



# LEADERSHIP & VITALITY

Providing access to resources and materials on what church vitality is, where churches are showing signs of vitality, and different styles and approaches to leadership – with an emphasis on Adaptive Leadership, Cultures, and Change

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## Words from our Regional Minister

### *Adaptive Cultures – What Does It Take to Change?*

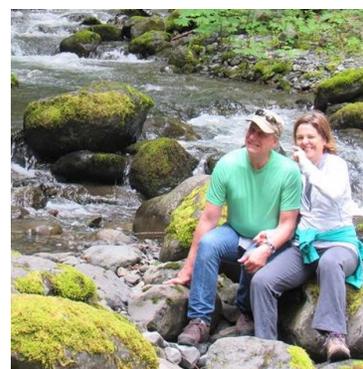
First Christian Church --- whether in Hastings, or Falls City, or Lincoln, or Omaha, or Aurora, or Scottsbluff, or Ashland, Nebraska City, or North Platte – is not the same wherever you go. While they all share the same name, it is the only thing that these local congregations hold in common.

What makes the church where you worship and serve unique? How would you describe the culture of the church where you worship and serve? Is it the same as any other church? How is it different?

Many of the Local Churches that make up the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) would acknowledge that there are some ways of “being church” that are not working any longer. And that they have tried any number of new ideas, programs, curricula, or initiatives, but nothing seems to work. Is it the program that didn’t work? Or, possibly, is it the culture of the church that stood in the way of new ideas finding root?

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska recently voted to embrace becoming an *Adaptive Culture*. No, it’s not another “get better in 12 steps” scheme. Instead, it is a commitment to engaging practices that will, over a long, long time, lead to changes in **how** we are the church. Our hope, of course, is that many, if not all, of the Local Disciples Churches in Nebraska will embrace becoming an Adaptive Culture. So, let me briefly introduce you to what an *Adaptive Culture* is.

When a local church faces a situation (like, let’s say, what to do about the music ministry, or children’s worship, or landscaping, or outreach ministries, or building maintenance,



Written by Rev. Christopher B. Morton

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## Resources for Adaptive Change, Culture, and Leadership

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**What is Adaptive Change vs  
Technical Change? Here are  
3 articles outlining all of the  
Definitions and Differences:**

[Definitions and  
General Info Link](#)

[Technical and  
Adaptive Change –](#)

or staffing), we often look for concrete ideas, suggestions, and solutions. What will fix our problem? And we want answers to that question to be easy to identify and understand; quickly address the problem; something one person or a small group of people can do to make the change; and a fix that people will go along with. Quick fixes like hire a new music minister, purchase a new children's curriculum, buy a new lawnmower, or contract with someone to tuck-point the bricks.

But, what if those solutions don't work? What then? Find another quick solution? Or, in an *Adaptive Culture*, we are encouraged to ask other questions. Like, what caused this situation? What are some of the other factors involved? What's really at-stake here? What are our assumed values and beliefs and relationships that may need to be changed? How can we get the people whose problem this is to be part of the solution (rather than the chair of a committee, or staff person)? What other parts of the church life are affected by this situation and may need to be involved? Is there something that we can experiment doing and risk failing at, but that might teach us something about the situation and/or about ourselves?

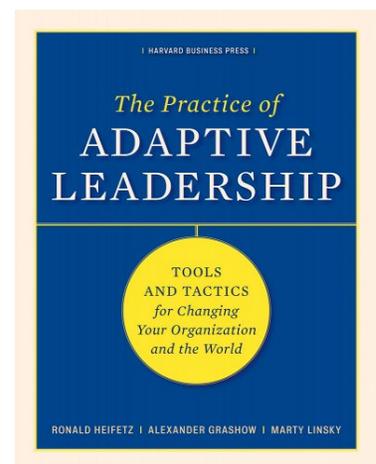
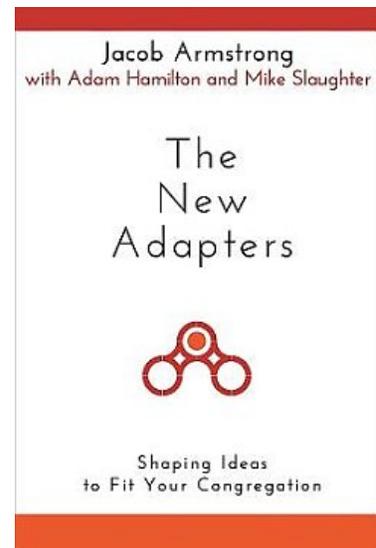
When I go to the cardiologist I am often given technical solutions to my heart conditions. Quick and simple solutions like medicine. But then the Dr and medical staff want to know if I am considering the conditions that caused my heart situation. Like, what am I eating, and how often and what kind of exercising am I doing, and what is my stress level. Those latter questions are going to take a long time to address because there are no easy solutions to diet, exercise, and stress – I will have to experiment with a lot of possible approaches and see which ones work. I will have to talk with the people around me – Julie to think through the foods we are buying and preparing, the staff at the YMCA about my exercise regimen, and my colleagues in the church about the stress in my work life.

Each month, I will write another piece like this to further introduce you to *Adaptive Cultures*. But it **would be nice to hear from you about what questions this brings to your mind, and how this does or does not relate to the church life** where you worship and serve. Please email or call me: [regmin@ccnebr.org](mailto:regmin@ccnebr.org) or 402-476-0359 – and let's talk soon.

Fuller Seminary

Adaptive Leadership –  
American Baptist  
Church's Mission  
Summit Conversations

Love a good read?  
Here are 2 great books that  
discuss Adaptive Change,  
Culture, and Leadership:



**New Church News**  
*Keyboard Recording?*

Are you, or someone you know, willing to record some hymns on a keyboard that the Chuukese Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Lexington/Cozad can use during their worship services?



The Chuukese CC is currently using hymns that are familiar to everyone from memory, but they would like to have the music of some hymns pre-recorded so that they can follow the tune as they sing more of the songs that are familiar to them.

If you are able, and willing, please contact Rev. Chris Morton: [regmin@ccnebr.org](mailto:regmin@ccnebr.org) or 402-476-0359.

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS



The Regional Church is not what it once was, and is currently in need of being re-imagined as we adapt to the changes both inside, and outside of The Church Universal. As we re-imagine the Christian Church In Nebraska we will hold to our core values that have sustained us for decades. As we reclaim our intended purpose of instilling, supporting, and sustaining vitality of the Local Church. Please join us on one of the following dates via Zoom to discuss and have your questions answered!

## UPCOMING ZOOM DISCUSSIONS \*\*CLICK DATE FOR LINK\*\*

- TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 6TH @ 6:30 PM**
- THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 22ND @ 9:30 AM**
- WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 12TH @ 6:30 PM**
- MONDAY - OCTOBER 17TH @ 3:30 PM**
- THURSDAY - OCTOBER 27TH @ 6:30 PM**



### CENTER ON CHURCH LEADERSHIP

To teach and witness to spiritual practices that enable leaders and emerging leaders to serve the people and the structures of the Local, Regional, and General Church

### CENTER ON CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

To establish, receive, and strengthen local churches by providing pastoral care and counsel to ministers and members of local churches



### CENTER ON CHURCH MISSION

To relate the local church, its members and ministers, to the worldwide mission of the whole church



### CENTER ON THE REGIONAL CHURCH

To ensure that there is a framework in which the other three Centers are able to fulfill their purposes (e.g., Church Leadership to identify new leaders)

[Learn More about the 'Future Directions' Zoom Sessions](#)

## Disciples Clergy Continuing Education Grant Program



The application period for 2023 Clergy Continuing Education Grants is now open. The deadline to have your application and regional endorsement forms



New Church Ministry is giving early registrants to its Leadership Academy event a registration discount!

Sign up using the code **EARLYBIRD** by **Friday**,



Terri Hord Owens  
General Minister and President  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Recently Disciples General Minister and President, Rev. Terri Hord Owens shared some important thoughts during this time of social division.

"Remember that God's love is

submitted is **Monday, October 31**. If you haven't yet applied, consider how you'd like to use up to \$500 of DHM's grant monies for a continuing education experience in 2023.

[Link to Grant Info](#)

**September 16**, and you'll get 15% off of the registration fee.

This discount applies to both individual/core team and regional team registration.

[Sign-Up Today!](#)

limitless and even in the midst of disagreement we do not have the right to destroy one another." - Rev. Terri Hord Owens

[Video Link](#)



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with



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