



MISSION PLAN

Northwest Regional Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

SPRING 2009



Special Regional Assembly May 16, 2009
Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Business Item
#09-03

The Regional Board voted unanimously to approve the following business item and recommends adoption by the Regional Assembly.

MISSION & VISION & CORE VALUES

These statements of mission and vision and values were affirmed by the NWRCC at the Regional Assembly May 2008 and served as guiding principles for the development of the Mission Plan

Mission

Called by God and sent by the Living Christ, we the Northwest Regional Christian Church intentionally engage with one another rejoicing in our diversity and shared gifts, deepening our spiritual life, building true community, acting courageously in ministry and mission, and sharing God's good news with a fresh voice and a new song. We seek to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

Vision Statement

Called by God's grace to do together that which by God's design cannot be done apart, and led by the movement of the Spirit of God,

we proclaim the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
to be a community of communities,
valuing our strength in diversity,
honoring and acknowledging our various gifts,
offering them in faithfulness and service to the entire body.

Filled with the joy of God's presence with us

we share together in hospitality, worship and praise
enriching our lives with scripture and prayer
singing songs of hope, faith and celebration
joining in the gifts of loaf and cup
inviting our neighbors to experience God's abundance.

Created by God as part of the body of Christ in this place

we join together in ministry
strengthening our bond to one another and to God
honoring and supporting those who guide us in God's new doings

Challenged by the Word of God to live into God's purpose and promise

we embrace ministries of justice and service
provoking one another to love and good deeds
bringing good news to the poor, freeing the oppressed,
healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked.

Inspired by the faith that moves mountains

we pour ourselves out into mission
caring for the earth and her creatures
listening anew for God's Word in each moment
living forward with courage and compassion

The Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with God's help, is living into God's purpose today, and trusting in the promise of God's tomorrow.

CORE VALUES:

Living Forward

- We celebrate that God is always doing a new thing
- Our faithful response is to continually be open to new ways of being church together
- Though we honor and celebrate past traditions, we are not bound or limited by them

God-Centered, Spirit Led

- We recognize that God is in our midst, shaping and forming our life together
- We intentionally seek opportunities to listen anew for the Spirit's direction through prayer, worship, study of scripture, and the collective wisdom of the gathered community

Diversity

- Diversity is a gift from God that must be nurtured, cherished, and encouraged as God's truth is usually too much for any one of us alone
- We are committed to acknowledging, healing and reconciling our brokenness and the wounds of the past
- Knowing our oneness in Christ, we commit to be open, receptive and inclusive of all people

Community

Through our understanding of the Region as an interconnected community of communities:

- We are committed to increasing our connection and availability for joyful interaction
- We are learning with God's help to love one another through dialog, forgiveness, learning, and mutual support

Justice and Compassion

- We are sent out by God to minister in Christ's name
- We are called to engage in intentional acts of justice and mercy
- We are prepared to see the presence of Christ in everyone on earth

Christian Unity

“Christian unity is our polar star.” – stated by Barton Stone, one of our founders

- Our unity is a gift from God that we celebrate as we gather with joy around the one table
- We recognize that our regional community is part of a wider community that includes not only Disciples but Christians and people of faith throughout the world

MISSION PLAN

Introduction

The Northwest Regional Christian Church, committed to God's leading, seeks transformation in our life together. We have called this formal regional transformation process RISE. We commit ourselves to a shared ministry as a community of communities, grace-filled, forward thinking, and open to new possibilities. This Mission Plan outlines how we intend to live out these values in the coming years.

Our Region has a rich heritage ministering to and with its congregations, neighbors, and the world. It is the prayer and hope of all involved in this process that the material presented here may continue that ministry in new and significant ways, and be used by current and future leaders to create and embody a regional church filled with vision, excitement, creativity, and the joy of living boldly into God's emerging future

The completion and adoption of this plan does not mark the end of our transformational journey. This is a living document that will continue to evolve over time as new visions, insights, and possibilities emerge. This document is best understood as a starting point and foundation from which to make decisions about the specific ways we, the regional church, will carry out our goals and objectives.

As one of our primary regional core values, we will continue to listen for God's voice and willingly adapt and change as the Spirit directs. May the Guiding Spirit who has brought us this far and walks with us throughout our journey continue to light our path and inspire us to new vision in the years to come.

I. Focus: Build True Community

*Called by God's grace to do together that which by God's design cannot be done apart,
and led by the movement of the Spirit of God,
we proclaim the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
to be a community of communities,
valuing our strength in diversity,
honoring and acknowledging our various gifts,
offering them in faithfulness and service to the entire body.*

We foster intentional relationships grounded in the love of Christ in all aspects of Regional life: between individuals, congregations, ecumenical and interfaith partners.

A. Teach, Model and Encourage Open Communication

Objectives

- Listen to one another with open hearts and minds, especially in times of disagreement
- Ground all decision-making in prayer and discernment, listening for the call of God
- Create settings that foster faith development and the sharing of Good News

B. Hospitality

Objectives

- Cultivate a regional culture that is welcoming and fosters safety in which people can develop and declare their faith
- Design regional gatherings to fully welcome everyone to the Table and provide needed resources to ensure full participation

C. Worship and Music

Objectives

Understanding that worship stands at the heart of the Christian community and that in worship we come to understand ourselves as one Body, the people of God, we commit to regional life centered in worship, creating:

- Services of Word and Table rich with tradition while attuned to modern needs
- Opportunities for music and praise incorporating a wide variety of forms that will elevate the soul to soaring heights
- Occasions for prayer that engage emotion and intellect and speak clearly to God
- Times of silent meditation that create space for God to be heard
- Worship that lifts up key elements associated with the Christian Church (DOC) and incorporates new forms of worship reflective of our diversity

II. Focus: Equip and Shape—Leadership Development

*Filled with the joy of God's presence with us
we share together in hospitality, worship and praise
enriching our lives with scripture and prayer
singing songs of hope, faith and celebration
joining in the gifts of loaf and cup
inviting our neighbors to experience God's abundance.*

Through our life together we support our congregations in the development and celebration of a faith-filled, collective life through holistic faith formation for children, youth, and adults; recognize and encourage spiritual gifts; facilitate sharing

of resources between congregations; encourage habits and practices that lead to congregational transformation; develop innovative leadership; and nurture vital clergy.

A. Faith Formation and Christian Education

Objectives

- Foster practices that lead to deeper spiritual faith formation
- Model theologically challenging educational objectives relevant to the context of Northwest culture
- Support lay and clergy leaders through the initiation of new spirit-led patterns
- Ground and deepen our life together in prayer in its many forms and attend to the movement of God in and between one another
- Allow time to listen for/to God in intentional ways
- Create intentional spaces of beauty for reflection and contemplation

B. Discern Call and Gifts

Objectives

- Foster an openness to God's radical call to discipleship
- Identify gifts for service with particular attention to the leadership needs of the church in this time and place
- Affirm, invite, and celebrate the gifts of the people of God within the Region and congregations
- Align our life in the Region with "the leadership development mission priority" of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

C. Camping Ministries

Objectives

- Design and implement a camping ministry that shapes and equips participants to minister in an changing church and world
- Design and implement a camping ministry reflective of our congregational diversity
- Ensure adequate staff training and the best possible curricula while making faithful and effective use of resources

III. Focus: Mission and Sending

*Inspired by the faith that moves mountains
we pour ourselves out into mission
caring for the earth and her creatures
listening anew for God's Word in each moment
living forward with courage and compassion.*

As a Region we seek to support individuals and congregations in intentional acts of justice and mercy in their communities and around the world, speaking truth to power through education, witness, stewardship, advocacy and action.

Objectives

- Raise awareness and create opportunities for mission related to areas of justice, service and advocacy
- Offer opportunities to strengthen congregations for this work through shared-region-wide initiatives
- Actively encourage congregations to band together in outreach
- We will work with our partners, particularly Global Ministries and the United Church of Christ, in our advocacy, education, and action

IV. Focus: Embrace Diversity

Called by God and sent by the Living Christ, we the Northwest Regional Christian Church intentionally engage with one another rejoicing in our diversity and shared gifts...

Diversity is a gift from God that must be nurtured, cherished, and encouraged, as God's truth is usually too much for any one of us alone. We commit ourselves to the work of healing and reconciling our brokenness and the wounds of the past. In light of our oneness in Christ, we commit to be open, receptive and inclusive of all people, recognizing that we as individuals and together as a regional church will be transformed by our relationships with one another.

Objectives

- Reflect the diversity within our Region in aspects such as: race, age, theology, sexual orientation, abilities, income level, and culture
- Honor and engage with those of other denominations, faiths, and cultures
- Align our life in the Region with the pro-reconciling/anti-racist church mission priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which includes an understanding of the presence and power of systemic racism and privilege

- Celebrate the diversity of people and gifts within our Region to the fullest and seek ways of sharing power with one another that will transform our structures and ministries

V. Focus: Grow Our Faith Communities

Challenged by the Word of God to live into God's purpose and promise...

In our life together we desire to nurture and celebrate a culture of openness to new patterns of behavior and thinking as we support existing congregations and nurture new congregations for ministry into the evolving future of God's church.

A. New Church Ministries

Objectives

- Develop and support new congregational starts
- Weave the gifts of new and established congregations together, leading to the transformation of our regional life
- Align our life in the Region with the “starting new congregations” mission priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

B. Energize Existing Congregations

Objectives

- Support and encourage congregations to find new energy to pursue ongoing paths of transformation
- Help congregations engage in necessary conversations for health and vitality
- Encourage congregations to develop habits and practices required for faithful and effective ministry
- Align our life in the Region with the “transformation of congregations” mission priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

VI. Focus: Embodiment—How We Support Regional Work

*Created by God as part of the body of Christ in this place
we join together in ministry
strengthening our bond to one another and to God
honoring and supporting those who guide us in God's new doings.*

In the embodiment of our core values, that is, when we live them out on a day to day basis, we provide the foundation for Regional work. That foundation includes caring

for one another in the way that God would have us do, while promoting a culture of innovation, community, kindness, connectedness, and celebration. These following areas are the “bones” around which our mission forms.

A. Living Forward

Objective

- Live out our Regional life and faith in a proactive fashion, being sensitive to God’s call by becoming God’s partner in building God’s Realm here and now

B. Stewardship

Objectives

- Grow stewards by offering resources and education to individuals and congregations, using a broad-based understanding of stewardship as it relates to all of God’s gifts
- Strengthen current sources of funding to undergird the current and future ministries of the NWRCC
- Identify, develop and implement new sources of funding
- Increase congregational commitment to the ministry of the regional church through education, transparency, and accountability regarding the faithful use of Regional resources
- Increase commitment to the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through education and partnership

C. Regional Facilities

Objective

- Propose a long-term recommendation for the future Regional Office for the NWRCC, taking into account the diverse needs for access, accountability and visibility, and anticipating future needs

D. Decision Making

Objectives

- Establish an agreed-upon approach towards decision making
- Cultivate a culture of servant leadership in discerning God’s guidance
- Encourage mutual agreement, ensuring that all legitimate concerns have been addressed

E. Manage and Share Resources across the Region

Objectives

- Design and implement a system to identify, share, and manage resources among congregations: people, spiritual gifts, places, things...
- Encourage the use of the most current information-sharing technology

VII. Structure: Building Connections; Making Decisions; Planning and Evaluating Regional Life

We seek to “do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8)

Form follows function. Organizational structure follows purpose, vision, and call. The structural form offered here has been developed to help empower, strengthen and bless the people, activities and ministries within the NWRCC. It is our earnest prayer that this structure will be invitational, dynamic, faithful, accountable and accessible, both in design and in practice. In that regard, it is critical to remember that with each component of the structure, it is crucial to give intentional attention to inviting those who are often not invited.

A. Three Main Structure Components

The Board of Directors—“Business for our Mission”

The Board of Directors holds fiduciary responsibility for the Northwest Region of the Christian Church, meaning that it stewards the legal “duty of care” for the financial, governance and administrative responsibilities of the regional church. This is the legal board for the NWRCC.

The Mission Council—“Mission is our Business”

The Mission Council is the body which joins to coordinate the programmatic expression of our missional call and activities. As distinct from finance, policy and administration, this body helps align, coordinate and empower varied programs, activities and new ideas regarding the spiritual, social and service life of the Regional Church.

The Common Table—“Spiritual Leadership and Community”

The Common Table is not a committee, but a sacred community space in which participants from the Board of Directors, Mission Council, and the NW Region at large gather for discernment, planning, evaluation, prayer, vision, and renewal. At this table, attention will be given not only to the “work” of the Region, but also to the spiritual dimensions of how we go about “being” the Region. The Common Table is envisioned as a place of nurturing possibility, of reconciling differences, and of

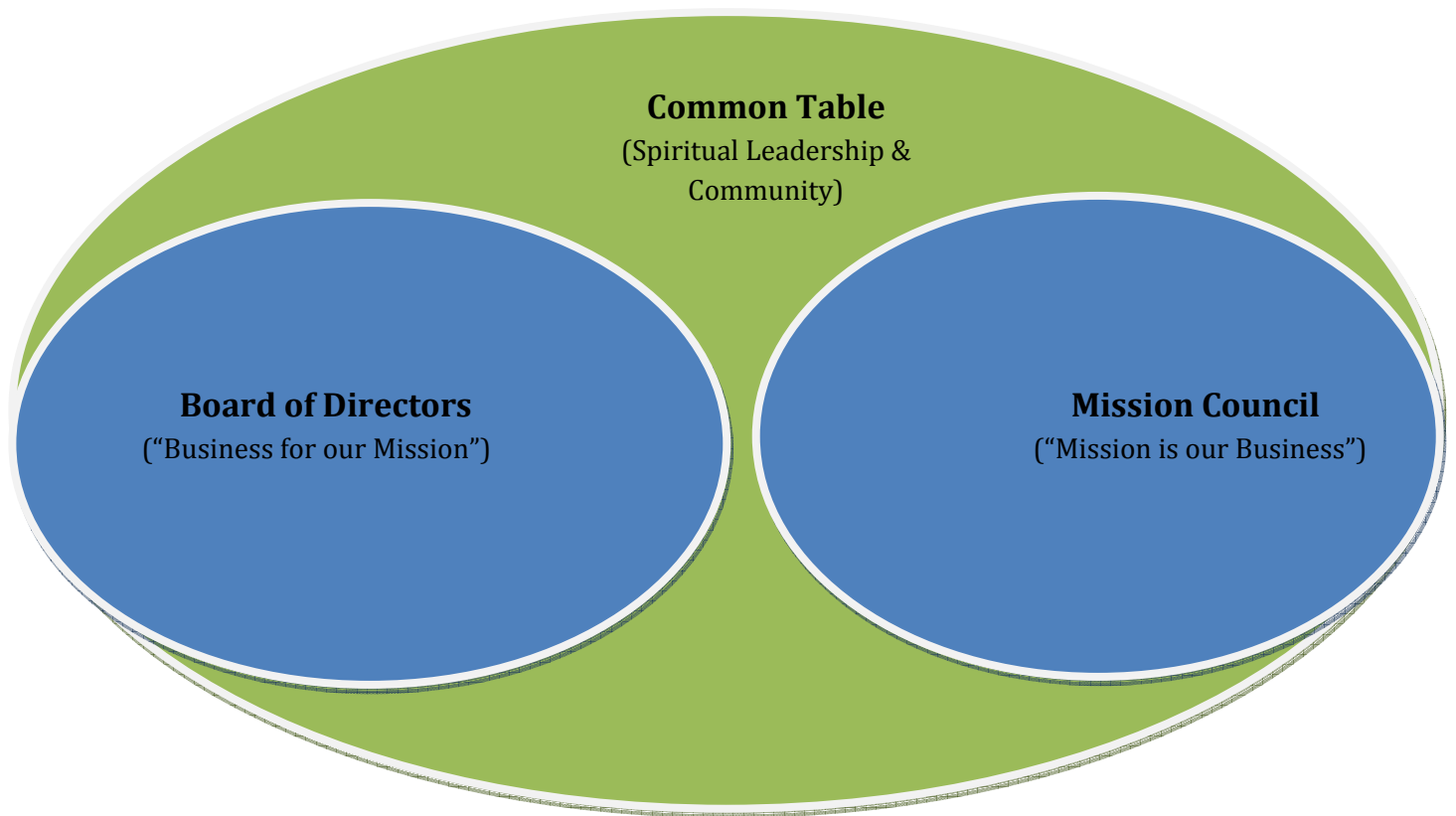
praying us forward. This is a rich table of relationship and connection where new ideas can be encouraged and given birth, where the work is collaborative, and where there is an attitude of “provisional try.”

B. Interaction of Board of Directors and Mission Council

- The Board moderator, Council moderator and the Regional Minister and President will collaborate to discern appropriate guidance for the Common Table. They will share leadership of Common Table gatherings
- Meetings of the Board and the Council are open meetings, unless an Executive Session is called. Minutes of both meetings are public
- The Board of Directors will be the legal board, bearing fiduciary responsibility for the Northwest Region of the Christian Church. The Mission Council will coordinate, empower, and align the missional activities of the Northwest Region of the Christian Church

C. Structure Diagrams

This is a depiction of the interactions of the three previously described groups, and a suggested meeting structure: *(see next page)*



Focus:
Fiduciary Responsibility
for Ministry

Focus:
Community, Discernment,
Celebration and Formation

Focus:
Coordination &
Empowerment of Ministries

Ethos:
Good Governance

Ethos:
Compassionate Community

Ethos:
Engagement,
Encouragement &
Coordination

The Gist:
This is the body responsible
for administration, finance
and policy. It is the legal
board.

The Gist:
We gather as Regional
Church for discernment,
worship and celebration
(corollary to Regional
Assembly).

The Gist:
This is the body that
coordinates, plans and
energizes our shared
missional activities

An Example of a Possible Saturday Schedule

<p>9:00 to 10:30</p>	<p>Board of Directors ("Business for our Mission")</p>	<p>Option I for Meetings <i>(Could work well for those who are preparing to go into the Mission Council, e.g., Outdoor Ministry, Ecumenism, Commission on the Ministry, and so forth)</i></p>
<p>10:30 to Noon</p>	<p>Option II for Meetings <i>(Could work well for those following up on board activities, e.g., Finance Team, Personnel, Stewardship)</i></p>	<p>Mission Council ("Mission is our Business")</p>
<p>Noon</p>	<p>A Common Meal: Fellowship, Fun & Nourishment</p>	
<p>1:00 to 2:30</p>	<p>Our Common Table: Spiritual Leadership & Community</p>	