

A Dreaming for Camp Cazadero

Introduction

We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature. – Sonya Renee Taylor

The scripture story of Esther bears witness to an apocalyptic moment for the Jewish people living in exile, a moment where their very existence was being threatened by a king bent on annihilation. That destruction was forestalled by a person who paid attention to a prophetic voice that invited her to embrace her calling “for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). We, too, find ourselves in an apocalyptic moment where global pandemic meets outcries for racial justice meets environmental crisis. And we, too, find prophets who are calling us to not return to normal, to dream new dreams and imagine new visions. We hope that this dreaming for Camp Cazadero can be a part of the Northern California Nevada Conference’s vocation “for just such a time as this.”

For centuries, Christians have given voice to the longing and imagining, the new garment stitching to which Sonya Renee Taylor invites us when we pray, “your kingdom come.” This dreaming for Camp Caz is rooted in a vocational calling to build God’s kin-dom on earth. The current kingdom we live in relies on an economy that uses the land and bodies as sources for profit rather than relationship. We imagine a Camp Caz that offers a vision of a new economy, a place for co-creative experimentation in what is possible when we live in right relationship with one another and all of God’s beloved creation, a Communion economy that relies on mutual support and care, rather than profits. This eucharistic vision invites us into practices of gratitude because we know that gratitude plants the seed for abundance, not as a dismissal of the real limits of our shared resources, but as an orientation that opens us to experience the prodigal love of the Creator.

God’s kin-dom is already rising up in our streets and communities, from emerging practices of mutual aid during a global pandemic, to a deeper awareness of how interconnected we all are, to an insistence on the belovedness of our Black and Brown kin. Kin-dom building is part of the unfolding story of God’s redeeming love, revealed to us in the revolutionary ministry of Jesus Christ, and ever emerging in our midst. We believe that Camp Caz has a vital role to play in offering us a vision of the horizon toward which we reach, the justice for which we yearn, the community we strive to be, the ways of being that restore new life to our broken world. At its core, we imagine a Camp Caz that offers a glimpse of the hope-filled “already” in the struggle and challenge of the “not yet.”

The Vision

Camp Cazadero is a retreat center offering year-round opportunities for deepening our spiritual lives and building capacity for justice-making to people of all ages. Our regular schedule of workshops, retreats, and convenings are offered at a variety of rates for members of the NCNCUCC as well as other community members. Camp facilitators will also work with organizations and groups to design or host their own event. Whether it be a day-long leadership retreat for a church council or a weekend anniversary celebration for an organizing coalition, the skilled staff, comfortable facilities, and beautiful setting can provide much-needed respite and sustenance. While Camp Caz maintains its historic roots, providing spiritually-rooted summer camp programs for children, youth and families, we also work with community partners to create innovative summer programs aimed at building relationships across difference and creating access for historically under-represented groups.

Camp Caz is home to Kin-dom Come, an intentional community for people in the midst of life-transitions seeking a space to find support, gain skills, and discern their next steps. It also hosts Feast, a monthly farm-to-table worship experience through food, art, and ritual. In land-sharing partnership with Coastal Miwok and Pomo tribe members, Camp Caz operates a farm focused on growing native plants and medicines, as well as other land stewardship and reclamation projects.

Strategic Plan - Phase 1

1. Shore up and revitalize camp programs
 - Create themed camps with a particular focus, e.g. eco-justice/sustainability camp, arts camp, movement-building camp, etc.
 - Partner with local youth organizations to facilitate a broader range of Camp offerings and participants, e.g. Radical Monarchs, Hip Hop for Change, Youth Against the Apocalypse, etc.
 - Increase outreach and advertising
 - Provide centralized planning, leadership recruiting, and training for Camp programs
 - Develop systems for registration and other administrative tasks that can be shared with Camp Tam and used for other NCNCUCC outdoor ministry needs
2. Upgrade facilities for year-round use by people of all ages
 - Repair and refresh cabins and meeting spaces
 - Host work days using volunteer labor
 - Solicit furniture and building supply donations
 - Assess Camp buildings and facilities
3. Build relationships and discern use-needs
 - Reach out to NCNC churches for information about their hopes and dreams for accessing and using Camp
 - Cultivate partnerships with local and regional groups whose mission and vision align with Camp Caz

Strategic Plan – Phase 2

1. Begin retreat and workshop offerings
 - Develop a variety of day, weekend, and other length programs for NCNC church members and other community members (based in part on needs articulated by communities in Phase 1)
 - Create opportunities for a broader spectrum of people to engage with Camp, including hosting association meetings, clergy events and trainings, confirmation retreats, leadership retreats, etc.
 - Determine economic model for fees and payment
 - Cultivate a diverse pool of retreat and workshop leaders in addition to Camp staff
2. Start creating an intentional community with members contributing to staffing needs
 - Work with partners to identify candidates for intentional community (East Point Peace Academy, Homeboy Industries, Phoenix Outreach Ministries, Blessed is She)
 - Identify skill-building opportunities at Camp with on- and off-site mentors
 - Create community structure and agreements
 - Build retreat and workshop offerings based on community expertise
3. Initiate a capital campaign for Camp Caz, Camp Tam and NCNCUCC Outdoor Ministries
 - Create a capital campaign team and plan
 - Do a feasibility study and screen potential donors
 - Use facilities maintenance, repair and new building as focal point as well as securing funding for an endowment to support Camps' future
4. Undertake major facilities repairs
 - Create priorities for short-term and long-term repairs
 - Begin renovation and/or building projects

Strategic Plan – Phase 3

1. Implement land-use and sustainability plans
 - Work with local indigenous communities to develop plans for ways of partnering with the land
 - Create infrastructures to support a variety of land use, including farming, herbal and medicinal plant gathering, and animal and land stewardship
 - Create and initiate a carbon-neutral plan for Camp

Staffing

Director

Description: Full-time - responsible for programing, strategic development, grant-writing, advertising, coordination of events, retreat facilitation, and onsite hospitality.

Compensation needs: housing, benefits, small salary

Dr. Sharon R. Fennema has served as Assistant Professor of Worship and Director of Worship Life at the Pacific School of Religion for the last six years. During that time, in addition to teaching classes in worship, theology, critical theories and leadership for social change and cultivating a robust and diverse spectrum of worship and embodied spiritual practice opportunities, she has lead workshops, offered keynotes, taught classes, and created formational activities for both faith and activist communities. Prior to her time at PSR, Sharon lived and worked as part of the intentional community at The Carpenter's Boat Shop, where she served as summer house manager and cook. She also spent two years as the house manager, guest director and cook at Mary's Margin, a retreat center run by the Sisters of St. Mary and the Episcopal Church. Sharon's activist work has included training in non-violent conflict reconciliation, strategic movement building, and arts and activism, and has focused on racial justice, decolonization, and prison abolition. Sharon brings proficiency as a teacher and facilitator as well as experience with retreat center management and programming. She sees this position as an opportunity to bring together the many strands of her experiences and to lean more fully into her vocation.

Outreach Coordinator

Description: Part-time – responsible for developing partnerships and facilitating access to camp programs

Compensation needs: housing

Rev. K. Lacey Hunter serves as the Associate Minister of Faith Formation at The Community Church of Sebastopol. This position focuses on faith formation for all ages and outreach ministries, which reflects Pastor Lacey's understanding of community partnerships, justice-making and outreach ministry as essential to the work of faith formation. As the Minister of Faith Formation at a church with historically strong ties to Camp Cazadero, camping programs are an important part of Lacey's ministries. Prior to Community Church, Lacey served in ecumenical partnerships as a Pastor of Education, as well as a Director of Youth, Young Adults and Outreach Ministries. Lacey also spent three years working in non-profit organizations where she created outreach programs for LGBTQ youth in rural Oregon and launched a mentor program for under-represented students at Southern Oregon University. Lacey's experience of living and praying daily with a Catholic Benedictine monastic community for two years in Berkeley, California fostered her passion and vision for sustainable, communal, anti-imperial ways of living in the world. Lacey also served for three years as the faith liaison on the Stop Urban Shield Coalition, inviting faith communities to participate with community organizations and

advocacy groups in solidarity actions to end militarized police violence. The dream of co-creating a ministry like this vision of Camp Caz has been part of Lacey's vocational understanding from the beginning. Lacey sees the Spirit's hand at work in preparing her in so many and various ways for such a moment as this.

Facilities Manager

As part of the Camp's transition from working with UCCR for facilities and land management during Phase 1 of the strategic plan, Camp will need a full-time facilities manager to care for and repair facilities, undertake land and grounds maintenance, and coordinate volunteer efforts. This staff member would take on the role of caretaker and steward of our natural and material environment. Our hope is that, eventually, all of the facilities management would be done by intentional community members in partnership with local tradespeople and mentors.

Summer Camp Cook

We imagine the Summer Camp Cook to be a eucharistic minister in our community, providing meals and hospitality in keeping with the kin-dom vision of Jesus' meal practices. They would be responsible for all meal planning, preparing and serving, ordering and inventory, cleanliness and organization of kitchen, and following state licensing compliance standards for each summer camp session and rental group during term of hire.

Funding

This vision of Camp Caz will continue to rely on financial support from NCNCUCC and will necessitate a capital campaign for facility repair, upgrade, and possible construction, as well as to establish a maintenance endowment. We expect that there will be opportunities to work with partners like the Sonoma Land Trust and Native American Land Conservancy to better steward the current Camp properties. With its emphasis on access to nature for under-represented groups, alternative economies and reparations, as well as eco-sustainability, we believe this vision will be attractive to a variety of funders and foundations so that a good portion of our income can come from grants.