



## Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

### Update on Pilgrim Point Camp Ministry

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

We write to tell you that the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Conference, on recommendation from the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee, voted to approve (with minor changes) the preferred action option of Kaleidoscope, Inc. and its lead consultant, Kathleen Trotter. A copy of her final report [is available on the Conference website](#). What follows is a summary of the recommended actions and some of the implementation steps already underway.

Before setting forth several options, the consultant made these important observations:

1. Minnesota UCC churches understand the value of camps as a ***style rather than place*** of ministry for children and youth and the value of retreats for adults.
2. Outdoor ministry at Pilgrim Point Camp has lost its focus on goals related to carrying out the mission priorities of the Conference and the congregations.
3. The organizational structure has not appropriately empowered all of the groups and individuals that must give leadership in order for the ministry to work.
4. The whole church is working within limited resources, and Pilgrim Point Camp has these additional limitations:
  1. Facilities are marginal to poor by today's standards;
  2. The population of children and youth within the congregations of the Conference is limited; and
  3. There is an unknown potential for raising capital funds to invest in the facilities.

With this in mind, the consultant advised these vital and foundational convictions and actions:

- **The Board of Directors needs to make an intentional decision to affirm the value of a camping ministry to the congregations of the Conference and be willing to invest the necessary funds and human energy to make it work.**
- **The future ministry must be NEW IN EVERY ASPECT.**

From this follow these actions:

1. The camp and retreat ministry needs to be re-created. This will involve ***developing a vision for***

In addition, a statement of purpose and of the values to be carried out by the camp ministry must be articulated. The consultant recommended that the vision be focused on using camps and retreats as a **STYLE NOT A PLACE** of ministry to accomplish the work of the church, particularly faith formation for children and youth.

2. A **governance and management structure to direct the ministry must be put in place**. Additionally, expectations for outcomes and acceptable parameters for the operation of the ministry (policies, goals, specific practices, limitations, reporting processes, etc.) must be established and clarified.
3. A **limited scope of operation at Pilgrim Point Camp for three (3) years is affirmed to test the potential of a new program model to work and to develop a sustainable operation at the site**. The expectation is that the site will operate from mid-May through mid-October. The emphasis will be on filling the site with UCC programs for children and youth, supplemented by meetings and events from the Conference and local churches. The consultant encouraged the opportunity to lease the site to Wayzata Community Church for the first 4 weeks of summer, requiring the compressing of the Conference programs into a 5-6 week period for the balance of the summer.
4. The Conference Minister is charged with creating a staffing model. The intention is to **integrate the camping ministry and the faith formation of children and youth ministry** and to give the Ashley Minister, Wade Zick, responsibility for shaping the camping ministry, overseeing the operation, and being held accountable for the outcomes. Additional part-time staffing will be for purposes of managing the program on site in the summer and overseeing the property in the summer. Registration and reservation functions will likely move to the Conference office in Minneapolis.
5. The Conference Minister and Ashley Minister will work with the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee to **develop specific policies** to guide the development of curriculum, use of volunteers, training, risk management, financial management, human resources, site maintenance, capital developments, etc. Policies require approval of the Board of Directors of the Conference.
6. The Ashley Minister will work with the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee to **determine the capital projects that need to be funded** to bring the site to an acceptable level of maintenance, comfort, and resources to support a quality program.
7. The Camp will be funded based on a budget approved at the Annual Meeting, with the expectation that the balance of funds other than those provided by the Conference (most likely through the Ashley Endowment) will be generated from program and use fees and contributions.

The consultant concluded her report by encouraging the sharing of this plan with staff, constituents and donors with the understanding that **the ministry must either grow to show definite potential for sustainability in the three year period (2011 through 2013), or an alternative will be taken**. Her final words are: "It may be possible that the program will thrive in the next three years, but it will be determined that the Pilgrim Point site is not the best facility or location. Leaders should be open to allowing the PROGRAM Ministry to determine the site needs, not vice versa."

As Conference leaders, we recognize that decisions regarding Pilgrim Point Camp evoke strong and passionate feelings in some individuals and congregations. We believe that for the past year and a quarter, those in elected and appointed leadership have listened carefully and well to a wide variety of perspectives and have engaged in faithful and healthy processes for sustaining camping operations during fiscal 2010, and for discerning a future for the Camp beyond this year.

Opening ourselves to a **"ministry new in every aspect"** is likely to be challenging for all of us. At the very least it will involve hours of intense and difficult work for the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee and for the Conference staff. Thanks be to God that we are blessed with an outstanding group of highly-skilled and deeply-committed folks on the Committee and at the Conference office.

Recognizing that you will have questions and concerns, which we welcome, we ask also for your prayers and support as we revise and revitalize this ministry program and test its potential and sustainability.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister

Dr. Lisa Lindesmith, Chair of the Board of Directors and Conference Moderator

Rev. Paula Northwood, Chair of the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee

Nancy Johnson-Maloney, Board of Directors liaison to the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee

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