



Northwest Passage

Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY...

Rev. Sandy Messick

(A continuing series of articles reflecting on the Objectives outlined in our Regional Mission Plan)

Diana Butler Bass, in her book, [A People's History of Christianity](#), points out that hospitality is an ancient practice, perhaps one of the earliest marks of the Christian community. "Unlike almost every other contested idea in early Christianity...the unanimous witness of the ancient fathers and mothers was that hospitality was the primary Christian virtue." (p. 62) In fact, she writes, Christian hospitality equaled Christian morality. Welcoming the stranger, the outcast, the neighbor was the means by which the early church lived out its faith. It was the practice that kept the church from becoming a club or a social group. "In greeting, meeting, eating, and caring, the church acted as a community with its arms open, attracting inquirers through a practical demonstration of God's love." (p. 64)

Attempting to reaffirm the importance of this value, the second objective in our Ministry Plan is about *hospitality*. Two key concepts are highlighted: "Cultivate a regional culture that is welcoming and fosters safety in which people can develop and declare their faith," and "Design regional gatherings to fully

welcome everyone to the Table and provide needed resources to ensure full participation." To live out this objective we need to be asking: "Who is welcome here, and who is, unintentionally, left out?" We need to question the ways we do things when we gather as regional church. Do we assume that everyone knows how things are done so no explanations are necessary? Or do we attempt to see through the eyes of one new in our midst, or one unfamiliar with our practices? How do we create a culture that welcomes new ideas, new opinions, new questions about the faith? How do we remain open to the guiding of the Spirit, expecting God's voice to be heard through everyone, rather than just the few? These are some of the questions and challenges before us as we seek to be a community that welcomes, invites, and includes; that offers through our actions a practical demonstration of God's love.

Peace,
Sandy

NWRCC Mission Statement

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)

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A NORTHWEST PRESENCE AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Northwest Region will be well represented at the General Assembly in Indianapolis later this month. Voting delegates from the region are **Cherilyn Williams** and **Tom Messick**. In addition, a number of workshops and learning groups will be led by NW pastors and lay people. Those listed on the schedule include: **Wahhab Baldwin**, co-pastor of Friends of the One, **Joan Dennehy**, pastor of Findlay St. CC, **Laurie Rudel**, pastor of Queen Anne CC, **David Bell**, Co-Director, Yakama Christian Mission, **Janetta Cravens-Boyd**, Pastor of University CC, **Cherilyn Williams**, Regional Moderator, **Will Boyd**, member University CC, **Kathy Coggins**, Program Director, Disciples Peace Fellowship. Those who are traveling to Indianapolis will have the opportunity to gather with Disciples from the Northwest Region as well as Montana, South Idaho and Oregon at a shared after session on Thursday, July 30 at 9:30pm.

TRANSITION TEAM IS BEGINNING ITS WORK

The next manifestation of the RISE process is coming to life in the form of a Transition Team that will guide our work as we live into the new structure and ministry plan priorities. The team will begin its work with a training session on Saturday, Aug. 22 in Yakima. Ray Shulte, our consultant from the Center for Parish Development will be with us as we begin to prioritize and strategize objectives for the coming year and plan for the transition into our new regional

structure. The Executive Board has been invited to meet with the Transition Team for this training. Members of the Transition Team are: Cherilyn Williams, Edie Rice-Sauer, Wahhab Baldwin, Lauri Clark-Strait, Justin Umbright, Miguel Rivera, Bill and Connie Robey, Debbie Jennison, Jo Gustafson, and Sandy Messick. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin work on your behalf.

COMMON TABLE GATHERING AND INSTALLATION SERVICE, OCT. 17, 2009

The first gathering of the Common Table will be held on Saturday, Oct. 17 at First Christian Church, Tacoma. As part of our new structure, we will gather in the morning with the Regional Board and the Interim Mission Council. The afternoon will include a regional gathering celebrating the installation of our new Regional Minister and President, Sandy Messick. General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, will be present with us during the installation service. More details will be coming, but mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

WHERE IN THE NORTHWEST IS THE REGIONAL MINISTER?

Wondering where the Regional Minister is this weekend? Or when she will be in your area? Check out **Sandy's Travel Log** on the website. It can be found at <http://www.disciplesnw.org/whats happening/travellog.html> It lists where she's been and where she's going to be for the next several months.