Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin

Regional Profile and Position Description

Regional Profile

In October 2024, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Michigan voted to *emerge* together as one region. This decision reflects our conviction that, in the process of coming together, we have the opportunity to more fully know and more powerfully reflect the love of God. We aspire now to be a region where our differences enrich us, our partnerships empower us, and our values unite us in following Jesus as Disciples of Christ.

Our region reflects a rich tapestry of communities and traditions, all of which enriches our collective being and offers unique opportunities for connection and collaboration. As Disciples, we are deeply relational, recognizing that it is the people in the pews, on the prayer teams, and serving on the committees who make up the Church. We celebrate our exceptionally active lay leaders (we think they're exceptional, anyway!), our committed clergy, and our talented regional staff. We value our congregations and the variety of experiences, theological perspectives, and cultural identities each one represents. We also long to be even more connected, more collaborative as we live into our identity as *a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.*

The emerging Region of Michigan and Illinois & Wisconsin includes over 150 congregations, including a representation of National Convocation, NAPAD and Obra Hispana affiliated congregations. Our emerging region consists of 154 congregations (Illinois & Wisconsin – 122, Michigan – 32) with approximately 20% of congregations reporting 50 or more in worship. Geographically, our region encompasses urban centers like Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee; the beauty of the Great Lakes; and the rolling prairies and small towns of the Midwest.

Our emerging region stewards two campgrounds that provide sacred spaces for connection, renewal, and discipleship. The Crystal Conference Center in Michigan hosts programs that nurture faith formation and spiritual growth for all ages. Meanwhile, the Walter Scott Learning Center in Illinois blends camp and retreat experiences with eco-justice initiatives (including a growing herd of goats) and a focus on faithful stewardship of God's creation. We are also home to two educational institutions: Eureka College in central Illinois, where abolitionists founded a school for servant leaders to be prepared for lives of purpose, and the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago, which has shaped theologians, ministers, and justice-seekers for over a century.

Together, we strive to be a region where congregations and leaders are encouraged, equipped, and empowered to share God's grace and love and to welcome *new* Disciples into our midst. Our longstanding commitment to anti-racism and reconciliation continues to evolve as we take responsibility for our past and learn from one another. Our active women's ministry fosters connection across the region. Through initiatives like Transformation Ministries and Clergy and Lay Education programs, we cultivate congregational vitality, spiritual growth, and leadership development. In the emerging Region of Michigan and Illinois & Wisconsin, we are committed to doing the hard and faithful work of becoming the church God calls us to be. We welcome candidates who feel called to journey with us.

Role of the Regional Minister

The emerging Region of Michigan and Illinois & Wisconsin seeks a Regional Minister who will prioritize the work of the local church by caring for pastors and congregations and broadening opportunities for leadership development. We are looking for a leader who can foster honest dialogue and cultivate a team approach to ministry at every level. We hope for a shared ministry with someone who brings new insight to the careful and creative stewardship of our resources, holding us accountable to our most deeply held values and challenging us to be more effective at what matters most. Such a leader will be comfortable helping us to promote balance and prioritize well-being and will be able to facilitate candid conversation about any number of divisions — historical, political, cultural, economic, theological — that keep us from doing the work of love together.

We seek a Regional Minister, ordained in the Disciples of Christ and experienced in building up the church and its leaders, who will attend to the life of the region with pastoral sensitivity and who embodies humility, vision, and a commitment to the covenantal relationships that define our Disciples tradition. In the wise words of our General Minister and President, Rev. Terri Hord Owens, great candidates will be FAT — **F**aithful, **A**vailable, and **T**eachable.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Spiritual Leadership

- Cultivate a deep and intentional spiritual life in which the Regional Minister's own faith, theology, wisdom, and practices can be nourished and refined.
- Seek to understand the diversity of theologies and values within our emerging region, help us to name and live into what is shared, and teach us to navigate our differences faithfully.
- Offer spiritual and moral leadership, grounded in faith, that is responsive to the realities of our world without being driven or confined by political party lines.
- Alert the region to any ways that we might support the Regional Minister's own spiritual life.

2. Pastoral Duties

- Serve as pastor to our region, caring and creating networks of care for our pastors and congregations and being in regular conversation with them.
- Be especially present with those in particular need of guidance, support, and celebration.
- Recognize the limitations of any one regional minister or regional staff and help us to develop new ways that we might care for one another.

3. Administrative Leadership

- Oversee the regional office and lead regional staff, taking care to support their wellbeing and nurture their growth as leaders.
- Supervise the region's finances, offering leadership in budgeting, spending, and the ongoing consideration of how our resources might best be used to support the work of the church.
- Meet with regional committees as needed to offer guidance, encouragement, constructive feedback, insight and support.
- Serve as the liaison between the regional staff and the regional board.

4. Oversight of Search and Call

- Guide congregation through the process as they search for and call pastoral leadership.
- Meet with search committees as needed, helping them to discern the values and needs of the congregation with regard to a pastor.
- Guide and support pastors entering the search and call process within the region.

5. Facilitation of Partnerships and Shared Ministries

- Serve as the liaison between our emerging region and expressions of the general church.
- Lead the regional staff in building relationships and active communication between the region and the region's congregations.
- Actively work to nurture relationships and build partnerships between congregations, ministries, pastors, lay leaders, and other entities of our emerging region that will strengthen our shared ministry and reduce the burden on any given church or staff member.
- Consider how the region's resources might be used creatively and effectively to develop and sustain such partnerships.