REGIONAL PROFILE
Christian Church in Arizona
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The Christian Church in Arizona encompasses the entire state of Arizona with congregations concentrated in the greater metropolitan region of Phoenix and Tucson. Within its twenty-three congregations and approximately 3500 members, the Region reflects much of the cultural, political, and socio-economic diversity of the state. As good Disciples, we also experience a wide range of theological views among and within our congregations.

Regional operations are carried out by the Regional Minister, a full-time Regional Ministry Administrator and part-time staff coordinating Youth Ministries and Women's Ministries. Lay and clergy leaders serve on the Administrative Council, which provides guidance on business matters, and the Mission and Focus Team, which provides the program leadership to the Region. The Hispanic Convención has its own leadership team and moderator, who also serves on the Regional Board. Our Regional Assembly meets every two years, and the Convención has a separate biannual meeting, though we have met together before. Thanks to generous endowments, the Christian Church in Arizona itself enjoys financial stability.

Our churches are a mix of Hispanic and predominantly Anglo congregations. Approximately one in seven of our members attends church where Spanish is the primary language spoken in worship. We celebrate this diversity while acknowledging our need to work for unity among all our congregations—a work requiring us to honestly address history and systemic racism within our church.

Although political diversity exists, our Region has a strong interest in social justice. In 2010, in the face of Arizona's papers-please law, SB 1070, the Region passed two resolutions — 2010-03 calling for hospitality and 2010-02 explicitly condemning the bill. Indeed, one of our congregations began the Humane Borders ministry, which provides water to those crossing the desert. That year a resolution acknowledging human-caused climate changed also passed. In 2015, we led the General church in recognizing the need to end the stigma of mental health and offer paths of support by sponsoring GA-1523 Becoming a People of Welcome and Support to People with Mental Illness and/or Mental Health Disorders, which was passed by the General Assembly. Finally, many of our churches are Open and Affirming of individuals regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Based on the cultural landscape, our interest in social justice, our diversity, and the number of churches experiencing change, we sense our Region is in a time of transition and potential transformation. Most congregations have young pastors in their call for five years or less. In addition, surveys conducted this year around the Search and Call process for a new Regional minister revealed our desire for new ideas and new ways to energize and sustain ministries that will bring vitality to our congregations and communities. They also expressed a hope that the Region not only provide stable guidance and strong administrative support, but also be a source of dynamism.

This reinforces a Congregational Vitality survey from two years ago in which congregations named their most pressing needs. In addition to concerns regarding stewardship approaches and techniques for effective use of our facilities, surveys showed a desire for more transformational Christian education and small group interactions as well as more authentically engaging evangelism.

In our desire to become more unified; grow in faith, love, and acts of justice; and ultimately become more fully partnered in God's work, the Christian Church in Arizona stands at the cusp of new possibilities for great things.