



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Musicians become Instruments of Peace

Musicians provide varied music genre and music relevant to worship theme

Anna and Don Jenkins have woven music through their 40 years of life together, inspired by their families as they grew up.

For 10 years, they were involved in the multicultural Bethany UCC in Seattle, and while they were there, they developed Instruments of Peace. That group brings together musicians, including their son, daughter and son-in-law, and friends, to share gospel, jazz, folk, Celtic, classical, African drumming and world music in spiritual settings.

When Anna and Don needed to live next door to her mother in Kirkland nine years ago, in the house where she grew up.

Instruments of Peace goes into dif-

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Anna and Don Jenkins sang and accompanied singing on harp and guitar for Annual Meeting 2014 at University Congregational UCC in Seattle, one of several churches they provide music for in the Seattle area.

Quinn Caldwell will speak at Annual Meeting 2015

Annual Meeting 2015 will consider the theme of "Spring Forth!" when it gathers Friday through Sunday, April 24 to 26 in Spokane.

Planners have sprung forth with a new idea for workshops, planning a series of 15-minute mini-workshops so more people can share ideas, collaborate, offer resources, report on specialized ministry, a new initiative or project.

The keynote speaker is the Rev. Quinn Caldwell, pastor and teacher of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Syracuse, N. Y., and author of *All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas* and co-author of *The Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of Christ*, geared for millennials: confirmation-aged youth and teens to appreciate the

**Annual Meeting
2015 will be
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United Church of Christ denomination.

He is a member of the UCC Still-speaking Writers' Group and author for the Still-speaking Daily Devotionals, published on the UCC website. (<http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/>)

Quinn, a native of Groton and 1999 graduate in natural resources from Cornell University, earned a master's in divinity in 2003 from Union Theological

Seminary in New York City. He did a two-year pastoral residency at Wellesley, Mass., Congregational Church. The former associate minister at Old South Church in Boston leads the Under-40 Writers Group for the UCC website's Feed Your Spirit section on the denomination's global reach.

His other wider church activities include co-creating "Bless," a small group DVD resource; co-hosting "Bless: A Conference for Worship Leaders" in 2011; and co-creating the nationally streamed commissioning service for Mission:1, also in 2011.

For information, contact Scott Ward at scott@magnoliaucc.org or Jan Shannon, Westminster UCC, pastor-jan@westminsterucc.org.

What makes worship, a rite or a moment sacred?

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

**What
do
you
bring
to
worship
this
week?**

I attended a recent ordination.

My beloved became the Rev. Lauren Cannon in a service that was rich and full.

This was the first ordination and installation I'd attended in years where I didn't have an official role of some sort due to my conference position.

Others from our conference and from Lauren's home conference, the Illinois Conference, asked the questions and said the words I normally get to say.

I sat in the pew, sang the hymns, said the words, and made the promises. Family, friends and colleagues gathered in person, in spirit and in memory.

This day had been on the horizon for a while. At the same time it seemed both unreal and deeply real at the exact same time. It was a good, good day.

These rites and liturgies are always an interesting mix of things.

Whether an ordination, installation, wedding, baptism or funeral the day itself has its own sort of weight. There is so much work in the planning of the day that getting through it all really feels like the completion of something.

For those planning the day, there really isn't much more to do once the service starts but adjust and adapt along the way to the small unanticipated or spontaneous pieces that emerge.

Part of the joy at the end of the service is simply because its done.

Completion is far from the final word. The service itself is a recognition of what's beginning, too.

These rites in the life of the church are not just about what we're being gifted with, but also about some of what we're letting go.

When someone is ordained, he/she is not only being trusted with leadership and pastoral roles in the Church, but are also letting go of the autonomy they had as a church member and agreeing to be accountable to "the faith and order of the United Church of Christ."

When someone is baptized, the person or the parents of the person are committing to accept both the joys and struggles of being faithful and to allow themselves to be supported by and in relationship with members of a faith community.

These rites and rituals are full of what we let go and what we are given.

Every time of worship—whether its one of those more occasional rites and liturgies or Sunday morning worship—can have some of that in it. That's the hope, really.

It is this bridge time where our week's come with us; all the joys, the sorrows, the struggles and the celebrations.

It's a time for us to remember what's important and recommit to prioritize our weeks around those most important things that God puts in front of us.

It is a time to mark completions and beginnings and the sometimes uncomfortable places in between.

Although what the pastor might bring is important, what we all bring collectively is still more important.

What we bring, what we share, what we offer, what we let go, what we ask for, what we promise and how we recognize or seek out God in that moment is what makes that moment sacred.

Bringing all that is not always easy. Things get in the way but, with some exceptions, those are things we've brought, too, and can't or aren't ready to let go of, yet.

What do you bring to worship this week?

Transitions announced

Kizzie Jones is retiring after 17 years as chaplain at Horizon House.

Alice Ling is the pastor at United Church of Christ Congregational in Wallace.

Hal Bergmann, of Shalom UCC in Richland was ordained Dec. 14 at University Congregational UCC in Seattle. At The Chaplaincy in Richland, he will be serve at two Tri-Cities hospitals.

Andrew Conley-Holcom, a Pacific School of Religion graduate, will be ordained Jan. 3 at home church is First Congregational UCC in Bellingham. He will be installed Jan. 3 as pastor at Admiral Congregational in Seattle.

Lynn Nelson will be ordained and installed on Jan. 4 at Affirmational UCC-Plymouth Congregational in Colfax, which she has served as a licensed pastor.

Leslie Moughty, a Pacific School of Religion graduate from Bothel, will be ordained Jan. 18 at Northshore UCC in Woodinville. She is director of children, youth and families.

James Smucker died on Nov. 10, at the age of 92. He served as Washington North Idaho conference minister from 1967 to 1971, then as New York Conference minister until 1987. A graduate of Yale Divinity School and Chicago Theological Seminary, he was also a missionary in India with his late wife Onieta beginning in 1946. He served churches in Ohio, Illinois and New York, and was associate conference minister in Illinois. After retiring, he returned to Washington and volunteered for the UCC Office of Church in Society.

Roland Schlueter, 95, of Seattle, died on Dec. 4. Born in Wisconsin, he married his late wife Frances in 1943, received a bachelor's from Yale, an MDiv from Union and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. He served seven churches in the conference from 1943 to 1984, and was later active at Plymouth Congregational Church in Seattle.

Interfaith Advocacy Days set

The Faith Action Network of Washington is planning three advocacy days in January and February to inform pastors and members of congregations about issues before the 2015 Washington State Legislature and advocacy strategies.

"Act on the Dream" is the statewide theme. Events are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Satur-

day, Jan. 31, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Spokane, at 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 7 in Yakima, and Thursday, Feb. 19, at United Churches in Olympia.

PNW Conference Minister Mike Denton will give the opening keynote on the theme, "Raising Prophetic Voices: Faith Communities Advocate for Justice," for the 2015 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane.

Workshops will address coal and oil transport, the Columbia River Treaty, wealth inequality, jails and police accountability, and interfaith reconciliation in Iraq. There will be legislative briefings by the Rev. Paul Benz of the Faith Action Network of Washington and representative of the Washington State Catholic Conference.

Roberta Wilburn, associate dean of graduate studies in education at Whitworth University, will speak on proposals related to K-12 education issues.

The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities of Spokane and the Faith Action Network partner to plan Spokane's event. For information, call 535-4112 or email kaye@thefigtree.org.

For information on the other Interfaith Advocacy Day events, call 206-625-9790 or visit www.fanwa.org.

Midwinter youth events set

The theme for Pilgrim Firs' junior high and senior high Midwinter Retreats is "All In: Living Your Life with Purpose."

Katy Lloyd and Kristen Almgren, co-chairs of the Outdoor Ministries Task Force, invite youth to jump "all in" to the retreat by setting phones and technology aside, along with the pressures of daily life, for the duration of the weekend.

There will be opportunities for youth to explore their values and where they feel called in life, along with reassurance that it's okay if they don't know what they want to be "when they grow up," said Katy.

Campers will consider an adapted version of the "7 Strange Questions to Find Your Life Purpose" by Mark Manson, as well as how Jesus was called to the life he led, said Kristen.

Katy and Kristen have been planning the retreats with Leslie Moughty, Susan Andresen, Rich Porter and Andrew Conley-Holcom, with input from Margaret Irribarra and Tara Barber of the Youth and Young Adult Council.

"Because youth often take camp photos

with their phones, we are asking for donations of digital cameras, so we can capture memories of the retreat," Katy said.

People with digital cameras to donate can contact her at (206) 930-1639.

Junior High Midwinter at Pilgrim Firs is Jan. 9 to 11 with an Early Bird discount for registering before Dec. 19th.

Senior High is Jan. 16-18 with Early Bird discount deadline of Dec. 26.

For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit pncucc.org.

N-Sid-Sen's Junior/Senior High Midwinter is March 13 to 15 with a discount deadline of Feb. 20. Dana Sprenkle, Sarah McDonald and Mark Boyd are directors.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit www.n-sid-sen.org.

Justice Leadership Program study continues into June

The Justice Leadership Program's Faith and Justice class series continues in the winter and through June. "Building Skills for Social Change" includes sessions on community organizing, advocacy, caring for oneself and setting boundaries while caring for others experiencing trauma, cultural competency for global citizenship and leading inspiring meetings.

Participants study with the PNC's four 2014-2015 UCC justice interns in Seattle, said Elizabeth Dickinson, JLP coordinator. The next "Skills for Social Change" class is on "Changing the World One Meeting at a Time." Cory Maclay, an organizational leadership consultant, will lead the session beginning at 6:30 p.m. with an optional potluck, and continue as a workshop from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 6, at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Place North in Seattle.

For information, call 206-320-0432 or email jl.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Conference Council is Jan. 24

The Conference Council meets on Saturday, Jan. 24, at Normandy Park UCC in Seattle for the budget summit. Representatives of committees and task forces will bring their budget requests, said Andy CastroLang, moderator. For information, call 206-725-8383.

Debra Jarvis sermon on TEDMED

Based on a sermon she gave at University Congregational UCC in 2012, Debra Jarvis gave a TEDMED talk in Washington, D.C. in September. It is at www.ted.com/talks/debra_jarvis_yes_i_survived_cancer_but_that_doesn_t_define_me. She is living outside Geneva, Switzerland,

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PNC has input on reshaping of Manual on Ministry

In her third two-year term on the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference Committee on Ministry, Lois Farnsworth-Whysong of the Congregational Church in Metaline Falls said she has gained “a good understanding of the Manual on Ministry.”

She started serving on the committee shortly after retiring more than seven years ago after 32 years as a special education teacher in Metaline Falls.

Nominated by Conference Minister Mike Denton, she began serving on the national UCC Habakkuk Group, which is engaged in a three-year process of conversations on ministry.

The group formed in February and met in June and October in Cleveland. It meets between meetings online to review documents and share research.

Their role is to re-imagine the Manual on Ministry, which is a primary resource for Conference Committees on Ministry regarding authorized ministry.

“Much of our work is in process and is confidential,” said Lois.

“We have started working small groups, looking at what other mainline denominations are doing on policies for authorization, researching what works, the theology behind what they do and why,” she said.

“Our goal is to write the Manual on Ministry in ways that address the changing culture around us. Our group represents varied ages, ethnicities, genders, lay members, UCC ministers and chaplains,” said Lois, who is one of the two lay members.

“We have a mix of wisdom in the room,” she said.

Lois shared an overview by the Rev. Rachel Hackenberg, minister for Committee on Ministry Resources and Conference Support, Ministerial

Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) Team, which is part of the national UCC Local Church Ministries.

Rachel said that the 17 participants “felt the presence of the Spirit” and tried to be responsive to being led by the Spirit through their discussions.

“The historic church is in the midst of enormous changes and this informed our conversations throughout our meeting,” she said. “We talked about the theological grounding in the UCC’s understanding of ministry—that of the whole people of God, as well as of that of commissioned, licensed and ordained ministers.

Discussions of the Habakkuk Group are based on theology in the UCC’s Constitution and Bylaws, Statements of Faith and prior work on the theology of ministry, particularly in developing the Ministry Issues Pronouncement.

They acknowledged realities about current forms of authorized ministry, as well as the church being called to new ministry approaches and settings.

Rachel said that calls for careful re-evaluate of “how we are articulating this theological grounding for ministry and the extent to which it is consistent with practice.”

Participants acknowledged the tensions between the “functional and sacramental views of ordination” within the denomination, accepting that it is to be honored, not resolved.

They agreed that “our stated theology of ministry and how we are using our forms of authorized ministry in practice seems to be out of sync,” Rachel summarized.

Next, the Habakkuk Group will address how “these theological understandings might be re-expressed, how our forms of authorized ministry can better reflect them, and how this work can also make space for



Lois Farnsworth-Whysong of the Committee on Ministry

new ministry settings and approaches, to which God is calling the Church,” she said.

Along with acknowledging the theological heritage of the UCC tradition, they are also responsive to history and ecumenism, Lois said.

Respecting how UCC forms of authorized ministry, which have shifted over time, have blessed the church and its ministries, they seek “to affirm ministries that will help us faithfully respond to God’s call now and in the future,” she said.

That includes honoring ecumenical commitments related to authorized ministry.

Between now and spring 2015, the group will clarify issues and themes, and discern possible new directions.

There are task teams established to explore four key areas: 1) the forms of authorization and their theological grounding; 2) the ministry of Committees on Ministry; 3) the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers, as well as their relation to ministerial codes of conduct; and 4) the culture of call within the UCC

Lois brings experience as part of the priesthood of all believers. After earning a

teaching degree in 1977 at the University of Washington in Seattle, Lois who grew up in an American Baptist Church, Central Baptist, in Spokane, moved to Metaline Falls.

Since she joined the Congregational Church in 1980, she has served as pianist, moderator, treasurer, trustee, deacon, Christian educator and women’s fellowship leader.

“In a small church, we rotate among the jobs,” said Lois.

The church now has about 20 members.

“It’s a genuine community church,” Lois said. “Our part-time pastor, Tara Leininger, does funerals for and gives support to families even if they are not in the church.”

“I have been learning about the importance of authorization in the context of the priesthood of all believers,” she said, pointing out that ministry in UCC churches is not about sitting back and listening.

Recently, on their 35th anniversary, her husband and she toured historic homes in Dayton and purchased one to be near their son and daughter living in Walla Walla.

For information, call 509-446-3831 or email van_lois@yahoo.com.

Three from PNC attend Authorizing Ministries event

The Manual on Ministry project that Lois Farnsworth-Whysong is working on is one piece of the body of work that the team Ministerial Excellence Support and Authorization (MESA) team has engaged in the two years since its conception.

Marsha Williams, transitional minister at Eastgate in Bellevue, Conference Minister Mike Denton and Tara Barber, chair of the Westside PNC Committee on Ministry, were among 150 attending the biennial Authorizing Ministries in the 21st Century (AM21) event, "Prepare the Way of the Lord!" event Dec. 3 to 6 at Savannah, Ga.

It drew people involved in the Search and Call processes, plus leaders in the national setting of the denomination, as well as seminary representatives and Committee on Ministry members.

"The event sought to engage the wisdom in the room in dialogue with denominational leaders, who are to support ministers and ministry settings throughout the UCC," said Tara

They heard reports from Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi on the Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) project; heard from each MESA team member; participated in topical conversations ranging from best practices in transfer of standing to the importance of small group Communities of Practice, to the Dream room where people used their imaginations related to church trends

In small groups, they worshipped, discussed and processed what they experienced.

The MESA team has rolled out a new profile for those seeking a call, and more than 4,000 people have tried it out, Tara reported. They are creating unified processes throughout the denomination for Search Committees, Authorized Ministers, Committees on Ministry and



Tara Barber is chair of Westside Committee on Ministry.



The Rev. Marsha Williams attends Authorizing Ministry event.

Fitness Reviews, as well as rewriting the Manual on Ministry.

Across the UCC there are 173 Committees on Ministry, averaging 12 members per committee. PNC's Committee on Ministry has 24 members on both sides of the conference.

That represents much volunteer time in the essential work of the church, Tara said.

"We did not do our work in isolation. When the decision not to indict the Staten Island police officer was announced, we redirected our energies to finding a faithful response," she

said. "We made plans to engage in our local settings, as well as making signs, singing protest songs and encouraged our collegium of officers to act while we were still in Savannah.

The collegium wrote a letter and shared a litany designed for a witness during worship on the third Sunday of Advent, she said. The litany is at ucc.org/news/an-advent-letter-racism-2014.html.

Highlights included naming characteristics of healthy congregations and pastors.

"Studies show that con-

gregations who are more welcoming and diverse are more healthy and vibrant." Tara said. "While every church wants a pastor who can preach well and engage with Scripture, those who are most successful are also those who can set a vision and help a congregation navigate change.

The report is at studying-congregations.org/2014/12/08/pastoral-leadership-that-matters-a-ucc-study.

"Ministers who are supported by peers and structures are able to be more healthy in ministry. Places where small groups are used have seen a dramatic increase in retention of new pastors—up to 50 percent of new clergy leave the ministry in the first five years, and the rates of Fitness Reviews have dropped dramatically," Tara reported.

"These statistics match what we are seeing in our local churches, and among our clergy. We are looking forward to developing small group Communities of Practice here in the next year, and have committed to offering resources to better equip both clergy and congregations for the changing landscape of ministry.

"It is good to be among the leaders in our denomination, who are passionate about excellence in ministry," she said. "We returned inspired and re-committed to do our work better and more intentionally, so we can be about the coming of God's kingdom on earth."

Another highlight was "Clergy Ethics: The Musical," written by the Office of General Counsel of the UCC. Prominent UCC clergy made costumed cameo appearances in scenes raising important ethical issues, which were also illustrated by some popular songs exploring sexual ethics.

For information, call (425) 213-9335 or email barber-tara@hotmail.com.

As gifts to the community for its 100th anniversary

Guemes Island created a labyrinth, open foyer

As part of preparing for its 100th anniversary last fall, Guemes Island UCC made its foyer more welcoming and gave the community a labyrinth.

Those projects, which were among others church members rallied to do for the anniversary, were funded in part by a \$2,000 grant from the PNC Church Development Committee.

A banner with a photo of the earth, a rainbow and a dove communicate readily the congregation's three-part covenant commitment to: 1) service, 2) inclusiveness, 3) peacemaking and 4) earth care, said Sally Balmer, the pastor, who came in August 2013 and was installed at the 100th anniversary celebration in October.

A graduate of Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, B.C., she served a church in Northern California, then nearly five years at Suquamish UCC, two years as interim at Prospect UCC in Seattle and nearly nine years at Pilgrim UCC in Anacortes, where she still lives.



Sally Balmer

When she first came to Guemes Island, she met with the church council, and they decided to clear and renovate the foyer.

Everything was moved out of the foyer, which had become a catchall, so members could be intentional about what would be there. Among the first furnishings added were two wicker chairs to create a sitting area.

Now large displays of the decades of the church's history hang from hanging rails along the walls the walls.

Member Carol Harmon gathered the information and created the displays to tell about the church's story and life since



Foyer, entry and garden express church's welcome. Below, banner near entry informs people of the church's commitments.

Photos courtesy of Bob Anderson and Connie Snell, below

it was founded in 1914.

"They are still up, because we're not done with reading them," Sally said, nor are the people who come through the foyer to luncheons in the fellowship hall or for other community groups that use the building.

With having the hanging rails, any display is temporary and can be shifted, based on what the church wants to communicate and emphasize at a given time.

Over the church's 100 years, there were additions to the original sanctuary to accommodate an education wing, a fellowship hall and offices. The additions formed a U-shaped building, so people had to go outside to go from one side to the other.

About five years ago, the church decided to enclose the central outdoor space and make it into an indoor gathering space, creating the foyer. The entry to the foyer has three double glass doors, so people can look in from the street.

After it was built, the foyer accumulated furnishings and items with little thought, said Bob Anderson, an associate member of the church.

Gary Curtis, an engineer on the Property Committee, designed the space. With three roofs draining onto the foyer roof, he designed the foyer roof

so the water would drain into a gutter. Water in the gutter flows off the roof and pours over an abstract aluminum sculpture with glass bowls, called "Living Water in Broken Vessels." Church and island artists created the sculpture.

The water then fills a sump gravel pit with a storage tank that pumps water into the church's raised bed healing garden. That garden has herbs and healing plants people are invited to use.

Bob landscaped the raised beds and a new 12-tree fruit orchard on the church's land.

The foyer and yard were also redesigned as part of the national UCC Mission 4/1 Earth campaign in 2013.

"The island was once a farming, gardening and orchard area, known as Garden Island," Bob said.

It was also once called Dog Island for the long-hair dogs raised there when it was the summer hunting and fishing grounds for Salish Coastal Tribes. They made blankets with the dog hair.

"Our use of the land for the healing garden, labyrinth and orchard honors the sacred ground of the native peoples," Bob said.

From 1986 to 1999, Bob and Boots Anderson came on and off to Guemes Island from



Seattle after buying several adjacent lots. In 1999, they built a house, then moved there and commuted to Seattle, where he did landscaping.

Bob served churches in Seattle and had a landscaping business, giving him skills to help design the labyrinth in the woods north of the church.

He was minister of outreach and parish care at University Congregational UCC for eight years in the 1970s, then he served Overlake Presbyterian, did several interim ministries, and was pastor of Seattle Continued on next page

Church's commercial kitchen is open to community

Continued from previous page
gregational Christian Church for several years.

While serving half-time at Overlake Presbyterian, he began a landscaping design company, doing that part time and continuing until 15 years after retiring until last fall.

Sally said Bob typifies many island people, coming on weekends and for summers to island property, building, commuting to jobs from the island and then retiring there.

The labyrinth project began when Lynn Prewitt first gathered members last February.

The church had a labyrinth in its back lawn.

Because people especially liked the part that went into the woods, the labyrinth committee decided to have the labyrinth wind under the maple trees in the area between the church and the Community Hall.

Once the seven-circle labyrinth was designed, it took many hours of hard labor to clear the ground of scrub brush, blackberry vines, ferns and moss. The path, which is lined with three- to eight-inch stones, leads to an eight-foot opening in the center.

There is also a direct path to the middle, so it's accessible for people with disabilities, and for people who want to use it for meditation and for yoga.

The path is being covered with gravel, which was funded by the Church Development Committee grant.

It opened at the solstice in June, said Bob, who helped design it.

The church's relationship with the community hall is another aspect of its sharing its resources with the community.

Two years ago, the church renovated its kitchen to qualify as a commercial kitchen, with the idea that it could be used for events at the community hall, as well as the church, Bob said.



The Island Labyrinth is the Guemes Island UCC's gift to the community.

Photo courtesy of Sally Balmer

Guemes Island has a general store near the ferry, the church just up the street, the community building and a resort on the other side of town.

When the church put in the kitchen, it also put in generators, so the kitchen could serve during an emergency, said Sally.

Many church members are also members of the community hall, which seats more than 100 people.

Bob said that 40 percent of the funds for renovating the church kitchen came from the community, because it's used by the community to prepare meals at the hall.

It's also used to cook lunches for about 50 seniors on Thursdays and Tuesday evening soup suppers at the church, and for the community Christmas dinner and the Fire Department's annual recognition dinner at the hall.

Meals cooked in the church kitchen are taken to the hall.

Bob said about 800 people live on Guemes Island all year. About 1,500 come during the summer and up to 3,000 come

on major holiday weekends.

"The church's best attendance is in the summer and weekends when people come to their summer/weekend homes," he said.

Some regular members go to Palm Springs, Ariz., or go skiing in the winter.

A core of 15 to 20 of the 60 members attend each week. Average attendance is 30 to 35.

"We seek to get away from the idea of members and focus on being a faith-centered, and a Christ-centered community that serves the community as it cares about the earth, is inclusive and works for peace," said Bob.

To survive today, he believes churches need to be facilities that facilitate a variety of ministries and welcome use by the community.

The building is used for a book club, yoga, an exercise group, the Historical Society. They work with the community center, which is 25 percent larger than the church, and less conducive for small groups.

For about 60 years, the church was primarily a place

for worship and Christian education. Then there were additions for education, fellowship, meals, offices and meeting space.

In the early years, it was yoked with the Pilgrim Congregational Church in Anacortes.

"In the 1980s, we had a conservative period and the church became polarized," said Bob.

That was followed by several short-term ministers, including the first woman minister, the Rev. Judith Bardsley, then the Rev. Darrel Berg, who served the church 14 years and did much calling to build the church. Then there were a couple of interims, a settled pastor and supply pastors before the church called Sally.

She serves part-time, 40 Sundays a year, so other voices preach other Sundays. She works in the area as a trained spiritual director.

"The balance of different voices in the pulpit is good," Bob said.

For information, call 360-293-5515 or email Sally at revbalmer@icloud.com.

Musicians' group worships through singing

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ferent churches to relieve the choir for a day.

Anna grew up in Kirkland UCC. They lived since 1985 in Issaquah, where they attended Pine Lake Presbyterian Church for nine years. Then they moved to attend Plymouth when their children Chris and Jennifer were in high school so they could be involved in the youth group there. They continued to live in their home in the woods in Issaquah.

When they began attending Plymouth Congregational UCC, it was beginning to discern ways to help Beacon Ave. UCC, which became Bethany.

"We wanted to be involved in the multicultural experience, so we attended both," she said.

They were members of Bethany for 11 years. Don became chorister, which meant he announced when to stand and sit, organized musicians and worked up songs.

"Each week was spontaneous," she said. "The church had an organ and piano, but no organist or pianist, so we did church without those instruments, unless we had a guest."

Don brought in different multicultural groups to create a unique worship experience each week. Different people became regulars, including some pianists.

Among the regulars was the Frank Clayton Ensemble, who played, as they did at the 2014 Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Now the Jenkins attend Kirkland, which has a music program. They provide special music three times a year.

They go to other churches, including Rainier Beach United Methodist Church about four times a year, Plymouth several times, including a Christmas Eve Wee Worship, and Spirit of Peace in Issaquah, University and Fautleroy.



Anna Jenkins arranges music for harp accompaniment.

Anna was a music major in college, graduating in 1974 from Washington State University and teaching music a year at Hoquiam High School in Aberdeen. She and Don married in 1975, having met when asked to sing at a wedding.

Don, a 1972 graduate in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, lived in Portland when they met. He retires in July 2015 from work in insurance and risk management.

They lived four years in Beaverton, Ore., and returned to Seattle for four years, then to Vienna, Va., for four years, coming back and living in Issaquah. For the most part, they have attended UCC churches.

He grew up in a Freewill Baptist Church in Newburn, N.C. His mother was church pianist, and his family was musical, singing and playing instruments. Every year, their children joined them for family gatherings in North Carolina, and sang with six other cousins.

Don had studied voice in college and was in the choir and

men's glee club. He has played guitar for 40 years, developing different finger patterns—finger picking and strumming.

Anna sings, has played piano and since 2001 mostly plays the Celtic harp.

She meets with 12 women in a harp circle and arranges music for it, and has published a harp duet music book.

"I arrange music for the harp, because music for it looks like piano music, but it sounds muddy on the harp. I listen to the overtones as I play and decide the sounds I want.

When they take a piece they decide what form it will take, who will sing and when, and how instruments will support it.

"It takes a while to pull together a piece as a performance piece," she said. "For congregational singing, the harp usually plays the melody and the guitar the harmony."

The name, Instruments of Peace, goes back to the prayer of St. Francis, "Make me an instrument of your peace."

It comes, too, from Anna's

use of harp music for healing and transitions, often played at the bedside of someone who is dying. For three years, she played for hospice patients at Swedish Hospice.

Every week at Covenant Shores Retirement Community at Mercer Island, she plays therapeutic music at the health center and reflections unit for people who are memory challenged. At the latter, the music is interactive, geared to stimulate memories and discussion.

Occasionally she plays for someone dying in a hospice setting—peaceharp.com.

"The idea is that harp music brings peace," she said. "The strings' vibrato sends vibrations people feel," said Anna, who has taught 10 harp students in her home since 2006.

When they sing for commercial enterprises, they charge. When they sing for congregations, they accept an honorarium. Some places they play for no charge.

Their music ranges from sacred to secular and includes many folk genre, hymns, Celtic, old time fiddle tunes, Civil War tunes, waltzes and some country.

"Our musical experience is intertwined with our faith," said Anna, telling of a poster that says: "It's All About the Music."

"We worship through singing," she said. "Before a service, we work with the pastor to put the service together, brainstorming about how to integrate music with the message, choosing the right words, tempo and rhythm to support the service and sermon.

"We weave what we do with what is happening in worship so all is connected," she said. "The top messages we share are about love and peace."

For information, call 206-914-2662 or 498-2900 or email anna@instruments-of-peace.com.

Horizon House CEO retires, reflects on 16 years

After almost 16 years as CEO of Horizon House, Bob Anderson announced in November that he plans to retire in June 2015 when he is 70.

He seeks to have more time with his family and his wife of 44 years, Julie, and he expects to continue as a consultant in senior services programs.

"I feel blessed to have good health and energy at this time to apply to future endeavors," which he said includes becoming a grandfather in December.

He has found his years at Horizon House "the most satisfying part of my work career, being able to work close to people in this stage of life and gain access to their wisdom—listening, respecting and learning from people who have learned much from life," he said.

Horizon House is a resident-directed community, so Bob has seen his role to be to serve people in their home and respond to their ideas and needs.

Horizon House's mission to residents is to their quality of life and financial security.

Under Bob's leadership since 1998, the community has done two things to reinvent itself: It established a new health care system that includes "supported living," and has built a new tower with 100 apartments.

Bob explained that supported living combines the former nursing home with assisted living to be a homelike continuum of care, so people make one move from their independent living apartments.

In addition, he said Horizon House offers a seven-day-a-week medical clinic with a nurse practitioner on staff, so residents have access to outpatient medical care five days a week and with a nurse on weekends.

"People can age in place in their own independent apartments because they have a



Bob Anderson retires in June 2015 as Horizon House CEO.

Photo courtesy of Horizon House

medical clinic in the building to help solve immediate medical problems and to support their health and wellbeing," he said.

In other settings, seniors have to set up a doctor's appointment, go by car to a clinic and wait in line. At the Horizon House clinic, the nurse practitioner can assess if more care is needed and work with doctors and specialists.

Two years ago, Horizon House formed Horizon Home Care, Inc., to provide home services to help with daily needs, such as meals, dressing and apartment chores on a temporary or permanent basis. It serves residents, but may expand outside the complex.

"Innovations we have implemented over the years have been integrated into new care models, including the support system apartments," he said.

Horizon House has 378 independent living apartments and is renovating eight independent living apartments to create 16 new supported living apartments, for a total of 106 by the end of next year. It has more than 550 residents.

"An important aspect of community life is that no one has to leave because of exhausting their resources," Bob said. "That has been our commitment for 53 years."

The way it guarantees that

commitment is through raising \$1 million a year to support its now \$11 million endowment.

"It's particularly needed today with growing demand because people are living longer and have more complex needs," he said. "That commitment is at the root of our mission.

"As a UCC affiliated organization, we are open to people of any faith tradition. The diversity of our community in religion and social-economic status is also part of our commitment," Bob explained.

Entry fees range from \$40,000 to six figures, and Horizon House is committed to maintain 25 percent of apartments for people of moderate to low incomes.

Another commitment is to facilitate residents being able to serve the broader community.

One way it does that is through its Community Grants Program, which supports three ventures: 1) Plymouth Church's development of Plymouth Housing, low income housing for seniors through financial and volunteer resources; 2) Mary's Place, a community based organization sponsored by Lutherans for women experiencing domestic violence, and 3) Northwest Center for Creative Aging, a nonprofit that partners to offers programs and services to seniors in the com-

munity to help them find greater connection through workshops, conversations and a learning day at Seattle University.

Bob said Horizon House is continually renovating its 1 million square feet of space on two-and-a-half acres in downtown Seattle.

"We are in flux to meet residents' needs," he said.

The facility also partners with other organizations, for example, providing Elderwise space for a day center for older adults from the community.

In 1961, the then Washington North Idaho Conference of the UCC—now the Pacific Northwest Conference—guaranteed a loan to buy the Baldwin Apartments as the first site for senior living. While it no longer has a financial relationship, the conference minister and a member of the conference Board of Directors sit on the Horizon House Board of Trustees.

"We are the only UCC-sponsored senior living center in the region," Bob said. "We draw people from UCC churches all over the region, including from Plymouth, University Congregational, Magnolia and some West Seattle churches, which transport members in Horizon House to church."

Bob, who grew up Catholic and has been a member of Plymouth UCC in Seattle, estimates that of the 550 residents less than 20 percent are UCC.

Growing up in Boston, after graduating from Tufts University in Boston, he earned a master's in public administration in 1970 at Syracuse University. He worked as with the Illinois Mental Health Authority, before coming to Seattle in 1978. He worked with several health care administration positions before Horizon House.

For information, call 206-382-3601 or email boba@horizonhouse.org.

Mark Schoesler of Zion UCC leads State Senate

Zion UCC Ritzville member Mark Schoesler, who will be the Republican leader of the Majority Coalition Caucus in the Washington State Senate for the next two years, said he finds much less polarization than “media portrayal of hyper-partisan gridlock suggests.”

He pointed out, for example, that even though there are 24 Democrats and 25 in the Republican coalition, the 2013 state budget had 43 votes.

“In the legislature, I believe it’s important to have a positive attitude, so I see the budget glass as half full, not half empty,” he said.

Believing that it’s as critical for government as for nonprofits and churches to be stewards of the money they have, he looks for effectiveness, rather than coming with a predetermined view of what an outcome should be, such as raising taxes or slashing everything.

Last year, he was appalled when the Department of Social and Health Services spent \$750,000, not for the safety net, but “for an expensive party for bureaucrats.”

“People need to be accountable for how they spend tax dollars,” Mark said. “If we give hard-earned money to a church or civic group, we want them to use it wisely. The same is true for government.”

He also challenged a proposal to build a building in Olympia for the State Patrol. It would cost 50 percent less for a long term lease, so more funds could go for public safety.

The Schoesler family are among the original families in Zion UCC, now Zion Philadelphia UCC in Ritzville.

“I am the fifth generation member on my maternal grandmother’s side. My two children and three grandchildren were baptized there,” he said, “so we have had seven generations of my family in Zion Church.”

Mark was first elected to



Mark Schoesler of Ritzville Zion represents the 9th district.

Photo courtesy of Mark Schoesler

the House of Representatives in 1993 and has served since 2004 in the State Senate. Since then he has been less involved in the church in Ritzville.

“In a small church, we wear many hats. I was a deacon, trustee and moderator until I was elected and in Olympia three to six months a year,” he said. “Now when I’m home, I enjoy worshiping with my family.”

Mark took confirmation classes from the church’s then German pastor, who taught a traditional understanding of the Bible and church.

He remembers that his Grandmother Schoesler, a matriarch in the church, expected the family to attend every week.

So if his parents wanted to take the family fishing, they hooked up the boat trailer, went to church, came home, changed clothes, and climbed in the car to go fishing.

Mark’s father’s family was from the German Russians—known as Volga Deutsch—and his mother’s family, the Heinemans, were from Germany.

“The Russian Germans had an understanding with Catherine the Great that they would

have religious freedom, have land to farm and not have to serve in the military. When she died, her successors backed out of the agreement, so many Volga Germans fled.

“I’m fascinated by that history,” said Mark, telling how 21 years ago his father and some cousins went to visit two villages on the Volga, where their forebears had lived.

“I learned from their visit about the suffering of families. We could have been stuck there, living in third-world conditions or exiled to Siberia for our faith. Our children could have been forced to serve in the military for yet another stupid war,” he commented, appreciating being an American.

Both sides of his family settled in the Ritzville area in the 1880s. He farms land from his parents’ families. He and his wife, Ginger, grow wheat and canola, and have cattle.

“The first generation were wheat growers,” he said. “I started experimenting with canola in the 1980s, seeking to improve crop rotations. The growing trend nationally includes canola for economic and

agronomic reasons.”

Serving in the House and then Senate, he is able to help with harvesting and planting, but often misses spring work.

“I first ran because of my concern about the long-term survival of agriculture in the region,” said Mark, who represents the 9th Legislative District in all or part of Adams, Asotin, Franklin, Garfield, Spokane and Whitman counties.

“Fiscal conservatism has always been part of my life, so I want to assure smart fiscal decisions. I look at the nation’s debt roller coaster with deficits and taxes. It affects our state, and it’s troubling,” he said. “If money is taken forcibly from people in taxes, we need to spend it wisely. People want the best value for their money.”

Mark is concerned about the challenge from the courts to fund basic education.

“Their decision puts us in a hard situation because the public is not prone to raise taxes,” Mark said.

He repeated his commitment for state programs to practice the same stewardship as faith based and nonprofit organizations.

“Where the government is to be responsible for a safety net, it is to be a good steward, scrutinizing every dollar wisely before appropriating it,” he said. “We must always be asking: Is there a smarter way to spend that dollar?”

Mark is aware that legislators may disagree on what is *wise* and *smart*, but both Republicans and Democrats care about the less fortunate.

“We just differ sometimes on ways to care for the vulnerable,” he said.

“I’m always optimistic,” Mark said. “We come into this session with nearly \$3 billion more in revenue.”

For information, call 360-786-7620 or email mschoesler@yahoo.com.

Deeg Nelson leaves Pilgrim Firs after 12 years

After 12 years managing Pilgrim Firs, Deeg Nelson has decided to resign effective Jan. 6 so he can dedicate more time to environmental issues.

Conference Minister Mike Denton said that now, “the most important thing to do is simply thank Deeg for his service.”

Soon the conference will share information about next steps and will notify the conference of plans to honor Deeg’s ministry.

Deeg began his resignation letter with affirming: “Pilgrim Firs is in a great place!”

He noted that there have been dramatic changes over his 12 years, and Pilgrim Firs continues to be on sound financial footing.

“We have made major repairs and improvements to the facilities, and our guests are happy,” he said.

Being immersed in a job he has loved, he said, “I have learned many things and built many a wonderful long-term relationships with the people related to the facility.

“I have met and worked with UCC churches and their members, outside groups of many kinds, camp neighbors, law enforcement and government representatives, small businesses owners and suppliers, and many more,” he added.

Deeg’s family grew up at Pilgrim Firs before they moved out on their own to pursue their dreams with camp as a background.



Deeg Nelson will move to Olympia to do environmental work.

He also appreciates what he has learned through travel to many parts of the country, as part of the Outdoor Ministries Association, visiting other camps and the national setting of the UCC.

Staff people at Pilgrim Firs have come and gone over those years.

“Most stayed on as employees here much longer than the average for this kind of job,” Deeg said. “They like the ways we do things, and we

reward them with a wonderful camaraderie and above-average wages.”

Several years ago, Pilgrim Firs became a part of the national UCC Ministry for Environmental Justice.

“The environment is important to me, and I have worked with staff to create programs that reflect this,” Seeg said. “We do our best to reduce waste, reuse things as often as possible, recycle and conserve.

“The re-roofing project that

we have been working on for about 10 years now is almost completed. Not only are the buildings more comfortable because they are less drafty, but our power bills have declined while rates have increased,” he said.

“The Environmental Justice Movement has also made its mark on me personally,” Deeg said. “I want to do more, much more, but I have been somewhat limited in the scope of things I have been able to do while managing Pilgrim Firs.

So on Jan. 6, he leaves Pilgrim Firs and move to the state capitol of Olympia where he will have better access to private and public agencies that will enable him to have a wider impact on our environmental future.

“I believe I am leaving Pilgrim Firs in great shape and in capable hands,” he said.

“One of my goals in life has always been to stand up for what is right in the natural world. The issues are getting bigger and the timing is critical,” he said.

“It is time for me to do this work now, and I want to have the biggest impact I can. Yes, I want to, and plan to, help save the planet!” he explained.

“Thank you for your support over the past 12 years, and thank you for whatever you can do yourself to help preserve our natural habitat,” Deeg said.

For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit pilgrimfirs.org.

Conference’s Annual Men’s Retreat at Pilgrim Firs features Denver pastor

The Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Men’s Retreat will be held Jan. 30 to Feb. 1 at Pilgrim Firs.

The Rev. Todd Smiedendorf, senior minister at Washington Park UCC in Denver Colo., will help participants engage on the theme, “Exploring the Paths to Mature Manhood.”

“No matter where you are

on your masculine journey, you are welcome to attend the retreat,” said Rick Russell, who is organizing the event with Michael Phipps and Steve Guy.

The retreat is an opportunity to engage with other men in discussions, worship, song, and reflection on life’s transitions, Rick said. Participants may also come on Thursday, Jan. 29,

for the “Day of Silence.”

Todd was ordained at Washington Park UCC in 2001 and returned as senior minister after 10 years of ministry in Forest Grove, Ore., Boulder, Colo., and Laramie, Wyo. His focus in ministry is on spirituality and social justice, influenced by creation theology and spirituality.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in religious studies from Albion College in 1986, a master’s in exercise science from the University of Arizona in 1988, and a master of divinity from Iliff School of Theology in 1993.

Registration is at www.nsid-sen.org. For information, email myrtos@comcast.net.

N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs are your homes on lakes

By Mark Boyd

A sunset graces the sky at your home on the lake, N-Sid-Sen. Yes that's correct, it's your home on the lake: N-Sid-Sen.

All 267 acres, all the cabins, the lodges, the more than three miles of trails, the beach front, the gathering spaces, all of it. It's yours.

N-Sid-Sen belongs to all of us as surely as we are all part of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. Whether you reside in the mountains surrounding Metaline Falls or are surrounded by the waters of Puget Sound on Guemes Island, you have a home at N-Sid-Sen. Although we are spread from Wallace, Idaho, to Cathlamet, Wash. from Bellingham to Lewiston, it is all part of the same.

In fact, we have two places to call ours: N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs.

To share in, to worship together, to play together, to just be together and to listen.

This year at camp I spent time listening.



Another sunset. Photo by Mark Boyd

folks as gathering more friends around us, not just the mass of friends on Facebook that sometimes become like another collection, but friends that truly are part of our family, however we define family—friends with that deeper connection of a commonality.

Someone once said that if we truly knew someone's story it would not be possible to hate them. Isn't that what family is really about?

Our family at camp has certainly been busy this year.

We have updated the downstairs bathrooms in Spirit Lodge, rebuilt the lakeside stairs on Stillwater porch, built and launched a new floating dock in the cove, put in a new sandbox in front of Forrester lodge, built a lifeguard chair, moved the entrance sign so it can be seen more easily, purchased a new oven for the kitchen, added new curtains to some of the cabins and removed some dead and dying trees.

That is only the physical stuff we did. As I listened to folks coming and going this year, I began to wonder, what allows strangers to become friends, to become family.

Is it in the slowing down and not worrying about having to plan meals, meetings, etc? Is it in the invitation of others to come swimming, canoeing, hiking, etc? Is it in the shared play of building a dock, sandbox, lifeguard chair? Is it in the knowledge that it is really OK to do nothing but nap and then nap some more? Yes it certainly is, and yet it is more.

In that more is where I struggle to find a name for it.

At our OMA-UCC (Outdoor Ministries Association of the United Church of Christ) gathering in October this question was presented.

How do we say what it is that we provide? At our Board of Directors and Council Meeting it came up again: How do

we inform others of the passion we find in the UCC?

As I pondered this I wondered what N-Sid-Sen provides beyond food, housing, site and program.

Three words kept coming to me: Breathe. Listen. Passion.

Breathe - We invite and encourage you to come to camp and breathe. When you step out of your car leave your worries and concerns in the trunk and lock it. Take another breath and look around...

Listen - Take a moment to listen to all the new sounds around you at camp. Don't try to identify them, just listen to them with your ears, eyes and feet. Then listen to yourself...

Passion - As you wander and unload your mind, think about your passion, what keeps you going, what excites you, what topics compel you to jump in? Find someone to share your passion with.

Friendships started at camp can be separated by miles and months without losing any of their strength.

2015 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

Junior High Midwinter Retreat,
Jan. 9-11 - grades 7-9

Senior High Midwinter Retreat
Jan 16-18 - grades 10-12

Men's Retreat
Jan. 30 to Feb. 1

GLBT Spiritual Renewal Retreat
May 29 to 31

Work Camp June 18-21

Senior High Camp
June 28 to July 4

Junior High Camp
July 5 to 11

Kids Camp July 12 to 15

Intermediate Camp
July 12 to 18

Family Camp Aug. 16 to 20

For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit pilgrimfirs.org.

2015 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

**Junior & Senior High
Midwinter Retreat**

March 13 to 15 - grades 7 to 12

Women's Retreat - May 15 to 17

**PNC Counselor & Director
Retreat** - May 15 to 17

Work Camp - June 15 to 20

Young Adult Camp - June 21-23

Kid's Camp - July 5 to 8

Intermediate Camp - July 5 to 11

Senior High Aqua Camp
July 12 to 18

Family Camp #1
July 26 to Aug. 1

Junior High Aqua Camp
Aug. 2 to 8

Family Camp #2 - Aug. 9 to 15

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.org.

- Listening to the wind blow through the trees;
- Listening to the ravens harrass the eagles;

- Listening to the deer rustle in the underbrush hoping that we would not notice them;

- Listening to the conversations around the campfires after the songs had been sung;

- Listening to the shared laughter on the many porches;

- Listening to the wise advice given from rocking chairs.

I listened to all the folks who came to visit us.

As I listened, I heard: "I went to camp expecting to make friends, but I ended up with family."

Today with all that is happening in the world wouldn't it be incredible if we could all live into that statement.

What would happen if we all looked at meeting new