

# **KANSAS WEST UNITED METHODIST CAMPING COMMISSION**

## **Strategic Plan**

### **I. VISION STATEMENT**

The camping program in the Kansas West Conference continues to be a strong ministry in the conference. Both of our camp sites and our camping commission are working hard to be a vital part of the development of and support for spiritual growth by its participants. One way we have chosen to do that is to develop a set of core values in cooperation with the National United Methodist Camping Ministry Council.

### **II. MISSION STATEMENT**

#### **A. Core Values**

A Place Set Apart  
Genuine Christian Community  
Development of Christian Spiritual Leaders  
Nurturing Christian Discipleship  
Earth Care and Faith  
Inspire Guests and Groups to Love and Service  
Partner with Local Churches, Districts and Annual Conference

#### **1. A Place Set Apart**

- Sanctuary in the Natural World
- Place of healing
- Retreat
- Renewal
- Re-Creation

Faith based leadership depends on truly trusting the Spirit of God to be present and to transform. It seems important, also, to recognize that teachings and practices of the vibrant, long standing camp/retreat traditions will likely seem strange at first for participants and even ourselves who are accustomed to the harried life of over producing and over consuming, which incessantly drives the pace and priorities held up as signs of modern day success in our culture. If we fail to cherish the unique gifts of camps and our settings, we can easily lapse into becoming activity directors thinking our job is to keep people busy and entertained as consumers rather than “being” with God and “being” God’s people.

There is a holy rhythm designed into life that calls us to balance creating and doing with ceasing from creating and laboring, in order to fully live. If we simply duplicate or mimic the constant motion, activity and striving, which are readily available elsewhere, then we become redundant. In losing our uniqueness, a special gift, a special path for the common good of all is lost to those in our congregations, to guests who come and to the world at large.

Faith is, at its core, trust in and love for God. Great acts of faithfulness call us, also, to respites, renewal, solitude and silence as an expression of that love and trust.

#### **2. Christian Community**

- Hospitality

- Inclusiveness
- Grace
- Balance
- Worship

Welcoming people and doing all we can to engender a true experience of community touches people profoundly. We live in a time when people long for connections, but often hesitate to reach out to form new relationships.

What is commonly referred to as “community” in general parlance falls far short of what people yearn for. Definitions of community run the spectrum from simply being in a homogenous group who thinks like me, to a collection of homes in the same housing development. Genuine love, however, expands the meaning of community by drawing people together despite their differences. The movement from mere politeness and tolerance to a greater level of care and recognition emerges when a group opens themselves to the Spirit of God. Christ models a wide embrace including those shunned by others.

Community comes alive through love determined to act on behalf of the spiritual growth for oneself and the other person. This means that we do all we can to create environments of hospitality that inspire people to seek God and to value and encourage one another.

### **3. Development of Christian Spiritual Leaders**

- Campers, Guests, Staff
- Opportunities for Leadership
- Intentional Training
- Spiritual Gifts
- Calling

Leadership ranks high in critical importance within society and the church. Leaders shape the present and the future for good or for ill. The number of books and resources about the nature of leadership and how to lead are innumerable. Within the plethora of perspectives and possibilities, our United Methodist camps can help persons grow in a very specific type of leadership.

The special type of leadership we seek to nurture and help persons incorporate includes two essential, additional dimensions – “Spiritual” and “Christian”. Spiritual refers to “God”, which indicates that the leader continually seeks God’s guidance and engages the individual or group being led to discern God’s purpose when choosing attitudes, direction and action. Christian refers directly to Jesus. Jesus epitomizes Spiritual leadership. “What would Jesus do?” leaves the realm of clever slogans and becomes honest inquiry.

Jesus had some radical ideas about leadership. From his perspective, the one who leads is not the one who is served, but the one who serves. We are called to be among those who are humble, who choose to use their influence and abilities to serve the common good. Spiritually speaking, humility is not about debasing yourself. It means knowing your infinite worth while simultaneously lifting or honoring the other. It means forgoing status, in order to help in ways that are really needed.

### **4. Nurturing Christian Discipleship**

- Decisions of Faith
- Evangelism
- Faith Sharing

- Teachable Moments
- Grace

One unique gift of Christian camps and retreat centers that other types of programs and centers rarely highlight are specific opportunities to learn from and practice the Christian path taught by Jesus. The word disciple means someone who seeks and incorporates the guidance of a teacher. Christian discipleship, then, refers specifically to a growing trust in Christ while learning to incorporate Christian faith teachings as a way of life.

First, people enter an environment apart from daily distractions as a time to focus more attentively on God. Second, participants actually live together as a community for an extended period of time. This creates a very real potential for moving learning beyond typical classroom conversation to actual life experience. Experiential learning or active learning draws people to move from concepts to practice, from spiritual thought to decision, from passiveness to engagement.

A significant part of nurturing Christian discipleship through camp and retreat ministry involves very intentionally relating with each and every participant in a way that reflects God's love for them and God's active participation in their welfare. It begins in the recognition that no one is outside the embrace of God. We are called to honor the divine spark within.

#### **5. Nature, Faith and Earth Care**

- Natural Surroundings
- Covenant Relationship with Creation
- Environmental Education
- Christian Stewardship

If Jesus often taught outdoors and trained his disciples there, then how could it be wrong? Christ himself, also, set the example of regular retreats into nature for prayer, discernment and renewal.

Natural environments allow people to come to a place apart from the rigors and responsibilities that might, otherwise, disrupt a focus on spiritual growth. The Church intentionally wants people to enter the creation because the natural world speaks of the Creator. The spiritual benefits of having persons spend time outdoors as part of the process of seeking God and being found by God is unparalleled.

As a part of who we are, we are called to teach participants about the importance of the environment and Christian stewardship. We have a covenant relationship taken from scripture to care for the earth.

#### **6. Inspire and Send Participants to Love and Serve**

- Continue The Journey
- Integrate Experiences
- Pass It On
- Do Good, Seek Justice, Serve Others

Community is at the heart of Christian life. Our scriptural tradition affirms community not only as a primary way that our humanity is lived out, but also as the way we understand God's call to love and serve.

The “temporary community” aspect of our ministry facilitates the possibility for God to transform lives. This is what makes camping ministry significant and memorable in the lives of so many people.

Our job is to help participants understand that the life-changing experiences that occur in temporary community are not an end unto themselves. Rather, they are beginning points, or milestones. They are transformational experiences that inspire us to love and service.

### **7. Partner with Local Churches, Districts and Annual Conference**

- Tell Our Story
- Presence
- Understand Their Ministry

One of the most fruitful and vital dimensions of United Methodist Camping Ministries is the participation in a tremendous covenant connection. United Methodists deliberately choose to link together and join forces in a common mission.

In practical terms, camp ministry leaders and committees must be genuinely interested in what is happening beyond the boundaries of the camp. Asking churches for more money, more people, more whatever is not a partnership. We must listen deeply to the local church, districts and conference. In order to be in ministry together, camp leaders and committees must be aware of what the local church, districts and conference needs are, and how we can be in partnership with them in ministry. Not that we can do it better than they can, but that we can walk with them and support them.

## **III. Plan of Ministry**

**Our Goals - In order to continue a quality camping ministry and in concert with our core values the Commission on Camping Ministry has adopted the following goals.**

### **A. Building the Image of Camping**

1. Short Term Objectives
  - a. develop a new camping brochure that highlights camping
  - b. evaluate camps and agencies based on the core values
2. Long Term Objectives
  - a. develop a conference policy handbook for camping
  - b. look at ACA Conference Accreditation

### **B. Quantify camping as a vital and viable ministry**

1. Short Term Objectives
  - a. improve camper evaluations based on core values and facilities
  - b. improve new camp evaluations based on core values
2. Long Term Objectives
  - a. outcome based evaluations
  - b. web page for camper testimonials

### C. Strengthen the connection with local churches, districts and conference

1. Short Term Objectives
  - a. continue local church presentations, conference presentations
  - b. meet with district council's on ministry to promote camping
2. Long Term Objectives
  - a. connect with local churches, districts and conference to see how we can help them in their ministry
  - b. develop plans for helping churches, districts and the conference

### D. Fund the ministry

1. Short Term Objective - fund the programs at current levels
2. Long Term Objectives - provide adequate funding for sites so they will be able to achieve the core values

## IV. BUDGET AND FUNDING

### A. Site Goals: Horizon Camp and Retreat Center

1. Provide handicap accessible facilities so our handicapped members can enjoy the same spiritual growth experience as other members. Horizon will be **fully handicap-accessible** by **1/2009**. Approximate cost - \$250,000
  - a. Seek grants from interested foundations
  - b. Use VIM and other work groups to minimize cost
  - c. Gain financial support from conference, congregations & members.
2. Provide the highest standard of service & safety through proper training and good facilities. **Horizon will become ACA Accredited by 1/ 2009**. We will begin researching the process for accreditation in 2006
3. Create an Endowment for Horizon Camp and Retreat Center. This endowment will enable Horizon to provide excellent camping experiences to our members at minimum cost by
  - a. helping to pay off existing debt (\$300,000 capital campaign, \$15,000 director's house, \$100,000 operating funds = \$415,000 +/-) so that the camp staff can focus on ministry and the fees charged do not have to include extra revenue to pay principal and interest. **(Raise funds in 2007, complete debt payment in 2009.)**
  - b. provide scholarships for campers
  - c. help with future site improvements
4. Develop more off-season programs with a spiritual focus for all groups. These program options will be provided to all retreat groups.

### Handicap Accessible upgrade rough cost estimate

Cedars toilet/shower rooms	\$32,000 x 2 = \$64,000	New showers, toilets, sinks
Agape toilet rooms	\$5,000 x 2 = \$10,000	New toilets & sinks
Renewal Toilet/shower	\$10,000 x 2 = \$20,000	New showers, toilets, sinks
Walks 5' wide	1000 LF x \$12 = \$12,000	

Toilet at Oxford, holding tank	\$ 10,000
Toilet/shower house @ pool 40x20	\$ 90,000
Toilets in Dining Center 2 @ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Doors, Ramps, other mods	<u>\$ 24,000</u>
<b>Rough estimate of cost</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

**Do not upgrade these facilities at this time (generally not enough space)**

Office toilet

Toilets @ old dining center

Toilet in old stone lodges

**B. Site Goals: Camp Lakeside**

1. Renovations and improvements needed to maintain current ministry offerings.

\$ 192,000.00 Camp Renovations: Lodge, East Canyon Cabins, Chapel, and Settler's Cabin

\$ 80,000.00 Swimming Pool Renovation

\$ 175,000.00 Waste Water System

2. Debt reduction in order to keep camp costs down and continue to provide quality camping experiences.

\$ 85,000.00 Debt to Kansas United Methodist Foundation

\$ 105,900.00 Internal debt from transfers of designated funds

**\$ 637,900.00 Total**