

Unity Reunion at Camp Perkins John VanDerWalker

In accordance with the 2019 conference action Inland West Mission Center will offer a Reunion experience at a “neutral” campground that will combine two already existing reunions, Echo Valley, Montana and Cascade, Idaho. After a search of facilities report also given to the conference it was decided by Mission Center Staff that the best option for this reunion was Camp Perkins in the beautiful area just north of Galena Pass in south central Idaho. Camp Perkins is operated by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries and offers us a comfortable camping facility with many outdoor activities available to us, including fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, and rock climbing.

This reunion will be called **Unity Reunion at Camp Perkins** and will be held August 7 -11 and will replace Cascade and Echo Valley reunions. The 2020 calendar has three reunion opportunities: Samish Island, Red Cliffe, and Unity Reunion.

Guest ministry will be President/Prophet Stephen M, and Cathi Veazey. The Reunion Direction Team is comprised of: Mary Beth Hunter from Whitehall Montana; Renee Fisher, New Plymouth Idaho; JoAnn Fisher, Sandy Decker, John VanDerWalker Inland West staff.

Our theme for this reunion will be “**Come BE in the lap of Christ.**” Our vision for this reunion is for a time of relaxation, fellowship and exploration. We hope to include time for focused discernment regarding the future of camping in Inland West Mission Center. We are also hoping that conversations about the nature of “BEing church” can be explored in ways that will empower folks who attend and influence thinking and ministries in their local congregations. We are also hopeful that the growing number of seekers who are coming into fellowship with Community of Christ will find a place of welcome and warm fellowship in a camp setting.

As I think of our theme **Come BE in the lap of Christ**, the image gives me a great deal of comfort. I recall the different laps of influence in my life time, my mom’s lap of comfort and safety, my dad’s lap of instruction, the lap of my wife as we hold each other intimately, and my own lap filled with love for my daughters and granddaughters. As we talked about themes in our staff meetings I was reminded by JoAnn about the lap of Jesus. One of our sacraments—the blessing of children—is indicative of the importance of laps. Most of the popular art that surrounds this event from both Mark and Luke’s gospels shows Jesus with a child in his lap as he is a blessing to the children. My sense is that this kind of thing just happened, it was not a planned ministry, it was however a planned response by Jesus. We hope to create the kind of experience where the unplanned occurrence becomes the focus of significant ministry that brings what is needed into the life of the body.

Every member, seeker and friend in the mission center is invited to attend this reunion. We have a reservation for 75 so you need to get your reservations in soon. You will need to bring your own bedding and personal items and there will be work crews for cleaning up the facility periodically and at the end of the camp.