

**Since 1991, 98 churches in 28 states have received Union Presbyterian Seminary Congregational Leadership Awards.**

**Presenting the 2013 award recipients:**

*(Judging panelists' comments are italicized)*



**The Community Presbyterian Church of Waldport, OR received the Elinor Curry Award for its ministry of outreach and social concern that addresses the call of the church to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God,” and in so doing changes the congregation.** The Community Presbyterian Church is a small rural church with 34 members, whose pastor serves in a 30% time position. The church learned that in their region the average income of families is \$26,774. They also discovered that children are often undernourished and have poor resources for food, which usually leads to inattention and poor reading skills. The Community PC established a monthly “Read & Feed” program for homeless families in the Waldport area. The program includes one-on-one reading sessions, singing, and family-style nutritious meals. All the food is bought and prepared by church members (supported by a fund established by the church for purchasing the food). This program has been replicated by other area churches so now there is a “Read & Feed” dinner available every Tuesday evening during all twelve months in the Waldrop area. Here are a few of the markers of success reported by the church: the number of families with children who attend each month averages between 30 to 35; take-home meals are provided for the families from leftovers; church members are learning the names of the children and family members; joyous chatter occurs regularly during the reading time; laughter abounds while singing the songs; relationships have been formed with parents of the children; the involvement of the congregation has “opened their eyes to the homeless situation”; and “they have hearts to reach out with the love of Christ.”

*“This is an application from a very small church that is doing marvelous things in a very needy community.”*

*“I am impressed that a small, rural church can accomplish this much. Good face-to-face in this ministry; it embodies the notion of 'walking with' someone in their need, rather than just 'doing for.'”*



**United University Church of Los, Angeles, CA received The Tolly Thompson Award for creatively meeting a vital Christian Education need in the church community.** United University Presbyterian Church started the "Campus Engagement Program," which works directly with USC students. It operates on a three- dimensional model that calls on students to focus inward (for better self-understanding), upward (to develop a closer relationship with the divine), and outward (by building relationships within the church and reaching out to the community). Programs include: "Critical Lens Student Bible Study" in which the Bible is studied through informed academic methods of study and personal experience, "Living in the Spirit," a group that explores different spiritual practices as a means of relaxation and connection with God, "Open Table Worship," a small dinner gathering in which students share a meal, discuss scripture and celebrate communion together, and other community service and interfaith opportunities. For more information visit their website at <http://uniteduniversitychurch.org/campus-engagement/>.

*"Most churches have given up in many ways with college student ministry. The focus on relationships, study and worship is somewhat traditional, but moving out to the students rather than requiring them to come to you is how student ministry will have to be done. I like the interfaith aspect of this ministry as well."*

*"I can see the creativity of the ministry as an effort to reach out to the young adults on the campus. Very engaging in the community concern, it seems that it is striving to meet the community's need with Christian 'loving and embracing heart.'"*



**Westminster Presbyterian Church of Salem, OR received The Katherine Hawes Award for its effective youth ministry that engages youth in all areas of the church's mission, extending beyond the church into the community and the world.** "City Camp' is unlike any traditional camping program. The best way to describe 'City Camp' is to say that it is like camp and a mission trip smashed together for four jam-packed days of service, fun and community building." This is an affordable alternative to other expensive summer camps or mission trips. "City Camp" began with a pilot program in 2010 – where 25 students and leaders spent four days serving several organizations in Salem and Portland including the Adopt-A-Street program, Kairos Soup Kitchen, Portland Rescue Mission and Blanchet House. In the evenings youth gathered for lessons, music, games, camp fires and small groups. Parents teamed up to provide meals, and the youth slept in an indoor tent city built in fellowship hall at Westminster.

In 2012, there were 66 students, leaders, and student leaders involved in City Camp. In 2013, a record 95 people are expected to be involved in the camp. For more information check out the youth website: <http://www.salemwestpres.org/youth.htm>

*"It is an excellent example of the involvement of the whole community, especially of the high level of congregational support and engagement. It is also exciting to see it include other denominations. I would give the Hawes award to "City Camp" program this year."*

*"The City Camp program has noble goals. To provide an effective educational service opportunity for middle school youth while keeping the price low - \$80 even! - is a worthwhile goal indeed. It appears a lot of behind-the-scenes effort goes on with the members of Westminster PC, and the ability to minister to the youth is greatly enhanced by this participation. I also appreciate that the congregation opened the program up to other churches and denominations to participate. Clearly, the program is a success, as seen by the significant increase in active participants and the congregational support. Overall, a very strong program."*

*"This application impressed me the most in its scope and longevity. The way the church youth group and the number of younger families have grown since the program began is significant. I believe this program is both supporting the work of the church and reaching out to welcome new people into the mission, expanding the work of the church. The "non-negotiables" of the program hit home, and there is clearly a great deal of support and passion throughout the congregation and community. The City Camp program should clearly win the award in my book."*



**Homestead United Presbyterian Church of Homestead, PA received The Al Dimmock Award for its excellence and congregational involvement in the empowerment of older adults.** Through the years Homestead United Presbyterian Church has evolved from a mid-sized congregation with several pastors and full-time staff to a small congregation with a part-time pastor and part-time staff. As various issues arose during these major transitions, it became clear that the responses to these changes tended to follow age categories, whether the issues were over the time of the services or over preference for traditional or contemporary music, or organ music versus drum and keyboard. Lines were drawn according to the ages of the responding members. This often led to physical division even as to where the congregant sat. More seriously, it often led to the loss of members who were dissatisfied with the decisions – until now! With the gift of four desktop computers with printers, a computer education program was established by the church and has seemingly crossed age barriers and attracted – sometimes hesitantly – an older generation who, having tried, are hungry for more. With the encouragement from the younger, tech-savvy members, the church has seen mutual respect across age lines, as well as an atmosphere of equality and enjoyment. Easy mingling of young, middle age and old is pleasant to behold. This ministry has had a unifying effect over the entire congregation.

*“I am impressed by the way that the provision of this service/education to older adults has had almost a side effect of healing wounds along age lines in the congregation.”*

*“While I wished that the applicant would have given more specific numbers for those participating in this program, the intention and execution so far seems admirable.”*

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**We are grateful to our panelists for their hard work in selecting the 2013 recipients.**