MNWCUCC Outdoor Ministry Committee January 2022 News

In 2021, COM enthusiastically embraced, "Reconnect, Reclaim, Refresh, Renew (with God, with self, with others, and with nature)" as the theme for the 2021 Season. Despite pandemic reticence, reticence to gather outside of family, and reticence to try a new place, we were able to successfully implement a wonderful Outdoor Ministry schedule during the summer on which we can build in 2022.

As this work team moves to embrace a new theme, a new season, and a new set of challenges, the first work to be done within the Conference is to define Outdoor Ministry, to educate its importance, and to earn Church support and buy-in to our future vision for this mission.

What is Outdoor Ministry?

Outdoor Ministry is a mission, an experience, a relationship rather than a place. Following the divestiture of the facility, outdoor ministry is program and people rather than venue. Outdoor Ministry provides a time for self; it is a time of personal retreat and growth away from the busyness of everyday life. It is being unplugged during a time when priorities center on relationship not production. Through the history of the Conference, outdoor ministry first centered on gatherings for the entire family then moved to an emphasis on youth camps. COM is now seeing the popularity of family gatherings grow and that opportunities for all ages are needed. COM also recognizes that experiences can happen any where in the Conference when we are not landlords of a facility.

Why is Outdoor Ministry important?

Over and over, we hear throughout the Conference how many of our Church leaders and pastors recognized their calls as they experienced outdoor ministry opportunities. Recognizing that there is a huge need for good Church leadership, outdoor ministry experiences are more important than ever to the lives of our Churches. COM is dedicated to see that these opportunities continue. The magic of nature brings reconnection to fundamental things.

What do we need to realize to make Outdoor Ministry happen?

- ✓ Because the Conference no longer owns a camp, the concept of "volunteer" changes. Registration costs must cover more than just the expenses of campers. The Conference must pay the expense of food and lodging for camp leaders, counselors, chaplains, and staff.
- ✓ COM needs to fill the staff of each Camp by February 15, 2022, so that all is in place for registration.
- ✓ Early commitment will be essential to ensure that COM can meet its zero-based budget guideline. April 1 will be the registration date for camps to ensure that our camps are viable.

- ✓ Support from all around the Conference is essential to the success of the Outdoor Ministry mission.
- ✓ Outdoor Ministry can take place anywhere in the Conference. COM is available to facilitate any adventure. Have an idea? Let COM help you carry it out!

What is needed from Churches and members around the Conference?

- ✓ We would like to have a Church Camp Leader in each Church to coordinate camp registration.
- ✓ Continued support from Pastors and Fire Starters. Gus Byrom will be in contact to update the list of advocates in each Church.
- ✓ Promote registration of campers of all ages to our Outdoor Ministry events. Look outside of the Church to the community to provide this experience to those who may not be able to get the experience on their own.
- ✓ Provide Camp scholarships through the Church.
- ✓ Consider sponsorships. Sponsor a camp leader, counselor, chaplain by paying their lodging a food expense so they can serve. Sponsor a camp by providing a leader or programming support. Sponsor a cook and/or food for a camp.
- ✓ Continue to support this mission in prayer.

<u>Preliminary 2022 Season:</u> (Leadership, registration information and fees, etc. will be announced when the final schedule is complete.)

DD Camp June 14-17 at Christikon

(Camp for mobile and continent disabled adults 18 and older. Christikon welcomes Conference participation in this Camp. It is open to all. There is medical staff at Camp. Registration will be coordinated through Christikon.)

Possible Adult Offering TBA June 27-July 2 at Christikon

You & Me Camp July 5-8 at Camp Mimanagish

(Intergenerational event combining Grandparents & Me, Mini & Me, Mom & Me, Family Camps of the past.)

MNWCUCC Youth Camps July 10-16 at Camp Mimanagish (Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12 Camps will share the week. Each camp will have its own leaders, counselors, etc. and its own activities.)

Youth Campers who wish to attend at Christikon, N Sid Sen, or Placerville because the camp is closer or is one attended in the past are welcome to do so. Those registrations will be coordinated with those camps.

MNWCUCC Adult Offerings August 21-27 at Christikon (Adult retreats aimed at self-improvement and a place to experience a variety of experiences in an adult-friendly facility. In 2021, the offerings were: Fly Fishing,

Yoga and Creative Hearts. The menu of offerings is being developed. More detail will be available soon. COM welcomes suggestions, ideas, input in the structure of these events.)

Bob and Nancy Staigmiller Memorial Family Retreat Sept. 2-5 at Mimanagish

(COM and the Conference offer this event in memory of Bob and Nancy Staigmiller, longtime supporters of the Conference and Outdoor Ministry. Family activities will highlight one final nature outing for the season among new and old friends.)

As COM moves forward to, "Reconnect, Reclaim, Refresh, Renew," we urge everyone to support the events which happen in 2022 and to join in the vision, planning, and implementation of what Outdoor Ministry will become as the Conference moves forward.