

MN Conference UCC Annual Report 2022

Outdoor Ministry

Rev. Sheri Nelson

As with the previous year, 2021 did not produce many in-person events. We had scheduled a full year, with the hope that the pandemic would subside and we would “get back to business.” Working with our partner sites, we moved all but one events to the 2022 schedule.

The Women’s Wilderness Retreat at Camp Amnicon, WI was our one event, with seven of us in the outdoors for a cold, but amazing weekend. There was hiking and canoeing along the Amnicon River and Lake Superior, good conversations, and great food.

The lack of events led to an increase in work flow around Creation/Eco Justice. At the beginning of the year I created a webinar series for congregations and individuals around Creation Justice and Sustainability. Each month through April had different speakers, such as Rev. Brooks Berndt, Ministry for UCC Environmental Justice, Hans Peterson and Heidi Morlock, permaculture farmers and advocates, and Rep. Todd Lippert discussing the Healthy Soil bill.

In May, with help from MN Interfaith Power and Light, we took two ecumenical groups to Palisade, MN to learn more about the construction and protests around the Enbridge Line 3. We met with protesters at the camp, prayed by the river, and witnessed the clearing of wooded and swamp areas to prepare for the pipeline.

These activities led to an increased movement toward continued Creation/Eco Justice work, which opened the door for the newly formed Great Lakes Creation Care Collaborative. This is a group of UCC conference around the Great Lakes coming together to inform, advocate, and worship for our lakes, watersheds, and soil conservation. Currently, this group consists of MN, WI, MI, and Heartland conferences. However, there is much interest in New York, Illinois, and Indiana/Kentucky.

I continue to be hopeful that we will have in-person events this summer and into the fall. Our host sites have been accommodating us with cancelations by offering to reschedule for 2023. This means we will have next year’s seasons ready to announce before the end of this year.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Outdoor Ministry.