



November, 2011

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)

SHARING

*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.*

You may have heard the story of the man who was taken to visit hell. He was surprised to see huge banquet tables spread with all kinds of delicious foods. But the people sitting around the tables were thin and haggard, and had looks of anguish on their face. Each of them had a six-foot long fork attached to their right hand and a six-foot long spoon attached to their left hand. They could pick up the food with the fork or the spoon, but they couldn't get it to their mouths because the handles were too long.

Then he was taken to visit heaven. What did he see? You've got it. There were huge banquet tables spread with all kinds of delicious foods, and the people all had six-foot long spoons and forks attached to their hands. But these people looked well-fed and their faces were filled with joy. What was the difference? They were feeding one another with their long forks and spoons.

Even though we read in the Bible that our God is a god of abundance, I often experience a sense of "not-enoughness" when I visit congregations in our region. Our sense of mission is limited because it seems that it takes everything we have just to run the

church—pay the staff and cover building expenses. Sometimes it even seems like a squeeze to do that much!

But the reality is that collectively, we have far more than we need. If we simply developed a strong habit of sharing, we'd know that.

For example, I have a lawn mower. So does almost every family on my block. I have a weed trimmer. So do many others. I don't have an edger or a hedge trimmer. If we simply shared these tools, my block watch friends and I could lower our expenses, have higher-quality tools, not need so much storage space—we would all come out ahead!

Our churches are the same way. It would be great if a soloist from a nearby church came to sing at my church every few months, because we don't have a strong soloist. The head of our Sunday School recently went to talk with the head of the nearby UCC Sunday School about joining forces for a youth program, since we have only a couple of teenagers. Some churches have members with real skills at developing websites, or photography, or making banners.

Talk with your local churches! You might make a plan for each church to create a list of gifts and assets, and of needs and wishes, and come together to see how more can be shared. We are here to serve as examples of God's realm, living out God's abundance, generosity, and love.

View the entire blog at <http://musingsonmission.disciplesnw.org/>