



MISSION PLAN

With Implementation Notes

Northwest Regional Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

SPRING 2009



NORTHWEST REGIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH MISSION PLAN

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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.

This Mission Plan does not attempt to describe all of the ministries that the Region has done in the past and will continue to do in the future. It is expected that the Region will continue to provide oversight and care for clergy and to support clergy and congregations in the Search and Call process. The Region will continue to provide for ministry to and with youth and others, and to support and nurture new and emerging congregations. It will also continue its relation with the wider church community, both the General level of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and our Ecumenical and Interfaith Partners. While these relationships are not always explicitly referenced in this document, they are and continue to be an important part of our Christian witness. In addition, this document is faithful to the current mission priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): 1000 new congregations by the year 2020; 1000 congregations transformed for mission by 2020; development of leaders to serve the new and renewed congregations; becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church

The Ministry plan described here is organized around six Focus Areas: Build True Community, Equip and Shape, Mission and Sending, Embrace Diversity and Grow our Faith Communities, and Embodiment. Each area includes those objectives that will form and shape our life together and enable us to move forward in the other areas. Each of these focus areas is defined further in the following sections.

The objectives included in this document were the result of the faithful work of many people serving on Design Teams around the ideas of Common Life, Formation, Resources, and Structure and the work of those in attendance at the Regional Assembly in 2008, area cluster meetings, clergy cluster gatherings, congregational Bible study and the RISE coordinating team meetings. In particular, the design teams began with the Vision Statement and the Missional Strategy and asked key questions about how the NWRCC could be open to transformation in how we structure our life together, how we form and grow Disciples and how we use and share our resources. A Writing Team then took the Design Team reports and edited, combined, and synthesized those objectives into the ones listed here. An appendix is included that lists additional ideas, resources, and strategies that may be used in the future as opportunities arise

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

Possible Actions

1. Create a working group to develop a flexible document identifying
 - a) The marks of true community, both biblical and organizational.¹
 - b) Elements that all Regional gatherings should embody.²
 - c) Guidelines for planning Regional gatherings that reflect that we are always on a learning journey and that provide recipes on how to successfully plan a Spirit-centered event.³
 - d) Specific recommendations for adopting and implementing those things identified in ways that will be effective
2. Connecting clergy
 - a) Hold regular spiritual retreats for personal growth and relationship building
 - b) Develop clergy partners for prayer, personal support and encouragement
 - c) Encourage clergy to develop a Covenant of Commitment to one another and shared ministry
3. Creating space for community
 - a) Expand the network of congregational information (e.g. Seattle District) where news of neighboring congregations is regularly shared and printed in congregational newsletters
 - b) Work together on district or Regional mission/service projects, building true community as we serve our communities
 - c) Include activities for children/youth/mixed generations at Regional Events whenever possible

¹ This would include such items as: be open minded; bear one another's burdens; build one another up; care for and pay attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships on a team so that all members feel accepted and supported and communication is open and authentic; encourage and welcome the sharing by members of their various gifts and talents, including humor; make it possible to disagree openly with one another and to struggle together to find solutions which we can all support; pool our knowledge, experience, and energy so that we provide help to one another as we carry out assignments; collaborate and cooperate actively with one another and with the Regional Community in seeking to design steps that move the Northwest Regional Christian Church toward its discerned vision, to accomplish its mission, key result areas and goals.

² For example: Spirit led; intergenerational; communal worship experience; a place to build and nurture relationships; missional, moving us beyond ourselves to do God's work in the world; a place for learning, including: a VBS experience at Regional Assembly, multi-generational breakaway gatherings with centrality of worship, camps and retreats, mission trips, etc.

³ For example: clearly define roles of leaders and members so everyone knows who is to do what and how best to fulfill one's assigned role; participate in team decision-making using consensus methods; open and close all gatherings, business and informal, with prayer; begin planning well in advance so it may be approached prayerfully; include broad participation in planning process; an awareness of needs of potential participants in terms of affordability, accessibility, etc.

4. Elect and select Regional leaders who demonstrate the ability to help build true community
5. Establish norms for group interactions
 - a) Practice silence to receive God's message and to contemplate the messages presented to us by others
 - b) Speak with conviction, but gently, with wisdom
 - c) Listen with receptivity to the ideas and desires of others
 - d) Seek clarity of meaning in what we have said and in what others have said
6. Enhance the Region's use of electronic media to provide more effective communication and access to information
 - a) Expand the website using appropriate technology to be a powerful Regional resource for all congregations, staff, boards, ministers, visitors, etc. Include interactive components (blogs, bulletin boards, etc.) so it can be a tool for all
 - b) Explore all options of audio-visual tools for dispersed group meetings
7. Expand communication methods and strategies making sure that the message reaches all intended recipients
 - a) Use multiple methods in order to reach all intended recipients, repeating the message in different formats multiple times
 - b) Identify the appropriate audience to receive the communication and create communication mechanisms to meet the needs of that audience:
 - (1) Specific group(s)/organizations (for example, by age, by gender, within the Area, within the Region, within the Denomination, interfaith partners)
 - (2) General Public
 - (3) Other
 - c) Collaborate with others to ensure we are best reaching those who need to hear our message
8. Offer resources to congregations relating to communication skills
 - a) Support holy conversations on difficult topics
 - b) Offer training in listening skills. Include silence as part of communications. Listen for God
 - c) Arrange classes in Non-Violent Communication (NVC), teaching communication skills that open dialog and do not alienate others.

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

Possible Actions

1. Create a Hospitality working group to be a bridge building entity, to leave no place at the table empty, to develop ways for the Region to better show our hospitality such as:
 - a) Ensure everyone is supplied equally with materials at an event
 - b) Share information broadly
 - c) Train others in hospitality on local level
 - d) Use name tags, ice breakers, etc. at Regional gatherings
 - e) Employ after care; follow up after an event with new members and participants
 - f) Create a welcoming working group to mentor and teach those new to the Region
 - g) Evaluate training needs including who/what we are as a Region and the who's who of contacts and information
 - h) Make sure hospitality is not directed at just to the stranger but also directed towards those we know.
 - i) Continue to develop our ecumenical partnerships through hospitality

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

Possible Actions

1. Create a Regional working group to consider how to strengthen worship and the effectiveness of music as a component of worship. In particular, explore how young people respond to Christian music
 - a) Identify those specific CC (DOC) elements that are most important—what must we have/maintain?
 - b) Consider how to create diversity in our worship styles, especially in cities, so that we can attract more diverse congregations
2. Model creative worship in Regional events. For example:
 - a) Bring in musicians from the community to share their gifts during worship. Incorporate drums, chants, Taize, call/response psalms, and choir exchanges

- b) Incorporate silence during services to contemplate the message, the Word, etc
- c) Blend the old and the new in songs and hymns
- d) Incorporate liturgical dance to express praise and thanksgiving
- e) Explore ways to bring many performing and visual arts into the worship experience
- f) Ensure we have prayers of the people coming from the people

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

Possible Actions

1. Inventory every church in the Region to determine what their education needs are and identify what outside resources can strengthen their education ministry
2. Offer Biblical education resources re: being in conversation with the Bible around values and theological understanding

3. Provide resources such as Bible study curriculum and wisdom teachers to improve Biblical literacy and help deepen our understanding
4. Lay Leader Nurture and Development
 - a) Design a program that identifies potential leadership both within and for congregations and the Region, and aids in developing their skills, gifts, and talents and supports spiritual direction.⁴
 - b) Offer training in public speaking for lay leaders
 - c) Provide personal days of reflection/renewal for elders and deacons
 - d) Invite children's participation in all areas of church life! (e.g. use children as lectors.)
5. Clergy Nurture and Development
 - a) Hold annual or more frequent silent retreats. Consider whether some retreats should be solely for ministers and ministerial students—no spouses, partners, or kids. Encourage clergy to participate in regular spiritual retreats for personal growth and relationship building and encourage congregations to support them in this growth
 - b) Offer pulpit opportunities for ministerial students and pulpit exchanges for clergy
 - c) Develop clergy partners for prayer, personal support and encouragement including mentors for new pastors
6. Provide a place for clergy to touch base. (i.e. strengthen clergy cluster groups)
7. Set up sister congregations from different parts of the Region to share prayer joys/concerns
8. Create mentoring relationships for new pastors and procedures for providing future new pastors with mentors
 - a) Convene a group to create a resource for mentors of new pastors

⁴ Methods for accomplishing this could include:

- Form a Commission on Lay Ministry (similar to Commission on Ministry, with ongoing, rotating membership) or engage a Regional staff person with training, gifts, and skills and establishing a mentoring program.
- Explore resources and models for leadership development.
- Provide a program for leadership development that includes Regional/area events for lay people that are engaging and build on spiritual issues and encourage attendance at events that foster spiritual formation. (i.e. Turner Lectures or "Turner Lecture" type event aimed at lay people and focused around practical ministry topics or transformation on alternate years of Regional Assembly)

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)

Possible Actions

1. Encourage and train congregations to engage in "Gifts Identification" surveys
2. Actively enlarge the number of people willing to share their gifts (e.g. look for new persons; have a member of the Regional Board on Westside and one on Eastside to encourage clergy and lay leaders to continue heightening the awareness of God's call)
3. Create Regional spiritual retreats for study, reflection, discerning God's call
4. Use pastors to identify leadership potential within members and send targeted invitations to leadership events

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

Possible Actions

1. Create a camping working group that includes representatives of past counselors/directors, youth, board members from Gwinwood and Zephyr, etc. and shows a diversity of lay/clergy, ages, ethnicities. (May consist of, include, or coordinate with, the Camping Commission that began meeting November 2008)
2. Engage a Camping Consultant to conduct evaluation of resources and program
3. Gather relevant data:
 - a) Interview camp directors, camp staff and board members, campers: What worked? Where were challenges?

- b) Review camping programs in neighboring Regions and denominations.
Explore possibilities for collaboration
4. Evaluate possibilities and recommendations, narrow options and solicit feedback from congregations. Select option and present recommendation to Regional Board

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

Possible Actions

1. Have a Region-wide Peace and Justice Sunday, focusing on Micah 6:8 and Matt. 25, with each church selecting one justice/service/advocacy project to focus on during the upcoming months/year
2. Explore options for Mission including:
 - a) Create service opportunities for congregation members
 - b) Invite active participation by developing leaders in some kind of community mission work
3. Actively educate congregations regarding outreach opportunities
4. Encourage strong interaction with the Yakama Mission
5. Involve RYC and regional youth in potential projects
6. Create time for the sharing of these experiences with the NWRCC

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

Possible Actions

1. Create a “Diversity Team”—a group that will educate, demonstrate and encourage the gifts of diversity across our Region. This group will have an active place at Assemblies, Disciples Women’s events, Camps, Cluster Meetings, etc. (This group could be an offshoot of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team.) This group would need to develop resources that could be used at the local church level, such as discussion group resources, Sunday School resources, Moment for Diversity resources to be used in worship, sermon resources, etc. All of these will highlight and illustrate the wonderful gift of diversity within the Body of Christ
 - a) Educate our congregations on privilege and understanding how systems perpetuate oppression
 - b) Support and encourage both existing and new Disciples churches whose congregations are not of the dominant culture and/or ethnicity. (See also New Church Ministries)
 - c) Establish a “Diversity Festival,” where the cultures, backgrounds and human stories of our diversity are celebrated. This would be a time of both education and affirmation. The Body of Christ is wonderful in its kaleidoscope of color, story and being
 - d) Encourage dialogues to overcome prejudice towards those who are “different” from us

- e) Ensure that funds are made available to encourage involvement in these various events
- 2. Connect with churches from each continent and develop a blog on global ecological vision that offers opportunities for participation for a wide range of ages and abilities
- 3. Create a cross-sharing exchange within the Region where congregations send out teams to one another for services to help build understanding and celebrate each one's uniqueness
- 4. Develop a Regional music team to go to congregations to teach the cultural music available in the hymnal and ways to use it in services

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)

Possible Actions

1. Support the New Church Team to oversee development and support of new and forming churches
2. Support new churches through intentional connectivity. (see also Sister Congregations under I. D. Spiritual Formation)

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)

Possible Actions

1. Actively promote the Journey of Discovery, New Beginnings and other similar mechanisms of reflection and growth
2. Provide consultation and resources to congregations considering transformation, remaining open to new transformational models and current thinking around transformation. (see also VI. A. Living Forward)
3. Develop resource bank for congregations to use in the process of re-energizing
4. Involve youth in discussion of transforming congregations

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

Possible Actions

1. Lift up the theme of ‘Living Forward’ at Regional gatherings
2. As part of the Regional website, list projects or actions that are available for congregations or individuals to become involved in that move God’s work forward in the Region, the country or the world (e.g. Global Ministries, Week of Compassion, Church World Service). – see also II.G. Managing/Sharing Resources
3. Invite cluster groups to develop specific projects/programs in their area that will keep them engaged in God’s work of creating a better future

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

Possible Actions

1. Engage consultant to design long-term strategy
2. Develop lay-led, Region-wide Stewardship program
 - a) Send leaders from within Region to outside training in stewardship
 - b) Develop training in stewardship for congregations
 - c) Recruit and train additional leaders in stewardship
3. Offer Stewardship Training events throughout the Region
4. Strengthen annual fund giving, Christmas Offering, and congregational giving to DMF
 - a) Engage non-profit fund-raising consultant to design long-term strategy
 - b) Interrelate this area with Stewardship Development
 - c) Establish an ongoing team to manage giving campaigns with the goal of expanding the donor base by a targeted percentage over the next 5 years
 - d) Employ a 3-year commitment strategy that would benefit both Regional budget and local congregational giving
 - e) Evaluate and adjust process as needed
5. Build self-sustaining (endowment type) funds to support specific goals related to the Regional vision (currently new churches and congregational transformation). These should be sufficient to fund these goals while still only drawing on interest

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

Possible Actions

1. Form Regional Office Site Working Group
2. Gather relevant data. This could include interviewing current Regional staff regarding needs and situation, holding conversations throughout Region to discern needs and perceptions, consulting with neighboring Regions and denominations regarding current practices, and analyzing current and emerging technologies that may impact both needs required in Regional office and possibilities for decreasing dependence on physical "place"
3. Explore options, narrow options and solicit feedback from staff, Regional board and others
4. Select option and make recommendation to Regional Board

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

Possible Actions

1. Express and make explicit our norms for decision-making. As Christians, we use discernment, listening for God's will, rather than voting to make decisions. Key characteristics include:
 - a) We recognize that God may speak through any of us, and we listen for God's voice in each statement made
 - b) We do not rush decisions. We listen, pray and study so that we may hear God's will for us. In particular, we do not make decisions until there is mutual agreement that all legitimate concerns have been addressed by the group
 - c) While agreement may not be unanimous, there should be a clear sense of sharing a common vision and with those who disagree still being willing to say yes. Special attention must be given to make sure that those whose viewpoint is "other," because of differences in age, social group, ethnicity, or

- whatever, are not overridden by a majority culture group without full attention and appreciation being given to the alternative viewpoint
- d) Once a decision has been reached, all members of the group agree to support the decision

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.

Principles of Structure Formation

The recommended structure for the NWRCC from 2009 forward was also developed utilizing the following principles:

1. Builds communication processes and structures that take into consideration the different levels of involvement and diversity in the Region and in the 21st century context
2. Forms and enables webs/networks of connections
3. The structure itself should have an organic relationship with the vision and mission
4. Creates a structure that invites and is hospitable
5. Provides for accountability to mission and vision
6. Empowers and encourages without being a center of command and control
7. Offers structure that allows for flexibility and readily adapts to a changing environment
8. Enhances participants’ enthusiasm for life in the church

9. Incorporates elements for ongoing evaluation of the structure itself
10. Acknowledges the diversity of gifts (administration, programmatic) within the Region and allows for expression of those gifts
11. Gives space and priority to our external partnerships

In the descriptions below, please reference the diagrams of the design that follow the text (Section E). Attached is a description of each of the three primary groups: Board of Directors, Common Table and Program Council.

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.

1. Membership of the Board of Directors to be elected for two years (except as noted), every other year at the regional assembly:
 - a. *Board Moderator (elected by Regional Assembly, nominated by nominating committee, two-year term)
 - b. *Board Moderator-elect (elected by Regional Assembly, nominated by nominating committee, two-year term as M-E followed by two-year term as moderator of Board of Directors)
 - c. *Treasurer (heads finance ministry – liaison with RMP and accounting staff)
 - d. *Secretary (records actions of Board of Directors including legal votes, etc.)
 - e. Personnel chair (gathers a committee of four additional persons to include at least one human resources and/or legal professional from the membership of the region. Names are submitted for confirmation by the executive committee of the Board of Directors)
 - f. Property chair (initially may chair group to look at current space requirements – gathers a group of at least four additional persons to include at least one real estate management and/or legal professional from the membership of the region. Names are submitted for confirmation by the executive committee of the Board of Directors)
 - g. Communications chair
 - h. Stewardship chair
 - i. **Area reps: two per area serving 4 year alternating terms
 - j. Ecumenical Representative
 - k. Two RYC Representatives (chosen by youth)
 - l. *Regional Minister and President (*ex officio*, no vote)

In addition there would be a chaplain function on the Board. This may be a shared responsibility, rotating among members, and/or be a focus of the regional minister and president.

* Indicates membership in executive committee;

** Two area representatives will be appointed to the executive committee

Note: The Mission Council moderator will also be a member of the executive committee *ex officio*-no vote

2. Work of the Board of Directors
 - a) Financial reporting
 - b) Budgeting
 - c) Legal matters (including property, investments, etc.)
 - d) Personnel relations

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.

1. Membership
 - a) Mission Council Moderator (elected by Regional Assembly, nominated by nominating committee, two-year term; moderates the meetings of the Mission Council, serves *ex officio*-no vote on the executive committee of the Board, coordinates Mission Council activities with the regional minister and president and Board moderator)
 - b) Mission Council Moderator Elect (elected by Regional Assembly, nominated by nominating committee, two-year term as M-E followed by two-year term as moderator of Mission Council; serves same functions as moderator in moderator’s absence)
 - c) Scribe/assistant scribe (records outcome of discussions/agreements for collaboration, etc. from group membership – could have an assistant scribe that would serve as Web coordinator or assistant to the communications chair. The scribes could be from among existing members of the Mission Council.)
 - d) Chaplain(works to keep the group focused on holy work and remind us of God’s presence; could come from among existing group membership)
 - e) Area coordinators: two representatives from each of the four areas (total of 8— could be nominated from the areas or could be volunteers. Until the areas become more cohesive, these may be volunteers who could be invited by the Mission Council moderator from recommendations by area representative, the regional minister or other members of the Board or Mission Council.) These individuals would facilitate common table meetings in their areas, disseminate information in cooperation with the communications chair and scribes, and coordinate area activities
 - f) Communication chair (same person that serves on Board)
 - g) Technology chair

- h) Chair of the Commission on Ministry (elected by regional assembly nominating process)
- i) Chairs of other ministries (currently 8 – could expand or contract as task forces come and go.) Representatives of working groups would participate in the Mission Council and common table. The full membership of these working groups could meet at the same time as the larger gathering (see diagram) or they could meet at other times as their work ebbs and flows. The groups already include the following, but others could be added as the work of the region progresses:
 - (1) Camping program
 - (2) RYC liaison (preferably youth)
 - (3) Pro-reconciliation team
 - (4) Disciples Women
 - (5) New Church Companions
 - (6) Turner Lectures
 - (7) Regional Assembly
 - (8) Additional groups that may be formed (examples: children’s ministries, men’s group, justice network, global missions, mission trips)

Note: The Mission Council moderator will also be a member of the executive committee *ex officio*-no vote.

2. Work of the Council

The Council employs a discernment model leading to consensus in decision making and refers to the mission as core to ongoing Regional programs. Its roles include being:

- a) A nurturing forum for new program/group ideas
- b) Responsible for Regional Assembly
- c) Reflective evaluator of effectiveness of programs
- d) Welcoming to new ideas

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.”

1. Work of the Common Table

- a) All ministries come together to share progress, needs, opportunities for collaboration and learn from each other; to receive affirmation and suggestions

- b) Evaluation of the work of the Region in light of the missional strategy
- c) Set priorities for the coming year, and refine plans
- d) Actively lift up the Region in prayer for the people doing God's work, both at the congregational level and in our Regional ministries, providing an opening for our Region to listen to God's leading in prayer and holy contemplation.

2. Areas

- The Region shall have four Areas: Eastern, Central, Southwest, and Northwest. The Common Table meetings will rotate among the Areas and/or Yakima as a central location.
- Other Areas may be developed among congregations who have affinities based on things such as mission, language, or interest, rather than geographic proximity.
- The Areas are encouraged to have gatherings. These can be called by a congregation, the area representatives, or the area clergy group, and should be opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth.

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. Building the Membership

The nominating committee will be made up of the elected chair and at least one appointee from each of the four areas of the region. The Board or executive committee would affirm the appointments.

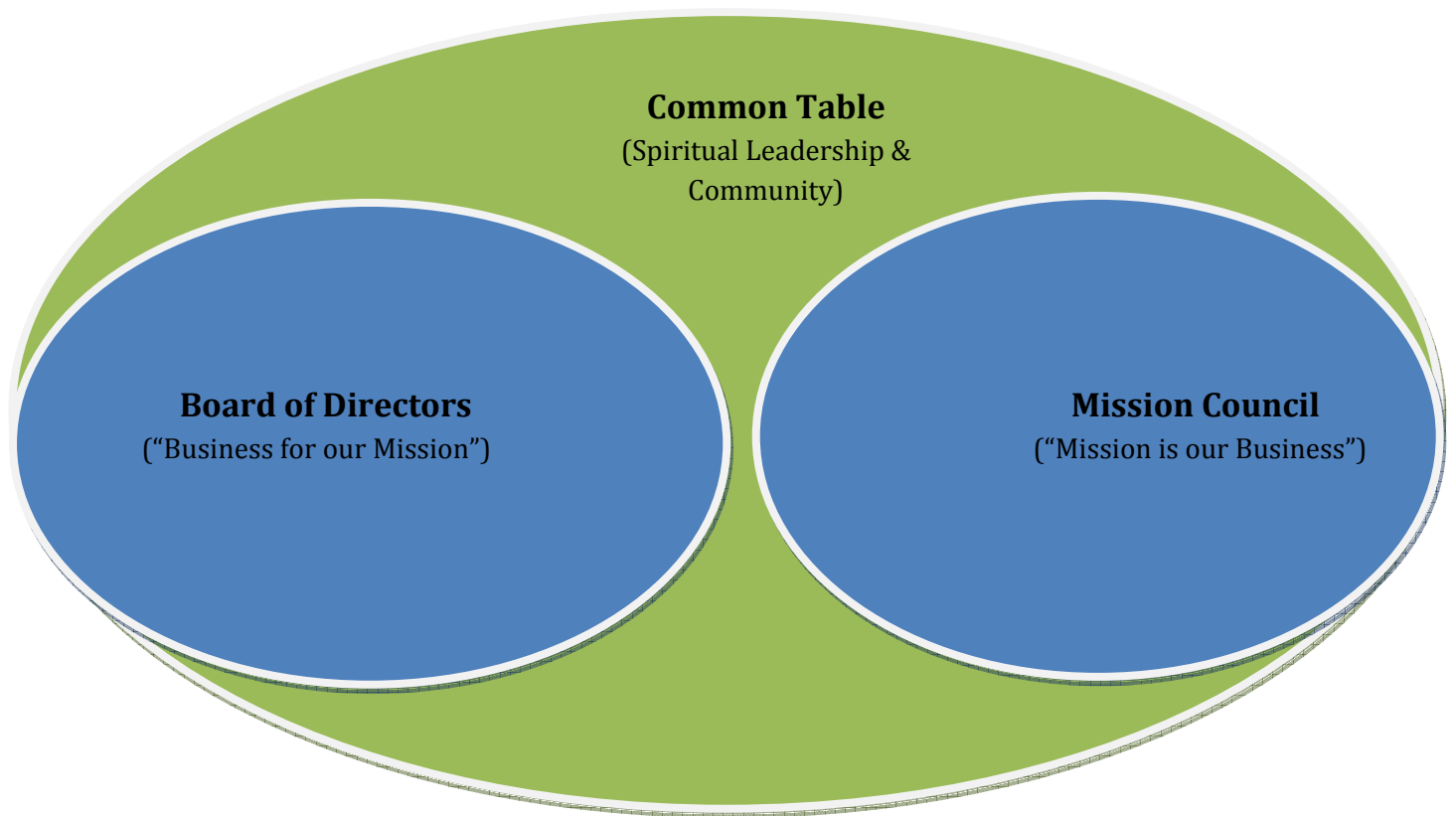
The nominating committee is to ensure broad representation from the diversity that is the Northwest Regional Christian Church, meaning attention should be paid to lay/clergy, gender, ethnicity, age, geographic and economic balance. Individuals would not be able to serve on both the Council and Board simultaneously with the exception of the communication chair. The committee would need to fill at least the following positions:

- Board moderator
- Board moderator elect
- Council moderator
- Council moderator elect

- Board treasurer
 - Board secretary
 - One Board area rep. for each of the four areas every two years
 - Nominating committee chair
 - Commission on Ministry chair
 - Communications chair
 - Technology chair
 - Property chair
 - Stewardship chair
 - Personnel chair
- (Total - 17)

D. 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>	

Appendix

While the strategies listed in the document above provide a rich set of tools for bringing us towards fulfilling our mission as the Regional Church, the Design Teams provided even more ideas. We recognize that not all of these may be implemented within the 5-10 year timeframe of this Mission Plan, but we wanted to make sure these ideas were not lost. Individual teams working to implement the Mission Plan may find some of these fit into their plans and may wish to include them in their work. Therefore, we are including them in this Appendix

I Focus: Build True Community—Further Possible Actions

A. Building Intentional True Community

1. Creating Space for Community
 - a) Encourage clergy and lay representatives to be present at ordinations, installations and special events/services of sister congregations
 - b) Reach beyond Disciples in creating Christian community by increasing awareness of other expressions of true community: ecumenical efforts, interfaith services, global ministries partnerships
 - c) Identify skilled persons and adequate resources to assist congregations when their life together is in conflict or struggle and true community is threatened
 - d) Encourage regular district meetings with a portion of time dedicated to enhancing true community

B. Establish Support Networks

1. Offer resources that highlight our commonalities such as: a study on what being Disciple means or why communion is central to our worship
2. Develop an *Anam Cara* (soul friend) network

II. Focus: Equip and Shape—Further Possible Actions

A. Holistic Faith Formation and Education

1. Create a curriculum to support congregations and individuals in working with the formation methods such as the following:
 - a) Prayer practices
 - b) Meditation / Centering prayer
 - c) *Examen* / Ignatian spirituality / other historical practices
 - d) Fasting
 - e) *Lectio divina*

- f) Attentiveness
 - g) Sabbath Keeping
 - h) Experiencing God in Nature
 - i) Working with a spiritual director
 - j) Use of art as form of contemplation / worship
 - k) Practicing the Presence of God
2. Encourage local church pastors to regularly be a part of theologically challenging study groups and model continuing education by attending seminars and workshops
 3. Offer retreats and forums for exploring faith formation practices, lifelong spirituality and discernment practices
 4. Have the Region choose an annual spiritual practice (such as one listed in 1. above) for special focus, with resources for preaching, sharing, partnering, exploring.
 5. Recognize congregations as refuges for particular practices: e.g. Edmonds as a living community where people explore the labyrinth; Queen Anne Christian for Bible in Your Bones
 6. Explore creative and forward thinking ways to approach faith formation. Possibilities might include:
 - a) Develop new children's programs that are practice based. E.G. Phyllis Tickle's book *This Is What I Pray Today: The Divine Hours Prayers for Children*
 - b) Create Jesus communes for people in their 20's
 - c) Have a spirituality center at Zephyr or Gwinwood to offer ongoing retreats and education
 - d) Create a research team to explore ancient Christian spiritual practices and reformulate them for the 21st C
 - e) Develop an *Anam Cara* (soul friend) network
 - f) Write a new book on spiritual formation for Disciples
 - g) Offer training in listening skills. Include silence as part of communications. Listen for God
 - h) Teach Non-Violent Communication (NVC)
 7. Provide resources on living in wholeness, experiencing all of life in relationship with our faith, and decompartmentalizing our life, including:
 - a) Voluntary simplicity
 - b) Ecological awareness
 - c) Bringing God into economics
 - d) Embodied practice: the body as the temple of God
 8. Make sure our local church leaders are aware of ecumenical and educational ministry events that take place
 9. Explore recovering the Bible for those hurt by Christian patriarchy

B. Developing/Nurturing Leaders (Lay and Clergy): Further Possible Actions

1. Encourage ways to celebrate people's gifts and where their passion calls them to dedicate/use those gifts
2. Make sure "The Call" is included in youth programs, educational curriculum, within the administrative life of the Region

C. Sharing Faith Stories/Evangelism

Objective

To promote expressions of our faith and the exchange of faith stories so that others might be warmly influenced in their personal faith and our own faith experience be enhanced and enlarged.

Possible Actions

1. Select a person from the Region to be the Regional Specialist on Evangelism (witnessing to their faith) to hold a series of meetings with cluster groups or individual congregations or to act as an interim pastor for congregations looking to move forward in this area of God's work.
2. Develop retreats and workshops where people are given the time, tools and encouragement to share their faith stories.
3. Develop a variety of ways for any group that has participated in a Regional (or cluster, or congregational) Work Trip or Mission Trip to be able to share their stories with the Regional Community.
4. On the Regional website include a section on faith stories to be shared with users and congregations in their services, Sunday School time, or in small faith groups meeting within the church. – see also II.G. Managing/Sharing resources
5. Encourage the sharing of faith stories as an integral part of all we do together as Region, taking time to allow folks to share and interact at Board Meetings, committee meetings, church cluster meetings, etc

D. Healing

Objective

To invite the Healing/Renewing power of God's Spirit

Possible Actions

1. Develop Regional retreats/workshops that explore the concept of Healing as a ministry of the church
2. Train church leaders to be sensitive to the variety of healing ministries that have been a part of Christian and other faith traditions

3. Encourage local congregations to enlarge and explore their expressions of healing (spiritual, emotional and physical)

III. Focus: Mission and Sending—Further Possible Actions

A. Mission

1. Since many of our congregations are already social action oriented, have a website where we can all share ideas and ask/answer questions about organizations that might need support and issues that need to be studied. – (see II.G. Managing/Sharing Resources)
2. Have a speakers list of who is available to speak on specific issues of justice (e.g. Heifer International has a Regional office in Seattle). – (see II.G. Managing Resources)
3. Train church leaders to be sensitive to the variety of healing ministries that have been a part of Christian and faith traditions
4. Develop a workshop on sharing faith to show congregations ways they can go about spreading the good news to their own mission field outside the church door
5. Offer and/or promote training in Peace Studies