

## COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

Washington, DC

- ⊕ The American Lutheran Church started **the Community of Christ in 1965 as an intentionally ecumenical alternative urban ministry**. John Schramm was the founding pastor. In its formative years, the Community's life and mission were influenced by the Church of the Saviour, George Webber's *Congregation in Mission*, the Mennonite house church movement, the writings of William Stringfellow, and the Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions.
- ⊕ **The life of the Community is centered around the Eucharist. From the beginning**, our worship style has been informal and intimate generally following the shape of the Western rite. Following an early dream of "shared ministry," the people have come to assume almost all ministerial responsibilities including pastoral care for one another and the planning and leading of worship. Governance in the Community is by consensus.
- ⊕ **The Community of Christ's field of mission is both very localized and rather expansive**. The life of the Community, for the most part operates from our homes and places of work, rather than from a particular building. We do own a building (not a recognizable church building) called "La Casa" on Mt. Pleasant St., N.W. where we gather for worship most Sundays. If we do have a geographical field, we would be comfortable calling the Mt. Pleasant area of Washington such a field. In a sense, though, our field of mission is rather expansive. We keep regular contact or work with about 60 varied groups/ministries. Most of these groups are located in the DC area, while some are active in other parts of the country and world. We communicate with them mostly through a variety of personal networks.
- ⊕ Our Community continues to be **an intentional ecumenical fellowship** in which each of us brings our particular faith tradition to bear on our life together. We respect our differences while we seek to live in unity in Christ. We perceive our mission as continuing to explore the meaning of community while pursuing the ecumenical quest at the grass- roots level.
- ⊕ Our Community is **committed to non-violence as the most appropriate mode of Christian life** in today's world. We seek to corporately and individually witness to and practice non-violent ways of living in ordinary everyday experience.
- ⊕ Our Community affirms the "city", where most of us live and work, **as a place where the power of redemptive love is expressed in myriad ways**. We see our mission as celebrating daily the Gospel of hope by working to overcome oppression, by dealing concretely with issues of power and privilege, and by involving ourselves in efforts to relieve suffering. We do this through involvement in civic and community based groups, through contacts with key people committed to improving the system, and through participation in direct help programs.
- ⊕ **Our Community strives to work for peace and justice locally, nationally, and internationally**. We work with and/or support those who otherwise would have little or no support from others either because they are just beginning an effort or because their cause may be controversial or not yet known. This is accomplished through ad hoc groups of people who utilize the various networks mentioned above.
- ⊕ **Our Community seeks to help people's "dreams" of new ministry become realities**. If one has a "dream" to explore, we usually establish a support group to deal with the feasibility of the dream as a ministry and, if appropriate, to provide an ongoing resource for the new effort as it is born, fed, nurtured and set free. Over the years such dreams have resulted in a religious art store, Homebuyers, two Montessori schools, a plant and greenery shop, youth governmental education seminars, a life-skills center for exceptional adults, low interest seed loans for new ministries and a variety of individual shorter-term projects

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