

History and Mission

Our Mission: To cultivate transformative communities that love and care for all creation.

History of Circlewood: In 1989, Tom Sine founded Mustard Seed Associates to assist churches and Christian organizations in evaluating how the world is changing and how we need to change to be more effective in the future. In 2004, MSA officially became a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Christine Sine became the first Executive Director and served for 12 years.

In 2016, Tom and Christine retired from MSA leadership. Andy Wade became the transitional Executive Director, and MSA's work was divided into two parts - writing/speaking/resources and pursuing the development of an educational retreat center. In 2017, James Amadon was hired as the new Executive Director in 2017 to continue the work of developing the center

Tom has always had an interest in community living and spent much time in the 1980's visiting intentional communities around the world. After his first trip to Iona, Scotland in 1982 he was particularly inspired by the Celtic Christian tradition and their emphasis on a faith that seemed to impact every area of life. In 1989, Tom purchased 40 acres of undeveloped land on Camano Island north of Seattle WA with the intent of building a retreat center that captured some of the spirit of a 6th century Celtic monastery. In 1991, the first guided prayer retreat was held on Camano, a tradition that would be repeated for 20+ years. When Tom and Christine were married in 1992, they visited Iona together and she too was inspired by the Celtic way of life. In 2004 the first Celtic retreat was held on the land. Retreats focused on connecting with one another and the land, and included an altar made of branches, a labyrinth, prayer trails, and an outdoor chapel.

In 2010, plans were made to develop the land into Mustard Seed Village, an innovative educational retreat center which would include housing, classroom, and agricultural elements all grounded in sustainability and rooted in community. In 2014, construction began on a classroom. This work continues under our new name, Circlewood.