

# KANSAS CITY REGION 2022



## A FUTURE STORY

It was a balmy summer evening at Tall Oaks. The Junior High Camp was entering its final days, and some adult leaders were taking a break by the campfire as their energetic “charges” were expending their last ounces of energy. The sounds of nature, being punctuated with sounds of youthful enthusiasm, laughter, and what might appear to the untrained eye as chaos.

Philip: (Drinking from his cup) What a great day!

(Sandy, George and May all agreeing) Yes it was!

May: Did you watch Jeremy during the campfire tonight?

Philip: Oh—that young man is really starting to grow up.

May: Yes...I think so...just a year ago he couldn't sit still for a minute, and there he was, spell-bound, listening to every word. You could just tell his faith is starting to make a difference!

George: Yes—once again the camping program is doing its magic. It's times like this that I am so glad that I took a week away from the church to be with these kids. Sandy, you've just come back to the Region after a few years somewhere else. Were you involved in camping before?

Sandy: Yes, I spent a couple of weeks every summer out here—but I have to say things are really different now.

George: Good kind of different?

Sandy: Oh yes—a very good kind of different. I can hardly believe this is the same program—or even the same Region for that matter. I notice just about every program is so much better than from where I came from. There are so many resources for churches and clergy. You all seem to lead differently. I'm really starting to wonder what happened here.

May: That's heartening to hear. We've been working hard these past five years. And it's worth it because you not only see it in the kids at camp and in our colleagues, but in our churches as well. It's like everything we do now has a purpose in it.

George: Have you had your new clergy orientation yet Sandy?

Sandy: No, that comes in September.

George: I'll bet that helps make sense out of this for you. You see, a few years ago we decided that the Region shouldn't be an authoritarian structure...but an interwoven network of Disciples! We looked at WHY we were a Region, instead of WHAT we should do.

May: It became clear to us in about a year that Regional life was all about accountability, and being the resource to congregations when they needed help. What we discovered is that the leaders of congregations had the skills and abilities to make their churches thrive, but our structure had us spending time going to meetings and accomplishing little.

Sandy: Oh, that's still clear in the Region I came from. All we did there was argue about by-laws, and form committees that rarely functioned.

May: That's what we were doing as well. Clergy were being forced through hoops that were not necessarily appropriate for them. Church development was hit or miss. And our Regional staff was shrunk and stretched so many times we thought we would have to include therapy expenses in our budget.

George: That's when we started to think about new ways of being Region. We adopted some values that said (1) we wanted an interwoven-network type structure, (2) that our congregations needed to share what they know with each other, and (3) that we have to be intentional about being in relationship with each other (and that these relationships are life giving) and, most importantly, the "hey—let's work together" attitude.

Philip: I'm just a lay person, but I've even...

George: Come on Philip, there is no such thing as "just" a lay person. I've been to four or five of your workshops—you get this church stuff!

Philip: OK, I was just pretending to be humble. But as I was saying, I've got a lot more confidence in our Region now. I used to think that "we are paying our pastor, he/she needs to give us 100% of their attention." Now I think...."We are paying our pastor, he/she should be working to resource other congregations...as well as learning from them."

May: We tell a story in our Region about trees. How when they put their roots down and intertwine with other trees, they become stronger in the storm than the lone-ranger tree that topples because its roots are not interconnected.

Sandy: So how does all of this work?

Philip: Well, take this camp for example. Jeremy goes to First Christian Church. Five years ago, that church was on the ropes, barely surviving. The congregation was almost all people in their 80's and 90's. It was one of three congregations that year that we concentrated resources on to help that church redevelop. They worked with Hope Partnership and our Regional staff to make an intentional decision about their redevelopment plan, and our staff coached them.

May: The great thing was we didn't try to fix 20 congregations that year. Just those three. The next year we selected three more to work with. Rather than spread our resources out over a wide area, we concentrated on making a difference.

Sandy: That is a great idea.

George: After First Christian Church relaunched, it attracted Jeremy's family. Now, the new people coming in didn't have any experience with Sunday School or anything like that. My church, on the other hand, has a great program for children's spiritual formation. The Region asked my leaders to teach a course on childhood spiritual development, and then invited First Christian Church and a few other congregations to attend our workshop.

May: That's what Sally does on our Regional staff. She connects gifted leaders with congregational needs. This was just one thing out of dozens she did last year.

George: The result was that a couple of years later, First Christian Church now had a great program for spiritual growth for children. They also connected with the camping program (First Christian Church hadn't sent a single kid to camp in the past 10 years). And the results? Well, you saw Jeremy tonight.

Philip: I overheard a couple of other pastors talking at lunch today. They are coming back to Tall Oaks for a weekend retreat for kids considering their decision to follow Christ. Instead of offering a pastor's class, they are offering a retreat. I heard them invite First Christian Church to bring their kids along, and Jeremy will likely be attending.

May: Just think about it. If First Christian Church insisted on doing everything themselves, they would have missed all of these opportunities. And who knows where Jeremy would be today in his spiritual journey?

Sandy: My church could use some help like this. I can't wait to learn more!

George: Well, it has really helped my church too. We are a good sized church, no money problems, and great children's program. But we don't do much for social justice or reconciliation. We know racism is a problem, and that we have so much to learn. The Region gave us some opportunities there that have allowed me to stretch my congregation.

May: Yes, like our relationship to MOKAN. Our church used to be proud of just sending money, or talking about how we stand with our congregations of color. But part of our new structure was to move us from doing mission "TO" people, to engaging in mission "WITH" people. MOKAN was a great resource, but we had to challenge our motivations and think through new ways of working together.

Philip: That's why I'm coming back for Urban camp next week. Instead of bringing kids from the inner city out to Tall Oaks, we're going to their neighborhoods and running a residential camp out of a church. It's going to be a challenge that I'm looking forward to.

Sandy: That sounds pretty challenging.

Philip: I'm scared to death. But, part of my faith journey is stretching myself. I need to learn about the realities that these kids are growing up with. How can we be Christ's hands and feet unless we get to know each other?

***Suddenly a door slams and a girl screams. Adult leader voices are heard checking on the kids.***

May: Sounds like they got it under control.

Sandy: Good...I still have a lot of questions. What are we expected to do as clergy in this Region? I don't think I could do an Urban camp.

May: Don't worry. You can do that when you're ready.

As clergy, we are expected to report to the Commission on Ministry every year. They are clearly looking for the usual stuff like boundary training, anti-racism training, continuing education and a list of books read. But this Region also asks us to report the number of Disciples Minister's Association meetings we attend and our attendance in a Peer Group.

Sandy: What, we are expected to go to meetings and Peer Groups?

May: It's not as bad as it sounds. The Region spends some resources in developing Peer Groups. Each year, the Peer Group leaders receive training. Lists are available on the website, and you should receive an invitation after your orientation to participate in a group. These groups are usually selected by affinities (age, gender, etc.). These are covenantal groups that meet monthly.

Sandy: That sounds like a pain.

George: It really is very life giving and totally voluntary. It goes along with our value of being in relationship. Studies show that clergy in Peer Groups outperform their peers who are not in groups. It improves your effectiveness, and builds relationships that could be beneficial to your congregation's development.

Sandy: How is that? I'm still skeptical.

May: So, let me give you an example. I have a difficult church member...

Sandy: Don't we all? (Laughter ensues)

May: Yes...but I was having a real hard time thinking about how I could deal with a situation she had created in our church. My gut reaction was to just go off on her—but my Peer Group helped me to see where she had hooked me emotionally, because they knew me. They also helped me to problem solve on my own.

George: That was a great example. It works in other ways too. Barney Dude is in my group. He is totally in love with Biblical Archaeology. Because I knew him, and knew his passion, I invited him to make a presentation to our Builders Sunday School class dinner. It was one of the most exciting events they ever had. I learned a thing or two as well.

Sandy: Wow...that's refreshing. We help each other provide outstanding spiritual growth opportunities for our churches instead of competing. How does the Region keep all this organized?

May: We rely a lot on our social media and webpage. As a pastor, you'll be given a log-on to the resource pages. There are chat boxes, sermon ideas, and some pastors post blogs. It's constantly evolving.

***Sally the camp director walks up to the campfire.***

Sally: There you guys are. Your kids are running amuck. Do you think I could impose on you to connect with your kids for a while?

George: Ohhhh....You expect us to actually work with the kids? (Sarcastically)

Sandy: Can I just ask a couple more questions?

Sally: Can it wait?

Sandy: Oh...I guess. I'm really looking forward to my orientation. This is going to be so much more fun working in this Region than the one I just left.

Sally: We're glad to have you here Sandy. I really feel like we make a difference in people's lives now.

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### **IMPLIED GOALS:**

**Goal #1: To develop Transformational Clergy Leaders who foster good collegial relationships and teach each other.**

A Transformational Leader is a person who can inspire a group of volunteers to do more than they ever imagined. This is different from calling leadership that "manages" good congregations. It is calling persons who can **help congregations adapt** to this new period of ministry.

A Region can have profound influence on the type of leaders it calls through the Search and Call process. It can empower Transformational Leaders through training, resourcing and strong Peer Group relations. The Region can also help congregations in the Search and Call process look at their candidates through different lenses.

### **Implications:**

- Continued improvement of Disciples Minister's Association, including resourcing program with Seminary, local and national leaders.
- Development of formal/informal Peer Groups and providing training and resourcing for group leaders (possibly connecting with Hope Partnership).
- Maintaining mutual accountability of clergy to ensure they engage in both groups, as well as in their annual standing review, at reasonable levels.

- Search and Call clarity to incoming candidates that this is a connectional Region.
- Regional Minister is the primary staff for Search and Call and clergy development.

### **Capacities to Develop:**

#### ***Adaptive Skills***

1. Already the Region has a strong Disciples Minister's Association that is well received. That group has worked to improve the quality of its program and interaction with clergy, including on-line resources. This provides an ideal platform to help clergy explore what being a Transformational Leader looks like today, as well as for lifting up transformational values and teaching methods of inspiration.
2. Studies do show the effectiveness of clergy Peer Groups. The adaptive issue is for clergy to commit time for this important process. The Region would do well to discover a way in which clergy can challenge each other to participate in these groups, emphasizing the value of spending time there.
3. The Regional staff should review its Search and Call process to ensure that they can identify and recruit Transformational Leadership to the Region.

#### ***Technical Skills***

1. Leadership of the Region should research this specific form of leadership and its implications. Hope Partnership would be delighted to give input.

#### ***Leadership***

1. The first group of leaders to develop is the clergy. Reorienting the clergy to new leadership values can take some time. Disciples Minister's Association and Peer Groups are a great way to teach and question this style of leadership.
2. A second level of development would be that of Peer Group Leaders. The Region should spend time identifying group leaders and training them in facilitation.
3. Facilitating Search and Call is the responsibility of Regional staff. Under the current structure the Regional Minister has primary responsibility. No changes are recommended.

#### ***Resources***

1. The Region will be encouraged to form a "New Initiative Fund." This fund of \$50,000 would be raised to help finance the development of all the ideas that emerged from this Future Story.
2. \$10,000 of this fund should be designated for the development of Peer Groups. Some of this can be used in training facilitators.
3. \$5,000 could be invested in program development for the Disciples Minister's Association. This would be a grant for engaging people who can teach Transformational Leadership from a number of perspectives.

## **Goal #2: To facilitate and resource congregational program life.**

The Region has numerous talented pastors and leaders who excel in areas of ministry. By developing a Program Network, the Region can provide a conduit for inspiration and the development of leaders. Rather than the Region being the sole source for resourcing, this Program Network would provide opportunities and numerous avenues for resourcing the program life of a congregation.

This could include standard church programming like youth groups, children's ministries, or women's ministry groups. It could also include innovative program offerings that some churches in the Region are already offering. This is clearly an arena where the close proximity of congregations could really benefit each other.

The Program Network could also include bringing in occasional resource people from other units of the church like Global Ministries, Disciples Church Extension Fund, Christian Church Foundation, or even the Pension Fund. These units offer workshops and services that could benefit a congregation's program life—and usually just need a platform.

The platform developed would include web-links for live streaming and archiving of the courses so that they can be accessed throughout the year.

### **Implications:**

- Discovering congregations that excel in program areas and recruiting them to resource other congregations.
- Eliminating structures for ministry groups—but facilitating digital networking.
- Providing at least 12 events annually for lay leader and clergy development in areas such as:
  - Youth spiritual and relational development
  - Young adult spiritual development
  - Children spiritual development
  - Congregational financial development
  - Women's ministries
  - Men's ministries
  - Music ministry
  - Senior ministries
  - Camping program development, including retreat
- New staff position of Program Network Coordinator would also manage social media and resource platform

### **Capacities to Develop:**

#### ***Adaptive Skills***

1. Shift in thinking that the Region has to be the sole provider of program resourcing for congregations.

2. Shift in thinking for congregational leaders to consider resourcing each other, rather than just serving their own congregation. This also involves the sharing of clergy time, gifts and talents with the wider church.
3. Platforms for delivery should rotate around the Region, which may require congregations to open their doors for other churches to participate.
4. Since events will be live-streamed and archived, success cannot be measured by participation at events.

### ***Technical Skills***

1. A lot of the success of this process will be determined by the Program Network Coordinator. This staff person would need to develop the skills to gather information from congregations about programs and resources that would be of value to the entire Region.
2. The Program Network Coordinator may have to develop the technical skills for linking congregations with digital resources to make workshops and program offerings archived and live-streamed for broader participation of leaders.

### ***Leadership***

1. The Program Network Coordinator is a new position. This staff position would likely be full-time and could include the Media position, expanding the duties of this person significantly.
2. The other reason for making this a full-time position is that the Program Network Coordinator needs to have the time to learn what congregations are doing, and evaluate the needs for program development in congregations.
3. This person would also have responsibility for the development of Peer Groups and leadership training.

### ***Resources***

1. This initiative would receive \$10,000 from the New Initiative Fund, primarily for developing the web platform and live-stream capacities.
2. This new staff position would be funded by reducing staffing in congregational development which will be discussed in the next goal. (See staffing considerations at the end of this report.)

## **Goal #3: To annually redevelop three congregations that are struggling with sustainability, while also stimulating the start of at least two congregations annually.**

Congregational development is very seductive work. At any one time a Regional staff can be swamped with dozens of congregations that suddenly have great need for redevelopment or are in financial crisis. The results are often an over-taxed staff that can help with band-aids instead of the concentrated work required to be effective, or by trying to put a lot of congregations through programs that may or may not fit their needs.

There are significant changes that congregations need to make if they are to redevelop. Most congregations just want to believe if they get a good pastor or \$10,000 their church could be revived.



What we learn over and over again is that these solutions only lead to short term gains. Unless we reorient the leadership of these congregations, they cannot achieve sustainability.

New church work in the Region has been fairly reactive. As congregations have come to the Region seeking affiliation, the New Church Development Committee has been responsive. However, due to lack of funds, the committee has been reluctant to pick targets and start intentional new starts.

The purpose of this goal is to give focus to the teams and help provide concerted efforts. This will also benefit congregations who must commit up-front to receiving extra help from the Region. We have learned that if services are offered for no charge, the congregation invests little into the process.

### **Implications:**

- This area is heavily staffed and costly. Consideration for integration with Hope Partnership services and resources (i.e. Leadership Academy, New Beginnings, etc.) to share in service development, freeing funds for direct service and grants to congregations. Hope Partnership would invest in training local resource people.
- Congregations would be selected in a competitive manner based on their passion for mission.
- Reduced staffing, increased resourcing.

### **Capacities to Develop:**

#### ***Adaptive Skills***

1. Understanding that if your congregation is in need of intensive help, there may be fees involved because of the intensive use of Regional resources.
2. Development of an application process for congregations seeking redevelopment, and a selection process for working with those congregations.
3. Existing congregations may need to consider other uses of their space to generate income.
4. Existing congregations need encouragement to open their doors for new and emerging Disciples congregations in their communities.
5. New church needs to become proactive by setting internal goals. A list of at least six "hot" targets should be developed as priorities for new church development and a plan for allocating resources for two plants per year.
6. Hope Partnership will provide help for the Regional Committee at no charge for new church development goals.

#### ***Technical Skills***

1. The Region is blessed to have a very competent congregational transformation staff person in Yolanda Roseby. Hope Partnership would like to make an investment in Yolanda so that she can work as a Hope Partnership contractor with some of its services. This would require time next fall away from the Region for training.
2. Integrate Hope Partnership services with Regional staff to provide seamless help for the congregation. The staff person would also provide intensive coaching for the congregation.

### ***Leadership***

1. Redevelopment staff can continue part-time in partnership with Hope Partnership. We could work out an arrangement where this person is compensated by work with Hope Partnership as a contractor. This would give your staff person some experience outside of the Region as well.
2. Currently there are two staff people relating to new church development. They give a lot of time connecting to new churches that are under way in the Region. A large success in this Region has been its ability to connect with the Spanish speaking community. By focusing on two new congregations annually, and maintaining contact with existing new churches, these positions may be reduced.

### ***Resources***

1. It is time for the Region to review the financial commitment to both new church and redevelopment. The Region has capital set aside for new church development.
2. Consideration should be given towards developing a policy that assets from any church closure would go into the capital fund for new church development.
3. Finding sites for new churches was listed by staff as an issue. Hope Partnership has some resources available, including loans for new congregations seeking rental space improvements.
4. The budget should include about \$10,000-\$15,000 annually in grants for redevelopment congregations.
5. From the New Initiative Fund, \$10,000 should be committed towards the integration of Hope Partnership services with congregational redevelopment.

### **Goal #4: To expand our footprint on Ecumenical, Interfaith, Social and Racial Justice issues in the Greater Kansas City area.**

Woody Allen once stated that 90% of success is just showing up. This Region, on many occasions, has "shown up" and been counted as leaders in many movements throughout the city in years past as well as today.

Most of the "showing up," however, does not have the Region's name associated with it. This is partially because our congregational leaders go to events out of their own passion and beliefs. If we were to imagine the impact an individual could have if they were identified as representing 60 other congregations, our government and people might take notice.

Not all congregations in this Region are of the same mind on many social issues; however, there are some basics that are inherent in Disciples congregations, primarily inclusion and racial equality. A process for naming the issues for which Disciples want to be counted would help this passionate Region focus attention on issues related to doing ministry WITH the Greater Kansas City area, instead of doing mission TO it.

The Regional Minister can carry great weight on interfaith, ecumenical and social issues. Regional congregations can get their noses bent out of shape if they see issues differently. The Regional

Minister should be encouraged to represent the Region on numerous issues in which there is widespread agreement to represent the churches of the Region.

### **Implications:**

- Digital network would need to be developed.
- Since no organization can speak to ALL of the social justice issues of our time, development of a decision making process that would allow the Region to determine areas of focus.
- Freeing the Regional Minister to represent Disciples on the broader ecumenical and interfaith stage.

### **Capacities to Develop:**

#### ***Adaptive Skills***

1. It is not clear to me if there is a process for naming issues the Region plans to address (there are so many needs). A process for naming issues for Regional response would foster healthy debate and learning. The Regional Assembly could be the platform for this kind of conversation.
2. There would be a need for setting ground rules for civil discourse.
3. It should be noted that there may be issues we disagree on, but this would not preclude people from acting on their own conscience. The purpose of this kind of debate is to find our common ground.
4. Freeing up Regional Minister time and encouraging the Regional Minister to engage in interfaith and ecumenical partnerships around the city.

#### ***Technical Skills***

1. Discovery of places of potential partnership on social, interfaith and ecumenical circles.
2. Discovery of ground rules for civil discourse.
3. Review of the Regional Assembly process for resolutions, and encouragement of congregations to participate in naming issues of common concern.

#### ***Leadership***

1. Oftentimes issues come up with little warning. The Executive Team should be empowered to give permission for the Region to utilize resources and encourage others to be active in social justice as needed.
2. Empowerment of the Regional Minister to "represent."

#### ***Resources***

1. There is a need to link the social justice initiatives to the website, and to keep those concerns at the front of Regional partners' minds.
2. Development of links to other partners on the website to provide better cross fertilization of ideals associated with these issues.

## **Goal #5: To reduce our administrative oversight and operate more efficiently.**

Of all the things we heard, this was the loudest. The Regional Board, in its current configuration, is not life-giving and is a cumbersome way to operate as a Region. Designed for a different era, it is imperative that the Region find new ways to utilize volunteer time in places other than in a meeting.

Another goal is to reduce the overhead of operating the Region. Many Regions have turned to virtual offices, requiring staff to work from their homes and necessitating the digitizing of records. The savings would be significant for the Region.

### **Implications:**

- Reduce Regional Board to a small Administrative Committee of six people.
- Regional Assembly offered every two years with emphasis on inspiration and mission, with minimal business.
- Consider reduction to a small administrative record-keeping space with program people in virtual offices in the field.
- Digitize records and provide a disaster plan for recovery of records

### **Capacities to Develop:**

#### ***Adaptive Skills***

1. Regional staff will need to learn how to continue to work together collaboratively but from individual, home-based office spaces.
2. Learning to access and work with remote records.

#### ***Technical Skills***

1. A phone system would have to be developed that links staff phones to a central number that the Office Manager would answer and could easily transfer without giving another number to call.
2. A review of records that can be digitized and documents that must be kept. Finding a safe place with a disaster plan for recovery.
3. A stipend may be put in place during the transition period for a church where the Region can conduct staff meetings and do casual copying.
4. The Office Manager should provide a list of concerns or issues to be addressed for staff consideration while making this transition.

#### ***Leadership***

1. The review of the by-laws indicates a need for major revisions. This should be accomplished by the newly formed Administrative Committee as soon as possible with a report to the Region with suggestions for revision.
2. Primary responsibility for moving towards a virtual office will be with the Office Manager.
3. Primary responsibility for Regional Board revision will be with the Regional Minister in relationship with the Administrative Committee.

**Resources**

1. Digitizing records could be paid for from the New Initiative Fund (approximately \$10,000).
2. There is likely a need for some new equipment for Regional staff. This could be paid for from the liquidation of equipment that is now surplus. (Or simply put, they can take equipment from the current office for use in their home offices, with excess furnishings to be sold.)
3. \$5,000 from the New Initiative Fund to equip home offices if needed.

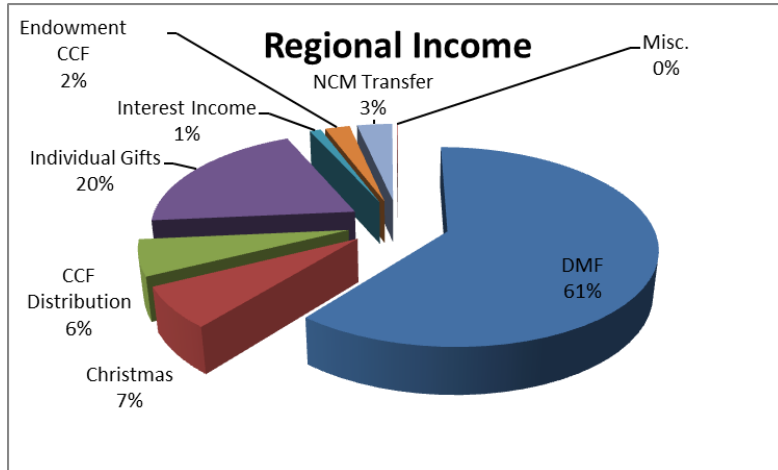
**STAFFING:**

Current	Title	PT/FT	For Consideration
Bill Rose-Heim	Regional Minister	FT	No Change
Robin Smith	Office Manager	FT	No Change
NEW position – to be named	Program Network Coordinator	FT	New Position (Funded by combining with women’s ministry/social media positions and office savings)
Lisa Engen	Financial Manager	PT	No Change
Mike Graves	Minister of Preaching	PT	No Change
Edith Mendoza	Hispanic New Church	PT	No Change
Tim Mabbot	Minister of New Church	PT	Reduce over 2 years
Jason Ashley	Media	PT	Position eliminated
Yolanda Roseby	Regional Minister of Congregations in Transition	PT	Position funded for 18 months...Starting in October, Hope Partnership would begin to shift this into a Hope Partnership contract position with primary service to the Greater Kansas City Region
Veronica Falleh	Women’s Ministry	PT	Transition over 2 years—eventually subsumed by Program Network Coordinator
TALL OAKS STAFF	Multiple Positions		No Changes

## **BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Regional budget is segmented in four ways: (1)The income and cost of administering the Region, which includes most salaries, office, programs, Search and Call and equipment expenses; (2)The program budget, including all Regional programs, as well as the camp program, where fees are charged; (3)The new church budget which includes grants and new church salaries; and, (4)The Tall Oaks operational budget.

### **Regional Administration Budget:**



The largest income arena for the Region is congregational giving through the Disciples Mission Fund (DMF). This is followed by gifts from individuals throughout the Region. A third category of income is giving through the Christmas offering.

The remaining 12% of income is from endowments and interest income.

The Region is largely dependent on

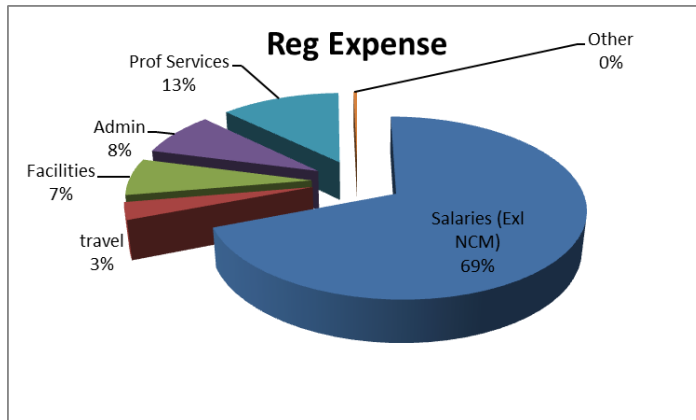
voluntary annual giving to support its ministry, and giving to the top three categories offers the greatest opportunity for income growth.

Congregational support of DMF has been in decline (12%) in the Region over the past 10 years. Many may suppose that congregations shifted their giving to local mission; however, data shows that congregations have been spending more on their own ministry. Consideration should be given towards challenging congregations once again to support the ministry of the Region through DMF and Christmas offering giving. This may have to include direct conversations by Regional staff with pastors in a straightforward manner.

Additionally, the Region may wish to consider a "New Initiative Fund." This would provide some one-time capital for initiating new programs as listed in the report above. The \$50,000 would provide the following:

- The training and establishment of Peer Groups for all clergy in the Greater Kansas City Region.
- Resource speakers for the Disciples Minister's Association that would reorient leadership towards the call of "transformational ministry."
- The development of the web platform for continued resourcing of local congregations.
- The development of the infrastructure for the redevelopment of congregations.
- Transition resources as the staff moves to a virtual office.

This fund would be a one-time appeal and could likely be achieved in a direct mail/email campaign run in the fall of 2017.



In terms of expenses, it is not surprising that the Region's largest category is salaries and benefits. This category does not include Tall Oaks or new church ministry staff.

The Region has done a masterful job of farming out many part-time positions to numerous talented program positions. While this is helpful to each program area, it does not facilitate program cohesion and

may also lead to silos of program development.

This new plan does not recommend lowering salary commitment, but suggests reallocating salaries to meet the goals outlined in the staffing configuration above. This can be phased-in over the next few years if needed.

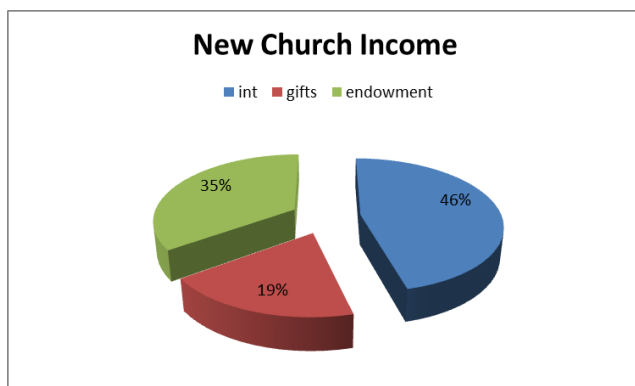
A significant savings could come from the elimination of the Regional office. Regional staff would be encouraged to work in their homes, and be linked digitally. Since the staff would rely heavily on digital connectivity, the Region may need to provide high-speed internet connections for their use. Each staff person would be allowed under the IRS code to deduct expenses for operating a home office.

### Program Budget:

A review of the program budget indicates that most programs charge fees and break even. The exceptions for this were the camping program, which lost \$22,000, and some of the Women's programs. It appears that the Region prefers to have programs pay for themselves by fees charged to participants. These small fees likely do not impact participation, except for the camping program.

The cost of sending people to camp continues to rise. Given the expenses for young families, the cost of camp is likely out of reach for many. A selling point for supporting DMF and the Christmas offering is Regional support of the camping program.

### New Church Budget:

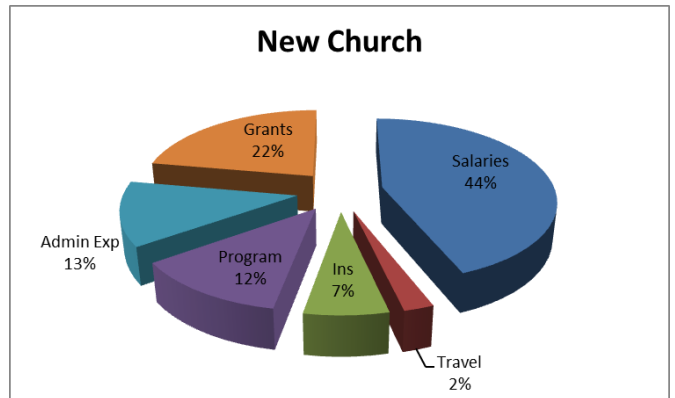


The Greater Kansas City Region has had a long and stellar history in new church development, and has established a sizeable endowment and investments that provide income for new church projects. Existing congregations have the opportunity to add support to this ministry through the Pentecost offering.

Enthusiasm for developing new congregations has flattened in the last few years and is reflected in Pentecost giving. This is likely due to not having established goals and a proactive agenda. It can also be seen in comments by some that new church development should NOT be a priority.

On the expense side, most of new church expense relates to Regional staff positions. This fund also pays an administrative fee to the Regional budget.

This means that the Regional new church effort is pretty heavy in administrative expense while projects actually receive about 41% in direct aid in establishing congregations. Consideration should be given towards lowering administrative costs to 33% over the next five years. This can be achieved by proactive grants to new targets for congregational development.



Hope Partnership's new church office would be delighted to work with your team on achieving new goals.

#### **Tall Oaks Budget:**

Tall Oaks is a ministry of the Region that provides services to Disciples and other congregations. Its operation is managed separately, with heavy Regional engagement. A review of their financial statement showed a loss in 2016. Revenue was lower than expected, and the camp (which is well managed) adjusted its expenses to minimize damage.

There are a number of ways the camp director has outlined for improving the financial position of the camp. There is also a need for capital improvements in the near future. We would encourage the camp to engage Disciples Church Extension Fund to discuss a potential capital campaign in the future.

The largest category of spending at Tall Oaks continues to be salaries and benefits. This dedicated staff is not overpaid—but committed to achieving a great camping environment.



**TIMELINE:**

Goal	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
#1 Peer Group Development	Raise New Initiative Fund  DMA focus on Transformational Leadership begins	Select Peer Group affinities/ Leaders training begins  Groups begin	Peer Groups monitored by Program Network Coordinator  New Ministers assimilated	Peer Groups monitored by Program Network Coordinator	Peer Groups monitored by Program Network Coordinator
#2 Program Network Coordinator	Administration Task Force establishes position/Job Description (with staffing configuration)	Call extended for Program Network Coordinator  Creates system of discovery which locates program opportunities/ congregational needs  Pilot programs begin	At least 18 offerings  Discovery continues→	At least 24 offerings	At least 30 offerings
#3 Redevelop 3 Congregations	Hope Partnership collaborates with incumbent to develop skills in service delivery while establishing a strategy for selecting congregations	First 3 redevelopment begins	3 additional redevelopment congregations, while providing coaching for first 3-->	3 additional redevelopment congregations, while providing coaching for previous 6-->	3 additional redevelopment congregations, while providing coaching for previous 9-->
Start 2 Congregations	Hope Partnership works with New Church Committee to achieve proactive strategy	2 congregations planted	2 additional congregations established, while coaching first 2-->	2 additional congregations established, while coaching previous 4-->	2 additional congregations established, while coaching previous 6-->
#4 Ecumenical/ Justice Footprint	Consider process for selecting issues	Strengthen commitment from Regional partners→			

**#5  
Restructure  
Board/Virtual  
Office**

Administrative  
Committee  
reviews by-laws  
and proposes  
changes

New Regional  
structure in  
operation

Staff moves to  
virtual office→

Administrative  
staff reviews its  
documents and  
plans to digitize  
and move to  
virtual office

### **WORKING GROUPS:**

As announced at the Future Story workshop, there will be four groups working on these initiatives for implementation. I would like to suggest that the following Work Groups focus on the following goals:

- Wider Church/Ecumenical Work Group - #4
- Finance and Administrative Work Group - #2 and #5
- Missions for/with Communities Work Group - #4
- Ministries for Greater Kansas City Region Disciples - #1, #2, and #3

### **CLOSING NOTE:**

It has been an honor for Hope Partnership to work with the Greater Kansas City Region on this plan. We know that this vision has emerged from hundreds of hours of listening and praying by many people. While there were many good ideas that emerged, not all could be included in this plan. That doesn't mean that our creativity ends with this report. The Ministry Plan is meant to be a catalyst for even more conversation, and more commitment in this great Region.

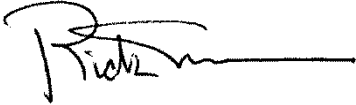
The writer doesn't pretend that the Region will follow this plan in its entirety...nor should you. My prayer is that you will use this as a guide as the new future emerges for the Greater Kansas City Region and its congregations.

My thanks to your Regional staff, including your Regional Minister Bill Rose-Heim, for their many hours of cooperation. I've felt the blessings of Bill's prayers throughout this process, and know that you are blessed as a Region with his leadership. I would also like to thank Barb Jones for her coordination of events and help in programing and patience in scheduling.

I've particularly enjoyed and appreciated the spirit of the clergy in this fine Region. What a wonderful group of creative men and women who seek to serve God in the magical work of faith communities. I have nothing but hope for the Region with such great leadership.

Like any ministry plan, if all we do is read it and shelf it, we have all wasted a lot of precious time. My prayer is that you will not only adopt this, but live out as much of it as you can. People like Jeremy, who will be in camp in 2022, are counting on it.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Morse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rick Morse, Vice President  
Hope Partnership