



# Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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## PNC learns about power of organizing

**'Faith is important, but faith without action is meaningless,' said Joe Chrastil.**

Joe Chrastil, regional organizer for the Industrial Areas Foundation that was started by Sol Alinsky in the poor working class area of Chicago, has shared that model of guiding people to action from Spokane, to Puget Sound, to Sidney and Brisbane, Australia, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria, B.C., and now in Montana.

He started the Spokane Alliance and then the Sound Alliance.

"All work for justice is local," said Joe, who found his way to Westminster UCC after leaving the Catholic Church. "I've valued how important faith is, but faith without action is meaningless. Action matters."

For him, action needs to involve strategizing, focusing and aiming for  
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**Amber Dickson, statewide coordinator for the Faith Action Network, engaged in a model of listening with Joe Chrastil, a regional organizer for IAF Northwest.**

## Wendy Blight is the new PNC Board moderator

Wendy Blight, the new PNC Board of Directors moderator, succeeding Peter Ilgenfritz, grew up in the United Church of Christ, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle. She has been involved in the conference and on the board of directors for many years.

As she begins as moderator she sees the need for the PNC to continue next year to deepen relationships. She sees that happening on several levels.

"First, we need to deepen relationships among clergy and lay leaders—moderators, treasurers and others," she said. "Second we need to deepen relationships within congregations and between congregations to strengthen networking to do justice and do community building.

**Hillary Coleman is  
the vice moderator.**

"Third, we need to build on community outreach in terms of how to do 'power with' rather than 'power over' or 'power for,'" she continued.

Wendy said the board is facilitating efforts to expand on Annual Meeting.

"We need to work with people on the margins and people in community networks to build a world that is just for everyone," she said.

Wendy brings strengths in strategic planning that will help bring people on the board, committees and in conference

into alignment with a vision. There's a place for everyone and a place for the church, she said.

"I hope all will see how they are part of the picture of bringing a more just world," Wendy said. "I hope they will match their skills and their concerns with those of their communities."

"Working for justice for all increases vitality," she said.

"When churches reach out into the community beyond their walls and get to know their neighbors and issues people are facing, they can align with what others are doing," she said. That leverages our energy and increases vitality in congregations."

As those at Annual Meeting expect  
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# Deepening relationships leads to justice, kindness

## Conference Comments



By The Rev.  
Mike Denton  
Conference  
Minister

**Deepening  
relationships  
requires  
listening  
and  
much  
more.**

“To deepen relationships, do justice, do acts of loving kindness and walk humbly with God.”

If you’ve been within hearing distance of a conference event over the last several months, you’ve likely heard this refrain. For those who haven’t, the board adopted these as our conference intentions after the Rev. Courtney Stange Tregear, minister for church vitality, did a series of listening sessions throughout the conference in an effort to uncover what it meant to be a vital church. “Deepen relationships” and Micah 6:8 framed the substance of what she heard.

Living into these intentions has required more listening and, as I’ve used these to frame my own work, I’ve been awed by the depth these frames offer. Calling them “frames” probably isn’t even fully accurate any more. They’ve become the lenses through which I see our conference and our work together. Each time I think I’ve gone as far as I could with one of these intentions, there’s still another layer that emerges. Recently, I’ve been focusing on one of these phrases in particular.

When I first considered “deepen relationships,” I assumed two things; people want to be reached out to more and want more opportunities to get together. It wasn’t too long after this that, although that was true, it was clear that many people were looking for these gatherings to be somehow substantial and transformative. We just didn’t want to acknowledge that each other existed, we wanted to know and understand something significant about the other people we spent time with.

What’s become even clearer is something that, at first, might seem like it should be obvious. It’s not simply that we want to know and understand something significant about each other but that we have a deep hunger for wanting to be known and understood. This is different from our commercially encouraged narcissistic compulsion to share significant amounts of information about ourselves. This is more about the sacred, existential impulse that is as important as eating well, sleeping well, creating and praying. It is about more than the accumulation of names and is all about our intertwining recognition of the fullness of life when life is regarded as our collective experience of joy, hope, pain, love, healing, grief, guilt, doubt, faith, awe, etc.

What’s also become clearer is that to live

into this will mean we’re swimming against some strong currents and are going to have to help each other a lot. The isolation that many of us in ministry and our various church settings are experiencing is not just a church problem.

Vivek Murthy, former U.S. Surgeon General, wrote an article in the Harvard Business Review about the loneliness epidemic. He cites research that suggests that the numbers of those suffering with loneliness have doubled since the 1980s. At least 40 percent of Americans report that they struggle with this condition. There is evidence that it reduces a person’s lifespan as much as smoking 16 cigarettes a day. Loneliness “is also associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression and anxiety. At work, loneliness reduces task performance, limits creativity and impairs other aspects of executive function such as reasoning and decision making.” In England, it has become such a growing health concern that the government has established a new position and office to work to address it. Recently, the Center for Disease Control also released a study citing the rise in suicides across the U.S. Among the suggestions to communities seeking to reduce suicide? “Connect people within their communities. Communities can offer programs and events to increase a sense of belonging among residents.”

The stated intention to “deepen relationships” is both a calling for us but also a calling to us to take action in our communities and the world. Deepening relationships and confronting loneliness is as important a call as the calls many of us have answered to feed, clothe and house people. However, the big difference is that the best way to address this loneliness epidemic—maybe more appropriately called a “drought” or “famine”—is by inviting a mutual recognition of loneliness; a mutual need for deepening relationships; a mutual desire to be known.

Beginning to address this requires intent. To start it will require closing our laptops, putting down our phones, taking a deep breath and, with faith and courage, taking a deep breath, reaching out our hand and saying something like this: “Hi! My name is Mike. It is so good to meet you.”

This, my siblings in Christ, may be becoming one of our most important statements of faith

## Transitions announced

**Amy Hitchens** has been called as pastor by Normandy Park UCC in Seattle.

**Sue Sutherland-Hanson**, a member in discernment in the PNC and member at Suquamish UCC, died on May 19, 2018. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Washington and a master of divinity at Earlham University.

## Church honors organist

Forks Congregational UCC recently celebrated Juanita Weissenfels' 45 years of playing organ and piano for the church.

For information, call 360-374-5319 or email [elhenry44@gmail.com](mailto:elhenry44@gmail.com).



## Prospect shows film on energy

There was a screening of the film, "Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution," at 7 p.m., Friday, June 15, at Prospect Congregational UCC, 1919 E. Prospect St. in Seattle.

After the film, the Prospect Social and Environmental Justice Team (SEJT) held a discussion with a representative from [350Seattle.org](http://350Seattle.org).

## UCC offers workshop on giving

United Church of Christ and Lake Institute on Faith & Giving are offering a seminar experience on "Creating a congregational culture of generosity: How do you inspire generosity?"

It will be held Saturday to Sunday, July 21-22, at Sunnyslope Church 3330 School St. in Wenatchee.

The pastor demonstrates how pastors and ministry leaders can energize congregational generosity by exploring steps to create lasting cultural change within a congregation. The seminar is for teams from congregations.

Seminar leaders are Andrew DeBraber and Mark Kirchoff. Andrew is a pastor, community organizer, nonprofit executive director and now as a major gift officer for the UCC. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Marc, an ordained American Baptist minister, is development officer for International Cooperating Ministries.

The fee for the seminar is \$115 per person. The deadline to register is June 25.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

## Disabilities board seeks two

The UCC Disabilities Ministries Board Nominations Committee is seeking two people, who are passionate about disability ministry. The Board is made up of people with disabilities, professionals who work in the disability field, and family members of people with disabilities. The mission is to encourage the denomination to create worship and meeting places, programs and leadership opportunities that are Accessible to All (A2A) and welcoming and inclusive of all persons with disabilities. The openings are for two service terms, one ending in October 2019 and the other in October 2022.

For information, visit

[uccdm.org](http://uccdm.org).

## Spirit Workshops seek socks

On Sunday, June 10, Spirit Workshops at University Congregational UCC focused on "The Importance of Socks," said Beth Amsbury, Spirit Workshop convener.

They talked about socks in literature, socks in life, and socks in the lives of the other. The gathering culminated in a celebration of knitted goodness: a sock drive! People brought new socks to give away, or cash to put into a kitty to buy socks.

The socks are for Camp Second Change, a Seattle encampment of unhoused neighbors and friends of Spirit Workshops.

Spirit Workshops are participatory gatherings for the spiritual-but-not religious to connect with spirit and community in an inclusive setting.

Workshop participants have been considering how to respond to housing in Seattle, and across the country with the Poor People's Campaign.

For information, call 206-524-2322 or visit [universityucc.org](http://universityucc.org).

## Webinar on Creation set

For the June Creation Justice Webinar, the UCC has teamed up with [350.org](http://350.org) and the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth for a session on "Successful Climate Action" at 1 p.m., Wednesday, June 17.

Masada Disenhouse from [350.org](http://350.org) will share how faith communities can make a difference on climate through local campaigns to transition society away from fossil fuels.

Registration is at <https://ucc.zoom.us/meeting/register/f41b73a27144159cd746f627e8486654>

## Normandy Park hosts vigil

Normandy Park Congregational UCC hosted a Interfaith Vigil on Monday, June 18, with the Highline Ecumenical Circle in response to the zero tolerance policy at the southern U.S. border for asylum seekers fleeing violence in Central America.

Normandy Park is near the Federal Detention Center in Sea-Tac, where 206 parents who have been separated from their children are being detained. Amy Hitchens, pastor, worked with asylum seekers during seminary at Pacific School of Religion.

The Church Council of Greater Seattle is in conversation with faith leaders and plans actions and events, including the Interfaith Vigil. There are plans for a community briefing on World Refugee Day hosted at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle provided by the Northwest Immigration and Refugee Program and community leaders.

For information, call 206-204-3855 or email [info@thechurchcouncil.org](mailto:info@thechurchcouncil.org).

## Northshore doing teach-ins

Northshore UCC in Woodinville did a "Truthful-Tuesday Teach-In" related to the Poor People's Campaign. It will hold another teach-in on at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 26, at the church, 18900 168th Ave. NE. After a potluck and pre-recorded life stream "Teach-In" from a June 11 event, there will be community reflection and conversation on the movement and how to be involved. For information, email [mountainclimber4@gmail.com](mailto:mountainclimber4@gmail.com).

## Programs receive offering

Part of the PNC Annual Meeting offerings of \$3,383 went to La Casa Hogar in Yakima and part went to the PNC Communities of Practice. A special offering was collected for Friends of the Conference. It totaled \$4,156, said Kara Newsome, interim accounting manager.

An article on La Casa Hogar's work educating immigrants is on page 17. The Communities of Practice since September 2015 has gathered clergy in local churches and specialized ministries in small support and learning groups, coordinated by Tara Barber, who is working on contract with the PNC. The program provides for peer learning and peer support that helps pastors strengthen themselves and their ministries.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

# Organizing focuses on concrete, winnable issues

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reaction, so the action makes a difference.

"It takes work, but it's life giving," he said. "The work of taking action matters. It's about exercising power in power relationships so change happens. We do not get change without power."

Many people experience power over, the negative side of power coming down, Joe said.

"Community organizing is about experiencing power with meaningful relationships," he said.

He talks against power "for" as another form of power over, acting on someone's behalf, which he said can be "patronizing, demeaning and disempowering."

Joe said "power *with* requires relationships. It's not power with unless people are connected. The iron rule is never to do for others what they can do for themselves. We need to invest in people so they act on their own behalf."

The primary tool for building power with is the "relational meeting" based on drawing out self-interest and finding where there are overlapping or intersecting mutual interests.

"We can't have mutual interest without understanding self-interest," Joe said. "We have baggage about self-interest because we relate it with selfishness that denies others, is self-centered, works for oneself, diminishing the power of others."

There is also baggage about selflessness, in terms of denying self, lacking a sense of self, working for others in a way that denies the power of the other.

"Self-interest can mean we work mutually with others building relationships to create power that brings about change," Joe said.

"The purpose of a relational meeting is to build trust and to



**Andy Castrolang, pastor of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, told how community organizing has had an impact on the life of that congregation.**

## Church joins with others to act

Five years after Andy CastroLang moved more than 15 years ago from a village of 1,100 in Nebraska to the oldest downtown church in Spokane, she felt overwhelmed spiritually and emotionally by the magnitude of ministry in the largest city in Eastern Washington.

"I was stuck about addressing the big problems of the world, like children dying of hunger," she said. "With the Spokane Alliance, I started where we were to work win installation of a stoplight to prevent children from being hit by cars near a school."

She found a spiritual and social toolkit for action.

Westminster has participated in listening sessions to draw out common concerns. Over the last 17 years, the Spokane Alliance has addressed school bullying, won a family sick leave campaign, created apprenticeships in public works projects, trained local leaders, registered voters, won school board commitment to efficient buildings, won parity in mental health insurance coverage and brought homeowners sustainable improvements, among many accomplishments since 2000.

develop understanding and a lens, through which people see and experience the world," he said. "In those meetings, people identify interests, passions, pressures, visions and values."

The conversations agitate participants to stimulate reflection on self in terms of potential, integrity and legacy, seeing through the lens of the other. As people hear each other's moving stories, then ask what they will do about it.

Joe then simulated a relational meeting with Amber Dickson of the Faith Action

Network. Each shared where they grew up and lived and what brought them to their present community. They shared some of their family struggles, faith background, education, work background and current work.

Amber grew up in Spanaway, then moved to Missouri, New York and South Carolina, eventually returning to Washington through the military.

Joe grew up in a sleepy, working class resort town of 5,000 in Northern Minnesota. He lived in many apartments moving seven times in six years

of junior high and high school. His father was a seasonal construction worker who ran out of money in the winter. His drinking led his parents to divorce, and multiple moves with his mother.

Amber grew up in Evangelical tradition and went to a conservative college. She left the church and wanted nothing to do with it through college at Seattle Pacific University. She was introduced to the UCC through the Justice Leadership Program as an intern with FAN, learning about justice and faith.

"I always wanted to make a difference. I studied psychology because I wanted to have impact on people's lives. I did not know about justice and advocacy. I became passionate about issues. I found issues that related to my own experience. I learned about criminal justice issues that had impact on my family."

Joe went to college and lived near Western Indiana Prison. A professor introduced him to community organizing. Joe learned that issues were not about personal failures but systemic failures. He worked with a congressman and organized around farm worker issues.

"I realized organizing is about connecting people so they can act together," he said.

Joe organized people in Portland to help ex-convicts transition into permanent housing, training people in prison in relational organizing so people would have a voice.

"Part of our challenge is that organizing requires tension as we put pressure on the system," he said. "People invest in each other. Relational foundation is key to working through tensions between people. Need tension with policy makers.

"The challenge is to feel strongly enough to challenge people," Joe said.

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## Moderator seeks to help PNC deepen relationships

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rienced in one-to-one conversations, when they enter into deeper communication and relate to their neighbors—an elementary school across the street or nonprofits working in the community—they experience energy and synergy.

“They experience God at work,” Wendy said.

“I grew up in the church until I was a young adult,” she said.

Wendy then entered business. Her first job after graduating in 1976 in business administration from the University of Washington was at the Olympic Hotel in Seattle. Then she transferred to Cincinnati. She worked four years in each city.

She moved to Kingston, Wash., in food services for Bangor military contracts. With the same contractor she went to San Diego for four years.

“My work was not conducive to attending church on Sunday mornings,” Wendy said.

She came back to Seattle and worked 10 years with Horizon House, starting as food services manager and promoted to administrator for resident



Wendy Blight, as moderator, takes energy and ideas from Annual Meeting to board and PNC.

services.

She and Tara Barber got together during that time while Tara was in seminary training at Seattle University. Her first call was as associate pastor at a church in Sebastapol, where she served three and a half years, followed by First Congregational in Bellevue for three and a half years.

During that time, Wendy

was business administrator at Plymouth UCC in Seattle for 11 years.

Recently, she has filled interim positions at University Congregational UCC, including youth coordinator, facilities manager and administrator.

With the conference, Wendy chaired the Personnel Committee, and served on the Stewardship Committee, as treasurer

and as vice moderator.

One summer she was assistant manager at Pilgrim Firs.

With a flexible work schedule, Wendy will devote much of her time to the conference.

“The conference has tapped into my interests and energy,” Wendy said.

**For information, call 425-213-9313 or email [blightwk@hotmail.com](mailto:blightwk@hotmail.com).**

## Relationships mean proposed actions are about friends

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Amber noted the power of putting a face to policies and issues. So a proposal is not just a house bill, but about a friend.

As Joe prepares to become a grandfather, he wants to equip the next generation of organizers. He believes institutions hold people together and give values so they have power to challenge.

“Are we finding people we can engage in public life with? Are there things we share and can act on? Where does your passion come from? Where do your private interests interact and energize?” he asked.

Joe believes that when re-

lational meetings happen in the context of the church community, people find their passion as church members to see where they can move forward.

Alliances are vehicles for communities to come together across institutions, faith communities, unions and education.

“A larger alliance is important when people come up against big issues,” he said. “An alliance, like the Spokane Alliance or Sound Alliance, is nothing without strong congregations and unions. Those institutions provide a safe environment for relational meetings.

“Institutional limits define the capacity for mediating in-

stitutions to stand between individuals and larger forces of society,” Joe said.

“There is a decline in congregations and unions, but we seek to change that decline. We need to re-imagine institutions so they look at what kind of institution they want to be,” Joe said. “Collective power is limited by the power of each institution.”

From conversations in relational meetings in safe places, he said that people move to discern a plan.

In 2009, the Sound Alliance brought pressure about foreclosures after listening to stories of people experiencing foreclo-

sures.

They launched research and found that Bank of America held a majority of mortgages, but people could not call or go in to renegotiate loans.

They met at a synagogue and told stories of their foreclosures to a bank officer. It touched him and he became an ally. Eventually the bank set up mobile loan servicing so more people could renegotiate loans.

“That’s an example of moving from a problem to a solution,” said Joe.

**For information, call 206-588-5016 or email [joe@iafnw.org](mailto:joe@iafnw.org).**

At Annual Meeting 2018 in Yakima

## Speaker shares power of community organizing

Bishop Dwayne Royster, pastor of the Faith United Church of Christ in Washington, D.C., works as the political director of the PICO National Network there to prepare congregations to move beyond Sunday mornings and to engage people in order to change the world by changing local, state and national policies.

PICO, a national network of progressive faith-based community organizations, is about prophetic witness.

**PICO was founded** in 1972 by a Jesuit priest as the Pacific Institute for Community Organization. In 1984, it shifted to a congregation-based model. In 2004, its acronym was changed to stand for People Improving Communities through Organizing. In May 2018, it changed its name to Faith in Action.

“We have a lot of work ahead of us if we are to transform the country and world,” Bishop Dwayne said at the PNC Annual Meeting, praying for God to “use us, fill us, empower us and release us into the world to do your will.”

He said he wears a collar and suit in D.C. so he can enter doors of power.

In April 2018, he said he works for “our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews the children of the community and for everyone” to know they have what they need in their community to thrive—assured of a roof over their heads, food, decent jobs and enough money to retire and live on.

“**I believe I serve** the sovereign God of the universe, the creator of heaven and earth who sent his son to encounter humanity and in that encounter to realize we have some issues,” Bishop Dwayne said.

“According to the Word of God, Jesus said we would do greater works than he did. God empowers us to not only to be



**Bishop Duane Royster heads POWER organizing effort.**

about witnessing but also about winning, so that we can create what God imagined the world to look like,” he said.

“We have that power when we connect with each other and build relationships with folks who are not like us,” he said. “The story of building a tower and causing confusion of language is cute, but the story in Acts when the Spirit comes and the disciples hear and start to spread Word in every language is about power, he explained.

“**You have the power** to transform the areas you live in, to re-imagine your communities, state and to work that all may live,” Bishop Dwayne said. “We can’t do it by ourselves. God desires us to be in deep relationships that have the capacity to transform the world. God called us to change

the damn world!”

He said that many people feel like they are living in hell, with people losing their houses, young pitted against seniors, jobs not paying enough, seniors having to choose between food or medicine.

“People wonder where is the church, where is God,” he said. “Sometimes we wonder, too.

“**God sends revival winds.** If ever there are crises it is now. God shows up in you,” he said. “I believe God desires the faith community to own our faith and power.”

While businesses are into making profits, and politicians prioritize being re-elected, the church and communities of faith care about people.

When he was in Philadelphia, the churches across de-

nominations began working together to organize, witness and rebuild. We met at the church across from City Hall. We started to have conversations with people to get below the surface,” Bishop Dwayne said. “Most did not know each other. What keeps you up at night?” they asked. “What troubles your soul?”

**About 1,200** came to listening sessions for three months. They compiled information.

“We started to grow, not because we were told we would be saved, but because the church cared about people,” he said. “We worked, learned and organized, putting people first, not just getting to know them, but knowing them in a new way, the way God would want. We went deep. I love you. I care about you. I see you. You have value and worth. We talked of values and relationships.

“**What does it mean** to have a revolution of imagination with love that can change the whole damn world?” Bishop Dwayne asked.

He answered that it means “God is present with and among us at an 8 a.m. worship and at 9 a.m. talking to deepen relationships.

In another PNC Annual Meeting session, he challenged as a myth the notion that institutions are dead, communities are gone and neighborhoods are no more.

“The myth supports might makes right, so to counter it, we need to organize institutions, communities and neighborhoods,” Bishop Dwayne said.

“Interdependence matters. It can change lives and bring God’s will on earth,” he said, pointing out that the idea of independence may lead people to fight each other rather than fighting injustice.

“Community, love and con-

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## PICO organization is about putting faith in action

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nctions change the world. The power of communities changes the world helping us to dismantle racism, excise violence and smash patriarchy,” said Bishop Dwayne, who grew up Methodist, went to a Lutheran seminary.

**In Philadelphia, he served** as executive director of POWER, a PICO organization about putting to faith in action.

POWER is a multi-faith organization with Christians, Jews and Muslims. It’s not like some interfaith organizations that silence the name of Jesus.

An African-American pastor can pray in the name of Jesus. It’s a teachable moment. For the black church, Jesus is the suffering servant, beaten and threatened badly by his co-religionists and political system.

“Muslims and Jews are our brothers and sisters. They understand who Jesus was,” Bishop Dwayne said. “Given that the Middle East is an Afro-Asiatic region, Jesus likely was person of color. He could understand black folks and black liberation theology.”

**Bishop Dwayne used** the story of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, as an example of Jesus sharing liberating love, challenging someone and breaking rules. His conversation with her, revealing he knows the depth of her truth but loves her rather than judges her, leads her to leave her water jar and run back to tell her community.

“If we can’t speak the truth in church, why go to church,” he said. “His conversation with her transforms the city.

“Community organizing on the next level is evangelizing to find someone’s pain and offer a way home to healing and wholeness, not judgment,” Bishop Dwayne said.

**Jesus opened** imagination to a different path to knowledge



**Bishop Duane Royster challenges people to live into liberating love so they can change the world.**

of our own truth that does not bind us to roles,” he said. “I’m a black man in America. That has daily challenges. I may be pulled over—driving from Yakima back to Seattle. It’s liberating understanding that truth and living boldly.

**“The woman at the well** met a person who did not judge her. She left her anxiety and went back to town where she was rejected and said she met a man who said he was the Messiah. People came and encountered Jesus. The whole town began to believe,” he said.

“Who are the folks you have to go to talk to?” he asked. “Who are the people who need to wrestle, to understand, to be

transformed as community?”

**“Sometimes we need** to stop worrying about being nice, faithful people, we need to speak the truth in love,” Bishop Dwayne said. “Sometimes the Holy Spirit can be tough. Conversations revealed pain, struggle and hurt. We can’t get to transformation unless we get uncomfortable.

“Sometimes we need to leave our jars behind. Our jars may hold us back,” he said. “We can’t get to liberating love unless let go of our jars.

Finally, he suggests that, “we be willing to break the rules. Often we have to break rules to see transformation in community. It may offend fam-

ily, friends, congregations, but we need to take risks in the pulpit and live liberation. It’s not worth staying in a place toxic to our souls.

**“The church is** about liberating all people, so we need to break the rules and talk with people we are not to talk with. We need to talk with our enemies,” Bishop Dwayne said.

He believes that God’s power of redemption can reach 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. It will not happen if people do not share stories and hear stories.

**“I founded POWER** as part of the challenge that blows organizations up. A grant from a faith-based foundation said we were to work under certain teachings, but we had priests sit on one side of a table and LG-BTQ clergy on the other side.

“There will be days we will march the same side of the street working together, but there will be days where we are across the street because we disagree, but because of our relationships, when we are not able to agree we will be able to see and speak our truth without demonizing each other,” he said.

**POWER decided** to organize on education when 65 Philadelphia schools were going to be closed.

“Organizing is about liberating love with a place for everyone at the table,” Bishop Dwayne said. “God’s love for all of us helps us love as well as relate to each other. God calls us to move beyond the world as it is; to move past and see the world as it could be and go do something about it.

**“Go back** to your communities and neighborhoods and tell them about someone who wants to create the world to work for the good,” he challenged.

**He is on Facebook at** <https://www.facebook.com/dwayne.royster?fref=ts> and **Twitter at** <https://twitter.com/>

# Annual Meeting photos reflect spirit of gathering



Donivan Johnson of Metaline Falls leads the 2018 Annual Meeting choir for the closing worship at the Yakima Convention Center.



Nathaniel Mahlberg serves communion to Neal and Norma Rader.



Martha Baldwin and Wendy Blight count the offering.



Dee Eisenhauer and Cindy Bauleke recruit new leaders.



Courtney breaks bread for the communion service.



A chance for conversations at the banquet.

# Music and ministry draw and hold PNC together



John Eisenhauer accompanies songs on guitar.



Iva and Edward Galaei of Anchorage lead a prayer and song.



John Eisenhauer introduces Leo Denton to his guitar.



Paul and Becky Withington pray as Kaye Hult beats drum.



Walla Walla musicians and pastor lead song, "Break Forth."



Hillary Coleman is the new PNC Board vice moderator.



David Morales introduces work of La Casa Hogar in Yakima.



Singing during worship at Annual Meeting.

## Church vitality minister sets stage for vitality in churches

Courtney Stange Tregear said the ministry of church vitality is living into the call to deepen relationship, to do vitality we need to know each other.

Christ's presence and power in, through and among us so all people might thrive.

"Vitality means life," she said. "Vital churches do not start with a vitality study but doing the work of ministry God calls us to do.

"We can provide conditions for seeds to grow," she said, pointing up that different seeds need different conditions.

Planted in a hydroponic system, basil may shoot up but mint may not grow because mint is hard to start from a seed. Once the plant takes off, however, it grows.

Courtney has visited PNC churches and shared a diagram of "vitality" at the center of intersecting circles of "do justice," "love kindness" and "walk humbly" in the larger circle of congregational, collegial and communal life in the conference.

"A church might not shoot up yet from seeds, but we can't shout at it to tell it to grow," she said.

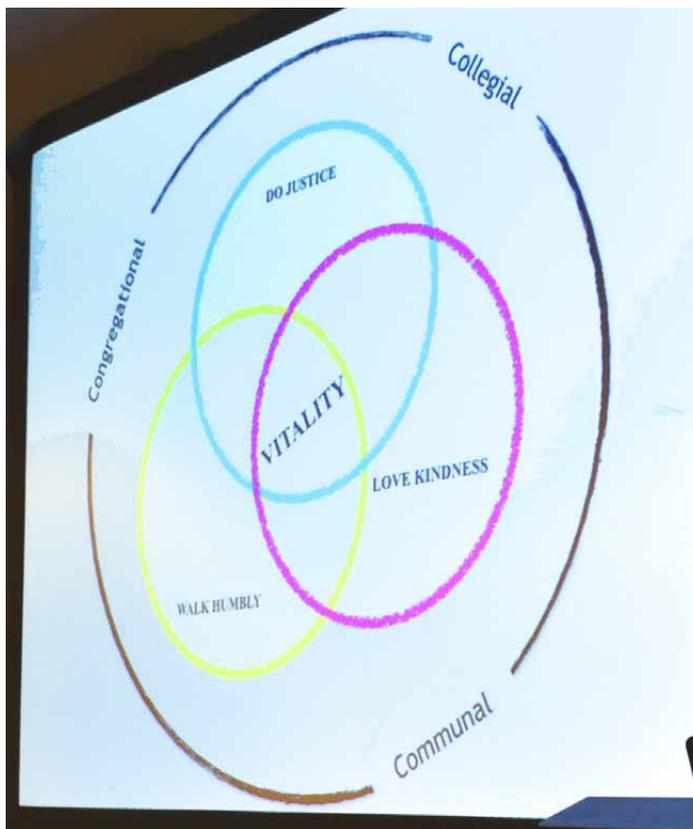
"As churches come together, I have shared a diagram to help us think about the of church vitality. I updated the diagram to show that we are called to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly," Courtney explained.

"We do not do well if we are not in relationship," she said.

"How can we love our neighbor if we do not know our neighbor? How can we know what we need if we do not talk about it?" she asked.

So she added a circle to represent relationships and the need for people in congregations to get to know one another.

"The outer circle is the rela-



Courtney Stange-Tregear, top, shares visual aid on vitality.

tional force," she said. "Small groups are opportunities for transformational listening as we each share a significant moment of our life.

"We need to be real together," Courtney said. "The air in room changes from us bringing our real selves into the room."

She saw that happen as par-

ticipants in the fall PNC gathering at N-Sid-Sen formed a human chain with 80 people, stretching through the parking lot nearly to the road.

"Imagine what work we can do together as the chain reaching out into the world," she said. "We as 80 churches working together can do good things.

Imagine what we can do together."

Then those gathered at N-Sid-Sen listened to each other.

There were relational groups with peers—clergy-clergy and lay-lay—sharing as congregations and on an interpersonal level.

"Relationships stretch us to move outside into communities and other partners and people in the community," she said.

"We need congregations to know their communities so they can reach into the community," Courtney said. "Not enough of us listen to and relate to others.

"Why does it matter?" she asked.

"Bishop Roysten thinks when we do work together, we can change the whole damn world," she said

"We don't work to be better friends, know each other's stories and have less conflict, but so we can change the world, so we can bring God's work to earth and do what we are required to do: do justice, love kindness and walk humbly," Courtney said.

She was setting the framework for later one-to-one listening sessions as a starting point for relationships and networking among participants at the Annual Meeting.

**For information, call 260-**

## Mike Denton lists some of PNC accomplishments

If churches become immersed in church statistics, it often does not look good, noted Conference Minister Mike Denton in his annual report—during his 10th year in ministry in the Pacific Northwest Conference.

“The Spirit, however, whispers in my ear words of comfort and encouragement,” said Mike, telling of feeling down in the winter. “The Spirit said, Mike, I don’t care about numbers. Don’t let the facts get in the way of the truth.”

“**The truth is** that something contrary to all that should happen is happening,” he said. “We are alive. Something is breaking forth.”

He said something is breaking forth in what God requires for the community of faith, which is to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly.

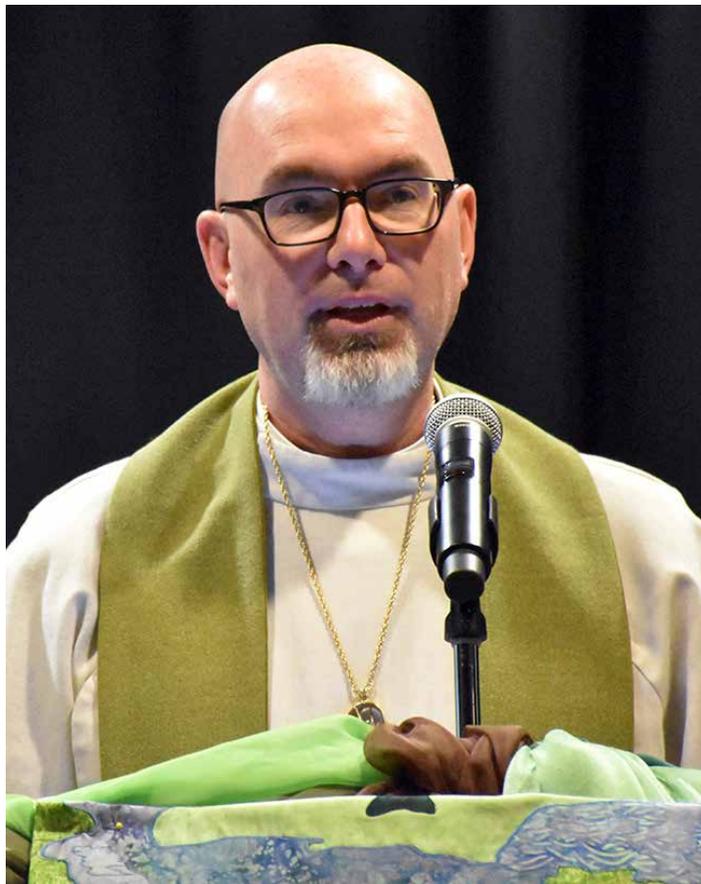
Some of the new breaking forth includes churches becoming sanctuaries to immigrants, churches supporting civil disobedience and resistance to incarceration of youth, participating in church anniversaries and pastoral installations, and pastors advocating for a mobile health clinic.

“Those are all stories of what has been happening within the last two weeks,” Mike said.

At the fall PNC gathering, activity focused on deepening relationships.

“**Doing justice**, loving kindness and walking humbly can easily be a catch phrase, not something we see in action,” he said.

Because camp managers Mark Boyd at N-Sid-Sen and Wade Zick at Pilgrim Firs have a strong relationship, they were able to differentiate the roles of their sites, focusing N-Sid-Sen on youth camps and Pilgrim Firs partnering with agencies in Port Orchard to serve the growing community.



**Conference Minister Mike Denton preaches at Annual Meeting.**

“On both sides, usage of the camps were down, so the PNC seeks to turn it around to encourage churches to use the camps to develop relationships and model ways to do justice,” he said.

**The idea of the church vitality is breaking forth** in different strands of the conference that are using the conference reserve funds, he said.

Mike said that he relies on Arlene Hobson, executive administrator, to keep him informed on the history of the conference and its commitments.

Michelle Doherty resigned as accounting manager to spend more time with her family, and Kara Newsome is the new accounting manager.

Peter Ilgenfritz and Wendy Blight as leaders of the PNC Board “have been a great team,

challenging us to do better,” he said.

**Mike encouraged people** in the conference to take off their blinders and see how the conference does much.

- The two camps are a success, used for many retreats throughout the year.

- Communities of Practice help clergy who struggle with the leadership. Tara Barber is leading that program in the PNC and serving other conferences, too, training local churches in congregational health.

- How can a conference of our size have a Justice Leadership Program in which young adults and older adults spend a year engaging in the world and with congregations to make life different for thousands of people? Three graduates have gone on to work with The Church Council of Greater Seattle, the

Faith Action Network and one is vice moderator of our conference.

- Amy Johnson is on the national UCC staff.

- Meighan Pritchard, pastor of Prospect UCC, continues to work on environmental issues.

- Darrell Goodwin, now pastor at Liberation and Everett UCC churches, is on the national UCC Board.

- The PNC is the largest per capita giver to Our Churches Wider Mission.

- PNC staff are turned to as experts and consultants in the denomination and around the world.

- The conference is the largest geographically in the UCC but one of the smallest in numbers.

“How do we compare with other conferences? Something new is breaking forth,” Mike said. “We are going to local churches with the Friends of the Conference campaign and encourage increased giving by congregations to the conference.”

**In the business meeting**, Ann Lev, reporting on the budget, said that even though the PNC is using reserve funds to revitalize its ministries, it finished the year with \$7,000 more because of increased income from the investment programs.

There is also increase in income from support from the Friends of the Conference, plus reduction in office expenses by using modern communication.

The Budget Committee recommended that support for the Faith Action Network be restored back to \$12,000.

In the last four years the PNC has used less of its reserves, Ann said.

Susan Andresen said funds are coming from the project fund rate of return, not principal.

**For information, call 206-725-8383.**

## Newport UCC welcomes bicyclists raising funds for MS

The end of July, Newport will welcome cyclists from Bike the U.S. for MS, which organizes cross-country bike trips to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis, to fund research and support treatment.

These tours follow a scenic cross-country route. Along the way, people join in to ride a segment.

The entire "Northern Tier Trip" is 4,295 miles for 69 days through 15 states from Bar Harbor, Me., to Seattle.

This year St. Anthony's Catholic Church is preparing a dinner, Newport High School is offering showers, and men of Newport UCC will cook breakfast for the team, who will sleep in the church.

Bill Mitchell, moderator of Newport UCC last year, was contacted to host them when the Baptist church in Newport had a scheduling conflict.

"As far as I know it was the first time Newport UCC had hosted a team, and it was a great experience," said the pastor, Becky Anderson.

The men's group will again cook a hot breakfast.

"It was a bit of a stretch for some folks to have bicyclists



Bicyclists stayed overnight at Newport UCC last summer.



Carlie Hoadley and Bill Mitchell welcomed the bicyclists.

Photos Courtesy of Newport UCC

sleep all over the church, but there was no question but that we would host them again," said Becky, who had experi-

ence in two other churches hosting groups.

"I was pleased at how many of the members came over to

meet and greet the riders, to have breakfast with them before they left and just to make them feel welcome.

"Making people feel welcome comes naturally to this congregation," she said. "They were rewarded with appreciation and smiles from the team."

Bill, a member since 1991, said the group was grateful the church served biscuits and gravy, rather than their usual fare of oatmeal.

George Weisbarth, who has lived in Newport since 1979 and been active in the church for many years, said, "It's an opportunity to serve in the name of God, whether the group coming is religious or not. Our role is to be welcoming, social and good stewards."

Last summer and since, the group sent cards about their progress on the trip, and told more about who they were and where they were from, he said.

George sees it as part of the church's outreach to the community and its ecumenical connections with the Catholic and Lutheran churches in Newport.

**For information, call 509-447- 4121 or email rev. becky.52@gmail.com.**

## Veradale UCC helps community address white supremacy

Since the April 20 walk-out at Spokane Valley schools remembering the Columbine school shooting and calling for action to end school shootings, Gen Heywood, pastor of Veradale UCC, became aware of the presence of "white-identity" youth on campuses of University, Central Valley, East Valley and Freeman high schools.

About 150 teens from those schools engaged in a peaceful protest carrying posters and registering voters.

A few students in Alt-Right groups, called Identity and Identity Evropa, wore white supremacy T-shirts and carried

other symbols during the walk-outs. They were interviewed by the local newspaper.

Concerned, Gen and others in the community formed Families Against Bigotry (FAB), first meeting April 23, to help people know how to address the white supremacy presence in schools and the community.

Families Against Bigotry has organized several speakers in a summer series on "Fascism, Hate and Building Alternatives." The events are at Veradale UCC.

One was Tony McAleer, a former organizer for the White Aryan Resistance. Speaking on

"Life After Hate," he said it's hard to leave such a movement. He now works to fight hate.

Lindsay Shubiner, program director for the Western States Center's new initiative to counter white nationalism and hate violence, spoke June 13. She has been involved in advocacy to defeat anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hate, and in support of community groups to expose organized bigotry and research hate movements. She addressed varieties of hate groups and ways to respond.

FAB is also collaborating with other area groups working against racism and hate, and

for human rights, including the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force, Spokane Community Against Racism, the Gonzaga University Institute of Hate Studies and PFLAG.

Shon Meckfessel from the English Department at Highline University in Seattle will speak on "Free Speech When It Isn't" at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, July 19, at Veradale UCC.

FAB is planning an August speaker. The next organizing meeting is at 5:30 p.m., June 28, at Veradale UCC.

**For information, call 408-593-9556 or email genheywood@att.net.**

# UCC folks involved with Poor People's Campaign

UCC pastor Bianca Davis-Lovelace of Renton is one of the state's three lead coordinators for the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Revival that organized protests in Olympia on six Mondays from May 14 through June 18.

The Poor People's Campaign picks up Martin Luther King Jr.'s campaign 50 years ago and continues its challenges of the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted morality.

Each week, people came from across the state to rally inside and outside the Capitol in Olympia to raise the moral call to move from poverty to enough resources for everyone, from racism to equality and respect; from militarism to a peace-based economy; from ecological devastation to earth stewardship; from isolation to solidarity in human rights, and from a narrow morality to a broad "moral fusion."

There were speakers and people doing sit-ins in the rotunda or on streets blocking traffic. Many of those engaging in non-violent protest were arrested, about 15 to 19 on average each time, said Bianca, but 25 on the last day.

In November 2017, clergy and activists met with national co-organizer, William Barber II, a Disciples of Christ pastor, to form the state coordinating committee. Bianca volunteered for that and then be a chair.

"I stepped up because I noticed in activist circles in Seattle and the state there are few people of color or poor people. It's important that people who are marginalized be leaders in this campaign," she said. "Dr. King wanted to bring groups together—African Americans and poor white people. Now its people of color."

Bianca's younger brother died from lack of quality health



**Wendy Blight, moderator, meets with Bianca Davis-Lovelace.**

care and poor treatment because he was a person of color. She told his story one week.

Bianca gave an overview of the six weeks.

The first week focused on women and children in poverty.

The second focused on systemic racism.

"We gathered clergy for a Black Lives Matter communion service, honoring blacks slain by police by putting a photo up on the steps of the Temple of Justice part of the Capitol building. We also focused on the mass incarceration of black and brown people," she said.

The third week, on Memorial Day, disabled vets and vets of color challenged militarism. One in a wheel chair spoke against past and present wars.

"Each week, there was training for those wanting to engage in direct action, a rally with speakers, followed by a march or direct action," Bianca said, noting that people were arrested all but the first week.

She said 80 to 215 attended each rally.

The fourth week focused on ecological devastation and health care. A scientist spoke on climate change. The action was a "die-in" on the lawn of a lobbyist, then going to the street to block an intersection.

The fifth week, focused on homelessness, with speakers

saying everyone has a right to a fair income so they can afford housing. People from the homeless program in Grays Harbor told their stories as low-wage earners in fast-food.

For the action, people set up 12 tents and occupied the lawn of the legislature and then moved the tents into an intersection. On each tent was a fact about homelessness, line "140 million people live in poverty."

The sixth week brought the issues together—racism, poverty, militarism, ecological devastation and homelessness. Bianca said Kelle Brown, pastor at Plymouth UCC in Seattle spoke on the effects of racism. Native Americans shared their struggles. There were performers and poets.

The action was to march to Olympia's City Hall and occupy it after hours, with people of different races and economic levels singing and chanting.

"We came together to address the issues plaguing the country," she said. "The experience of 40 days of mass action was a powerful experience for many. It was an experience of how the Body of Christ should look and act."

Marginalized people, people of different spirituality and together in unity, celebrating for a cause, she said.

"Most congregations are

homogeneous," she said. "It was beautiful to see diverse people together."

Washington sent three to Washington, D.C., to participate in a national rally on Saturday, June 23. Seattle and Spokane planned solidarity rallies and marches. In Seattle, the rally begins at 1 p.m. at Plymouth UCC.

"The six weeks have launched a multi-year movement," Bianca said. "States will have autonomy on how to address issues."

For example, there will be solidarity opposing building a youth jail in Seattle, she said.

In June, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the U.S. Episcopal Church joined several from the state campaign who gathered in Aberdeen for a tour, vigil and march protesting a city ordinance making it illegal for homeless people to sit or sleep on streets.

Bianca, who grew up in Chicago and earned a master of divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary, is the daughter of the Southern Conference's conference minister. Her mother is also a UCC minister. She came to Seattle after graduating from seminary in 2013 to serve a UCC church, and then began as executive director of the Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches (REACH).

Both with the campaign and the ecumenical association, she said she "fight for those who are marginalized and oppressed."

REACH has a night shelter with 55 beds and a day shelter for homeless families. It also has a feeding program.

While advocating for the poor through the Poor People's Campaign, through REACH she meets with people in need.

**For information, email [Washington@poorpeoples-campaign.org](mailto:Washington@poorpeoples-campaign.org).**

## Kelle Brown sums up the moment and movement

By Kelle Brown, pastor at Plymouth UCC - Seattle

My friends, breathe in deeply. Take in the profound nature of this movement. This is the movement, the Poor People Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival, and this is the time where history is being made.

This is the movement, and this is the time where we choose who we are, and on which side of history we shall be. This is the time where we must acknowledge that the children and the historians are watching.

**The oppressed**, they are watching. The earth, she is watching. Today, let us recognize that there will be eyes looking at the pictures captured of this time, and they will judge what we in this country are doing will inspire our children and our children's children, or what we are doing to shame them when they find us in the pictures performing acts on the wrong side of justice.

**I shall not stand** on the side of those who lynch. I shall not stand on the side of those who bomb. I shall not stand with those who make laws against sleeping outside or feeding the unhoused. Let us stand with courage on the side of righteousness!

**This is the moment** we must decide if we will be holding the hoses that tear the flesh off the oppressed as they did in the 1960s, or if we will stand with the most vulnerable, unafraid. We must decide if we will hold the leashes of the dogs whose teeth rip into protestors, or if we will protect those who courageously stand for justice.

We must either sit with Rosa Parks in solidarity or judge her for breaking an unjust law. Today, we must stand with the water protectors at Standing Rock, or with those who desire profit over everything, the peo-



Kelle Brown speaks at Poor People's Campaign in Olympia.

ple and the earth. Today is our day to stand.

**I come to you today** as an African in America, as a woman who knows oppression on a cellular level.

This is not the Oppression Olympics. Therefore, I am not dropping pain to give myself credibility. I'm simply sharing that I have been impacted and how I am engaged. I come to you as the great-great grandchild of a woman, Kitty Rogers, who ate out of a pig trough with the animals during the enslavement in this country. I come to you as the grandchild of Louis and Dorothy Price who drove at night to avoid the KKK and the ever-presence of the arbitrary violence of racism.

**I come to you today** as the parent of a child who graduated with honors after being mishandled through racist and misogynistic schooling her whole life, a daughter who still struggles at a racist university that seems uninterested in successful graduates of color.

I come to you today as pastor, a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ who says enough is enough! God is tired of folk standing up in arrogance and ignorance, speaking on God's behalf! God is tired of folk making unjust laws and enforcing them in God's name.

**I have questions.** I want to

know when Jefferson Beauregard Sessions became a theologian. I want to know when the White House press secretary says, "It's very biblical," how her word alone became enough support using the Bible to destroy people and their families.

Listen, you don't want me to be in the control tower at the airport, helping a plane to land or take off. You want an air traffic controller with expertise to do that. You don't want me performing surgery on your brain to remove a tumor. You want a neurosurgeon, an expert, a specialist, to perform that task.

**How is it that folks** are trusting the proof-texting of the Bible from the people who are actively ripping parents from their children?

Guess what? They quoted Romans 13 to sustain the enslavement of Africans in this country. Quoted Romans 13 to perform mass genocide against the indigenous. Quoted Romans 13 during the production of the slave codes to recreate the enslavement with a new face. Quoted Romans 13 to support the Japanese Internment. Its use has been flawed and intentionally dangerous.

**Yet, what we are doing**, this Poor People's Campaign, is a moral revival of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's work, but

more rightly, it's a revival of the work that inspired Dr. King, that of Jesus Christ.

Our eyes must be watching, God, as Zora Neale Hurston invites. We must watch God, for the devil is not creative! The devil doesn't come up with anything new. The devil just re-creates what the devil has always done and pushes it out in public with a new and improved sticker on it.

**We must watch closely** and observe, because if we imagine these children as Japanese, we could see this evil for what it is. If we imagined these people as indigenous, like the children ripped from their families, sanitized of their language and culture, we can see this for what it is—the face of evil.

I'm here to tell you that all laws are not made equal. Some laws are just, and some laws are unjust. Some laws are born of righteousness, and some laws are born of ego, arrogance, narcissism, and hate, under the guise of "protection" and "safety." Some "laws" are the scapegoat policies for pure genocide and annihilation.

**We have been here before** my friends, and this campaign is a wake-up call. It is an alarm clock because we have been sleeping too long. It is a call to say time is of the essence. It is a call to say there is no more time for thoughts and prayers. We had better pray with our feet, our voices, our hands and hearts, our voting and our protest!

**Today is about moral fusion.** About inclusion. This campaign is about claiming all people. This campaign is about knowing that a moral narrative will always be more powerful than a manipulated so-called fact, or a Scripture text taken out of context for political agenda. This is moral fusion. It's understanding that a mighty

**Continued on page 15**

# Photos share Poor People's Campaign visually



Recently at the Poor People's Campaign rally in Olympia, Meighan Pritchard, Katy Lloyd and Sharon Nichols are in the line above.



Protesters sit in street, top, testify, below, set up tents, bottom, and 25 are arrested on June 18, left.



## Pastor challenges misuse of Scriptures, tells Jesus' words

**Continued from page 14**  
fist is made from putting five fingers together. That's power!  
So, we've heard what Paul said, but, we haven't heard a word from Jesus. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them." Jesus said, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Jesus said, "Those who exalt themselves will be humbled,

and those who humble themselves will be exalted."  
**Jesus turned tables!** He did not build cages! Jesus told the children to come to him. He did not stop them at the border. Jesus was an immigrant, and if Jesus was a baby today, he wouldn't have made it to America either. The manger would have been a blessing in the America context, because if

it was up to this administration, he would have been with the other brown-skinned children in a cage.  
Stop bastardizing the Bible for evil agenda! This isn't about legal or illegal, because if immoral people make the laws, the laws are unjust. All laws are not equal!  
**Saying those seeking** asylum are illegal keeps those who

seem to agree from knowing the horror they are creating. This is not about Democrat or Republican, or left or right, but about moral or immoral, right or wrong.  
**Today we say,** Black lives matter! We say, we shall not be shall not be moved! We say, Everybody's got a right to live! We say, Forward together, not one step back! Amen

## ***UCC pastor decides to risk arrest to bear witness***

Becky Withington, pastor of New Pilgrims Community Church in Anacortes, had been preaching since early May about issues the Poor People's Campaign is uplifting and told her congregation she was going to Olympia on Monday, May 28, to participate in the rally.

At the training in the morning, she decided she would be of support to those willing to risk arrest, bringing water and protein bars, but she also learned about civil disobedience.

"My decision to risk arrest was last minute," she said. "I believe engaging in civil disobedience would heighten awareness of the issue."

Becky felt it would underscore the seriousness of the issues if people were willing to risk arrest. In a sense it was a last-minute decision, but it was also a natural step for her as an ordained minister, "walking the social justice path of Jesus as part of my call," she said.

"I'm also a peaceful, law abiding citizen who believes in the rule of law. Sometimes those two ways of life come into conflict," she added.

After the training, she and nearly 100 others joined the rally on the Capitol steps with 300 listening to speakers.

After the rally, Becky was with a group of 50 who left the Capitol to march, sing and chant. She was with 16 who surrounded a state patrol SUV, circled it and sat down on the street, blocking the officer from leaving. He started the vehicle and put it in gear, inching forward, but "we didn't budge," she said. After two hours, the Olympia police warned the group to disperse or be arrested.

"The arrest was catch and release. Two police officers took each of us two blocks away to an officer with a computer," Becky said. "They scanned our driver's licenses and gave us an



**Police arrest Becky Withington.**

Photo courtesy of Becky Withington

arraignment date.

"We wanted to raise visibility by being arrested. They wanted to minimize the visibility of our witness," she said.

Kelle Brown, pastor of Plymouth, was there May 28 as a moral witness and support person for those committing civil disobedience, Becky said.

Stephen O'Bent, associate minister of music at First Congregational UCC in Bellevue was arrested on May 21. On June 4, Tad Anderson, parish visitor at Plymouth, was arrested, and then on June 18, Kelle was among those arrested.

For Becky, the arraignment was 10 days later on June 6. Before then, the group talked with an attorney working with the Poor People's Campaign in Washington state. Becky said that they were advised to sign up for a public defender.

The public defender met with the campaign lawyer to "discuss constructive ways for those arrested to be heard without imposing on the public defenders' time and ability to serve other clients, she said.

"So we know our actions had some effect," she said.

That day, the public defender read each person's charge and said the misdemeanor could be reduced to an infraction and a \$56 fine. Each accepted agreement, because there is no record with an infraction.

"I wondered if we had been people of color if our arrests might have been more rough and if we would so easily have had our sentences reduced," Becky said.

When she had returned to tell the church she had been arrested, she found people not only supportive, but also proud.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law."

King planned a Poor People's Campaign 50 years ago before his assassination in 1968. This campaign renews that effort, uniting tens of thousands of people across the U.S. to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted morality, she said.

"Many clergy are supporting the call for moral revival by participating in rallies and civil disobedience," she said. "As a Christian minister and activist, I felt called to join them."

The theme for May 28, Memorial Day, was ending the war economy and gun violence. Members of Veterans Against War spoke.

"One choked up as he described his grandfather's suicide after returning from combat with mental illness that went untreated for years because of the backlog at Veterans Affairs," Becky said.

"So many have sacrificed so much and been treated so badly by our criminal justice system, and so many are suffering from systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and more," she said.

"As I live into this call to take more action to protest the true injustices taking place in our country, I ask for prayers and urge others to follow their own call and conscience as we work together to bring about the Culture of God," Becky asked.

***For information, call 360-722-0815 or email [bwithing@comcast.net](mailto:bwithing@comcast.net).***

# Korean partner churches continue prayers, action

At Annual Meeting in April, Ed Evans of the PNC/NW Regional Disciples Global Ministries Committee shared a video of Kurt Essinger, Presbyterian mission co-worker assigned to the Reconciliation and Reunification Department of the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCCK), noting that NCCCK proposals were included in the North-South Korea conversations with the goal of going from the armistice to a peace treaty.

**“North and South are no longer at war, so we need to concretize it in a peace treaty,”** Kurt said, noting that the goals include transforming the DMZ to a peace zone and ceasing hostile military actions.

Kurt said there are more parties than North and South Korea, because the war was a proxy war, leaving the U.S. military the ultimate authority over the South Korean army.

“It’s a Korean-led process,” he said. “It’s time for the U.S. follow and let Korea decide.”

**The issue is to overcome** years of suspicion and mistrust.

Kim Jung Un bringing Naengmyeon cold noodle soup may seem insignificant, but Kurt said it was a step in a greater process of reconciliation that said “we are one” and eat the same food.

When Kim invited Moon Jae-in at the Panmunjom peace village conference building to “come North,” and Moon stepped across the line that runs through the building, Kurt said it raised hope among Koreans.

**What’s next is uncertain.** Ed said one issue is a peace treaty, which the U.S. has to sign. The peace treaty language includes reunifying families.

He told of 10 Korean delegates in 2013, visiting Normandy Park UCC, and discussing reunification—with some wanted it, some did not and some told of wanting to see family in the North.

The PNC has been a partner since 1993 with the East Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. The presbytery also has a partnership now with a church in France. The next delegation will come to the PNC in 2019.

**Ed also shared a letter** from Korea’s National Council of Churches about the peace summit between Kim Jong-Un and President Donald Trump.

They wrote: “Since the national division in 1945 and the Korean War of 1950 to 1953, we in North and South have sinned against one another, hating and even killing each other. For more than 70 years the division has brought us unbearable pain and suffering.”

**The NCCCK fear** another war on the Korean peninsula would be “a flash point for a clash of the world super powers.” Fear of a nuclear war was heightened last year, but the Pyeongchang Olympic Games were an opportunity for North and South to cultivate a peace momentum and recognition that a military confrontation would be a catastrophe for Korean people and neighboring countries. The peace momentum led to inter-Korean summit meetings on April 27 and May 26, in which the leaders agreed to end the Korean War and work on a permanent peace and “comprehensive denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.”

**Those meetings led** to arranging the June 12 U.S.-North Korea summit, with the hopes it would lead to denuclearization of North Korea and normalization of diplomatic relations.

The NCCCK also wrote: “We, the people in the Korean peninsula and the U.S., are situated at a kairos moment in which the decades-long hostility dissipates, and an era of peace, reconciliation and prosperity shall blossom. However, we are all aware that we just began this long journey together

on a new road. On this journey we will face dangers and obstacles lurking in the darkness, but we believe God will eventually lead us to reconciliation and peace.

**“We are called by God** as agents of peace, and this peace mission is not an option, but an obligation for us Christians. Hence, let us lift all our hearts to sincerely pray and act for the success of the U.S.-North Korea summit and peace on the Korean peninsula. We also bring our sincere prayers for the whole world so we can pull down this wall of hostility.”

This NCCCK statement was shared by the national UCC-Disciples Global Ministries.

**Jim Winkler, president** and general secretary of the U.S. National Council of Churches, also shared reflections, expressing hope that despite “the mistrust on both sides and paranoid personalities in control of each nation, we may nevertheless witness a future in which good relations develop, war games cease, troops return home, nuclear weapons are dismantled and a peace treaty is signed.”

He called for intense prayer and hard work, continuing years in which churches around the world have prayed, been in dialogue and studied, while staying in contact with North Korean Christians.

He told of plans to meet with North Korean Christians in June, aware of the benefits of those relationships for peace, and as a “backdrop for the media expressions of doubt, alarm and confusion in the quest for a winner and loser.”

**Jim recognizes** that some “experts” believe that the U.S. did not extract enough concessions and conferred legitimacy on Kim Jong Un. He also cited Trump’s comments that he could “be wrong,” leaving open a potential retreat to the Cold War mentality—given the power “of the military-industrial

complex.”

**Because “the odds** are against success and peace,” Jim said that’s “where we Christians and other people of good will come in” because “we know God is at work. We cannot waver now. We cannot assume all will be well.

“Much needs to be done to heal the scars of battle, the false separation of the peninsula into two nations and the enmity that has developed,” he said. “For more than 100 years, Korea has known colonialism, war, massacres, dictatorship, famine and privation. While South Korea is generally prosperous, it has come at a high cost.”

**Jim is aware that forces** of hatred and war can still dash hopes of peace, that skeptics and warmongers may plan to sabotage negotiations, and that the leaders will be under “enormous pressure” to fall back into old patterns of name calling and blame.

So he calls for continued prayers for peace, for contacting the White House and elected representatives to “say we believe this is an important step forward, we’re behind them, and we a new era of peace, both North Korea and the U.S. to denuclearize, unification of the Korean Peninsula and swords beaten into plowshares.”

**On June 18 during** celebrations of the World Council of Churches’ 70th anniversary at its Central Committee meeting in Geneva, Christians from North and South Korea linked arms and sang the 600-year-old folk song, “Arirang,” the unofficial anthem of Korea before the civil war in the 1950s. The WCC has been active in promoting dialogue and peace between the North and South.

**For information, call 360-670-1073, email edevans@aol.com, or visit [nationalcouncilofchurches.us/ncc-grateful-for-outcome-of-singapore-summit/](http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/ncc-grateful-for-outcome-of-singapore-summit/).**

## Admiral UCC challenges PNC churches to feed children

Admiral UCC has issued a challenge each summer for the last two years to UCC churches to raise funds for local food banks.

In 2017 Alki UCC and Monroe UCC participated.

Andrew Conley-Holcom, the pastor, said that the church's Outreach Team decided to challenge other churches in the conference to raise 2,000 pounds of food during the summer because summer is the "hungriest time of year" for children.

"Many children rely on access to free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs, which are not available in the summer," he said. "In addition, food bank donations are usually down during the summer."

Admiral Church is holding its Summer Food Drive for Hungry Kids to assist West Seattle Food Bank through June, July and August.

In the first three weeks, they collected 341 pounds of food. Not only do church members participate, but the appeal is out to the neighborhood, the 12-step groups and preschool that meet in the church.

"It's an outreach for justice and an outreach to neighbors," said Andrew.

"We see ourselves as 'the little church that could,' as a small, neighborhood, progressive church in West Seattle with membership of less than 60 people," said Uta Rockel of the Outreach Team.

It started in 2016 with a challenge from the Outreach Team to the Admiral congregation to donate 1,000 pounds of food to their local food bank.

"Some thought it was impossible, but we ended up with 2,500 pounds of donated food and cash," said Uta.

Since then, they have challenged every UCC church in the PNC to "answer the nutrition deficit of the needy" in their area by challenging their



Gerry Flaten, Peggy Rich and Uta Rockel show the food collected on Sunday, June 17.



Readerboard draws food donations from the community.

congregations to collect food and money to support local food banks and children who need nutritional support during the summer.

"During the school year, 22 million U.S. school children receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program. Only 3.9 million of them receive meals through the USDA Sum-

mer Food Service Program," Uta reported.

She said the gap is because of lack of access to meal sites, insufficient program awareness and limited resources when schools are closed, leaving 18 million children struggling with hunger.

Most UCC churches give to their food banks on a regular basis, so the challenge is not

much of a stretch.

Monroe participated the last two years. The first year was a bigger response because they did the drive for two months and included donations from their "regular" stint sitting outside a local Fred Meyer, asking for donations of cash and food for the Sky Valley Food Bank.

Jane Sorenson, pastor, said they used to do that five times a year, but couldn't this year. Last year, they did the drive for one month so response was smaller.

"We limited it to one month because we also do a school backpack drive in the summer, and didn't want to over-ask," Jane said. "Admiral outdid us, but it was great to participate."

Alki participated last year but, being in pastoral transition, not in 2018.

The Admiral Outreach Team urges a few dedicated people in other churches, like Admiral's team of three, to contact their local food bank and learn local statistics.

In West Seattle, about 9,000 use the food bank at least once yearly and 170 bags of food are delivered to home-bound elderly or disabled each week. The food bank distributed 1.3 million pounds of food in 2017, with 25 percent of clients receiving more of their groceries from the food bank and 59 percent having annual incomes of less than \$12,000. Thirty-eight percent are under 18.

"Let your congregation know there is a problem, 'an elephant in the church,' the church is now aware of and could do more to solve," Uta said, suggesting mobilizing from there communicating through the newsletter, at coffee hour, with posters and with speakers during worship. "Jazz up your congregation to help feed children."

**For information, call 206-932-2928 or email officemanager@admiralchurch.org.**

## Leda Zakarison is JLP intern with Earth Ministry

Leda Zakarison, Earth Ministry outreach coordinator, has supported Earth Ministry/ / Washington Interfaith Power & Light campaigns through 2017 to 2018 at an intern with the Justice Leadership Program.

The year has confirmed her commitment to social justice.

“I see power in what faith communities and larger faith communities can do together to make positive change in the world,” she said.

Leda grew up in Community Congregational UCC in Pullman from 1995 to 2015, while her mother, Kristine Zakarison, was pastor there. Leda is also the fourth generation of wheat-growing family with a farm near Pullman.

Her year has given her insights into ways to enable people of faith raise moral concerns on justice and environmental issues, and insights into bringing people of diverse opinions together to seek common solutions.

**Fall projects focused** on opposition to fossil fuel terminals—a coal one in Longview and an oil one in Vancouver. Earth Ministry had been working against both for eight years.

“I had a role in empowering people of faith to speak at hearings against the proposed permits being granted by the counties and cities,” Leda said. “People told why because of their faith values they opposed the terminals. Permits for both terminals were denied.

**In the winter**, she worked with Jessica Zimmerle, program and outreach director, in the state legislature supporting two of four bills selected by the Environmental Priorities Coalition and one on clean fuels.

Leda said the coalition recommended priorities, and Earth Ministries chose two bills, the Oil Spill Prevention act and the Healthy Food Packaging Act.

For both, she helped bring people of faith to Olympia to



**Jessica Zimmerle, left, and Leda Zakarison, right, with staff from Toxic-Free Future meet with Rep. Joan McBride (second from left), a sponsor of the Healthy Food Packaging Act.**

Photo courtesy of Earth Ministry/WA IPL

testify on that legislation, to “tell stories to give a moral voice,” said Leda, who went there for day trips each week for the two-month session.

“Both bills passed and were signed into law,” she said.

**The food packaging bill** calls for removing cancer-causing toxins, PFAs—perfluoroalkoxy alkanes—from packaging.

“We have a moral obligation to get toxic chemicals out of food. The packaging is paper, coated to be oil and water resistant—such as for muffin wrappers, coffee cups and popcorn bags,” said Leda.

“I was struck during the legislative session with how much difference individuals can make in legislation. It was heartening to bring folks to speak to representatives to discuss issues and it was good to see how enthusiastic people of faith are to take a day off work to talk with legislators.”

**The Oil Spill Prevention Act** funds laws passed to increase inspections of barges/vessels and pipelines that bring oil into the state. It was assuring there is funding for transportation safety.

Having lived in Washington all her life, Leda was excited to call, email and talk to representatives.

She studied religion and French at Whitman College in Walla Walla, graduating in

2016. She moved to Seattle in February 2017 with friends and started in the Justice Leadership Program last summer.

“I care about Washington and want to make it a safe, clean place to live and work,” she said. “When I talked with legislators, I said I’m a person of faith and care about creation.”

**In the spring**, Leda worked on two programs.

She promoted salmon recovery on the Lower Snake River, working with the Nez Perce, Upper Columbia United Tribes and Save Our Wild Salmon to challenge four dams that make it difficult or impossible for salmon to return to mountain streams to spawn.

“Salmon are sacred to the majority of Inland Northwest native tribes, so they want dams managed in a way so salmon can come back,” she said.

**Leda helped organize** “Loaves and Fishes” dialogues in April and May in Moscow, Spokane and Walla Walla.

Panel discussions brought together people of faith, farmers, commercial fishermen and tribal members to talk of their love for Eastern Washington and their stakes in dam removal or re-management to see if they could find a solution that would respect all their interests.

Being from a farm family, Leda knows the dams allow barges to transport wheat

grown in the Palouse to market. For tribes and fishermen, dams endanger the salmon runs.

“We sought to help tribes, fishermen and farmers find shared ground that might lead to a solution for all of them,” she said. “I hope it is the beginning of a process to bring understanding. It’s not about farmers vs. environmentalists. We all love Eastern Washington and want it to be a place where all can live.”

**Another spring project** has been informing faith communities about Initiative 1631, written by the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy. I-1631 will “invest in clean energy like wind and solar, healthy forests and clean water, while creating good-paying jobs and investing in communities most impacted by pollution. It will be funded by a pollution fee paid by the state’s biggest corporate polluters,” Leda said. It has support from faith and low-income groups, communities of color, and environmental, labor and health groups, and native tribes.

The goal was for 500 signatures from faith communities, but they have collected 6,000.

“It seeks to create a just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, bringing everyone along into jobs in the clean energy economy,” said Leda, who is coordinating an outreach for the faith community to collect signatures through July 1.

**Leda, whose year** with the JLP ends July 31, finds faith-based organizing for social justice life-giving, and is looking for other opportunities in Seattle to do such work.

She went to N-Sid-Sen every summer as a camper and then as a counselor. She served on the PNC Board during college, and has attended General Synod, National Youth Events and Annual Meetings.

**For information, call 206-632-2426 or email [leda@earthministry.org](mailto:leda@earthministry.org)**

# N-Sid-Sen will be site for fire district fire boat

N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center is working with the Eastside Coeur d'Alene Fire District to locate their dock and fireboats there. Construction will begin after Labor Day and be done in October.

"We will take out our boat dock and replace it with their larger dock with a fireboat barn at the end," said Mark Boyd, managing director. "We will have use of a better dock with more space."

The dock will be accessible all year with the road to it maintained.

The fire district has raised funds for this project which will provide space for police, fire and EMTs to serve the East Side of Lake Coeur d'Alene when there are boating or car accidents or house fires.

It is an outgrowth of Mark's working close with the community.

"We have provided food for their July 4 pancake breakfast at the Arrow Point station, host



**East Side Fire District and N-Sid-Sen have built a cooperative relationship over many ears.**  
Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

their Christmas banquet at the camp and provide emergency food from our kitchen 24/7 for fire fighters, police and emergency personnel," said Mark.

In addition, he has offered space at N-Sid-Sen for families burned out as a space to stay for a few days and its meadow is a Medivac Transition Site for

landing helicopters.

"The East Side Fire District wanted a location that would be big enough and long term. They know we will be here," said Mark.

Currently there is a fire station across from Arrow Point with four volunteer fire fighters is one of three fire stations. The

others at Carlin Bay and Powderhorn Bay are not staffed. This will be one of many fire boats that will be stationed around the lake. This will be a multi-purpose boat, both for putting out fires and for emergency rescues.

One EMT, Charlotte Pegoraro has been a nurse at N-Sid-Sen and her children come to the camp.

"We will need to keep the road, now named Ford Rd., open all year. Volunteer fire-fighters will come in personal vehicles and park in designated spots," Mark said.

Next summer the campers will have a fire boat demonstration and a drawing to go out in it.

There will be a sign for N-Sid-Sen on the boathouse and the boathouse is designed in the style and with colors that make it look like it belongs to camp.

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



## More Sailboats at Camp



Imagine getting to sail on the lake this summer at N-Sid-Sen. Now imagine waiting in line for 1 of 2 boats to be available.

Well, now you can help to change that! Let's get some sailboats. We have been wanting to increase and upgrade our fleet of sailboats for some time now. We have looked at small sailboats that would be more user friendly for new sailors as well as boats inbetween those and our Cape Dory. N-Sid-Sen has been given a challenge that we know we are up to. There is a matching donation being given to us for up to \$10,000. That's right for every dollar up to \$10,000 we will be matched dollar for dollar. So let's get that \$10,000+ for our fleet. Remember no gift is too small or too large. Simply write a check, go online or call us and we can get those sailboats coming.



If going on line, just click Donate and put sailboats next to N-Sid-Sen  
Feel free to call for more information or questions.

Mark Boyd, Managing Director

36395 S. Highway 97 Harrison Idaho 83833  
208-689-3489 e-mail mark@n-sid-sen.org  
website www.n-sid-sen.org

## La Casa Hogar educates immigrant families in Yakima

David Morales of the Northwest Justice Project and a member of the La Casa Hogar Board, said the program provides cultural activities, connections and education for immigrant and Latino families. It has an Early Learning Center, Adult Education classes and Citizenship and Civic Engagement classes.

"Often people are illiterate in their own language," he said, so La Casa Hogar offers literacy classes in Spanish, as well as English language classes.

More than 450 adults participate in classes each year. Overall, programs serve about 2,000 a year, preparing people to be successful, find jobs, improve their income and become voters.

The Yakima Interfaith Coalition, which leaders of 35 faith communities founded in 1986 to serve low-income neighbors, started La Casa Hogar to provide community and education for Latina women and children. Since 2012, its focus has been educating immigrant families.

**For information, call 509-457-5058 or email info@lac-asahogar.org.**

## 'Beyond Belief' is theme for 2018 combined summer camps

"Beyond Belief" is the theme for the 2018 camps at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center of the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ on the east side of Lake Coeur d'Alene.

Registration for youth camps is on par with previous years, but this summer, campers from throughout the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ will come to N-Sid-Sen, rather than be divided between there and Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center at Port Orchard.



**Campers play beachball volleyball at N-Sid-Sen.**

*Courtesy of Mark Boyd*

Counselors and directors are coming from both eastside and westside churches.

"We are working on transportation to make sure campers from Western Washington can come," said Mark.

One church has provided

funds to rent vans. The conference is also helping connect people who need rides with people who can provide rides. To rent vans will require two drivers to comply with safe church policies.

"We are bringing all the

youth camps here because we have more space and activities than at Pilgrim Firs.

"That camp will be used for the first year as the base for mission camps with youth groups coming from around the region and nation," Mark said.

N-Sid-Sen camp programs are run by volunteer directors and counselors.

As they bring campers together from the two camps, they will focus on valuing the traditions of each camp and on creating new traditions.

Mark said that having the camps for the different age groups facilitates activities, such as worship, meals and campfires.

"Stories we tell for senior high campers are different from those for younger campers," he said.

**For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit [n-sid-sen](http://n-sid-sen.org).**

### 2018 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

**Work Camp** (all ages)  
June 18 to 21

**Senior High Camp**  
Tony Kliment and Kristen Almgren  
July 8 to 14

**Kid's Camp**  
Gale Peterson and Trudy Lambert  
July 15 to 18

**Intermediate Camp**  
Stephen Hadden and Julie Boyd  
July 15 to 21

**Rainbow Retreat**  
July 20 to 22

**Family Camp #1**  
Ryan Lambert and Amy Johnson  
July 29 to Aug 4

**Junior High Camp**  
Leah Atkinson Bilinski  
Aug 5 to 11

**Family Camp #2**  
Janet Malley and  
Andrew Conley-Holcom  
Aug. 19 to 25

**For information,**  
call 208-689-3489  
email [mark@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:mark@n-sid-sen.org)  
register at [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org)

## Camp directors tell of vitality

At Annual Meeting, camp managing directors Mark Boyd at N-Sid-Sen and Wade Zick at Pilgrim Firs, reported that at a time many UCC conferences are closing camps, the PNC has two vital camps, caring for each other in ways that make camps thrive.

N-Sid-Sen has a new logo.

When they asked those at Annual Meeting about why they value the camps, people popped up to share several of the following ways the camps add value to their lives and the lives of their congregations:

- Men's, women's and church retreats;
- Access for disabled children and adults;
- Engaging youth and inter-generational ministry;
- 27 years of recycling newspapers to pay half camper-ships;
- Places where people get married;



**Wade Zick has been recruiting agencies and groups.**

- Places to be one's authentic self;
- Connecting people with the outside and nature;
- Volunteer opportunities and summer jobs;
- God and nature "smooshed together";

Wade said that the camps "connect and resource us as churches."

Mark said the mattresses have been paid in full and now N-Sid-Sen has a sailboat funding campaign.

### 2018 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

**PNC Counselor & Director Retreat - May 20 to 22**

**Service Camps in the Kitsap Community**  
June 24 to 29  
July 15 to 20

**For information,**  
call 360-876-2031  
email [wadezick.pf@gmail.com](mailto:wadezick.pf@gmail.com)  
register at [pilgrimfirs.com](http://pilgrimfirs.com)