northern lights disciples reflections

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Harvest. Preparing. Amen.

Moment with the Moderator, Mary Larsen

"Look at this one!" my younger brother hollered while light snow swirled around him. He was holding a freshly dug potato about the size of two tennis balls. It was time to harvest the potatoes. HARVEST.

Harvest had actually begun two months earlier at our garden just north of Yellowstone National Park. August saw corn and beans and tomatoes, zucchinis and cucumbers. September continued with beets, more tomatoes, and beans. October saw pumpkins that my brother and I got to sell to the neighborhood kids in the park where we lived. But the potatoes... my dad liked to keep them in the ground as long as possible, so it seemed we were always digging the potatoes, pulling carrots and harvesting winter squash in a snowstorm or sleet, or pouring rain preceding a storm. HARVEST. We were so grateful for the bounty of our garden. But, along with harvest came preparation – PREPARING the bounty for the next season. For three months my mom had been chopping, canning, freezing, pickling, drying our harvest. PREPARING – making ready for what is to come.



In this month of November, we show gratitude and thanks for the bountiful HARVEST in our lives: our family, friends, our homes, our faith. Even when perhaps there is some swirling snow or storms in our harvest and yet still grateful – then we begin PREPARING – making ready for what is coming, the season of Advent upon us. PREPARING our hearts and minds to welcome anew the precious gift sent to Earth to bring us hope and love.

HARVEST. PREPARING. Amen.

Mary

You Are Invited! Rev. Rebecca Sumner installation



Sunday, November 22 at 2 pm PST
Northwest Christian Church
7503 - 18th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117

Clergy are invited to wear red stoles and process in (please arrive early).

Refreshments will be provided after the installation service.



To livestream, click here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86347492689?pwd=uJMyTcnIOOWJo9r7yvLRLgXwRwMAyM.1

Last Call: 2026 Clergy & In-Care AR/PR training requirements



Throughout 2026, clergy and leadership anti-racism/ pro-reconciliation trainings have been a regional focus in compliance with the NLR policy that all active and Retired-active clergy, as well as in-care candidates, must complete six hours of AR/PR training every four years. Read the policy here.

Clergy and in-care candidates due for training have received multiple notices; if you have questions as to whether you are in need of completing training in 2026, please contact the regional office.

Those unable to attend previous sessions may opt to take a six-hour training held by another Disciples Region or by other approved denominations under the umbrella of Churches Uniting in Christ.

Approved virtual or online opportunities include:

- SW Region – December 12th at 8 am-2 pm PT: Register Here
- UMC General Commission on Religion & Race – Recorded on YouTube – On your schedule (in 2026): "*Racial Justice: A Mandate to Our Discipleship*" 4-Part Webinar Series. View info & lin to videos here
  All four videos must be completed for a total of six hours. Share a screenshot from the end of each session with the Regional Office to receive credit.

Pension Fund extends one-time emergency aid program

Pension Fund of the Christian Church is extending its one-time Emergency Aid Program for a second year. Following changes introduced by H.R. 1 (the One Big Beautiful Bill Act), clergy who purchase health insurance through the ACA Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace are facing a second year of premium increases. Recognizing the ongoing financial strain these create for pastoral families and congregations that support them, Pension Fund is again making emergency assistance available to eligible clergy. (One-time assistance: Eligible clergy may receive a $4,000 non-taxable stipend.)

Building on last year's Emergency Aid initiative, this continued assistance reflects Pension Fund's commitment to supporting clergy navigate these financial challenges.

For more information and program and eligibility details, visit pensionfund.org/about/news/pension-fund-extends-one-time-emergency-aid-program-for-pastors-facing-rising-aca-health-insurance-premiums

Application Deadline and Payments: Applications began on Nov. 15 and continue through Dec. 31, 2026. All applications and required supporting documentation must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on Dec. 31.

Pension Fund of the Christian Church
strong smart secure



Share your ministry's news with your regional family

What is new, exciting, challenging, or changing in your communities in this great region? What is your congregation, faith community, or place of employment doing that you'd like to share with others? Are there connections being made as you reach out into your community? New ways of being Church as you follow The Way of Jesus? Ideas that are working for your gatherings that might be of interest to others? Intersections where we can collaborate as the Body of Christ in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region?

We'd love to gather stories and photos to feature ways our region is doing God's work in the world! Has the Region supported your congregation or have you participated in regional events and have photos to show off?

SHARE WITH US!

Submit your stories at northernlightsdisciples.org/community-connections

or email to the Regional Office at office@northernlightsdisciples.org

DOC Thanksgiving Offering

Received in congregations Nov. 15 & 22



The Thanksgiving Offering celebrates the Disciples' longstanding commitment to higher education and leadership development. Your gifts through November 22nd help support students attending the 15 colleges and universities and seven seminaries and divinity houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Give thanks by investing in the next generations!

Gifts to the Thanksgiving Offering are a critical part of the ongoing collaborative work of church and higher education that is such a foundational part of the heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Please give generously. Your gift makes a difference in the lives of our students, and in the world.

Find graphics, details, and more ways to share: disciplesmissionfund.org/special-offerings/thanksgiving

Holiday Soulcare Moments with NBA series

On Tuesday, December 15th at 12 pm PT, National Benevolent Association's (NBA) Mental Health and Wellness Program invites you to **Soulcare Moments: Anchored in Hope Virtual Gathering of Rest, Reflection & Collective Hope**. The holiday season can bring both joy and heaviness, and this free virtual webinar, part of Soulcare Moments: Anchored in Hope holiday campaign, aims to create a welcoming, faith-centered space for clergy, congregations, families, and community members to pause, reflect, acknowledge personal and collective challenges, and find renewed hope through prayer, connection, and intentional soul care.

NBA's hope is that through this event and throughout this season, you will find meaningful ways to care for yourself and one another. Join NBA as you journey through this season together, anchored in hope.

This virtual event will be held on Tuesday, December 15th at 12 pm PT. There is no cost to attend but registration is required.



El Niño Preparation Guide

A message from Week of Compassion

As a partner in ministry, Week of Compassion is sharing resources to help your congregation prepare for how this season's weather may affect your community. A little prep now can help protect your people, care for your congregation, and strengthen your ability to serve neighbors.

What is El Niño—and why does it matter?

El Niño is a climate pattern driven by warmer-than-average water in the tropical Pacific Ocean that shifts the paths of storms and changes seasonal patterns of temperature, rain, and snow. We've already seen examples of weather changes, such as hurricane conditions in the Pacific, flooding in the southwest, and late-season nor'easters.

A strong El Niño is expected to influence the winter of 2026 through 2027. Current outlooks favor warmer conditions across much of the northern U.S. and wetter conditions across the South and East, including the Southwest and California. These patterns can increase some risks while reducing others. El Niño doesn't guarantee a weather event, but gives us an opportunity to prepare for what may come.

Regional risks to keep in mind

PACIFIC NORTHWEST and MOUNTAIN WEST

Warmer or drier conditions are possible in parts of the Northwest and northern Mountain West, while California may experience periods of heavy rain and atmospheric river storms. Prepare for potential drought and wildfire risks in drier areas, and flooding, landslides, and road closures where heavy rain occurs.

These are broad seasonal patterns, not local forecasts. Monitor your local weather and follow local emergency guidance.

What your congregation can do to prepare

CARE FOR YOUR PROPERTY

- Inspect roofs, gutters, windows, trees, and walkways. Address potential hazards before storms arrive, like clearing storm drains and securing outdoor items.
- Check sump pumps, drainage systems, and backup power where available.
- Keep tarps and basic cleanup supplies accessible.
- Locate and label electrical panels, water and gas shutoffs, and other utility controls. Ensure appropriate people know how to operate them safely.
- Clear vegetation around the property to create defensible space in areas of wildfire risk and to reduce incidents of impact damage in areas of risk from severe storms.

PREPARE TO CARE FOR PEOPLE

- Update contact lists for staff, leadership, members, and people who may need additional assistance.
- Establish an emergency communication plan, including backup ways to reach people if power or internet are out.
- Identify available flashlights, batteries, first-aid supplies, emergency food and water, and essential medications. Plan for refrigeration needs and power outages.

Week of Compassion is your partner in ministry before, during, and after disaster. You don't have to navigate preparedness or recovery alone. For questions, to learn more about disaster response resources, or explore how your congregation can support its wider community, contact:
Michael Shepherd, Disaster Response Mgr.
michael@weekofcompassion.org | 317-586-2360

Download the complete emergency preparedness guide in PDF format at
northernlightsdisciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/2026-El-Nino-Preparation-PNWMW.pdf