

The Labyrinth

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
ECUMENICAL CAMPUS Coalition

March 2009

National Ecumenical Leader Visits

Dr. Michael Kinnamon encourages the Ecumenical Campus vision

by Tom Quigley

"I thought I'd be telling you that your efforts needed a stronger theological basis," said Dr. Michael Kinnamon.

"But clearly you have a very well developed theological basis for what you are doing and hope to do. The effective and efficient use of resources is itself a theological issue for the churches, of course, but you have gone well beyond that to

an understanding of the ecumenical movement as a renewal movement of the churches through the sharing of gifts."

Dr. Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, has a global



perspective on the ecumenical movement, having served with the World Council of Churches and the National

Council of Churches and as a seminary professor of ecumenical theology. He had asked to be briefed about the University District Ecumenical Parish (UDEP) and about UDECC.

At a January event hosted by University Christian Church,

Rosemary Blakemore traced the history of ecumenism in the U District and described new ways of sharing insights and gifts among Ecumenical Parish churches as a sign of God's intention for the human family. Clint Pehrson reviewed UDECC's history and its vision of creating a vital center

for the community, service agencies, and churches that will deepen relationships and expand resources available for missions both shared and separate.

Dr. Kinnamon responded with a great ecumenical truth: that unity is not an achievement. "It is a gift. We are one. ... It is not 'If we become one, then we can engage in common mission,' but rather, "because we are one, therefore we engage in common mission for the sake of the world." He suggested strengthening University District church relationships through sitting on each other's boards, attending each other's baptisms, and praying for each other during worship services. He affirmed the vision of collocating at a common campus and urged us not to settle for too little: "Be responsible and accountable to each other for the continuing renewal of the church."

UDECC Membership Continues to Grow

University Congregational UCC and Episcopal Campus Ministry UW Join UDECC

UDECC's momentum continues to build with the addition of two new Coalition members. At its February board meeting the UDECC Board of Trustees admitted Episcopal Campus Ministry UW and University Congregational United Church of Christ as the ninth and tenth faith communities committed to participation in the pre-development phase for the Ecumenical Campus. Additional congregations continue to consider participation.

In December, Episcopal Campus Ministry UW, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, joined three other campus ministry programs as full participants in UDECC. The Episcopal Chaplain is Rev. Mary Shehane, who will represent ECM on the UDECC board. Episcopal Campus Ministry UW is presently located at Covenant House, along with Lutheran Campus Ministry and Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education.

Already a participant in the ecumenical community of congregations in the U. District, "U.Cong" is an 800-member congregation with a long history of supporting outreach ministries in the neighborhood. The congregation hosted the "Nickelsville" encampment this winter on its parking lot at NE 45th Street and 15th Avenue NE, after another UDECC congregation, University Christian Church, hosted the encampment for several months.

Church for the 21st Century

Community. It's a common enough term, and commonly used. We dwell in residential communities, participate in professional communities, engage in online communities, and belong to faith communities. We identify with particular groups, defining ourselves in relation to those who share particular dimensions of our lives: A place, an interest, a history...a belief.

Increasingly, however, American culture seems to deliberately enable "immunity from community." We live in gated enclaves, in homes isolated at the ends of cul-de-sacs. We vote by mail, instead of gathering at polling places. We drive alone in our automobiles, work alone in our cubicles, or telecommute from home and see nobody at all.

In our consumer society, the "exclusive" (that which excludes) is assigned highest value, and "common" is a pejorative term. Yet that which we hold in common – our "common wealth" – encompasses our highest values - because it is shared.

Our society's current shift from an industrial to a technological base, from a manufacturing economy to an information economy, has been more disruptive than any geographical catastrophe or economic convulsion. A world in which human experience could be understood in tangible, quantifiable terms is becoming a world in which much of what we encounter is abstract and relative. The resulting disorientation produces feelings of isolation and powerlessness.



One important antidote is commonplace; literally, the "common place." A convivial place where people can encounter one another, and appreciate one another, and care for one another. The kind of place where "the other" doesn't stay strange to us for very long.

The more we talk about community, the more we end up talking about shared experience in a shared place. The point of belonging to a faith community is that we find deep meaning and deep comfort in the experience of shared worship and fellowship.

"Deep Community" might be a suitable term for one of the key purposes behind the Ecumenical Campus concept. As members of one Church in Christ, we are all, despite our unique traditions, members of the same faith community. The Ecumenical Campus is conceived as a place where our unique traditions can be sustained, nurtured and shared, while enabling all to enjoy a richer shared experience in common and a more sustainable future. On another level, it is also a way to engage more fully with the larger University District community of which we are also a part, and to enable more effective outreach ministries to communities in great need, here in our midst.

Community happens at many levels, and the Ecumenical Campus is intended to foster deeper community among those congregations and campus ministries that choose to abide there, those who visit, and those in need of our care and hospitality.

Anthony Robinson asks, "Five churches, one building?"

IN THE STORY OF DAVID AND Goliath, Saul famously insisted that David be outfitted in his own kingly armor. David found that he could hardly move. Rejecting the clunky armor, David retrieved five smooth stones for his sling.

MANY NORTH AMERICAN congregations are like David, limited by the armor of previous generations - namely, impressive church buildings.

THE CONCEPT OF A SHARED church campus, strategically located near the university, mass transit and residential neighborhoods is exciting...and would provide ample space for a variety of church-supported human services now scattered throughout the University District ...

[BUT...WILL] BEGINNERS IN THE faith learn the biblical stories and the practice of prayer and experience God in life-changing ways at UDECC?...Without a clear and compelling call to arms, different armor may not make a difference.

The Christian Century,

December 2, 2008

Are We There Yet?

The deadline for completing the feasibility study is being extended so that the UDECC Board of Trustees can secure the most advantageous site. While all concerned are eager to complete this phase of the project as soon as possible, excessive haste could compromise project success. The UDECC board will revise the feasibility study schedule at its next meeting, and revisions will be shared immediately with the coalition's member congregations and campus ministries. As things stand, it appears likely that the completed study will be delivered to the UDECC congregations and campus ministries in late summer, 2009.

Project Update: Site Control

So, Where is This Thing Going to Be?

Rumors abound, but the truth is that a thoroughgoing process of objective evaluation and analysis (and “horse-trading”) is determining the location of the proposed Ecumenical Campus.

Completing the UDECC predevelopment feasibility is taking longer than anticipated, due to the challenge of securing “site control.” The Board of Trustees is determined to secure control of the most suitable real estate for the Ecumenical Campus project. This task is presently “Job #1.”

As many are aware, the block where University Temple United Methodist Church is located was the site of a conceptual plan dating back to 2005, which was essential to developing an early understanding of the potential

of the collocation concept. By December 2008, difficulties in coming to agreement with existing property owners on the block led UDECC’s Board of Trustees to examine multiple site alternatives prior to committing to a final solution. The Board was determined to evaluate thoroughly all potential sites within a target area bounded by Campus Parkway, Roosevelt Way, NE 52nd Street, and 16th Avenue NE. Sites were ranked according to several key criteria.

UDECC continues to work toward

resolution of the project site through a process of reducing a list of 12 potential sites, in locations throughout the U. District, down to a final selection. Discussions and negotiations are underway with property owners at multiple alternative locations.

The UDECC board hopes to announce a final site this spring, with completion of the predevelopment study later this summer. More details regarding these site alternatives cannot be disclosed at present because they involve ongoing real estate negotiations.

Spotlight: Perkins Coie

Premier Seattle law firm has long history of supporting social justice through *pro bono* service

Perkins Coie is generously providing comprehensive legal services to UDECC on a *pro bono* basis for the Ecumenical Campus Feasibility Study. A leading international firm providing a full spectrum of legal services, Perkins Coie was founded and is headquartered in Seattle, yet has over 650 attorneys in offices in 14 cities across the United States and in the Far East.

Perkins Coie has donated more than 150,000 hours to *pro bono* service in the past six years. The firm’s attorneys were in the news recently for their role in seeking justice in federal and military courts for Guantanamo Bay detainee Salim Hamdan, a driver for Osama bin Laden. From handling death penalty appeals to presenting cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, the attorneys at Perkins Coie have frequently risen to provide legal services *gratis* for clients in need of good counsel.

Partner Laura Whitaker, whose area of practice is real estate and land use law, leads the UDECC team. Her group also advises UDECC in the areas of nonprofit/corporate law, real estate

acquisitions and financing, labor and employment law, and tax law.

Heidi Beck has been instrumental in assisting UDECC in engaging and negotiating with existing property owners.

Steven Schindler is an associate in Perkins Coie’s Personal Planning practice, which deals with tax laws as they pertain to nonprofit organizations including churches. In October 2008 he presented the Draft Ownership and Governance Plan, posted on the UDECC web site (www.ecumenical-campus.org), to a gathering of UDECC church councils and boards.

At least 10 attorneys have contributed time and expertise to this effort so far. UDECC is very grateful to the Perkins Coie team members who have generously extended themselves to assist us through completion of the feasibility study.



Left-Right: Perkins Coie attorneys Laura Whitaker, Ben Stafford, Stephen Schindler, and Amy Hughes

Laura and Bill Bailey

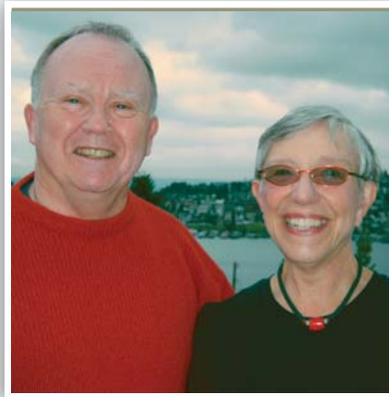
Interview by Joan Burton

Bill and Laura Bailey have been members of University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since 1973. They love its sanctuary and its stained glass windows. They've seen many changes in their congregation and have participated in the local ecumenical movement throughout the years.

Laura has served on the Church Council of Greater Seattle and has twice represented her denomination to the National Council of Churches. Bill, who has a degree from Yale Divinity School, is Of Counsel to the law firm of Mills Meyers Swartling. In 2000 he was honored as the Washington Trial Lawyer of the Year. Both Bill and Laura believe that the chance to share a building with other University District denominations will be a chance to live out their Disciple heritage. At U Christian both have been part of the group that is willing to look at options for the future.

Bill remembers in 2004 attending

the first planning meeting that led to the University District Ecumenical Parish; he says he and Laura were excited by the idea of their congregation's participation. He has followed closely the development of



the Ecumenical Campus concept and believes it to be vision that "could not have come this far if buildings were all that we are about." They both pay tribute to the passion, intelligence, expertise, and persistent dedication to the UDECC concept

evinced by UDECC's executive director and board.

The issues that cause concern in their church, they believe, are reluctance to leave their beautiful sanctuary and the fear of losing the church's identity as a congregation. Reluctance and inertia played a part in a vote taken two years ago on members' willingness to leave the building. The vote was "Not at this time." A second vote taken at the same meeting was to reconsider that action in one year, though the second reconsideration vote has not yet been scheduled.

Laura says her only disappointment with the UDECC proposal is that it doesn't go far enough. She would like to see not just separate spaces in the new building for each participating denomination, but one shared space with different scheduled worship times throughout the weekend.

Bill and Laura Bailey believe in the dream of UDECC becoming a reality in their lifetimes.

Snapshot: Sanctuary Art Center

by Joan Burton

The Sanctuary Art Center is a University District nonprofit art studio for street youth. Its mission is to provide a safe, warm, calm environment for homeless and street-involved youth to experience creativity and success through the use of various artistic media.

Located at University Lutheran Church, SAC is open 5 days a week to provide programs in visual arts, theatre, and music. Professional and

amateur artists from the community instruct programs in a well-equipped studio facility.

Established in 1998 by Episcopal deacon Mary Shehane, Sanctuary Art Center was conceived as a way to connect with young people from 13-25 who were sleeping in doorways and local parks. Initially they were invited into University Lutheran's upstairs area for one morning a week to get warm, eat, and create art. In

2003 SAC was granted status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and its hours were expanded. In 2008 the Center served 397 young people in 3,235 visits, and began offering programs in job training and youth employment. Music instruction and drama are now offered, and a production of "Winter Tales," an original play, was presented in February.

For more information, visit the web site at www.sanctuaryartcenter.org.

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