



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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January-February 2011

Task force connects youth and young adults

Education Ministries responsibilities divided into task forces

The Education Ministries' Youth and Young Adult Task Force's eight Western Washington members is optimistic about the future as they plan events to listen to what is and is not working for youth and young adult workers and volunteers.

Half of the eight are 18 to their mid 30s and half are 40s to early 50s.

"In 2010, the Ministry Resources Committee decided the Education Ministries Committee would work better if it was divided into four task forces," said Cory Maclay, convener of the Youth and Young Adult Task Force.

The other task forces are Christian Education, Adult Spiritual Formation and Outdoor Ministries.

"In two October meetings and one
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Kevin Peterson, Marc Gall and Emily Hanson Gall at young adult gathering.

Photo Courtesy of Cory Maclay

Annual Meeting speaker focuses on young people

Conference Minister Michael Denton suggests that delegates and visitors attending the Annual Meeting April 29 to May 1 will find a different format and style to the meeting which will be held at University Congregational UCC in Seattle, a church rather than a hotel-convention-center site.

It will be the first time in 15 years that Annual Meeting will be held west of the Cascades, rather than in Wenatchee, Yakima or Spokane. The reason is that University Congregational UCC has facilities large enough to host a meeting for 300 to 400 people.

"Connections – Reflections – Directions" is the theme.

To reach out to and involve youth and young adults, the featured speaker

will be the Rev. Da Vita McCallister, the Connecticut UCC Conference's associate minister for youth and young adult ministers.

As a national speaker, McCallister is known for challenging

listeners to embrace their God-given gifts to share in transforming the world.

In the Connecticut Conference, she supports and equips youth workers and



Da Vita McCallister

ministers, building a youth leadership movement that is multicultural and multiracial, and challenging local churches and the Conference in the ways God calls young people to leadership in the church.

Known as "Day," McAllister has more than 20 years' experience working in youth and young adult ministries. She was ordained in the Southeast Conference in 2004 and has served in local churches, the Southeast Conference and as minister for youth, young adult and outdoor ministries with the national setting of the United Church of Christ.

Denton said that with more UCC members living in the Seattle area, the hope is that more of them will be able

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Visit to Tuscon heartbreaking and surreal

Conference Comments



By the Rev. Mike Denton
Conference Minister

Actions like the Tuscon shooting did not surprise us...

On January 8, I was in Tucson, Arizona.

I'd been invited to be part of a United Church of Christ delegation to learn more about border issues in California and Arizona. The night before, our trip had pretty much wound up. In and of itself, the trip had already been heartbreaking and surreal.

The number of people dying and suffering along the border due to failed U.S. and Mexican policy is horrifying.

Although I'm sure (I hope) there were some exceptions, those involved in legal and illegal business activities in the border regions seemed to be, unfortunately, equally parasitic; creating systems of exploitation, human trafficking, oppression and opportunism that boggle the mind. The level of violence – physical, economic, environmental and spiritual – was as palpable as the dust and diesel fumes that are all part of border of life.

This made the places of justice and compassion that some were trying to build seem to shine brighter through the cracks of what was clearly a flawed system.

If you don't know about our UCC's Centro Romero in San Ysidro; Borderlinks in Arizona; or Church of the Good Shepard UCC in Sahaurita, AZ its worth checking them out online.

They were our hosts for this delegation and they are doing incredible work.



Each cross, extending as far as the eye could see, reflects the death of someone who tried to cross the border near Tijuana.

My plane wasn't leaving until late in the afternoon on Saturday, Jan. 8. I'd just taken a long walk to try and get my head and heart around some of what we'd seen when the news of the mass shooting in Tucson broke.

As I said, the trip had already been heartbreaking and surreal. We'd already been told about the divisions between folks, the violent

rhetoric and fear-mongering that was normal in Arizona. As I sat in the hotel lobby in Green Valley, Arizona, a proudly conservative town about 30 minutes south of Tucson, some of the local folks there automatically assumed that Mexicans were somehow guilty.

"They're coming to get all of us!" one of the women exclaimed.

Many of those I encountered that day who were proudly progressive assumed that it was folks related to the Tea Party movement or the Minutemen that were somehow responsible for the shooting. The idea that people related to these groups might be "coming after" those they disagreed with was a part of the discussions I had with other folks, too.

I confess that these were some of my first thoughts, too. Although many of the folks I spoke with were shocked, none were surprised.

Many I spoke with, many commentaries we all read and many of those interviewed all said that they saw this coming

In the days since, we've learned that the man who was the shooter in this instance was mentally ill. Although there were many commentators who, initially, tried to connect him to more conservative philosophies, over time it's become clear this is far too simplistic an approach.

This was a man with what apparently was an untreated brain disorder. Although the vast, vast majority of folks with mental illness are not a danger to anyone (and, of course none of us are perfectly healthy), this particular person became violently ill.

There may be no understandable or commonly logical reasons for why he developed and acted on this plot.

Still, the fact that so many of us saw something like this coming and assumed that one particular group or another might be responsible for such an act points towards a societal soul disorder.

We weren't surprised. We're that sick.

Although actions like this aren't normal, they are expected. That is the part of this story that may be the most frightening and disturbing of all.

Location will save costs, require volunteers and change logistics

Annual Meeting venue will be in a Seattle church

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to commute to the meeting and fewer people will have to stay overnight in hotels. In order to save costs and increase participation for those who will travel from other parts of the state, the conference is asking members of local UCC churches to open rooms in their homes to delegates. PNC will also suggest a hotels in a 15-mile radius.

Because the Conference can select caterers, planners hope to

reduce the cost of meals on site and offer inexpensive meal options near the church.

Denton said that while University Congregational is "a gracious host" they do not have the same resources as a convention center. Volunteers will be needed to do things the Conference has previously paid a convention center to do.

The church parking lot has space for many, but not all, plus there may be difficulty with

traffic in Seattle on Friday.

Because of need to accommodate for normal Sunday worship attendance at University Congregational, conference delegates will be invited to visit local congregations on Sunday morning and bring greetings on behalf of the Conference.

To do that plan for worship, Annual Meeting will officially close on Saturday.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

Annual Meeting 2011 will be held April 29 to May 1 at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Transitions announced

Kathy Youde, conference treasurer, who served PNC churches in as pastor in Tonasket and interim at Newport, died on Nov. 21. A graduate of Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry program, she was ordained in 2003. She directed the choir at Tolt UCC in Carnation.

Matt Smith will be installed as campus minister to Progressive Christians at the University of Washington at 4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 6, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Judith Holloway will be ordained and installed as pastor at the Chewelah UCC on Sunday, February 26.

Tara Olsen Allen will be installed at First Congregational UCC in Bellingham on Sunday, May 27.

Two Work Camps set in 2011

Randy Crowe, managing director at N-Sid-Sen will lead the 2011 Work Camp in New Orleans Feb. 27 to March 5, continuing with assistance through the Little Farms UCC to rebuild homes after Hurricane Katrina.

Bobbi Virta, pastor at Ferndale UCC will lead her fourth work camp to New Orleans April 2 to 9.

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

Pension Board recognizes 3

The UCC Pension Board's Christmas Fund Offering recognized three PNC churches as "Rising Star Congregations" for tripling their annual offerings. Everett UCC, Wayside UCC in Federal Way and United Church in University Place received banners. In the first four years of a five-year campaign, 98 UCC congregations

across the United States have received recognition. The offering, formerly known as "Veterans of the Cross," helps provide supplemental funds for pension and health insurance premiums for low-income retirees. It also provides emergency assistance to clergy, lay employees and their families.

For information, call 425-760-4989.

Clergy Retreat is Jan. 30 to Feb. 1 at Pilgrim Firs

"Clergy Support and Renewal" is the theme for the 2011 Clergy Retreat from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, at Pilgrim Firs.

Men's retreat is Feb. 3 to 6

"Men's Health (Body and Soul): Exploring the Five Causes of Life" is the theme for the 20th annual PNC Men's Gathering and Retreat Feb. 4 to 6 at Pilgrim Firs. Dave Shull, pastor of Spirit of Peace UCC in Samamish, and Paul Wiesner, a public health physician who recently retired from the faculty of the University of Washington's Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, are co-leaders, facilitating reflections on wellbeing, maintaining health, quality of life in large group seminars and small groups. An optional Day of Silence is Feb. 3.

PNC sends five delegates to 28th UCC General Synod

The PNC will send five delegates plus many more visitors and guests to represent it at the 28th General Synod July 1 to 5, 2011, in Tampa, Fla. The theme, "Imagine What's Possible. God Is Still Speaking,"

invites participants to imagine the future God has for the UCC, the church universal and the world. This synod will focus on celebration and education, with speakers and programs for personal growth and nurturing local churches.

PNC delegates are Nick CastroLang, Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane; Don Hanson of Peshastin UCC; Tom Miller of Anacortes; Davante Taylor and Pam Taylor, Wayside UCC in Federal Way, and Kristine Zakarison, Community Congregational UCC in Pullman. Brandon Duran of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle is an associate delegate.

"Your Church, Better" is an opportunity for individuals, churches, organizations, exhibitors and ministries to present 20-minute mini-workshops with tips and ideas for local congregations.

Youth in grades nine through 12 in 2011 from the PNC will join with youth from across the UCC in worship, meetings and activities. Youth interested in attending from June 29 to July 6 may contact Tara Barber at barbertara@hotmail.com or 425-213-9335 or Susan

Andresen at susan_andresen@hotmail.com or 206-265-2987.

UCC writer speaks in Seattle

Donna Schaper, UCC pastor, writer and mother of three, will preach at 10 a.m. on UCC Women's Sunday 2011, Feb. 6, at Broadview Community UCC in Seattle. Schaper is a former Massachusetts conference minister, pastor at Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan and a contributor to

Conference News Briefs

Group attend trainings, offer young adult event

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in January, we have looked for ways to build on what is working well. We realize building relationships among those in youth and young adult ministries is vital.”

One goal is to incorporate more youth and young adult participation in the conference, particularly in the 2011 Annual Meeting. Speaker DaVita McAllister will meet with each youth and young adult to hear what they seek from churches and the conference. She will offer pointers for the road ahead.

“We feel called to develop leadership in local churches and the conference among people from ages 12 to 30,” said Maclay. “As many affirm: youth and young adults are the church of today, not just tomorrow. They can be church and conference leaders today. In fact, if we don’t develop those leaders, we will miss a few generations in conference leadership.

“Most youth workers are volunteers or part-time staff. We seek to support them,” asked Maclay, who was high school youth minister at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle for 11 years in two stints: one for three years in the late 1980s and from 2002 to 2010.

She remembers coming to Plymouth when she was in her mid 20s. Now more than twice that age, she still remembers what she experienced—positive and the negative—being a young person in a big church.

She believes many would welcome the UCC denomination, particularly in areas where more conservative churches are the norm, said Maclay, who is taking a year off to listen to where God is calling her next.

“When I was in high school ministry, we had a ritual of blessing seniors at the end of the year,” she said. “They were joyful but sad moments, because even our large church had no viable young adult ministry



Mark Boyd and Robert Guthrie converse at the October task force meeting.

Photo courtesy of Coroy Maclay

where youth could go next. We had spent years helping them navigate life through childhood and adolescence, yet once they graduated they no longer had a small group to call home.”

Several task force members recently attended some national training events. Tara Barber and Margaret Irribarra, youth ministries coordinator, both of University Congregational UCC in Seattle, attended the Network of Wider Church Youth Ministries gathering for 14 UCC youth workers in November in Orlando, Fla.

Irribarra and Kmbri Bond, also of University Congregational, attended an ecumenical Youth Workers Summit, also in Orlando, but hosted by Disney.

On Dec. 29 at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle, about 25 young adults churches, four clergy and six young-adult allies came to a gathering. After decorating and delivering cookies to several to Plymouth Housing Group residents, decorating cards to sell at Annual Meeting and eating a meal, they conversed about what it means for UCC churches to call themselves “open and affirming” (ONA) 25 years after UCC first used the term.

Sharing insights to spur conversation were Kyna Shilling, young adult leader at Plymouth; Amy Roon of University Congregational; Vincent Lachina, state chaplain for Planned Parenthood; Matt Smith, pastor with Progressive Christians at the University of Washington, and Tim Devine, pastor at St. Paul’s UCC in Ballard shared personal stories to open the discussion.

They looked at what ONA meant in UCC history versus what it might mean to people, particularly young adults, today, Maclay said they distinguish between a body voting on an ONA resolution and a church or conference living into being open and affirming.

They explored expanding “open and affirming” to mean integrating anyone—not just those in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender community—who feels considered “other” by those of in the church.

The task force has crafted a two-year budget to support current local, conference, regional and national youth events, plus gatherings to support those who minister to and with youth and young adults.

Rachel Teigen Brackett and

Maclay met with a Global Ministries subgroup developing a young adult exchange as part of the PNC’s 17-year partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, East Seoul Presbytery. Global Ministries will host a young adult delegation in Seattle this summer and hope to send a young adult delegation in 2012.

“To recruit young adults to go to Korea, we need provide a partial subsidy,” Maclay said, because “many young adults have made career choices that mean they have lower incomes and would need financial help.

“A challenge we face is that few young adults participate in churches out of loyalty to the denomination. What does that mean for the future of our churches?” she asked. “Like most other mainline denominations, we need to adapt to a new way of being church.

The task force incorporates faith formation in its meetings. “While we are talking about the care and feeding of souls for youth and young adults in the conference, we are caring for and feeding our souls, too.”

For information, call 206-841-2744 or email cory.maclay@gmail.com.

Stewardship and mission empower children to live their faith

By Gale Peterson
Pacific Northwest
Conference
Partner in Education
Since 1999



The PNC's three Partners in Education – Gale Peterson, Lorna Kropp and Don Schmitt – are trained by the national UCC to help local churches with their education ministries. They inform persons in teaching ministries of resources published by and curricula developed by the UCC. They offer workshops to help churches plan and provide effective education programs.

When congregations provide children and youth a variety of mission experiences, they plant the seeds and nurture understanding of the importance of stewardship, mission and what it means to be the hands and feet of God in their community and the wider world.

Stewardship and mission empower children to live out the Scripture.

If stewardship means helping take care of the church and the world on behalf of God, then children more easily grasp the concepts of stewardship and mission through active participation in both experiences.

Experiencing a direct connection with stewardship, mission and the church teaches children that they can make a difference both locally and globally.

Involving children in mission projects, in which they can actively participate, helps to develop their desire to share God's love and their own resources with others who have greater needs than their own.

Building on their understanding of mission and their experiences of carrying out a mission project heightens their sense of stewardship.

Such a structure makes the importance of stewardship to the home congregation and the church's wider community more tangible.

This is my experience.

At the Kirkland Congregational UCC, where I am director of Christian education, monthly mission projects have been an effective way to develop the sense of stewardship and mission in our children and youth.

These monthly projects engage the entire congregation, but are a focus for the children and youth each month.

The projects include:

- collecting back to school supplies,



In 2010, Kirkland children bagged 350 toothbrush/toothpaste sets and carried them to the front in a worship service to be dedicated before they went to HopeLink.

- gathering toothbrushes and toothpaste for the food bank;
- collecting supplies for no-kill animal shelters;
- shopping together for the Giving Tree;
- donating cold weather clothing for Tent City 4;
- bringing cans of soup for the "Souper Bowl of Caring";
- providing birthday party supplies for the food bank;
- conducting bake sales for disaster relief;
- spearheading shoe collections for "Soles 4 Souls" project, and
- donating books for a summer reading program.

The majority of these mission projects involve a visit to the receiving agency to deliver the gifts the youth gathered.

The weekly offering brought by the children and youth is added to our "Common Cents Fund," which helps support each of these monthly mission projects.

As a part of the Fall Stewardship Drive, the children and youth receive a stewardship pledge form designed for them and entitled "My Stewardship Promise."

The pledge card explains: "Stewardship means helping to take care of the church and the

world on behalf of God."

On this card, they are asked to check the ways that they are able to help take care of the mission and ministry of their church for the coming year.

It says: "I promise to be a partner with God for (church name) by:

- bringing an weekly money offering to Sunday school;
- bringing items for the Emergency Feeding Program;
- bringing items and help pack and count donations for Monthly Mission Projects;
- helping in the worship service and/or children's chapel time—lighting candles, ringing the bell, being a greeter, reading Scripture, praying or being a friend to someone lonely.

- helping around the church for special event or activities—church clean-up days, church breakfasts, sorting supplies in the summer or picking up litter.

Then there is space for the children and youth to write in other gifts they have to offer.

After participating for years in monthly mission projects, 12-year-old Bradley felt the need to lead a mission project for the children of Haiti. The project was conceived and completed by the children as they engaged the entire church family and the neighboring community in service to God's less fortunate children.

This project is an example faith in action.

These children are the hands and feet of God, already on the path to a life-time of service.

A resource available through United Church of Christ Resources, "God's Gifts, My Gifts" by Sandy Luechsen, Local Church Ministries, offers further ideas.

For information, call 425-823-8737 for Gale, 509-448-2291 for Lorna and 425-591-7729 for Donald, visit www.ucc.org/education/partners or email gale246@frontier.net.

Pastor serves a 100-year-old 'transforming church'

As the Northeastern Washington town where Tara Leininger serves as pastor and mayor recently shrunk from 285 to 250 people, she said, she's preparing for the church's and the city's 100th anniversaries.

She sees the status of both in light of a history that continues into the future.

The Metaline Falls First Congregational UCC's celebration will be on Palm Sunday, April 17, and the city's celebration will coincide with the town's "Affair on Main Street" over Labor Day weekend.

Stevens County was chartered in 1911. It chartered Metaline Falls - Pend Oreille County later that year.

In 1910, Ione Congregational Church, which she has served three Sundays a month for four years, was started by the Rev. Walter Veasie and his son, the Rev. Carl Veasie. They also started the church in Metaline Falls, where a group first met in 1908. It was incorporated in 1911.

Then it was a long trip on a dirt road and ferry. Today it's a 15- to 20-minute drive after the 8:30 a.m. service in Ione for Leininger to reach Metaline Falls to lead worship.

"The Secretary of State's letter congratulating us on our incorporation said that of 3,000 other organizations and businesses incorporated in 1911 only 45 still exist and half of them are churches," she said.

Both the Catholic and Congregational churches held services at the former public school, now the Cutter Theatre, for many years. The Congregational Church did not have its own building until 1951.

Over the years, 20 pastors and interim pastors have served the church. Leininger has been there more than 12 years.

"We have experienced growth when it was possible, and have become smaller as the community population slid, but



Tara Leininger is pastor of a 'transforming' church.

we are still viable," she said.

When she and her husband Donovan Johnson moved to Metaline Falls 20 years ago—him to teach music and her, history, social studies and English—they thought they would be there five years. The community, its surroundings, people, opportunities and the clear starry nights hold them.

Leininger can afford to serve the church on a part-time salary because they live in the parsonage and her husband teaches. His job continues even as the Selkirk School District's student population has declined from 560 to 246 students since they came. Leininger was "rified" by the district 11 years ago but is advisor for the extra-curricular theatre arts program.

In their first years there, they attended the Catholic Church because he was church musician there. Then they attended American Lutheran Church in Newport for years he was church organist there. She did some pulpit supply at the Congregational church and at American Lutheran Church.

"I felt the call to ministry for many years, studying communication, history and religious studies at the University of Montana," said Leininger, who became licensed with the

PNCUCC Committee on Ministry and was ordained in 2006, despite not having a seminary degree. She is now within five months of finishing a master's degree in theology at Whitworth University in Spokane.

"It says something about the UCC that I could be called to ministry and take a unique route, gathering wisdom and experience in years of ministry," she said. "The UCC cares about little churches."

She said she was one of the first in the conference to follow a "new path" to ordination, being called to a church, being mentored by pastor colleagues and then being ordained.

"Whitworth's master's degree is geared to working people with intensive class time and people from a variety of traditions and ages on a journey together," said Leininger, who will be 54 in May and has "not quit learning." She stepped away from directing the Cutter Theatre to do the studies.

"In planning the town's celebration, I've been reading 100 years of City Council minutes and preparing a readers theater on the town's history at the Cutter Theatre," said Leininger, who has been active in theater productions at the Cutter.

"There were controversies

over bawdy houses and pool tables," she said. "The town has been big and tiny. We had dirt streets forever and issues about cow manure on the streets and the need for sidewalks."

Much of the town's history fluxed with employment in logging and mines. In 2008, the Teck-Cominco Pend Oreille Mine temporarily closed and is deciding if it will reopen and for how long. The city lost few families, because most miners did not move their families there. Losses are in support businesses.

"Younger people are not staying here because they leave to find work," said Leininger.

"We're graying," she said of the church and community, "plus, the few younger people in town are not geared to belonging to civic organizations and churches that serve the community. How the community serves itself is changing, not for a lack of love but for a lack of hands. Even the graying folks are leaving to be nearer family, services and medical care."

In its long-range planning, the church is looking at how to minister to a community that's aging. When the previous pastor left 15 years ago, about 15 to 20 were attending. Those numbers grew to 30 in "boom years," but after teens graduated and young families moved, there's not an untapped young population to recruit.

"The power of the church is more than numbers of people at worship. It's about being driven to keep ministry alive in the community," she said. "A church that is graying and declining in numbers is transforming, not dying. We have to figure out what we are transforming to be and do."

"I'm a pastor of a transforming church," she said, "and mayor of a transforming town."

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

Members express opposition to war in Afghanistan

More than 250 people at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle have signed a petition calling the President and Congress to “be realistic” and realize military and political goals for the United States in Afghanistan cannot be achieved.

“In Afghanistan, America Must Face Reality: A fervent call to end our military involvement in Afghanistan” is the title of petition and a paper Plymouth’s Peace Action Group agreed on, reported petition coordinator Adele Reynolds.

The petition asks the United States 1) stop taking responsibility for the struggle against the Taliban; 2) end its combat role in Afghanistan by July 2011; 3) end plans to operate permanent military land and air bases there; 4) educate Afghans, particularly girls and women; 5) revise U.S. A.I.D. procedures to include local people in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of civil development projects; 6) press to end corruption, and 7) promote arts of peace, rather than arts of war, as the best way to draw support from the Taliban.

Reynolds, co-chair of the Peace Action Group, said the resources are online at plymouthchurchseattle.org: click on downloads and then sermons/Peace Action Group Afghanistan Position Paper.

The petition is based on a paper by Richard Pelz, 87, who retired with his wife to Seattle after a career as an attorney, aide to former Congressman Don Magnuon and 25 years with the Interior and Energy Departments in Washington, D.C.

Given his hobby of following foreign policy news, he agreed in August to write the paper. There was much news on Afghanistan, he said.

“I learned more than I had known and grew more disgusted with our role there,” he said.

The paper begins by summarizing America’s questionable interventions in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. “Each country has a history, a religion and a people that Americans do not understand. The last 60 years, the U.S. has intervened politically and militarily in these countries seven times, often on the wrong side and with disastrous consequences,” he wrote.

The times were installing the Shah in Iran in 1953; aiding the Mujahadeen fighting Russian occupation (1979 to 1989); a failed military rescue of the U.S. hostages in Iran in 1980; support of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War; the first Gulf War in 1991; troops in Afghanistan since 2001 and in Iraq since 2003.

“This record does not inspire confidence that we know



Martha Poolton, Sara McKenzie and Medora Moburg review petitions.

Photo courtesy of Adele Reynolds

what we are doing,” Pelz said, citing a lack of infrastructure improvements, continued violence and an estimated \$3 trillion in costs for the war in Iraq.

He said Al Qaeda started as a small faction of global Jihadists led by Osama bin Laden and emerged as a movement with groups in Pakistan and Yemen.

“They are rejected by mainstream Islamic organizations,” he wrote, adding that after 9/11 he realized he knew little about Islam and began reading on it.

Pelz said the Taliban are “the latest group of fanatic religious reformers in the 1,400 year history of Islam.” As religious reformers, their focus is primarily on other Muslims.

“In war as in physics, every action has a reaction—the

more we fight the Taliban and kill civilians, the more we create recruits for the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and around the world,” he said.

Goals a New York Times reporter listed for U.S. policy in Afghanistan—“oust Taliban militants, build a credible central government and restore security”—are not achievable politically or militarily, he said, because of no tradition of democracy; government corruption and incompetency; low literacy; a blind desire to win, and Pentagon investment in multi-million-dollar facilities. The petition summarized his recommendations.

For information, call 206-937-9757 or email adelereynolds@netscape.net.

Westminster UCC holds Kirkin’ o’ the Tartans during worship

When the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John in Spokane was unable to schedule the Kirkin’ o’ the Tartans, Roger Ross of the St. Andrew’s Society asked Andy CastroLang of Westminster Congregational UCC to hold the recognition there.

The Kirkin’ o’ the Tartans is a tradition of Americans of Scottish descent, homesick for their homeland. Tartans are the plaid designs and colors that represent their family clans.

After an 18th century rebel-

lion, the English government banned wearing tartans, playing bagpipes and bearing arms. Scots secretly carried a small piece of their clan’s tartan to church under their clothes and the minister included a blessing in the benediction. In the 1940s, Scottish Presbyterian pastor Peter Marshall created the American celebration, Kirkin’ o’ the Tartans.

Alan Mackay of Westminster and Morag Stewart of Cheney UCC wore their tartans.



Andy CastroLang and Roger Ross tell children of the tradition.

'Got Spirit?' is the question summer campers will explore

"Got Spirit? Seeing God in the Everyday!" is the theme for the 2011 summer camps at Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen. The Outdoor Ministries Task Force is recruiting directors and counselors to lead the programs.

Pilgrim Firs' Junior High Mid-Winter was Jan. 7 to 9, and Senior High Mid-Winter is Jan. 14 to 16.

Work Camp at Pilgrim Firs is May 27 to 30, followed by a GLBTQ Spiritual Retreat, June 3 to 5, and the Young Adult Retreat June 24 to 26.

The 2011 PNC Leadership Retreat will be June 17 to 19 at Pilgrim Firs.

At N-Sid-Sen, Mid-Winter Youth Retreat will be held March 11 to 13; the



Drama plays role in camp learning.

Women's Retreat will be May 20 to 22, and Work Camp is set for June 12 to 18.

Summer camps at Pilgrim Firs are Senior High, July 3 to 9; July 10 to 16, Junior High; Intermediate, July 17 to 23; Kids, July 24 to 27, and Family, August 21 to 25.

N-Sid-Sen camps are Kids, June 26 to 29; Intermediate, July 10 to 16; Senior High Aqua, July 17 to 23; Family Camp #1, July 31 to Aug. 6; Junior High Aqua, Aug. 7 to 13, and Family Camp #2, Aug. 14 to 20.

For information, call 360-876-2031 or 208-689-3489 or visit pilgrimfirs.org or n-sid-sen.org.

Mutual caring of members strengthens church spiritually

A senior lunch, an after-church forum and a monthly contemporary service are avenues Emily Tanis-Likkel, associate minister at Eagle Harbor UCC in Bainbridge Island, has used to empower lay people and facilitates their connections with each other.

About 24 of the church's 175 members attend a "Soup and Such" senior lunch that started in May 2010.

The first program on "Ageing to Sage-ing" urged seniors to reclaim their role as sages in the community. Another program led by a chaplain-poet had them to write Haiku poems.

Then Tanis-Likkel led a program on writing a "Spiritual-Ethical Will" to leave friends, family and future generations a legacy of values and advice.

She invited the seniors to fill out a form to share their thoughts on their lives, honor relationships that enriched their lives and express their gratitude. She found ideas for the form online.

The form asked them what they have most valued in their lives, what life has taught them, what has given them strength in difficult times. There was space



Marjory Studerus dictated a spiritual-ethical will to Alice Tawresey.
Photo courtesy of Emily Tanis-Likkel

for them to express regrets and forgiveness; share future hopes for the person receiving the letter; tell how they wish their lives to be honored, and express gratitude, love, last thoughts and blessings for the person.

Some hesitated, but others appreciated the exercise. One woman in her 90s dictated her legacy to a volunteer and left it at the church. Two weeks later she died, so Tanis-Likkel took it to her family, who were "moved that she had the capacity to think that deeply and with such humor in her last days."

Men also have a men's breakfast at the church—draw-

ing a handful from the church and about 70 from the community. Women also have Women's Lunch Bunch gatherings.

Bainbridge Island is in a condo-building boom, growing from being a small town.

In an after-church forum in January 2010, about 20 people explored how God may be calling the church to build connections in its community.

"We discussed how inter-generational small groups might provide opportunities for friendships across generations. A middle-aged woman observed the loneliness of elders, and suggested younger folks

might offer companionship and practical assistance," she said.

A young mother expressed interest in her children having an adopted grandparent. A retired woman and a middle-aged man suggested connecting with busy, young families who need child care to take an evening out.

"In our culture of individualism and isolation, these connections are crucial for our wellbeing," said Tanis-Likkel who also helped the church train 12 lay visitors. "Mutual caring is life transforming."

She and her husband, Brett, moved from Michigan in 1997. During studies at Fuller Seminary Extension in Seattle, she became involved in the UCC after seeing UCC ads on a bus and reconnecting with UCC minister Kris Ostrem, who had been one of her professors at Seattle Pacific University.

Tanis-Likkel, who was ordained in 2005, has also helped the church establish an 11:30 a.m. contemporary service second Sundays for 30 worshippers. Youth and lay involvement is central to this effort.

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