

MARKS OF A FAITHFUL REGIONAL CHURCH

The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes three expressions in the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): congregational, regional and general. This document seeks to delineate those ministry responsibilities that are entrusted to the regional expression of the church (The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), paragraph 20). As you read through it, this expression of the church is referred to as “the Region.” The examples that follow each of the twelve “marks” are presented to enable persons to learn about specific ways in which these marks are manifest in the life of the church. They are not intended to limit the creative imagination that God inspires in the regional church.

1. PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

The Region gives spiritual leadership, enables the ministry of evangelization, and calls a Regional Minister who serves as a sign of the unity of the church in sacrament and service.

2. CARING FOR CONGREGATIONS

The Region resources congregations and extends consulting services in such areas as ministerial transition, problem-solving, conflict resolution, renewal (transformation), and planning for the future, as well as celebrations of congregational life such as anniversaries, dedications, installations and retirements.

3. ENABLING CONGREGATIONS TO DO THINGS TOGETHER THAT CANNOT BE DONE ALONE

The Region provides opportunity for fellowship groups, outdoor ministry, congregational transformation, new church starts, anti-racism initiative, education for global mission, and such events as Regional assemblies for sharing and nurture.

4. CALLING OUT AND DEVELOPING LEADERS

The Region assists individuals and congregations in discerning God’s call as they move through life’s journey. The Region creates and provides leadership opportunities in a manner that equips and models good leadership. Recognizing that leadership is a grace, a gift, and a skill, the Region helps in locating the resources and education needed to fulfill an individual’s calling.

5. CARING FOR MINISTERS AND THE MINISTRY

The Region provides care for ministers and their families. The Region helps promote healthy relationships between congregations and their leaders. The Region assists clergy and congregations in the Search and Call process in order to match the needs of congregations with the particular gifts and graces of ministerial leaders.

- 6. TEACHING AND DEFENDING THE APOSTOLIC FAITH**
The Region will actively address faith formation, helping people understand their roots, address prophetic and public witness in the world, and be led to grow in healthy directions.
- 7. GATHERING AS A REGIONAL EXPRESSION OF THE CHURCH**
The Region is an important expression of the whole Body of Christ. In assemblies, educational events, ordinations, missional experiences, outdoor ministries, and at other times, the Region celebrates its life as a community faithful to God and Jesus Christ.
- 8. MANAGING THE CHURCH'S RESOURCES**
The Region models faithful stewardship, responsible clarity, and full accountability in its ministry. The Region calls and maintains a staff, providing supervision and support, a fair and just work environment, and good fiscal practices, including an annual audit.
- 9. ENCOURAGING NEW FORMS OF MISSION AND MINISTRY**
The Region provides support for new church starts, congregational revitalization and transformation strategies. It assists congregations in their efforts to be relevant, while not compromising the faithfulness of the church to Scripture and our Disciples heritage and core values.
- 10. TEACHING STEWARDSHIP**
The Region interprets the global mission of the church, promotes the funding of mission and ministry, teaches stewardship as a lifestyle, and cares for all God's creation.
- 11. ADVANCING THE PRIORITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**
The Region promotes the concept of whole church, and has a primary role in advocating and supporting the denomination's mission and vision.
- 12. LEADING IN ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES**
The Region joins with its congregations in an historic commitment to Christian unity. Significant points of ecumenical work for most will include our partnerships with the United Church of Christ and Churches Uniting in Christ. When there is opportunity, the Region will be involved in creating an understanding and knowledge of different faith traditions.

(Written October 1993, Adopted December 1993, Revision Adopted by Regions March 2007)