

A Vision of Ministry with Children, Youth and Families

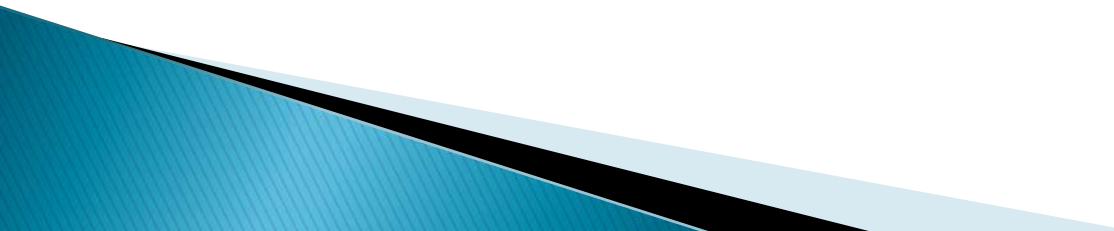
Wade Zick

**Ashley Minister of Faith Formation
for Children and Youth**

**The GOOD is the
ENEMY
of the BETTER!**



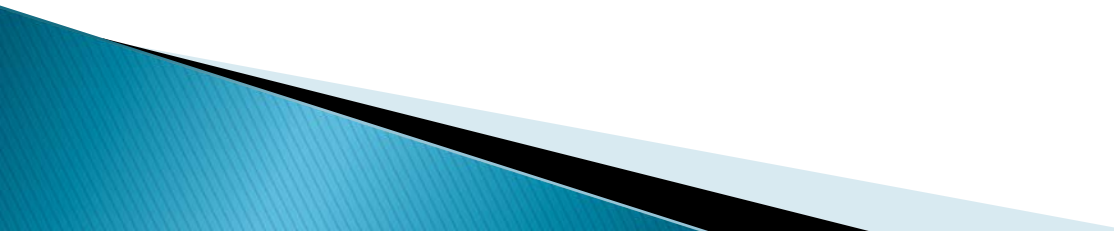
“A generous bequest from Floyd C. Ashley makes it possible for the Minnesota Conference UCC to become a premier site for Christian education, spiritual development, and youth ministry, contributing significantly to a critical contemporary ministry need.”



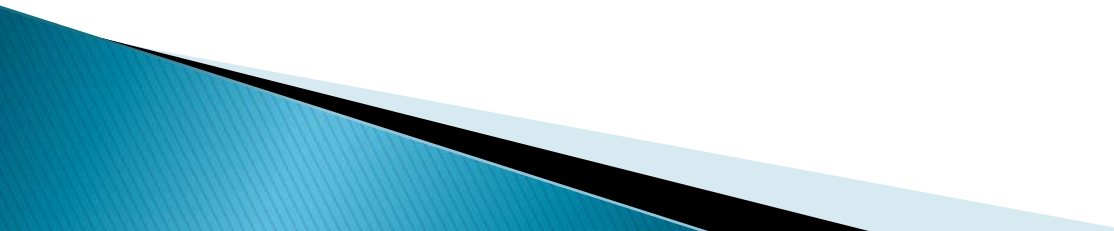
Working Assumptions

- ▶ **Faith Formation from the MN Conference that is BETTER...**
 - provides both our lay & clergy leaders opportunities for professional development and spiritual growth
 - occurs in multi-generational settings
 - collaborates between ministry program areas - especially between Outdoor Ministry and Faith Formation
 - focuses on FAITH PRACTICES and not education
 - builds throughout the YEARS on transformative experiences and church-centered relationships rather than individual encounters or event-centered activities

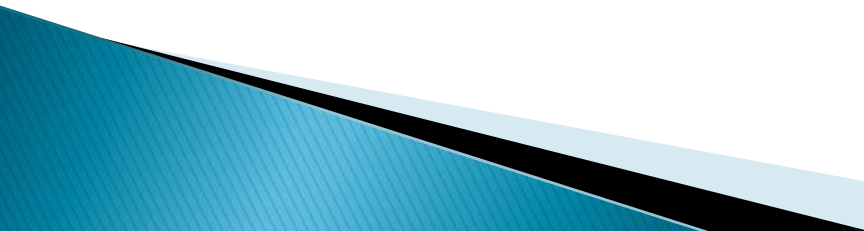
What we are doing “GOOD”

- ▶ Inviting children, youth and families to shared experiences with others from around the conference
 - ▶ Providing lay volunteers opportunities to serve
 - ▶ Having “all come” events - whether UCC or not
 - ▶ Providing a place and opportunities for churches to retreat at camp
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What we are doing “BETTER”

- ▶ Training and gathering events for lay and clergy leaders of children and youth that are held in more than the Twin Cities
 - ▶ Youth Events that are church-leader friendly
 - ▶ Opportunities for youth and leaders that are increasingly “Faith Practice” focused
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A Vision Moving into Better...

- ▶ **Not be afraid of BOLDNESS with our four strategic mission priorities**
 - ▶ **Implement a plan of STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – and think multiplication...**
 - **ALL children, youth and family ministry opportunities are led by lay leaders and/or clergy of MN Conference churches with a goal of leadership development to further enrich the local church ministries**
 - **Provide and encourage/require training for the leaders of all conference children, youth or family programs**
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A Vision Moving into Better...

▶ **Some specifics for Children (5th grade and younger):**

- More regionally sponsored trainings and workshops for children's ministry local church leadership
- Conference support of finances and/or presence for churches doing "off-site retreats" that are also children friendly (grants for speakers, resources, worship help...)
- Conference sponsored opportunities that are targeted for children when their families and/or church leaders are present (including all outdoor ministries programs)

A Vision Moving into Better...

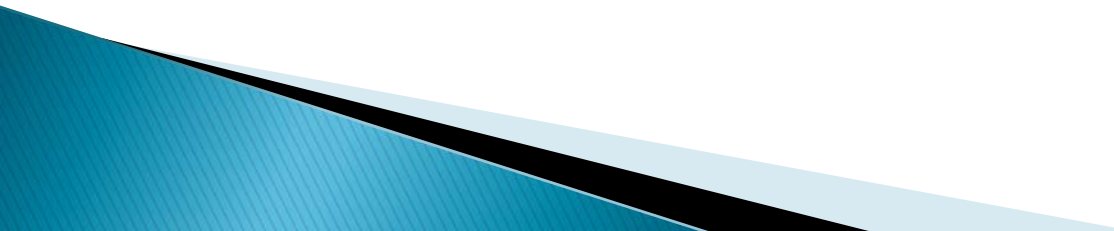
- ▶ **Some specifics for Middle & High School**
 - Leadership at all conference sponsored youth activities are from the local church
 - Youth activities provide a gathering time for the adult leaders with training and sharing
 - Relationships from the local church (both between youth & their leaders) are seen as the PRIMARY relationships to be nurtured
 - Opportunities for leadership development exists in multiple places and times throughout the year

A Vision Moving into Better...

▶ **Some specifics for Young Adults**

- Identifying and nurturing young adults who are considering a vocation in ministry
- Inviting young adults into serving in various roles throughout the conference structure - especially cultivating opportunities with UTS students
- Support opportunities for fellowship, service and spiritual development of young adults
- **Start putting dollars in the budget for staff time and programming for this ministry!**

What (I think) needs to be addressed structurally as not yet “Good” or “Better”...

- ▶ **Collaboration and cross-programming efforts among conference staff and teams in our ministries with children, youth and families**
 - ▶ **Understanding fully the diversity of church sizes in relationship to their differing needs and gifts of leadership they are able to offer**
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