

**2016 Annual Report of the (Interim) Associate Conference Minister of Faith Formation
for Children and Youth (ACMFFCY)
Submitted by Rev. Garth Schumacher**

My tenure as your Interim ACM of Faith Formation for Children and Youth began the first of July, 2015. Since that time I've been supporting two primary areas of ministry in our conference: Pilgrim Point Camp and Retreats and Faith Formation for children, youth, and families in our local churches through the Pilgrim Point Camp committee and the Faith Formation Team. Two great staff persons serve our Minnesota Conference faith formation: Office Manager, Zac Norenberg, and Camp Director, Gigi Nauer. I thank them all for their hard work and energetic creativity!

The Ashley Endowment for Faith Formation in our Conference continues to fund a wide variety of projects. Grants totaling more than \$10,000 were made to local churches in micro-grants, \$12,000 to help support youth and their leaders attend National Youth Event. Six Fourth Thursday gatherings provided new insights into formation subjects as diverse as: "Beyond Vacation Bible School"; "Mandatory Reporting issues in our Churches"; "Wiggling Bodies Form Faith"; and "Youth Peer Ministry." Leadership development is key to maintaining a healthy support network for our children and youth leaders. Over \$7,000 has been used as scholarship funds for continuing education so far this year. In October 2015 I helped lead the ConNext Summit for Progressive Christian educators and leaders which provided an ecumenical forum for 18 of our UCC faith formation leaders. The Faith Formation Team and I continue to look for new opportunities to expand and improve methods to support our local churches' faith formation.

We've been blessed with the fine leadership of Phil Kasten (Pilgrim Point Camp Committee Chair) and Kevin Brown (Faith Formation Team Chair). They've increased the tempo of improvements on both fronts. Two new roofs have been shingled and a new (used) pontoon boat was added at Pilgrim Point Camp and Retreats all while focusing even more attention on financial and mission clarity. The Faith Formation Team re-dedicated themselves to even more involvement with programming on the conference level and at our 130 local churches.

Below is a summary of some of the work we have engaged in faith formation & outdoor ministry over this past year;

Programmatic events for children & youth ministry

- Two High School Conference Youth Events (CYEs) and two Middle School Conference Youth Events
- Six *Fourth Thursday Gatherings* for Children and Youth Ministry leaders
- ConNext Summit 2015 for Progressive Christian Faith Formation leaders
- Planning for and scheduling travel arrangements to our 2016 National Youth Event in Disney World, July 26-30.

Local church and leader engagement

- 20+ visits with children and youth leaders over coffee or a meal
- 12 Sunday morning visits with congregations
- Awarded congregations with \$10,000 in micro-grants for Faith Formation and Intergenerational ministry
- Consulted with 10 church boards/committees around areas of faith formation ministry

Pilgrim Point Camp

- Oversight for projects and expenditures for site improvements to Pilgrim Point Camp
- Overseeing the implementation and programming of youth camps and young adult camps.
- Continuing close relationship with Luther Crest Bible Camp through re-negotiation of contract for maintenance & waterfront staff
- Work with the staff for PPC to focus on programming and hospitality ministry excellence
- Over \$50,000 of Ashley Funds awarded to Pilgrim Point Camp for maintenance, staffing, and programming.
- Planning and marketing new camps with Camp Director Gigi Nauer: Taize Camps; Deaf Family Camp; Young Adult Camp; Camp Awesome; Intergenerational Mission Camp; Taller and Smaller Camp; with additional congregational camping weekends.

Wider church activities

- Board of Trustees member for *United Theological Seminary*
- Board member for the *Resource Center for Churches*
- Planning team member for the *ConNext Summit 2017*, an ecumenical faith formation leader event
- Member of Network of Wider Church Youth Ministry UCC (NOWCYM) organization.
- Attendee to Progressive Youth Ministry event in Dallas, TX. (making contacts for future faith formation events here in Minnesota)
- Attendee with the Faith Formation Team at Faith Forward event in Chicago, IL in April 2016. (More contacts for MN Conference UCC)

I thank everyone in our office who helped me through this past year of discovery in my role as your Interim ACM. I especially want to thank Rev. Shari Prestemon with whom I worked closely to re-define the role of ACMFFCY. We've made a long concerted effort to make sure that the next person serving our conference will be in the right place at the right time with the right tools and skills to succeed brilliantly! May it be so.

Respectfully Yours,
Rev. Garth Schumacher
