



## 2018 Comments and Reviews

"The Faith and Addiction Conference" was the single best conference I have attended in years! One speaker was more spot-on than the next, with faith filled, content driven material. The conference presenters provided information about how we as faith communities can respond to and prevent the ravages of addiction in and among our members.

The attendees were there with a shared mission and drive for change that was heartening to the core of my being. I spend my days working in the field of addiction, and have a profound connection to my faith tradition and my own AA journey through recovery. Finding an ecumenical community to engage with around these issues was worth every minute and every penny. Well done!

I came with questions...left with hope and more questions...I was thrilled to hear that there would be another conference in 2019."

**Dede Armstrong LADC MA MS**

**55 Plus Program Coordinator**

**The Retreat | 1221 Wayzata Boulevard E | Wayzata, MN 55391**

**952-476-0566 | 877-446-9283 (toll free) | 952-404-7208 (fax)**

[www.theretreat.org](http://www.theretreat.org) | [www.facebook.com/theretreatonline](https://www.facebook.com/theretreatonline)

*"Alive with the Spirit of Recovery"*

Churches have long housed Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and other substance abuse groups. But they're typically run by the sponsoring organizations. So church leaders such as the Rev. Joanna Mitchell will be attending the conference with pen and paper in hand.

Mitchell says she doesn't see a lot of addiction problems at her Edina church. But she's aware that "almost everyone has a family story of someone who has struggled with it."

"I think addiction is a reality out there, whether it be alcohol, drugs or gambling," said Mitchell, of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. "I want to know more about it so I can listen and attend to needs."

Simply "naming the problem" is a big start to calling attention to it, she said.

By [JEAN HOPFENSBERGER](#), STAR TRIBUNE

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"I am so glad I went. It is good to meet others who have the same heart for helping others who help others."

Min. Geraldine Anderson

Liberty Community Church

"Astounding! Absolutely wonderful! What a great message of hope that we all need to hear - while full of realistic and helpful information related to the brain and addiction and faith. Very, very inspiring. Have Omar back as much as you can rope him in!"  
Anonymous

"Thank you so very much! It was an awesome conference!

Wishes for peace and joy,"

Yvette

“Omar was very knowledgeable AND entertaining both. I learned a great deal that I wasn't aware of about the epidemic and am excited to open conversations in my community.”

Anonymous

“This was great. While a lot of it was review, it was amazing to get some very specific ideas of what clergy can do to support families facing addiction in the church. Nicely done.”

Anonymous

“One of my main take-aways from the Addiction and Faith Conference is **how important** the **comradery** with others is to the **recovery from any addiction**. This applies to food addicts, drug addicts, alcohol, gambling, technology - recovery from every form of addiction. Trish Vanni said, “It is **hard** to find **one** person who is not dealing with some form of addiction.” An addict can't recover alone – or at least very few can. I heard this message time and time again, in almost every session I attended. You can't just **be** with others; you have to be **active** with others. An addict in recovery has to **participate**. Anne Wilson-Schaefer put it this way “Recovery works because of **participation**. You can't learn it; you must **do** it. The way they said it in the 12 Step Open Meeting of AA is -members need to “**work** the Steps.” Dr. Omar Manejwala said the same thing in these words, “Attendance counts, but **participation** counts more.” In the Conscious Contact Spiritual Drumming session I participated in, I heard the words, “Be active, Involved.”

That includes being spiritually active and involved. Religion talks about God; **spirituality lives it**. Dr. Manejwala called addiction, a biological illness with a spiritual solution. **Scientifically**, we know spirituality helps some people but we don't know who or we don't know why. Many show a benefit of spirituality; many don't. We don't know why.

What can we as a church, **as Christians**, do? Encourage that interaction. Be an attentive listener. Be a place to practice, **to live**, spirituality. Be a person who is informed about the nature of addiction and recovery because the person who has little knowledge is probably part of the problem. Make space and time allowances for that participation to occur because **community** is the core to recovery. It is an opportunity to extend grace, unmerited mercy, to others.”

Linda M