

# Northern Lights Reflections

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

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[northernlightsdisciples.org](http://northernlightsdisciples.org)

## A Different Kind of Christmas

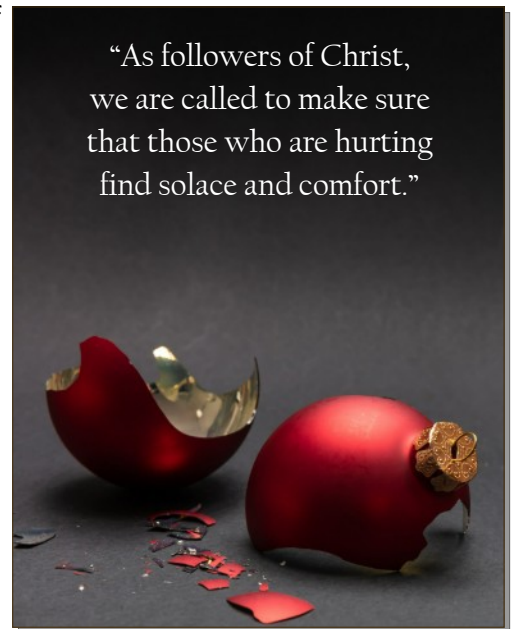
*Reflection with the Regional Minister, Paul Allen*

Christmas has always been a time of joy for my family, but also a time when we were incredibly busy. When I was young, with two ministers in the house, there was always somewhere to go or something to do. I never understood why my parents were so tired until I became a minister and went through my first Advent and Christmas season. Regional ministry is different. Advent is a time when things slow down, at least in my case, and I can reflect on the past year and look forward to the year ahead, but I still remember the frantic joy and the exhaustion I felt until around 10:00 pm on Christmas Eve when I could finally rest.

While Christmas and Advent are times of joy for some, they are times of sorrow for others. The loss of loved ones and the absence of family can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. The holiday season can be incredibly difficult for those who do not fit into “traditional” societal norms, and often their pain and discomfort are masked by the celebratory spirit around them.

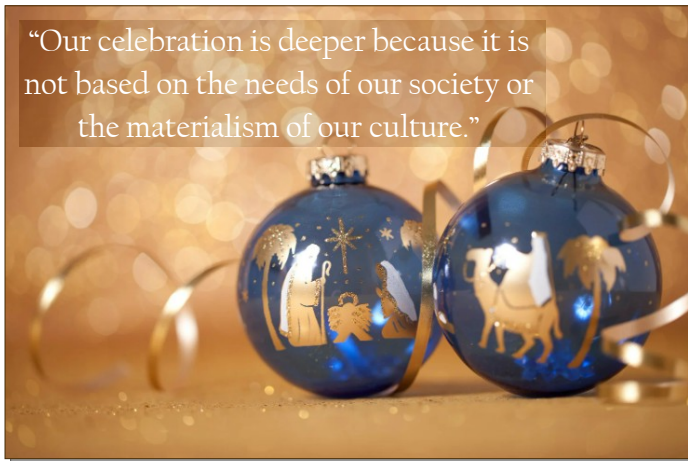
As followers of Christ, we are called to make sure that those who are hurting find solace and comfort. I hope that in the weeks to come, you will take a look around you and seek out those who may be lost or lonely. In this time when visiting can be difficult, send a card or call someone who needs a friendly voice. They will appreciate it, and you will help spread the joy that is Christmas.

“As followers of Christ,  
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that those who are hurting  
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*Continued on Page 2*

As exciting as Advent and Christmas can be, as Christians, our celebration is deeper because it is not based on the needs of our society or the materialism of our culture; it is based on the ultimate gift of God to us. The glory of Jesus Christ was not reflected in his birthplace; it shone in the sky as the angels sang of his coming, rang forth in the message of the Shepherds, and found true measure in Mary as she treasured their words and pondered them in her heart.



The most important aspect of this season is not the preparation of our homes but the preparation of our lives for the coming of Christ. Together we celebrate the certainty of God’s promises, that the Emmanuel, the God with us, came to earth to experience humanity and, in doing so, provided forgiveness and salvation for all.

I hope that every one of you will find joy in the season of Advent, have a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. May the love of God enfold you, the blessings of Jesus Christ flow down upon you, and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit give you strength so that the year ahead will be filled with wonder and joy. Thanks be to God, Amen.

## Special Christmas Offering

Received in most congregations December 14 & 21, 2025  
100% of this offering benefits the ministries of our Region



### THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

2025 CHRISTMAS OFFERING  
supporting the work of your Region and its ministries

Received in most congregations Dec. 14 & 21, 2025

[DONATE NOW](#)

The Disciples Mission Fund Christmas Offering returns 100% to the Region to help fund our shared ministries. **Every generous gift to the Christmas Offering makes a 100% difference in our own Northern Lights Region and its ministries.**



[Check out and share a video highlighting some of our regional ministries at the Northern Lights Region YouTube channel!](#)

[DONATE NOW](#)

Congregations can find resources to share this special offering that benefits OUR region at:  
[northernlightsdisciples.org/special-day-offerings](https://northernlightsdisciples.org/special-day-offerings)



# Congregational Food Insecurity Assistance Grants

Food insecurity is on the rise. Federal cuts and delays, tariffs, inflation, and skyrocketing prices for just about everything means that food can be one of the first things compromised in the life of a family or individual. And yet, we all need food, every day.



In hopes of relief for the folks hit hardest, and in heeding the words of Jesus to feed and care for the hungry in our midst, the Northern Lights Region Board has approved a new opportunity for its congregations to make a difference in their communities.

**Each active Northern Lights congregation may request a one-time grant for up to \$1,000 for either their own existing food insecurity assistance ministry, starting a new ongoing food assistance ministry, or work they do supporting local food assistance programs.** (Not for general operations or other ministries.)

**Apply for a congregational grant: [northernlightsdisciples.org/food-assistance-grants](https://northernlightsdisciples.org/food-assistance-grants).**

**Contact the Regional Office with questions: [office@northernlightsdisciples.org](mailto:office@northernlightsdisciples.org).**

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

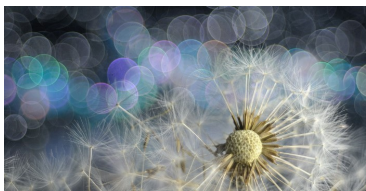
The ongoing regional technology grant offers NL Region congregations up to \$500 for electronics and technology upgrades, equipment, software, and projects (not to be used for normal operating expenses). Each Northern Lights congregation may request up to \$500 in funds.

**Apply NOW: [northernlightsdisciples.org/2025-tech-grant](https://northernlightsdisciples.org/2025-tech-grant)**

*Made possible by a legacy gift from Joliet CC in MT, whose tradition of service continues even after their visible ministry has ended.*



## Other Available Regional Grants:



**NLR Transformation Grants** are available for congregations wishing to pursue programs and education for the purpose of congregational transformation.

This may include education, training, or skill development for clergy & lay leaders, initiatives developed for congregational learning, ministry development related to transformation, and more. [northernlightsdisciples.org/transformation](https://northernlightsdisciples.org/transformation)

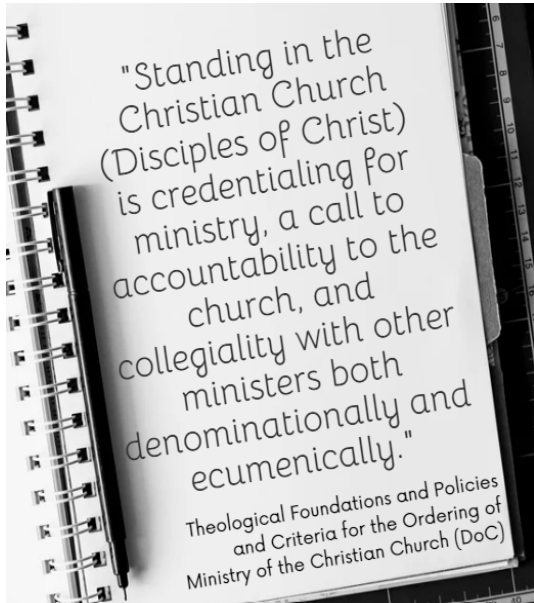
**NLR Reconciliation grants** are available to congregations developing and implementing programs that promote our Disciples' anti-racist/pro-

reconciling identity and seek to educate on systemic and structural barriers that serve to deny the image of God in all. The AR/PR Team seeks proposals that further the work of dismantling racism and promoting justice in a spirit of reconciliation. [northernlightsdisciples.org/reconciliation](https://northernlightsdisciples.org/reconciliation)



# Annual Clergy Standing Renewal for those with standing

**Annual standing renewal is required for all clergy with current standing, ordained and commissioned, active and inactive, who wish to maintain standing in the Region.** (Exceptions include those granted permanent courtesy standing by the Northern Lights Region's Commission on Ministry.)



Clergy renew standing by updating a form for the Regional Office.

**This year's deadline is January 30, 2026.** Data received helps the Region keep accurate records, link good information for the general church clergy directory (which is required), learn about our clergy and link them to opportunities supporting their passions. Forms will be reviewed at the Commission on Ministry's February meeting.

**An email was sent to all Northern Lights clergy with standing or who are in-care with links and instructions. If you didn't receive an email but think you should have, or have questions or support needs, contact Robin at [robin@northernlightsdisciples.org](mailto:robin@northernlightsdisciples.org) or at 253-893-7202 x1.**

**The easiest, fastest, and preferred method of renewing standing is using our secure portal at [northernlightsdisciples.org](https://northernlightsdisciples.org) - scroll to the bottom right and log in.**

*If you don't know your login information or are new to the Region, contact Robin to get issues resolved quickly.*

Failure to renew will result in loss of standing, which may affect employment and/or benefits, congregational or personal insurance coverage, and other regional advantages such as access to Search & Call, eligibility for providing pulpit supply, receiving clergy communications, and voting. **We urge your help in completing this process for our region by setting aside a few minutes to return the form by January 30, 2026.**

## New and updates from GMP Rev. Terri Hord Owens

Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, shares a Christmastide greeting and a charge for the church. She reminds us that when the lights, music, and celebration come to a close, the true work of Christmas is only beginning — work that calls us to embody hope, justice, compassion, and love in the everyday moments that follow.

[disciples.org/from-the-gmp](https://disciples.org/from-the-gmp)



### Wednesday Prayers with Terri

Join her and others Live on Facebook (9 am PT):

[www.facebook.com/terrihordowens](https://www.facebook.com/terrihordowens)



## Disciples Seminary Collective program offers variety of courses

The world needs leaders rooted in justice, compassion, and courageous faith — and the [Disciples Seminary Foundation](#) (DSF) Collective is here to help. The new [DSF Certificate Program – Pastoral Leadership in a Divided World](#) offers 10 flexible online courses designed to strengthen your ministry and deepen your spiritual foundation. ([See lineup here.](#))

**Who is this for?** This program is ideal for:

- Lay leaders seeking deeper theological grounding
- Anyone discerning a call to ministry
- Pastors & clergy pursuing renewal or continuing education
- Faith-based community workers and chaplains
- Those committed to justice, inclusion, and transformative leadership

Whether you complete the full program or take **individual courses for CEUs**, you'll find community, depth, and practical tools for real-world leadership. **The first course begins in January!**

To ensure access for all, [scholarships are available](#) of up to 50% of the cost. The cost for the entire Certificate Program is \$3,000, and individual courses are \$300.



The advertisement features the DSF Collective logo at the top left, with the text 'PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN A DIVIDED WORLD' to its right. Below this, it says 'Introducing Our New Certificate Program!' in large, bold letters. A list of three bullet points follows: 'FEELING CALLED TO MINISTRY OR THEOLOGICAL STUDY?', 'WANT PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP?', and 'NEED SKILLS TO NAVIGATE TOUGH ISSUES?'. A yellow banner below the list says 'USE CODE "DSF10OFF" TO RECEIVE 10% OFF!'. At the bottom, there are two boxes: 'DSF.EDU/DSF-COLLECTIVE' and 'SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!'. The background shows a laptop, a Bible, and a notebook.

Use **DSF10OFF** to enjoy **10% off** your enrollment today!

Together, let's build ministries that heal and uplift. **Learn more:** [dsf.edu/dsf-collective](https://dsf.edu/dsf-collective)

## 2026 Stewardship Sessions from Center for Faith & Giving

Join the [Center for Faith & Giving](#) for a year-long journey going far beyond funding the church budget. Each month, explore a new facet of faithful generosity—from caring for ourselves and creation to engaging every generation, crafting compelling stories, and consistently expressing gratitude. Together, work toward cultivating generosity and stewardship as a continuous, life-giving practice that sustains ministry and deepens discipleship.

To support CFG's ministry, a \$20 contribution per session is asked. Those who register for all 12 sessions (\$240) by Jan. 31 will receive a FREE download of 2026 Stewardship Theme materials (\$49.99 value) and access to our online community, which will include recordings of each session.

SECOND THURSDAYS — 8:30 am AK / 9:30 am PT / 10:30 am MT

[DATES & TOPICS HERE](#)

[REGISTER HERE](#)



The advertisement has a green and blue background. At the top, it says '2026 STEWARDSHIP SESSIONS' in large, bold letters. Below this, there are three circular images: one showing hands holding a Bible, one showing the Center for Faith & Giving logo, and one showing a whiteboard. At the bottom, it says 'CREATING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY ONE WISE PRACTICE AT A TIME' and 'CENTERFORFAITHANDGIVING.ORG/2026STEWARDSHIPSESSIONS'.

# NORTHERN LIGHTS



## GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS

THEREFORE I HAVE HOPE. -LAM. 3:20-23

MAY 1 - 3, 2026

KENNEWICK CC

WATCH FOR  
REGISTRATION  
INFO SOON!



2026 REGIONAL ASSEMBLY



*My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what was happy. And I say, "My hope is lost from the LORD."  
But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;  
God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

~Lamentations 3:20-23 NRSV

While still in the planning stages, the wellspring of a creative team is at work, and the Regional Assembly Planning Team is working hard to curate a meaningful weekend that will unite, inspire, and inform... and bring hope and reminders of God's faithfulness.

**Mark your calendars for the third in-person assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region!**

**Friday evening, May 1, 2026 through Sunday morning, May 3, 2026  
at Kennewick Christian Church, WA (virtual options will also be available)**

**Keynote Speaker: Rev. Chris Dorsey,  
President and CEO,  
[Disciples Home Missions](#)**

**Guest Speaker: Rev. Rebecca Hale,  
Executive Vice President,  
[National Benevolent Association](#)**

*Clergy & Laity Anti-racism/Pro-reconciliation training will be held Friday, May 1 prior to the Assembly. Info & registration will be forthcoming. Facilitator: Rev. Chris Dorsey, DHM*