



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

Mary Stamp, editor
editor@pncuccnews.org

325 N. 125th St. - Seattle WA 98133 • (206) 725-8383 or (800) 954-8777 or (509) 535-1813

June-August 2020

Bell ringing, food pantry say that church cares

Dayton UCC makes presence known as it facilitates food distribution in community

Dayton First Congregational Church-UCC continues to use its historic Eells bell as a call to prayer and mindfulness in these days. A bell-ringer took up the ministry of ringing it at 11:30 a.m. Sundays from their first Sunday without in-person worship on March 15 to now.

“What was expected to be maybe a month or two will happen every week for as long as it takes,” said Marj Johnston, pastor. “While our church members know it’s a point in time on Sundays with an audible call to prayer, the wider community has taken notice and bolstered the idea that we really are ‘together while apart’ in these days.”

Repairs in 2015 restored the Eells bell to working condition (see story in Sep-Continued on Page 4



Dayton First Congregational UCC find ways to help community during COVID-19.

Moderator and PNC board prioritize anti-racism work

By Hillary Coleman - moderator

This is not where we expected to be as the summer of 2020 arrives, and yet, in some ways, I think we are being called to be exactly where we need to be as a church and to do vital work.

We are dealing with two pandemics—the existing pandemic of racism and the COVID-19 pandemic. I so wish that we were not faced with either of these pandemics, but unfortunately, we are and we must take action. I have been amazed by the stories of churches in our Conference adapting to church in times of COVID-19 and encourage them to keep up the inspiring work.

Today I write about addressing the pandemic that has existed for far too long: racism. I have similarly been in-

We must be declaring that Black Lives Matter and speaking up in solidarity.

spired by seeing UCC clergy and members speaking out in our Conference and across the denomination.

This builds on our work of deepening relationships and undoing institutional racism that our Conference has been working on during our most recent Annual Meetings and in the time between. We have a lot to do, and this work must continue.

We must be declaring that Black

Lives Matter and speaking up in solidarity because Black people are being murdered by police brutality and white supremacy.

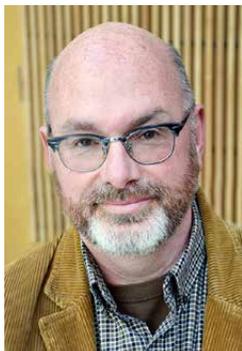
We must acknowledge the white supremacy that is intertwined with the structures that make up our country, Conference, and churches. White folks (myself included) must heed the call to do our own internal work to understand white supremacy and what it means to be an anti-racist.

White folks must continue to step back while listening to and believing stories and experiences of people of color and following their leadership around policy demands and ways to undo institutional racism. We must feel uncom-

Continued on page 6

Now we reflect how the pandemic transforms us

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

*We may be
renewing
intimacy
that has
the possibility
to change
lives
and
change
the world.*

As I write this, it's been 114 days since Ash Wednesday. Around the beginning of Lent, we really began to understand what the impact of the pandemic might be and began to grasp what sort of sacrifices and changes we might have to prepare for. In some ways, we've adjusted amazingly well, but it hasn't been without consequences for many of us in our settings. The first part of this pandemic was about how we adjusted. Now, we're moving into a clearer stage of reflecting on how this is transforming us. The first was temporary. The second is more permanent.

We've been on a trajectory of shallowness for a long time. We only have so much energy to spare and much of it has been required to do more as opposed to be more. We've confused the idea of more communication with the idea of better communication. We've confused the idea of more busyness with meaningfulness. We've confused the idea of being seen with being present. We've confused the idea of saying the right thing with doing the right thing.

I know I've been caught up in this. It's hard not to. There is this idea of going after the "low hanging fruit" and tackling those things that are easiest in order to rack up something like task points. Respond to a bunch more emails. Post the right thing in social media. Like the right updates. Express the proper amount of outrage. Buy the right thing. Subscribe to the right thing. Listen to another podcast. By the end of it, we can actually feel like we did something and yet...

Some days I've been surprisingly productive and, at the same time, amazingly ineffective. The breadth of what I might have done in a given day was broad but it was shallow. Now that I have more time at home and less travel, commuting, what's become clear is that too many days, my family and friends get the leftover time; the leftover attention: the leftover me.

I have a love-hate relationship with video-conferencing at this point in the pandemic. In one way, I appreciate the ability to be immediately present in a way that's feeling more personal as time goes on. In another way, it is so exhausting because it insists on so much attention. I browse faces in a different way and pay a different sort of attention to a person's movement on the screen.

Think about that for a moment. The reason we might be so exhausted by video-conferencing is because we have to pay attention. I keep wondering, had I really been paying so little attention, before? Was I so focused on, well, everything else that I wasn't paying attention?

We're at the early stages of a fund raiser

for our camps. Like most places in the world that count on their income coming from being a gathering place, our camps are taking a huge financial hit. They've done amazing work transitioning from places where groups can gather to place where people have some time and space set aside. Pilgrim Firs has been a Quarantine and Isolation Center for Kitsap County. N-Sid-Sen has hosted first responders and clergy that have needed a break. At the same time, underneath the service that camp has been, we've also rediscovered some of the meaning that camp is a vessel for.

We put together a promotional video for the fund-raising campaign and it's worth watching. One of the themes that clearly emerges is the reality that camp changes lives. It has me thinking about how. One of the things that many folks who attend programming at camp talk about is how being in these places fosters a sense of community and peace.

More than one person asks what it might take to recreate some of this experience at home. What if it's all about this "paying attention" thing? What if it's all about setting this time aside where wifi and mobile phone signals are spotty to be present with each other in a place that gives us time for depth vs. breadth? What if it wasn't about how many friends you have in your Facebook feed but the depth of friendships and relationships with family, neighbors and friends? Camp sort of forces the container. What if we created it?

This might be the transformative legacy of COVID-19: the community it creates. We should mourn every person who dies but not every practice; not the busy-ness, not the shallowness. We're paying attention, now, in a way that many of us didn't previously and we're seeing police violence and racism in ways that we didn't before. We're paying attention to others and ourselves in ways that we might not have a 114 days ago and we're not just clicking through the list of what's not right in our newsfeeds but feeling what is and isn't right in our guts. We're missing being with each other and being intentional about making space to pay attention to each other.

Regardless of what some might suggest, realistically we're still at the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic but maybe, just maybe, our attention at this moment is bringing some other things to an end.

We might be overwhelmed with the idea of social distancing but may, just maybe, we're at the beginnings of a renewing kind of intimacy that has the possibility of changing lives and changing the world.

Clergy transitions & reflections

Brigitta Remole is now the interim at St. Paul's UCC in Seattle after serving as interim at Eastgate UCC in Bellevue.

Russell Clark began his call at Sunnyslope UCC in Wenatchee.

Deanna Murray has resigned from Bellingham First Congregational UCC.

Bianca Davis-Lovelace, executive director of Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches, shares reflections on being a UCC pastor, offering insights related to racism at <http://www.ecclesio.com/2017/11/dance-inclusion-african-american-leadership-dominant-culture-churches-by-bianca-davis-lovelace/>.

Faith communities gather to discuss a moral response

"A Moral Response to the Pandemic, Poverty, and Police Violence" was a virtual gathering at 6 p.m., Wednesday, June 17, with faith leaders of many traditions and communities gathering to discuss actions needed out of faith and love for these times.

The event is co-sponsored by Bethany UCC, MAPS-AMEN, Kadima Jewish Reconstructionist, New Hope Missionary Baptist, Islamic Center, Plymouth UCC, Faith Action Network, WA Poor People's Campaign, and more with elected officials. Sister Aneelah Afzali of MAPS-AMEN and the Rev. Angela Ying of Bethany moderated this virtual gathering.

Register for the Facebook event at www.tinyurl.com/MoralResponseRSVP.

PNC has weekly meetings

Members of PNC churches are connecting in new ways through conference-wide meetings on Zoom and RingCentral. Information is available pnucc.org under the COVID-19 tab.

"Worshipping together when we can't be together" meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Mondays on PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android on Ringcentral.

Courtney's Community Office Hours is 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Wednesdays, and 1 to 3 p.m., Thursdays, on Ringcentral.

Sharing on Pastoral Care during an outbreak is from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays.

The Rocky Mountain Conference has arranged a meeting for Children and

Youth Ministers also from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays on Zoom.

A weekly Moderators Meeting is from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Thursdays on Ring Central.

Church Administration and Fiduciary Considerations is the theme for a meeting from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Fridays.

From 4 to 5 p.m., Fridays, there is also a Fun Friday Pastors Hour.

Conference News Briefs

Plymouth offers workshop

Plymouth UCC is also offering be an Anti-Racist Giving Workshop on June 23 on Zoom. "How do we decide when, where and how much to give? How do our social and racial identities shape our relationships with money and giving? What does it look like to center the giving of money as part of our anti-racist practice?" ask organizers from the Social Justice Fund and Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites who have teamed up to present the interactive workshop to help people develop personal social justice giving plans.

This cross-class workshop is open to anyone but designed for those who have benefited from the history of white wealth accumulation in the country and community. There will be discussions of race, whiteness, reparations and the concept of fund-shifting.

The Zoom Virtual meeting will be from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 23, with information at plymouthchurch-seattle.org.

General Synod announced

The 33rd biennial General Synod planned for Kansas City, Mo., in 2021 will now be virtual. The UCC Board met online March 27 to discuss synod plans. "Rooted in Love," based on Psalm 1:3a, will be the theme of the General Synod meeting July 16 to 20, 2021, online.

The logo incorporates not only the scriptural theme—"they are like trees planted by streams of water"—but UCC values as well, said the Rev. Penny Lowes of Rochester, Mich., moderator of General Synod 33.

"The image of a colorful tree rooted near living water is a perfect logo for the challenging times in which we find ourselves," she said. "As diverse members of the United UCC of Christ, our many roots entwine to give us resilience and strength. Together, we spread our branches of love,

offering shades of faith and hope to a weary world. This scripture and image will resonate with the people of Christ as we strive to build a new creation of righteousness through a just world for all."

A 2019 visit to Kansas City by the Synod planners informed the logo and theme.

"Kansas City's many water fountains presented a spiritual symbol, a unique local connection, and a pathway to engage one of the most pressing creation, justice and spiritual issues of our day: water," said the Rev. Tracy Howe Wispelwey, minister of congregational and community engagement and the Synod's worship director.

For information, visit ucc.org.

UCC offers prayers, Juneteenth

The UCC Opening and Affirming Coalition is hosting a daily 15-minute Morning Prayer from at 9 a.m. PDT, Mondays through Saturdays in its Zoom chapel. Services are based on the ancient "Hours" of Christian prayer and include scripture, silence, intercessory prayer and Taizé chant.

At 4 p.m. PDT, Sundays, the Coalition offers a virtual Holy Communion with music and a message.

Services will continue as long as stay-at-home orders remain in effect.

Join at zoom.us/j/5556624822.

UCC Ministries invite members and friends to join in virtual commemorations on Friday, June 19, of the official end of slavery in the U.S. and to use the occasion to join long-term the anti-racism movement. **Go to https://www.ucc.org/news_juneteenth_observances_invite_entire_ucc_to_recall_slavery_s_end_commit_to_action_06102020.**

Poor People's Campaign set

The Poor People's Campaign is planning the largest mass digital event ever in support of poor people and the end to systems and policies that oppress poor people this Saturday and Sunday, June 20 and 21. PNC UCC minister, the Rev. Bianca Davis-Lovelace is one of the Washington State Poor People's Campaign Tri-Chairs. Events are at 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., Saturday and 3 p.m., Sunday, reported Steve Claggett, chair of the PNC UCC Justice & Witness Ministries Committee.

The Washington PPC link is <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonPPC>, at <https://wapoorproplecampign.org>. Saturday's event is at www.june2020.org.

Dayton UCC finds new ways to serve community

Continued from page 1

tember/October 2015), and the bell has been rung every Sunday at the beginning of worship.

Marj said it has tolled for funerals, memorials and to summon the community to prayer and observance at times of grief like mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Fla., and schools, shopping centers and entertainment venues, as well as any other community event warranting a call to prayer.

"We post our intentions to ring on our Facebook page, which is shared on two community pages" she said. "Each week we note a particular point of prayer, like when we crossed 100,000 COVID-19 deaths. Folks chime in with names or their own prayer thoughts."

The church also uses the bell to participate in nationwide invitations to ring and toll bells, such as recently on the National Day of Mourning on June 1.

"We've had many come to record the ringing and tolling. We hear 'thanks for doing this' from several. Some beyond ear-shot—often because of wind—have been walking, riding bikes, driving by, or parking and listening," Marj said.

The community knows the church for more than its bell.

"We had been talking about hosting a Little Free Pantry for a while," Marj said. "With the sudden move to isolate and new challenges for folks with limited incomes or perhaps even no incomes for a time, an old cupboard from the parsonage that hadn't found another use was reclaimed and repurposed."

Within 24 hours from the first mention of "could we," it had shelves, a new coat of paint inside and out, and a small gabled roof. It was placed in a sheltered, accessible place for anyone to use.

It's been monitored informally by a couple of folks from the congregation, and again, individuals in the community

have connected with a tangible way of showing love for neighbors, she said.

It was rarely less than half full any time in the nearly 10 weeks of "business." It holds non-perishable food along with personal toiletries, household supplies and pet foods.

Sometimes a few small vases with fresh-picked flowers are available to visitors, and recently bags of three or four sticks of sidewalk chalk have been available with the invitation to create art on the sidewalk.

"Recently I heard, 'Wow, there's cereal!' a delighted shout at the Little Free Pantry. 'And hot chocolate!' 'And soap!' Thanks to friends and neighbors who stock our Free Pantry," said Marj, noting that people now know it's there outside the church 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Food stamps can't be used for cleaners, toiletries, personal hygiene products or pet foods, so some donors keep watch and make those items their focus.

"A natural sort of almost daily check seems to be happening by those who are most engaged as donors," she said. "It has become a community project to donate, tidy and remind folks it's here."

One neighbor said, "It's easy to send a check and hope it does some good. This gives me a hands-on way of *doing* something that I believe is helpful."

Another neighbor left gift certificates to three stores in town to fit into our "shop local" reminders. She said it was a sort of "test to see if people took just one or if the same person(s) would take all three."

Marj doesn't know the end result of the effort. Many appreciate that it's a way to feel helpful and have anonymity in giving and in receiving.

"There's no monitoring by names and numbers, and when I've overheard comments—my office is just around the corner



Dayton UCC offers food pantry.
Photo courtesy of Dayton UCC

of the building—I can relay what items seem to bring the biggest shouts of joy and appreciation," she said.

Marj, who has been serving there since November 2011, said much of her ministry is in broadening understanding of "what we mean when we say, 'All are welcome here.'"

She continues to learn that practical, hands-on ways of living out faith, wrestling with Jesus' teachings and putting them to work goes much farther than simply tossing out Bible verses and having debates about what Jesus might really have meant.

"We intentionally continue to examine our faith and daily living experiences," she said.

They consider it "Loving God, Loving Neighbor, Loving Ourselves"—the greatest commandment and the second—are reflected in what they're learning and living, allowing the Spirit to guide them forward.

Marj said in these days the church has been concerned for keeping everyone safe, those who gather as First Congregational and their neighbors.

With guidelines in place from the governor and the State Department of Health, advice with the Center for Disease Control and the PNC-UCC, she said the church is guarded and slow about moving forward.

"I've recorded my message each week, sending it via email

with elements for a brief worship service. We have done three weekly Zoom online gatherings for coffee hour, prayer, check-in and office hours," Marj said. "We've shared online communion and will offer communion to-go soon."

Deacons and two others share in pastoral care via phone and handwritten notes.

"We're a low maintenance faith community with many in the risk category by age who are also seriously connected and engaged in volunteer opportunities throughout the community," she said. "These are not idle folks!"

Her focus is to support them with the language that explains for those outside who think we're dragging our feet and being too cautious, to remind the people of the theological underpinnings of what it means to "love your neighbor as yourself" so that they're confident "we're doing the best we can do to love God, each other and our neighbors," she said.

The church council has a task force that reads newly released information, reviewing what's happening in the state, region and town, to discern what level of commitment it will take to ensure that the church's "all are welcome" and safe is true. They are deciding about in-person gatherings.

On Sunday, June 14, Marj offered drive-by blessings for people who were masked and stayed in their vehicles. Depending on how things go, they may hold outdoor gatherings in July.

"While we're not worshipping in person at present, members are busy about many things in town assisting where needed for those who are truly isolated and isolating as we wait for safer days ahead," said Marj, who sees "the Spirit is at work in us and through us!"

For information, call 509-382-2471 or email pastor-marj@gmail.com.

Richmond Beach UCC holds candlelight vigil

Paying attention to careful distancing, Richmond Beach Congregational UCC in Shoreline hosted an outdoor Black Lives Matter solidarity candlelight vigil in the churchyard beside the busy Richmond Beach Road on Saturday, June 6.

Nearly 75 members and neighbors, many of whom had not seen each other in person for more than three months, communicated their collective grief and love through their COVID-care facemasks with tearful yet smiling eyes.

Beginning with Psalm 6 as a lament, a number of persons gave accounts of pain, activism, inspiration and heartbreak, said Dan Stern, spiritual director at Richmond Beach UCC.

“We stand together on the lands of the Coast Salish People,” RBCC member Aerika began her introduction. “We’re here to grieve, mourn and honor the lives of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Manuel Ellis, Breonna Taylor, Charlena Lyles and so many black lives lost. We pray for justice, change, love and peace.”

Having grown up a Black



Richmond Beach UCC help lead candlelight BLM vigil

Photo courtesy of Dan Stern

woman in the South during the Civil Rights movement of the 60s, RBCC member Beverly told of how often she heard her father lament, “How long, Lord, how long?”

In referencing how some, when confronted with the

words, “Black Lives Matter,” reply that all lives matter, Beverly spoke of Luke 15.

It says: “The shepherd has 100 sheep. One gets lost. He goes to find his lost sheep and the 99 question him saying, ‘What about us, don’t we mat-

ter?’ And the shepherd says ‘Of course you matter but you are not the one in danger, the one is.’”

“Black Lives are in danger because their lives don’t matter,” said Beverly.

Then a quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin was added, “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”

At the conclusion, with candles lit against the darkening sky, the gathered faith community listened only to more than 8 minutes of a single human heartbeat.

This represented the entire length of time a knee was held down on George Floyd’s neck as he lay dying. As the heartbeat ended, everyone extinguished their individual flames.

Asked to give a benediction, the Rev. Paul Ashby, pastor of RBUCC, stressed that “we aren’t finished, that waking up is only the start of a new day.”

For information, call 206-542-7477 or email danstern@juno.com.

Four UCC clergy join interfaith leaders’ vigil

At noon on Friday, June 5, Seattle clergy of many faith traditions gathered and filled the steps of St. James Cathedral for a silent vigil and moment of lament with Father Michael Ryan of the cathedral.

The clergy came out to protest racism and police violence. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the clergy stood silently six feet apart wearing masks, as funeral bells rang continuously for eight minutes and 46 seconds for George Floyd and all the people killed by police in this country.

That includes the 200 people, mostly black and brown brothers and sisters, killed by

the police in Washington State since 2005.

A consent decree was put in place on Seattle because of excessive force by the Seattle police in 2012, after Native American John T. Williams was killed by Seattle police while crossing the street.

Work to defund the Seattle police budget by 50 percent or more and instead fund much needed communities for affordable housing, jobs, human and health services, and restorative justice is before the mayor and Seattle City Council.

For information, call 206-725-7535 or email angelaying@bethanyseattle.org.



509-730-9969

Seattle UCC clergy who attended included the Rev. Angela Ying, senior pastor at Bethany United Church of Christ (center, fifth row with All Black Lives Matter sign); the Rev. Steven Davis, executive minister, Plymouth Congregational Church (back row, third from left); the Rev. Kelle Brown, lead pastor, Plymouth UCC (preparing to speak, next to Father Ryan), and the Rev. Gary Southerton, pastor of Broadview UCC (back row, third from right).

Photo courtesy of Bethany UCC

Sione Tuihalamaka keeps UCUCU safe for homeless teens

While staff at University Congregational UCC in Seattle is working from home, Sione Tuihalamaka, who was recently promoted from lead custodian, to facilities manager.

He is managing the facility, not only keeping the basic building systems operating but also keeping it clean and safe, because the basement is being used by homeless youth for a daytime drop-in center and take out meals.

Before COVID-19 and the stay at home orders, he began a course with the International Facilities Management Association. He recently earned a certificate in facilities management.

"He takes initiative in his care of the church," said Wendy



Sione Tuihalamaka is UCUCU's lead custodian.

Photo courtesy of Sione Tuihalamaka

Blight of UCUCU.

Sione was born in Tonga,

raised in Australia and returned to Tonga for studies in 1989. He spent many years playing rugby internationally, living 10 years in England, where he completed studies in sports and science in 2004, with the goal of being a rugby coach.

He returned to Tonga, where he met his wife, who is from Seattle. They married in 2005 and have three children. He ended his career in rugby in 2006 and began working various jobs in Seattle, in maintenance, utilities and custodial work, which he has now done for nearly 20 years.

Sione began working at University Congregational UCC in 2018. He is now responsible for coordinating the custodial staff, making sure

they are safe and have PPE.

The University District Youth Center has a day center operating seven days a week, serving 25 to 30 teens from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. The related Teen Feed program operates six days a week, offering a take-out evening meal.

"It's a blessing to reach out and help the teens by making sure the building operates and is clean," said Sione. "God has prepared me for this journey and I'm grateful to do it."

While his mother-in-law is pastor of a local Tongan Methodist Church, he also has attended UCUCU.

For information, call 206-524-2322 or email facilities@universityucc.org.

Board commits to develop, use anti-racist lens in its work

Continued from page 1

fortable and do our best to get over that discomfort and take action.

If we had met in person for our 2020 Annual Meeting, our Conference would have voted on bylaw changes that named our commitment to dismantling racism. We would have acknowledged in our governing documents that white supremacy and dominant culture are realities in our conference, and that we must work with an anti-racist lens to undo institutional racism.

Since we could not vote on bylaw changes this year due to not being in-person, our Board of Directors decided to take action and voted at our June 16 meeting to commit to Anti-Racism as a priority for the Board.

Our Board is dedicated to this work.

In lieu of an in-person board retreat this year, our board members are taking part in a series of diversity workshops to do some of the impor-



Hillary Coleman joins a recent BLM protest in Seattle.

Photo courtesy of Hillary Coleman

tant personal and internal work as the Conference Board that we need to do.

Our board members have

been committed to work to address racism and white supremacy in our Conference, and I am committed to making sure

that we learn and act in collaboration with people across the Conference to truly look at our Board's work with an anti-racism lens.

As part of adopting this priority at our June 16 meeting, we share the following statement. Please look for further communications about this commitment and the work that follows on the Google listserv in the coming days and weeks:

"The Board of Directors is committed to dismantling racism while expanding our understanding and awareness of the impact of racism and other intersectional oppressions such as classism, homophobia/homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny. White supremacy and dominant culture are realities in our Conference, and as an expression of equity, the Board is committed to developing and using an anti-racist lens in our work."

For information, call 206-321-4344 or email hillarycolemanucc@gmail.com.

Eagle Harbor UCC joins in Bainbridge Island protest

Bainbridge Island hosted a Black Lives Matter/Native Lives Matter protest on Thursday, June 4, under the leadership of a local group called Kitsap ERACE Coalition, which also arranged protest gatherings in Bremerton and Poulsbo that week.

In addition to remembering Black lives lost, the community continues to mourn for Stonechild Chiefstick, who was shot by Poulsbo police last July 3.

Hundreds of people, including members of the Suquamish tribe, gathered around the intersection closest to the ferry terminal, stretching out in four directions along the roadside in an effort to maintain some measure of social distancing.

After an hour of chanting and a few words from organizers, the crowd processed a few blocks to Bainbridge City Hall, briefly blocking regular traffic in the compact downtown area, said the Rev. Dee Eisenhauer, pastor of Eagle Harbor UCC.

“About a dozen people from Eagle Harbor UCC participated, but it may have been more because it was hard to recognize people under their masks and of course we did not congregate as a unit,” she said.

“It was a peaceful inter-generational event attended by quite a few local religious leaders,” she said.

For information, call 206-842-4657.



The Rev. Dee Eisenhauer at the Bainbridge Island protest.

Photo courtesy of Chandra Kaur of Eagle Harbor

UCC churches join in vigil and rally in Everett

At 2 p.m., Sunday, June 14, Everett and St. Paul’s UCC joined the Penn Northeast Conference UCC churches mobilizing on Flag Day “to let our presence be testimony to the freedoms proclaimed in our revolution and our becoming a nation, said the Rev. Brigitta Remole, interim pastor at St. Paul’s UCC.

Folks gathered in the church parking lot, using appropriate protection guidelines, to “stand in solidarity with our siblings of color who have been subjected to systems of white supremacy and racism for centuries,” she said. “We gathered to demonstrate our willingness to change and act in faithfulness to the way of Jesus.

They also recognized words of the U.S. founders: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The vigil included a reading, prayer, eight minutes and 46 seconds of silence, and a commitment to next steps.

In addition, the community was invited with the words, “Don’t wonder what you would have been doing during the civil Rights Movement, you’re doing it right now,” to a rally and march from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, June 12, at the Everett Courthouse Plaza, co-hosted by the Everett UCC, with Pastor Jermell Witherspoon of Everett UCC and Liberation UCC speaking. After speakers, there was a silent march through the streets and back to the Courthouse Plaza.

For information, call 206-783-6733 or email remolebrigitta@gmail.com.

UCC church sent cookies for marchers



There was a march June 12 on Mercer Island. Mercer Island Congregational UCC did not participate, but delivered 10 dozen chocolate chip cookies, which rode along in a little red wagon that accompanied the marchers, said the pastor, Roberta Rominger.

Photo courtesy of Roberta Rominger

About 30 joined in signing along Newport sidewalk

About 30 people from diverse backgrounds shared their passion on Saturday, June 6, in downtown Newport.

"There were only a handful of negative comments and 'salutes,' but mostly positive waves, honks and smiles," said Becky Anderson, who retired in January as pastor of Newport UCC and still lives there.

"There were two people from Newport UCC there, and I know people were there from other churches," she said.

During this stay-at-home time, Becky has been doing research she planned before COVID-19 focusing on the Jim Crow era and the non-response of Christians," she said.

She is also writing a short book on veterans who died in wars and were connected with

Pend Oreille County from the Civil War and Spanish American War to the Vietnam War.

Becky said the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall will be in Newport July 16 to 20 at the cemetery. It's a half-size version of the D.C. wall. During its visit, names of all on the wall will be spoken aloud. Other events in Newport include a July 18 Veterans Stand Down with resources and Farmer's Market events to honor veterans.

The title is for her project is "I Never Knew." It traces her background growing up in an Eastern Washington county where there were no blacks and little attention to race.

"I guess I am 'woke' now. I want to help people like me understand what the 400+ year background of oppression in



Mike and Sandee Meade of Newport UCC are among those holding signs in Newport.

Photo courtesy of Becky Anderson

slavery, peonage in Reconstruction, voter suppression and just plain mean spirits have done to black-white relations in

the US."

For information, call 307-272-8922 or email rev. becky.52@gmail.com.

Walla Walla church speaks on racism, supremacy

As people of faith and disciples of Jesus, our community at First Congregational Church of Walla Walla stands with those struggling for racial justice who are speaking out about racism and white supremacy in our culture and institutions.

We declare that Black lives matter.

We share the grief over the violent death of George Floyd, a fellow Christian dedicated to peace, and over the many other unarmed Black, Brown, and Indigenous people who have died at the hands of those we entrust to provide fair and equal protection under the law. Our faith compels us to confront racism as a false idol and a force that crucifies.

We know that God's grace, as a gift, is free, but it is not cheap. It calls us to a change of heart and of actions, seeing clearly the role of sin in ourselves and our society. We are humbled to acknowledge the

sin of racism and White supremacy in ourselves, in our institutions, and in our country's living history. We seek, with God's help, and with the confidence that nothing truly separates any of us from the love of God, to do our part to overcome racism and heal the injustices in our society.

To that end:

- We are committed to better understanding our own White privilege and racism, for those of us who are White, and to address its subtle and overt manifestations in our church culture. To aid us, we will use small group curricula developed by our national leadership in the United Church of Christ, such as "White Privilege - Let's Talk: A Resource for Transformational Dialogue." We invite others in our community to this work, and gladly will share these resources.

- We are committed to supporting and responding to the

leadership of Black and Brown people in our city and state who are developing policy measures that can reduce the risk of police violence and increase democratic oversight and accountability.

- We are committed to finding appropriate ways as a church to help bring our local police and political leaders into conversation with the Walla Walla Black Lives Matter movement, as well as the Walla Walla Immigrant Rights Coalition, as they request, to discuss meaningful reforms and reconciliation.

- We are committed to peace and nonviolence in our ways, knowing all people are fellow children of God. We will do our part to reduce the level of violence in our society overall. This requires attending to larger injustices in our nation, largely impacting People of Color. This also requires attending to the seeds of violence

in ourselves. A less violent society will reduce the level of risk and stress for all, including those who serve as police officers.

- We are above all committed to following the Way of Jesus with integrity, confronting the forces of violence and racism with love in our hearts and with our trust centered on the God of resurrection at work through history and beyond.

Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg, pastor

J.R. VanSlyke, moderator

Jen Rickard, Vice-Moderator

Dana Taggart, chair, Board of Trustees

Judy Chacon, chair, Board of Deacons

Heidi McFarley, chair, Mission & Social Concerns Committee

Dot Willis, chair, Christian Education

For information, call 509-525-8753.

Normandy Park UCC joins in community silent march



Amy Hitchins, Shannon Thomas, and Steve and Nancy Allen participated in a Silent March and Black Lives Matter Vigil

Photo courtesy of Nancy Allen

On June 12, about eight members of the Normandy Park United Church of Christ joined about 400 others in a Silent March and Black Lives Matter Vigil in Normandy Park, said Amy Hitchins, pastor.

The march was organized by a church member at John Knox Presbyterian, a neighboring church with which Normandy Park UCC has partnered.

“It was a good first step for the community of Normandy Park,” said Amy.

Normandy Park is a community that developed after World War II, she said.

“The city had had rules excluding people of color in its not too distant history,” she pointed out.

For information, call 206-824-1770, email info@npucc.org or visit npucc.org.

University UCC develops statement on dismantling racism

In response to the murder of George Floyd and in solidarity with those protesting, University Congregational UCC in Seattle has written a statement that it has posted on Facebook and the church website, and shared with the UCUCU congregation via email.

The church offers it as a model of a formal statement churches may want to make,” said Kyna Shilling of UCUCU.

She offered an article with more thoughts on crafting a statement: <http://www.nesheaholic.com/2020/06/the-dos-and-donts-of-crafting-your.html?fbclid=IwAR32iuTN2dVZnKDXfEZGaIh-H2e54LkpySTePGQcNbg-PB3hxZxEd5jSlbzA>

A Statement and a Call

In solidarity with those protesting the murder of George Floyd; we call for the dismantling of systemic racism in our country.

Last year our congregation adopted a resolution calling for us to be a Racial Justice Church. In that resolution we acknowledge that there are many ways in which we, as a congregation, take part in the systemic racism that exists in

our society and our church. In addition, we declare that as people of faith and followers of Jesus, we are called “to work in ways both in and outside the church to change those systems and ourselves.”

In these last months the depth of systemic racism and its cost in human lives have been on full display. As a result of a long history of oppression and economic injustice, the impact of this global pandemic has been felt disproportionately in communities of color. And in these last months, the deadly pandemic of racism has also claimed other victims. We add the names of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd to the unbearably long list of those who have been killed because we have allowed systemic racism and white supremacy to continue in this country.

We recognize that silence in the face of such injustice is complicity. We stand with people of color in our congregations and in our communities who are threatened and exhausted by ongoing injustice. We stand with those who are placing their bodies on the front lines of protest in

order to confront and to change this country.

Therefore, as people of faith, we proclaim that we stand with those who are speaking out against racism and white supremacy culture.

We have witnessed elected officials of our city, our state, and our nation call for a response of domination toward those who are crying out for justice.

Therefore, we call on the elected officials to take action: disavowing violent retribution and partnering with protesters to enact meaningful change.

We have witnessed police use pepper spray, rubber bullets, and other escalation responses against non-violent protesters, including journalists, bystanders and our clergy colleagues.

Therefore, we call for a de-escalation of police response, and a commitment from policing groups to disavow acts of provocation and violence, and engage in police reform.

We have witnessed an over-anxious concern for property that diverts attention from humans who are suffering from systemic racism and the lives that have been lost because of it.

Therefore, we call for a continued focus of attention and a devotion of needed resources to dismantle the deadly racism that has gripped us all for far too long.

Our faith calls us to the urgent work of justice, as God’s hands and feet in the world. We bear witness with our siblings in Christ who are Black, Indigenous, Immigrants, and People of Color to the suffering and death they experience at the hands of police, in prisons, at our border, and disproportionately from coronavirus. These interconnected injustices come from systemic racism.

Therefore, we will not be silent, and we commit ourselves anew to this ongoing work.

The statement is signed by on behalf of the church by: the Rev. Catherine Foote, minister of care and outreach; the Rev. Amy Roon, minister of Worship and Christian education; the Rev. Todd Smiedendorf, minister of vision and stewardship; Terry Moore, moderator, and Ed Coleman, assistant moderator.

For information, call 206-524-2322, email office@universityucc.org, or visit www.universityucc.org.

Food pantry becomes 'food bank' outlet

Tolt UCC in Carnation became involved with grocery rescue with community groups as part of its response to COVID-19.

"It all started with our Little Free Pantry that was built as a service project by a confirmand and her mentor," said Kaila Russell, the church's moderator.

The pantry was placed in front of the church about a month before the COVID crisis.

"There are hungry people in our community, and this was a way to help. People could take what they needed, and people could also donate nonperishable items," she said.

In early March at the beginning of the COVID crisis, the local Hopelink foodbank reached out to the church, having seen the little pantry out front, to see if the church would help with receiving perishable items from grocery stores.

Regulations had limited Hopelink's ability to receive some foods during this crisis.

"We began to partner with Hopelink's grocery rescue program and with Platefull, another organization that rescues groceries rather than having them discarded," she said.

"In early March, we began receiving both perishable and nonperishable items from eight grocery stores during the



Tolt UCC in Carnation has a food pantry outside.

Photos courtesy of Tolt UCC

week," said Kaila. "Some of the food was delivered to us, some was picked up by volunteers."

A team of Tolt volunteers received the food, sorted and then organized it to be picked up by people in the community.

"Every week we would receive boxes and boxes of potatoes, onions, many kinds of fresh produce, fruits, milk, yogurt, cheeses and meats," she said.

The "food bank" was open from 3 to 6 p.m., Wednesdays and again on Thursdays until all of the food was disbursed.

People began lining up at 2:15 p.m. outside the church to pick up their food.

Over and over volunteers heard, "Thank you. This is saving our family right now."

"People are so grateful. We practiced social distancing, allowing two people through at a time to pick out their items," said Kaila.

People appreciated being able to pick out what they would use. There were limits on items to make enough available for everyone.

From 100 to 120 families

come through each week.

"We initially committed to do this for two weeks. The end of May marked the end of three months," Kaila said.

With a limited number of volunteers because of social distancing and the makeup of the congregation, along with the difficulties of storing food safely while temperatures were rising outside, Tolt ended the program at the end of May.

Hopelink is working to restore their perishable food item pickups.

In the meantime, they are finding different places to take the groceries.

"We will continue to receive groceries from one store on Wednesdays and have those items available for pickup," Kaila said. "We will resume our weekly Free Community Meal on a take-out only basis.

"Our Little Free Pantry continues to be a blessing. People in the community want to help others, and we have received so many food donations," she said.

The church has turned its conference room into food storage for the pantry. Volunteers stock it twice a day with donations. They also receive monetary donations to support it as well.

For information, call 425-941-6279 or email russell.kaila@gmail.com.

Tolt UCC joins in international day of mourning

After its worship service on Zoom at 11:30 a.m., Sunday, May 31, Tolt UCC joined interfaith communities across the nation seeking to transcend divisions and calling people to lament, mourn and honor the dead in the National Day of Mourning and Lament for lives lost in the pandemic and in response to the injustice of racism, said Barb Lewis, office manager of Tolt UCC.

Members of the church and

community gathered in front of church with social distancing and face masks.

"We gathered outside our chapel to share tolling of our chapel bell with statements to remember the recent deaths from the pandemic and to stand against racism, allowing the greater community to witness," she said.

"We acknowledged the unequal suffering, prayed together for the healing of the nation and



Cristine Airaghi, Steve Hadden and Kaila Russell lead vigil.

recommitted ourselves to the difficult work ahead," she said.

For information, call 425-333-4254.

Global Ministries connects with Sri Lanka, Colombia

The Pacific Northwest Conference-UCC recently sent a gift to Sri Lanka from the Markham Fund, and the Global Ministries Committee of the PNC and Northern Lights Disciples of Christ set plans for a virtual pilgrimage to Colombia.

In April, the PNC-UCC sent \$1,000 from the Markham Fund—established by Robin and the late Fran Markham, retired missionaries who served in Angola—to partners Sri Lanka's Church of American Ceylon Mission (CACM).

The church sought help to feed people on lockdown in Sri Lanka because of the pandemic. Many poor people there, work at a daily wage—field workers, tuk, tuk drivers and restaurant workers, said Mary Olney-Loyd, co-chair of the PNC's Global Ministries Committee with the Northern Lights DOC.

Mary asked committee member Ed Evans to talk with Robin Markham, requesting \$1,000 to go through the PNC and Global Ministries to the CACM.

"The funds were used to provide dry food packages with such staples as lentils, beans, rice, spices and soap for those in need," said Mary, who visited with her husband Gary to teach English in Sri Lanka in 2017.

She shared a report of the Rev. Rajan Rohaan, secretary of the Eastern Region of the Church of the American Ceylon Mission. He told of emergency response in his region, as an example of how funds the PNC sent to the CACM were used. CACM also has churches in South Central Sri Lanka and the Northern area around Jaffna.

"Funds helped suffering families during this unprecedented time of uncertainty from the COVID-19 global pandemic," he said. "The world has been turned upside down by coronavirus, and the Sri Lankan population has had a growing number of persons



Food arrives in Sri Lanka.

Photo courtesy of Rajan Rohaan

who have contracted the virus."

March through May the country experienced emergency curfews, lockdowns and quarantines, putting many families in severe hardships without access to food, safe water and other essential items, as well as emotional care, Rajan said.

The most vulnerable are those who are dependent—elders without income, those with disabilities and orphan children.

"Other consequences are starvation, suicide attempts and corruption," he said. "In this period of panic and pain, CACM is committed to sustain the victims, the vulnerable and families affected by COVID-19."

Rajan said the CACM in his region gave them to children's homes, children with disabilities, and poor families of daily wage earners, small vendors and self-employed people.

Mary said funds were shared in similar ways in other areas of Sri Lanka.

"Gifts were also given to Hindu and Muslim families," said Mary, noting there were bombings of churches in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, and in Batticaloa on the east coast on Easter 2019. Rajan held gatherings of interfaith leaders after the bombings to build bridges, "a wise, courageous move given the fear and mistrust."

The regional Global Ministries Committee has been seeking a new global partner for 10 years and has been working two years to develop a partnership with two faith based organizations in Colombia: Justapaz, the Mennonite Center for

Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action, and the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia. Both are national Global Ministries partners.

In September 2020, the committee is planning a "virtual pilgrimage" to Colombia, setting aside plans to travel to Colombia as all travel for Global Ministries has been suspended.

The virtual pilgrimage starts Sept. 21, International Peace Day, and ends Sept. 26. Global Ministries will facilitate contacts, said Rick Russell, UCC co-chair. There will also be two days of reflection among participants.

"Colombia is emerging after a civil war," he said. "Since then there have been elections but the new government is not implementing the Peace Accord."

The virtual visit will include going by video on a riverboat trip and on a visit of Southern Colombia. It will include shar-

ing in worship through a video they send, as well as some live virtual contact, Mary said.

Michael Joseph, who served as a mission co-worker with Global Ministries with Justapaz in Colombia, visited the Northwest in the fall to introduce congregations to Colombia.

Mary and Rick said the Global Ministries Committee seeks at least 16 applicants for the virtual tour to Colombia. Some encounters will be limited to be safe for Colombians, who want justice and peace so they can practice their faith.

Global Ministries' other partner, the PROK in South Korea has been concerned with peace and justice and some focused on reunification with the North.

For information, contact Mary at 206-291-8953 or maryolneyloyd@gmail.com, or Rick at 206-999-6968 or myr-tos@comcast.net.

Rajan is in solidarity on Black Lives Matter

Mary Olney-Loyd shared a letter Rajan, who studied a year at Eden Seminary, writing to U.S. churches sharing prayers for healing and reconciliation in the U.S. struggle for "justice, equality, dignity and freedom of minorities."

From experiences in a minority community in Sri Lanka, struggling for religious freedom, democratic rights and civil rights, he said, "we know the pain of Blacks and all the struggling minorities in the U.S."

He knows of Blacks Lives Matter in the American context from studies at Eden during the Ferguson unrest after the shooting of Michael Brown by a white police officer in 2014. He participated several protests and meetings so he knows of racism and white supremacy.

"As I write, the pandemic of COVID-19 has turned U.S. upside down with more than 107,000 deaths and 1,800,000 infected. In this context, racism is killing minorities and marginalized another way," he said calling people to be agents of God's will.

"Christians today live in divided world, broken by racism, religious supremacy, capitalism and militarized governance," he said, reminding Christians of the ecumenical commitment to the freedom, dignity and human rights of people of all cultures, faiths and opinions.

"Therefore, we announce that 'Racism is sin,' which is against God's will," he said, affirming that the Peace Forum in Sri Lanka joins with Blacks in American to declare that Blacks Lives Matter and pray for the healing of the country.

Camps start fund campaign to raise \$200,000

Camp Campaign Team members know everyone knows that going to camp transforms and changes lives.

In these challenging and changing times, the spring, summer and fall camps, retreats, workshops and meetings at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs are not happening for health and safety reasons.

Other camps of faith communities in the region have a similar experience with cancellations of retreats by outside groups and by decisions by regional leaders not to hold the camps.

“We deeply grieve this loss,” said team co-chairs Margaret Swanson and Eric Johnson.

Other team members are Don Mallett, honorary chair, plus Mike Denton, Alice Ling, Ron Patterson and Kevin Peterson.

“The camps are still here with the beauty, the birds, the gentle sound of the lakes in the evening, the wind whispering through the trees, the quiet trails, the opportunity to experience the embrace of creation’s beauty, the space to renew, create and learn and so much more,” they said. “Our typical camp events will continue to be present again for our campers and churches, as soon as it is safe to do so.”

The camps are ministering in new ways this summer.

N-Sid-Sen is providing a different kind of camp experience with 12 weeks of “Families at Camp.”

Small “family” groups who are isolating together will be present at camp in safe ways. They will use Spirit Lodge, the Crowe’s Nest, the Ford cabin and other cabins with one family group in each, with access to restrooms and—except the cabins—to kitchens.

They will be assigned recreational equipment—such as



Enjoying Families at Camp and anticipating future camping.

Photos courtesy of Nick CastroLang

canoes, paddles, life jackets—to use the whole time they are there, Thursdays through Mondays.

They will leave windows and doors open when they leave, to air out the space before staff—paid or volunteer—come in to clean and sanitize Tuesday and Wednesday to prepare for the next families.

Pilgrim Firs has formed a temporary partnership with Kitsap County, and continues to offer housing and respite for individuals infected with the coronavirus.

“These new ministry opportunities have provided limited income to help keep some of our staff in place, but we need a lot more funding to continue our mission,” said the team.

Because the camps are not happening during this season, the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC and camp managing directors Mark Boyd at N-Sid-Sen and Wade Zick at Pilgrim Firs anticipate a budget deficit of approximately \$450,000 this next fiscal year—

June 2020-May 2021.

The conference has committed \$200,000 to support N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs in this time of financial need.

“We are deeply grateful for this funding, and that support comes with a challenge to those of us who hold this camp dear,” said the team.

“We invite all of you to consider helping double the impact of the conference support by raising an additional \$200,000 to assist us in reaching our total campaign goal of \$400,000,” they said.

They are asking the individuals and faith communities that have experienced the magic of this sacred life-transforming place to step up with gifts.

During June, partner groups, congregations, leadership within the conference and the camp community will be asked to consider participating in this campaign.

“We ask folks to consider a gift in an amount that they find meaningful—such as gifting the dollars they would have

spent on a vacation away that has now become a ‘staycation,’” the team suggests.

This campaign is being led through the PNC Board of Directors, the Stewardship Committee and the Camp Campaign Team.

Those with questions about the campaign or making a leadership gift, may call or text either of the co-chairs, Margaret or Eric.

“We are excited to partner with you to support our camps during these challenging times,” said Margeret and Eric. “Let’s make sure our camps can continue to transform and change lives. Stay tuned for more information coming soon about the campaign and ways you might support this effort.”

To make a gift to the campaign, visit the conference website, pncucc.org or send a check to PNC-UCC, 325 N 125th Street, Seattle, WA 98133.

For information, contact Margaret at (206) 399-2213 (cell) or Eric at (253) 640-7137 (cell).

Alternative ‘camps’ set

For the summer of 2020, this year’s camp theme of “This is Our Prayer” could not be more needed, said Kaila Russell of the Outdoor Ministries Task Force.

The camp directors and members of Outdoor Ministries, feel that while camp can never be replaced, it is vital to offer resources for healing and community during these times.

Camp resources will be available online at www.n-sid-sen.org July 1 through Aug. 31.

Camp events will be offered during each camp’s scheduled week.

“We love you and we miss you! We hope you are able to hold the feeling of camp in your hearts as we love one another

Continued on next page

Pilgrim Firs serves as isolation center for the county

Since March 25, Pilgrim Firs, the PNC camp and conference center at Port Orchard has served about 15 guests on contract as a COVID-19 quarantine/isolation center with Kitsap County.

Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs, first agreed to have the program for only men who are first responders, medical personnel or homeless.

Another camp was to have hosted families and women, but there was less need than expected, so the other location was dropped and Pilgrim Firs is the only site.

"We are grateful for being used as a place of healing for them and the community," said Wade.

People who come are referred by a health care provider. The temporary shelter is not for people in nursing homes or people with complications needing hospital care. The center provides lodging, meals and laundry.

"Pilgrim Firs provides the food and hospitality, maintaining a safe distance," said Chris



Kitsap County District 1 Commissioner Robert Gelder and Gretchen Ta are among the volunteers.

Photos courtesy of Pilgrim Firs

Berry, a member of Fox Island UCC who has been assistant

director of hospitality for four years.

If one person is on site, they provide about seven meals for the volunteers and staff.

Staff from the county and volunteers they have trained work in the office, serve the food, interact with the people and interview them. Medical officers do testing and treatment.

The three Pilgrim Firs staff prepare the meals and do normal cleanup.

A hazard team does the cleanup and sanitization.

Guests are on site four to 14 days. They are not to come and go, Chris said.

If they leave, they have broken quarantine and cannot return.

Several have been first responders and several have been homeless.

Pilgrim Firs has used three cabins, Huckleberry Lodge and South Lodge.

People come with their personal belongings, but those who are homeless may come with nothing.

More than 30 people have donated masks, gift cards, health kit supplies, comfy clothing and puzzles/books/games. Some individuals and groups have given financial gifts. The Kitsap Library has provided a mobile library donation.

"If they are masked, they are free to walk the grounds and enjoy the camp," said Chris, "but they are to approach no one and no one is to approach them."

The contract with the county has helped keep the camp going and cover salaries.

"I now feel like I am part of a partnership with the county and the community. This program gives us a broader base than we usually serve with the secular arts camps and the church camps," he said.

Chris, who grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, New York and Nicaragua, first came to the Northwest to stay with his brother in Gig Harbor.

When he began attending Fox Island, he learned about the opportunity to work at Pilgrim Firs.

He believes the relationships Wade has forged with the community in doing this effort will have long-term benefit.

The contract runs through the end of August, and after that the need may continue until there is a vaccine.

"I miss the connections we have when the camps are here," he said, "but this innovative program is important."

"I'm delighted to a partner with the community and the county," Wade said.

For information, call 360-876-2031 or email wade@pilgrim-firs.org.

Camps will include online content and virtual meetings

Continued from previous page from a distance and go through this together," said the directors.

Intermediate Camp will be July 5 to 11. It will be held simultaneous with **Junior High Camp**, directed by Leah Atkinson Bilinski.

Kids Camp, directed by Kaila Russell and Cristina Airaghi, will be held July 12 to 15, the first few days of **Senior High Camp**, which runs July 12 to 18, led by Anna Colwell and Cory McClay.

Family Camp 1 directors

July 26 to Aug. 1 are Ryan Lambert and Amy Johnson.

Family Camp 2 or "Camp Together" is Aug. 2 to 8, led by Janet Malley and Andrew Conley-Holcom.

To help support camp during the COVID-19 pandemic, please donate at www.n-sid-sen.org.

All of the camps will have some online content as well as some virtual gatherings.

For information, call 425-941-6279 or 208-689-3489, email russell.kaila@gmail.com or visit n-sid-sen.org.

This Is Me book from Lenten stories raises funds

Courtney Stange-Tregear, the conference's minister for church vitality, compiled stories and devotionals during Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday 2020. Since then, she edited them and had them published as a book that is available for purchase on Amazon.

The book, *This Is Me: Stories of Lent during a Time of Pandemic*, is a compilation of stories written by 35 people from across the PNC and beyond.

"Ash Wednesday began was the first recorded U.S. death in Covid-19," said Courtney, noting that it was revised later.

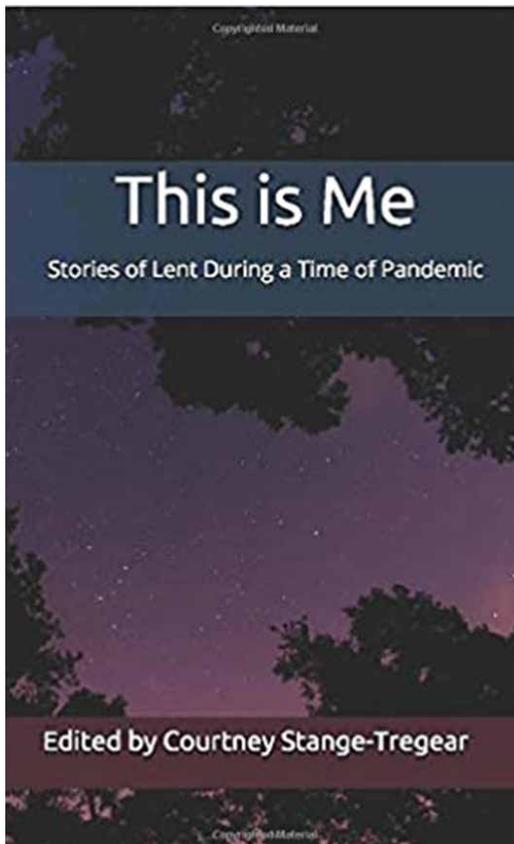
Most of Washington went on lockdown, making "loneliness, isolation and disconnect more real than ever," she said, so the daily stories "were a lifeline" to many in the PNC.

Proceeds from sales go to the Conference. The paperback is \$13.99 and on Kindle it is \$9.99.

Copies are available to purchase at https://www.amazon.com/dp/B088BJLMC8/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_6xbXEbSYCPKE3

Courtney also created a Worship Video Library as a resource for churches on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Conference. After registering at no cost, pastors and worship leaders may download videos for worship.

The videos worship resources, recorded by PNC lead-



Courtney Stange-Tregear compiles, edits and publishes Lenten stories into a book that is being sold on Amazon and proceeds are raising funds for the Conference..

ers for PNC churches. They are available on a Worship Video Library, which is a private, curated collection of videos which can be borrowed for use in local church worship services, said Courtney. The video library includes videos of worship music, sermons, prayers, litanies and more.

Resources have been shared to the library with permission by the musician, preacher, leader and creator. Any PNC church is welcome to use videos from the library, at their convenience, and at no cost to the local church, said Courtney.

This library is intended to help support local churches

with the ongoing work of creating online worship experiences.

The videos can be used to supplement a worship service, for instance, by adding an additional musical interlude, or several videos can be compiled into an entire worship service, she said.

The PNC Worship Video Library is hosted on Vimeo, a free-to-join video sharing website. Access to the PNC Worship Video Library is also free, but it is on a private channel on Vimeo and registration is required.

To register, it's necessary to create a Vimeo account and opt to "follow" the Pacific Northwest Conference on Vimeo. The PNC account is at <https://vimeo.com/pacificnorthwestucc>

For information, email conference administrator Arlene Hobson at arlene@gmail.com with your name, title or role in the church, email address, Vimeo username, phone number, church name, church address and, optional, church moderator's name and email address.

Arlene will grant permission, by adding each individual user to an "allowed" list on Vimeo.

Applicants will receive an email that indicates their registration has been received. Then the channel can be followed and the videos can be viewed.

For information, call 206-725-8383 or email courtney@pnucc.org.

Prospect UCC members held a Black Lives Matter vigil

Prospect United Church of Christ organized a one-hour vigil on the afternoon of June 12 near the church building, which is on the corner of E Aloha St and 19th Ave E on Capitol Hill in Seattle.

A dozen participants held signs and the church banner in support of Black Lives Matter,

prior to the Silent March in Seattle.

"Most drivers coming through the intersection honked in support, waved or gave a thumbs up," said Meighan Pritchard, the pastor.

For information, call 206-322-6030 or email pritchard-meighan@gmail.com.



Two from PNC join advocacy for Yakima workers

The strike by Yakima fruit packing warehouse workers has ended with agreements with all seven companies the workers challenged to adopt safer COVID-19 precautions and to grant higher pay and hazard pay.

Among the advocates supporting them on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC—based on past PNC resolutions—were Steve Claggett, chair of the Justice Witness Ministries Committee, and Leslie Cushman, a volunteer with the Latino Civic Alliance.

Both are involved as part of their commitment to the PNC-UCC's efforts to dismantle racism.

Both went there to join those picketing, about a third of the workers. Leslie helped host a solidarity event at her church, United Churches of Olympia.

"The fruit packers had never gone on strike before. They have no union. They have been paid minimum wage for 20 years, with no increases other than when the state raised the minimum wage," said Leslie.

She described their conditions: They work 12 months a year. The plants operate three eight-hour shifts a day, working around the clock. Fruit is kept in controlled atmosphere cold storage, so they run all year, more in harvest time.

"While the people have worked faithfully, they have faced discrimination and intimidation on the job, some because they are undocumented and some because they are vulnerable economically," she explained.

The intimidation includes silencing them with threat of losing their jobs if they speak up about working conditions. There is also sexual harassment and assault, Leslie added.

The workers wanted the employers to provide masks, barriers between work stations, keeping soap and hand sanitizer dispensers full, sanitizing sur-



Vigil on May 1 was held at United Churches of Olympia.



Steve Claggett with JWM banner expresses PNC solidarity.



Leslie Cushman shows strikers lined along a sidewalk.

Photos courtesy of Leslie Cushman and Steve Claggett

faces, informing workers when co-workers are test positive, improving communication with workers, pay raises and hazard pay. They also wanted protection from retaliation for striking.

Familias Unidas por la Justicia, a union formed in the Skagit Valley to protect berry pickers, became involved. Leslie was involved with that effort.

Familias Unidas created calls for action and advocacy to call attention to the strikes.

Leslie has been advocating with the Latino community since 2016.

"Latinos are 13 percent of the state's population, but 43 percent of all COVID-19 cases in the state," she said.

Steve added that, according to the Seattle Times, the per capita COVID-19 rate in Yakima County is now four times higher than the per capita rate in King County, previously the hot spot in the state.

It's because of the condi-

tions Hispanic people have there in working crowded work places, living in crowded housing, lacking access to health care, and working as essential workers in grocery stores, the trucking industry, nursing homes, fields and fruit, meat, dairy and chicken food processing warehouses," he explained.

"Stay Home and Stay Healthy was not an option for them," he said, adding that their children were out of school, but lacked access to computers and broadband for Zoom and other means to continue studies. "Many teens went out to the fields to work."

Steve went to Yakima on May 25, the 19th day of the strike, which ended with workers making agreements with each of the companies. Steve stood with the workers on strike, holding a banner of the PNC's Justice Witness Ministries Committee.

Steve and Leslie had arranged for the conference to sign a letter of support. Both urged PNC churches to inform members and bring more support. They spread word on the Google listserv. They informed people of the strikers' Go Fund Me Drive, because, not having a union, they had no support for their time off work.

In holding the JWM banner, Steve, who retired six years ago from a career in advocating for low-income housing, goal is "to show up where I can to show support for economic justice, to let people know the faith community cares."

He wants those striking to know that others, people in the faith community, are there and support them.

"Our job is to empower them by our presence, not do the organizing," he said.

For information, call Steve at 206-795-9475 or email him at claggett@comcast.net or Leslie at leslie.cushman.olympia@gmail.com.

Annual Meeting connects 180 around conference through Zoom

Annual Meeting had a new face and approach, extending over several days and weeks with worship, Mike Denton's report, interviews of and by the outgoing moderator Wendy Blight and incoming moderator Hillary Coleman.

The Board of Directors voted the change in leadership before the Annual Meeting worship on Zoom.

In opening music, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" was played by Carter Schafer, originally done for University Congregational UCC in Seattle, playing the song with multiple instruments, adding one at a time as if multiplying himself on screen in the same room.

Conference Minister Mike Denton preached on Galatians 6:9 about growing weary doing what is right and working for the good of all people, especially the family of faith.

In the midst of the pandemic, Mike admitted in the April 24 worship that he feels a weariness—tired of being away from friends—but he's amazed how people turned to new ways to do worship, figuring it out in a few days in time for the start of Lent.

"I wonder every day how long it will be until we are back together, but in a moment of weariness in the midst of creative work, I know if we do not follow through with distancing, there will be more deaths," he said, aware that staying away from work has economic impact."

Paul's words in the scripture remind us "we are not to weary" in the work for the good of all—serving congregations, communities and the world, speaking for justice, and speaking to the divisiveness that is worse in COVID-19.

"We are finding new ways to do what we do and we believe God is with us in this moment," he said.

"As we serve those who are

suffering and oppressed, as we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly, we continue to work for the good of all," Mike added.

Andy CastroLang, pastor of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, where Annual Meeting was to have been held, then offered prayers for the sick, dying and all who aid them—nurses, doctors, cooks, cleaners, scientific researchers, first responders, the quarantined, the lonely, the frightened. She also prayed for grocery store workers, immigrant workers and truckers who feed the people, and for parents, teachers and children. She prayed for wise leadership, peace to blossom and justice to roll down.

Roberta Rominger of Mercer Island UCC and the Stewardship Committee, reminded participants of the need to continue to support the conference, its camps and congregations. There are opportunities to give by mail or through pncucc.org.

Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister of church vitality for the conference, added her reflections, urging participants not to be weary or give up in the work for justice and caring for those in need.

Kelle Brown, lead pastor of Plymouth UCC, in Seattle sang "Blessed Assurance" with reminder that God will "see us through," will take broken pieces and make them brand new, and that we are called to love and heal through Jesus "all the day long."

Hillary then said that Annual Meeting would be available virtually in coming weeks at <https://vimeo.com/pacific-northwestucc>.

There are four segments of the worship, plus interviews as ways to present reports from Mike, Courtney, Wendy and Hillary at <https://vimeo.com/channels/pncannualmeeting>.



In groups of 25, attendees see each other face-to-face.



Conference Minister Mike Denton gives his annual report.



Kelle Brown, lower center, sings during closing of service.



Outgoing moderator Wendy Blight interviews incoming moderator Hillary Coleman in a video online.

UCUCC youth provides music video for worship

For University Congregational UCC in Seattle, where he grew up, Carter Schafer edited a video of himself playing “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” on five instruments and shared it for the virtual Annual Meeting service on April 25.

He started playing fiddle when he was seven and added guitar at age 10. When he was 12, he started playing banjo and started classical piano lessons.

By then, bluegrass folk was his preferred music style.

At age 15, he began playing mandolin.

He learned with a teacher outside school, but at the Bush School, a private school in the Madison Valley area of Seattle, there were about five or six students in music, not enough for a band or orchestra, so their program centered around composition.

Carter has also been active in the Northwest Folk Life Festival, which is usually held on Memorial Day weekend. He has played with a band at it for several years.

At University Congregational UCC, Carter said, his musical development was nurtured by the music director Heidi Blythe. He has played preludes and postludes.

He has also played with the youth group and for the annual youth services. He would accompany others singing.

With the COVID-19 shut-



Carter Schafer with his dog Winston. Photo of his musical video is below.

Photo courtesy of Carter Schafer

down, she asked him to contribute some music videos for the virtual services.

Carter, who is 18 and just graduated June 5 in a class of 71 from the Bush School, plans to attend St. Olaf College, a private liberal arts college in Northfield, Minn.

While it is known for its

music, Carter will be majoring in computer science.

His technology skills were what made it possible for him to create the video playing “Will the Circle Be Unbroken.” Carter explained how he die the video.

He set up a camera in one corner of the living room to

record. For reference, he set a phone on the couch to record the sound.

He started playing the banjo, which plays through the whole video. Then he added the guitar, playing the banjo track on the phone behind his head.

“I thought it would be cleaner to record without an earbud or headphone,” he said.

Then Carter added the layers with the piano, mandolin and guitar.

He wound up with five videos of varying lengths and worked on Premier Pro, a video editing software.

The banjo runs the full length, with the others staggered lengths.

“I did a mask around my head and body to place the second, third, fourth and fifth me,” he said.

“I had not done this before, but I like spending time working on technology,” Carter said. “This is the most intensive editing project I have done.”

He sent links for that and for another recent video music project he has done.

Carter has been active with youth at University Congregational UCC, going to camps and retreats at Pilgrim Firs, and joining in several mission trips.

In 2018, he went with the church’s youth to the Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE) in Hawaii, helping with a mission project helping at a thrift store, doing remodeling and helping at a homeless shelter in Hawaii before WRYE.

Two years ago, he joined a mission trip to Yakima remodeling houses, painting and doing yardwork for families.

“Mission trips have helped me think about best ways to help meaningfully, without a white savior mentality,” Carter said.

For information, call 206-302-9823 or email carter.schafer8@gmail.com.



Carter Schafer, a member of University Congregational UCC in Seattle, plays “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” on banjo, fiddle, piano, mandolin and guitar for music video he created.

Environmental Justice team learns of options

**By Meighan Pritchard -
pastor of Prospect UCC in
Seattle**

On May 19, the PNC Environmental Justice (EJ) Team met via Zoom with Reed Schuler, senior policy advisor to Governor Jay Inslee. The Environmental Justice Team had just completed a focused push to help pass the Sustainable Farms and Fields Bill in the state legislature. The bill passed but still requires funding.

In the wake of the coronavirus, the team consulted with Reed to figure out how and when environmental justice issues might regain attention, and how this team could help focus efforts on those issues.

For this meeting, the team invited LeeAnne Beres, executive director of Earth Ministry, who in turn invited past and present members of Earth Ministry's board.

Reed acknowledged that most of the governor's time these days has shifted to dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic devastation. Meeting participants asked whether, in rebuilding a resilient economy, there could be a push toward creating jobs in the sustainability sector. He said the governor has pushback from constituents who would perceive such a move as exploiting the pandemic situation for political ends.

Participants see this moment, however, as the perfect time to transform the economy in more sustainable ways and thought the EJ Team might be able to put forward such an idea.

"Why not exploit this moment?" one participant asked. "We can't wait until people are 'ready.' We can't react to fear by denial. Let's react constructively."

Reed discussed various climate-related topics.

The Department of Commerce is taking the lead on im-



PNC environmental activists Leda Zarkarison, Meighan Pritchard and Rick Russell in 2018 at legislature in Olympia.

Photo courtesy of Meighan Pritchard

plementing recommendations from the State Energy Strategy. This document is a technical analysis of what must change long-term in order to move into compliance with new greenhouse gas emission limits.

The 2019 legislative session passed a 100 percent clean energy bill, which provides a broad path toward carbon emissions reduction. A broad and diverse coalition supports a clean fuel standard.

"It is important that groups such as this Environmental Justice Team and Earth Ministry keep pushing such long-term priorities as the Clean Fuels Standard. Let your legislators know that you still care about this. The intensity of your voices has to double," Reed said.

LeeAnne said Earth Ministry could help locate churches in districts where legislators are obstructing passage of a Clean Fuels Standard and a transportation package to go with it. The EJ Team could then help those churches contact legislators.

Reed said legislation requiring new funds, such as the Sustainable Farms and Fields bill, are not likely to be funded as the state budget has taken a major hit from the coronavirus, but he expects the Clean Fuels

Standard has a better chance to succeed.

Other areas that could move forward include efforts to shift commercial buildings and homes away from gas and toward electricity. Gas in buildings is a fast-increasing source of emissions.

Reed noted that Climate Solutions has been working on a beneficial electricity bill that would incentivize moving from gas to electric. When induction stoves come down in price, they will be better than gas stoves. He suggests asking utility companies to provide financial incentives for people to make this switch.

Several years ago, the governor, former governor Jerry Brown of California and Gov. Andy Cuomo of New York formed the Climate Alliance to support the Paris climate accord and national emissions targets.

Since then, the alliance has grown to include 25 governors. There's a working group in the alliance focusing on electrifying buildings. The alliance coordinates on communications, so when the federal government tries to roll back fuel efficiency standards, the alliance can respond as a unified block. Alliance members attend international climate meetings to be a U.S. presence and to counter-

act the official U.S. stance of withdrawal from the Paris climate accords.

A regional group called the Pacific Coast Collaborative has also been created with British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California.

EJ Team member Lin Hagedorn, a co-founder of 350 Eastside, has been trying to form a public utility company on the eastside of Lake Washington. Puget Sound Energy, the utility in that area, derives a significant portion of its energy from coal, and 350 Eastside wants to create an alternative that would draw from clean energy sources.

The coronavirus shutdown has hampered 350 Eastside from collecting the required 20,000 signatures to put this issue on the ballot. Lin appreciated connecting with Reed and will pursue options with him.

LeeAnne noted that the EJ Team could also rally churches to stand with the Quinault and Chehalis tribes in opposing a proposed dam on the Chehalis River. This dam has been put forward as a way to solve flooding issues, but it doesn't appear to do that as well as alternative strategies would. It would also destroy prime spawning grounds for steelhead and salmon, both of which are in steep decline. The tribes have asked for community support, and University UCC has been urging members to register comments with the Department of Ecology regarding the draft Environmental Impact Statement for this dam.

This meeting started collaboration with government efforts toward a sustainable planet and with Earth Ministry's campaigns.

The PNC Environmental Justice Team will keep looking for ways to involve the conference churches in this work.

For information, email [pritchardmeighan\(at\)gmail](mailto:pritchardmeighan(at)gmail).