



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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September-October 2017

PNC delegates share experiences of Synod

Delegates' reflections offer insights on Synod and national church operations

Eight PNC delegates and PNC staff were among those attending the 2017 UCC General Synod in June in Baltimore.

Four of them recently shared reflections on their experiences.

Peter Ilgenfritz, PNC moderator and pastor at University Congregational UCC in Seattle, returns stimulated by conversations in the process of passing resolutions on critical issues.

"I come away thankful for the stewards of our church's ministry who have the essential gifts of listening for the Spirit and crafting and tweaking language," he said. The engagement in committees, which were hearing about resolutions and shaping responses to bring to the floor of Continued on Page 4



Jill Komura of United Churches of Olympia, Meighan Pritchard of Prospect UCC in Seattle, Peter Ilgenfritz of University Congregational UCC in Seattle, and Kyna Shilling, assistant for church camps, were among the PNC delegates and visitors at the 2017 General Synod of the UCC in Baltimore this summer.

Program seeks to give churches tools, encouragement

"Answering God's Call in this Season" is the theme for the Gathering of the Beloved PNC Community Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

The program is designed to give churches tools, encouragement and inspiration with opportunities for church communities to learn from each other and share best practices in faith education, worship and justice, said Wendy Blight, PNC vice moderator.

There will be affinity groups around church leadership roles including treasurer/bookkeeper. Other groups will focus on pastoral care and spiritual formation.

Conference staff will share from their expertise.

The program opens with a board of

'Answering God's Call in this Season' is the theme for PNC Fall Gathering

directors meeting at 1 p.m. Committees and task forces meet at 4 p.m.

After hors d'oeuvres at 6 p.m., Courtney will be installed as minister of church vitality at 6:30 p.m.

Courtney Stange-Tregear, PNC's minister for church vitality, will be keynote speaker and discussion leader on Saturday morning, using the art of facilitated listening to deepen connections.

"Our progressive Christian voices are stronger and our ministry has more impact when we know who's walking

with us and who has resources and energy to share as we move toward the beloved community of God," she said.

Staff-facilitated conversations are on search and call, overcoming obstacles to change, hospitality as spiritual practice, best practices for service/mission trips and healthy conversations.

Ministry and local church role groups, also Saturday morning are on personnel, stewardship and finance, community outreach, church leadership, lay pastoral care, deepening faith and relationships, faith formation with children and justice work around anti-racism/white privilege.

Sunday worship will celebrate World Wide Communion Sunday camp style.

For information, call 425-213-9313 or register online at n-sid-sen.org.

People spread God's radical love across boundaries

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Meighan Pritchard,
pastor at Prospect
UCC in Seattle

***Kahlil said:
'Coming here
centers me
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There is so much
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The mosque
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On the same August Sunday when there was a Patriot Prayer gathering in downtown Seattle, there was also a barbecue at Idriss Mosque on Northgate Way.

One was spewing hate, racism and white supremacy. The other was inviting people to come and join in a meal. I chose the barbecue.

I went through the food line and sat down at one of the many tables set up in a side yard. Soon I was joined by Kahlil, who has attended this mosque for seven years.

I asked Kahlil what he would like me to know about this place.

He said, "Coming here centers me in God and in community. There is so much consumerism today. This place offers an alternative."

Hmm. I seem to recall saying words to that effect in a few sermons.

Later I met a leader from the mosque. He said society can divide us into separate groups, teach us to hate each other. This barbecue is an offering to the community so that people can come, meet each other and make friends across boundaries.

This is a radical love.

I took a tour from a woman wearing a hijab. She showed us the room for mothers with noisy young children. I've seen a number of churches with such rooms.

Another area could be used for special gatherings or overflow if the service upstairs was too crowded. It is like our fellowship hall. There was a kitchen.

There was a room for ablutions, so that people could present themselves clean in body before God.

The main level was where the men gath-

ered for worship and where the imam gave his ... sermon? reflection?... on Friday afternoons.

The women gathered on the balcony. During times of questions in worship, women would write their questions on slips of paper and toss them down.

Our tour guide said, "There is no place like the United States. In other countries, if the government makes a rule, that's just how it is, but here, during the dark days of the travel ban from Muslim countries earlier this year, non-Muslims went out to the airports and said, 'This is not right. This is not how our country is. Muslims are welcome here.' That was amazing.

"My children's schools are finding space for the Muslim kids to say their prayers during the school day. During Ramadan, if the children are fasting, there is a room where they can go during lunchtime so they don't have to hang out with all that food. In recent months, more people have been intentional about saying hello to me and others wearing the hijab. People are reaching out, being friendly, saying we belong," the guide said.

Throughout the building and out on the fence, there were handmade posters from various Christian groups. They said things such as, "We love our Muslim neighbors," "You are welcome here," and "We stand with you."

We can be taught to hate people who are different from us. We can also dare to love. I give thanks for this mosque reaching out to the community with something as simple as a barbecue. We are more alike than different, and we have so much to learn from each other.

Let us dare to make friends across boundaries. This is God's radical love, and we can spread it everywhere.

Transitions announced

Dave Schlicher is the new settled pastor at Northshore United Church of Christ.

Donene Blair joins Plymouth UCC Seattle staff in a part-time position as minister of community care. She will offer spiritual direction, pastoral care and visitation.

Zion-Philadelphia UCC in Ritzville is being led by **Janel Rieve**, newly licensed as a pastor.

Courtney Stange-Tregear will be installed as PNC's minister of church vitality at the Fall Gathering at N-Sid-Sen, at 6:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 29.

Conference News Briefs

UCC Disaster

Ministries offers resources

Zach Wolgemuth, executive of the UCC Disaster Ministries, recently offered information on the UCC's disaster relief. The UCC financial appeal, Harvey webpage with worship resources and information on ways to be involved is at http://www.ucc.org/disaster_hurricane_harvey

The Hurricane Harvey Donation Link is at <https://transactions.ucc.org/CampaignForm/UCChrist/Hurricane+Harvey+relief>

Workshop introduces Stephen Ministry

There will be an Introduction to Stephen Ministry workshop from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 23, at North Creek Presbyterian Church, 621 164th St SE in Mill Creek. The workshop will help congregations equip laypeople as caregivers.

For information, visit www.stephenministry.org/workshop.

Bike tour follows red line in segregated real estate

In the early 20th century, white people could legally ban people of color from buying houses in neighborhoods north of the Ship Canal and a few south—Capitol Hill, Madison Park, Queen Anne and Magnolia.

On Saturday, Oct. 7, Cascade Bike Club leader Merlin Rainwater will lead a bike ride along Seattle's infamous Red Line. The tour includes visiting the history of segregation in Seattle's own back yard. Lunch break to include guest speaker sharing Seattle's zoning as a segregated city and the effects still in existence today.

Admiral shows films on Islam

Admiral Congregational Church will

show documentary films on "Discover Islam" on at 7 p.m., Fridays, Sept. 8 to Oct. 13, followed by discussion.

The United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Disciples of Christ and other denomination-shave funded a series of documentary films directed by Muslims and featuring Muslim voices, said Andrew Conley-Holcom, pastor at Admiral.

"The 30-minute films offer a nuanced window into Islam and the people who practice it," he said.

They cover six topics to speak to concerns of U.S. Muslims and non-Muslims: "Islam: Faith and

History," "Islam: A Faith Hijacked," "African-Americans and Islam," "Islam: An American Faith," "Women in Islam" and "Christianity and Islam." Admiral invites other congregations and faith communities to join them or host their own screenings. Copies are online.

For information, call 206-932-2928 and visit discoverislam.com/documentaries.

First in Bellevue hosts documentary 'Screenagers'

First Congregational UCC at 11061 NE 2nd Street Bellevue in Bellevue is hosting a viewing of the documentary, "Screenagers," at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 14.

"Screenagers" addresses the pervasive parenting issue of these times—depicting teen struggles over social media, video games and internet addiction. The film empowers youth to navigate the digital world and provides practical resources.

Cristina Airaghi, pastor of children and youth at Bellevue First, recommends parents attend with their teens or pre-teens, ages 10 and older.

Free tickets are at <https://impactflow.com/event/presented-by-first-congregational-church-bellevue-ucc-3303>

For information, call 425-454-5001 or email cristina@fcbellevue.org.

PNC's fall Clergy Retreat will be held Nov 13-15

The fall PNC Clergy Retreat on the theme, "Building upon our Strengths," will be held from noon, Monday, Nov. 13, to noon Wednesday, Nov. 15 at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center.

Clergy will reflect on recognition that "no matter what Paul says, we cannot be all things to all people," said organizers.

Participants will work with the StrengthsFinder assessment tool and inspired by the wisdom of Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak*, and will focus on "Clergy Vitality."

There will be time to discover, affirm and build upon their spiritual gifts, while also making time and space for rest, renewal and collegiality.

To register, visit pilgrim-firs.org.

Jim Wallis speaks in Seattle

Jim Wallis, the president and founder of Sojourners, a nonprofit faith-based organization that calls for putting faith in action for social justice, will lecture and share in a panel discussion at 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 16, at Marion Oliver McCall Hall at Seattle Center, 321 Mercer St.

Panelists will include Kelle Brown, lead pastor at Plymouth Church UCC; Sr. Aneelah Afzali, attorney and executive director of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound's MAPS-AMEN initiative; Estela Ortega, executive director of El Centro de la Raza; Senior Rabbi Daniel Weiner of Temple de Hirsch Sinai, and Treacy Levine Center president Terry Kylo, pastor of the Catacomb Churches and director of Neighbors in Faith.

For information, call 800-838-3008 or email info@treachlevine.org.

UCC offers resources on its 'White Privilege' adult curriculum

UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer, the Rev. Traci Blackmon and other national cross-denominational leaders are offering a webinar series on "White Privilege: Let's Talk—A Resource for Transformational Dialogue," the UCC adult education curriculum.

The curriculum and lesson outline, plus facilitator resources designed for church members to engage in safe, meaningful, substantive and bold conversations on race is in a downloadable PDF resource *available at <http://privilege.uccpages.org>.*

Westminster sets panel on homelessness

There will be a Community Panel Discussion on "How to Be Better Neighbors with Our Homeless Neighbors" from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 20, at Westminster UCC, 4th & Washington in Spokane

For information, call 509-624-1366.

Pastor found other Sermon-on-the-Mount Jesus followers

Continued from page 1

Synod, was an important part of the first couple of days of our work.”

While Peter admits that language crafting is not his strength, it made him grateful for those who do this work. Pacific Northwest Conference member David Anderson, church administrator at University Congregational UCC, again played a central role at Synod in crafting and holding the process of committee hearings.

Peter was also inspired by the conversations both in the conference hall and outside over meals and in the exhibit hall.

Among the speakers, Glennon Doyle’s outrageous humor and stark honesty about pain and the Rev. William Barber II’s groundbreaking vision and tenacity in starting a national poor people’s campaign were highlights.

“I come home inspired about what our denomination is doing in in the national setting and in conferences throughout the country,” Peter said. “We were reminded many times, that ‘this is our time’ as church to live into our call to help make a just world for all.

“The world, our country and communities need our witness,” re-inspired to to support the UCC’s work in the national and conference settings.

It was the first time Wendy Blight, vice moderator, has been a voting delegate to General Synod, but she has attended several national gatherings.

The focus of General Synod action was on justice, she said, because it had recently adopted the Vision Statement, “United in Christ’s love, a just world for all.”

“Of course, we in the UCC always put a lot of emphasis on social justice, but this year I felt that it had come to the center

of our theology and our work,” Wendy said. “I have returned inspired and ready to work toward a just world for all in our Pacific NW Conference.”

Wendy’s committee assignment was the resolution in Support of Legislation Authorizing Medical Aid in Dying. They heard a presentation from a doctor who has studied this issue for years and from the former husband of a terminally ill woman in great pain and in hospice care. They moved to Oregon so she could end her life legally and with dignity.

“The resolution was approved with minor changes, but did not receive the two thirds majority it needed from the plenary,” said Wendy, aware it is a sensitive issue and for many there are too many questions.

Kyna Shilling of Plymouth in Seattle said her favorite Bible verse (Matt. 18:20), “wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them,” jumped to mind when she entered the crowded Baltimore Convention Center to join thousands of UCC delegates, clergy and friends for General Synod 2017.

“I couldn’t help but think, ‘Wow, if Jesus is here when we’ve only got 2 or 3 people in a room, what must he think of this!’” she said.

Kyna found the passage apt for the process of Synod, because (in context) “Jesus is talking about how members of the church find consensus, and the whole weekend was one big experiment in listening to and sharing diverse perspectives, finding the ways we agree and disagree, making mistakes and making amends, and being the (big) church together.”

Kyna’s committee discussed the resolution on Witness in Support of Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse and Neglect, calling on all settings of the church to take seriously “our commitment to love and

inclusion and welcome, and to provide public support for the healing needs of many adult survivors in our congregations. It also calls for educational materials to be available, and for advocacy around policies that support survivors.”

Given that it’s a sensitive and personal topic for many, and the discussion was passionate and vulnerable.

Kyna was interested in a debate over the use of the word “survivor.”

“For some, it is a label that doesn’t fit them yet, as they still feel like victims who haven’t yet survived the impact of their childhood abuse. For others, the act of claiming their survivorship has been essential to their healing process. After much discussion and some edits in wording, the resolution passed out of committee and was approved on the floor of Synod,” she said, inviting folk in the PNC to consider discussing the resolution in their congregation.

Nathaniel Mahlberg, pastor at First Congregational UCC in Walla Walla, found Synod “downright inspiring” in the midst of its “human messiness.”

With most of his experience of UCC community in local churches, as a believer venturing back to church, and then as a minister, larger church bodies arouse his suspicions.

Not much of a joiner, he said, that at the only other UCC General Synod he attended, he felt like an outsider, who didn’t “get” what the big deal was.

“Now I get what the big deal is, and it’s a big, important deal that has actually has something to do with God and with how God is moving through our place and our time,” Nathaniel said.

This synod, he was more in the inner workings of the national setting, not only because he served as a delegate

from the PNC but also because of “the strain of striving to be a Sermon-on-the-Mount kind of Jesus follower in our present time of crisis,” he said.

In the big messy gathering of UCC humans, he found an earnest body of folks who had something to teach him about how to be a Sermon-on-the-Mount kind of Jesus follower today.

He was impressed with “the strength in struggling inwardly with our own weaknesses, as we show our strength in struggling outwardly against the abuses of power that roar around us,” Nathaniel said.

“There is a willingness to be honest with ourselves that, for example, however inclusive of the gifts of all God’s people we think we are as the UCC, we still, as a whole, show discrimination against woman, people of color and LBGTQ folks in our hiring practices,” he pointed out.

He also found a willingness to be honest about the great cost of risking to protect “our immigrant siblings and neighbors in our present time.”

“This kind call to both inward and outward honesty and boldness, faithfulness and critical mindedness, resonates in the conversation I have had post-synod with the local congregation I serve, which is not particularly identified with the UCC as a national body,” he said.

He enjoyed getting to know others in the PNC in working together.

“I voted for the ‘right to death with dignity’ resolution. All those in my church I spoke with beforehand supported it. Yet I was relieved it didn’t pass, because I saw that the disagreement was substantive and I wanted the larger body to work more to a consensus on the matter,” Nathaniel said.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

Mayers offer endowed scholarship for MDiv students

The Don and Lynnea Mayer United Church of Christ Endowed Scholarship, established in 2006 to honor the life and ministry of its namesakes, has provided more than \$40,000 in scholarship funds to 12 Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry graduate students with financial need.

Through this endowment, Don and Lynnea will generous financial awards that reduce the cost of higher education and lessen students' post-graduation debt.

With a reduced debt burden students are more likely to pursue and remain in their calling after graduation, they say.

As an inclusive Christian school dedicated to interreligious relationships for the common good, the School of Theology and Ministry (STM) at Seattle University challenges students to engage in a transformative community of teaching and learning where collaborative action for a more just and humane world is imagined, they said.

For many student recipients, including Trina Banks, who graduated with a master of divinity in June 2017, the opportunity to attend STM and thrive as a member of its community was only possible with donor supported financial aid.

Trina will live her vision for improving lives as a leader in her church and other ministerial settings.

Born in New Orleans and raised along with her younger brother in the Southern Baptist Christian tradition, she chose to attend Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry because of its reputation for academic excellence and notable alumni who have made lasting impacts on the world.

Her educational goal was to become ordained for leadership in the United Church of Christ and to obtain the credentials for licensing as a hospice chaplain.



Lynnea and Donald Mayer are avid supporters of the STM.

When she graduated, Trina was serving on the ministerial team at Liberation United Church of Christ in Seattle and also volunteering as a chaplain at King County Juvenile Detention Center.

She looks forward to serving as an ordained pastor in her church and as a chaplain in a local hospital or hospice facility.

Trina said the scholarship ensured that she had the financial resources to complete her degree at this Jesuit university, "which is infused with values that complement my own," she said.

Other recipients in previous years and their classes are master of divinity students Kevin Bechtold, 2013; Natasha Burrows, 2015; Allison Decker, 2018; Linda Gasparovic, 2015; Karen Hollis, 2012; Sophia Morse, 2010; Amara Oden, 2020; Corey Passons, 2016; Margaret Rodgers, 2015; Mark Travis, 2016, and Rebecca Withington 2011.

Since graduating, Karen was ordained in the United Church of Canada in British Columbia and is now campus minister at the University of British Columbia.

Corey is the interfaith minister at the Community for Interfaith Celebration in Olympia.

Margaret is a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

Rebecca is pastor at Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Anacortes.

"Nationally, seminary students graduate with an average of \$70,000 in debt," said Don. "Many of these students may also be carrying debt from their undergraduate education. The overall effect is that graduates leaving college to pursue their careers are often saddled with significant debt that impacts their ability to pursue and stay in church leadership roles."

The average annual cost of tuition and fees for students pursuing graduate degrees in

the School of Theology and Ministry is \$46,204.

For students pursuing Master of Divinity degrees, the tuition and fees are \$71,118. Currently, Seattle University is able to provide financial support to just over half of the 47 percent of its graduate students who demonstrate financial need.

"In the years ahead, the university is committed to doubling the amount of donor-funded financial aid to meet the growing financial needs of undergraduate and graduate students, reduce their debt burden and provide more students access to higher education," he said.

Don and Lynnea have been involved many years with the STM's development and see it as "a singular contemporary institutional embodiment of the theological passion in which the United Church of Christ was conceived and born." That passion affirms "our devotion to one God...confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world, and hearing with a deepened sense of responsibility the prayer of our Lord 'that they all may be one'." (Basis of Union, 1943).

"There is no doubt that we are still confronting divisions and hostilities of our world," they said. "The prayer of our Lord that all may be one calls us to a far deeper and wider sense of responsibility than our UCC forefathers and mothers could ever have imagined 60 years ago.

"For those of us who love the history and contemporary life of the United Church of Christ, the School of Theology and Ministry is an astonishing response to that calling," said Don and Lynnea. "We are deeply grateful to all who have responded to the fulfillment of that call."

For information, call 206-382-3182, email d.l.mayer@

Faith Action Network hires former UCC intern

The Faith Action Network (FAN) of Washington has hired Amber Dickson as a full-time organizer. Amber served at FAN in 2014 and 2015 as an intern with the Justice Leadership Program (JLP) of the United Church of Christ.

During that time, she met many FAN constituents through FAN organizing and events. She discovered her passion for criminal justice after visiting Monroe prison, and learned about advocacy at the state level as well as federal during Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

Amber continued as a JLP intern to do a second year of service at the Children’s Alliance, where she worked with the organizing team on Advocacy Camp, Have a Heart for Kids Day, legislative research and advocacy, and other special projects.

During both years, she worked with the Racial Equity Team to have an equity impact on public policies across many



Amber Dickson begins as full-time organizer this fall.

Photo courtesy of Amber Dickson

issues. She spent last year in New York City, reconnecting with family, attending Sayville Congregational UCC on Long Island and volunteering with the Refugee Action Committee.

Originally from South Carolina, Amber spent her teenage years in Spanaway, and graduated from Seattle Pacific University.

“When last April the FAN Governing Board first discussed the possibility of expanding our staff capacity by adding an organizer, we had the audacity to dream about raising the funds and hiring somebody by Sept. 1,” said board co-chairs, the Rev. Carol Jensen and Rabbi Aaron Meyer.

They invite participating in capacity building for FAN and support Amber’s work to help close the gap for the extra funds needed to secure her position for the next three years.

For information, call 206-625-9790, email dickson@fanwa.org or visit fanwa.org.

FAN shares successes, plans Fall Cluster Gatherings

The Faith Action Network offers a pdf file listing the 10 End of Session Successes in 2017. They are in anti-human trafficking, criminal justice reform, economic justice/anti-poverty, environmental justice, gun safety and mental health.

The document is at [fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-End-of-](http://fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-End-of-Session-Successes-1.pdf)

[Session-Successes-1.pdf](http://fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-End-of-Session-Successes-1.pdf).

The Faith Action Network is also planning 20 Fall Cluster Gatherings in different geographic areas of the state. A list of those events is at fanwa.org/our-network/cluster-meetings/. There are 20 UCC congregations participating in those interfaith gatherings with the 108 other network congregations.



Linda and Randy Crowe, and Carol Belling of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane review resources at the 2017 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane.



Mike Denton, center back, was among interfaith leaders meeting with Senator Patty Murray about the local and widespread effects of Islamophobia across our nation. Resources are at fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Combating-Islamophobia-Action-Resource-Center.pdf



University Congregational UCC members at the 2017 Faith Action Network Annual Dinner.

UCC actively involved in Faith Action Network

Paul Benz and Elise De-gooyer, co-directors of the Faith Action Network (FAN), recently wrote a letter to the PNC to express appreciation for the presence and support of PNC individuals and congregations in FAN work.

“We realize that while we are in close contact with some in the PNC, others may not receive regular updates from FAN,” Paul said. “We hope to change that and open up greater lines of communication.”

Since FAN’s founding six years ago, PNC members have been active in shaping the work for justice, as well as being significant financial supporters.

Keystone UCC Pastor Rich Gamble co-chaired FAN’s Governing Board and inspired FAN’s vision for five years. Recently, Jim Castrolang, pastor at First Congregational UCC in Colville, joined the FAN board to bring a UCC and Eastern Washington perspective to the statewide work.

“PNC Conference Minister Mike Denton is an important voice on our Interfaith Leaders’ Council, offering creative and faithful impetus for our public action together,” said Elise.

For each of the past three years, FAN has hosted Justice Leadership Program interns, who have contributed to the work of FAN, said Paul.

Twenty UCC churches work “hand-in-hand with FAN as members of its Network of Advocating Faith Communities in 19 geographic clusters,” he said. “We are working with additional UCC congregations who have yet to formalize this relationship.

“This network now has 128 faith communities and includes 6,500 individuals, putting Christians, Jews, Muslims, Unitarians, Buddhists, Sikhs and Quakers in collaboration with each other for justice,” Paul said.

“UCC leaders abound in



Paul Benz, top, and Elise DeGooyer, bottom, at 2017 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane.

our work as liaisons, legislative district coordinators and work-group facilitators, like Steve Clagett of the PNC’s Justice and Witness Ministries Committee,” Elise added.

Many in the UCC participate in such FAN events as the Interfaith Advocacy Day,

Spring Summits and upcoming Fall Cluster Gatherings. The clusters are opportunities to join other faith communities in area gatherings to build interfaith relationships and to engage in strategizing for advocacy.

There are also candidate

forums, meetings with elected officials and opportunities to stand in solidarity while confronting Islamophobia, hate, racism and white supremacy.

“We don’t do this alone. We do it in community and coalition,” said Elise.

FAN’s Annual Dinner on Sunday, Nov. 19 in Renton is a time to celebrate FAN’s efforts and gather strength for work ahead.

Paul and Elise also reported on some of the legislative victories in the 2017 session of the Washington State Legislature.

“In a divided political climate, we have been able to celebrate 10 successful bills, most notably the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act and Higher Education in Prisons bill,” Paul said. “Both of these took many years of work with our partner coalitions to finally succeed. More information on the 10 bills is reported online on our End of Sessions Successes.

“We are grateful that an operating budget was finally passed with some additions for human services, but regret that more comprehensive tax code reforms were not implemented this session,” he said. We await a Capital Budget agreement.”

In addition to thanking those involved, FAN leaders encourage others to sign up for emails and action alerts at fanwa.org and follow FAN on its Facebook page.

“Most of all, we are grateful for the commitments of each individual and congregation in the PNC for their commitment to faithful justice work, within and outside of FAN,” said Elise. “Your presence in FAN’s partnership for the common good is vital to us.”

FAN staff are available to speak at churches and offer technical support for advocacy.

For information, call 206-625-9790, email fan@fanwa.org or visit fanwa.org.

Rural pastor asserts identity by wearing clerical collar

Seeking clarity about her identity as pastor to First Congregational UCC and to the community of Metaline Falls, where she wears several hats as mayor, Chamber president and volunteer director/actor at the Cutter Theatre, the Rev. Tara Leininger decided to start wearing a clerical collar when she had official church business during the day.

Tara Leininger was no stranger to Metaline Falls or the church when she began as pastor 19 years ago.

She had lived there for eight years, taught high school and was involved with the Cutter Theatre before she began on a slow path from being lay to licensed to ordained. Within a year of starting at the church, they called her as pastor.

Tara had not attended the church, but had done pulpit supply, so the church knew her.

"I felt called to ministry, and I was ordained in 2006 without having attended a traditional seminar," said Tara, who earned a master's degree in theology at Whitworth University in 2010."

She went from "Pastor" Tara to "the Rev." Tara, but she still felt that with her other roles in the community, her role as pastor became muddled.

In the last three of 10 years she was in spiritual direction, she focused on identity.

"It wasn't about giving up my work as mayor or in the theatre—unless they got in the way of my ministry," Tara said.

The more she talked and prayed about her many "hats," she realized it helped Sunday morning that she wore a robe.

So she began wearing a collar, stepping into the role to remind her and people in the community who she is.

"What was my most important identity? It was my role as pastor to the community through the church," she asked.

Just as she was ready, she



Tara Leininger wears a clerical shirt when she's doing ministry.

was diagnosed with breast cancer in July 7, 2016 on her 26th wedding anniversary.

"My focus was on dealing with the cancer," she said.

Tara scheduled surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

She had a lumpectomy in August, and chemotherapy Sept. 1 through Nov. 31, losing most of her hair, but otherwise having no side effects. In January, she began radiation for four weeks in Spokane Monday through Friday, and home on weekends. She never missed a Sunday. Recent mammograms are good news.

Then her husband, Donovan, had to have heart surgery in December and was in the ICU between her chemo and radiation. He returned to teaching.

"I began to work through my identity as I began to wear a clerical collar," Tara said.

If during the day she was working for the church—hav-

ing office hours or a church meeting, leading a class or visiting someone, she would wear a collar, even if she was also at city hall or the theatre.

People grew used to it. Most felt nothing changed, recognizing that's who she is.

"It gave me a sense of my priorities," she said. "I would take time to focus my energies in prayer, closing the door and turning the phone off. It is a physical reminder of where I spiritually need to be.

"I am more assured in who I am as a pastor, not taking myself for granted, not walking on tiptoes about who I am. I am a pastor serving the congregation and community to bring the Good News," Tara said.

The surety she felt was not just about her but how people responded to her. When she wore the collar to a city council meeting, she asked, "Is it a problem?" "No, it's who you

are," was the reply. No one was put off by it at the Cutter Theatre either.

Tara feels affirmed about who she is as pastor.

"I worked hard for this," she said. "Often women are not taken seriously as pastors."

When she first went to the local pastors' group, two walked out and would not come if she came. One said she and her church would go to Hell. Now none of them are around.

"With it a small town, some had problems, but we are neighbors and teach each other's children," Tara said. "Criticisms faded about me being a woman pastor and the UCC being open and affirming."

When Tara started, about 10 to 12 came to worship. In five years attendance grew to 30. Now most young adults move because there are few jobs. The cement plant and lumber mill closed. In 2008, the mine re-opened but employs few local people.

When she and Donovan first came, there were 550 children in the school district. Now there are 230. So the churches are small and have few young members. First Congregational is the community church, often called for funerals or weddings.

"Wearing a clerical collar is not magical. I learned early in theatre that when an actor puts on a costume, the actor becomes the person. The last sense of acting is the costume.

"It's not the clothes that make the difference. It's how I feel about my presence as a pastor," said Tara, who wears pink, green, red, blue and purple. She usually wears black or gray clerical shirts on Sundays.

"It gives me a wonderful identity to wear colors, like the play, 'Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.' It gives me a multicolored identity.

For information, 509-446-3301 or email mfucc@yahoo.com.

Seven new justice leadership interns start

The end of July, the 2016-2017 Justice Leadership Program (JLP) interns ended their year of service.

Abi Velasco will continue in development for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

Denise Parry, who served with the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness and Prospect Congregational UCC, has begun a job at the Lifelong AIDS Alliance in Seattle.

Latanya Jenkins, who served Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and Plymouth UCC, does case management at the Downtown Emergency Service Center.

Others ending their year are Daniel Solomon who worked with 350 Seattle and Plymouth; Anya McMurrer, who worked with the Church Council of Greater Seattle (CCGS) and Northshore UCC; Emily Martin, who interned with Earth Ministry and First Congregational UCC in Bellevue; David Choi, who did advocacy with the Faith Action Network and partnered with All Pilgrims Christian, and Iris Chavez, who also worked with the CCGS and was at Keystone in Seattle.

Three weeks later, the program welcomed seven new social justice interns, who were oriented to Seattle through tours of the Duwamish Longhouse, murals at Garfield High School, ice cream with Conference Minister Mike Denton and hearing faith stories from their UCC supervisors.

They began their nonprofit and congregational service after Labor Day. The new interns are Amanda Agrellas, Brianna (Bri) Little, Daniel de la Rosa, Erica West, Hunter Paulson-Smith, Leda Zakarison and Renee Lumia.

Amanda, who grew up on the mission field in Guatemala and now considers Seattle her home, will work with the Se-



Anya McMurrer, Daniel Solomon, Abi Velasco, Iris Chavez, Denise Parry, Latanya Jenkins, David Choi and Emily Martin complete their year as interns with the Justice Leadership Program (JLP) of the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference.

Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Dickinson

attle/King County Coalition on Homelessness and with Plymouth UCC.



She graduated in 2017 with a degree in sociology from Seattle Pacific University, where she was president of the Intersectional Feminist Club, which starts conversations about inequality and raises awareness of gender-based violence.

Bri, a native of Washington, D.C., and recent graduate of William and Mary College, will serve with the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project and Keystone UCC.



A poet, reader and dog enthusiast, she has a strong sense of justice and is interested in intersections of identity, creative work and social activism. She believes in the strength of empathy, education, self-advocacy and community as means to achieve equity.

Daniel, a 26-year-old Cuban-American fluent in Spanish and English, will serve with SEIU 6 and Northshore UCC.

He grew up in Miami, raised by his single mother,

who is his best friend, mentor and favorite person. In 2013, he earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Florida. For two years he served with Americorps with Florida Reading Corps in Miami.



Erica, who is from Alexandria, Va., and recently graduated in American studies and government from William and Mary University, will advocate for immigrant rights, affordable housing and economic justice with the Church Council of Greater Seattle and serve with University Congregational UCC.



In college, she played a key role bringing gender inclusive housing options to campus and holding the university's administration accountable through organizing with Black Lives Matter Williamsburg.

Hunter, a 2016 graduate of Evergreen State College in Olympia majoring in creative writing and studies in environment, public health and queer studies, will work with Earth Ministry and Keystone UCC.

Hunter is interested in find-

ing ways to make spaces more accessible and safe for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Hunter, a femme who uses they/them pronouns, seeks to open discussions on gender, race, class and sexuality, and conversations on mental health.



Leda, a fourth-generation daughter of the Palouse, born and raised in Pullman and a lifelong UCC member who has spent summers at Camp N-Sid-Sen, will also intern with Earth Ministry and serve with Prospect UCC.

In 2016, she graduated from Whitman College with a bachelor's degree in religious studies and a minor in French. At Whitman, she discovered a passion for interfaith ministry and advocacy, working three years as an intern in Whitman's Office of Religious and Spiritual life, and at Whitman's chapter of Better Together, an organization that promotes interfaith understanding on college campuses through conversations and direct service.



Renee, who is from Maple Valley, Wash., and has lived her life in the Pacific Northwest, said her faith compels her to protect her home and the livelihoods of those who share it.

She will intern with 350 Seattle to advocate for environmental conservation, social justice and climate change acceptance, and All Pilgrims Christian Church.



Renee has enjoyed teaching about environmental conservation through Girl Scouts of Western Washington, developing an interactive curriculum

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King County Habitat recognizes volunteer's gifts

By Janet Randall - Plymouth

Jerry Haas, Plymouth Church UCC member since 1980, was recently named King County's Habitat for Humanity's 2017 Volunteer of the Year.

Also a volunteer usher at Plymouth, Jerry has given one day a week to Habitat for 20 years—about 7,000 hours

An engineer by trade and always a “do-it-yourselfer, Jerry said he first became involved with Habitat through working with a Plymouth Church group.

“I enjoyed it, so decided to get more involved,” he added. “It's great doing something you enjoy that helps other people. Working with many of the same volunteers through the years, I've developed good friendships.”

Jerry travelled to Guatemala with the Plymouth Church group the past two years.

Ken and Jeanette Hagen, who headed up Plymouth's 2017 Guatemala contingent, at-



Jerry Haas is Habitat-King County's Volunteer of the Year.

Photo courtesy of Janet Randall

tended Habitat's celebration.

“We're proud to see Jerry named to this honor,” said Ken.

Jerry participates primarily in local projects, but he looks

forward to see “where we go next.”

Plans are underway for the third year in a row for Plymouth members to travel to Guatemala to participate in a Habi-

tat for Humanity project Feb. 10 to 20 at Lake Atitlan to bring sanitation to rural Mayan families while building latrines and smokeless cook stoves.

About 46 percent of Guatemalans use inadequate or no latrines, and 90 percent of rural Guatemalans use wood in open fires as their primary cooking fuel, a long-term health hazard.

Habitat projects significantly aid in the health of poor, rural families.

Working with host families gives volunteers an opportunity to become acquainted with another culture in an authentic way.

Participants will also share some Guatemalan culture, visit a Mayan ruin and weaving cooperative, visit a school and participate in other activities, said trip co-leaders Greg Anacker and Susan Dittigof Plymouth UCC.

For information, call 206-542-0224 or 206-285-7541.

Kizzie Jones' two books are translated into Spanish

By Thomas Wert – German United Church Seattle

Kizzie Jones, a retired UCC chaplain, has had her two children's tall tale picture books translated into Spanish as a way to carry out her ministry to promote peace by building bridges, not walls.

The translations arose through her involvement in two literacy programs, Las

Hermanitas de Isabella (Sisters of Isabel) in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and Sala de Lectura (Reading Room) in Baha.

“The programs gather donated books, which volunteers take to parks, schools and shopping areas, so children, young adults and families can read to each other or alone,” Kizzie said.

Impressed with the dedi-

cation and professionalism of Professor Alfonso Winston, who spearheads the literacy effort in Cabo, she was thrilled when he agreed to translate her books into Spanish.

Her books are *How Dachshunds Came to Be: A Tall Tale About a Short Long Dog* (2012) and *A Tall Tale about a Dachshund and a Pelican: How a Friendship Came to Be* (2016). The first focuses on kindness, compassion and collaboration. The second highlights that “we can like without being alike.”

Now bilingual editions of both her books are available for children and parents to read in Spanish or use them to learn and practice English.

Early in March 2017, Kizzie's books were featured as a play, “How Dachshunds Came to Be,” and as a dramat-

ic reading (A Tall Tale about a Dachshund and a Pelican) at the FeLCA '17 Book Fair at the Cabo Pavilion for K-12 children and their families.

Kizzie and Alfonso shared in a dialogue for the attendees about writing. She was also interviewed for a high school newspaper not only about writing, but also about current political tensions.

“My simple tall tales model the values needed for a respectful co-existence,” she said.

“In today's political climate, in which walls of fear, hate and isolation are advanced, these books help communicate the importance of collaboration, compassion, kindness, and honoring diversity in our world,” she said.

For information, visit kizziejones.com.

Interns bring new gifts to JLP

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for girls pre-K through sixth grade, and mentoring girls in seventh through 12th grades to organize such a curriculum. As someone who has struggled with mental illness, she advocates for mental health awareness through theatrical monologue performances and video

projects.

Elizabeth Dickinson continues as program manager for the Justice Leadership Program affiliate of the UCC national Young Adult Service Communities Network.

For information, call 206-320-0432 or 498-4654, email jlpelizabeth@gmail.com or

Friends of Conference campaign draws support to PNC

At the 2017 Annual Meeting to Pilgrim Firs, the PNC launched a new Friends of the Conference campaign.

Michelle Doherty, PNC accounting manager, said the funds will support the work of the conference in various ways:

As Rev. Michael Denton stands with local communities against racism, income inequality and other social injustices, the donations support him.

As he works with churches to guide them through clergy transitions, the donations support him.

As Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister for church vitality, travels the region, meeting with PNC churches to promote

church vitality, the donations support her.

As Arlene Hobson interfaces with church search committees and clergy seeking positions, the donations support her.

As all of the staff work with the camp directors to strengthen the camp programs, the donations support this work.

As PNC committees do their work in Justice and Witness, Outdoor Ministries, Global Ministries, Stewardship and others, the donations support them.

As the Insurance Assistance Fund helps ensure medical insurance coverage for retired and church pastors, the donations support them.

As the Board of Directors meets to guide the Conference in its mission, the donations support them.

The work of the Conference is varied and the strength of the Conference is in the individual. So the Friends of the Conference campaign was introduced to give the individual a means to directly strengthen the Conference.

For the first year a target of \$10,000 was set.

The individuals at the Annual Meeting contributed a third of that goal in one day, a total of \$3,390. Donations continue to arrive, another \$1,245 in the first three months of the fiscal year – reaching almost

half of the annual goal – a handful from small monthly, recurring donors and some from larger one-time gifts.

Contributions can be made by

- Sending a check, with “Friends of PNC” in the memo line, to PNCUCC, 325 125th St., Seattle WA 98133;

- Going to pncucc.org and clicking the DONATE button and enter the amount on the Friends of the Conference line. Recurring donations can be set up with credit card or electronic check, or

- When registering for Pilgrim Firs or N-Sid-Sen camps, selecting at the end of the registration process to also give to Friends of the Conference.

Monroe UCC team filled 43 back-to-school backpacks

Because of the passion of Kim McCullough, Monroe UCC has been filling backpacks for the last five years for children in the local schools.

Kim, a science and math teacher at Skykomish High School, knows the importance of children having the tools they need to succeed.

“Some of us at Monroe, and that would include me, have fond memories of fresh school supplies, so we do our own shopping and contribute to the growing pile of items in the Fellowship Hall,” said Jane Sorenson, pastor of the Monroe UCC.

“We stack them on a table there so that we all can relish the process,” she said.

Kim makes repeated trips to stores to take advantage of their penny sales, their “buy one, get one” sales, their mid-week specials.

She also looks for things she thinks children would enjoy, supplies that come in a variety of colors and have pic-



Jill Reasoner, Heidi Bahrey, Kestrel Bahrey, Kim McCullough and Ontario Bahrey prepare to fill backpacks with school supplies. Below, backpacks in front of the altar for dedication.
Photos courtesy of Jane Sorenson



tures, Jane added.

“Kim likes to set a goal for us – that she doesn’t tell us about until the project is over,” said Jane.

“She hopes that every year, we will donate more backpacks than the year before,” she observed.

Last year, the church packed and donated 17 backpacks. This year, they sent off 46 backpacks to the Sky Valley Food Bank.

“Even Kim was floored by that number,” said Jane. “She’s a big reason that it was possible. She, and the generous hearts of people in our little church.”

For information, call 360-794-7601 or email jcaos.old-school@gmail.com.

Covenant groups thrive at Ferndale, Walla Walla

**By Kathie Forman
Adult Spiritual Formation
Task Force**

It's a Tuesday evening at United Church of Ferndale, and a small group has just finished checking in with one another, sharing joys and concerns. Now participants are turning their attention to the evening's topic, "Taking a Leap of Faith."

After the facilitator reads aloud some thought-provoking passages about leaps of faith, each group member has an opportunity to share a related thought or experience before discussion begins.

This is a Covenant Group meeting. Participants are able to speak without interruption, be heard without judgment and know that whatever they choose to share will be held in confidence. In this safe space, people deepen relationships as they engage in conversations about things that matter.

Covenant Group Ministry began at Walla Walla First Congregational in 2013 under the leadership of interim minister Cecilia McKean. Covenant Groups have continued to thrive there with the support of current pastor, Nathaniel Mahlberg.

In 2015, Bobbi Virta introduced the United Church of Ferndale to this form of small group ministry.

Nathaniel and Bobbi recently shared their churches' experiences with Covenant Groups.

Why Covenant Groups? What called your churches to this form of small group ministry?

Nathaniel: Cecilia initiated the groups after a church-wide survey revealed that many members were yearning for more ways to get to know each other through church—beyond worship, fellowship hour and



Covenant groups enjoy sharing both companionship and food at the United Church at Ferndale. Photo courtesy of Bobbi Virta

committee meetings. When I arrived, people made it very clear that they wanted the Covenant Groups to continue, and I was happy to provide support.

I'd had my own experiences with small group ministry and know how valuable it can be in developing friendships and spiritual companionship.

Bobbi: I walked into a Covenant Group workshop at the 2015 Conference Annual Meeting and was surprised to find other members of my church's delegation already there! Our congregation is a mix of long-time Ferndale residents who know each other well and people newer to the community who long to feel more connected within the church.

I think that's what called several of us to the workshop. We left feeling that Covenant Groups could be just what we needed to strengthen relationships within our congregation.

Now that you've both been involved with Covenant Groups for a couple of years, how would you describe the benefits?

Bobbi: I have definitely

seen deeper connections develop within the church community because people have walked more closely beside each other, through joys and tragedies. This was especially evident when one Covenant Group lost two participants to death. The other members enveloped those people and their families with care and support and love and strength during every step of the journey.

Nathaniel: I've witnessed the kind of connections and care that Bobbi's just described. I also know that Covenant Groups fulfill a spiritual longing as well as a longing for relationship. Another major benefit is that Covenant Groups can bring people into the church. Group members can invite friends to join their Covenant Groups, and some of those people are now active participants in the life of this congregation! Small group ministry outreach is a powerful way to address the spiritual hunger that's out there.

Are there comments you've heard from Covenant Group facilitators and participants that you'd like to share?

Bobbi: Participants have said: "This is my family." "These are my people." "I would never want to miss a Covenant Group meeting."

Nathaniel: Comments include: "We have spiritual discussions that wouldn't happen otherwise." "We're truly honest with each other." "I wouldn't still be coming here without the relationships I've formed in Covenant Groups."

Any additional thoughts?

Nathaniel: I'd like to say that in Covenant Groups, our UCC diversity really comes out—in a healthy way! People are able to express their beliefs and doubts and talk candidly with each other because Covenant Groups create such safe space. People listen deeply. They're respectful. They can say, "I hear you. I don't really agree with that. Here's what I think..." And it's okay.

Bobbi: I have officiated at many memorial services over the past 10 years. Often, people have said to me at the close of a gathering, "I wish I'd known all those things, heard all those wonderful stories, before now."

Covenant Groups fulfill that longing. In Covenant Groups, we can share our stories, share our experiences, and other people can receive the gift of knowing those things about us now.

The task force encourages local churches to consider Covenant Group Ministry, as a small group model.

The task force can provide information about how to start and maintain groups. Free sets of sessions are also available.

For information, call 206-799-9248 or email pkforman@juno.com.

Korean partners call for an end to war of words

Global Ministries partners with the church in South Korea are saying the need has become urgent for the escalating war of words to be ended between North Korean Leader Kim Jung Un and President Donald Trump, and ways found for dialogue to occur to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula, throughout Asia and the world.

In Skype conversations with Pacific Northwest Conference Global Ministries Committee co-chair Ed Evans, Rev. Han Sung Soo of the Seoul East Presbytery of the PROK said the people of South Korea “feel that Kim Jung Un wants to negotiate with the United States, but the US won’t negotiate yet.”

Han suggested many people feel that Kim Jung Un would like to imitate the model of India and Pakistan, both countries armed with nuclear weapons.

He noted concerns are growing from European nations, as well as the China and Russia.

“Generally, Korean people are peaceful in these situations. But this time, Kim Jung Un is not reasonable. However most Korean people think that Kim Jung Un will not shoot a bomb toward South Korea,” he said. “There would not be any winners in a nuclear war.”

Common Global Ministries mission co-worker Jeffrey Mensendiek, serving as a UCC chaplain at Kwansai Gakuin University in Kobe, says there is fear and uncertainty in Japan about how prepared Japan is every time a North Korean missile flies overhead.

“Part of the fear is not knowing what America is going to do, because there is a man in the office of President who nobody knows what he’s going to do,” he said.

When the missiles fly over Japan a national emergency alert system is activated called



Rev Han Sung Soo, Seoul East Presbytery of the Presbyteri-an Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) speaking with Ed Evans via Skype.
Photos courtesy of Ed Evans



Jeffrey Mensendiek talking about missiles launched from North Korea flying overhead, speaking via Skype from Kobe, Japan

a “J” Alert. People are warned to take cover.

However, the people don’t really know what to do, where to go, or what’s safe. Since the “J” alerts began in recent weeks there has been an increase in schools and public offices practicing emergency drills.

As a result of the uncertainty and fear because Donald Trump is in office, Mensendiek says people in Japan are shaking their heads.

“There is a growing sense that maybe it’s time for the Japanese government to take matters into their own hands and begin the process to militarize because they can’t really be sure what America is going to do,” Jeffrey said.

That would require a change in Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, known as the Peace, or Pacifist Constitution.

Jeffrey said a series of laws passed two years allowed national defense forces of Japan to join military maneuvers with the United States. With the escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has called for an early special election next month so he can push a revision of Japan’s pacifist constitution.

The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) has maintained that the only thing that will solve the conflict is dialogue.

Mission co-worker Kurt

Esslinger, working with the Reconciliation and Unification Department of the NCKK recently said: “Since the Korean War there have been constant hostile and military threats. Even at times where there has been dialogue, the hostile and military threats have never actually stopped. They’ve been a part of the diplomacy.”

He said the NCKK is continuing its Peace Treaty Campaign reaching out to international church partners.

“The NCKK is saying the only real chance for peace or resolving the conflict is to sign a peace treaty to end the technical state of war so that it gives North Korea a better sense, something that they can trust to say that some new president isn’t going to step into the U.S. presidency and then suddenly decide that they need to launch a pre-emptive attack in order to change out the regime because they’ve decided that this line is apparently too far to cross,” Kurt said.

The NCKK, in partnership with the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches in the United States have initiated a worldwide campaign to create a Peace Treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953, bringing an end to the state of war on the Korean Peninsula. A petition gathering signatures to urge establishment of a peace treaty is online at www.KoreaPeaceTreaty.com.



Kurt Esslinger of NCKK

Senior high campers bring together different cultures

The choice to schedule Senior High Aqua Camp at N-Sid-Sen and Senior High Camp at Pilgrim Firs early from June 25 to July 2 meant that the last day of school in Seattle—because of snow days—was the first day of camp.

Tony Kliment who co-directed the aqua camp with Sheila Thieme, describe camp as an intimate affair this year with about 16 youth “enjoying what turned out to be a unique camp experience.”

That’s fewer than any time in the 14 years he has directed the camp. Usually about 40 come.

“The limited attendance was not good financially, but allowed campers and staff to experience camp in new ways,” he said. “There was more intimate for group discussions and activities.”

One activity was a behind-the-scenes tour led by Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center on Lake Coeur d’Alene.

The camp included water adventures—swimming, tubing and a rafting in the cove instead of a float trip on the river, because the early date meant the water was too high and cold to float safely, Tony said.

“We many good group conversations around trust, welcoming others and re-imagining the senior high camp experience for the future,” he added.

“The visioning was particularly important because mid-week we were joined by more than 50 campers and counselors from the Pilgrim Firs Senior High Camp,” he said.

“Our fellow campers received a warm welcome when they arrived by bus Wednesday afternoon as they were introduced to N-Sid-Sen as the first step in combining the two camps,” he said. “They left Friday morning.”



The Noah Group meets on porch at N-Sid-Sen lodge. Long time camper Noah Sprenkle, a senior from Richland who couldn’t come, was represented by a cardboard cutout. Campers carried it around and danced with it, so he was present.
Photo courtesy of Tony Kliment

This year’s Senior High Aqua Camp began a process that will continue next year with just one senior high camp held at N-Sid-Sen.

“As for combining camps, the main conversations were around how to combine two unique and well-established cultures, recognizing that each camp group needs to be open to change as we create new camp traditions,” said Tony.

Campers and staff from both N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs will need to let go of some of their established traditions in order to embrace and create new ones.

There is steering committee made up of youth and adults from both camps to help this process move forward, he said.

That committee should begin meeting in the near future, and Mark will have more information.

A few campers have gone to both N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs.

Tony said that N-Sid-Sen

tends to be more about water sports, being on a big lake with big grounds. PF is small with a little lake, said Tony.

Other highlights of the week included several rain and wind storms—mostly in the evenings—that led to creative indoor campfires.

“Camp also included a heart-centered art project led by MaryLu (Hubbe) Vait from Richland, and pastor Jan Shannon from Westminster UCC in Spokane,” Tony said. “The project was about teaching us graciousness and guiding us in our worship activities.”

He explained that the heart project was about campers all being part of something bigger, and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

MaryLu provided 6-by-10-inch painting canvases. Each camper and staff had one canvas, one piece of the heart, to paint.

Then they placed the canvases into a big square and outlined giant hearts. It formed the



Campers made heart mosaic.

mosaic that became a heart.

Kelsey Peterson and Kristen Almgren were the directors with Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs, came along for support.

“It was a mixed adventure for many as the week was the close to the long tradition of senior high camps at Pilgrim Firs,” Tony said.

For information, call 206-963-8983 or email tonykliment@gmail.com, or visit n-sid-sen.org or pilgrimfirs.org.

Mark Boyd summarizes summer at N-Sid-Sen

N-Sid-Sen's staff were new people from Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States and the former campers, said Mark Boyd, managing director, in a recent report on the summer camping program.

A few new groups were at camp. Casting for Recovery uses fly fishing to help women walk through breast cancer. They will return next year.

A UCC youth groups from San Jose, Calif., and University Congregational UCC were among new groups at camp.

PNC camps began with the Senior High from Pilgrim Firs traveling to visit their new summer camp site at N-Sid-Sen. Both Senior High and Junior High camps at Pilgrim Firs will come to N-Sid-Sen in 2018.

"The visit was informative. There was grief and eye-opening experiences," Mark said.

"Pilgrim Firs campers talked about their feelings of loss. N-Sid-Sen campers shared their understanding of what it meant to welcome many new campers at once and how camp was going to change.

"Both groups saw how welcoming others means more than saying hello. Staff realized the invitation was only the beginning. Intentional process and thought must begin," he said.

So N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs have formed a transition team with four adults and two youth along with Mark: Todd Kamp counselor and member of the Outdoor Ministries Task Force, Jan Shannon, associate pastor at Westminster UCC in Spokane, Nick Wright, counselor and member of Bellevue UCC, Kristen Almgren, youth worker at Fautleroy UCC, Idaly Hernandez, camper

and member at Richland Shalom UCC, and Lindsey Miller camper and member at Wayside UCC. The team will meet Oct. 21 to 22 at N-Sid-Sen.

In July, N-Sid-Sen welcomed Kid's camp, Family Camp 1 and two family reunions. In August, Junior High and Intermediate Camps were followed with Family Camp 2.

"Overall we saw a slight drop in UCC numbers," Mark noted. "Some was because of late school endings and some because of date changes. We anticipate more next year.

"Outside user group numbers increased slightly helping balance that out," he said. However, two groups canceled events for late August leaving some spaces for churches looking for a time to come to camp."

N-Sid-Sen is looking to upgrade an old water system and

plan for long-term management of its forests, streams, meadows and waterfront with the Outdoor Ministries task force and the N-Sid-Sen Advisory Board.

With a high fire danger during the summer, there were no campfires, so campers improvised. Some flashed flashlights to concentrate light. Some tied colored streamers to a fan. One group made the letters to LOVE with tea candles in glasses.

For information, call 208-689-3489.



A substitute camp fire.

2018 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

Junior & Senior High Midwinter Retreat

March 11 to 13 - grades 7 to 12

Women's Retreat - May 18 to 20

Work Camp - June 18 to 21

Young Adult - TBD

Kid's Camp - July 15 to 18

Intermediate Camp
July 15 to 21

Senior High Aqua Camp
July 8 to 14

Family Camp #1
July 29 to Aug. 4

Junior High Aqua Camp
Aug 5 to 11

LGBTQ Camp
July 20 to 33

Family Camp #2 - Aug. 12 to 18

**For information,
call 208-689-3489
email mark@n-sid-sen.org
register at n-sid-sen.org**

Campers rest on new mattresses at both camps

The PNC Fund a Mattress campaign for N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs beds has succeeded in raising funds for new mattresses on all beds at the two camps and conference centers.

Based on original estimates, they set a goal of raising \$75,000, but bargain hunting by the camp directors, all mattresses were able to be replaced with the \$25,000 that was raised.

Mark Boyd, managing director of N-Sid-Sen, said Wade arranged with Good 360, an organization that works with nonprofits to put together truckloads of merchandise. He arranged for purchasing 250 mattresses in two truckloads, one with twins and one with twins and doubles for both camps for less than \$9,000.

N-Sid-Sen purchased 130 mattresses for the bunks in the cabins and Spirit Lodge that are narrower than twin mattresses. Platforms for several lower bunks in Spirit were replaced as part of work camps.

Pilgrim Firs' mattresses are all twin beds, not bunks.

The camps are a vital resource to PNC church communities and provide retreat space for other groups in the wider community, too.

Donations came both from church members and others who use and love the camps.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or 360-876-2031.

2018 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

Junior High Midwinter
Ultra Camp - Jan 5 to 7
grades 7-9

Senior High Midwinter
Ultra Camp - Jan 12 to 14 -
grades 10-12

UCC Silent
Women's Retreat
Jan 25 to 28

UCC Men's Retreat
Feb. 1 to 4

Mission Service Camp
June 24 to 29

Mission Service Camp
July 15 to 20

Mission Service Camp
Aug 19 to 23

**For information,
call 360-876-2031
email wadezick.pf@gmail.com
register at pilgrim-firs.org**