

Northern Lights Reflections

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

Vol 6 Issue 9 September 2025

IN THIS EDITION

+Moment with the Moderator
p. 1

+The Phoebe Fellowship
p. 2

+Young Adult's first General
Assembly experience

+HELM Young Adult Leadership
p. 3

+Clergy Retreat at Gwinwood
+Brite offering for clergy
p. 4

+Two Global Ministries
mission co-worker events
p. 5

+CCC Billings Fall Book Sale
+NLR Interim clergy positions
+Reconciliation Special Offering
p. 6

+NLR Tech Grants
+Conversation Cafes for
Congregations
+Gwinwood Annual Meeting
P. 7

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

Phone: (253) 893-7202

northernlightsdisciples.org

Creatures of habit (but up for a challenge!)

Moment with the Regional Moderator, Rev. Doug Garner

It has been said that when wagon trains of settlers would gather in Independence, Missouri for the 2,000-mile trek to western Oregon on the Oregon Trail, trail bosses would often tell them to pick their ruts carefully because they were going to be in them for a long time. Of course, that wisdom applies to so much more than the Oregon Trail. We like our ruts because human beings are creatures of habit. I was interviewing at a church one time, and as congregations generally do, they asked me to bring the morning message. Well, that is an uncomfortable thing for a pastor because we like to tailor messages for people we know, or, at least, are getting to know. So, I tried an experiment with this congregation so that they could feel a little bit of discomfort as well. I asked the congregation to stand and trade sides of the sanctuary. If they were on the left they should go to the right, if on the right they should sit on the left. A little thing, right? Oh no... not little at all. You could sense the grumbling and groaning, and though it wasn't out loud, there were several who refused to give up "their" seat. That should have been a clue.



Ruts are still visible today on the Oregon Trail

Close your eyes and imagine your congregation's sanctuary... as you picture the people, you know where everyone sits. Most of them sit in the same pew or same chair as they do every week. Truth be told, pastors really don't mind that because a glance around the sanctuary makes it easy to see who is missing. And you know, as well as I do, that it applies to more than the church. In college and in seminary, students tended to sit in the same places. When I cook, my favorite burner on the stove is the left front, Lisa however, likes the right front. The point is, we are creatures of habit.

Continued on Page 2



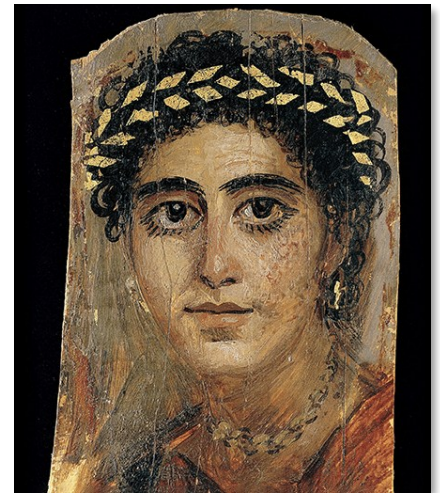
For the Body of Christ... the Church... however, the only constant is change. And that makes it difficult for those of us who are creatures of habit. Think of the massive amount of change that has happened in the last decade of our corporate life. It started with whispers in the Northwest and Montana Regions. Could we do better work together? We prayed together and studied together and worked together and the result was a brand-new Region... The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region. No sooner than we launched this new region, then change once again came as the Covid pandemic hit with a vengeance and we were all locked down. We have been through three Regional Ministers in our short five-year history and most of you feel like you are ready for some stability. But buckle up, because here we go again. At the recent General Assembly, the Church approved massive changes to the Design and moved from a biennium (two-year cycle) to a triennium (a three-year cycle). While we here in the Northern Lights Region are still working out the kinks in our bylaws, we are now challenged with moving to a three-year cycle. But I have faith in you all, these are the growing pains that come to all living things and the living church is no different. The challenge is for all of us to meet with grace and generosity and fidelity as we live and grow together in the living Body of Christ.

The NLR Phoebe Fellowship

“The Phoebe Fellowship: A group for active clergy in the NLRCC (DoC) who identify as women

In the tradition of Phoebe (Romans 16:7) and other female biblical leaders, the active clergy in the NLRCC (DoC) who identify as women faithfully lead and minister across diverse contexts and communities. This group is intended to provide a safe, supportive, and empowering environment for clergy who identify as women to connect, share experiences and address challenges unique to their roles and lives as church leaders.

We currently have 14 clergy on our roster. We meet monthly on the 2nd Thursday of each month for 1 hour over Zoom. We began meeting in May 2025. Our meetings have become a welcome place of respite and support for members from across the region. Many have expressed gratitude for the space and that they look forward to meeting each month. Our largest gathering was this month with 8 ministers in attendance. The current size of the group allows for deep sharing and support. We plan to continue in our current form and would welcome new members.



Portrait of a young Roman woman (detail), 90–120 CE, encaustic on limewood with gold leaf. Courtesy [Metropolitan Museum of Art](https://www.metmuseum.org).

Grace and peace,
Rev. Juli Prentice, Phoebe Fellowship Chair”

Contact Robin in the Regional Office to be added to the communications among the group and for upcoming meetings and news!

My First General Assembly

Katee Kostecki, Missoula, MT — 2025 NLR Young Adult Voting Representative

When I was first asked if I wanted to go to the General Assembly I wasn't sure what my answer would be. Even though I'm on the Northern Lights Regional Board, an active member in my congregation (acting as worship leader, diaconate and the board secretary) I thought I wasn't "religious enough" to attend. I know, I know, for those of you that have been going to Assembly for decades, I sound silly, but for those of you who haven't gone to an Assembly and maybe think the same thing, let me tell you how wrong I was.



From the start I had so much support from people in my life; my good friend and Pastor, Mathew Goodrich, fellow board member, Doug Garner, my mother, Diana Kostecki, and even my Regional Minister, Paul Allen. Their support came in many different forms, scholarships, reassurance, packing lists, emails, and help with booking my flights (just to name a few). They made it possible for me to go. I would be remiss if I didn't give thanks for their presence and influence in my life. So, if you are reading this, Mat, Mom, Doug and/or Paul, thank you.

I was so nervous because this was my first "adult" trip without my biological family, but the moment I stepped foot in Memphis, TN, I was never alone. People I knew, and people I didn't know, were always there when I needed guidance, a ride to the airport, advice or just someone to go to lunch with. Those "not worthy" thoughts slowly slipped into the back of my mind and then eventually slipped out entirely.

The energy during worship was lifechanging; it reignited my passion for faith and gave me more hope for the future than I've had in years. I had the enormous honor of hearing Bernice A. King's sermon Saturday night and despite her still recovering from a respiratory ailment, her words echoed through my world. Her words cut through my worries and my fears and called me to action.

I learned so much but the principal lesson I learned was I had a place there. What I thought wasn't "religious enough" didn't matter to God. It finally clicked that this place and experience was yet another table God prepared for me. A table that will never cast me, or any one else, out. With that fortified knowledge I plan on moving mountains, I plan on encouraging others to attend and move mountains too. I plan on taking the table I found in Memphis, TN and sharing it with all those around me, friends, family, neighbors, and strangers alike.

Young Adults 18-25 - Don't miss out!

Now announcing the launch of HELM's (Higher Education & Leadership Ministries) **Young Adult Leadership Symposium**, a new gathering designed to empower and equip young adults for leadership in their congregations, communities, and the wider church. This interactive event will offer workshops and opportunities to connect with peers and mentors who are passionate about faith and justice.

Registration is open! Don't miss this chance to grow in your leadership, explore your calling, and be inspired for the work ahead. [Learn more and reserve your spot today!](#)

Introducing

Young Adult Leadership Symposium

Ages 18-25

- Learn and develop leadership skills
- Flexible learning schedule
- Create impactful projects
- Work with church leaders

2026 Registration now open!

HELM HIGHER EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES

All-Region Clergy Retreat—register today!

All clergy -- pastors, chaplains, active, retired, and more from around the Northern Lights -- are invited to gather and renew at this year's *Rhythms of Rest* Clergy Retreat, at the serene forested Gwinwood Retreat Center on Lake Hicks in Lacey, WA. Clergy may attend with a significant "Plus-One" or on your own. You may also mix and match arrival and departure for your schedule (1, 2, or 3 nights).

Whatever your reason for being part of the retreat, forest-bathing or a labyrinth walk, making new friends or meeting up with old ones, time to rest and simply be... there will be something for everyone.

We're encouraging prompt registration to help planners with headcount and food prep, so visit RSVP TODAY!



REGISTER NOW

docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/2025-clergy-plus-one

Brite Divinity School offering virtual workshop



Flourishing in Ministry: Exploring Meaning, Means and Practice (virtual workshop)
October 5-8, 2025

Feeling tired, overwhelmed and disconnected from what called you to ministry?

Do your days continue to provide meaningful work?

Are you struggling to improve the quality of your daily life? Or seeking a time for personal reflection on what comes next?

Are personal, professional, or cultural transitions impacting your ability to thrive?

Ministry and life bring diverse kinds of transitions which challenge a pastoral leader's ability to thrive.

This intentional workshop lays a foundation for understanding the connection between our values, our stories, and the ways they support/inhibit our flourishing and then builds the resiliency skills and strategies needed to successfully meet the stress of ministry.

This 3½ day (Sunday evening to Wednesday afternoon) online intentional workshop is designed for mid-career clergy interested in exploring the different facets of personal and professional flourishing and in developing strategies for increasing one's resiliency.

Visit surveymonkey.com/r/WN8NVRD to learn more and apply. The deadline to apply is September 22. Once your application is received, it will be reviewed and notification of acceptance into the program will be sent no later than September 26.

TWO opportunities to learn and support our mission co-workers!

GLOBAL MINISTRIES CIRCLE

Englewood CC, Yakima, WA
Saturday, September 27 at 10 am-2:30 pm PDT
(lunch included)

You're invited to the **GLOBAL MINISTRIES CIRCLE** where we will experience our Colombia Partnership with our mission co-workers, Alex Maldonado and Xiomara Cintron-Garcia. Alex and Xiomara will tell us about their work in Colombia and talk about how we can continue to support them as our mission partners.

Join us at Englewood CC in Yakima, WA on Saturday, September 27 at 10 am-2:30 pm PDT (registration includes lunch).

GLOBAL MINISTRIES SUMMIT

Cane Ridge West, Lincoln, MT
Fri. & Sat., October 3 & 4 at 4 pm-4 pm MDT
(lodging & meals included)

Join us in our **GLOBAL MINISTRIES SUMMIT** as we explore our Colombia Partnership with our mission co-workers, Alex Maldonado and Xiomara Cintron-Garcia. Alex and Xiomara will tell us about their work in Colombia and how we can continue to support our mission partners. They'll also share lessons from our Colombia partners for congregations in the Big Sky Area.

Join us at Cane Ridge West in Lincoln, MT on Friday & Saturday, October 3 & 4 from 4 pm to 4 pm MDT (registration includes lodging & meals).

The New Testament reminds us that "partnership" [*koinonia* in Greek] is more than financial support. Partnership involves sharing, participation, fellowship, and communion.

ALEX & XIOMARA
MISSION COWORKERS IN COLOMBIA

→ Register by 9/22

GLOBAL MINISTRIES CIRCLE
AT ENGLEWOOD CHRISTIAN CHURCH
YAKIMA, WA
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH
10 AM TO 2:30 PM PDT

ALEX & XIOMARA
MISSION COWORKERS IN COLOMBIA

→ Register by 9/22

GLOBAL MINISTRIES SUMMIT
CANE RIDGE WEST RETREAT CENTER
LINCOLN, MT
FRIDAY, OCT. 3 - SATURDAY, OCT. 4
4 PM TO 4 PM (MDT)

Register BY 9/22 for the GM CIRCLE at Englewood CC, Yakima, WA:
docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/gm-circle-ecc

Register BY 9/22 for the GM SUMMIT at Cane Ridge West, Lincoln, MT:
docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/nlr-global-ministries-summit-crw

In May 2022, at the Northern Lights Region's first in-person Regional Assembly (Post Falls, ID), the assembly unanimously affirmed and signed a 5-year covenant to be in partnership with our Colombia Partnership "mission co-workers," Alex Maldonado Lizardi and Xiomara Cintrón García.

Read more about their mission and what we—as a Region—promised to support them with at:

northernlightsdisciples.org/colombia-partnership

Northern Lights Reflections

It's Fall Book Sale time!

Over 75,000 items to peruse!



Central Christian Church
1221 16th St W, Billings, MT
Mon, Sept. 29 - Sat, Oct. 4

10 am - 4 pm daily

Hardcovers,
Paperbacks,
DVDs,
Vinyl
...and more!

Job openings in the NLR

[First Christian Church, Bremerton, WA](#)
seeking a full-time intentional interim minister

[Northwest Christian Church, Seattle, WA](#)
seeking a part-time interim minister



For more on these positions, visit the regional website:
northernlightsdisciples.org/job-opportunities

2025 Reconciliation Special Offering - *Beyond*

Sunday, September 28th - Sunday, October 5th

2025 Reconciliation Ministry SPECIAL OFFERING

BEYOND

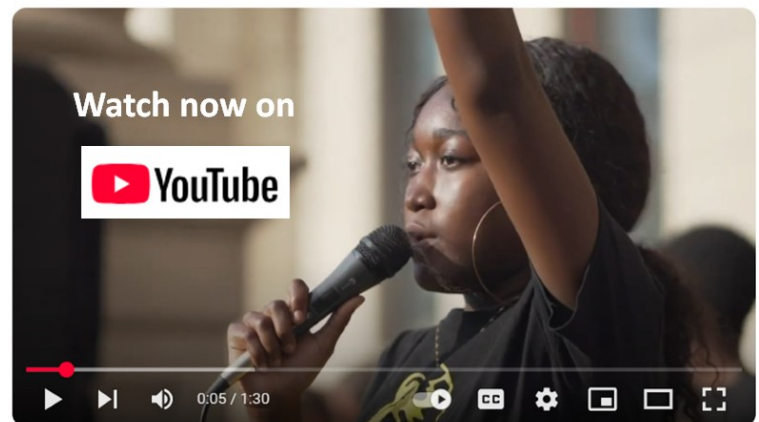
Beyond Brokenness - Building Beloved Community

The [Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering](#) is received in congregations the last Sunday in September and first Sunday in October (World Communion Sunday). Funds generated by this special emphasis are used through the year to provide grants to ministries and congregations actively developing and implementing programs that promote our Church's Pro-Reconciliation and Anti-Racist identity.

These efforts seek to reveal, re-educate, and remove systemic and structural barriers in communities that serve to deny the image of God and human thriving based on race.

For congregational resources visit northernlightsdisciples.org/special-day-offerings

youtube.com/watch?v=JtlIvQhRFNw



2025 Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering

Church Technology Grants of up to \$500
 (Every NLR congregation is eligible!)

Congregational Technology Grant still open!

This special technology grant offers up to \$500 for electronics and tech upgrades, equipment, software, and related projects (not to be used for normal operating expenses).

From a legacy gift from now-closed Joliet Christian Church in MT, their tradition of service continues after their visible ministry has ended.

Each congregation in the Northern Lights Region may request up to \$500 in technology funds.

northernlightsdisciples.org/2025-tech-grant.

CONVERSATION CAFÉ FOR CONGREGATIONS
 AN ONLINE LUNCH DISCUSSION

Attention: Clergy, Lay Leaders, and Church Staff

Join us from your home or church office for an engaging hour curated to discuss topical menu items relevant to congregational life, innovation in ministry, and supportive resources.

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 11:30am CST	Congregational Identity Values, Mission & Vision
Tuesday, December 16, 2025 11:30am CST	Research Strategies To Learn About Your Immediate Community

Visit www.discipleshomemissions.org under Congregational Vitality and Innovation to find a Café conversation guides ahead of the virtual lunch dates.

Scan to Register

Contact information:
 Rev. Derrick L. Perkins, Sr.
 Director for Congregational Vitality & Innovation
dperkins@dhm.disciples.org

GWINWOOD
 RETREAT CENTER
 EST. 1947



Gwinwood Annual Meeting
Saturday, November 22, 2025
10 am—12 pm

- ◇ Each western Washington Disciples owner congregations may register 2 representatives + pastor for voting (all others are welcome to attend, too)
- ◇ Do you or your church have a portable sound system and capability to make our meeting accessible and Zoom-friendly?
- ◇ Now seeking names for those interested in serving on the Board of Trustees during an exciting time (2-year term)
- ◇ Help to approve a 2026 budget & plans for the future of Gwinwood