

The Labyrinth

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
ECUMENICAL CAMPUS Coalition

November-December 2008

Good Planning Makes Good Neighbors

The legal framework for the Ecumenical Campus

One congregation member remarked, “The bad news is, sharing the same facility we’ll have to learn to work together.” Her friend replied, “The good news is ... exactly the same!”

On October 25, attorney Steven Schindler of Perkins Coie introduced the draft Ownership and Governance (O&G) plan for the Ecumenical Campus to leaders of UDECC’s member organizations. The plan is a legal framework for collective decision-making, with procedures to enable fruitful collaboration.

An associate in the Perkins Coie Trusts and Estate Planning group, Schindler knows how to maintain the tax-exempt status of 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Faith communities deciding to collocate at the Ecumenical Campus will create a new entity in the form of a Limited Liability Company (LLC), which will develop and operate the facility. While income from particular uses will be subject to taxation, the tax-exempt status of the members will not be affected.



The O&G plan also explains how member congregations will join the LLC, leave it, increase or decrease their partnership shares, resolve ownership and governance disputes, handle liability issues, and decide on commercial uses. No single member group will be permitted to gain a controlling interest in the LLC. A professional property management team will manage building operations, including security, maintenance, event planning, facility space reservations, and rentals.

Program spaces at the facility will be designed and built for flexibility to permit programming changes as church and community needs evolve over the years. Appropriately, many decisions not specifically related to ownership and governance will be made by the congregations and campus ministries that decide

to collocate. Thus many questions won’t be fully resolved until those who choose to share the facility sit down together to consider them.

Fresh vistas open when we imagine sharing the Ecumenical Campus. New worship and fellowship opportunities will emerge, and social services may include some new as well as some existing agencies. Will accommodating every entity currently sponsored by every collocating church best serve the parish and the larger community? Could children of different traditions attend Sunday school classes together? Should member congregations share a single youth minister? Members will decide such matters together.

The draft O&G plan is posted at www.ecumenicalcampus.org. A few paper copies (save a tree!) are available for perusal at church offices, and your UDECC representatives will be happy to email a filedoc to you. Initial comments are due by December 12.

Staying Open to Possibilities

Interview by Joan Burton

Molly Hoffman, a retired social worker and a trustee on the board of the University Temple United Methodist Church, has been a member of her congregation since she was baptized as a child. Her wedding took place at U Temple, and her children were baptized there. No wonder she has mixed feelings about the University District Ecumenical Campus. She doesn’t want to see changes in the church she has known all her life. She fears that a new sanctuary won’t seem truly Methodist. Still, she has followed UDECC with intense interest since its start.

Hoffman says, “We all have wonderful old

and valuable buildings. But as our congregations grow smaller and the upkeep burden grows heavier, sharing those responsibilities seems more attractive. By joining together cooperatively we can all benefit.”

She goes on to say that joining together would mean better use of such spaces as choir rooms, bride’s rooms, and kitchens. Capital expenditures for boilers and roofs



would be shared. Through cooperative work with other congregations, the mission outreach for social programs such as ROOTS, currently housed at the Temple, could be enhanced. Depending on the Feasibility Study report and retail space allocations, member churches could coordinate weddings, bazaars, and Christmas concerts in a cooperative plan for all.

So Hoffman remains cheerfully willing to hear further plan details and is staying open to the possibilities.

Church for the 21st Century

Despite massive economic and cultural shifts in American society, its urban churches remain in the vanguard of community missions serving disadvantaged populations. Yet “mainline” congregations face an uncertain future themselves, with stagnating membership rolls, out-of-date facilities, and faltering budgets.

So an ecumenical group of eight faith communities in Seattle’s University District has made a bold and hopeful proposal to sell their outdated, single-use facilities (occupying acres of land in a thriving urban neighborhood with soaring land values) and pool their equity to construct an economically and environmentally sustainable, mixed-use “Ecumenical Campus.”

The facility will house several partner congregations, each maintaining its own ministry and its own traditions. It will also be home to a broad range of social service agencies, some of which the same churches have been



instrumental in founding and supporting over many years. The whole is conceived as a lively community cultural center that will provide meeting and performance spaces for an eclectic variety of secular gatherings, civic and cultural events, and university programs throughout the year.

The proposed Ecumenical Campus is a major strategic move by multiple worshiping communities to embrace better stewardship. By pooling their considerable (but illiquid) resources and employing 21st century

land-use principles, they can create a nexus of community life for the urban center they share and can leverage their assets to better serve populations in need.

The Ecumenical Campus models a way for the land-rich but cash-poor urban churches of America to extract the wealth now lying fallow beneath their buildings and use it to transform themselves and their communities.

Worldchanging Honors UDECC

The award-winning, visionary on-line magazine *WORLDCHANGING* praises the Ecumenical Campus as one of “the world’s most innovative solutions to the planet’s most pressing problems”:

“A NEXT-GENERATION SOLUTION”

“The Ecumenical Campus Coalition’s progressive approach to resources and land-use planning is truly a next-generation solution that we hope will be modeled by many different kinds of social, business and community groups in years to come.”

“TREMENDOUS GAINS”

“[I]ndividual congregations don’t sacrifice their own good for the creation of a community center. On the contrary, it seems that by changing their thinking, each participating church will see tremendous gains in productivity, financial resources, and hopefully even a revitalized congregation once they combine their assets and engage with the broader community.”

“WORLDCHANGING IDEAS”

“The UDECC plan incorporates ... big *Worldchanging* ideas... into one city-changing reality, and we look forward to seeing it take shape.”

<http://www.worldchanging.com/local/seattle/archives/008683.html>

Calendar

OCTOBER 25, 2008:

Building program outline and draft Ownership & Governance (O&G) plan delivered to member congregations

DECEMBER 12, 2008:

Deadline for initial questions and comments on the draft O&G plan and building program outline

JANUARY 31, 2009:

Feasibility study completed, including O&G plan, building program, conceptual design, development *pro forma*, budget, and schedule

FEBRUARY 1, 2009:

Architects and development consultants present conceptual design to ecumenical gathering of members of all congregations

MAY 3, 2009:

Member congregations vote on their further participation

2010:

Groundbreaking

2012:

Occupancy

Eight ... and Counting

Earlier this year the six original members of UDECC – Christ Episcopal Church, University Baptist Church, University Christian Church, University Lutheran Church, University Temple United Methodist Church, and Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education – were joined by two more: the Wesley Foundation (United Methodist campus ministry) and Lutheran Campus Ministry. Several additional worshiping communities in the University District are considering their possible participation, as well.

Warm Thanks to Our Generous Donors

UDECC is deeply grateful to the individuals and groups who have helped with Predevelopment Phase funding. Donations are still needed and will be gratefully received. All are tax-deductible.

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The Norcliffe Foundation
The Seattle Foundation

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University Christian Church
University Congregational United Church
of Christ
University Lutheran Church
University Temple United Methodist Church
Wesley Foundation

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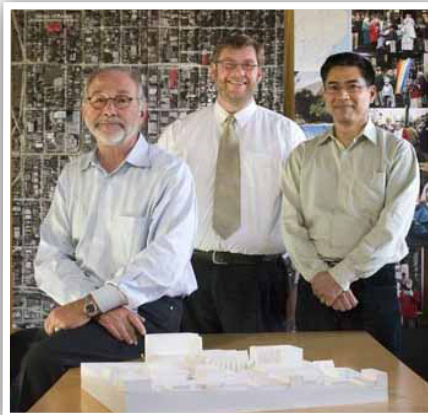
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Spotlight: Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen

Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects is one of the most honored design firms in our region.

Since the 1960s OSKA Architects has built an international reputation for excellence through their commitment to urbanism and civic life and through a worldwide collection of noteworthy projects including places of worship, museums, academic buildings, interior design, and residences. The office combines the capacity of a large firm with the intensity of a small one.

Local examples of their work include the Frye Art Museum, the new Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle's new Southwest Branch Library, St. Mark's Cathedral, and the Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University (with architect Steven Holl).



Rick, Bob, and Stephen

Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen's enthusiasm for the UDECC project was an important factor in the firm's selection. Rick Sundberg, FAIA, Principal-in-charge of the project, leads the design and planning process. Associate Bob Jakubik, AIA, is Project Manager for the UDECC team. Principal Stephen Yamada-Heidner, AIA, heads the team's sustainable design efforts and provides management support.

The conceptual design will be completed during the next few months. The architectural team will unveil the design in a presentation to an ecumenical gathering of church members on Sunday, February 1, 2009.

A Change of Mind and Heart

Interview by Joan Burton

Nancy Kern, organist and choir director at Christ Episcopal Church for the past eight years, initially opposed the idea of moving from the 1920s-era church building at 47th and Brooklyn. She was concerned that sharing a space with other congregations would destroy her church's individuality.

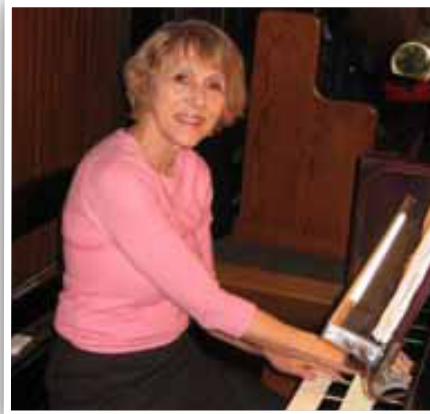
After a presentation about the Ecumenical Campus, however, Kern says she was stunned by its vision of honoring the individuality of all participant churches and shocked by the depth of her own ignorance. The plan answered all her concerns beautifully. She says that it has been a powerful message for her – that she didn't realize how little she knew or understood about what was being offered.

Kern says, "Christ never taught us to love and cherish only things and places. Christ taught us to love one another and care for those in need. I now feel that the Ecumenical Campus is a wonderful and powerful solution to the challenges facing member churches. It offers our church the opportunity to follow our mission for many years to come.

"I love our church sanctuary, but UDECC will give us a chance to reach out to more of our University District neighbors and to offer facilities for service agencies, day care,

and programs for seniors."

Kern adds that she "always had a reverence for things of the past – old buildings, antiquities, and the liturgical forms of the early church that we carry forward into the future."



"I now feel that the Ecumenical Campus is a wonderful and powerful solution to the challenges facing member churches."

Many people in the Christ Episcopal congregation are dedicated to spreading God's word, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and helping the poor. "We are a small congregation with a mighty outreach program that would be a tremendous asset to any group we joined and to any neighborhood."

Kern believes we must have complete respect for everybody's feelings for and against UDECC. She acknowledges that she herself is made uncomfortable by change. "My biggest hope is that whatever decision is made, it will be an informed decision. It will be useful to have a series of presentations to make information available to every member of the congregational family.

"Like a family, we will need to share our fears, concerns and worries, and like a healthy family, we can lay the groundwork to go forward with a well-informed decision to participate or not to participate in UDECC."

U District Service Providers Alliance Needs You to be Santa!

UDSPA is a coalition of U District non-profit organizations working together to coordinate shelter, feeding, medical care, case management, and other services for area at-risk youth.

A UDSPA program well known to local congregations is TeenFeed – dinners rotated nightly among the churches. Others feature free trainings for agency staff and volunteers,

such as Homelessness 101, which introduces the causes of teen and young adult homelessness and provides an overview of street life from the perspectives of young people living it.

On December 11 the annual U District Holiday Party for homeless youth will be held by UDSPA and TeenFeed. For dozens of street kids, this will be their only Christmas celebration.

Please put gifts under their tree – a new hooded sweatshirt (L-XL), toiletries, movie ticket, playing cards. Or be a Secret Santa! Write secretsanta@teenfeed.org for a list of adoptable youth, and choose a name or two.

Bring gifts to the office at 4740-B University Way NE, on Wednesday Dec 10, 12-5 pm, or Thursday Dec 11, 4-9 pm. Questions? Call (206) 853-1927.

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