

Northern Lights Reflections

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

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You are a Disciple... What Does that Mean?

Reflection with the Regional Minister, Paul Allen

What do we share with friends and relatives when they ask us what the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) believes? Who are we? This can be a difficult question to answer since our denomination is congregational and we have no creeds or dogma. However, we have beliefs that unite us. Yet, is there a way to introduce our denomination to those who do not know about it, encourage questions, and begin a discussion?

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) emphasizes Christian unity, inclusiveness, and social action. Our identity statement, found on our denominational website, disciples.org, states we are

"a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us."

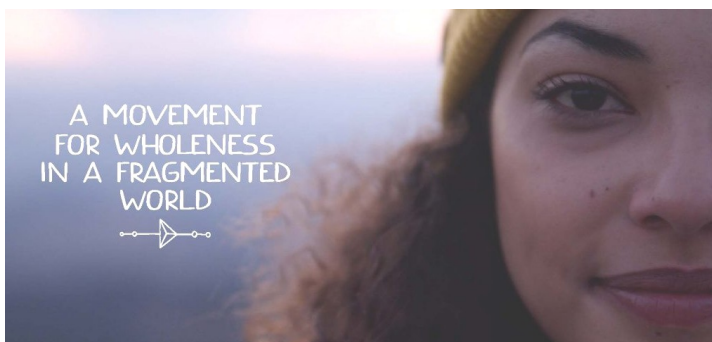
The Disciples of Christ movement is part of the larger Restoration Movement, which began in the early 19th century with Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is the oldest Christian Denomination born on American soil. We recognize the priesthood of all believers; therefore, we are not hierarchical in polity. All members are ministers who use their spiritual gifts to further the church's mission and spread the Good News of Christ. We teach believer's baptism by immersion and therefore do not baptize infants but accept baptism from other denominations. We place a heavy emphasis on communion, symbolized by the Chalice, which serves as our denomination's logo. Disciples of Christ congregations observe communion weekly.



Continued on Page 2

As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we dislike denominational labels and avoid putting Christians “in a box.” We believe that Christians can have a variety of doctrinal differences. “Unity, not uniformity,” as our founders put it. Our denomination’s official confession is short and simple, avoiding detailed assertions about doctrine beyond stating that Christ is Lord and Savior. As such, we are a fluid group, connecting many people of vastly different beliefs.

There are no “tests of faith” to join the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); we allow individual congregations and Christians to believe and practice based on their own study of faith, scripture, tradition, and reason. All people are welcome in leadership, at the table of communion, and within our congregations. We also believe in working with other denominations to spread the good news of Christ through mission work, evangelism, and social justice.



Such a diverse denomination can be difficult to encompass in words, so we invite others to experience the Disciples. To understand that we have churches that speak different languages, come from different cultures, and hold different theological ideals, yet we are unified by the covenantal promises we make to God and to each other, and by our desire to spread the good news of Christ. Our unity is expressed at its best at the table of communion, where all are welcome, all are fed, and all are called to move into the world to spread the message of peace, hope, and love we know so well.

Paul

2026 General Assembly News

That’s right—**General** Assembly! Amidst the excitement around our NLR in-person **Regional** Assembly coming in May, an online GENERAL Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will occur in July! At GA 2025 Disciples voted to move to a three-year cycle for gathering in assembly; this will be the first online event of that venture.

All Disciples are invited to participate in the 2026 General Assembly taking place online July 10-11. During BEYOND: Love Surpassing (Eph. 3:14-21), Disciples will gather from across the church to worship, learn, discern, and connect. Along with the business of the church, the Assembly provides chances to share resources, engage in collaborative conversations, and strengthen relationships across regions, churches, and general ministries.

- Registration Opens - March 2026 - (\$30 per person)
- Information Session for Congregational Leaders and Delegates - March 2026 - TBA



GA Tech Training for congregations

Tech Training opportunities are designed to help congregations and ministries prepare for the online General Assembly. Trainings will provide guidance on navigating the Assembly platform, BigMarker, and are designed to help ministries fully participate in the Assembly experience. Leaders are encouraged to attend these opportunities with those who will support technology and participation in their ministry settings.

What We’ll Cover:

- Demo of the BigMarker Platform
- The Voter and Non-Voter Experience
- Recommended Hardware
- Optimal Room Setup
- How to engage during GA

Training Dates:

February 26, 2026, at 5:00 pm PST
February 28, 2026, at 8:00 am PST

[REGISTER FOR THE TRAINING HERE](#)

N O R T H E R N L I G H T S



G R E A T I S Y O U R F A I T H F U L N E S S

M A Y 1 - 3 , 2 0 2 6

K E N N E W I C K C C

G U E S T S P E A K E R S :

REV. CHRIS DORSEY, DHM

REV. REBECCA HALE, NBA



2 0 2 6 R E G I O N A L A S S E M B L Y



*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

REGISTER NOW for the 2026 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 are also available)

Find out all the details and REGISTER NOW:
northernlightsdisciples.org/2026-regional-assembly

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

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

Preaching: Rev. Paul Allen,
Regional Minister,
[Northern Lights Region](#)

- Six Workshops to choose from
- Children's programming
- Important business session votes
- Clergy after hours get-together

***Anti-racism/Pro-reconciliation training for Clergy & Laity** will be held Friday, May 1st from 9 am-4 pm.
Registration is separate from the Assembly—register here: docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/nlr2026-arpr

Spokane clergyman in the news

The Northern Lights Region's very own Rev. James Burford has made the news in Spokane's *The Spokesman-Review*. A February 17, 2026 article by Mathew Callaghan titled "From Selma to Spokane: Local pastor remembers eventful trip to Alabama with Rev. Jackson" remembers the Rev. Jesse Jackson on the occasion of his passing, and names James Burford in its first sentence: "In March 1965, James Burford and Jesse Jackson caravanned together from Chicago south to Selma, Alabama." The rest of the article chronicles a 700-mile road trip, sleeping under the stars, peaceful (but tension-filled) protests, and a walk across the famed Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.

Read the full story and view the full photo at spokesman.com/stories/2026/feb/17/from-selma-to-spokane-local-pastor-remembers-event.



Jim Burford, Susan Burford & Jesse Jackson attend Chicago Theological Seminary at the 50th reunion of the Selma March.

Week of Compassion Offering

Suggested offering dates: Feb. 15 & 22

Whether rebuilding after a flood, finding safety in conflict, or recovering from economic hardship, Week of Compassion is finding A NEW WAY – one rooted in relationship, equity, and hope. Together, we are strengthening the church's long-term capacity to respond and accompany, wherever people are displaced or in need.



In the new Special Offering resources they share stories and glimpses of hope. The gifts you give make an impact around the world, ensuring vulnerable communities are held at the center of the work, and strengthening congregations and partners to respond. Be a part of that work - give today or in your congregation. In this work we share, God is opening new ways. Our task is to walk them faithfully – together, with imagination, courage, and trust in the One who makes all things new.

For more information, church resources, and to donate, visit www.weekofcompassion.org/2026.html.



Become a Disciples Advocate

Disciples Advocate is a distribution channel and a connection space that empowers Disciples to bring a coordinated approach to promoting greater justice and mercy in the world.

Learn More and Sign Up at [HERE](#).

Connect with Disciples Men in a survey and a Book Group

An invitation from Kevin Lue, First Christian Church in Sacramento, of the Men's Discipleship Council:

All men in Disciples congregations and throughout the denomination are invited to participate in a survey hosted by Disciples Men.

Disciples Men is a cooperative effort between the [Office of Disciples Men](#) and the Men's Discipleship Council (formerly, General Conference of Disciples Men).

Your input is extremely valuable and helps guide the direction and effectiveness of our ministry. If you are still willing, I would greatly appreciate you taking a few moments to complete the updated survey.

Our Disciples Men ministry created this survey to better understand the needs of men across the United States and Canada. Our goal is to provide the best possible resources, training, and encouragement to support the spiritual health of individuals and congregations.

Please also help us by sharing and distributing this survey to as many men as possible. Your opinions, experiences, and perspectives are greatly appreciated.

Please access the survey for Men's Ministry using the link below. Thank you for your time.

Survey Link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q1b1oYCb_DxliZclKpdil2JOWEY5MzkNUp69nZ5Xa6E/edit?usp=drive_web

Disciples Men's Ministry Website:

discipleshomeissions.org/ministry-programs/disciples-men
disciplesmissionhub.org



**DISCIPLES
MEN** 
Disciples Home Missions

The Long Way Together - A Disciples Men Book Group

Disciples Home Missions is launching a new monthly online men's book study, *The Long Way Together*.

This gathering is grounded in a simple, but powerful conviction: we are formed, not finished. Through shared reading and guided conversation, participants will explore questions of faith, masculinity, and discipleship shaped by the way of Jesus.

Each session centers on conversation rather than lectures or debate, creating space for honest reflection, deep listening, and growth rooted in community. This group is open to men across the life of the church who are seeking a thoughtful, relational space for ongoing formation.

Learn more and sign up [HERE!](#)

The Long Way Together Formed, Not Finished

*Reading, reflecting, and growing in faith
Exploring masculinity and discipleship*

A men's book study grounded in faith, curiosity, and community.



ALEX data entry deadline 3/31

ALEX—formerly Yearbook—is open for congregational reporters to add their church’s data into the system. Having undergone an extensive makeover in the last couple of years, it is more streamlined and easier than ever to enter required information for 2025. Join 2,800 congregations—make your voice count!

Congregational reporters, log in at alex.disciples.org, and find support and helpful worksheets to prepare your church’s data.

We’re grateful for the 20 congregations who are complete! There are 13 in progress, and 12 still to start.



2026 SUMMER CAMP

July 13-16—Kids Camp

**at Gwinwood Retreat Center
(Lacey, WA)**

July 13-18—Junior, ChiRho & CYF Camps

**at Gwinwood Retreat Center
(Lacey, WA)**

July 20-25—Kids, Junior, ChiRho & CYF Camps

**at Cane Ridge West Retreat Center
(Lincoln, MT)**

NBA Mission & Ministry Grants



Supporting Disciples ministries for older adults and educational programs for at-risk youth and young adults.

Apply at NBACares.org/MM-Grants

Applications due March 25, 2026



National Benevolent Association
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Congregational Food Insecurity Assistance Grants

In hopes of relief for the folks hit hardest by federal cuts and delays, tariffs, inflation, and skyrocketing prices for just about everything, 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.)

We've been energized and inspired by the innovation, partnerships, and longevity of the twelve congregations who have applied and been granted these grants so far. Will yours be next?

Apply for a congregational grant:
northernlightsdisciples.org/food-assistance-grants.

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

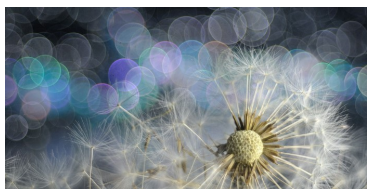
The ongoing regional technology grant offers NL Region congregations up to \$500 for electronics and technology upgrades, equipment, software, and projects (not to be used for normal operating expenses). Each Northern Lights congregation may request up to \$500 in funds.

[Apply NOW for a congregational tech grant.](#)

Made possible by a legacy gift from Joliet CC in MT, whose tradition of service continues even as 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 and lay leaders, initiatives developed for congregational learning, ministry development related to transformation, and more.

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

