

Since 1942 Northwest Christian University has been awarding honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees. The criteria for granting honorary degrees established by the University are:

1. The candidate demonstrates a personal Christian commitment.
2. The candidate contributes exceptional service to the church, community and the world.
3. The candidate exhibits a commitment to lifelong, continuous learning and personal growth.
4. The candidate supports the mission, vision, and values of Northwest Christian University.
5. The candidate is a person of high ethics and personal integrity and held in respect by colleagues/community.
6. The candidate will normally be awarded the degree while still active in his/her career.

Through the years a significant number of ministers and missionaries have received this honor. In addition on the list is the former Governor of the state of Oregon and then Senator Mark Hatfield, John Dellenbeck, head of the United States Department of Education, the President of Holt International, the Korean adoption agency and the Superintendent of the Eugene Public School District. Nancy now joins that group!

In December 2013 Nancy Glower Johnson was nominated for consideration for the degree. A series of steps in the process: review of the nomination by the entire faculty, the administration and the Board of Trustees.

This is an honor both for Rev. Nancy and for you of the Puyallup congregation. Here is an excerpt from the nomination document used by President Joseph Womack as he introduced her to deliver the Commencement Address:

“Nancy is one who genuinely “walks the talk” and by example, encourages other to do so. Her full-ranging ministry is an example of faithful pastoral care. Her worship services are creative, engaging and encourage lay leadership. Her worship services are creative, engaging and encourage congregational participation. Her sense of music and the arts enhances all dimensions of her work.”

This is what President Joseph Womack said as he said to her as he conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree:

“The congregation of First Christian Church of Puyallup, Washington states they are called to “be the church” and not just “go to church”. Since being called as pastor of the church in 2000, Rev. Nancy Gowler Johnson’s creative and faithful leadership has led the church to become a force in outreach to the community. They look for ways of living out the compassionate way of Jesus every day, and partner with others in the area to help make a difference, including feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, volunteering in schools, teaching English, building homes for Habitat for Humanity, and the list goes on.

This honorary degree is an affirmation of Nancy and an affirmation of the most relevant, faithful and effective models of ministry, and what a pastor and congregation can build together. For her commitment to Christ and the church, Rev. Nancy Gowler Johnson is being awarded the honorary doctor of divinity degree.”