Extension Ministry Report

Rev. Todd Bartlett

Portland-Trinity UMC

October 16, 2022

I continue to serve as the Executive Director for Camp and Retreat Ministries of the Oregon-Idaho Conference. Covid continues to impact how we operate, though we are still able to carry out our mission of “creating sacred spaces of Christian hospitality and learning” through our focus on those we serve and the values of encounter God, engaging with creation, developing interdependent relationships with others and creation, and by doing justice in the world, which leads to our vision of a world of wonder, love, and justice.

Dr. Cornell West said, “Justice is what love looks like in public.”

I have continued to provide worship leadership at Trinity UMC by preaching once each quarter (though I did get the summer quarter off as I was doing a lot of traveling to our ministry sites) and occasionally leading dinner church. I have also participated in leadership retreats with the parish team. I have enjoyed these ways of being engaged with the parish.

As part of my leadership for the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries we have committed to further explore our mission and vision and how we incorporate that into all facets of our work. We are also looking at ways to provide more sustainable practices for the future of this ministry. We have committed to 2 solar projects. One at the Collins Retreat Center (location is actually across the highway) and at Wallowa Lake Camp. We anticipate breaking ground in October of 2022.

At my suggestion the board will have a conversation about co-stewarding the land at Wallowa Lake with the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) nation. This may lead us to engage in similar conversations with our other sites and their traditional stewards. All of our sites are working of a template to have a similar land acknowledgement statement which should be in place by 2023.

As a part of my involvement with the United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries Association (UMCRM) I have been participating in a group seeking to address racism and its presence in Camp and Retreat Ministries. We have developed a guidebook that we are rolling out this fall with other leaders to explore their ministries and how they can make adjustments so that they become welcoming to a more diverse population.

I have led communion on several occasions for our Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries. As a part of ongoing faith formation, I work with the directors to support them in their growth as disciples and camp and retreat professionals.

The shadow of Covid still looms over Camp and Retreat Ministries and the way that we work with each group. Some groups have stricter requirements regarding Covid than others and we have the responsibility of providing as safe a working environment for our staff as possible.

I am thrilled that we are able to offer this ministry to diverse populations in the name of Jesus, on behalf of the United Methodist Church. It is a great testament to our faith, our commitment to support transformation in the lives of campers and retreatants, and a beacon of hope to those who need these sacred spaces to do the work they need to do to become the people that God already knows them to be.

Sincerely,

Todd Bartlett