

## 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.



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.