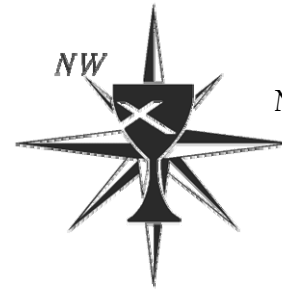


# RISE

**\* The RISE Team:**

Edie Rice Sauer (Chair)  
Cherilyn Williams (Moderator of the Regional Board)  
Dawn Marie Turner  
Wesley Strait  
Gary Shoemaker  
Sandy Messick  
David Bell  
Rebecca Hale (staff)  
Ray Schulte  
(consultant from the Center for Parish Development)

You can contact the team at  
[rhale@disciplesnw.org](mailto:rhale@disciplesnw.org) or [Ricesauer@aol.com](mailto:Ricesauer@aol.com)



Northwest Passage  
*Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

18000 72nd Ave S. Suite 171, Kent, WA 98032  
P: 253-893-7202 F: 425-251-4937  
[www.disciplesnw.org](http://www.disciplesnw.org)

**July 2007**

**W**hat an important moment in the life of the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). RISE, our regional transformation journey, is helping us hear God's call to ministry for this time.

Through congregational Bible Study, clergy dialogue, one-on-one interviews with regional leaders, prayer, and much shared conversation the following list of four key Challenges and Opportunities emerged. There are challenges! And there are amazing opportunities!

Your regional RISE Transformation Team\* encourages you to lift these up in thoughtful prayer. It is time to begin imagining the shape of the rich future that Spirit calls us to RISE and move towards as a region.

**Challenge and Opportunity One:  
Changing Circumstances – Faith in a New World**

We live in a time of constant rapid change – change is the order of the day! Our regional landscape is vastly different from when many of the congregations of the NWRCC were founded. These changes affect the way we experience our own faith and our congregational and regional life. Surrounding culture is less supportive of faith communities; local and global economic changes impact us; many of our congregations have older memberships; time is sliced to cram in all the busy-ness the surrounding culture seems to expect, and we could go on . . . To be faithful in ministry, the Northwest Region – that is, all those members of Disciples congregations across the region, as individuals and congregations -

# Northwest Passage

need to be adventurous and examine assumptions about what it means to be the body of Christ in this time and place.

## **For Reflection:**

- Imagine one new way that God might be calling us to be church together. What might it look like?
- What are some opportunities for Christian witness in today's culture? What might the region's role in that be?
- What does this challenge and opportunity call you to pray for?

## **Challenge and Opportunity Two: Calling and Mission**

There is lack of clarity about the purpose, or reason for being, of the Region (what work it should do and why). This leads to confused expectations and haphazard participation in regional life. What might it mean for this region to understand ourselves as actually being church together – a community of communities, even?

## **For Reflection:**

- If the NWRCC understood ourselves as a people called by God and sent on a mission -- what new vision and structure might flow from that understanding? How would we relate to one another and our world?
- What does this challenge and opportunity call you to pray for?

## **Challenge and Opportunity Three: A Sense of Community – Gift and Calling**

Though historically connected, the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a community seems to be disappearing. Congregations and their leaders are going their separate ways and are not often in

# Northwest Passage

fellowship with other congregations and leaders. Add to this the geographic, cultural and economic differences among individual members, and the situation is even more obvious. This tension sometimes seems to lead to a sense of competition for money, time and resources. Yet, when we do gather and create a common story we find joy in our connection and long for more. As Disciples we share a commitment to gather around an Open Table, to learn from one another's journeys, to engage in mission, and to the unity of the Church. With this common ground as our foundation, we sense that we are so much stronger together than we are alone.

## **For Reflection:**

- Imagine a way of being together with other Disciples congregations in your geographic area that would bring you joy and a sense of being about God's work. What would it look like? Where and how would it take place?
- What does this challenge and opportunity cause you to pray for?

## **Challenge and Opportunity Four: A Climate of Trust – Lost and Being Found**

The NWRCC has weathered some rough times recently, particularly with its budget and regional leadership structures. Trust between us has eroded to some extent and this can be destructive to our shared life, leading to conflicts and uneasiness with one another. It weakens the witness and mission of the Region because it demonstrates the ways of a broken and conflicted world rather than the unifying ways of the Gospel.

## **For Reflection:**

- What might your role be in rebuilding relationships between the Disciples in the Northwest Region?
- What does this challenge and opportunity call you to pray for?