

The Benefits Of Being A Part Of The Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ)



“For we, who are many, are one body in Christ.” — Romans 12:5

Why Stay Connected?

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Being a local congregation is a beautiful thing. But being part of something *bigger* — something that connects us across regions, cultures, and generations — brings deeper meaning, wider impact, and stronger support. That’s what you experience being a congregation of the **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**.

Here’s why staying connected to both your **Regional Church** and the **General Church** matters — and why it’s worth your time, energy, support, and commitment.

We’re Not Alone — We’re a Movement

Being Disciples means we’re part of a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world and helps us welcome all to the table as Christ has welcomed us. That’s not just a tagline — it’s a call to unity, nurture, mutuality, justice, and shared purpose. When your church stays connected:

- You gain **partners in ministry**, not just in name, but in practice.
- You’re **part of something that stretches beyond your walls** — regionally, nationally, and globally.
- You’re **connected to the rich and unique history of the Stone-Campbell movement**, and part of shaping the future of this unique North American-born Christian tradition.

Regional Church: Your Frontline Partners

Your **Regional Church** isn’t just a hub — it’s a *lifeline*. Here’s how:

- **Pastoral Support & Care:** Regional ministers are there when your pastors and congregational leaders need encouragement, coaching, or crisis support.
- **Leadership Development:** Training for elders, deacons, board members, and ministers — so your leaders don’t have to figure it all out alone.
- **Congregational Resources:** Need help with conflict mediation, event planning, ministry evaluation, social media, evangelism, transformation, visioning, or stewardship? Regions provide tools and guidance AND human beings to help you use them.
- **Youth & Camp Ministries:** Kids and teens connect across congregations through camps, conferences, and retreats — shaping faith that lasts. (And lots of the same for adults, too!)

- **Connecting Congregation and General Church:** The Regional Church helps bring the perspectives and priorities of the local congregation to bear on what happens in the General Church, and vice versa!
- **Innovation & Creativity:** Looking to not have to recreate the wheel? The Regional Church connects congregations seeking help with new mission and ministry ideas and shares best practices.
- **Stability In Times Of Transition:** When a pastor leaves, the Regional Church is well equipped to guide the congregation through the process of searching for and calling their next pastor and maintaining the congregation's important ministries continue.

Bottom line: the Region has your back. You don't have to go it alone.

Your General Church: Bigger Mission, Broader Impact

The **General Church** connects us to the *global mission* of God — and amplifies what we can do locally:

- **Global Ministries:** Partner with missions and justice work around the world.
- **Week of Compassion:** Respond to disasters and humanitarian needs with love and speed, whether in North America or globally.
- **Resources for Worship, Nurture, Outreach, & Study:** Curricula, liturgical resources, trainings, and publications like *Disciples News Service* keep you informed, inspired, and equipped.
- **Extending Compassionate Care:** Resourcing and supporting institutions that serve children and youth, adults, and older adults and those who are most vulnerable, as well as supporting young social service entrepreneurs and seasoned health care executives alike.
- **Higher Education & Developing New Leaders:** Help your members access Disciples colleges and theological education, apply for scholarships, and gain critical skills in faithful leadership development.
- **Justice Ministries:** Engage in racial equity, anti-poverty, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and environmental care — with Disciples at the forefront.
- **Ministerial Excellence:** Ensuring our congregations, health care institutions, military installations, and colleges and universities have the highest quality, carefully evaluated, ministers of the Gospel.

And remember — the General Church exists *to serve you*. Your voice matters in shaping its direction.

A Voice and a Vote

When you're connected to the wider church, you don't just receive — you *participate*:


- Send voting delegates to **General Assembly** and **Regional Assembly**.
- Help **shape denominational priorities and policies**.
- **Be heard** — as equals at the table, across cultures and generations.

This is not a top-down hierarchy. This is not a contract or set of demands. It's a covenant. *We choose* to worship, serve, and care for the world together. And starting in 2025, *every congregation* has three lay delegates, and they have access to the General Church *throughout the year!*

Identity & Accountability

In a world of division and disconnection, staying rooted in the Disciples identity:

- Grounds your congregation in **shared values**: open communion, believer’s baptism, freedom of thought, and unity in Christ.
- Offers **accountability** — not control, but mutual encouragement and shared standards.
- Provides a **faith family** when times are hard, when pastors transition, or when discernment gets tough as well as when we need to celebrate, such as a congregational anniversary, a successful new ministry endeavor, or a blessed retirement.

 **And then there are some really technical (and helpful!) reasons to be part of a larger denomination**

- Your affiliation, listing, and reporting in ALEX (Yearbook and Directory) automatically cover your congregation in the blanket **501 (c)(3) tax status** of the Denomination. Without it, each congregation would be responsible for creating their own tax status and doing the annual IRS report to retain status. This saves countless hours and thousands of dollars.
- By ensuring that your ministers have good and active standing with the Region (and therefore denomination), you should be **saving a premium increase in the congregation's liability insurance**.
- If your congregation is incorporated, your **incorporation** probably lists your church as a member organization of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is both costly in both time and dollars to reincorporate.
- Remaining a part of the Denomination could affect some **donor directed funds** your congregation receives.

 **Relationships Are the Real Treasure**

At the end of the day, the best part of being part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is the **relationships**:

- Colleagues in ministry who *get it*.
- Congregations who pray for you and support you, even if you’ve never met.
- A family that shows up when things fall apart — and celebrates when things come together.

These connections don’t happen by accident. They’re built over time — through commitment, showing up, and choosing to stay in relationship.

 **We’re Better Together**

Disciples’ congregations are diverse — in theology, worship styles, and local context. But we choose to stay at the table, to journey alongside one another, and to grow in Christ *together*. That’s rare. And it’s powerful.

So if you’re wondering whether the Regional and General Church still matter — the answer is **yes**. They matter because *you* matter. Your ministry matters. And when we stay connected, we’re stronger, bolder, and more faithful than we ever could be alone.

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6