



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Treasurer's hope comes from global insight

Experiences on mission trips to visit China, the Dominican Republic and Haiti open CPA to trust

By Mary Stamp

While the Pacific Northwest Conference and its congregations often enter the year-end season wondering, even worried, if they will meet their annual budgets, conference treasurer Martha Baldwin said she learned from mission experiences in China in 2006 and in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 2010 "to trust that God will provide."

Also treasurer of Kirkland UCC, which she has attended for 20 years, she said she always wanted to see proof, to have the money in hand.

"Now I've learned to let go and have
Continued on Page 4



Martha Baldwin hugs children she met at a school in the Dominican Republic on a visit to meet the child she sponsors through her employer.

Photo courtesy of Martha Baldwin

Speakers focus on local and small churches

The Rev. Elizabeth Dille of First Congregational UCC in Red Oak, Iowa, and the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, executive minister of Local Church Ministries, are the keynote speakers for the 2012 Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting April 27 to 29 at the Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center in Pasco.

"Come and Worship, Come and Grow, Come and Connect," carries on the theme "Connect" from the 2011 Annual Meeting in Seattle.

Dille, a student of smaller congregations and pastor of a small, thriving, progressive church, promotes the "world-changing power of small

**Annual Meeting
2012 will be
April 27 to 29
in Pasco.**

churches." In 2011, she was a summer session instructor at Pacific School of Religion, where she earned her master of divinity in 2003. She earned a bachelor's in educational theatre from New York University.

Dille is also a part-time health educator with Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, where she works with people of all ages to promote healthy life and sexual choices. She is active in local ministries, serves on the Red Oak School Board, and participates in wider settings of the United Church of Christ.

Guess, who was elected executive minister of Local Church Ministries by

General Synod, has served at the national office in Cleveland since 2000, as communications director for Justice and Witness Ministries, as news director and editor of United Church News, and since 2007 as the director of the UCC's Publishing, Identity and Communication Ministry.

Previously, he served 12 years as a local church pastor in Kentucky. He earned a bachelor's in journalism from University of Kentucky, a master of divinity from Vanderbilt University Divinity School, and a doctor of ministries degree in preaching from Chicago Theological Seminary. He also studied public administration at Murray (Ky.) State University.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

Requests for aid reveal dedication to ministry

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

*Some retired
pastors
lived their calls
so faithfully
that they
are now
living
in poverty*

Every year around this time there is one particular meeting I attend that is consistently, an emotional rollercoaster. It's the meeting at which we disperse the monies that have been collected through the Insurance Assistance Fund.

The Insurance Assistance Fund is the successor of what used to be called the Pastor's Insurance Fund. For those who might not be aware of this story, a little history... A few decades back, it became clear that several of our retired pastors and several local churches were finding it difficult to afford their medical insurance costs. In a wonderfully covenantal response, the churches of the conference agreed to support all these folks by creating a financial pool out of which the insurance costs for all the conference's pastors would be paid. To do this, each church was assessed a member based per-capita fee to cover these costs. For many years, this program worked well.

However, over time, health-care costs went up at a rate much higher than the rate of inflation and, as they did, the per capita rate also increased, significantly. Several years ago it became clear that many churches had concluded that the per capita rate could not be sustained. Over time, a decision was made to try something different.

Now, the conference has what is called The Insurance Assistance Fund. As opposed to this being a common fund from which all the insurance costs of all our pastors are paid, this is a fund that those churches and pastors who are in need of insurance assistance apply to. As opposed to this being a fund with an established per capita fee based on a local church's membership, each local church decides how much to give to this fund. Individuals are also welcome to donate to this, directly. A subcommittee of the conference Stewardship Committee, along with a representative from the Church Development Committee, takes a look at the applications that come to us and we discern, based on the monies available, how to respond to each applicant.

For the most part, the applications are pretty straightforward. Churches request help because of some particular unexpected financial challenges or because they are a community with particular financial challenges based on challenges within their church members' lives, such as unemployment or poverty. Sometimes, a church is in a transitional moment and, in that case, we've begun to connect the local church to our Church Development Committee so that they can have a

conversation partner as they consider increasing their church vitality or their church's viability.

Applications from individuals tend to be similar. They tell a story of unexpected costs during the year or a particular financial challenge that makes it difficult for them to pay for insurance. We have, on occasion, connected some folks who might be having particular financial management challenges with volunteers who were willing to help them sort things out. These folks are still always in need but, with a few tweaks, we're able to help them be less so. This is one of the advantages of having such a great collection of people on the Stewardship Committee with professional financial management experience!

Then there are that few who just seem altogether different. Every year, there are a few applicants who, during their time in ministry, served only impoverished, small churches that were never, ever able to pay them much. None of our pastors are ordained because of their hopes for a high salary but most of us are able to live decent middle-class lives with the assurance of a decent pension when we retire. Most of us were faithfully called to ministries that could support this.

However, many of the retired pastors who apply to The Insurance Assistance Fund were called to different ministries that carried significant financial risks. These are folks who lived in to their call so faithfully and so well that, now, they are living in poverty. Their applications to The Insurance Assistance Fund are not simply financial documents but testimonies to their faithfulness to God's call in their lives; they are testimonies to their trust of that covenant among us that sometimes seems difficult to define. As we read through these applications together, it's not unusual for there to be a tear or two. Reading through these particular applications and providing some help really feels like an honor.

So, sisters and brothers, thank you. Thank you for your support of this fund, making sure it's a part of your church's budget, and your work as a conference to take care of each other. On January 2, I will have been your conference minister for four years, now. It's in no small part because of intentions just like this that I'm so proud and pleased to be here. Merry Christmas to each of you and, again, thank you so much for working to make sure that so many of your sisters and brothers who have served you so well in ministry have a happier New Year, too.

Transitions announced

Brigitta Remole's installation as pastor, preacher and teacher at Plymouth UCC in Seattle is on Dec. 11.

Marj Johnston has been called to serve as pastor of First Congregational UCC in Dayton.

Clergy Retreat is Feb. 5 to 8

The annual Pilgrim Firs Clergy Retreat Feb. 5 to 8 will be a time of renewing and reconnecting with presenters Cheri Lovell and Barbara Blodgett discussing money and work. For information, contact Tara Barber, barbertara@hotmail.com.

Volunteers can still help repair homes in New Orleans

A one-year partnership between Phoenix of New Orleans (PNOLA) and UCC Volunteer Ministries provides opportunities for volunteer groups to travel to New Orleans to repair homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. As New Orleans decides on areas to rebuild and areas for green space, PNOLA and the UCC will decide year to year on their roles. For information, visit www.ucc.org/volunteer/mission-trip-opportunities/louisiana.html#PNOLA.

Church treasurers seminars planned for Jan. 28 and 29

"Church Numbers for Treasurers," workshops led by the Rev. Cheri Lovell, who developed the UCC Cornerstone Fund's educational programs and leads seminars, will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 28, at Plymouth Church, 1217 6th Ave., in Seattle and from 1 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 29, at Veradale United Church of Christ, 611 N. Progress Rd., in Spokane Valley.

The seminars, which seek to strengthen churches' financial health to make their ministries possible, are for financial leaders, committee members, pastors and others develop new skills in managing church financial issues.

Lovell, who earned a master of divinity at Emory University and was ordained in 1998, worked in Cleveland and then New York City with United Church Funds.

Sessions will help participants understand how church numbers are different, the treasurer's responsibilities, church-friendly financial statements, the narra-

tive budget for stewardship, and policies churches need.

For information and registration, call the PNC office at 206-725-8383.

Signups begin for NYE

PNC ninth through 12th graders are beginning to register for the National Youth Event NYE 2012 at Purdue University in Indianapolis. NYE is a gathering every four years for youth to be inspired by people, programs, music, worship, workshops and service projects. Youth will be gone from July 7 to 14.

A pre-registration form and questionnaire are due Jan. 1 with full registration due April 1, ready for commissioning at Annual Meeting in Pasco. For information, contact Susan Andresen at susan_andresen@hotmail.com or Tara Barber at barbertara@hotmail.com.

Men's Retreat will be Feb. 3-5

The PNC Men's Gathering will be Friday to Sunday, Feb. 3 to 5, at Pilgrim Firs, preceded by a "Day of Silence," 8:30 p.m. Thursday to 4 p.m. Friday.

Tom Colwell a corporate coach known to the PNC for his music leadership, will lead the retreat on "Music That Matters: Men Sharing Their Hearts."

For information, call 800-448-3489 or email pnwmen@gmail.com.

Sex education workshop set

"The Naked Truth: What Are You Saying about Sexuality and Christian Faith?" is the theme for a workshop for pastors, lay leaders, Christian educators and youth ministers from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 4, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle. Leaders are Kimbris and Kendal Bond, Amy Johnson and CLN founder Tony Robinson. For information, visit www.clnorthwest.org/111211eventreg.htm.

Our Whole Lives retreat set

A young adult retreat on "Our Whole Lives," a sexual-health and relationships curriculum developed by the United Church of Christ and Unitarian Universalists, will be held Friday through Sunday, Feb. 10 to

12 at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard.

For information, call Kimbris and Kendal Bond at 541-953-4442 or email bondsjazz@gmail.com or Sally Warner at 206-992-1990 or sally.warner@gmail.com.

Camp director recruiting underway

Retreats and camps are on the calendar for 2012 are:

At Pilgrim Firs, the theme for Mid-Winter Retreats is "Justice," with Junior High, Jan. 6 to 8; Senior High, Jan. 13 to 15. Other events are Men's Retreat, Feb. 2 to 5; Leadership Retreat, May 18 to 20; Work Camp, May 25 to 27; Spiritual Renewal

GLBTQ, June 1 to 3; Young Adults, June 22 to 24; Senior High, July 1 to 7; Junior High, July 8 to 14; Intermediate, July 15 to 21; Kids, July 22 to 25, and Family, Aug. 19 to 23. At N-Sid-Sen events include a retirement party for managing director Randy Crowe on April 14.

The MidWinter Youth Retreat is March 9 to 11; Women's Retreat, May 10 to 16; Work Camp, June 10 to 16; Kids, July 8 to 11; Intermediate, July 8 to 14; Junior High Aqua, Aug. 5 to 11; Senior High Aqua, July 22 to 28; Family Camp #1, July 29 to Aug. 4, and Family Camp #2, Aug. 12 to 18.

For information, call Pilgrim Firs, 360-876-2031 or N-Sid-Sen, 208-689-3489.

Marcus Borg speaks at UCong

Marcus Borg, canon theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Ore., internationally known biblical and Jesus scholar, and author of 19 books, will lead the Lecture Series Friday through Sunday, Feb. 10 to 12, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

His theme is "Speaking Christian: Reclaiming Christian Language."

For information, call 206-524-6255 or visit www.universityucc.org.

Listserv connects conference

The conference's listserv at pnwc-ucc@yahoo.com is a way for churches to share about events and connect to others in the group. People may join by sending an e-mail to pnwc-ucc-subscribe@yahoo.com.



Campers learn to appreciate what they have

Continued from page 1
faith that things will come through. It's not ours to begin with," she said.

Baldwin reported that many churches are struggling now, and she is uncertain if they will be able to keep up with their Our Churches' Wider Mission pledges for 2011 as they hoped.

Given that worry is typical at this juncture in the financial season, she calls for asking: "How do we communicate our need rather than worry about not meeting bills?"

"I believe we always have to have hope that our needs will be provided for in one way or another," she said. "It may not always be what we expected initially."

In November 2010, Baldwin's CPA firm, Chaffee Geddes Chucka, PLLC, in Bellevue sent her and several others on staff to visit Haiti and the Dominican Republic to meet children they sponsor through the firm's ties with Children of the Nations.

She met the 16-year-old boy has sponsored for four years. She chose him because he is near the age of her son, Ben, 14. She and Ben have a photo of him, follow him through Facebook, receive letters translated from Spanish to English and send a Christmas card.

While in Haiti on the market day, Baldwin met a 14-year-old girl and noticed that her thong sandals were broken. Talking with her in French, Baldwin learned they had the same shoe size. So she took off the pink and white tennis shoes she was wearing and gave them to the girl.

Baldwin is pleased to work for a firm that would offer not only the opportunity for employees to sponsor children but also for them to go on an educational trip to meet the children and learn how they live.



Junior High Aqua campers made eyes of God and talked about how God sees all the children.

Photo by Dana Sprengle

The firm also provides support for a school in the Dominican Republic.

In April, 2006, she joined a Conference Global Ministries mission trip, led by Jennifer Russell to rural areas of China.

"Things are never quite the same after visiting a Third World country," Baldwin said. "I now appreciate all I have so much more."

Seeing how people are happy even though they did not have much, she has come to realize that it's not necessary to be overly tied to things to be happy.

"It has made it easier for me to let go and not be in control of things," she said, telling of learning that faith perspective related to her work as a certified public accountant and as volunteer treasurer with the

conference and her church.

She felt that when Tod and Ana Gobledale, former missionaries in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Australia, and now in Great Britain, were at Kirkland UCC as interim pastors, her church gained from their global perspective.

Baldwin said she is now looking forward to finding other opportunities for global encounters.

Her involvement with the conference also includes 16 years as a camp counselor or director—following the ages of her children, who are now 28, 25 and 14—at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs.

Last summer, she shared a digital slide presentation of her experience at junior high aqua camp at N-Sid-Sen. The theme that day was "Spread Christian

Love through the World."

After her presentation showed campers how children live in Dominican Republic and Haiti, campers broke into discussion small groups.

"Several expressed interest in going on a mission trip," she said. "Many felt depressed seeing the pictures of the children and realizing and feeling grateful for how easy they (the campers) have it.

"I said the condition of the children they saw was like conditions for many of the world's population," she said.

Part of the discussion group made God's eyes and talked about how God's eyes watch over all the children of the world.

A CPA since 1993, Baldwin grew up in Milton, Mass., where her father was a United Church of Christ pastor.

Attending church camps in New England, she felt close to God, and she has sought to share that experience with her children.

"It's been great to see my own children become excited about God through involvement at church camps.

She started her studies at Boston University and earned a degree in accounting in 1988 from the University of Maryland.

She chose accounting on the advise of the director of a social service agency where she was volunteering in Maryland. He suggested she study accounting, work part time and volunteer part time. Her former husband's career brought her to Seattle.

Baldwin reported that PNC churches need to submit OCWM and special offerings to the Conference Office before Jan. 13 for them to count for 2011.

For information, call 425-454-7505 or email mahtha@hotmail.com.

Newport UCC member compiles report on OCWM

Seeking a way to let people in Newport United Church of Christ know what Our Churches' Wider Mission does, Jerry Hargitt began compiling a page for the monthly church newsletter, "The Chimes," on what the United Church of Christ and Church World Service do around the world.

Open Door Congregational UCC in Deer Park reprints his column for their newsletter.

In 1998 when he began providing the information, he learned that he could call the national office of the United Church of Christ and listen to a recorded message.

"I jotted notes on the message and transcribed them into a one page report," Hargitt said. "Sometimes I had to listen to it two to three times."

Then his son-in-law gave him a recorder, so he could record the message and play it back to transcribe it.

After Hargitt bought a computer, he received a weekly email report and picked out items from two to three pages to summarize on a page.

He particularly looks for what Church World Service is doing in foreign countries and for disaster relief abroad and in the United States.

"I usually made the report four paragraphs, one on each of four places in the world," he said.

Starting with the Decem-



Jerry Hargitt compiles reports on the UCC's global engagement through Church World Service. Photo courtesy of Jerry Hargitt

ber newsletter, he is changing the format to include reports on five or six subjects, including two to three lines for each.

"I try to include a variety," Hargitt said, "reporting on what the problem is and on what Church World Service is doing to alleviate the problem."

He recently reported on thousands of blankets and tons of food sent.

"The goal is to keep OCWM in front of people so they know where their contributions go," he said.

While he has no way of knowing how much income his column has drawn to the cause, he has noticed that there's more awareness.

One woman told him her husband always tries to find the

countries he reports on.

His motive is simply to have people aware of where their donations are going.

"Our church does a good job of supporting OCWM, OGHS and special offerings," Hargitt said, "and I have learned much about Church World Service."

Hargitt is impressed that gifts through the UCC and Church World Service provide long-term, ongoing aid following disasters.

While Red Cross and others come in providing quick response to an initial disaster situation, Church World Service partners are local, so they are present in the communities and regions after response to an initial crisis has subsided.

Since the tsunami in Indo-

nesia in 2004, he said, CWS is still there helping restore homes, lives and livelihoods.

In Kenya, development work is about providing clean water through digging wells and building catchment systems.

Hargitt has never gone abroad himself. Some people in his church have gone to Kenya to work with water projects there through the Newport Rotary.

The Hargitts moved to Newport in 1994 after he retired. He and his wife had lived in Bellevue, where they attended a United Methodist Church.

His wife, Dee, grew up in Spokane and her lifelong friend, Barbara VandeVanter, was living in Newport. They had visited her at Diamond Lake, near Newport, and eventually asked her friend to look for a cabin there where they could retire. They found a cabin a quarter mile from her friend.

The first few years, the Hargitts just went to their cabin on weekends. Then they moved there.

Learning the United Methodist church in Newport has burned down 40 years ago and members attended the United Church of Christ, the Hargitts joined the UCC church. He often has been a delegate to Annual Meeting.

For information, call 509-447-5189 or email hargittj@gmail.com.

Eric Anderson will speak on 'Who Is my Neighbor?' at Yakima Briefing

The 2012 Yakima Legislative Briefing on the theme "Who Is my Neighbor? Faithful Responses to State Budget Cuts" will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Jan. 21, at Central Lutheran Church, 1604 W. Yakima Ave., in Yakima.

Eric Anderson of United

Christian Church in Yakima will lead a reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan related to the workshop theme, "Who Is my Neighbor?"

He will look at the role of individuals, institutions, government, businesses, private charities and churches in serving the most vulnerable people

in the community.

David Hacker, congregational relations director with the Faith Action Network (FAN), and Alice Woldt, co-director of FAN, will present updates on the legislative session.

Steve Hill, of the Yakima County Department of Human Services and a panelists from

social service agencies in the Yakima Valley will discuss the impacts of proposed cuts to the state budget on their programs.

The Yakima Association of Churches and Faith Communities is sponsoring the event.

For information, call 509-995-4692 or email hacker@fanwa.org.

Westminster's Tree of Sharing largest in U.S.

Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane has one of the largest, if not the largest, Tree of Sharing projects in the country, according to former coordinator Jon Louis.

"Every time I log in a doll or other toy, I think of how incredible the gift givers are because many buy more than just the requested gift," said Ann Marie Floch, 2011 coordinator for the Tree of Sharing. "It keeps my hope alive that the world will 'get it' and care about each other."

At Tree of Sharing tables set up at three malls in Spokane and Spokane Valley, shoppers pick up computer-generated tags with gift requests from 62 agencies. The tags, which now have bar codes and are printed on peel-off sticky paper, describe the recipient and gift.

For example, one this year was a 70-year-old man

who wants mittens and another was a seven-year-old boy who wants art supplies and a game. Shoppers bring gifts with the tags affixed to them to Tree of Sharing locations by Dec. 12.

This year, Floch said agencies requested 6,300 gifts for their clients.

When it started in 1980, there were 650 tags from eight agencies. In early years, requests were pasted on colored paper cut in the shape of an ornament and hung on a tree. Floch remembers seeing a Tree of Sharing in the Skywalk downtown. When the project expanded to University City mall, Veradale UCC also recruited volunteers.

With the malls open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day, about 520 volunteers serve three-hour shifts. For the seven days the donated warehouse space is open to receive and sort gifts for agencies to

pick up, there are about 35 volunteers.

Volunteers come from the churches, but also from agencies and businesses. They include high school youth and people who were recipients of gifts in the past, said Floch.

Organizations requesting gifts include Headstart/ECEAP, three elementary schools, Eldercare, Catholic Charities and many more.

Floch, who has been a member at Westminster for three years, added that any extra gifts donated without a tag are available so that representatives of agencies requesting gifts can go through those gifts to find gifts for tags not taken. The remaining gifts are taken to the Sharing Room at the church and available all year for people from agencies to pick up to meet gift needs for clients.

Louis said the program has given \$2 million in gifts

since it began.

In 2011, the Tree of Sharing became an independent nonprofit to encourage giving from more corporations, which would not give to a church.

Assuris Northwest Health and KREM-TV, a co-sponsor since 1982, provide for the publicity. The Air National Guard and Boy Scouts pick up and transport gifts from the malls to the warehouse.

"It does not take much to change people's lives or give them a moment of peace," Floch said, based on her experience with the Homeless Coalition and with Westminster's team helping Shalom Ministries' Dining with Dignity program at Central United Methodist Church in Spokane.

For information, call 509-5-0999-3956, email treeofsharing@gmail.com or visit treeofsharing.org.

Cheney UCC helps organize local gift program

When no one was available to organize the Christmas Gifts for Cheney Kids program of the Cheney Outreach Center in 2008, Sally Shamp of Cheney UCC, a volunteer with the center, picked up doing it.

"I couldn't let it go by the wayside," she said, "so I asked the church to help and it became a UCC project that year.

"Many parents in Cheney wouldn't be able to give gifts to their children without our help," she said.

Last year, parents of 207 children "shopped" for free gifts on the distribution days. This year, distribution is Dec. 13 and 14.

Since she retired nine years ago, Shamp has volunteered with Cheney Outreach.

For two years after the roof

of the Wren Pierson Building collapsed under heavy snow, Cheney UCC housed Cheney Outreach. Now it's in a rebuilt Wren Pierson Building with the food bank, clothing bank and City Parks and Recreation.

Donors put gifts in collection boxes at 14 stores and businesses, and five churches—Emmanuel Lutheran, St. Paul Episcopal, Cheney United Methodist, the Church of the Nazarene and Cheney UCC. Some send money to Cheney Outreach.

When giving seemed down before the deadline, Shamp made an appeal to members at worship and the women's fellowship, which provided generous gifts.

For information, call 509-235-8900.



Sally Shamp and Christie Bruntlett pick a gift out of a box in the narthex of Cheney UCC.

Admiral painter's art will be in 'Seasons of Spirit'

By Donald Schmidt

During a "Seasons of the Spirit" curriculum development event in September at Admiral Congregational United Church of Christ in West Seattle, a display of art work graced the walls of the meeting room.

A painting by church member Ann Bowden, showing her then four-year-old grandson earnestly creating a work of art, captures the power of creation in his face, the intensity of wanting to preserve an image that spoke to his heart.

This painting, connected with several weeks of scripture readings, will be reproduced and sent to churches along with the other Seasons resources.

From its early days, the "Seasons of the Spirit" curriculum and church resource project has sought to be "grass roots." This has taken a variety of forms over the years. Most recently with the creation of "SeasonsFUSION," it has taken on a new persona, and Seattle experienced some of that first hand this past September.

"SeasonsFUSION" provides biblical background information, worship resources for all ages, learning "stations" for many ages, and articles, poetry and prose. All are centered on one of the biblical texts from the Revised Common Lectionary each week. One thing that sets this apart from other church resources is that the materials



Ann Bowden painting will be part of "Seasons of the Spirit."

Photos courtesy of Joanne Murray

are created in community, within a local church setting.

The September "Seasons of the Spirit" development event drew churches from Canada, New York, Scotland, Australia, England and beyond.

The general editor, Susan Burt, came from South Australia, and the editor of other Seasons resources, Cathie Talbot, came from Canada, to join a group at Admiral to look at scripture readings for the summer of 2013.

Using conversation, art, questions and a hefty dose of wonderment and laughter, the group talked about meaning and mystery within those biblical texts. They asked each other: "What the scriptures might mean today. Who might be hurt by them? What aspects of life

can they open up for us? What might God be wanting us to get from these stories?"

Through that, themes and images emerged. Then, the real work began.

Jane Sorenson, recent interim at Plymouth in Seattle, is writing worship resources; Donald Schmidt at Admiral is writing biblical backgrounds, and others from Admiral are writing learning stations, stories, skits and other pieces for the resource. In the meantime, members of a Church of Scotland congregation are working on another season, while a New York City congregation does another, and so on. Through email, the materials will be sent back and forth, edited, shaped and eventually published.

Other aspects of church

life found their way into the process. One key component of "Seasons of the Spirit" is the inclusion of art work that can help challenge, inform and augment our understanding of scripture and daily living.

Music is a part of the curriculum and a song from Admiral Church music director Keith Terhune will also be a part of that season.

Participants came away from the event excited about ways the scriptures are speaking to us today, and how the word of God in many forms — text, art, music, interaction — is present and alive in the world.

For information on "Seasons of the Spirit" and "SeasonsFUSION," go to www.seasonsonline.ca.



Donald Schmidt, pastor of Admiral Congregational UCC in West Seattle and a former editor of "Seasons of the Spirit" and the "Whole People of God," is one of the Partners in Education in the Pacific Northwest Conference.

Faith Action Network sets Advocacy Day

The Faith Action Network of Washington is encouraging a message of concern that the 2012 Washington state budget lacks revenue to maintain investments in education, health care and thriving communities, said Paul Benz, co-director.

He said religious leaders are asking what to do in response. The FAN is committed to advocating raising revenues

rather than "crippling the quality of life of residents of the state for years to come," he said.

FAN has set the 2012 Interfaith Advocacy Day, "Uniting Hearts and Minds: Raising Revenue for the Common Good," on Tuesday, Feb. 14, in Olympia.

Registration forms are available at www.fanwa.org or by calling 206-625-9790.

E Wa Legislative Conference is Jan. 21

Julia Stronks, professor of political science at Whitworth University, will speak on "Render Unto Caesar: Reclaiming Our Prophetic Voice" at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference set for 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

A panel of church leaders will discuss denominational

statements on economic justice.

Paul Benz of the Faith Action Network and Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Services with Catholic Charities Spokane will discuss issues before the legislative session.

There will be workshops on the budget, advocacy, hope and environmental issues.

For information, call 509-535-4112.

Richmond Beach UCC embarks on 24 housing units

In October, Richmond Beach UCC in Shoreline voted to replace two 1950s houses on its three-acre property with 24 units of low-income housing built in cooperation with Hopelink Transitional Housing Program, a nonprofit that builds affordable housing and provides social services for the residents.

Jim Civarra, chair of the church's Long Range Planning Committee, said interaction with members about the future of the church often focused on using the two houses for homeless or low-income families.

One house was the parsonage in the 1960s and 1970s and then rented. The other has been used as part of the transitional housing program of the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

A year ago, Civarra said, the church received a letter from the City of Shoreline inviting churches and nonprofit developers of affordable housing to a forum on homelessness.

After the meeting, he sent a letter to the North Seattle Housing Alliance, describing the amount of land and zoning. After reviewing three nonprofits, the church chose Hopelink.

Civarra said 1) it's in North King County and members have volunteered in its food bank; 2) it provides social services for residents and 3) its arrangement for building would not require rezoning.

The City of Shoreline formed 15 years ago, taking in unincorporated areas from the City of Seattle five miles north to the King County line and from Puget Sound east past Interstate 5. Richmond Beach was one of the neighborhoods.

Much of the western part of the city is upper middle class, Civarra said, but the eastern neighborhoods are low-income and need affordable housing.

Marcia McLaughlin, spiritual director at the church and member of the Long Range Planning Committee, reported



Jim Civarra beside one of two old houses on the Richmond Beach UCC church property.

Photo courtesy of Marcia McLaughlin

that there are 112 homeless children in the Shoreline school district and 51 percent of households pay 30 percent or more of their incomes for rent.

"In 2000, 6.9 percent of city residents were at poverty level. In 2010, 8 percent were," she said.

Because the area around the church is zoned for low-density residential, less than six housing units per acre, Hopelink agreed to a long-term lease of the land, so the full property is considered, which means they can build 24 units of permanent supportive housing without rezoning.

Hopelink's social services include education, job training and skills in parenting, budgeting and finances to help families move from crisis to stability to self sufficiency, said McLaughlin.

Since Hopelink began in 1989, nearly every family in its program has gone on to find and retain permanent housing.

Civarra, who lives in Seattle, said the bass and baritone in his barbershop quartet drew him to Richmond Beach UCC.

"They roped me into coming and then into singing in the choir and joining their theatre production group," he said.

He joined 10 years ago and became a trustee. In that role, he earned about the property and was interested in moving beyond repairs and maintenance. When he became vice moderator, he learned there was a Long Term Planning Committee in the bylaws and revived it when he became moderator. Since then he has been chair.

Richmond Beach UCC, which has nearly 200 members, has supported local social service agencies, food banks and outreach efforts.

Having not attended a church since childhood, he said, he wanted to be involved in helping people.

"So I began doing what our denomination and most religions want people to do. I became empowered to act as part of an active, caring church," Civarra said.

McLaughlin, who lives one block from the church, will work with other members living in the Richmond Beach neighborhood to educate neighbors about the project as part of the City of Shoreline's efforts to encourage development of affordable housing.

She appreciates that Hopelink will work with residents who live in the units to be sure

they follow rules and reach their goals.

"Housing terminology has changed as we realize there is need to move away from short-term transitional housing to housing where people can live as long as they need to before they move into better housing after they are more self sufficient," she said. "So there is no timeline for how long people will stay."

McLaughlin expects the church may continue what it has done for people who have lived in the transitional house. They have provided supplies and food when the people first move in. She said the church is open to other opportunities there may be, including hosting community meals or tutoring children.

"We are open to whatever it will mean for us," she said. "We have worked in the arena of homelessness for the past decade, but this is still a big step."

The church, which formed in 1891, describes itself as a "journey"—as opposed to an "answer"—church, open to "discover what it means to be a human being in this world."

For information, call 206-542-7477, office@rbccucc.org or visit www.rbccucc.org.