

Northern Lights Reflections

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

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Growth Brings Life

Reflection with the Regional Minister

We are in the midst of summer, temperatures are rising, greenery is exploding all around us, and life seems to be bursting in every corner. In the Northern Light Region, we are still celebrating our Regional Assembly. This gathering in Kennewick, WA, provided times for worship, study, mission work, welcome, and meaningful hospitality. We are grateful to Kennewick Christian Church, to Nueva Vida en Cristo, and the other congregations that helped support our Assembly; to the Regional leaders who planned this event; and to all who attended in person and virtually.



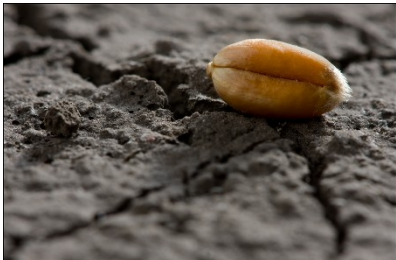
At our Assembly, there were three major items of business.

We discussed the changes the Regional Board made to the Regional Assembly schedule and our leadership. We will now meet in person every three years, adopting the model of the General Assembly for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and our leadership positions will also have three-year terms. We elected new leadership for our Regional Board and the Regional Commission on Ministry, and we voted to begin an Open and Affirming discernment process in our Region.

We know that with growth comes change. We are creating new missions for our Region, ones that could lead us away from comfortable surroundings and into challenging arenas of faith. Yet, without change, we will wither into nothingness and die. Transformation is not to be feared, but accepted and welcomed as a gift from God.

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I once heard a story about two grains of wheat. They were very similar and were planted in a field close to each other. However, the first wheat kernel wanted more, so it absorbed moisture and nutrients from the soil and began to grow.



The second grain saw what the first kernel was doing and could not believe it. Why would a grain of wheat want to change?

Wasn't it happy? Then, the first wheat kernel began to grow and split its shell. Roots developed at the base, and a slender stalk appeared. The grain of wheat was in pain, but it kept growing.

The second kernel of wheat was now sure that growing was not worth it. Why go through the discomfort if it did not know what was going to happen? It would be better to stay as they were. The second kernel remained dormant and eventually died.

The first grain of wheat, now a long stalk and a head with many grains of wheat, sadly looked down at the second grain. It had withered away, but the first grain of wheat continued to grow and prosper, and soon the field was full of long stalks of wheat.



It is my hope that the Northern Lights Region will continue to grow and prosper as we accept the cost of discipleship and carry on the work of Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Let's Go To SUMMER CAMP!

Summer Camp at our Disciples venues in Lincoln, MT and Lacey, WA is coming this July! Kids and youth grades 2 thru highschool grads are invited to register now for camp— a week of memory- and friend-making, and learning about about God, Jesus, and our beautiful world.



IN THE WILDERNESS

NORTHERN LIGHTS REGIONAL  SUMMER CAMPS - JULY 2026

REGISTER NOW!

Cane Ridge West July 20-25	Gwinwood Retreat Center July 13-16** & July 13-18
Kids - entering 2-3	Kids** - entering 2-3
Junior - entering 4-5	Junior - entering 4-5
ChiRho - entering 6-9	ChiRho - entering 6-9
CYF - entering 9-Grad '26	CYF - entering 9-Grad '26

northernlightsdisciples.org/summer-camps
office@northernlightsdisciples.org

REGISTER HERE

Scholarships are available for those with financial need. Get details at northernlightsdisciples.org/summer-camps.

Camp will be held at both NLR Disciples-connected venues:

Cane Ridge West Conference & Retreat Center (MT) –
July 20-25: All Camps

Gwinwood Retreat Center (WA) –
July 13-16: Kids Camp / July 13-18: Jr, ChiRho, CYF Camps

Registration Deadline is 14 days prior to camp start.
\$20 Early Bird discount until one month prior to camp.



Missoula Summer Book Club

FCC Missoula, MT is having a Summer Book Club and YOU are invited!

Each month we are reading a different book and gather on a Thursday Night to discuss the book (with a light meal if attending in person).

June: *I am a Follower* by Leonard Sweet.

Tonight at 6 pm MDT

July: *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman.

July 16th at 6 pm MDT

August: *White Poverty* by William Barber II.

August 20th at 6 pm MDT

These gatherings are available both in person at FCC Missoula and via Zoom.

If joining on Zoom, use the signup form to receive links and details! To learn more and find links to purchase the books visit fccmissoula.org/book-club.

Offered in a
Hybrid
Format

[View a brochure here!](#)

Shoutout to Kara Markell & Juli Prentice for the idea!

Adult (or 18+) Camp at Cane Ridge West will run Friday-Sunday, July 17-19!

Click in to see the schedule, registration link, and details!

[Verified volunteer staff for CRW Youth Camp attend for free — details within!]

[Register now!](#)

Regional discernment process

Greetings, Northern Lights Region. At our Regional Assembly in Kennewick, WA in May, by majority vote, a resolution was passed to begin a **three-year process of discernment on becoming an open and affirming region.**

We understand that not everyone felt they had an opportunity to express their concerns or support for this endeavor. It is our hope that you will take the time to do so now. Your voices matter to us.



All Northern Lights Region clergy and laypersons are invited to participate in a survey opportunity to help determine next steps in our discernment: [CLICK FOR SURVEY](#)

Your responses will be confidential. Only Rev. Dr. Christie Love and Rev. Gloria Soja, the designated co-leaders of this process, will have direct access to your responses. The information gathered will be summarized, with any identifying information removed, prior to sharing beyond these two individuals. This information will be used to gauge where we are as a region, develop a path forward, and ensure we are including all voices at the table in the spirit of mutual respect and love.

Thank you for trusting us and thank you for taking the time to share with us.”

Rev. Dr. Christie Love and Rev. Gloria Soja





ONLINE JULY 10-11, 2026

Registration \$30 per person



Hear Inspiring Voices at General Assembly 2026

Registration is now open for the 2026 General Assembly, taking place online July 10–11. Join Disciples from across the United States and Canada for worship, learning, fellowship, and discernment as we gather around the theme BEYOND: Love Surpassing. Participants will hear from inspiring preachers and speakers who will challenge, encourage, and equip us for faithful ministry in the world. Register today, \$30 per person, and be part of this historic gathering of the church.

PREACHERS

JULY 10, 2026
REV. DR. JONATHAN HALL
 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF NORTH HOLLYWOOD

JULY 11, 2026
REV. TERRI HORD OWENS
 GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT

PREPARING FOR DIALOGUE ON THE TOPIC FOR EDUCATION, DISCUSSION, AND PRAYER
REV. DR. LIZETTE ACOSTA
 DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
 BRITE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Register Today!

BEYOND: LOVE SURPASSING

Congregational Delegates

Congregational Delegates
Has your congregation appointed three delegates for the 2026 General Assembly? Serving as a Congregational Delegate is an opportunity to represent your congregation, participate in important conversations, and help shape the ministry and witness of the church as we gather online July 10–11, 2026.

Learn More

BECOME A DIGITAL DEACON FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2026!

BEYOND: LOVE SURPASSING

Calling all Digital Deacons!
Help foster connection across the church by serving as a Digital Deacon for General Assembly 2026. Disciples of all ages are invited to help build community and engage participants before and during our inaugural online General Assembly. Orientation, a toolkit, and complimentary registration are provided.

Learn More

Soul Circle - A Women's Spiritual Retreat

September 18-20, 2026
Early Bird discount thru 8/18; Register BY 9/10
Cane Ridge West Conference & Retreat Center

REGISTER NOW

This annual favorite is on the calendar again as women from around the Region will gather to celebrate gifts, passions, empowerment, and the joys of womanhood.

Find more details and register at docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/nlr2026-womens-retreat



Rhythms of Rest - Clergy (and +1) Retreat

October 16-18, 2026
Early Bird discount thru 9/1; Register BY 10/8
Cane Ridge West Conference & Retreat Center

REGISTER NOW

All Northern Lights Region clergy are invited to participate in a retreat of restful surroundings in the company of colleagues, friends, and a plus-one companion (if desired).

Learn more and register at docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/nlr2026-clergy-plus-one-retreat



Jill Crisci Ordination Invitation!

The Northern Lights Region is proud to share that Jill Crisci, pastor of Missiongathering Bellevue, who has been under the care of the Region and Commission on Ministry on our ordination track, has been approved for ordination, and you are invited! We are so proud and thankful for Jill's presence and pastoring in our Region.

Missiongathering Bellevue at 6 pm PDT
15318 SE Newport Way



2026 Clergy AR/PR training

2026 is the focus year for clergy Anti-racism/Pro-reconciliation training. With few exceptions (such as Retired-inactive), **clergy are required to complete six hours to maintain standing.** At the May Regional Assembly, 37 clergy and 12 laypersons attended an inspiring, informative training by Rev. Chris Dorsey of Disciples Home Missions.

In accordance with regional policy, clergy unable to attend that event may opt to take a training by another Disciples Region or those led by approved denominations under the umbrella of [Churches Uniting in Christ](#), and there are plans being made to provide another in-person training event in Yakima, WA in the fall.

We are adding approved trainings at the Northern Lights website as they are made known to us - keep an eye on this page as training events are added: northernlightsdisciples.org/boundaries-arpr-training.

Joint Endorser Concern Regarding Reduction of Religious Affiliation Codes Letter

“Without explanation, the Department of Defense (War) removed the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and several other religious traditions from its Religious Affiliation Code list. Service members in our denomination must now identify under a code that does not reflect their faith — or choose the catch-all ‘Other Religion’ designation. Rev. Dr. Jonathan Fisher, DHM Director for Chaplaincy and Specialized Ministries, and our Ecclesiastical Endorser, represented the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) well and helped lead an ecumenical response — sending a letter of protest to the Department of War, signed by multiple Christian denominations and religious organizations. We are grateful to our colleagues and partners for standing with us in defense of the religious liberty of those who serve. This letter helps frame the impact of these changes and how the action threatens the work of chaplaincy, and undermines the dignity of persons of faith who dutifully serve the country. We will have more to say about this as a denomination, but in the meantime, we ask that you circulate this ecumenical letter broadly and find ways to make your own voice heard on this issue.”

[Click below to read the 4-page letter in its entirety](#)

June 05, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
U.S. Department of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

CC:
Members of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board
Office of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness
Service Chiefs of Chaplains

Re: Joint Endorser Concern Regarding Reduction of Religious Affiliation Codes

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We, the undersigned religious bodies and representatives, write in common cause to express our grave concern regarding the recent revisions to the Religious Affiliations Code List administered under the authority of the Secretary of War.

Though our traditions differ in belief, practice, polity, and language, we share a common commitment: every Service Member must be able to serve with dignity, receive appropriate spiritual care, and have their religious identity respected within the military community. The revised list undermines that commitment by removing or obscuring the