaith."

Somewhere along the way, that became safe enough for her to hand to the world. Curiosity was the only door that was ever going to work for her.

Stewardship

JL-GNO carries no debt, the Great River Region's support secures our leadership through 2028, and individual giving gained real momentum this fall.

Leadership is funded. The Region's investment covers the Executive Director's salary and benefits through 2028, separately from our operating budget. It is the reason a small movement could become a clear one, and we are grateful for it every single month.

Neighbors are giving more. Individual giving gained real momentum late this summer. August and September together brought in more than January through July combined, and our year end campaign is underway. Our deepest hope is for this work to rest increasingly on the neighbors it serves.

Grants support specific programs. The National Benevolent Association has supported our older adult work for three years running, most recently with a $4,000 Mission and Ministry grant to grow Curious Conversations. A Bridging Divides proposal to the Lilly Endowment, led by St. Charles Center for Faith + Action with JL-GNO as a core partner, awaits a decision in December.

The work is beginning to fund itself. This year we added new income from the work itself: Curious Krewe and JL-GNO merch, a founding member's memoir published with JL-GNO, and preaching honoraria returned to the ministry.

Looking ahead

The next season is about going deeper with the neighbors we already know and widening the circle with care.

Deepening the Good Samaritan Initiative. With renewed support from the National Benevolent Association, Curious Conversations will become a steady practice at GSI, so the elders we serve each week are met with questions and listening as well as practical help.

Piloting the Seasoned Curious Krewe. The same grant will help us shape a gathering made for older adults, at a pace and in places that work for them, and learn what it takes to sustain it.

Mutual aid that grows from relationship. We'll pilot a simple way for the circles we gather to care for one another directly, so a need named at the table can be met by the people around it.

Some Were Neighbors. In 2027, the exhibition from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum comes to Dillard University and then to Loyola University New Orleans, an invitation for our whole city to ask what neighbor love requires of us when dignity is under threat.

The Curious Krewe beyond New Orleans. Other communities have started asking how to gather their own Krewe. We'll begin sharing the practice and the Curious Code with congregations and partners who want to try it.

Forming more community chaplains. Our long hope is for this ministry to multiply through people. Through chaplaincy formation and coaching, we're building the path for others to carry this kind of presence into their own neighborhoods.

An invitation

The simplest way to be part of this work is to gather with us, and the Region's congregations are welcome in two ways.

Host a Curious Krewe table. Bring the Curious Krewe to your congregation for an evening of questions, stories, and listening across difference. We'll bring the questions, walk your people through the Curious Code, and help you host it well. All it takes is a room, a table, and neighbors willing to be curious together.

Wear the work. Curious Krewe and Just Love shirts and gear help carry the conversation into everyday places, and every purchase supports this ministry. You can find them at justloveneworleans.org/merch.

To host a table or learn more, reach out anytime at sam@justloveneworleans.org.

Thank you, Great River Region, for believing in this ministry and for making room for a new kind of church to take shape on the streets and at the tables of Greater New Orleans. None of this happens without you.

With Grace, Peace, and every Good,

Rev. Samuel J. Hubbard II

Movement Initiator, Just Love – Greater New Orleans

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Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
General Board Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

The General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) met on Friday, October 23, and Saturday, October 24, to hear reports, approve minutes from various meetings, and discuss business items of the General Board.

Rev. Seth Stearns, with the Spiritual Life and Learning Center in Dublin, OH, presented on the topic of "Dialogue," saying, "Discourse is the path to discerning truth together." He explained, "***Debate*** aims to win and seeks the 'other sides' weaknesses as the target. ***Dialogue*** aims to understand, suspending one's position long enough to attempt to see what the 'other' sees. ***Dialectic*** aims to synthesize information, building a larger view that allows room for both perspectives."

It was helpful to be reminded to ground ourselves in the spiritual discipline of deep listening and conversation with people of differing viewpoints.

Topic for Education, Discussion, and Prayer (TEDP) Report findings were shared as discussed online during General Assembly in July around the subject of Economic Justice. Across the Church in the US/Canada, 229 summaries were submitted from individuals and 52 small groups, indicating that the top 3 issues of economic justice that congregations/communities are facing include:

- **Food insecurity** (in multiple contexts including care for the elderly, impoverished, and areas where food deserts exist) was named in two out of every three responses (67%).
- **Housing and housing-related issues** (e.g. homelessness, utility costs, property taxes) were named in six in ten responses (60%).
- **Healthcare** was noted in more than half of the responses (52%).

The report was shared as a tool for the GB to better understand issues of economic justice that local congregations face and how they are responding. The full report can be viewed at disciples.org (under the GA Triennium drop-down tab)

The GB was tasked with viewing, discussing, and editing the **Mission Committee Report** as it works to define its role/purpose as part of the GB. The process is lengthy, as these suggestions are then submitted to the Executive Team and Governance Committee for word-smithing and will eventually return to GB for more discussion and vote before being incorporated into the Standing Rules for the General Board.

Bill Bailey, GB parliamentarian, and Rev. Terri Hord Owens shared information regarding who is eligible (congregations, Regions, General Ministries and Partners) to submit **"Statements of Witness" (formerly known as Resolutions) and Alternative Perspective Reports (APR)** to be shared at General Assembly. Alternative Perspective Reports are a new addition to allow for contrasting perspectives that can be voted upon by the GA for attaching to any approved Statement of Witness in effort to include

contrasting perspectives. More information regarding submission deadlines, including an informational video, will be shared with the wider church soon.

Statistics and review of the **2026 online GA** were shared. 2,483 people registered, with 101 local gathering sites in 27 regions. Adam Frieberg of the Tech Team shared frustration with the vendor platform (BigMarker) that misconfigured their system, explaining that lost signals led to tech disruptions.

For the **2026 ALEX reports,** churches will be asked to go ahead and submit names of their representative voting delegates (up to 3) for the 2027 online General Assembly.

Themes/dates for upcoming assemblies were shared:
GA 2027 (online) July 9-10 "Beyond: For this reason we live worthy of the call" based on Ephesians 3:14-4:4
GA 2028 (in person) July 8-11 "Living Ready: Courageous Together" based on Joshua 1:9 will be held at Donald E. Stevens Convention Center in Rosemont (northwest of Chicago, right next to O'Hare International Airport).

Discussion continued on Saturday within individual group meetings of the Mission Committee, Finance Committee, and General Assembly Committee, followed by **GB business items** to ratify amendments submitted by the Pension Fund Board of Directors and forward preliminary Mission Committee Rules to the Governance Committee for more work.

Steven Gower of Finance Committee gave a report on giving, stating that while there has been a long-term decline in giving to Disciples Mission Finance, across the board giving is down less than 1% over the life of the church this year, and that was good news. Within the Finance Committee, there are several active groups focusing on things like congregational giving, financial literacy (resources/videos/fact sheets) for the wider church, and metrics and guidelines for reviewing financial reports from the Regions and other entities of the church who are required to submit their financials. He asked, "How do we get congregations more involved in giving to DMF?"

Eight small groups met to discuss the feedback received from the 2026 Topic for Education, Discussion, and Prayer (TEDP Report) and were asked: 1) Should the focus continue to be on Economic Justice? 2) Should we choose a different topic for 2027 GA discussion? 3) What suggestions do you have regarding content of the survey to be sent to congregations asking for input on Topics for Education, Discussion, & Prayer? Thoughts were compiled and submitted for Executive Committee discernment.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Sybrant
GRR General Board Rep

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)
Executive Committee Report to Regional Assembly
November 13-14, 2026

The Great River Region Executive Committee met to address topics of the GRR in 2026. These include:

February 6	Personnel & Strategic Planning
February 17	Strategic Planning
February 24	Personnel
May 7	Personnel
May 12	Personnel
May 26	Strategic Planning
October 8	Bylaws

The Executive Committee has been in conversation throughout the year regarding the Slidell property throughout 2026. Discussions surrounding Strategic Planning point the GRR toward seeking "life" for our congregations even as the leadership is called to address the needs and concerns of churches and the properties which are declining. Personnel celebrates the ongoing and incredible work of a terrific GRR team. We offer our thanks to them for their efforts throughout Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The Bylaws Committee is reviewing, researching and addressing the needs of the GRR in 2027. There are a number of significant edits that will need to be made to the Bylaws and Operating Guidelines which the Assembly will need to address in the coming months. One primary topic will be to align the gathering of the Assembly with that of the General Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Zena Featherston Marshall
GRR Moderator Elect

Great River Region CC (DOC) Regional Board Nominating Slate

						Board Composition						
	2020-2022	2022-2024	2024-2026		2026-2028	AR	LA	MS	M	F	Cauc	AA
Moderator	John Johnson	*Bobbie Yellott	*Bill Lacy		Ryan Pfeiffer	1			1		1	
1st Vice Mod/Moderator Elect	Bobbie Yellott	Bill Lacy	Ryan Pfeiffer	Zena Featherston Marshall	Zena Featherston Marshall	1				1	1	
Treasurer	Deborah Nunerley		Alfreda Brown		Alfreda Brown	1				1		1
Secretary	*Victoria Prevost	Vanessa Bostick		*Carol Madere	Carole Madere		1			1	1	
RCOM	Ryan Pfeiffer *Rolling off in October 2023	Shawn Wallace			Corey Harrison	1			1		1	
General Board Rep	Alison Robuck	LaShaundra McCarty	*Ronny Nowell	Cheryl Sybrant	Cheryl Sybrant	1				1	1	
Member at Large/Finance	Shawn Casey Allen	Nick Koontz	*Walter Smith	Vacant	Bonnie Simerly		1			1	1	
Member at Large/Finance	Paul Seal	DC Sills										
Member at Large/Finance	Delaine Baughtman		Linda Hampton		Linda Hampton	1				1	1	
Member at Large/Governance	Felecia Wolfe Jennings		Mike Snell		Mike Snell	1			1		1	
Member at Large/Governance	Donald Warren	Jeffery Murphy										
Member at Large/Governance	Daniel White		Beverly Utnage		Beverly Utnage	1				1	1	
Member at Large/Mission	Ruby Howard	*Carol Madere		Vacant								
Member at Large/Mission	Kalie Rhodes	Cinder Bailey-Dorsey										
MCMC	Rufus Edwards	Rena Baker			Pamela Dubose			1		1		1
AR State Fellowship	*Rita Richardson			*Marion Palmer-Carter	*Marion Palmer-Carter	1				1		1
GRR DW President	Carol Rhein	Pernella Shortie	Stacy Eastwood		Deborah Spring	1				1		1
DM President	Harvey Anderson				Harvey Anderson			1	1			1
Disciples Youth Rep	Sam Harrison	Ben LeMaster	Emma Davidson	*Khonrad Bales / Betty Arambel	Mark Dingler	1			1		1	
Disciples Young Adult Rep	LaShaundra McCarty	Patricia Ball										
Regional Elders	Miles Cook		*Holly Jo Engle		Laura DeMann		1			1	1	
						11	**3**	**2**	**5**	**11**	**11**	**5**

(RA 2026-8) GRR Resolution to Express Appreciation to the Host Congregation

Whereas, the Regional Assembly of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting November 13-14, 2026, in Sherwood, AR, recognizes that the sharing of the truth, as followers of Christ, we are "rooted in love" has been enriched through the warmth and hospitality of the members of First Christian Church and

Whereas, these gatherings of the region are important in fulfilling our mission and strengthening our covenantal partnerships,

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Regional Assembly of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting November 13-14, 2026, in Sherwood, AR, expresses heartfelt appreciation to the members of First Christian Church, Sherwood, AR, for their dedication to extending the hospitality of Christ through their gifts of time, talent, and resources to create a meaningful experience for the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as we continue living our faith as those who are "rooted in love". A special word of gratitude to Jennifer Mikesell and her crew for creating the beautiful banners which have set the tone for our weekend…to Peggy Griffin and her kitchen crew for hosting Friday evening's dinner… and finally to Deb Flynn and her crew for preparing the facilities to host this special event.

Be It Further Resolved, that the Regional Assembly Local Arrangements Committee and Regional Assembly Planning Committee receive our appreciation for their time and dedication in creating an inspiring gathering of important work and inspiring worship.

Motion by: _____

Second by: _____

Action: Adopt