



The Labyrinth

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
ECUMENICAL CAMPUS Coalition

September 2008

Jesus Didn't Carry Keys to a Building

Interview with Episcopal Bishop Greg Rickel

by Joan Burton

Bishop Greg Rickel, consecrated as head of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia in September 2007, brings to Seattle a viewpoint that is open, fresh, and unfettered by church politics. He said he was very glad to learn that Christ Episcopal is a member of UDECC.

"We need to be at the table," he told me. "I love the Ecumenical Campus idea and talk about it all the time to vestries and other bishops. We need to revision the church, and UDECC could be what the future holds."

Asked why some might oppose the vision, Bishop Rickel replied, "I think resistance is based on a concept of Christendom that is dying. Jesus didn't carry keys to a building.



If we become tied to our buildings, we've lost our way. Yes, we need a 'base camp' to nurture and heal us, but the care realized in our buildings occurs only so we can be sent out as disciples to the world, sharing the Good News. Christianity means being able to let go."

How might other area congregations think about the Ecumenical Campus? Bishop Rickel suggested, "When people say, 'Why should my church join in this?' they need to ask

instead, 'Why shouldn't we?' They need to ask themselves, 'Do we need to protect and control everything?'"

"Ask yourself, 'What kind of legacy do I want to leave?' Be honest. Is it 'I want to worship in my familiar church building and be buried from it? I don't care about what happens after I'm gone?'"

Or is it instead, "This is a creative vision of how to do church in the future. It is part of a new approach to being Christian that will serve generations to come.' As I said, I am so glad Christ Episcopal Church is part of this endeavor, and I pledge to personally participate and encourage this as I can."

Local Foundations Invest in Ecumenical Campus Feasibility Study

UDECC recently received generous grants from two key local foundations to support the Feasibility Study for the Ecumenical Campus. **The Seattle Foundation** gave \$25,000, and **The Norcliffe Foundation** \$10,000. Their gifts, combined with those from individuals, congregations and campus ministries, represent broad-based community investments in the Ecumenical Campus vision.

"We're very grateful for the broad community support we have received so far," said Tom Quigley, UDECC Development Chair. "Gifts from significant institutions like the Norcliffe and Seattle Foundations affirm the importance and value of testing the potential and trying new ways to 'be Church' in this new time. The foundations seemed particularly interested in the idea of unlocking church resources that are

now tied up in real estate and liberating them to serve the community in creative ways," Quigley said.

The Seattle Foundation sees great potential in the Ecumenical Campus for helping to build community well-being. Indeed, Ecumenical Campus goals match many in the Foundation's "**Healthy Community**" framework - fighting hunger and homelessness, promoting health and wellness, improving education, providing job training, supporting small business, nurturing and assuring public access to the arts, creating green spaces and healthy pedestrian neighborhoods, providing social support, caring for the environment, and increasing opportunities for young adults.



The Seattle Foundation

Contributions from foundations, congregations, and individuals have been supplemented with a no-interest unsecured loan of \$75,000 from Impact Capital, a nonprofit loan fund created by local banks and other funders to assist nonprofit organizations with the early development costs of promising projects. Altogether over \$200,000 has been raised towards

the projected \$230,000 necessary to complete the feasibility study.

Additional gifts are needed, and will be gratefully welcomed and well used. Please go to ecumenicalcampus.org/contact_donate.php.

Church for the 21st Century

The Ecumenical Campus responds to a painful 21st-century irony. Mainline churches with declining memberships have mountains of equity tied up in separate, unsustainable properties, while their budgets are so tight that ministries to vulnerable populations must be cut. Around them, social service providers work in scattered, substandard, costly spaces. Needy people are turned away due to insufficient resources. In the U District at-risk youngsters pass empty days on public sidewalks. Affordable housing is rare and decreasing. The neighborhood needs revitalization through the fostering of community arts, culture, civic activity, and commerce.

To address these problems UDECC congregations seek to build an economically and environmentally sustainable, fully accessible, architecturally beautiful urban facility that will house several different churches



and social services. Service agencies will have centrally located, improved spaces at below-market rents, near a transit hub and teams of church volunteers. Collocation of these agencies will enable better coordinated and more comprehensive services as well as better access for vulnerable populations, especially seniors and at-risk youth.

The facility will also provide public amenities including a neighborhood park and a variety of beautiful assembly spaces for civic and cultural events. Income from spaces leased to local businesses, added to savings from shared resources and economies of scale, will be available to support the churches' outreach ministries. Surplus church real estate can be directed toward providing affordable housing.

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UDECC on Deck!

UDECC is a coalition of eight U District faith communities (5 parish congregations and 3 campus ministry programs) hoping to improve their stewardship by liberating and pooling their real estate assets. The funds would be used for meeting people's needs and nurturing neighborhood community, as well as for sustaining the individual identity, viability, and ministry of each church.

After 3½ years of concept development, UDECC was incorporated as a tax-exempt, nonprofit corpora-

tion in June 2007. Members include Christ Episcopal, University Baptist, U Christian, U Lutheran, and U Temple United Methodist churches, and Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education, Wesley Foundation, and Lutheran Campus Ministry.

UDECC's mission is to complete a Feasibility Study that will help member congregations decide whether the Ecumenical Campus can be built, managed, and governed by several churches that would collocate there and share a common future.

Are We There Yet?

Over \$200,000 has been raised toward the Feasibility Study budget of \$230,000. UDECC is working with development consultants Lorig Associates and architects Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen. Sellen Construction Company is providing cost estimates and consulting on constructability issues. From Perkins Coie, Seattle's largest law firm, UDECC receives *pro bono* services including advice on real estate and tax law and assistance in developing a sound legal plan for facility Governance and Ownership.

Decisions, Decisions...

SUMMER

Focus sessions with lay leaders, clergy, and staff from UDECC congregations help architects understand issues of Worship, Fellowship, Music, Administration, Education, and Campus Ministry.

AUTUMN

Proposed Governance and Ownership plan for the Ecumenical Campus is presented to the congregations for discussion, along with building program details. Continuing discussions with neighborhood associations, human service agencies, business leaders, and the UW keep these stakeholders informed of Ecumenical Campus decision-making processes.

WINTER

Architects' conceptual design is completed and presented along with development budget and other data. Congregational discussions are held, with each church coordinating its own internal process of study and evaluation.

SPRING

Each congregation concludes its review of the Ecumenical Campus feasibility study and votes on its further participation.

Honoring Our Elders: A Place for Seniors

With Baby Boomers now approaching retirement, a recent Seattle Times column noted that by 2020 the number of persons in King County age 65 to 74 will rise 69 percent. This growing cohort of active, vital elders offers much to their community, and the Ecumenical Campus has much to offer them.

Creating programs for seniors in Northeast Seattle will be especially important now that Tallmadge Hamilton House has closed. The first senior center in the Pacific Northwest, it was the only one serving the city's northeast neighborhoods. New senior services are needed to fill this gaping absence in the U District.

Although known as a haven for young people, the U District is actually a splendid environment for seniors - a walkable urban neighborhood with affordable restaurants and shops, and good transit service including efficient connections to the rest of the city. At the University of Washington, the District's crown jewel, retirees can audit classes and enjoy full access to the library system for just a few dollars.

Retired UW faculty and staff value opportunities to sustain relationships with the university. One goal of the UW Retirement Association is to establish services for seniors in the U District as well as affordable homes for retired faculty and staff,



Building a healthy community in a time of increasing personal isolation.

many of whom qualify for low-income housing.

It makes sense, then, that cultivating a gracious environment for seniors is a central goal for the Ecumenical Campus. Programs for seniors can lessen their isolation, reinforce independence, and enrich daily life, with

potential offerings ranging from classes in arts and crafts, computer technology, and fitness, to discussion and support groups, social services, counseling, and weekday lunches. Other possibilities include dancing, driving lessons, senior rights assistance, tax assistance, pet food distribution, and transportation. These can help build a healthy community in a time of increasing personal isolation.

Important synergies can arise from juxtaposing programs for seniors and street youth. "Grandparents" with time to care can be a positive influence on at-risk teenagers. Computer-

savvy young people can help seniors keep up with new technologies. Retired artists, authors, and teachers can enjoy the satisfactions of mentoring and coaching youth.

In short, at the Ecumenical Campus - a true neighborhood commons, nurturing a diverse, multi-generational community - our elders will find an honored place and abundant opportunities for enriching their daily lives.

Ah, Those "Aha!" Moments!

During Focus Session #1 in August, in which various groups from UDECC churches spoke with the architects about Worship, Fellowship, and Music, light bulbs periodically lit up around the discussion circle. One of the brightest was an epiphany about how to schedule worship and fellowship.

Different congregation members were understandably reluctant to change their traditional hours of worship so that all services could begin and end simultaneously. Still, if worship services were held at different times, how could an ecumenical Fellowship Hour be held? And how would classes and other Sunday activities fit in?

The answer ("Aha!") was to turn the Fellowship Hour into a continuous Fellowship Time, with coffee and snacks available all through the morning hours. In this way, regardless of each congregation's individual schedule, people can socialize with each other and with members of other churches, before and after their separate ser-

vices, Bible study classes, lectures, and other Sunday activities.

By framing our Sunday morning worship and education activities within a continuous environment of fellowship, we'll give powerful expression to two central values of the Ecumenical Campus: community and hospitality.

Jack and Betty Hatlen

Interview by Clint Pehrson

When Betty Hatlen joined University Lutheran Church, Franklin Roosevelt was in the White House, and World War II was nearing an end. “U. Loo” (as the church has long been known) was the beloved “Little Church on the Green,” popular for weddings among area college students.

Jack was living in a house across the alley from the church when he joined in 1947. “That little sanctuary was always jam-packed,” he told me. “Sunday school had to meet in the house next door.”

Betty remembers attending Luther Club meetings in the church basement as a teenager. Many young people at those gatherings grew up to become longtime congregation members, but few can claim a longevity in the church to match the Hatlens’.

You might say Jack has a personal investment in the ULC facility. In 1955, when the current sanctuary was built, he was on the building committee, and in the 1960s he led the committee for building the new education wing. Since then Jack has continuously served with the group that manages and maintains the building complex.

As the Hatlens think about relocating University Lutheran to join other congregations at the Ecumenical

Campus, they agree that “everything changes, and that’s OK.” From Jack’s perspective, “The change that’s

taking place is more in the people than in the place. Our congregation is getting younger, not older, and we need to think about the best future for the whole congregation, not just our memories.”

Betty agreed. “What’s important is maintaining a congregation’s identity.” She still wants it to be University Lutheran Church, but the ecumenical events and fellowship that she’s been a part of “have been great for developing spirit.”

While the existing University Lutheran building complex holds important memories for Jack and Betty Hatlen, they note that “the mixing of Lutheran synods that has taken place over the last century has been a very ecumenical process, too, and we’re still going strong.”



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U District Youth Services Snapshot: The YMCA

Of course the YMCA is a place where you can use weight-training equipment and exercise for fitness, but did you know that the **University Family YMCA** also provides many community services? Our Y offers child care and a drop-in service for parents using the facilities, as well as children’s and youth programs. In addition, there are programs for homeless youngsters,

including a Saturday evening meal, served for the past 8 years or more, that complements Teen Feed and Friday Feast in neighborhood churches.

The meal is prepared off-site by volunteer individuals and groups or organizations, then brought to the Y. Showers and other hygiene facilities are also available on these evenings. These are the only activities scheduled

on Saturday evening, so there’s no conflict with other programming. On Sunday afternoons the YMCA operates a drop-in center with a light meal - a place for homeless youth to hang out, socialize, play games, and access the internet.

University Family YMCA Executive Christine Stoffels is following UDECC developments with keen interest.

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