

Title: Report of Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Origin: Rebecca L Hale, Transitional Interim Regional Minister

Regional Staff: Rebecca Hale, Transitional Interim Regional Minister, Female  
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Number of Congregations: 54

Total Members: 7797

States included in Region: Alaska, Northern Idaho, Washington

**ACCORDING TO THE REGIONAL BYLAWS, THE NWRCC IS CALLED TO FOCUS ITS MINISTRIES IN THESE AREAS:**

1. Supporting the transformation of the congregations;
2. Committed to becoming an inclusive, welcoming, celebrating community of Christ which seeks to heal brokenness by being agents of reconciliation and hope and by
3. Offering itself up to the work of transformation on its own behalf

**TRANSFORMING CONGREGATIONS – More than 30% of NWRCC congregations are participating in some formal process of transformation and revitalization:**

1. Through a region-wide process of transformation, *Journey of Discovery*, congregations throughout the region are engaged in a three-year journey of intentional, systemic, and comprehensive transformation. This process is supported in each congregation by a consultant whom the region trains and supports. The region partners with the Center for Parish Development in this process and significantly underwrites the cost for each congregation to participate. Goals of this project include: congregational transformation, capacity building throughout the region, sustainability of the Journey of Discovery Ministry, and a raised awareness about issues related to transformation in pastors and lay persons throughout the region. Some Early Results: A new language about what it means to be church taking shape in participating congregations; Lively discussion groups around the region talking about transformation and new life; A solid core of trained individuals, lay and clergy, providing leadership in local congregations and in partner congregations; Increased hope about the future of congregational life and vitality; Deeper and articulated understanding about what it means to live in a missionary culture. In 2008 we are launching a second wave of Journey of Discovery congregations.
2. *Through New Beginnings* eleven NWRCC congregations are partnering with Church Extension and the region to assess their current ministry and to make focused intentional decisions about their future.
3. Regional Ministry presence with congregations as they seek to determine what it might mean to move into a transformational process or another type of process that would lead them towards a sense of mission, vision and necessary decision making. This includes conversation, evaluation, guidance, resourcing, and a variety of other kinds of support.

**ENCOURAGING MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE REGION**

1. This has been a time of rebuilding relationships in the NWRCC and we have offered numerous opportunities throughout the past year for congregations and clergy to come together and begin to establish contact across the region once again.

2. The NWRCC sponsored the annual Turner Lectures which brings together clergy from around the region for study, worship, and mutual encouragement. In 2007 the speaker was Amy Jill Levine and in 2008 our speaker will be Diane Butler Bass.
3. Five regional clergy clusters meet monthly for peer-to-peer support and encouragement.

### **OFFERING OURSELVES UP FOR TRANSFORMATION**

The NWRCC is in the midst of a two-to-three year process of Regional Transformation called “*RISE*.” The *RISE* Transformation Process provides the Northwest Region an opportunity to discern God’s vision and more faithfully engage the context in which it exists. Recently we adopted a new Regional Vision Statement and are working to articulate a more specific mission statement and key ministry areas. The Vision Statement:

Called by God’s grace to do together that which by God’s design cannot be done apart, and led by the movement of the Spirit of God, we proclaim the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to be a community of communities,  
valuing our strength in diversity,  
honoring and acknowledging our various gifts,  
offering them in faithfulness and service to the entire body.

Filled with the joy of God’s presence with us  
we share together in hospitality, worship and praise  
enriching our lives with scripture and prayer  
singing songs of hope, faith and celebration  
joining in the gifts of loaf and cup  
inviting our neighbors to experience God’s abundance.

Created by God as part of the body of Christ in this place  
we join together in ministry  
strengthening our bond to one another and to God  
honoring and supporting those who guide us in God’s new doings.

Challenged by the Word of God to live into God’s purpose and promise  
we embrace ministries of justice and service  
provoking one another to love and good deeds  
bringing good news to the poor, freeing the oppressed,  
healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked.

Inspired by the faith that moves mountains  
we pour ourselves out into mission  
caring for the earth and her creatures  
listening anew for God’s Word in each moment  
living forward with courage and compassion.

The Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with God’s help, is living into God’s purpose today, and trusting in the promise of God’s tomorrow.

### **REGIONAL GOALS RELATED TO THE CHURCH’S PRIORITIES**

Supporting ministries in the NWRCC such as the New Church Ministry Team, the Journey of Discovery Coordinating Team, and the Anti-Racism Team. These ministry teams receive support by the time, attention and presence of the Regional Minister and involvement of the Regional Board. Identifying new leadership in each of these areas, interpreting the work of these teams to the broader region, ensuring budgetary support, and lifting up the visibility and support for these ministries from regional congregations are all ways these priorities are supported.

In addition, working with the Commission on Ministry as it nurtures leadership is a central priority for the NW Region. The Commission on Ministry is the primary place in the NWRCC where the nurturing of candidates for ministry occurs and we are working to put in place comprehensive and accountable procedures and models for

caring for both candidates for ministry and pastors who already have standing in the CC (DOC) and who are under our care.

The NW Regional New Church Companion Team meets quarterly to nurture and care for new congregations. One new congregation in formation was recognized in 2007, Friends of the One in Seattle, Washington.

Also in 2007 a new Regional Funding Team was formed and will conduct an annual campaign in 2008 and will begin designing a strategy for stewardship education throughout the region.

Finally, the NWRCC Regional Assembly to be held May 16-18, 2008 will focus on the theme "Borderlands," highlighting the challenges of articulating and living a vital faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.