

Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ **Campaign for Silver Lake**

Now, for the Future.





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The Need

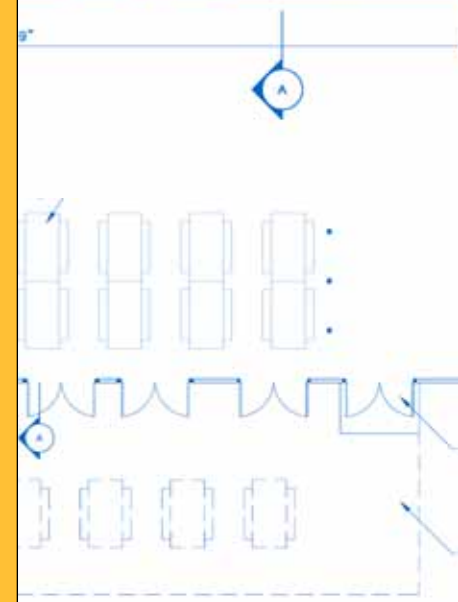
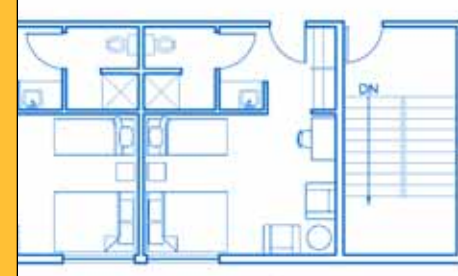
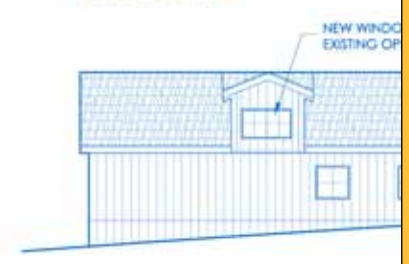
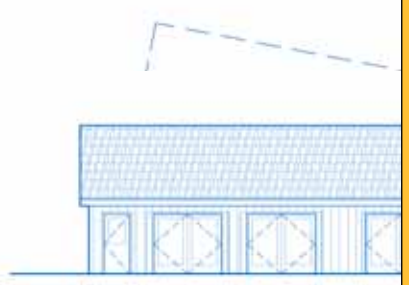
Silver Lake is a storied, beloved place. It's where our Connecticut UCC family gathers, laughs, learns and grows. But for Silver Lake to grow – to remain the vital heart of our outdoor ministry – it needs our help. And it needs us now.

Each year – throughout the year – this 61-acre site in Sharon serves more than 5,000 conferees, guests and members of our church community. And while most other denominational facilities rely heavily on use by groups from outside the denomination, Silver Lake is truly *ours* – 98% of Silver Lake use is Conference-related.

Clearly, Silver Lake is central to our Christian ministry – especially with our youth, who are, after all, both the present and the future of our Church.

But in order to remain the inspiring place it has been for almost 50 years, Silver Lake needs to adapt to the changing needs of our church community. All the current year-round lodging facilities at SLCC were built more than 32 years ago for a very different era. Code and safety requirements, guests' expectations, and disability access needs have all changed. The sizes of groups visiting SLCC have changed. And the condition of the buildings has declined dramatically.

To re-invigorate Silver Lake, we must renovate and rebuild. And we must begin *Now, for the Future.*





Where We Stand

In 2004, the Connecticut Conference Board of Directors authorized a Strategic Plan for Ministry for Silver Lake Conference Center to assess, in detail, what needs to be done. To this end, the Conference hired Kaleidoscope, Inc., a nationally known consulting firm specializing in camp and conference center operations. After a thorough, six-month investigation and study, the firm recommended several key changes to the facility's physical site and management systems. In short, the consultants found that most of the buildings at Silver Lake are sorely in need of renovation, that several structures need to be redesigned for both flexibility and energy-efficiency, and landscaping is needed to enhance and preserve the property.

God has given us the capacity to achieve this critical, ambitious undertaking - all that is needed is the will and commitment among our churches and members!

Using this report as a starting point for the schematic design process, in May of 2005 the Conference hired Susan Maxman & Partners, of Philadelphia, to implement the recommendations. Over the summer, key leaders of the Conference and Silver Lake met three times with the architectural firm, which refined the vision for Silver Lake by producing a detailed set of schematic design drawings, renderings, reports, and cost estimates.



Right: Retreat Center, architect's rendering

Changes Ahead

Happily, some of the work needed at Silver Lake has already been done. For example, bathrooms have been upgraded in many buildings, new furniture and mattresses have been purchased, a handicapped lift has been installed in the Glen and we have many new, urgently needed summer cabins.

Still, we have a long way to go. In addition to the specific projects detailed below, plans call for changes to several ancillary buildings and activity spaces. For example, we will move all maintenance and construction activities to a single location behind the Director's house for safety and efficiency.

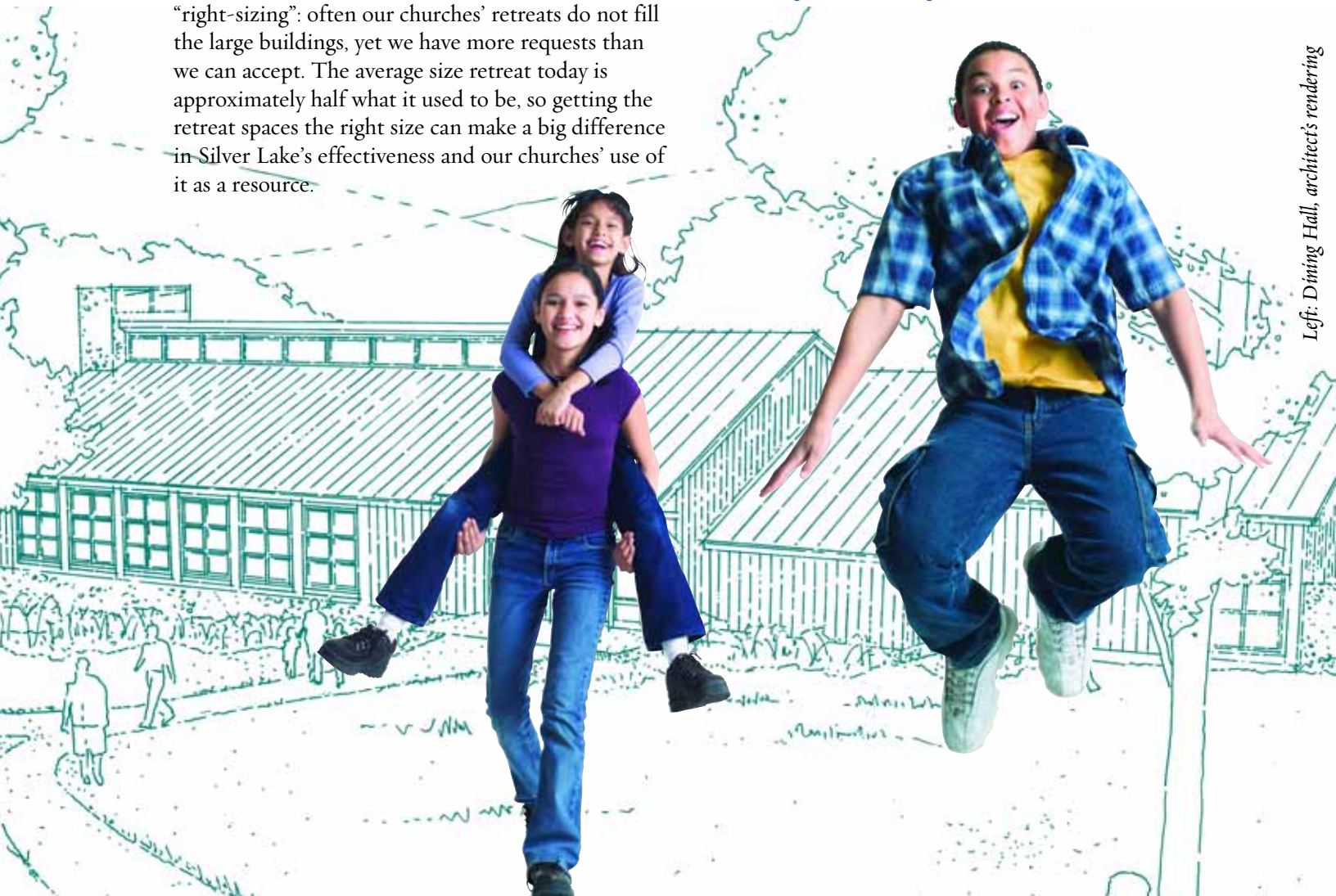
We look forward to landscaping and other site improvements, too. New basketball and volleyball courts will be created, traffic patterns improved, and a variety of new landscaping and campfire locations will be established. A new amphitheatre and better summer greeting space will be developed near the current Social Hall, as well.

Many of the proposed changes address the need for "right-sizing": often our churches' retreats do not fill the large buildings, yet we have more requests than we can accept. The average size retreat today is approximately half what it used to be, so getting the retreat spaces the right size can make a big difference in Silver Lake's effectiveness and our churches' use of it as a resource.

We also need to be realistic about expectations: today, adults do not want to sleep in bunkrooms with eight other adults, nor do they want to share bathroom facilities! The new Retreat Center, Retreat Lodge and Guest Lodge (the three buildings proposed to replace the existing Retreat Center, which must be torn down) will have private baths with bedrooms accommodating one to three persons. Simple and economical, yet youth and adult-friendly, these lodges will also provide gathering and small group space.

Finally, we are dedicated to both energy efficiency and economy. Windows must be replaced and heat changed from electric to oil in the Cedars and the Pines retreat centers. The payback from these improvements alone will help immensely in controlling costs.

Few of us can imagine the Connecticut Conference without Silver Lake and its ministry - it is the heart and soul of so much of what we do.



Left: Dining Hall, architect's rendering

Where We've Been

Projects Completed or Near Completion

Health and Welcome Center: Now in its final stages of completion, this important building greets visitors as they arrive at the main entrance to SLCC. In addition to serving as the introduction to the Silver Lake experience, the Health and Welcome Center now provides greatly improved infirmary, nursing, hosting and site control functions, as well as critical office and administrative space.

The Center is a clear example of how formative an early camp experience can be: the building's renovation was largely made possible through the generosity of one of our ministers who so valued his own youthful camp experience he dedicated a lead gift for this project. His foresight and generosity testify to the urgency of *Now, for the Future*.

Summer Cabins: Among Silver Lake's oldest buildings, many of these cabins have already been replaced with lovely new structures through the generosity of many of our local churches. Fourteen of the 20 new cabins have been completed and enthusiastically received by this past summer's counselors and conferees. Our church members gave of their time and talents, as well as their finances. And when this "sweat equity" project is completed, we will have room for 225 summer conferees, along with volunteer counselors, in four "villages."

Where We're Headed

New Projects and Renovation

Some of the new construction involves renovation of existing structures; in other cases, the existing facilities need to be razed and new buildings built in their place. All new buildings will be winterized, except where noted. All are designed to be energy-efficient and handicapped accessible, and bathroom facilities throughout SLCC will be updated.

Renovated Buildings

Cedars: Cedars, an existing winterized lodge and dining building, will be renovated to remove the dining function and provide more – and better – lodging during both the summer camp and the retreat season.

Social Hall: The Social Hall is an existing dining hall and kitchen structure, used during the summer season only. Plans call for the addition of a new deck and entrance to expand the building's capacity and attractiveness.

Art Center: An expanded Art Center will be created by renovating the existing Wood Shop. The newly renovated center will house SLCC's art programs and classes. The plan includes space for small performances and other group activities. The Wood Shop and all maintenance functions will be consolidated away from the program activity sites, near the garage behind the Directors' home.



New Buildings



Dining

The Dining Center is the cornerstone of our plans. Consisting of a dining hall, which doubles as a large meeting space, and associated kitchen facilities, this building will accommodate 200 guests.

It will also serve as a program center and storm shelter during the summer.

Building a new dining hall central to the year-round facilities

both frees up the lower level of Cedars for additional youth retreat and summer staff lodging, and expands our ability to serve more meals.

By concentrating heating and other mechanicals in this one building, we conserve maintenance and energy resources.



Showerhouse

One new Showerhouse will be constructed with both shower and restroom facilities for summer use. The existing restroom and shower house will be refurbished.



Guest House

The Guest House will include 6 guest rooms with baths, with a total capacity of 18.

The Retreat Lodge is planned to contain 8 guest rooms with baths (for a total capacity of 24) and associated meeting spaces.



Retreat Lodge



The Retreat Center

The Retreat Center will contain 12 guest rooms with baths and associated meeting spaces, with a total capacity of 36.

The Commons Buildings are group activity structures for summer occupancy only.

One Commons is located in each cabin grouping and each has lodging for deans (conference leaders).

The plans include options for two different sizes.



Commons Building



*At SLCC, lives are changed and faith is built.
God becomes real and Christ becomes one's life companion.*



The Vision

All the proposed changes to Silver Lake Conference Center are guided by one firmly held principle: we must be enlightened, responsible stewards of this beautiful place. In order to do so, we have ensured that the work adhere to several criteria:

● **Simplicity** Our vision for Silver Lake, while modern and elegant, retains the simple, and time-honored traditions of a wooded, natural retreat. For many of us in the Conference, it was at Silver Lake that our core values were shaped, and where we first felt the stirrings of a call to our life's ministry. These early experiences have informed and help sustain our Christian life. Therefore, we are embarking on this renovation with intentional continuity – taking the best from our collective and individual pasts and adding strength and viability to the Silver Lake we have known and cherished.

● **Environmental Responsibility** We have chosen an architecture firm that specializes in “green” design, using natural resources responsibly, creating buildings that emphasize sustainability, and are energy-efficient and cost-effective to operate and maintain. One key component of the plan is better attention to water management, using both run-off water and fresh water more efficiently throughout.

● **Flexibility and Durability** While new construction and renovation will increase the overall capacity of SLCC, the real beauty of the design lies in its flexibility. Too many of our existing buildings do not allow for any adaptation or variety in use. The new buildings are designed to adapt to large or small gatherings, so that they are especially viable, user-friendly facilities suitable for a range of guests — from Conference-wide gatherings to small youth groups, from adults to children.



The Financial Need

Such an ambitious, creative vision does, of course, require a substantial investment. We are asking you, a valued member of the Connecticut Conference community, for help. In giving to *Now, for the Future*, you are investing in our past, present *and* future. You will be helping to preserve and reinvigorate a place critical to our heritage in Connecticut. You will be protecting its current viability and strength. And, most important, you will help ensure that the future is one in which our young people can learn and grow in their life's ministry as they share – as we have been blessed to do – in God's abundance.

We made some difficult but necessary decisions to bring the campaign within achievable goals, and now project that the campaign will focus on a basic goal of \$8 million with a challenge goal of \$12 million. This is a significant decrease from the original projection.

Campaign Timeline:

Pledge Period: 2005-2010

October 2005: Campaign is approved by the Fall Annual Meeting, and the quiet phase begins

May 13, 2006: Report to the Spring Annual Meeting

October 20-21, 2006: Launch of the Church Phase at Fall Meeting



Financial Goals

Figures include all construction costs, a 10% contingency, and all fees for design, construction management and fund raising. Construction will be phased, according to need and practicality.

	Phase 1	Phase 2
Commons Buildings and Social Hall Renovation	\$ 732,218	
New Showerhouse	499,843	
Other Renovations for Summer season	342,319	247,176
New Dining Ctr/Program Space	2,263,662	
Cedars/Pines/Glen/Lodge Renovations	1,742,542	361,089
New Retreat Center Build out lower level of guest rooms	1,838,775	600,000
New Maintenance Facility and Deferred Maintenance	572,260	
New Retreat Lodge		1,414,279
New Guest House		1,073,658
Totals	\$7,991,619	\$3,696,202
Tithe for Back Bay Mission	\$799,161	\$369,620

For more information, contact:

The Campaign for Silver Lake

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