



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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February-March 2010

Samoan concert benefits tsunami relief

Concert also raises awareness of Samoan church, life and culture.

Among the 250 people who lost their lives in the Sept. 30, 2009, tsunami in American Samoa and Western Samoa were relatives of people in 15 Samoan churches in the Northwest.

Many others have relatives whose homes were damaged or destroyed, and who are recovering from injuries.

Ulises Sala, pastor of the First Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Tacoma, said there is still need for food, clothing, building materials and medical supplies.

The church's 50-member choir concert Feb. 21 at Bellevue First Congregational United Church of Christ raised \$2,300 for ongoing tsunami relief.

Some of the funds will also help with



Dance and song help keep interest in the Samoan culture alive for younger generations.

Annual Meeting speaker urges watching trends

Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., will preach on "Communication, Compassion and Community" at the opening worship on Friday during the 2010 Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting from Friday to Sunday, April 23 to 25, in Wenatchee.

Nishioka, who promotes educational ministries, especially for youth and young adult ministries considers this post-denominational era a "Reformation-type age." His research with people in their 20s and 30s has found that young adults who were baptized, confirmed and in youth groups now consider themselves post-denomina-

tional. He also found that many are looking for mission nearby.

Growing up the son of a United Church of Christ pastor, he switched denominations when he began serving the Japanese Presbyterian Church in Seattle.



Rodger Nishioka

Nishioka earned a bachelor's degree at Seattle Pacific University in education and taught school in Tacoma. He earned a master's in theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, a doctor of divinity degree at Austin College and a PhD at Georgia State University.

An initial list of 16 workshops includes such topics as supporting "members in discernment" (formerly "in-care") as they explore their call to ministry, political advocacy, ideas for church treasurers, how the conference and committees operate, Celtic spirituality, gracious space for families and communities, InterPlay as a spiritual practice, music, discussion with keynoter, ending homelessness, clergy

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Listserv stirs communication questions

Conference Comments

By Mary Stamp
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On April 16 the UCC will launch its new 60-second Still Speaking ad and will rely on its 1 million+ supporters to "spiral this viral message" around the world by texting, Twittering, Facebooking and emailing it to their friends, families, colleagues and constituents. Our target audience is more likely sitting at computer screens than TV screens, says Ben Guess, the UCC's director of communication.

Recent interchanges on the Pacific Northwest Conference's Yahoo! listserv group have led to reflection on whether it should be only a source of conference events, information and resources, or also a venue for discussion and dialogue among its 216 members.

"List members are waking up a desire for more connection because of the impact of other social networking technologies," said Jim CastroLang, yahoo group manager. "It was a bulletin board. Now we need to decide if it will be for announcements, pronouncements or discussions.

"It's good that people are seeing emerging technologies as a way to build connections and relationships," he added, noting that "managing a discussion group will be a challenge, but a good one."

Members are a mix of clergy and laity, leaders of conference boards and committees and church office staff who have found the yahoo group as a source of objective information and an exchange on ideas and resources, such as a recent question about whether churches have one or two annual meetings.

Started in 1999 by Jeff Spencer, who now serves a church in California, the listserv has been moderated for five years by CastroLang, acting minister at Colville First Congregational UCC.

Membership is up from 120 members two years ago, and there is room for growth, he said. People interested in joining the group can send an email to pnwc-ucc@yahoo.com.

On Feb. 5, CastroLang polled participants to learn their preferences: 1) information sharing only, 2) open discussion of issues and concerns or 3) information only but create another forum for discussions. He's waiting for 100 replies.

"The issue for management and for those on the listserv is one of overload," he explained. "How much exchange do pastors and lay leaders need? What would the group say "yes" to and what would it say "no" to? We can have too much of a good thing. If people become overwhelmed by it, some might opt out of the loop for some information they may want," he noted.

Currently, management involves reading content and thinking of the implications for the group. Discussions on issues will take more time.

As part of the online discussion about the options, Spencer said people who don't want "a bunch of emails" can manage their settings to receive only one email a day that is a digest of the day's emails.

"Others don't like the discussions on listservs because they aren't interested in more opinions about subjects—sometimes subjects on which they care little," he said. So an alternative is to have two email lists, one for discussion and the other for an-

ouncements, which are also posted on the discussion group. A third option he suggests is the frequent use of the delete key.

Discussion arose with several emails sent recently. One was an unsigned email encouraging boycotting an oil company. Another shared an email from a friend of a friend, reporting on the chaos of relief response in Haiti. CastroLang researched the information on the oil company and found through snopes.com that it was "a mixture of true and false information," spam circulating since 2006.

He suggests senders check with Snopes.com, an internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors and misinformation, before spreading rumors and claims.

Several readers objected to anonymous pieces for persuasion. So several suggested how to identify people sending posts. One questioned if the purpose of the listserv is to promote boycotts.

Dan Stern of Broadview Community UCC in Seattle wants "more public debate, not less."

Mimi Lane of Everett First Congregational UCC said that "as a denomination we often participate in justice issues and inform each other about them. We don't have to agree with everything, but knowing what is going on is helpful."

Jeannette Solimine of Colfax added that living in a rural community where there is limited interaction with other UCC clergy "can be lonely at times."

Anni Stedman a member of St. Paul's UCC suggested including identity information in a header or footer to help people know more about each other.

Discussion on the bad experience of a firefighter in Haiti led to Carol Stanley of Eastgate Congregational UCC in Bellevue saying there are "all types of experiences in Haiti." She said her son Brandon is having "a positive, helpful experience" through USAID. Her comment was followed by interest in having Eastgate host an event after his return Feb. 9 for people from the conference to hear about his experiences.

CastroLang suggested courtesy, identification and direct response to the people making postings.

Listserv use will be included in the conference's planned evaluation of communication tools.

Conference Minister Mike Denton commented that there is a need for discussion on how best to use it and not to embarrass people because of small controversies that become annoying and may reduce use of the listserv.

"We need to build connections within the conference that break through our distances and busyness. We need to be creative with technology to give people options," CastroLang said.

For information, call 509-998-7203 or email jimcl@icehouse.net.

Transitions announced

Kent French is the new lead pastor for First Congregational United Church of Christ in Bellingham.

Amy Roon was installed as associate pastor of University Congregational UCC in Seattle during January.

Debi Hasdorff has left Cheney UCC to serve a church in White Bear Lake, Minn.

Amos Smith at Zion Philadelphia in Ritzville has accepted a call in Oregon.

Donald Schmidt is ending his interim at Bellevue First and will start at Admiral UCC in Seattle on March 1.

Deb Allen left University place Jan. 24.

UCC President visits Seattle and Spokane during March

UCC General Minister and President Geoffrey Black will visit the conference March 12 and 13, meeting with clergy for lunch at noon, Friday, March 12, and present at an open potluck dinner at 7 p.m. at First Congregational UCC in Bellevue.

He will be in Spokane for an open potluck lunch at noon, Saturday, March 13.

UCC youth leaders meet

UCC youth leaders—volunteers, paid staff and clergy—will meet from noon to 4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 27, at University Congregational UCC, 4515 16th NE in Seattle. For information, contact Tara Barber at barbertara@hotmail.com or Margaret Iribarra mirribarra@universityucc.org.

Transitional ministry training set for March 16 to 18

Bill Peterson, professional transition specialist with the Interim Ministry Network, will lead a workshop on Fundamentals of Transition Tuesday to Thursday, March 16 to 18, at Palisades Retreat Center in Federal Way. For information, visit www.imnedu.org/fundamentals.htm.

Profile writing workshop set

The Conference will give a profile writing workshop for any member in discernment or clergy from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Saturday, March 27 at the Conference office.

NW Women's Retreat is in fall

The Northwest Regional Women's Retreat #9 will be held Nov. 5 to 7 at Kah-Nee-Ta resort in Warm Springs, Ore., on the theme, "Come to the Oasis, Our Affirmation of Spirit, Inspiration and Soul," with keynote speaker Carolyn Kortge.

Women's Retreat is March 5-7

"Wholesome Bread: The Sustenance We Need for Life" is the theme for the 2010 PNC Women's Retreat from 7 p.m., Friday to 11 a.m., Sunday, March 5 to 7, at Pilgrim Firs. Register at www.pilgrimfirs.org.

Men's retreat is Feb. 19-21

The 19th annual PNC Men's Gathering and Retreat will be held Feb. 19 to 21 at Pilgrim Firs Conference Center to consider the importance of imagination for creating vision about possibilities and helping participants understand God's will. Register at WWW.PNWMen.org

Benefit set for Tent City 4

Amy Florence, Susan Strick and members of Kirkland Congregational UCC choir will present "Songs of Life," a benefit concert for Tent City 4 and the Emergency Feeding Program, at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 6, at the church, 106 5th Ave. For information, call 425-233-9097 or email mackmaday@aim.com

Teams rebuild in New Orleans

Randy Crowe, managing director of N-Sid-Sen, led a work camp in February at New Orleans, continuing work at long-term recovery and rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Bobbi Virta, pastor of Ferndale UCC, will lead a Work Camp II from March 20 to 27. Both groups will stay at the Little Farms United Church of Christ.

For information on the March team, call 360-384-3302. Register online at www.n-sid-sen.org.

Walter Brueggemann speaks

The Lecture Series of University Congregational UCC in Seattle and the

Dale & Leone Turner Lectures features Walter Brueggemann, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. The UCC pastor, author and theologian will speak on "The Drama of Rehabilitation," with a focus on "The Descent into Truth at 7 p.m., Friday, April 9, and on "The Ascent into Hope," from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 10, at the church, 4515 16th Ave. NE.

He will speak at 9 a.m., Sunday on "From Obedience to Praise: Psalm 73" and preach at 10 a.m., on "Authorized for Risk." For information, call 206-524-6244, ext 3447 or email jsp@universityucc.org.

PNC plans retreats, camps

The 2010 retreats and camps sessions at Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen have begun.

At Pilgrim Firs, the Confirmation Retreat, April 16 to 18; LGBTQ Family and Friends, May 29 to 31, and Young Adults, June 26 to 28.

Summer at Pilgrim Firs includes Work Camp, May 28 to 30, led by Deeg Nelson, managing director. Other camps are Intermediate, July 5 to 10; Senior High, July 11 to 17; Junior High, July 18 to 24; Kids, July 25 to 28, and Family, August 29 to Sept. 2.

Upcoming events at N-Sid-Sen are the Women's Retreat, May 14 to 16; Work Camp, June 6 to 12; Kids, June 27 to 30; Intermediate, July 5 to 11; Senior High Aqua, July 11 to 17; Family Camp #1, July 25 to 31; Junior High Aqua, Aug. 1 to 7, and Family Camp #2, Aug. 8 to 14.

Sabeel plans event

Sabeel-Puget Sound, a nonprofit promoting justice through nonviolence in the Holy Land, plans a conference Friday to Saturday, Feb. 19 to 20, at St. Mark's Cathedral to explore the situation in Israel and Palestine today, the role of U.S. policy and nonviolent strategies for peace. Sabeel founder and leader Naim Ateek will speak. For information, call 800-838-3006 or visit www.brownpaper-tickets.com.

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Samoan concert raises funds for rebuilding

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losses the church sustained when its sanctuary burned in a Christmas fire.

Peter Lin, who is on Bellevue First's outreach committee and has been involved in the UCC's Pacific Islander Asian American Ministry (PAAM) since 1995, helped plan the concert. He related with the church, as one of 10 PAAM churches in the conference.

"After the tsunami, Bellevue First planned a concert in November, then rescheduled it for January and postponed it again because of the fire," said Lin, who has attended Bellevue First since he moved there from Olympia in 2007. He also attends the Taiwanese Christian Church in Seattle.

He said that before the concert, a map was projected showing how far—5,000 miles—Seattle/Bellevue is from Samoa. He also valued the experience of learning about Samoan history, culture, life and customs through the program, dance and song.

Telling of the fire, Sala said

his church's Christmas Eve service ended at 9 p.m. At midnight, his family, who live in a house on the church campus, saw the fire in the sanctuary.

The Tacoma Fire Department brought the rapidly spreading fire under control by 1 p.m. Sala said an electrical fire started in an extension cord for Christmas tree lights.

Damage to the seven-year-old, 4,000-square-foot building, at 3717 E. Portland Ave., is mostly covered by insurance, so they will be able to rebuild.

The 200-member congregation held worship for six weeks at First Samoan Church at Fort Lewis. In mid-February, they began worshipping in their new social hall, which had been slated for completion in May

Sala shared some background about First Samoan Church in Tacoma and its ministry.

Eight of the 15 Samoan churches in the region relate to the Pacific Northwest Conference, and have roots in the Congregational Christian Churches of American Samoa (CCCAS).



Samoan men perform a dance for cultural celebration.

American Samoa is a U.S. territory. Western Samoa is independent, he explained.

More than 60 CCCAS churches relate with the UCC, which at General Synod in 1999 adopted partnership in mission and ministry with the CCCAS.

Funds raised at the concert

will be sent to the CCCAS.

"The tsunami has had much emotional impact on our congregation," Sala said, expressing appreciation for assistance from FEMA, other nations, the UCC and World Vision. "We have had nurses, doctors and relatives of people who died or were injured go to help."

Travel to American Samoa as a territory is convenient, although expensive, he said, adding that many Samoans in the Northwest have served in the U.S. military, retired and purchased homes here.

"Now children and grandchildren born and raised here are influenced by the individualism and secularism of U.S. culture," Sala explained. "That has affected our lives and families. We offer a youth program to teach cultural values and have bilingual worship, as well as encourage travel to keep up our customs and ways of life.

"The church is the only place people see our culture alive here," he explained.

Not wanting to be isolated, the church has dual affiliation with the PNC-UCC and the



Samoan women's ensemble prepares to perform.

Korean partners invite delegation of 10 people

The Conference's Global Ministries Committee is recruiting 10 people to visit the East Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea May 10 to 18 as part of the global partnership of the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ Conference and the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Seventeen delegations have participated in exchanges with the PROK, living with host families and learning about the life, issues, joys and struggles of Koreans as they live their faith in their setting and culture.

Participants are Ed Evans, Terry Teigen, Jim Spraker, Francesca Sabrina, KJ Royle, Kathy and David Helseth, Medora Moburg, Clint Cannon and John Williams.

Ed Evans, chair of the joint UCC conference and Disciples regional Global Ministries Committee and leader of the delegation, said, "We seek to learn about our sisters and brothers in Korea."

Since the PROK formed in 1953, he said it has had a prophetic understanding of the church and its mission in society. It is committed to dialogue, engagement, diversity, reconciliation, democracy, human rights and reunification, along with providing food aid to North Korea and being active in national and world ecumenism.

For information, call Evans at 360-683-4704 or email edevans@aol.com to arrange for delegates to speak upon returning.

German church plans summer clergy symposium

The Global Ministries Committee has received an invitation for clergy to attend a Pastoral Colloquy on "Building the Presence of Christ in the Neighborhood: Building the Church and Serving the Community" August 15 to 20 at the Pastoral College in Brandenburg, Germany.

Frank Schuermer-Behrmann of the Berlin-Brandenburg United Evangelical Church has invited representatives from the UCC conference and Disciples region to join representatives from the UEK's other global partner, the Penn Central Conference.

Four years ago pastors Steve Erikson of Shalom Richland and Darrell Berg of Coupeville, Wash., attended a colloquy. Former Pacific NW Conference Minister Randy Hyonen also nurtured contacts with Berlin-Brandenburg.

Discussion leaders are Viola Kennert, director of the Brandenburg Pastoral College and Hal Taussig, visiting professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York since 1998 and co-pastor of Chestnut Hill United Methodist Church in Philadelphia since 1990.

The program will include field trips to urban and rural churches making a difference in their communities, as well as to landmarks in Berlin and Brandenburg.

For information, call 509-535-1813.

Global partnership connects UCC, Disciples to Koreans

The global partnership experiences as delegates and as hosts helps participants broaden their perspectives of the world.

The ties with the East Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) are a regional commitment of both the PNCUCC and the Northwest Disciples of Christ.

Two years ago, Mary Ann Teeters, a member of First Christian in Bellingham, joined six UCC delegates. She particularly valued home stays with two Korean families, one young, modern family and one traditional family.

The young family, who spoke English, lived in a high rise and would be hard to distinguish from a U.S. city family, she said.

The older family had a son who spoke English, but he was not always there. They had chairs at a desk and at a kitchen table, but otherwise they sat on the floor around a low table and the wife ironed on the floor. The family went to church four or five times a week and had a Bible study in their home.

"In worship, I realized even if I didn't understand the words, I could understand the spirit and intensity of devotion in the praise and music," Teeters said. "We made a connection so I feel I have family in Seoul."

"Trips to the demilitarized zone impressed on me how close their 'enemy' is, yet how many want reunification," she said. "For me, the Korean War was ancient history. I was a child then, but to them it's something they continue to live."

Teeters, who works in manufacturing sales, found she had more in common with Koreans than she expected, especially in faith.

"It was quite a spiritual journey for me," she said, taking a leap of faith, being curi-

ous and asking questions.

"The week before I learned of the opportunity, I prayed, saying I was ready to do what God wanted me to do," she said, learning about Korea outside history and TV's "MASH."

Having lived on a farm in Indiana for 24 years, she wanted to know where their food came from and saw farms as she drove in the countryside. At the DMZ she saw trees in the North cut for firewood to cook.

Lillian Moir of First Christian Church in Bellingham helped Teeters in 2009 host Korean guests for worship and a potluck dinner to learn about their ministry. For her, the experience reinforced what she knew from more than 35 years of serving in overseas mission and communication with the Disciples.

"We connect congregations with the world beyond to let them know we are part of one world," she said. "As we relate with people from around the world, we learn that life and faith are not just about our families and immediate neighbors. These connections help us understand our common interests, hopes and dreams with people around the world."

For information, call 360-778-1350 or email mteeters@flowserve.com.



Elder Yi Kai Tong and Mary Ann Teeters in Korea.

Retirees consider forming a new church

In visiting UCC Pension Board annuity recipients on the Olympic Peninsula, Ed Evans of Sequim found many feeling isolated from the wider UCC. Six retired clergy and a chaplain are interested in starting a new UCC church.

Dee and Bob Brauningler decided to retire to Port Angeles after years when both serve churches in Nebraska.

Barb Laski, a hospital chaplain in Port Townsend; Donna Babb, who retired from churches in California, and Evans all live in Sequim.

Marge Terpstra, who retired from the Hawaii conference, and Bruce Van Blair, who



Barb Laski and Maureen McLain lead communion.

had served Mercer Island UCC before retiring from 15 years serving churches in California,

live in Port Townsend.

“Because many had retired from other conferences, they

did not know each other, so last summer I invited them to a picnic at my house,” Evans said. “I told them they had all expressed to me their lament that there is no UCC presence on the peninsula.” The nearest churches are in Forks and Suquamish, which Evans and Laski attend.

“I asked how much energy they had to do something,” Evans said, “and found energy to create a new church start.”

He offered to be part of a shared ministry and Dee Brauningler agreed to coordinate leadership.

Evans talked with Tom Thresher, pastor at Suquamish UCC, about starting as a satellite congregation and has talked with the conference’s Church Development Committee and Conference Minister Mike Denton about the channels and steps to start a church.

Evans attended Magnolia UCC and United Churches of Olympia, before leaving broadcast journalism to ministry. He served an interim at Blaine UCC and 10 years at Vancouver UCC before retiring.

For information, call 360-683-4704.



Core group of retirees and persons interested in starting a UCC church on the Olympic Peninsula meet on second Saturdays each month for worship in the living room of Ed Evans in Sequim.

Annual Meeting agenda includes bylaws changes

Continued from Page 1 tax questions, Unified national UCC governance, the spiritual tasks of aging, beyond the progressive church, “Experiencing Faith Practices” curricula and “Money Doesn’t Grow on Trees, but...”

Carol Scott Kassner is planning the Saturday morning worship, and Conference Minister Mike Denton will

preach for the closing worship on Sunday.

There are also plans as part of the Annual Meeting’s 2009 vote to be a Global Ministries Conference to connect with one or more UCC mission personnel to learn about their lives and ministries.

In business, delegates will vote on a 2011 budget, a resolution from General

Synod on changes to constitution and bylaws related to different roads to authorized ministry, bylaws changes related to the PNC Board and Council makeup, said Dennis Hollinger-Lant, chair of the board. Delegates will be assigned to hearings to review the items of business.

For information, call 206-824-1770.

Annual Meeting 2010 will be held April 23 to 25 in Wenatchee.

Five in PNC visit about 140 annuity recipients

Annuitant visitors let retirees know the UCC cares

Just over a year ago, Ed Evans of Sequim, Gail Crouch of Seattle and Mimi Lane of Arlington agreed to take responsibility, on behalf of the UCC Pension Boards, for visiting people in Western Washington who receive UCC annuities. Previously, David Nelson had covered all that area.

For three years, Bob Jackson, a former Presbyterian pastor who served Peshastin UCC from 1999 to 2005 before retiring, visits 20 Eastern Washington annuitants, traveling from his home in East Wenatchee.

“Our goal is to let those on UCC annuities know that we remember them and are grateful for their years of service,” said Jackson, who also does supply preaching.

After he retired 15 years ago, Nelson—who served UCC churches in Cathlamet, University Place, Ferndale, Tonasket and Newport—visited retired clergy, their spouses, their widows and widowers. He kept attuned to their needs, illnesses, surgeries, crises and tragedies. He reported needs to the Pension Boards, which gives grants from the Christmas Fund.

For 10 years, he made 20 calls on the East side and 80 on the West side each year. Recently his assignment has been those in Horizon House.

In 2008 Doug Borko of the Pension Boards began reviewing assignments and the job demands. He recruited deans in each region to keep in contact with the annuitant visitors. Lynne Simcox, of Seattle became the western regional dean, responsible for more than 30 visitors, each of whom was to visit 30 to 50 annuitants. Finding that Nelson had 125 on his list, she recruited Evans,

Crouch and Lane.

Crouch, who served 15 years at University Congregational and three at Bellevue First after entering ministry as a second career, visits nearly 50 retired clergy or widows/ers from Seattle to Issaquah.

Lane, who lives in Arlington and attends First Congregational UCC in Everett, visits 28 retirees in Northwestern Washington and phones several in Alaska.

Evans, who lives in Sequim, covers on the Olympic Peninsula, Gig Harbor, Olympia, Aberdeen and Tacoma.

Crouch enjoys visiting many who are friends and have served in ministry from 20 to 50 years. She finds most of those in their 60s and 70s are doing well, but many who are older face health issues and struggle with the costs of prescriptions.

“I inform them of new programs, such as vision coverage that is one of the options in the health insurance programs offered by the Pension Boards,” she said clarifying that her visits are not pastoral visits but are made on behalf of the Pension Boards. Most annuitants are in churches and have pastors to provide pastoral care.

“I enjoy hearing stories of those who have worked in ministry, especially those who were in mission fields,” she said.

In her retirement, like many of those she visits, Crouch has done pulpit supply and short-term interims. Having taught the UCC polity class at the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University, she also works with some students and teaches there on occasion.

Lane, anticipating difficulty traveling in the winter, visited the people who live on the islands of Northwest Washington, leaving those who live nearer to her for the winter.

Since retiring two years ago, she said she has been more active in the conference and



Bob Jackson



Gail Crouch



Ed Evans



Mimi Lane

serves on the Committee on Ministry, attends retreats and ministers' meetings.

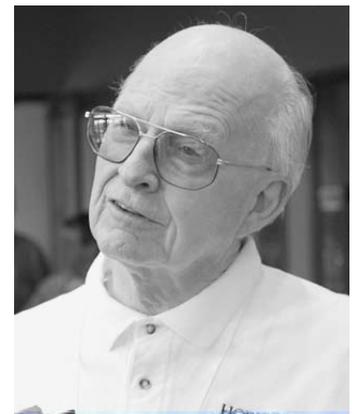
“It’s a nice assignment to tell people how much their work in ministry was appreciated,” said Lane, who was a hospital chaplain for 30 years.

Visits also give her a sense of the history of churches and ministers. Sometimes she takes older women who have few chances to go out to a restaurant for lunch. Also, by visiting in homes, she can spot economic or health concerns that may need attention.

Lane and Crouch said they have talked with clergy of other denominations and found that no others are doing visitation of annuitants.

“Older people feel cut off. Our contact says we care and lets people know they can call us if they have questions or problems,” Lane said.

In an interview five years



David Nelson

ago, Nelson said an issue for many retired clergy is having to live on a limited income, because they served small churches and earned modest salaries. Those who opted for variable plans were affected as the stock market declined in recent years.

For information, visit www.pbucc.org.

Churches can download new UCC curricula

Conference now has three partners in education to introduce churches to new "Faith Practices" curriculum.

The Pacific Northwest Conference's three Partners in Education to help churches plan for Christian Education and Nurture are Gale Peterson, director of Christian education at Kirkland UCC, and Donald Schmidt, interim at Bellevue First Congregational through February, on the Westside, and Lorna Kropp, Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane. Peterson and Kropp, who attended the national introductory workshop on "Faith Practices" in early February in Nashville, Tenn., will lead a workshop at Annual Meeting.

By Lorna Kropp

The UCC is inviting churches, educators and writers to share in creating new educational resources for congregations that will be available for download from the Internet by subscription.

Called "Faith Practices: Worship, Learning and Serving for Vital Congregations," the materials will feature 24 faith practices with four practices to be developed each year for the next six years.

The first four practices, coming out in 2010-2011 are: "Forming Community: Giving and Receiving Hospitality"; "Being Stewards: Living Stewardship"; "Centering Life: Keeping Sabbath," and "Living Creatively: Playing and Living Joyfully." The resources are meant to provide flexibility in planning for churches. Subscriptions will range from \$100 for one component to \$600 for an annual subscription for the whole site. There will be discounts for small churches.

Resources can be used in various settings—worship, education, church school, workshops, retreats, church leaders, small groups, outdoor ministry, vacation church school, midweek programs and community settings.

While the resources can be used with age-related groups in a traditional setting, the hope is that they will help congregations extend learning to additional settings, such



Gale Peterson and Lorna Kropp at a recent "Faith Practices" training in Nashville.

as integrating worship and learning, inter-generational programs and faith searching stirred up in the "God is Still Speaking Campaign."

The planning has grown out of conversations among church leaders and educators about faith formation. They believe that growing in faith is about living out faith, seeking meaning and exercising faith as a lifelong process, not something limited to children and youth.

A planning premise is that new understandings and spiritual development come through participation in community—sharing in church life, joining in worship, serving others and engaging in spiritual practices of prayer and contemplation.

The organization of Faith Practices contrasts with the other curricula available—lectionary based, or Bible-story based—by not being linear, nor based on the church year themes. As more themes are developed, churches will be able to pick and choose to craft an individualized sequence of themes.

Congregations will want to be purposeful in planning education goals. Does the church want its education program to develop participants to progress on a spiritual journey; to become full participants in the community of faith; to seek justice and serve those in need, and to be well versed in biblical stories and Christian traditions?

Schmidt, who begins in March as pastor at Admiral UCC in Seattle, is also one of the editors and Ana Gobledale, interim at Kirkland, is one of the writers for these resources.

For information visit <http://www.ucc.org/education/practices/> Information about becoming a development partner is available at: <http://www.ucc.org/education/practices/development-partner.html>.

