

Northern Lights Reflections

Official Newsletter of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region

Vol 6 Issue 2 February 2025

IN THIS EDITION

+Reflections with the
Regional Minister
p. 1

+ALEX Yearbook reporting
now open for 2024 data
p. 2

+Earth Ministry webinar:
*Sacred Spaces,
Sustainable Future*
p. 3

+2025 Stewardship materials
available
+NLR Transformation Team
invitation
p. 4

+General Assembly funding and
registration opportunities
p. 5

Northern Lights Region
4227 S Meridian, C615
Puyallup, WA 98373

Phone: (253) 893-7202

northernlightsdisciples.org

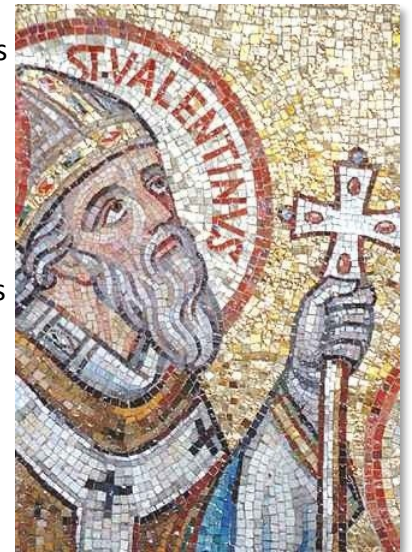
The Work of Love

Reflections with Regional Minister Paul Allen

Two weeks ago we celebrated Valentine's Day which is named after Saint Valentine, a Catholic priest who lived in Rome in the 3rd Century. According to legend, at the time of Valentine's life, many Romans were converting to Christianity, but the Emperor Claudius II was not a believer and created strict laws concerning their actions. Claudius believed that Roman soldiers should be completely devoted to Rome and therefore passed a law preventing them from marrying. St. Valentine began to marry these soldiers in secret Christian ceremonies and this was the beginning of his reputation for believing in the importance of love.

Eventually, Valentine's acts were discovered and he was put in prison. While imprisoned, Valentine cared for his fellow prisoners and his jailor's blind daughter even curing her blindness. His final act before being executed was to write her a love message signed 'from your Valentine.' Valentine was executed on February 14th in the year 270, but it was not until more than 200 years later that February 14th was proclaimed St. Valentine's Day.

Like many Christian holidays, Valentine's Day has become more secular and is now associated with romantic love, with around one billion cards being exchanged and thirty six million heart shaped boxes of candy sold each year. While I am not adverse to a holiday that focuses on the ideal of love it is important to know that Christian love should be viewed much differently. Christian love is not just an emotion; it is the actions that spring from that emotion.



Continued on Page 2

In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 we read that, “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

The modern view of love is portrayed in the media as love at first sight, passions that inflame the soul, and desire that overcomes reason. For Paul, love was less of a feeling and more of a way to live and act in the world. He reminds us that we could be empowered with all spiritual gifts, have faith that could change the world, understand the mysteries of the universe, and give away all that we own, but if these things are performed for the wrong reasons, if they are not done in a spirit of love, then they amount to nothing. For Paul, all good things are worthless if they are not done in the spirit of love.



For Paul love is the model for Christian life, how we are to treat others in our family of faith and in the world. He believed that if you cooked Christianity down to its essence, boiled away all of the other concerns, you would find one thing that remains. What remains is not a doctrine, a set of rules, a creed or a confession. When you take our faith to its core, what remains is love.

It is my hope that the desire to celebrate the gift of love will extend beyond Valentine’s Day and the month of February. We need to spend time with the people we care about, learn about those who are different than us, and deepen our relationships. We are called to move into the world and love others as God loves us, even those who we disagree with. Let us share this powerful and life-changing love that takes work, but is well worth the effort.

Paul



ALEX (formerly the yearbook) is NOW OPEN and receiving congregational yearbook statistics for 2024. ALEX will be open to receive reports from congregations through Friday, March 21, 2025.



The open reporting window for congregations to enter their 2024 data into ALEX, the yearbook database that has taken the place of paper yearbooks for a few years now, will remain open until Friday, March 21st. Due to upgrades made in the overall ALEX system, some one-time steps are required before logging in. Each assigned congregational reporter was sent an email from the Northern Lights Regional Office on February 25th with instructions. If your congregations’ reporter(s) didn’t receive that email, please contact Robin at the Regional Office.

Let’s see if the Northern Lights Region will be in the top percentile of congregational reporting again this year!

Sacred Spaces, Sustainable Future:

Understanding Direct Pay Tax Credits for Religious and Faith-Based Organizations

From our own Rev. AC Churchill of [Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light](#)



Has your church ever considered getting solar panels, adding electric charging stations to your parking lot, or upgrading your furnace but stopped because the costs were too high? Energy upgrades like the ones mentioned are amazing ways to support the work and ministries of your congregation. They provide reduced energy expenses, can help your church be a community resource hub (think of how a church could be a safe space during a community power failure or weather disaster), AND are positive ways to care for this creation that God has called good. Yet all too often these energy upgrade projects are out of reach for churches because they are just too expensive to implement.

However, there is financial opportunities and free legal and technical assistance available to communities who are interested! Partnering with Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG), [Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light](#) is hosting a [webinar](#) Friday, **Feb. 28th at 10 am PT for faith and lay leaders to learn about possible energy upgrades and free technical and legal assistance support available to faith communities and nonprofits through the Inflation Reduction Act.**

[Join the Sacred Spaces, Sustainable Future webinar](#) on February 28th at 10 am PT.

Please direct questions to Multifaith Program Manager, Keah Calluccie: keah@earthministry.org.



Making Connections—Being Disciples in the NL Region

Did you know every Disciple in the Region is part of an “Area”? Divided up by counties and geographical zones, the four NLR Areas are Salish Sea, Tahoma, Columbia, and Big Sky; designed with making and keeping connections across the one Region.

No doubt—the Northern Lights Region is varied and wide, and staying connected is a challenge. Be sure to plug into some of the existing connections groups, AND, share your ideas for new groups and ways to connect with the Regional Office: office@northernlightsdisciples.org.

Contact the Regional Office to find out more about these active groups:

Congregational Pastors
(Tuesdays on Zoom)

Chaplains
(First Tuesdays monthly)

Retired Clergy
(First Mondays monthly)

What’s your idea?



Northern Lights Region
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Northern Lights Reflections

2025 Stewardship materials

Your 2025 stewardship theme materials are here! [Dreaming God's Dream: No Gift Too Small, No Dream Too Big](#) offers eight (8) full worship services, sermon starters by diverse authors, and faith formation sessions for all ages. Created by the [Center for Faith & Giving](#) in partnership with the United Church of Christ, this resource goes beyond an annual campaign guide. It provides tools for year-round conversations on generosity and stewardship within your congregation. Early bird pricing (\$39.99) is available through March 31.



Click here to see details and program content:

2025 Stewardship Campaign Materials



DREAMING GOD'S DREAM: Theme Overview

Artist Adrian Sanchez, incarcerated in the California Institution for Men, created "Process of Life" as part of an arts program funded by a local congregation. He reflects, "I believe our young ones begin life with innocent hearts. I have learned...to do things without violence. We were asked to imagine what a city of compassion would look like and how the people there could cooperate so that everyone would have enough food. The Process of Life shows that there is pride and hope in carrying out positive ways of thinking..." Sanchez's art reminds us of the power of dreams – the chick can become the rooster, the whisper of the Spirit can become a movement for transformation, *that no gift is too small to help make God's Dream a reality.*

Telling Our Story - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 by Rev. Dr. Lance B. Pape
 Generosity as Our Role in God's Plan - Ezra 6:6-12 & Nehemiah 4:1-9 by Rev. Vinnetta Golphin-Wilkerson
 The Sacred in the Seed - Matthew 13:31-32 by Rev. Dr. Chelsea Brooke Yarborough
 The Way of the Innkeeper - Luke 10:25-37 by Rev. Dr. Elena Larsen
 Generosity Even Amid Hardships - Ruth 1:6-19 by Rev. Dr. Thad Austin & Patrick Gorman
 Feeding Five Thousand - John 6:1-14 by Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade
 A Dream Powering Generosity - Acts 10 by Rev. Andrew Warner, CFRE
 Jeremiah and the Remnant - Jeremiah 23:1-8 by Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdue

What's Included

- PLAN:** Leadership Resources
The leadership team prepares, organizes, and reflects on the stewardship campaign.
- LEARN:** Year-Round Generosity
The congregation engages generosity as a spiritual practice through worship, sermons, study by adults, youth & kids.
- ASK:** Inviting Commitment
The congregation asks people to make a commitment of financial support for the coming year.
- THANK:** Expressing Gratitude
The congregation expresses gratitude for gifts and shares stories of impact of mission and ministry.

in partnership with the
Center for faith&giving

uccresources.com/generosity

\$39.99
EARLY BIRD
(BEFORE 3/31)

\$49.99
STANDARD
(4/1 AND LATER)

also: letterhead + templates for step chart & pyramid of giving + pledge cards + posters + bulletin inserts

Transformation Ministry Team

Is our congregation sustainable for the next 10 years? Should we downsize our property? How can we ensure our search team doesn't burn out? Can we reach out to our community in meaningful missional ways? Who are we as a community in this time and place?

Perhaps your congregation is asking some of these or similar questions and are looking for support and guidance. **The Northern Lights Regional Transformation is here for you!** Our team has included clergy and laypersons from around the Region focused on providing information, resources, and support for congregations and congregational leaders exploring renewal and transformation in our rapidly shifting religious landscape.



On our webpage you'll find video presentations, reading and study suggestions and links to national organizations dedicated to support churches in transformation. We invite you take a moment to peruse the resources on our page and reach out to the team if you have questions or suggestions—especially personal experience with a resource or organization. If you just want to talk through a challenge your congregation is facing, send us an email! If you're interested in joining the team contact Sacia Vik, Northern Lights Region Transformation Team Chair.

<https://northernlightsdisciples.org/transformation>

General Assembly Grant

The 2025 General Assembly in Memphis will be historic. We hope as many NLR congregants, lay leaders, and clergy as possible will attend.

A policy giving financial assistance up to \$1,000 for first time congregational pastors can assist in the cost of General Assembly registration and travel. The policy states in part:

*"Believing it is important to the ongoing ministry of the Northern Lights Region to have the pastors of our congregations experience and participate in the General Assembly, **grants of up to \$1,000 will be made available to assist pastors in their first congregational call to attend the General Assembly.** To qualify for an assistance grant pastors*

- *Must be in their first call as a congregational pastor;*
- *Have not attended a prior General Assembly; and*
- *Need financial assistance to be able to attend the General Assembly."*

[Read the full policy here.](#)

If you are a first-time attendee and first-time congregational pastor with interest in attending, **please contact the Regional Office.**

Watch for more ways to support others wishing to travel to this very important Assembly soon!

What is the General Assembly?



The General Assembly is a four-day gathering in response to God's covenant of love that calls us to come together to go BEYOND. It is a time for us to step into the vastness of God's imagination across the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Mark your calendars to join us July 12-15, 2025, for worship, workshops, Bible study, opportunities to explore Memphis, mission projects, and the sacred work of the church for children, youth, young adults, and adults across the life of the church.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025

Save the Date to join Disciples across the church as we gather.

The theme for the 2025 General Assembly is "BEYOND". The theme is based on the following scriptures: Ephesians 3:20-21, Colossians 3:12-17, 1 Corinthians 1:25-27 (28-30), Hebrews 8:5-7, and Luke 4:16-21

Now to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to them be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen! Ephesians 3:20-21