



# The Center for Environmental Structure



---

ARCHITECTS, PLANNERS, ENGINEERS, BUILDERS

# MILWAUKIE'S SOUTH DOWNTOWN



Report on CES Work in 2008-2009



The  
South  
Downtown  
is.....



## Recap of Work in Phase 1 –last year

- Meetings with 34 community members, detailed discussions of their hopes and desires for Milwaukie. What is it about Milwaukie that you love, which would be good to reproduce and extend, to protect?
- Summarize and organize all this material from Milwaukie community members, in preparation for Pattern Language
- Review of a previously prepared Concept Plan for south downtown, prepared by others



## WORKING SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND INFORMATION RAISED BY MILWAUKIE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

IN PREPARATION FOR PHASE 2 PATTERN LANGUAGE WORK

June 20, 2008  
(rev. Aug 6 2008)

The information we have gathered from Milwaukie community members in our one-on-one discussions is here distilled, and roughly grouped under headings based upon content. This material forms the starting point from which we will create a final pattern language during Phase 2 with the group of nine community members who will continue to work with us. This present document contains the raw material from which the final pattern language will be created, but it is not itself yet a proper pattern language.

Some topics which the community members spoke to us about, often with strong feeling and evocatively, were not directly concerned with the south downtown per se. Though these comments were not necessarily directly linked to our scope of work for the south downtown, we have included many of those thoughts here in this working draft, in order to present a more complete image of the community's dreams, concerns, and desires. It is in this context that the south downtown plaza will be created.

---

### OVERALL FEELING AND VISION

- Keep the downtown pedestrian in feel. Lots of small businesses could come in without destroying the small town feel, if the town is kept pedestrian.
- All day long there is activity; vibrance and life. And there is a reason to be here, not just a place to stop.
- Create a safe environment, where you feel happy to be there. You feel invigorated by all the stuff going on around you.
- Things to do at night: I could come to Milwaukie after 6 PM and there would be things going on here. Social dancing, indoors because of weather; some sort of community center; people coming together to talk. Having coffee at outdoor cafes or the cafes that are already here.

### REVIEW OF 2007 CONCEPT PLAN FOR SOUTH DOWNTOWN MILWAUKIE June 20 2008

---

In 2007, consultants working for the Development Director prepared an initial concept plan, to stimulate discussion about the future of South Downtown Milwaukie. The concept plan presented a proposal for a triangular plaza, at Main Street and Lake Road, coupled with a transit station at that location.

Since then, the Center for Environmental Structure has been commissioned to undertake an elaboration of this South Downtown plaza concept and we are presently in the finishing stages of Phase 1 of our contract work. One of the deliverables of our Phase 1 work asks us to undertake a review of the 2007 concept plan, together with an explication of its strong points and weak points.

The plan drawing of the concept plan follows. The text following the drawing then summarizes our findings.

# Recurring Themes Raised by Community

---

- Overall Feeling and Vision
- Plaza
- Parks
- Connect Parks
- Riverfront
- Water
- Plants and Trees
- Trails
- Businesses
- Housing
- The Nature of Buildings
- Sustainability
- Outdoor Space
- Arts
- Music
- Bikes
- Play
- The Nature of Sidewalks and Streets
- Farmers Market
- City Hall
- Parking
- Light Rail
- Busses
- Lighting
- Views
- Sounds
- Driving
- Animals
- Visitors Center
- Dark Horse
- Library
- Treatment Plant
- North Downtown



**This past year's work...**



# The first draft Pattern Language

## What is a Pattern Language?

A pattern language is comprised of a series of patterns. Each pattern describes a certain element, or piece of the built environment, or a relationship between such pieces. Each pattern provides direction as to how that element or relationship should be generally configured.

A pattern language is a word-picture that describes the wholeness of a place, envisioned as the place might and can become over time. Each pattern language is unique to the place for which it is constructed, but naturally shares some elements with other pattern languages created for other places – just as people's desires for their neighborhoods are unique but also share certain universal desires with one other.

A pattern language taken as a whole is intended to convey and evoke the overall feeling that a place will have. It does not provide an overly detailed and highly specified picture.



# Forming the Ad Hoc Committee

From the 34 citizens we interviewed, a group of nine continued on, working with us in greater detail..

- Dave Aschenbrenner
- Lisa Batey
- Scott Churchill
- Carlotta Collette
- Mark Gamba
- Jeff Klein
- Mike Miller
- Dion Shepard
- Sarah Smith

Diagnosis of  
the Site  
with the Ad  
Hoc  
Committee





# What is Diagnosis?

---



A process of mapping and studying the existing land, streets, trees, water, and buildings, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the existing context.

In essence, identifying things and places of beauty to be protected; and also identifying places which are less than they could be and so need to be healed and repaired.

## Some of the Items Diagnosed by the Committee



Dogwood Park and the Willamette beyond.... Strong positives  
Noise from McLoughlin a negative which needs repair





Beautiful basalt on Lake Road– use this material in the SDT, gives a local northwest feeling





Must protect this beautiful knoll with rocks and trees, where the lake bends northward





Large deciduous tree near Main and Lake Road – must protect



Smaller tree near Main and Lake Road – beautiful space below and around it





Attractive view westward, to and through the old 99 bridge over creek





As you get closer, can see the Willamette both over and under the bridge – positive





Of course the lake/creek itself is a strong positive place, need to protect and enhance





Many on the committee liked this building: its height, masonry materials, its solidity





The rail trestle is a strong positive in the South Downtown





The new landscaping beginning to be implemented downtown was identified as a positive, worth continuing and extending





Several in the committee found the Bernard Garage neon “B” to be a positive of the SDT





# Our Diagnosis of Site

Our diagnosis identified similar items, and a few others.





Of course the river and hills beyond are very strong positive centers in the SDT





The small dogwoods and grassy park are important positives in the SDT



Two great large trees in parking lot near former Cashspot – protect them











A plaza here could be beautiful-orient west and a bit north





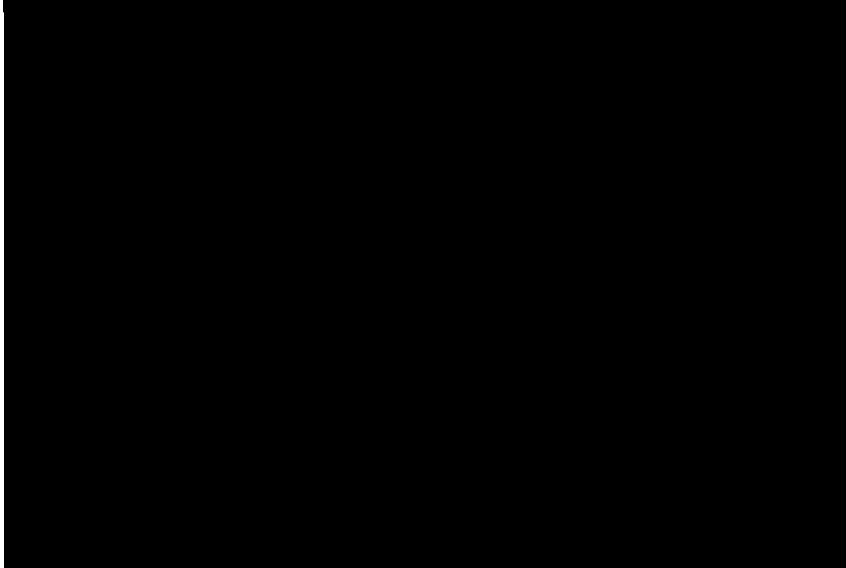




**Editing the Pattern Language with the  
Ad Hoc Committee**







# The Pattern Language

FOR THE PURPOSES OF STUDY ONLY

A Pattern Language  
for  
THE SOUTH DOWNTOWN  
OF MILWAUKIE, OREGON

JUNE 2009 DRAFT  
FOR THE PURPOSES OF STUDY ONLY

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE  
Berkeley, California



# Chapters in the Pattern Language

---

1. Relationship of the South Downtown to its surrounding areas.
2. A Major Plaza forms the core and focus of the South Downtown.
3. The Plaza lies at the head of Main Street.
4. From the Plaza there are views of the Willamette River and the western setting sun.
5. The Transit Station leads directly into the Plaza.
6. The Plaza is given its shape and character by a inner frontage ring of two-story buildings faced all along its length with a generous colonnade. The ring creates beautiful and comprehensible outdoor space.
7. There is a second, wider and deeper outer ring of land, containing more loosely placed one, two & three story buildings and open land. In the outer ring, especially, there is a tangled network of narrow lanes, residences, businesses, and open space.
8. As an additional support for the Plaza, 25% of the boundary land that surrounds the plaza will be restored to its natural state, preserved as an ecological area for Parkland, Fish and Wildlife.

9. The prevailing form of buildings in the SDT are **Shop/Houses** -- small mixed-use buildings, which contain both dwellings and workplaces on the same lot. Each lot will include some commercial workspace, some domestic living space, and some outdoor work area or garden.
10. The **overall building density in the South Downtown will be limited** to a floor area ratio of 1.51 for the 119,000 sf of buildable land within the SDT perimeter. Thus the buildings in the SDT, in their aggregate, will be limited to 180,000 sf of built space.
11. All buildings (and exterior works) in the SDT will be built by **individual craftspeople working in a masonry tradition** that emphasizes brickwork and cast stone, with lesser amounts of stone, concrete, ceramic tile, plaster, and metalwork. Smaller buildings may be built in wood frame with exterior woodwork.
12. From very the start, owners and owner-occupiers will be strongly encouraged to **ornament their own buildings**, perhaps give them an individual touch. This also means that the construction management will be organized to allow individual and personal qualities to appear in each building that is built. Furthermore, a subsidized maintenance program will assist and encourage owners to look after their properties, and keep them in sparkling order.
13. Throughout the South Downtown, there is a **web of pedestrian paths and transit**; connected paths, roads, cars, electric cars, incentives for electric cars which need small parking areas, small buses, mini-parking, bicycles, sidewalks, paved areas, and parkland. They work unobtrusively and work smoothly together.

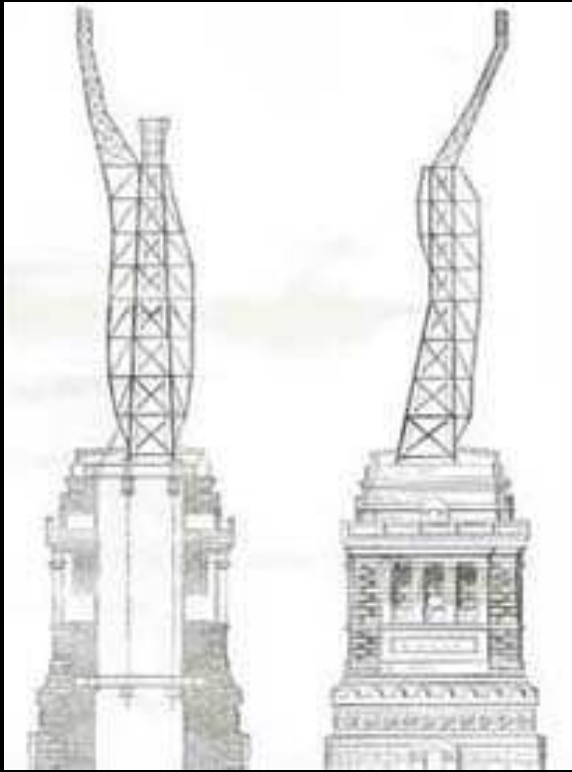


**Based on Pattern Language, and  
diagnoses, we looked at the wholeness  
of the SDT – what is needed**

**We developed an Armature  
for the South Downtown**

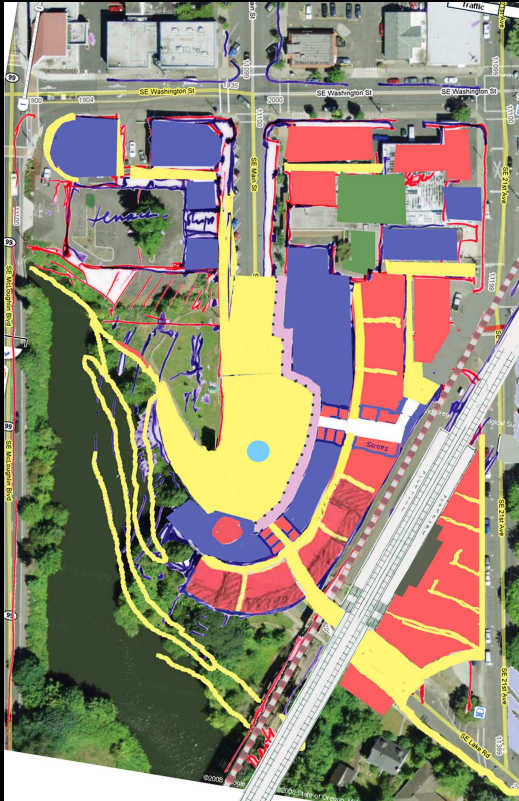
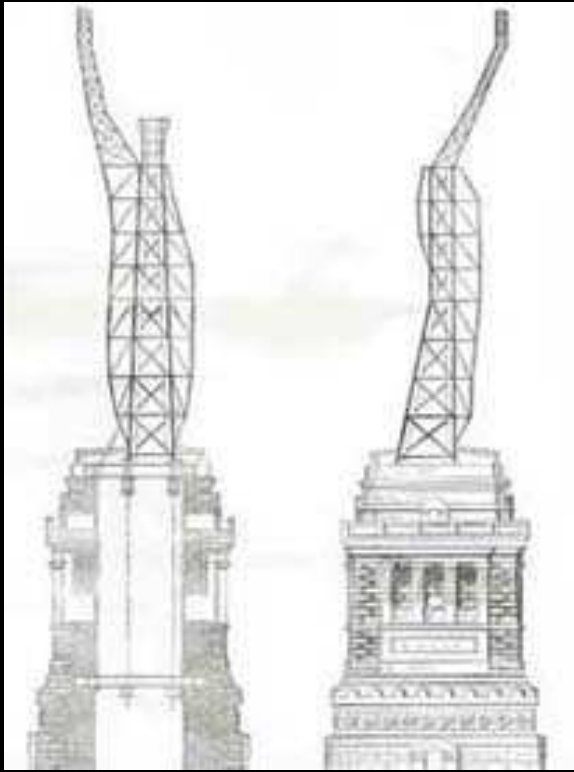


**What do I mean by armature?**



**What do I mean by armature?**









# Rough model studies



Very rough, early study- not all buildings are shown, only meant to study the plaza and immediately adjacent ring of buildings















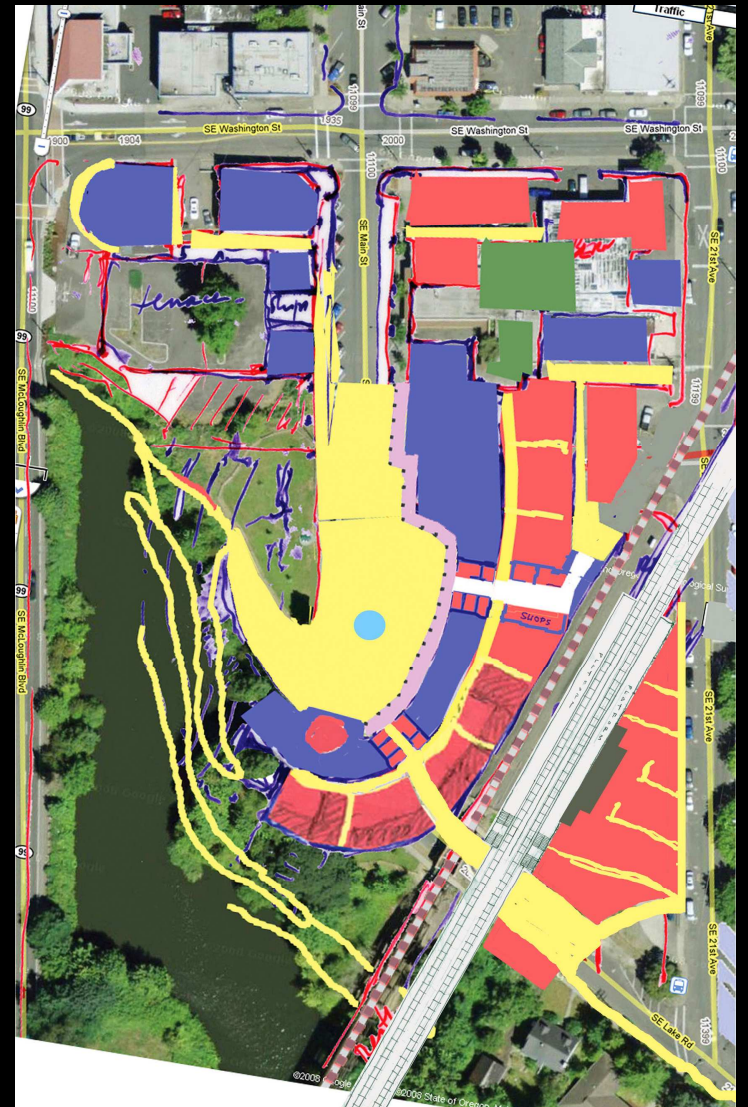




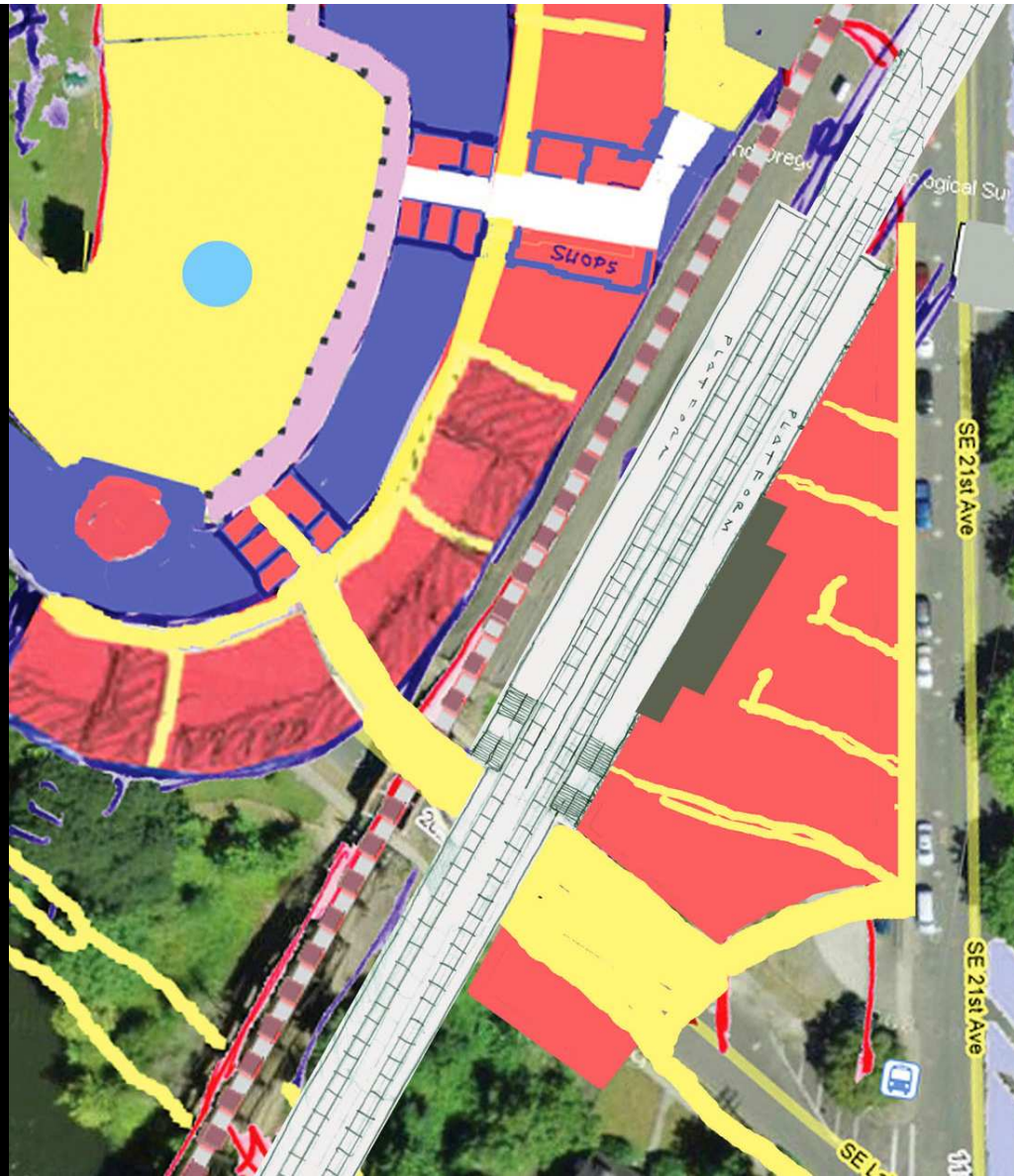
# Light Rail Studies

# Our recommendations on light rail, communicated to TriMet to date:

- Narrow bridge over Lake Road and Kellogg from 50' to 34'
- Split Platform station allows that
- Keep things small in general, in keeping with scale of Milwaukie and the SDT
- Keep platforms and bridge near-level, not rising too much going to the south
- Primary pedestrian access to platforms from south, to enliven plaza
- Waiting room building is desired, for northbound passengers
- Utilize some of Union Pacific R.O.W. land, currently oversized
- Keep platforms around 12 feet wide
- Terminate at Park Blvd, not here in downtown Milwaukie







**Closer view of armature drawing, in the area of the light rail station, showing split platform, primary access to south, and possible waiting building**



**Bend Oregon station, which inspired  
some of the Committee members to  
dream of some sort of waiting  
building for Milwaukie station**





**Rough sketch of platform area looking north,  
showing split platform, beginning of narrow bridge,  
steps to Lake Road, and waiting building on  
northbound platform**

# Upcoming Work

**Work which we recommend be undertaken in  
the coming year, to carry the South Downtown  
forward**



### **Train Station 30% + Design Work.**

We believe the rail station will have a very significant impact on the quality of the South Downtown. If the station area is not very carefully considered and designed, the negative impact on the SDT will be difficult to recover from. On the other hand, if the rail station is carefully designed in accordance with the Pattern Language and concept plan, the station can form a vital helpful part of the south downtown. So we propose that we be further involved in this work, to steer it in a direction which can increase the quality of the station design, and therefore the SDT.

### **Preliminary Implementation Studies:**

Preliminary number crunching, “proof of concept” to show, in general: rough construction and development costs, how money will flow, ideas of land ownership, etc. This will be a first rough study only. But it will show enough, that the community can understand the general idea, and agree upon its workability. The subsequent year will include a more detailed study, to continue this work.

### **First construction of initial public items for the South Downtown.**

We feel it is important to take some small but real construction actions, to begin to create the south downtown. The South Downtown has gone a long time without growth or change. We feel the community may doubt that anything will come to pass there. A few real objects, actually built, will encourage the community, and will also create a physical presence which will enhance public understanding of and enthusiasm for, the South Downtown project.

## Longer range steps we recommend

- Ad Hoc Committee takes the South Downtown Pattern Language to the wider Milwaukie community.
- Design light rail station, in accordance with the past work.
- Develop comprehensive implementation strategy for the design and construction of the South downtown, including strategies for: land ownership, land acquisition, construction financing, construction phasing over time.
- Continue design and construction of initial public items for South Downtown.
- Begin closing parts of Adams, Lake, and Main
- Begin process of Land Acquisition.
- Begin laying public space ground surfaces.
- Form the entity which, with the City, will oversee the growth of the SDT – based upon implementation strategy worked out above.
- Develop new zoning codes for the South Downtown.
- Begin to design and build individual buildings, on a piecemeal basis, over time. The South Downtown might take perhaps 10-15 years to build out.
- Construction of rail line and station.



## Benefits of this Process

- Each project is Unique
- Well adapted to the wishes and needs of the users
- Also deeply adapted and connected to the natural beauty of the site
- Prevents major mis-fit before it occurs
- Creates usable outdoor space around buildings; the buildings and spaces are integrally related, shaping one another
- Outdoor spaces and buildings are not gestural, they are actually nice to be in and around
- Focussed both on aspirations, and nuts-and-bolts implementation

# Our deep thanks to the Milwaukie Ad Hoc Committee members for all their help to date:

---

- Dave Aschenbrenner
- Lisa Batey
- Scott Churchill
- Carlotta Collette
- Mark Gamba
- Jeff Klein
- Mike Miller
- Dion Shepard
- Sarah Smith





# And also our deep thanks to the 34 Milwaukie community members who helped us:

---

- Amiel Alo
- Dave Aschenbrenner
- Heather Andrews
- Art Ball
- Lisa Batey
- Scott Churchill
- Carlotta Collette
- Jeff Davis
- Sherri Dow
- Brendan Eiswerth
- Rev Sarah Fischer
- Mark Gamba
- Lisa Gunion-Rinker
- Alicia Hamilton
- Linda Hedges
- Frank Hemer
- Val Hubbard
- Mart Hughes
- Jeff Klein
- Gary Klein
- Sherry Klein
- Dolly Macken-Hambright
- Matt Meneley
- Mike Miller
- Ronn Palmer
- Ed Parecki
- Matt Rinker
- Greg Seagler
- Dion Shepard
- Lisa Shippy
- Emma Shippy
- Sarah Smith
- Cami Waner
- Ed Zumwalt

