

# GB-22-1218

**Name of ministry:**

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF THE  
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

**Ministry**

**Executive/Regional**

**Minister name:**

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**Ministry**

**Executive/Regional**

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

Our Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR) enjoys its seat within three states, Las Vegas, Nevada, Hawaii, and most of its congregations exist in Southern California. According to a 2019 American Community Survey, “no race or ethnic group constitutes a majority of California’s population.” Other assessments show California has the highest total number of Hispanics and Asian Americans of any state in the US. Only Hawaii has a higher percentage of Asian Americans. This is important learning, because it reveals we have a host of diversities.

Amid the pandemic, the Region and all congregations were forced to reimagine community, worship, fellowship, and meetings, etc. Our region, which enjoys active, thriving and growing Racial / Ethnic ministries (National Convocation, NAPAD and Obra Hispana). These bodies were affected more severely by the pandemic/s, our congregations, regional and general church were steadfast in prayer and provided support of all kinds. Together, we witnessed a strong resilience and stronger congregations and communities. These were able to deepen in relationship, expand discipleship, develop leadership and reimagined service

to the surrounding communities. A reimagined praxis was / is born. Our region continues to enjoy vitality from this time of creativity and a new and living way. Our congregations have continued to respond to the societal inequities, public challenges, and our changing needs as we face the future being shaped, together.

The region calls and continues to support a staff that is reflective of and dedicated to serve its diverse make-up. Thank you in large part to the faithfulness and generosity of congregations and regional leadership past and present. The PSWR has an economic stability. This year, amidst many difficulties brought on by the pandemic, we are excited to re-open our camp and conference centers, summer camp programs and look forward to hosting a tri-regional youth weekend event (November 11th – 13th) in the San Bernardino Mountains, CA.

We are discovering new and living ways of being church in this pandemic. We are working hard to assess and reassess what is most important for our continued flourishing. Our region is confident in its forging ahead, “Siguiendo el Camino” (continuing on the way) God has called for our being in this world.

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

Our Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR) like many other regions across the life of our church continues to be challenged with this question (as posed by Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* pg. 142) "How can the gospel “come alive” in all these different cultural contexts, and still be the same authentic gospel? This is the problem (challenge) of contextualization.” This citation comes from my readings during my days in seminary. I believe it rings true still to our current times and experiences.

Our congregations and Region and General church are made up of a beautiful tapestry. As already made

mention, the PSWR has a diverse make-up and spans across a wide spectrum of culture, race, ethnicity, identities, theological convictions, and political ideologies. It is beautiful when we assemble or gather as a region (the past two years, virtually) for worship. Although, we become challenged when called to deepen our relationships and respect the many theological convictions and political views or differences that are held. This is a challenge, when there is an inability to see each other eye to eye and hold our views to “be the same authentic gospel.”

Indeed, in the PSWR, “Unity is our polar star.” Unity can and has become messy at times. Throughout the years, many of our congregations and clergy have continued to let love to lead the way. We work hard to honor our diversity and inclusion. We are reminded not to power over one another. The PSWR has taken seriously its call to honor the sacred in everyone. It demonstrates this commitment by holding accountable our clergy to programmed Pro-Reconciling and Anti-Racism education. Several of our congregations are reaching out and working to educate and train its lay leadership and members as well.

The PSWR, like many other regions, are facing challenges in transforming some existing congregations and launching new communities. Our New Church and Transformation Committees are in the process of reimagining its efforts in this challenge of contextualization. Our New Church Committee with years of learnings, and recent outcomes are poised to revolutionize its focus.

As the PSWR works to assess and reassess what is most important for its flourishing. We are seeing more and more possibilities for the gospel to “come alive” in our midst. This remains a challenge, when we are reminded by the words of Jesus, in Luke 10: 2, that the harvest is

plentiful, but the workers are few” and need the word. Go! (vs. 3). We remain prayerful, faithful, confident, and cautiously optimistic as we live through pandemic/s.

It is our hope to recall and recapture part of our PSWR legacy by realizing new community centers through partnerships and / or the re-use of some of our sacred spaces. We have identified one or two cities to begin, again and look to build, create, and share with others sustainable models that could be replicated in the PSWR and other regions, in the next year.

Our Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR) has a rich history and witness of congregations meeting the changing needs of its surrounding communities. This continues to be carried out in many forms, spiritually, with education, by public advocacy, addressing hunger and poverty, providing social, health and wellness services.

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

It was 80 years ago, All Peoples Community Center, South Central Los Angeles, was founded and launched by Disciples with this same yearning and goal in mind and at heart (meeting the changing needs of its community). In this same Spirit, we watched the birth of Eastmont Community Center, East Los Angeles and Project Impact, Lynnwood, Los Angeles. In the past few months, the Executive Directors of each center have been meeting with our Regional Leadership to build mutual relationship (synergy). While, new and living ways are being imagined and planned, to replicate these centers and services all throughout our region.

It was 80 years ago, and still a vision of PSWR Disciples and many across our church like former DCEF President, Rick Reisinger with “a vision for facility re-use... as new church incubators and non-profit service hubs.” This is one of several ongoing efforts to engage PSWR congregations, clergy and leaders into joint mission and ministry opportunities. Those that promote or

encourages or depends on our unity and expanding of the reign of God in our midst.

I / we hope to witness newer tangible efforts like the one mentioned that helps to address our communities' changing needs (including that of our congregations), bringing healing and wholeness in our fragmented world. While, raising an awareness and beacon of our congregations' light to the world.

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

I was installed as Regional Minister of the Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR) on October 19, 2019. In turn, this means that the PSWR has more experience with my regional ministry through the pandemic or virtually than "in-person." I / we have witnessed the greatness of our covenant, the bonds that hold us, grace, and love we enjoy in Jesus Christ for each other. I / we give thanks to God for these.

The PSWR is grateful for the work of our General Church, General Units and Ministries, and this General Board and Staff.

**How can we pray for your region/ministry?**

Please continue to pray for communities, congregations, and clergy who were affected more severely by the pandemic/s.