



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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November-December 2018

Mission camp is transforming for youth

Pilgrim Firs first Common Fire camp 'fabulous experience'

Common Fire, a mission-based service/mission camp in the Kitsap community was launched this past June at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center, said Kaila Russell, chair of the PNC Outdoor Ministries Task Force.

A group of 22 youth and seven adults from First United Church in Oak Park, Ill., spent the week of June 25 to 29 at Pilgrim Firs.

Alicia Reese, pastoral associate for youth and congregational care, and the Rev. Lydia Mulkey, associate pastor of education, brought the youth. Members of Fox Island UCC provided expertise as master builders to help with projects with Rebuilding Together - South Sound.

Alicia said her team ripped out the lining of a would-be pond and filled it
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Members of a team of youth from 9th through 12th grade from First United Church in Oak Park, Ill., were first Common Fire mission/service campers.

PNC Board meets online, reduces travel across state

By Wendy Blight - PNC Moderator

Online meetings have become a great way for our Board of Directors to connect across the state and reduce the need for long trips to be together in person. However, as many of you know, there are limitations to meeting online.

In a Zoom meeting we can convey words, thoughts, prayers and expressions (if we're on video), but so much of our communication is non-verbal that it can't be relayed over the digital divide.

If we're not in the same room we miss important information that we can only understand when we're sitting across the table from one another.

The weekend of Nov. 9 to 10, the Board of Directors made the commitment to be together in Seattle over Fri-

**Online meetings,
however, may miss
non-verbal
communication.**

day evening and Saturday to brainstorm and discuss some important ideas.

We had a few goals in mind as we gathered: get to know each other better, have some fun together, talk about our purpose and direction as a Conference and identify some next steps that each Board member will take to move us into the future.

Friday evening was a time of fellowship and good conversation over pizza.

We played a theatre arts/improv game that made us laugh together and helped us get to each other better. We wrote thank-you notes to our Conference committee chairs thanking them for their work. At the end of the night, we worshiped God together.

On Saturday we ate breakfast together and then dove into our work for the day. Our intention was not to definitively write the purpose statement for the Conference but rather to imagine what a deeply-connected Conference would look like in a few years if we were to lean into that work. Here are a few of the dreams expressed:

- The people in the Conference understand that "we are in this together".

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PNC's 2018-19 goal is deepening relationships

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

**We
need
each
other.
We
really,
really
do.**

Stick with me, here, for what might seem like a couple of wonky paragraphs. There is more here.

A couple of years ago now, the PNC Board did what boards are supposed to do and worked to discern what direction the conference might be called to go.

They rooted this discernment in what the Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear, our Minister for Church Vitality, witnessed as marks of vitality in our congregational life.

They named what we have come to call our conference intentions as a commitment to deepen relationships, do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

This fall, the board choose to focus particularly on the intention to deepen relationships by focusing on four encompassing priorities for the year. These are: to deepen relationships between colleagues throughout the Conference; to deepen relationships within congregations and between congregations; to deepen relationships between congregations and their neighborhoods and communities; to improve the effectiveness of communication throughout the Conference. Again, these are not separate from the conference intentions I mentioned earlier but a deeper dive into one part of these intentions.

Many times when I read such things coming out of boards and committees, I tend to have a few, well, cynical reactions.

The first is usually an overriding impulse to say something like, "OK, these are fine but how are they going to do this?"

The next question is usually along the lines of "Isn't this something they're supposed to be doing already?"

The next one is usually something along the lines of "Of all the important issues they could be dealing with why are they focusing on this one?" Sound familiar?

I get it. That said, I think these goals tap into what I'm being convinced is the primary purpose of boards and committees; to manage and deepen relationships. Yep, the com-

mittees will frequently have names that point towards another purpose. Yep, the members of the gathered body are usually chosen because they were willing to work together towards a particular task or set of responsibilities.

However, all these human systems have the very basic purpose of helping us get to know each other so that we can work together when possible and sort through the best ways to build enough trust that we're willing, with a spirit of generosity, to stay out of each other's way.

It's all about relationships. I know the prevailing opinion is that "it" should be about the about to doing work fast, efficiently and effectively. There's a place for that and a need for that but when a method gets in the way of deepening and relationships that are mutual and whole, there's probably something wrong with the method.

Many of you have heard me go off on this before but the experience of personal loneliness is increasing. The health services company Cigna published a study in May of this year that found that about half of Americans feel lonely, a number that's even higher among millennials. (See <https://www.cigna.com/newsroom/news-releases/2018/new-cigna-study-reveals-loneliness-at-epidemic-levels-in-america>.)

This number has doubled since the 1980s and is correlated with significant and increasing physical health concerns. (See <https://slate.com/technology/2013/08/dangers-of-loneliness-social-isolation-is-deadlier-than-obesity.html>.) Although we are—in some ways—more productive than ever, what are we being productive for? To have more stuff or to have more fulfilling lives? Efficiency has its place, but when we sacrifice relationships on an altar before efficiency we're worshipping a false god.

So, yes, the PNC Board has decided to focus on the general goal of deepening relationships this year and I think it's a good, beautiful and holy one. We need each other. We really, really do.

There is a place in my heart shaped a bit like you and the same is true for your heart. When we find a way to connect something amazing happens. We both feel just a little more whole, a little more loved, and little more human.

Transitions announced

Allysa De Wolf is the new pastor at Wayside UCC in Federal Way.

Cynthia Meyer is the new pastor at United Christian Church in Renton.

University Congregational UCC in Seattle seeks a bridge minister to serve on its leadership team for 12 to 18 months beginning on January 12, 2019. *For information, visit <http://opsearch.uss.org/id/3277>.*

James Hazen, who served churches in California, Hawaii and the PNC, died on June 26 in Ft. Collins, Colo. He was pastor of United Church of Christ Congregational in Wallace from 1986 until he retired in 1988.

National UCC has openings

The national UCC seeks a disaster recovery specialist and a construction manager within with the UCC Disaster Ministries and partners.

For information, call 410-259-6194 or visit ucc.org/disaster.

Holy Land Pilgrimage planned

Cory Passons, interfaith UCC minister with the Community for Interfaith Celebration in Olympia is organizing an Interfaith Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in April 2019. He is co-host of the pilgrimage with Erica Martin, instructor of Hebrew Scriptures and Christian-Muslim Dialogue at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry. She is a Reform Jew who spent years in the Holy Land while working on her doctoral degree.

The pilgrimage will take participants from the modern city of Tel Aviv to the historic site of Elijah's home on Mt. Carmel, traveling through the lands of Israel and Jordan that have given rise to Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

At Jaffa, Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Haifa, Safed, the Sea of Galilee, the Golan Heights, Arbel, Beth Shean, Amman, Petra, the Dead Sea, Jericho, Masada, Hebron, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, there will be opportunities to learn about the history and importance of each site.

For information, call email interfaith-corey@gmail.com.

Ecumenical group offers events

From Nov. 15 to 18, is the third in a series of educational events for understanding issues pertaining to the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Writer and activist Alison Weir will offer sessions from 4:30 to 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 15, at St. Mark's Diocesan House for clergy and social ministries staff.

Her presentation from 6 to 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 16, at Trinity Lutheran Church is Lynnwood is on "Justice for All: What Don't Americans Know about Israel-Palestine?"

She will speak for a radio interview with Mike McCormick of KEXP from 7:30 to 8 a.m., on Saturday, Nov. 17, followed for a presentation at the Seattle Mennonite Church from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Marching to Zion: The Zionist Reality in Modern Israel" is her presentation from noon to 1:30 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church in Everett.

In October, there were presentations

by Pilgrims for Peace advocates and Nov. 8 to 13, there were presentations by three graduates and a teacher from the Mar Elias School Founded by Archbishop Elias Chacour in Ibillin, Israel.

For information, call Jim Kutz at 360-503-9845 or email j.a.kutz@gmail.com.

FAN Dinner honors Fig Tree

The Faith Action Network's Annual Dinner at 4:30 Sunday, Nov. 18 in the Renton Pavillion Event Center will be livestreamed to the Glover House in Spokane, thanks to FAN Board member and UCC representative Jim CastroLang, pastor of First Congregational UCC in Colville.

The dinner features several awards.

In Spokane, an Interfaith Leadership Award will be presented to Mary Stamp, editor of The Fig Tree newspaper and PNC-UCC News, for her work and vision bringing faith voices to the public square, inspiring a region for 35 years, said Jim.

FAN appreciates how interfaith communities are represented as the Fig Tree lives its mission to "break through divisions among people to promote unity and action for the common good."

Renton award recipients are Justice Leadership to the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project; Advocating Faith Communities in Bellevue for efforts on homeless shelters, and Legacy Awards to the late Verlene Jones Davis for her devotion to FAN as a founding board member and efforts for social justice, and to the late Ron Young for his contributions as an educator, organizer, activist and change agent for peace and social justice.

For information, call 206-635-9790, email degooyer@fanwa.org or visit fanwa.org.

Conference News Briefs

Board commits to tasks related to priorities

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We give each other grace. We know that we are in covenant with each other and that we are always safe when we interact with one another. We embrace "covenantal conflict".

- We understand and honor each other's faith communities and our varied expressions of love and justice.

- We relate to the Conference as a set of relationships

more than a structure.

- We see "church" as a community and not as a building.

- We know what's going on in each other's churches and communities.

- We show up for each other.

- The greater community knows and cares about what we're saying and doing. We are known in our communities as people who make the world a better place.

I'm curious to know what you would add to the list. Feel free to write your thoughts to me at blightwk@hotmail.com.

It's not easy to figure out what the first are to move us toward the future we envision.

Each board member identified two to five tasks that they could commit to this year. Each of the tasks falls under one of the priorities that I shared last month: deepening relationships

with colleagues, congregations, our communities, and improving communications throughout the Conference.

We intend to make a difference in each of these areas before our Annual Meeting on April 27 at First Congregational Church of Bellevue.

We'll keep you posted!

For information, call 425-231-9313 or email blightwk@hotmail.com.

Loren McGrail has full schedule of church visits

UCC minister, theologian, poet and visual artist Loren McGrail recently returned from Palestine, where she served the YWCA on behalf of Global Ministries. She will preach, teach and give presentations throughout the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference and Northwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The PNC-UCC and NW-DOC Global Ministries Committee has arranged her itineration.

In addition to presentations, she will exhibit her art and lead a workshop on assemblage, which is art created out of found objects.

Her art exhibit, “Unexpected Joy,” incorporates both visual art and writing related to her work in Palestine. She describes herself as a “modern day salvager making meaning and art out of things broken and lost.”

It opens with a reception from 3 to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17, at University Congregational UCC, 4515 16th St. N.E. in Seattle.

The art workshop will be from 9:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Nov. 17, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle. Her art will be on exhibit all day.

She will read her poetry and other readings at a reception from 3 to 5 p.m., before people view her collection of assemblages.

Working in a locale where violence is a fact of life, both her imagery and her writings reference this reality.

From 9:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Nov. 17 in the chapel, Loren will teach about the art of assemblage – building a piece of art from found objects.

University Congregational UCC’s Advent worship theme, “Unexpected Joy,” will be the focus for this workshop on find-



Loren McGrail will share about her experiences working through Global Ministries with the YWCA in Palestine.

Photo courtesy of Global Ministries

ing joy in unexpected places.

Those who attend are to collect and bring objects and images that bring them joy.

Items brought to the workshop will become a permanent part of the art participants create and will be glued or varnished to a rigid surface.

For information, call 206-524-2322 or email liturgicalarts@ucucc.org or kgarratt@universityucc.org.

On Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 12 and 13 Loren is staying in Everett with Ruth Brandon of the PNC/DOC Global Ministries Committee—425-220-2476 or orarembe@mac.com.

Loren will go to Ferndale for a joint program at 2:30, Tuesday, Nov. 13, with the Ferndale UCC and First Christian DOC of Bellingham at the Ferndale UCC, 2034 Washington St. For information call 360-201-7253.

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 14, she will give a presentation at Lake Washington Christian Church, 343 15th Ave., in Kirkland with the Kirkland Congregational UCC. For

information, call 425-822-4637 or email pastor@lwchristian.org. The two Kirkland churches will arrange overnight housing and breakfast for her.

From Nov. 15 to 17, Loren will stay with her daughter in Seattle.

From noon to 1 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 18, Loren will lead a faith study program at Plymouth UCC in Seattle. For information, call 206-382-3785 or marypaul@foxinternet.com.

On Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 18 and 19, Mary Olney-Loyd of the Global Ministries Committee will host Loren for a Monday, Nov. 19, clergy group meeting and lunch in Seattle and for a noon luncheon and program for the Pugetarians, retired clergy and spouses, at noon, Tuesday, Nov. 20 at Horizon House, 900 University St. in Seattle.

For information, call 206-291-8953 or email maryolney-loyd@gmail.com.

She will be with her family in Seattle from Wednesday to Saturday, Nov 21 to 24.

Loren will preach and give a program from 10:30 a.m.

to 12:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 25, at Bethany UCC, 6230 Beacon Ave. South in Seattle. For information, call 206-725-7535 or email angelaying@bethany-seattle.org.

Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 26 and 27, Loren will stay with Mary Margaret Pruitt at Horizon House, where she will give an 11 a.m. program to residents on Monday.

Loren will offer a program at a potluck from 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 27, at Prospect Congregational UCC, 119 E. Prospect in Seattle. For information, call 206-370-4142 or email pritchardmeighan@gmail.com.

Then she will lead an evening program on Wednesday, Nov. 28, at Wayside UCC, 2000 SW Dash Point Road in Federal Way. For information, email risesam@gmail.com.

On Nov. 29, 30 or Dec. 1, depending on weather, a Global Ministries Committee member will transport Loren to Othello, where she will preach and give a program beginning at 10:45 a.m., Sunday, Dec 2, at Othello Christian Church, 915 E. Rainier. For information, call 509-488-2208 or email pastor@othellochristianchurch.com.

Next is an evening program on Monday, Dec 3, at Newport United Church of Christ, 430 W. Third St. For information, call 509-770-3830 or email or rev.becky.52@gmail.com.

North Hill Christian Church, 4620 N. Post in Spokane, will host her at 6 p.m. For information, call 509-326-5400 or email pastor@nhchristian.org.

Loren will return to Seattle on Wednesday, Dec. 5. Her daughter will drive her to Portland on Dec 7 to continue presentations there.

For information, call 425-220-2476 or email orarembe@mac.com.

Three women on social justice journey together

For the second year of the Jubilee Justice Program in 2018 to 2019, there are three participants. Christine Hanson, who participated during the first year in 2016 to 2017, as part-time program coordinator has recruited the adult participants and arranged the organizations they will work with.

She will also, along with Elizabeth Dickinson, Jubilee Leadership Program executive director, help the participants with “sojourning,” which are monthly reflection gatherings at Christine’s home in Seattle.

Justice Leadership Jubilee is a 10-month program involving 10 to 15 hours a week for adults who want to integrate faith and justice work into their lives in a meaningful and transformational way, interacting with a community of peers.

Each month, participants spend 24 to 40 hours working with a community partner agency, two to three hours reflecting with a spiritual sojourner, four to eight hours in skill-building training, and four to eight hours engaging with their congregations.

This year’s participants are Barbara Anderson, Kathy Dawson and Jan von Lehe.

Barb is working with the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness and is with Keystone UCC. Kathy is working with Earth Ministries and is with All Pilgrims. Jan is working with 350Seattle.org and involved at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Growing up with her parents running a grocery store in Port Angeles, Barb said conservatism was hammered into her.

“I decided to find my own directions in life and moved to Seattle, where I worked more than 50 years in sales,” she said.

She and her husband ran a small computer supply business for 41 years. She was vice president and sales manager.



Barb Anderson

Since they closed the business in April, she feels “free to pursue my interest in working to help solve the issue of homelessness in our community and our country,” said Barb, who has participated in social justice work at her church.

She volunteered at Mary’s Place for five years and then decided “to focus on changing the system.” Her placement with the Coalition on Homelessness means she will work collaboratively “to ensure safety and survival for people while they are homeless and to end the crisis of homelessness in our region.”

For Kathy, Micah 6:8—to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God—has long been a touchstone.

“Recently I was introduced to the vision of the Pachamama Alliance of a world that works for everyone, an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet,” she said. “I knew it was my contemporary re-statement, capturing the particular call on my life.”



Kathy Dawson

She sees environment, spirituality and social justice as “so intertwined, so interrelated that none can be achieved without the others. I believe that the generations living now must bring the three together to transform human civilization if there is to be any chance for it to continue beyond our lifetimes.

“It is an incredible, frightening and exhilarating time to be alive,” Kathy said. “The future is in our hands. No one can do it alone, and it will take every one of us to make it through.”

Now retired, she is looking for clarity in her calling to climate action as a volunteer.

“How am I called to act? Where shall I put my energies? How can I sustain the spiritual strength to keep at it when the powerful make the situation worse?” she asked. “These are some of the questions I bring to my time with Justice Leadership Jubilee, confident that the service our cohort will embody will inspire me in many ways and that accountability to the



Jan von Lehe

Photos courtesy of the Justice Jubilee Program

group will keep me engaged with the questions.”

Jan looks forward to the faith-guided social justice journey of service as a first phase of her retirement.

A life-long “UCC-er,” she has lived in Seattle most of her adult years, raising family and working in health care leadership roles, primarily in hospice.

“Grounded in the University UCC circle and having recently completed a term as moderator, I am not actively working with our Calling, Engagement and Community Ministry,” said Jan, who has roots growing up on a Minnesota dairy farm.

“I have deep love of the Pacific Northwest ‘wildness’ that brings beauty and sanctuary on hikes and adventures,” she said. “I come to Justice Leadership Jubilee with deep concern and commitment about how we can work together to create stronger communities.”

For information, call 509-679-7430, email justiceleadershipjubilee@gmail.com or visit justiceleadership.org.

Youth camp helps people stay in their homes

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in with rocks, tore out rotted boards of a deck and cleared out thorny blackberry bushes.

Lydia's team rebuilt a rotting deck so the homeowners can safely stay in their home.

Five work teams partnered with Rebuilding Together and were helped build ramps and decks at different sites to help to improve accessibility for low-income and disabled people so they could stay in their homes.

"One man had been waiting in his home for a month, looking forward to this project so that he could leave his home," Kaila said.

Fox Island UCC led the work stations.

"What a wonderful opportunity for this church to be a part of youth ministry, while supporting one of our camps," Kaila said.

Part of each day was spent doing mission work. The rest was spent having a camp experience at Pilgrim Firs.

Along with swimming, canoeing, hiking and hanging out, the program, led by Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs, helped the youth focus on systemic issues that foster situations which many homeless, disabled and veterans in need are currently facing.

"Through discussions, youth came to realize that changing systems takes time," Kaila said.

"What a gift it was for youth to be able to experience mission work, have a camp experience and have the opportunity to process their experiences that come from doing service work," she commented.

Lydia, who has taken the church's youth on mission experiences since she started at the Oak Park church in 2012 going to Koinonia Farms, National Youth Event, the Yakima Christian Mission and other



Fun on the lake is part of the day. Photo courtesy of Lydia Mulkey

places, described Common Fire as a "fantastic experience" because the lodging, planning, food, organizing, service projects and debriefing were all included.

"I take the youth for mission experiences because I want them to have a picture and experience of living out their faith, putting hands and feet to their faith, and having experiences they can't have at home," she said.

Lydia said the youth, who recently shared about their experience for the church's Youth Sunday in October, "were transformed."

"They gained compassion and confidence," she said.

One said he has become pen pals with one homeowner, for whom he helped do repairs.

"He now has a relationship with someone of a different socio-economic background, someone older and from a different area of the U.S.," she said. "He told of having a kind, caring friendship."

"The youth have learned that we are all connected and share a common humanity," Lydia said.

She learned about the op-

portunity through contacts in Northern California, where she studied at Pacific School of Religion where Andrew Conley-Holcom of Admiral UCC was her neighbor.

"I appreciated the learning opportunities in the debriefing, reflection and worship that Wade led," she said.

Lydia said that in other mission opportunities, she had to do the debriefing "on the spot," because she did not know what they would be doing. In some places she has had to "negotiate through the presentation of reflections in a theology that did not fit for youth from a progressive church."

She and Alicia were able to focus on relationships.

One day, when most groups had finished their projects, the youth decided to make "blessing bags" with food, water, bandaids and other items for hungry, homeless people. They asked Wade where to take them, and he suggested the Bremerton Ferry Terminal, where they connected with a ministry to give bags to their clients.

"Each camper made and gave two bags," she said.

"While our youth have helped at the PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) program through which their church shelters people overnight on Mondays, they felt hesitant to walk up to and talk with people. After they talked with the people, they found it was not scary. They were just people."

Wade is planning Common Fire opportunities for 80 participants a week in summer 2019.

"Churches that bring youth choose an area of focus for their week. They are paired with a service organization that syncs with their focus," said Wade.

Focus areas listed on the website are housing, food, environment and social services.

Housing projects will involve building, renovations and landscaping. Food projects may be at the food bank or involve meal distribution. Environmental projects may include clean-up, trail work or park department work. Social services may involve working with people who are experiencing homelessness, with elderly people or at-risk populations.

Registration for youth and adult leaders will be \$475.

Pilgrim Firs organizes work sites, offers housing, meals, an evening snack, evening programs, vespers and a Common Fire T-shirt.

When campers return to the camp at about 3:30 p.m., they have free time for swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking, hiking, fishing and relaxing. At 5 p.m., church groups have breakout discussions until dinner at 6 p.m., followed by justice discussions and vespers.

Evening activities will include games, skits, a talent show, dance, board games and a sending ritual.

Pilgrim Firs staff does the work of organizing a mission/service week, lining up

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Wade Zick plans ahead for 2019 mission camps

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partner organizations, dealing with logistics, offering action/reflection times and providing the setting on the lake for recreation.

“**The Kitsap Community** has a mixture of urban, rural and suburban issues that are only increasing because of Seattle’s growth and area housing price increases leading to the displacement of vulnerable and poor,” said Wade. “Kitsap is facing a growing number of issues including a rise in homelessness, food needs for families, environmental impacts with population growth and the clash of growth from Seattle flight with protectionism of a suburban/rural lifestyle.”

He added that there is also a large military presence with 17,000 employed at a shipyard. That present can lead to the absence of social and family support systems when people face financial and personal crises.

The camps are for church groups with youth entering seventh grade through 12th grade graduates. An individual youth may participate as space allows and on invitation of churches. Church groups are being recruited from around the country.

“In the evening, we take our experiences of service and think about them through the lens of systemic issues and injustices that we, as Christians, are called to address. The curriculum is being developed in collaboration with national UCC staff and local clergy,” Wade said.

Adult leaders will be responsible for managing the youth they bring and for helping lead small group discussions and activities.

On June 26, Alicia wrote that “tearing down and rebuilding ramps, emptying out and filling in pools, ripping out rotted boards and refinishing a



One team builds bridge to make home more accessible.

Photo courtesy of Lydia Mulkey



deck, moving piles of boulders, pulling weeds, cleaning gutters. These are just a few of the things the youth group spent

their first day doing.”

They were dirty, sore and tired, but a “good, satisfied” tired, she said.

The people they helped welcomed the youth into their homes, providing beverages, snacks and kindness, and sharing their stories.

“They are each so thankful for the help we are able to give them, and surprised that a group of teenagers would be willing to come all the way from Illinois to do this work,” Alicia wrote.

The first evening the youth talked about the upstream and downstream solutions.

“Often we focus on doing downstream work, addressing the symptoms of problems our societies face without looking upstream to see the causes of the problems, and working to make the changes that would make the downstream work obsolete,” said Alicia.

She added that the upstream issues that plague society, such as racism, sexism and classism, are so deeply rooted it’s easy to feel disheartened by the struggle to make the necessary changes. She added that it can take years of behind-the-scenes efforts to make any changes that may only have a slight impact on these issues.

“We need to continue our downstream efforts of tutoring, food pantries, PADS, building and rebuilding things, and more,” she said pointing out that they fill needs and make a difference in the lives of people.

Alicia added that it’s also important to remember to ask why are these efforts necessary.

“We need to allow our righteous anger to fuel us to make changes that are necessary in our society,” she wrote on the first day, anticipating her hopes for the experience.

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

Ecumenical service adds Mexican celebration

For its annual fall ecumenical worship on Nov. 2 with Lutheran Memorial Lutheran and St. Dunstan's Episcopal churches, its neighbor churches, Broadview UCC in North Seattle, incorporated a celebration of Dia de los Muertos, the Mexican Day of the Dead.

The fall holidays of Halloween, All Saints Day and All Souls Day are in some ways also about death, said the Rev. Gary Southerton, Broadview's pastor, as he offered an overview of other cultural celebrations about death.

"The beliefs around the Day of the Dead are based on the complicated blended cultures of the Aztecs, the Mayas and the Spanish invaders, layered with Catholicism," he said.

When Spanish Conquistadors landed in what is now Mexico 500 years ago, they saw natives practicing a ritual that seemed to mock death, a 3,000-year-old ritual. The Spanish tried unsuccessfully to end it. The church did make the joyous celebration into a tragic image of death.

"All Saints and All Souls Day evolved into celebrations that today honor the dead with



Day of the Dead altar setting.

Photos courtesy of Kay Groves

color, candles, joy and a ritual from the Day of the Dead," he said.

Broadview decorated its

altar with decorative skulls to represent the vitality of life of beloved people who have died, bright colored paper and fabrics

to represent the fragility of life, marigolds to draw their spirits into this space, memorabilia from Mexico and food.

"We offer these things on our altar, recognizing that ceremony has long been a means of spiritual survival for people amidst colonialism and violence," Gary said. "We offer them with a prayer that our world and our community might be transformed by honoring and learning from these ancient ceremonies."

For 20 years, Broadview member, Kay Groves, has set up displays of the variety of Mexican memorabilia she has collected since her first trip 25 years ago to Mexico with her daughter during a Dia do los Muertes celebration. This year she was not at Broadview for the celebration but in Tuscon for a Day of the Dead celebration there with family.

When her husband died 40 years ago, she realized his death was not as frightening as she had expected. She experienced the Day of the Dead as a celebration of the completion of life. At the plaza outside the cathedral, there were marigold designs. People went to the cemetery and had picnics. Mariachi bands played.

She has visited Mexico other times and added to the memorabilia.

"We light candles on a cross to remember family members who have passed during the year," said Kay, who was born in Montana but has lived in Seattle for more than 50 years.

When she was 30, she and her husband joined Broadview and brought up their children, a daughter, 56, and son, 50, in the church.

"It's been a gift I have shared with the church, rotating in different items, said Kay, who has 50 papier maché figures, several skulls, gourds, Continued on Page 9



Day of the Dead memorabilia Kay Groves has collected over many years.

Member shares Dia de los Muertes memorabilia

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tequila, Mexican coke, candy bars, ceramic clay figurines, paper marigolds and Mexican striped blankets on the altar.

Kay has also connected with other cultures. For 45 years, she has hosted in her home Japanese students who come to learn about American business. She hosted an Ethiopian boy when her children were in high school. She has traveled three times to Europe and once to South America. She also volunteers at a community food bank, with a clothing collection and at Mary's Place.

Gary, who has been at Broadview for three years, said the three churches worship together several times a year to show "we are connected to the same church."

The other services are for Solstice, Epiphany and Good Friday.

About 50 to 100 usually attend the joint services," he said.

The traditional All Saints or All Souls services are somber," Gary said, "but the Day of the Dead is celebrative."

Broadview does not have Latino members, but the church knows Latinos are increasing in the U.S. population.

The members of the Lutheran, Episcopal and UCC churches incorporated names of family members who had died during the previous year into a litany that Claire Smith, Broadview's music director set to music.

Claire, who has completed a master's degree in social work at the University of Washington, regularly seeks to build cultural sensitivity into the congregation.

She asked members of the churches to send her names of loved ones and she put them to the tune of "For the Healing of the Nations," which has been used to honor different coun-



A Mexican cross with lighted candles is set on a Mexican rug on a table in the aisle.

tries. The choir sang it.

Gary previously served eight years as executive director of Plymouth Healing Communities. He previously served 15 years as a Catholic priest.

When he moved back to Seattle, he lives nine blocks from where he grew up.

Gary earned a master's degree in 1982 in international affairs from Columbia University in New York City and studied theology at Catholic university

in Washington, D.C., where he graduated and was ordained in 1988.

His undergraduate degrees in 1980 was from the University of Washington in economics and German. He served as associate priest in Bremerton and as pastor in Linden and in Puyallup at a new church, Holy Disciple, that grew to more than 1,000 families.

"I blew my ecclesiastical career to live authentically,

working four years for a non-profit AIDS organization raising funds for people living with AIDS before I was hired by Plymouth Healing Community and transferred his Catholic ordination to UCC," Gary said.

At Broadview, the church's goal now is to partner with other churches and nonprofits to extend its influence and reach into the community, he said.

From reading UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer's book, *Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World*, Broadview, a church with about 35 attending on a Sunday, understands its mission is to build bridges in the North Seattle Community.

"North Helpline runs two food banks and provides rent and utilities to help people stay in their homes," Gary said.

"The church once rang bells and people came to worship, the church now and into the future is about creating community and partnering with the community to serve," Gary said.

"Instead of looking inward, we are looking outward to see how we can have an impact in the community where there is so much need," he said.

At a recent North Seattle summit, residents identified three needs: affordable housing, treatment for mental health and treatment for addiction. North Seattle population exploded quickly and the cost of housing has had an adverse impact on many people, Gary said.

"Some in our congregation are struggling with those needs," he said.

The Broadview building already hosts recovery groups every day but Sunday—Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous.

For information, call 206-363-8060 or email pastor-gary3@gmail.com.

Olympia faith communities, city partner to build tiny houses

United Churches of Olympia is partnering with other faith communities to address homelessness, including through tiny houses, said Tammy Stampfli, pastor.

The January 2018 Point in Time Count found 825 people in Olympia experiencing homelessness, up to 300 tents set up downtown and people camping in wooded areas near the city.

Because the 9th Circuit Court had recently decided on a Boise case that it is “cruel and unusual treatment” for a city to sweep away homeless encampments, unless the city provides somewhere the people can go, Olympia cannot close the camps, Tammy said.

In May, the mayor gathered faith communities. The meeting made it evident that faith communities did not know what they or the city could do, said Peter Cook, a deacon at the United Churches.

“Our church recently held a summit with Center Progressive Renewal and decided to work on homelessness, sanctuary and immigration, and eliminating racism,” said Peter, chair of the church’s Community Connections Committee, which is to implement the goals. “We chose to begin with focusing on tiny houses.”

The United Churches partnered with Evergreen Christian Center to host a workshop on tiny houses on Oct. 28. About 130 people from about 15 faith communities came.

They heard success stories from Eugene, Ore., where faith communities and nonprofits work together on tiny houses, and the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) of Seattle.

Some Seattle-area churches have built \$1,300 Conastoga-style houses in three hours with the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and have tiny house villages in their parking lots.

Several attendees were in-



At the fall workshop, participants built a Conestoga house.

Photo courtesy of Peter Cook

spired to urge their congregations to build tiny houses on their property, said Peter, who is organizing follow-up meetings to work with the City to introduce more tiny houses.

The workshop reminded faith communities that they need to engage with homeless people and create relationships.

The City of Olympia has started a pilot program to partner with faith communities:

- A faith community may build one to six houses on its property with support from a city contractor for screening, portable toilets, trash removal and links to social services.

- A medium-sized tiny house village of 10 to 20 houses with common facilities for water, toilets, laundry and cooking will be managed by a group of faith communities with support from a city contractor.

- Faith communities may make contributions to a tiny house village on city property with city-contracted management

He said that tiny houses are only part of the solution, as transitional housing to more permanent housing. He said faith communities should also support existing encampments and shelters, and recognize that people on the street “have skills we can use.”

Keith Stahley, director of

Olympia’s community planning and development department, was skeptical when Peter proposed the workshop, but after the workshop, he said the event exceeded his expectations. The workshop was an impetus for the city and faith communities.

“The city and faith communities are now developing a coordinated entry system for placing people in tiny homes. There are benchmarks for people to meet and they can stay up to a year while signing up for services and looking for jobs,” she said.

The churches will provide land for the tiny home dwellers and they may use the churches’ bathrooms or portable toilets, kitchens and a shower house.

“We are working with the City of Olympia to change ordinances and provide money,” Tammy said.

Evergreen Christian Center, an Assembly of God Church, has put up \$300,000 to hire a downtown homeless coordinator, because churches are providing the main response to homelessness through Union Gospel Mission, Shelters, Just Housing support of encampments. The Salvation Army is trying to expand the number of beds and open a day center.

United Churches continues to support an encampment. Members go to Monday meet-

ings at one, bringing propane stoves and plastic storage bins, and cleaning up trash.

“I have personally gone and visited with some people in the camps,” Tammy said. “They are just like the rest of us.”

Peter, who is retired from 35 years of working with the World Bank and U.S. AID to solve problems related to water and transportation systems around the world, and his wife settled in Olympia 12 years ago, halfway between their children in Eugene and Seattle. When they were living in Washington, D.C., during his work, they attended the Rock Springs UCC.

His interest in supporting people who are vulnerable started in the 1960s when he was teaching in the Peace Corps in Ghana. In the 1960s and 1970s, he studied engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), business administration at Harvard, studied urban planning at MIT, and was a lecturer there from 1987 to 1988.

In Olympia, Peter has been involved for 10 years with Camp Quixote, which grew from a political protest to pressure the city to support homeless people. It developed a camp that has rotated among churches for five years.

“Now an alliance of 11 faith communities is working in partnership with the city to identify sites for tiny houses,” Peter said. “We are working so more can move from camping to find permanent homes.”

“Some tiny houses may just have a bed and a door that can be locked so it’s a safe place to keep belongings,” he said.

Olympia plans for volunteers to build a village of 40 \$2,500 tiny houses by mid-December, Peter said. Faith communities are also making plans to build tiny houses.

For information, call 360-352-6225 or email pcook99@hotmail.com.

Pastor says law of love will change our humanity

Steve Davis is executive minister in collaboration with Kelle Brown, lead pastor, at Plymouth Church UCC in Seattle, and recently attended the Oct. 26 service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for the interment of the ashes of Matthew Shepard in the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

“Matthew was a 21-year-old college student in Laramie, Wyoming, who was tied up, savagely attacked and left for dead 20 years ago because he was gay,” said Steve.

“His murder attracted media attention and galvanized support for hate crimes laws protecting the rights of LGBTQ Americans,” he said.

Plymouth, where he has served since June 2016, is Steve’s first full time ministry in the UCC, following 27 years of ministry in the United Methodist Church in Texas, New Mexico and Georgia, after graduating from seminary at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

He was required to surrender ministerial credentials or be removed by church trial from the denomination when it came out during his divorce from his wife that he was gay.

Steve began attending the Cathedral of Hope UCC in Dallas and there he was encouraged to pursue ministry in the UCC. His ordination was recognized by the South Central Conference UCC when approved for Privilege of Call.

“I was not aware I was gay until my late 40s. I thought I was a strong ally, but through counseling recognized as a youth, I had no frame of reference to express my orientation,” Steve said.

Steve said when he saw a posting in early October on Facebook from the Washington Post that Matthew’s ashes would be interred in the Wash-



Steve Davis of Plymouth UCC attended interment of Matthew Shepard’s ashes.

Photo courtesy of Plymouth UCC

ington National Cathedral, he wanted to go, but didn’t know how. He asked Plymouth leaders for their support and they affirmed having Steve go and represent them on behalf of the church to “stand in solidarity with those whose voices were never heard in their experience of hate and those who lost their lives.”

Bing Tso, Plymouth’s vice moderator, connected him with a friend in the national UCC who helped make connections and have Steve be the point person with others attending to represent the UCC, offering their encouragement.

He connected and went with Matthew Braddock, pastor of Christ Congregational Church UCC in Silver Spring, Maryland.

“It was a transformative event,” Steve said.

Bishop Gene Robinson, who made the interment possible, spoke in the service of remembrance and thanksgiving, reminding people that churches, synagogues and mosques have often been the source of the greatest pain for LGBTQ people.

For Matthew, who grew up Episcopalian, to come back to the church, “it’s the cath-

edral saying some churches are different, some churches have been on this journey with you. Some churches not only welcome you, but also celebrate you,” said Bishop Robinson.

“Matthew’s parents, Dennis and Judy Shepard and their other son and daughter, Logan and Marlow, had not buried his ashes for fear the grave would be desecrated,” Steve said.

Matthew’s father said, “Matt was blind, just like this beautiful house of worship. He did not see skin color, religion or sexual orientation. All he saw was the chance to have another friend. It’s so important that we now have a home for Matt. A home that others can visit, a home that is safe from haters, a home that he loved dearly.”

Bishop Mariann Budde of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, spoke of young people coming from across the country, having tours and “being educated here. When they pass by, they will pass a plaque in his honor. They will see that this is a church that has learned from the example of violence that we need to stand and be counted as among those who work for justice and for the full embrace of all God’s children.”

Steve was later in the crypt and saw a group of middle and high school students hear Matthew’s story from a docent.

“These are people who were not alive when he was killed, but they heard his story and were inspired,” he said.

The docent also told the students that Matthew’s death and the death the same year of James Byrd, Jr., an African-American man who was dragged behind a pickup truck by three white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, had impact on Capitol Hill, where the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was passed in 2009 and signed

by President Barack Obama.

For Steve, it was empowering to be there. He had vivid memories of the murder and wondered how someone would do such a horrific act to someone just because they were not like them.

“I could see how the tragedy had been turned into a force for advocacy for human rights and human dignity,” he said, also telling of learning of the work of Matthew’s family to inspire others through the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

While in Washington, D.C., Steve said he stood in front of the Supreme Court and saw the words, “Equal justice under the law” inscribed on the building.

“Justice does not always happen equally,” he said. “Justice sometimes takes a long time to happen. Because of Matthew’s life, there will now be new tools for justice to be done and for there to continue to be a voice for advocacy, justice and inclusion for all.”

On Sunday, Nov. 4, Steve preached at Plymouth, on “the Greatest Commandments,” to love God and love all. His message “Undivided Love” also lifted up those killed in the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh..

“No human law will change hearts committed to hatred, but the law in the commandment to love God and love our neighbors will change our humanity,” he said. “We can bring justice into human laws, but we can bring transformation into our humanity when we live out our love for God and neighbor. We do not lack knowledge, we lack action. We cannot remain silent.”

“Loving God and everyone requires that we be engaged in our communities actively and we make love visible,” he said.

For information, call 206-622-4865 or email sdavis@plymouthchurchseattle.org.

Shalom UCC shares in voter education for new citizens

As part of a regional Faith Action Network (FAN) meeting on Sept. 30 at the mosque in West Richland, Lora Rathbone, a member of both the local League of Women Voters and the Tri-Cities Faith Action Network helped provide voter education to refugees who recently became citizens

Both the league and Tri-Cities FAN came to the conclusion that voter education is needed to have more people vote.

“We realized that getting people registered to vote wasn’t enough,” Lora said. “Many people say they don’t know enough about the issues, and many ballots were thrown out because they were not signed, and so on.”

So the league and Tri-Cities FAN hosted three voter education events in October.

- One was at a public library.
- Another was at a harvest festival with Spanish translation for Spanish speaking voters.
- A third was at the Islamic Center of the Tri-Cities, with translation in Arabic.

“Although we reached a dozen or so people at each event, we learned ways to improve the presentation and to reach more people,” she said.

They found that participating at an existing event is help-

ful, but the Harvest Festival was noisy.

“We decided holding an event with child care and children’s activities with a voting presentation is worth trying next year,” Lora said. “People were appreciative of our efforts and for the opportunity to feel included as the American citizens that they are.”

Lora has been involved with Shalom UCC in Richland and its Social Action Committee. She is also leader of the Tri-Cities Faith Action Network, which has been meeting with pastor Rick Matters of St. Paul’s Episcopal in Kennewick on the Poor People’s Campaign.

Members of the Tri-Cities FAN are also involved in the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition (TCIC), which has been holding “Know Your Rights” trainings for the Latino population and community outreach to overcome myths about this population.

Shalom UCC has been involved with the Islamic Center of the Tri-Cities for many years, helping plan and participate in Interfaith Potlucks, Peace Walks and directly aiding refugees.

For information, call 509-371-8000 or email shalom@shalomunitedchurch.org.



Girl with face painting at the Harvest Festival for Spanish-speaking voters with translation into Spanish.

Photos courtesy of Lora Rathbone



Woman at the Islamic Center of the Tri-Cities listens.

‘Peace Works’ is theme for 2019 youth camps

For the 2019 youth and family summer camps at N-Sid-Sen, the theme of the curriculum will be “Peace Works - Empowering the Next Generation of Peacemakers.”

The curriculum is an ecumenical project created by Inside Out, which the PNC has been using for several years.

“I particularly love this theme,” said Kaila Russell, chair of the Outdoor Ministry Task Force. “Our world needs peace and peacemakers.”

An overview of the curriculum says that “peace is a prayer for some and a life’s work for others. It’s a bless-

ing we share with others and a longing within each of our hearts. Scripture is filled with the stories of peace and justice and camp is the perfect place to share them. Peace isn’t always easy, but it’s always worth the effort, because we know that peace works!”

Kaila encourages churches to begin recruiting youth to go to camp this summer.

Intermediate and Junior High Camps will be July 7 to 13.

Kids Camp is July 14 to 17, overlapping a few days with Senior High Camp, which will be July 14 to 20,

Registration will be online at n-sid-sen.org.