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Wilfrid honored for spiritual contributions

by SUSAN SKORUPA

The Rev. Carl F. Wilfrid, retired pastor of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, has received the Rev. Lyle Guttu Award from his alma mater, Wagner College in New York.

The award is given for spiritual contributions to the college and to local communities or the world.

Wilfrid retired in June 2014 after 14 years at Good Shepherd and 45 years in parish ministry.

After receiving his B.S. in bacteriology and public health from Wagner in 1965, Wilfrid earned a master's degree in theology from Luther Seminary and a master's in sacred theology from the New York Theological Seminary. He has since dedicated himself to churches and parishes across the country, a Wagner press release said.

He served at Benedict Lutheran Parish and Noonan Lutheran Parish, both in North Dakota, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Phoenix, at Faith Lutheran Church in Chico, Calif., before coming to Good Shepherd.

Among other honors, he received the City of Chico Mayor's Award in 2000. He was also elected justice of the peace in Noonan, N.D.

As a student at Wagner, Wilfrid was an inductee of the Beta Beta Beta biology honors society and a member of the Alpha and Omega Fellowship. He has remained a donor to Wagner College.

Reno was known for gambling and divorce when Wilfrid came to town with his wife Dianne and his family in 2000.

"We drove into Reno on I-80. You come over that hill just west of town and see downtown, all that neon. "I thought, 'What am I doing?'" Wilfrid said during an interview with the Reno Gazette-Journal a month after his retirement.

"The truth is, the people who live here are really no different than people at other places," Wilfrid said. And Good Shepherd is "a strong congregation trying to do God's work, and show God's love in the place where they live."

During his years as pastor in Reno, Wilfrid had three top priorities: the Family Promise ministry, an interfaith program to help the homeless, to which the parish responded generously, he said; the need for new church facilities; and Adult Faith Formation, or Journey with Christ, a program for new and returning congregants.

In 2011, construction began on a large church expansion project that opened the next year.

Adult Faith Formation also became active to enrich the faith of the faithful and to form faith among others.

"I told the congregation I'd rather be remembered as the pastor who introduced Adult Faith Formation than the pastor who helped get the new buildings built," he said after his retirement. "I think I will be remembered as a welcoming person, a welcoming pastor. And the congregation is that way too."

The Wilfrids have two daughters, Alissa and Erica; and one grandchild, Sam.