



# Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

Mary Stamp, editor  
editor@pncuccnews.org

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

February-March 2018

## PNC Board joins Seattle Women's March

**Reaching out to build conversations, connections and relationships**

The Board of Directors continues to explore new ways to meet, have conversations, deepen relationships and connections and live into our call as conference for church vitality. At our last meeting on Jan. 19-20 we stepped out of our conversations to join the Women's March in Seattle.

Among 12 PNC folks bringing the PNC-UCC presence and witness at the march were Tara Barber, Wendy Blight, Mike Denton, Courtney Stange-Tregear, Ann Lev, Kathleen Morgan, Kelle Brown, Martha Baldwin, Hilary Coleman, Kelle Brown, Indigo Brown, Jennifer Castle, Sandy Cheatham and Janet Matthews. They raised signs giving their identity as the Pacific Northwest UCC and signs expressing their solidarity on justice for women and people of color.



Members of the PNC Board and others from the PNC participate in Women's March. Photo courtesy of Peter Ilgenfritz

## Bishop Dwayne Royster is keynote for 2018 gathering

**By Peter Ilgenfritz - Board Moderator  
Wendy Blight - AM Planning  
Conference Minister Mike Denton  
Minister of Church Vitality - Courtney  
Stange-Tregear**

*"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isaiah 55:12*

The PNC Board of Directors, Annual Meeting Planning Committee and PNC ministers look forward to gathering with members of the conference at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference Friday to Sunday, April 27 to 29 at the Yakima Convention Center.

The theme this year, "Breaking

**'Breaking Forth' is  
theme for 2018  
Annual Meeting.**

Forth," celebrates our ministry of building deeper relationships and growing vitality in our churches and communities.

We'll gather this year at a familiar setting for some of us, but we will break out of some familiar patterns for meeting and carrying out the business of the conference.

We will bring forward some of the unique ways that we gathered at our camps last year and provide more op-

portunities to connect with new people and address issues using the power we experience in community. We hope you can come take part!

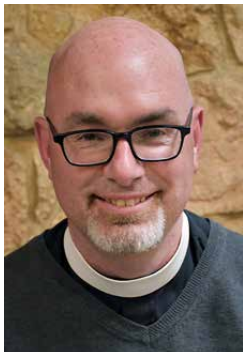
We are blessed to have as our guest presenter Bishop Dwayne D. Royster, who has served in pastoral ministry for the past 20 years and is the minister emeritus and founding pastor of Living Water United Church of Christ in Philadelphia.

He is currently serving as political director for People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO). PICO believes in building a more just world by teaching people of faith how to build and exercise their own power to address the root causes of the problems

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# Wisdom and meaning in these worst of times

## Conference Comments



By The Rev.  
Mike Denton  
Conference  
Minister

Sharing  
wisdom  
is an  
expression  
of love,  
not power.

Meaning  
is a seed  
for  
wisdom.

In the last PNCUCC News, I wrote a column called “Worse.” I used to say that things are going to get worse before they get better but now I simply say things are going to get worse. Period. My opinion hasn’t changed. I know this isn’t a hopeful idea, but I’d rather be wrong than to present a false hope. We’re facing some difficult decisions as a church, a country and a world. I sit with this reality everyday. I’m learning as I pray about what it might mean to focus on “wisdom” and “meaning” in these times

**Much of what is leading** to more devastating days is the collapse of unsustainable systems. Our use of natural resources are unsustainable. The “isms” and their related ideologies of supremacy are unsustainable. Political fractiousness is unsustainable. The world has been addicted to unsustainable practices and we’re hitting bottom. Collectively, we’ll have to choose between death or a withdrawal that may last for a few generations. The question I’m asking is whether we love the great, great, great grandchildren we will never meet enough to try and make a way, now, for a better day for them in the future.

**Iroquois wisdom suggests** that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world for those seven generations out. When “generations” are mentioned biblically, it’s almost always about the covenants and practices that were designed to last for “all generations.” In contemporary thinking, we use generational thinking to look back at the acts of previous generations or as a tool for creating differentiating generational critiques. We rarely use it within the context of considering the responsibility we have to future generations. The UCC’s Constitution and Bylaws include the words: “The responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.” I love this phrase and have tried to live into ministry using this lens. I’m also seeing how incomplete and self reverential it can be. Don’t I also have a responsibility to do my best to try and make sure the Church is a gift and not a burden to future generations?

**This wisdom thinking is best passed on** by elders—those trusted people who a community believes have accumulated so much wisdom in their lives that they are asked to dedicate the rest of their lives to sharing/relinquishing the wisdom they’ve accumulated, as well as identifying those times wisdom bubbles up. Self-identified elders rarely work out because they’re not really looking to relinquish anything but to gain power, instead.

The wisdom accumulated may come in the form sage words but its as likely to come in the form of stories, jokes, songs, art and many other forms of expression. Although wisdom is frequently most quickly identified by elders, we don’t need to be elders to know it, share it or express it.

**Wisdom is different than information.** Information tends to have limited contexts and applications. There is that saying, “Information is power.” It’s so true. Information tends to be stockpiled or shared selectively and, in a way, is a currency like money. There has been more information gathered about those living right now than any previous generation. The amount of documented information available to us is increasing exponentially and although parts of it have made a difference in our lives the overwhelming amount of it leaves less room for meaning and wisdom. The tendency we have toward the accumulation of information is also unsustainable and buries us in its weight.

The flattening of leadership structures happens because of the more democratized access to information today. The specialists used to have more power be they a doctor, a mechanic, a politician or a minister. Some of the richest folks in the world today, are focused on material accumulation but wealth is more related to the information they have access to or the information they’ve commodified and stockpiled. “Information is power” is the way it’s weaponized. Information often is honed down to one or two small points used to kill or subjugate others. Sometimes it’s used as an intentional avalanche to overwhelm any information that may somehow run counter to the dominant one.

**Wisdom is too slippery** for a price tag. It heals, not hurts. Sharing wisdom is an expression of love, not power. When people try to package it, its placed within a limited context that turns it into just one more piece of information to be bought and sold. Wisdom is so valuable and so expansive that its beyond a price. The cost was paid by the lived experience of the generations that discovered it. So, right now, maybe we have to look at these times as moments we are paying a significant cost. Can wisdom emerge out of it?

**How might we find and make meaning** out of this moment? Meaning is a seed for wisdom. I believe the crucifixion of Jesus was, in and of itself, a meaningless moment. It was an attempt to kill the love of Jesus, the healing works of Jesus and the liberating movement of Jesus and when Jesus died, these things died, too. Those trying to kill these things, won. All that had been done up to  
**Column continues on next page**

## Transitions announced

**Susan Fairo** will be ordained at 5 p.m., March 11 at Alki UCC. She has been called as an intentional interim and began serving Spirit of Peace UCC in Sammamish in January.

**Kris Forster** of First Congregational church in Maltby has ongoing need for pulpit supply preachers. It is located between Woodinville and Monroe. For information, email [kforster27@hotmail.com](mailto:kforster27@hotmail.com).

## Conference News Briefs

### Climate Conference set

The Rev. Richenda Fairhurst, a pastor in Ashland, Ore., is organizing a Climate Conference for communities of faith, May 1 to 2 in Ashland. The event is open to clergy and ministry leaders who want to know more about climate and how climate work intersects with the local church.

For information, email [csninfo@climatereality.com](mailto:csninfo@climatereality.com).

### UCC DataHub ready for data

The UCC DataHub resources webpage is available for churches to enter their 2017 data, information vital to the national UCC, as well as local churches. There are tutorial videos at [ucc.org/research\\_yearbook](http://ucc.org/research_yearbook).

Those wishing paper forms may contact **Arlene Hobson** at 206-725-8383 or email [pncucc@gmail.com](mailto:pncucc@gmail.com).

### Financial Vitality program starts

The Ministers' Financial Vitality Initiative (MFVI) began in 2017 with 30 UCC ministers selected for the first group to participate in a three-year curriculum to help them achieve financial wellness.

Two more cohorts will be selected in 2018 and 2019. The MFVI program offers two matching grants of up to \$1,000 to assist 1000 pastors serving local congregations in meeting immediate financial needs

such as outstanding debt, unexpected medical expenses or setting up an emergency fund. To qualify for the grant, a minister's congregation must raise an equal amount.

Applications are available online at <http://bit.ly-2BRjKDz>. For information, contact **Darrell Goodwin**,

program director, at [darrell@mylucc.org](mailto:darrell@mylucc.org).

### 'Come to the Water' is theme

"Come to the Water"—E Hele Mai'Ka Wai—is the theme for the 2018 Western Regional Youth Event June 25 to 29, at the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu.

The event for youth from 9th through 12th grades integrates community, music, justice, spirituality, joy and service, said **Cristina Airaghi**, pastor for children and youth at First Congregational UCC in Bellevue. She is the PNC representative to the WRYE planning committee.

It is a time for youth to explore their faith, discover new friendships, share inspiration and engage in service around the island of Oahu, she said.

Once every four years, hundreds of youth from the Western United States come together as a movement within the UCC, she said. Local churches arrange registration and travel.

For information, email [cristina@fc-bellevue.org](mailto:cristina@fc-bellevue.org), follow WRYE on Twitter @WRYE\_2018, or Instagram, [wrye2018](https://www.instagram.com/wrye2018).

### 'Let Justice Roll' is Feb. 11

"Let Justice Roll: A Multi-Media Musical Journey to Selma and Back" is an original production with the choir, spoken word, instrumental solos and video clips focused on learning about white privilege and joining efforts to dismantle racism. It is taking place at 3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 11, at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Dinner and discussion will follow. The

event co-sponsors are Plymouth, the Youth Forum, reSound, a Northwest Chamber Ensemble and the Institute for Social Change through the arts. A \$15 donation is suggested. For information, visit [plymouthchurchseattle.org](http://plymouthchurchseattle.org).

### Webinar offered on new tax law

Actively contributing members of the Annuity Plan of the UCC Pension Boards have an opportunity to learn about tax implications of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and steps to adjust tax strategies and financial plans under it.

Ernst & Young Financial Planning Services is offering a 30-minute webinar at the following times and dates: noon, Thursday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m., Monday, Feb. 19, 7 a.m., Friday, Feb. 23, 9 a.m., Tuesday, March 6, and 8 a.m., Thursday, March 8.

Registration is at [877-927-1047](http://877-927-1047) or [pbucc.eyfp.com/Login?url=%252f](http://pbucc.eyfp.com/Login?url=%252f).

### Environmental Justice group starts

A new Environmental Justice Team is working as an offshoot of the PNC Justice and Witness Ministries Committee, said **Meighan Pritchard**, pastor at Prospect UCC in Seattle. A goal is to create communication channels among PNC congregations and with the national UCC setting on environmental justice issues. The team holds monthly videoconference meetings on Zoom at 4:30 p.m., third Tuesdays.

For information, email [pritchardmeighan@gmail.com](mailto:pritchardmeighan@gmail.com).

### Mardi Bras events held

Westminster Congregational UCC and several other Spokane churches and agencies held "MardiBras" Parties recently as opportunities for women to gather for a "Mardi Gras" theme party and bring bus passes, pads, tampons, underwear and bras for homeless and low-income women in the community.

For information, call 509-624-1366.

# As I pray, I realize hope has not given up on me

## Column continued from page 2

that moment became meaningless. But then Christ's resurrection came as this singular event of killing meaning was overwhelmed by the multiplication of meaning that began to flow out of that moment: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 1 Cor. 15:55

Meaning began to emerge out of that

moment of meaninglessness. This singularly meaningless moment was recontextualized and meaning was resurrected.

These days, I pray for wisdom and meaning. I have no expectation that things are going to become quickly resolved; that we'll have a great awakening moment to wisdom, or that the emergence of meaning is a guarantee, but this isn't a reason to

give up. Yes, things are going to get worse. Our collective unsustainable practices and ideas are catching up with us and the collapse of these expectations are going to be hard and inevitable.

So, I pray. I listen. I wonder. There are days I feel like giving up hope. And yet, most days it becomes so clear that hope has not given up on me...



## Pastor recruits people to join in march in D.C.

Roberta Rominger, pastor at the Congregational Church of Mercer Island, and her mother Janet Sears of United Churches of Olympia are recruiting others to join them in responding to a call from the UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer to participate in a rally and events April 3 to 5 in Washington, D.C.

The rally is in remembrance of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and a rally for people of faith to “ACT Now!” and to unite to end racism.

The event, planned by the National Council of Churches, is designed to “Awaken” people to the truth that racism is evil and hurts everyone, to “Confront” racism through truth telling and action to right the wrong, and to “Transform” the hearts, minds and behaviors of people and institutions.

**“Act Now!” will begin** with an interfaith service at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 3, at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Beginning at 9 a.m., Wednesday, April 4, there will be an interfaith service of Prayer and Preparation at the Lincoln Memorial before the rally, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., that day.

Thursday, April 5, is Lobby Day, an opportunity to visit political representatives.

Roberta learned about it from the Northern California Nevada Conference and agreed to be the contact person for a team going from the Pacific Northwest Conference.

**When King was** assassinated in 1968, Roberta was in seventh grade. After Robert Kennedy was shot later in the year during his campaign for the Presidency, she was concerned that major national leaders were being assassinated.

“During the Civil Rights Movement I came to more consciousness about community and wider concerns,” she said.

Now, 50 years later, she



**Janet Sears and Roberta Rominger join April rally and events.**

Photos courtesy of Roberta Rominger

said a major focus for her is to bring the learning home.

**Roberta said her mother** regretted not participating in civil rights actions in the 1960s, because she had a house full of small children. Now she is free and wants to stand up and be counted.

**“My motivation was** different then,” Roberta said. “I would have said in 1968 that we needed to end racism for the sake of those ‘other’ people who were suffering from discrimination.

“Now she feels awake to the reality that racism blights all of our lives,” she said. “When any human being is treated as second class, we all lose. ‘Second class’ does not begin to describe what is happening.”

Roberta said that “ongoing injustices are so monumental that they make our claims to be an enlightened, civilized country a lie.”

**Going to the rally** in Washington, D.C., is a major jump for her.

“I feel it’s time,” she said. “We have become aware of how our churches and communities benefit from white privilege. We are more aware of how bad things are and we need to climb off the fence.

“The national church is calling us to go,” Roberta said.

“I’m going for myself, for my own sense of integrity,” Roberta said. “It will feel good to march in that body and declare that the status quo is simply—totally—unacceptable.”

ACT Now: Unite to End Racism in the areas of church life and practices, criminal, economic and social justice, civil and human rights, environmental justice, immigration, media, and education.

**The National Council** of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC) call is to heal the soul of the nation as the nation commemorates the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s assassination.

The NCC said there will be events across the country commemorating the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., focusing the nation’s attention on ending racism and launching a multi-year, multi-faceted effort to finish King’s work.

**The rally is a call** to action to eradicate entrenched racism that grips the nation and paralyzes the ability of people to see every human being as equal.

This launch event will be followed by an extensive program to address racism in church life and practices, criminal, economic and social justice, civil and human rights, environmental justice, immigration, media and education.

“In partnership with others, we confront this systemic evil in which even church people and structures are complicit and complacent,” said organizers. “We challenge our communities and ourselves to join in truth-telling conversations leading to actions that right the wrongs, and thereby, with God’s grace, bring healing and wholeness to all people, and unity to the nation.

**Serving as a leading voice** of witness to the living Christ in the public square since 1950, the NCC brings together 38 member communions and more than 35 million Christians in a common expression of God’s love and promise of unity.

Since the Federal Council of Churches formed in 1908, the ecumenical movement in the U.S. has brought churches together to act prophetically for social and racial justice.

**Roberta said that** “the real work is what happens at home.”

She told of an African-American mother deciding in January to move from Mercer Island because of abuse her children have suffered in school

“How could this be? My tiny contribution, as a member of the Church Council of Greater Seattle’s nominating committee, is to bring more diversity to the council’s leadership,” she said.

Roberta added that an African-American friend asked on his Facebook page, “Why do all my white friends disappear when I start talking about race?” “He’s right. I’m guilty. I really want to change. Making this trip is me saying to myself that I really mean it,” she said.

**For information on joining a PNC delegation, call 206-232-7800 or 360-932-4562 or email roberta.rominger@ucc-ccmi.org.**

**For information on the D.C. rally call 202-544-6929 or visit [www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us](http://www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us).**

## Walla Walla churches support rights for immigrants

Like many churches in the conference, members of First Congregational Church of Walla Walla have been involved in local immigrant rights efforts.

The pastor, the Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg, and several members participate in the Walla Walla Immigrant Rights Coalition (WWIRC).

That organization has held “Know Your Rights” trainings reaching 1,000 people in the area and has established a bilingual 24/7 Rapid Response Hotline to help people with documentation and law enforcement.

**In September, WWIRC** led a march of more than 100 people, affirming their commitment to immigrant rights and to the support of a clean “Dream Act” for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The march started and ended in the parking lot of First Congregational UCC.

Signs said: “We are a nation of immigrants,” and “Immigrants make good citizens.” Participants were urged to write letters and call Congress.

In Nathaniel’s presentation, which was translated into Spanish, he said inclusion is part of Christian and Jewish teachings.

He invited the crowd to repeat chants:

- “Dreamers dream the American dream.”
- “Their parents dream the American dream.”
- “They all belong here.”

**“It’s about who belongs,”** he said, “and how we extend that belonging.”

The marchers were motivated by their anger over an attempt to take away that sense of belonging and use it as bargaining chip for political gain.

Nathaniel invited marchers to touch into “the wellspring of love that animates that, and the sense of belonging we have in our hearts that we want to extend to all those with whom we share this land.”



**Nathaniel Mahlberg, right, helped lead the September march.**

Photo courtesy of Nathaniel Mahlberg

The Walla Walla Immigrants Rights Coalition began more than a year ago, about a year after Nathaniel began serving First Congregational UCC.

“It began in response to escalating rhetoric and threats against immigrant communities here,” he said. “Many who worked on immigrant rights decided to come together to support immigrants.”

An Anglo member of his church was friends with recent immigrants, helping them through a crisis related to their status, doing what was natural caring of neighbors.

**A few individuals** have been picked up by ICE, put in the county jail and deported, leaving their families.

“We respond to the families as needs arise,” he said.

Walla Walla is an agricultural town, so there are agricultural workers. There are also students and people who are working at the colleges, the hospital and the veteran’s clinic.

There are several Hispanic Adventist churches and two Catholic churches with Spanish masses in Walla Walla.

**The coalition provides** rapid response, responding

to emerging needs, as well as training on rights, government relations and accountability, and doing other acts of public witness—a vigil before Christmas to call elected officials to be compassionate and find effective pathways to citizenship.

In January, Nathaniel was among 24 Walla Walla area clergy—including the Rev. Marj Johnston of Dayton UCC and his predecessors, the Rev. Cecelia Mckean and the Rev. Adam Kirtley—signing a letter to Senators and Representatives urging them to act justly and humanely toward undocumented immigrants (dreamers). The clergy called on them to pass legislation that allows them to remain in the U.S. with a pathway to citizenship.

**“We see that our faith** compels us not only to welcome as fellow citizens those who come to our nation from a foreign land (Leviticus 19:34) but also to treat them as if they are Christ (Matthew 25:34-40).

“This is not an incidental commandment from our God of love and justice,” the letter said.

“Immigrants often are fleeing violence or hardship, and meet scorn in their new home.

Many of our forebears experienced this. We are called as Christians to do better than cast out immigrants working to improve their and their families’ lives,” the letter continued.

It said that in Walla Walla, Dreamers are our congregants, neighbors, co-workers, classmates and lifelong friends.

**“This work is hard work.** We welcome collaboration with the folks of our Conference who are struggling on behalf of the biblical mandate of compassion for the immigrants among us,” Nathaniel said.

In his congregation, Nathaniel said members held panel discussions last spring.

**His involvement** also stems from working in the summer of 2012 with Crispaz, Christians for Peace in El Salvador. There, he learned that people are pressured to migrate north, despite the risk, because of violence and poverty that are legacies of the civil war in 1980s and 1990s.

“The U.S. is not innocent, but supported the repressive, violent regime,” he said.

Nathaniel believes the U.S. needs to recognize how it contributes to global inequality and violence that leads people to migrate north.

“We are bound in a web of mutuality, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, responsible to each other and responsible for what happens in the global South.

**Nathaniel is also** inspired by the witness of Archbishop Oscar Romero and El Salvadoran nuns and priests who continue to do Christ’s work.

“To help do right by the immigrant communities here is the least I can do,” he said, seeking to bridge the language divide and build relationships between the Anglo and Latino communities.

**For information, call 509-525-8753 or 509-240-2494, or email pastor@fchurch.net.**



## UCC congregations present at women's marches



Carol Bellinger of Westminster in Spokane and her daughter at the Women's March in Spokane.



Jennifer Merrill, Barbara Chrisman and Jim Macpherson were among 20 Eagle Harbor UCC members at Seattle's march.

## PNC pastors help plan for Poor People's Campaign

Bianca Davis-Lovelace is one of the tri-chairs for Washington Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, along with Liz Moore of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) and Jonathan Hemphill.

Bianca, an ordained UCC pastor who is now co-pastor of Sky Urban Empowerment and Transformation Center in Renton, led a Feb. 10 training for organizers in Renton. Gen Heywood, pastor of Veradale UCC, is helping organize "faith and conscience" communities in the Inland Northwest.

Both are recruiting people to organize grassroots efforts in neighborhoods, faith communities and other networks for 40 days of action and beyond from Mothers' Day, May 13, through the summer solstice on June 21.

In Spokane, planning will be part of PJALS' annual Peace and Justice Action Conference, Feb. 23 and 24, at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Plans also relate with a national rally April 3 to 5 in Washington, D.C., on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

"Plans for the 40 days are for more than marches, rallies

and speeches," said Gen.

The Poor People's Campaign is co-organized by Repairers of the Breach, a social justice organization founded by the Rev. Dr. Barber II, of the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary and a Disciples of Christ pastor.

The national goal is to "build the power of people and state-based movements to serve as a vehicle for a moral movement and to transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society."

Gen said the planning group seeks ways to be involved be-

yond 40 days, because "changing hearts takes more time."

Events will build relationships through sharing stories, uncovering connections and pain, and focusing on causes of poverty.

"We are planning relational experiences related to overcoming poverty, racism, militarism and ecological devastation," she said. "We will look at how we talk to each other without blame, while practicing listening, educating and learning with one another."

**For information, call 708-937-5711 for Bianca or 509-926-7173 for Gen.**

## Annual Meeting will be April 27 to 29 in Yakima

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they face.

At the center of PICO's model of faith-based community organizing is a belief in the potential for transformation—of people, institutions and the larger culture.

As an advocate for preparing congregations for the ministry of availability, Bishop Royster says, "Ministry should not be limited to Sunday mornings. Sunday is a time of wor-

ship. Ministry should be done Monday thru Sunday on the bus stops, at the supermarkets, in workplaces, at soccer games—wherever people are."

A passionate speaker and preacher, he will share in both dynamic and practical ways.

"We encourage anyone who is interested in forging new relationships, building power and promise in their local church, and transforming institutions to register for this gathering,

even if you're not an official delegate. It will be time well spent in faithful community," said Wendy.

Annual Meeting begins at 9 a.m. Friday with a workshop for clergy and lay leaders, "Hitting the High Mark," offered by the Committee on Ministry and presented by the Rev. Tara Barber. The workshop will deal with "marks" of effective ministry for ordained clergy.

The opening session for delegates is tentatively at 1:30 p.m., Friday, with presentations on directions and priorities for the PNC in the coming year and the proposed budget. Small group networking sessions begins at 3 p.m. There will be a 5 p.m. reception for members in discernment and new clergy.

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

## Justice Leadership Program leads Holy Week Pilgrimage

The PNC's Justice Leadership Program (JLP) is offering a Pilgrimage Experience during Lent.

"So often in our culture we hear about the celebrities. We know about the athletes, movie stars and politicians, but what about the local heroes who have devoted their lives to the work of making the world more just and compassionate?" asks Rich Gamble, executive director of the JLP.

Who are they? What are their stories? What have they learned?

The Justice Leadership Program is starting a new program called Pilgrimage.

**The goal of the pilgrimage** is to provide people with an opportunity to dig deep into the is-

sue of homelessness, visit some of the sites, meet some of the people who are part of the response, hear about the struggles and insights gained, Rich said.

The program offers adults an opportunity to spend the first three days of Holy Week, Monday to Wednesday, March 26 to 28 digging deep into the issue.

**The focus** of the Pilgrimage will be learning the history of the issue of homelessness as it is experienced in Seattle, hearing from some of the unsung heroes of the struggle to end homelessness, learning about various approaches to the work of justice on this issue, and visiting sites where history was made or solutions developed.

The goal of the event is to provide a greater understanding

of the struggle to end homelessness and how to become part of that struggle.

"We see the tents. We hear about people sleeping in their cars. We think that someone should do something," said Rich. "Then a still small voice whispers that concerned everyday people like us must be part of the solution.

**"The Pilgrimage program** offers people an opportunity to move from a general concern to active informed participation in providing solutions," he said.

Scheduled during Holy Week, the Pilgrimage could be integrated into a Lenten study program, he said.

The sites include a tent city, Pioneer Square, St Martin de Porres Shelter, the Aloha

Inn, Real Change, Arion Court apartments, Yesler Terrace, 1811 Eastlake.

Hunter Paulson-Smith, a JLP intern, is on the organizing committee for the pilgrimage.

**"This is a variant** on the educational approach of JLP and Jubilee, finding local social justice leaders in the community to talk about their work. It is hoped that if this pilgrimage is a success that we will have others covering issues such as immigration," said Rich.

Participants will spend about eight hours a day as part of this immersive experience.

The cost is \$150. **For information and to register contact Rich Gamble by calling 206-632-6021 or email [jlp.rich.gamble@gmail.com](mailto:jlp.rich.gamble@gmail.com).**

## Justice Leadership applications due for next year

The Justice Leadership Program Northwest is accepting applications from change-makers of all ages who are looking to deepen their faith while doing the work of justice, said Claire West, outreach coordinator.

The program, which is an affiliate of the national UCC Young Adult Service Communities Network seeks motivated young people ages 21 to 35 for an 11-month internship beginning in September 2018.

Interns learn community organizing and political advocacy working full time at Seattle-based nonprofits, while living in intentional community and serving a local congregation. The priority deadline is Feb. 15 with inquiries to [justiceleadership@gmail.com](mailto:justiceleadership@gmail.com).

Justice Leadership Jubilee is filling its next cohort of volunteers, who serve part-time for six to nine months at a local organization working for structural change toward social justice. Jubilee is a program for



**Amanda Agrellas, Renee Lumia, Bri Little, Leda Zakarison, Hunter Paulson-Smith, Daniel de la Rosa and Erica West at one of their meetings.**

Photo courtesy of Claire West

individuals seeking a deeper analysis of systemic injustice, and a desire to strengthen the connection between faith and justice in a cohort of their peers. Last year's organizational partners included Puget Sound Sage, 350 Seattle and the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The application is available through [\[leadership.org/jubilee.html\]\(http://justiceleadership.org/jubilee.html\).](http://justice-</a></p>
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Justice Leadership Jubilee, which is in its second season, seeks participants who will help shape the future program with weekly community work, weekly church engagement, regular learning and skill building, monthly spiritual reflection and sojourning retreats.

JLPNW is based at Key-

stone Congregational UCC in Seattle with support of partner congregations: Northshore UCC, Plymouth Congregational UCC, Prospect UCC, All Pilgrims Church and University Congregational UCC, as well as the PNW Conference.

**For information, call 206-909-8758 or visit [www.justiceleadership.org](http://www.justiceleadership.org).**



## PNC leader offers closing words for FAN event

PNC Minister of Church Vitality Courtney Stange-Tregear begins her closing remarks at the Jan. 27 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane by describing what her role, a new role in the church, is.

Because it is a new job, she is able to frame it from her vision in concert with the PNC Board.

“I am expanding what we think of as vitality,” she said. “If we think of education, evangelism and formation is being over here and advocacy, social justice and lobbying being over there—two separate things, I have come to say there is no vitality without community connection, no vitality without being relevant in the community. There is no way we can evangelize if we do not know with whom we are talking,” she said.

**Courtney was invited** to help frame the gathering, to help participants debrief about what they had experienced and learned, and to help them look at where they are going with it.

She then invited people to share what value forms and drives them and their communities, and how does that value compel them to act.

Several participants said they were committed to work with refugees, write legislators, bring forth the Holy Spirit and work to preserve the earth.

Then she invited participants to think about potential partners—people and organizations—to work with to accomplish their goals.

**“It’s great to come** together to talk about justice and see that there are others who care about justice and who want their convictions, love and faith to change the world,” she said.

“To do that, we need to make connections in the room to do the work we feel compelled to do,” she said.

Courtney then offered the following closing prayer:



**Courtney Stange-Tregear speaks at ecumenical advocacy event in Spokane.**

O Loving One, you have gathered us here from all of our different places, from different geographies, different economies, different races, different histories. Here we are together.

**We are together**, despite the myth that persists. You know the one. The myth that says institutions are dead, community has been lost, neighborhoods are no more, and “traditional” families have been threatened—and we all know what is really meant by “traditional.”

This myth that says our interdependence is our most valuable possession.

The myth says that might makes right, that some of us worked hard and made it on our own, that bootstraps have ever pulled anyone up. This myth persists.

We have gathered here despite this myth. We have gathered here not as independent autonomous, individuals. We have gathered here, having been formed by communities, institutions and neighbors. We’ve come from churches, synagogues and mosques. We’ve come from schools, neighborhoods and families. We’ve even come from yoga studios and athletic clubs. We’ve come

from many places, and no matter where we have come from, no matter who we are, or where we are on life’s journey, we are welcome here.

Loving one, you have gathered us here together, because it is not our independence but our inter-dependence that matters most.

**It is our inter-dependence** that changes lives, our inter-dependence that challenges the status quo

Our interdependence brings Your will on earth as it is in heaven.

So you have gathered us, gathered us in, the lost and forsaken; gathered us in the proud and the strong. It is not an accident or coincidence that this myth persists. For this myth is not truly a myth. It is a strategy.

**It is a strategy to keep us** separate, keep us down, keep us afraid. It is a strategy to keep us fighting each other instead of fighting injustice.

It is a strategy use power over us, till we can’t recognize the power we have together. It is a strategy to make us think that if we get enough individuals on our side we will change things.

You know better.

We know that community, love and connection changes the world. We know that the whole is indeed greater than the sum of the parts

**So we pray, together.** We pray that we will go forth from here not just with the courage of our convictions but the power of our communities.

We will dismantle white supremacy, loose the bonds of poverty, house the homeless, care for this planet, de-escalate our habitual state of violence, and loving powerful One, with #metoo fresh on our lips, let’s also smash the patriarchy.

**We pray that** we will have the courage to listen to one another, the courage to believe the truth of what we hear, especially from voices of those who are different from us,

**We pray that** we can reject the strategy of independence and instead claim proudly our inter dependence.

Because loving one, you know, we are in this together. We’ve been called from all our different places, called together for just such a time as this. Amen.

**For information, call 206-725-8383 or email [courtney@pnucc.org](mailto:courtney@pnucc.org).**



## Spokane workshop helps people respond to hate

Four leaders guided small group discussions on “Faithful Responses to Hate” in two sessions at the Jan. 27 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane. The first session was to help participants with listening and healing, and the second was about action. Both focused on building relationships.

The first session focused on clarifying values and supporting each other to have the courage and commitment to respond faithfully to hate. The second session focused on generating ideas for responding to hate and making commitments for action.

**The Rev. Jim CastroLang**, pastor at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Colville and a member of the Faith Action Network Board, helped organize the legislative conference and the workshop.

Other speakers were Kristine Hoover, director of the Hate Studies Institute and professor in leadership studies at Gonzaga; the Rev. Walter Kendricks, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, and president of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, and Aaron Henderson, long time civil rights professional.

**To help people** think about faithful responses, the workshop was experiential “because there are no experts,” Jim began.

Then he told a story. He has a “Black Lives Matter” sign in his yard on the lower South Hill. The house next door was being remodeled. Last summer one of the workers saw me in the front yard and called me over. He pointed at the sign. He said, “All lives matter, don’t they.”

“I was having a good time in my yard,” Jim said. “I wondered what to do? Do I engage? My head was spinning. I made some responses, asking about him. Being from a South Side Seattle neighborhood where whites



**Jim CastroLang** co-led the workshop and helped plan the Eastern Washington conference.

were the minority, he said he experienced reverse racism.

“As I asked what privileges or rights did he lost because of reverse racism, he was called back to work,” Jim said.

“That’s an everyday story of the dilemma we are in and hopefully we find faithful ways to respond to hate,” Jim said.

**Aaron said people are 99.9 percent the same genetically.**

“Why is there a problem when we are so much alike and our differences are superficial?” he asked. “Many other things that go into who we are that transcend our genetics—our profession, being white collar/blue collar, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and politics,” he said. “These things and more make us unique.”

From his work in civil rights, Aaron asked: “How will we figure how to problem solve?”

To do his job, Aaron has to listen. So he invited participants into small groups to do an exercise on listening, using pantomime.

“Tell the group in gestures what brought you here, who you are, how you feel, what ate this morning, or what interests you,” he said. “Be silent and

listen with your eyes.”

**Walter then shared** the idea that changing the direction of the wind takes communication.

“Communication not just talking. It’s listening. When I pray, I do not just spew off list to God, but I listen to God for my direction in life, he said. “Listening is a healing way to find and honor values.”

Walter grew up in a small town in Ohio in the 1960s. His parents—who grew up in Alabama—took his brother and him there in 1962.

“I remember car rides going off the main highway and down back roads. I remember feeling afraid and sensed my parents were afraid of something. Dad, a pastor, kept saying, ‘Everything be all right.’ So one my values is faith: that everything will be all right.

**“Why are we so afraid** of each talking with each other?” he asked, inviting groups to discuss their core values: What is faith? What is love, hope, empathy?

“Values are the essence of who we are,” Walter said, quoting an earlier speaker’s observation: “I can’t be all I can be until you can be all you are

meant to be.”

Walter said that “hate comes from ignorance and fear, so it’s important to be in tune with our core values to respond to it.”

**Kristine concluded:** “We discussed how love, listening and values are manifest, but conversations sometimes go sideways. Even if we don’t get it right, we need to engage with one another, not as experts, but as people who come together in community forming leadership. We are all leaders. We can look to each other, not for one individual leader.

“When we are courageous and engage with people, if a conversation goes sideways, we need to grant and receive grace, rather than avoid in uncomfortable spaces. By entering uncomfortable spaces, learning occurs and grace.”

The Eastern Washington Legislative Conference is organized by the Faith Action Network, The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities of Spokane, NAACP Spokane, the Inland United Methodist District and Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

**For information, call 509-535-1813 or visit [fanwa.org](http://fanwa.org).**

# The Ground Floor planned for homeless youth

When First Congregational UCC of Bellingham built a new sanctuary 20 years ago, it had a vision of using the unfinished basement below it for community outreach and mission.

Until recently, it has used the space for storing furniture for the Interfaith Coalition for Homelessness and for its own Fresh Start ministry to supply towels and kitchen supplies to women leaving a domestic violence shelter.

**The congregation has a new vision now, growing out of its more than 30 years of dedication to serve people experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County, conversations with other nonprofits and city officials, and its partnership with Northwest Youth Services' outreach to youth on the streets and youth in families facing homelessness.**

After a year and a half of visiting facilities, researching best practices and listening to needs, its Mission and Justice Board brought a proposal to the congregational meeting in June 2016 to renovate a portion of the unfinished basement to welcome Northwest Youth Services, a local nonprofit whose mission fits the congregation's values to use the space.

**"We are renovating** our building for mission right here in our community. The Ground Floor project is becoming known throughout Bellingham and bringing the Divine's rejuvenating spirit to many," said David Weasley, minister for youth, young adults and mission a position that started in March 2017. He previously served as acting youth program director for about a year.

David and his partner moved to Bellingham two years ago from Chicago, where David has served several churches and worked with homeless youth in Night Ministry, which has a similar model. He graduated from Chicago Theological



**Bellingham First Congregational UCC renovates basement for Northwest Youth Services.**

Photo courtesy of David Weasley

School in 2009 and Oberlin in religion in 2006. He has dual standing with the PNC-UCC and American Baptist Church.

In 1996, First Congregational began preparations to expand its building. In 2002, they broke ground for the current sanctuary and unfinished basement. Since that time, they have prayed and discerned how the Spirit calls their congregation to use the unfinished space for local mission.

**In January 2015,** church members gathered in the unfinished basement to hear and give input about what Whatcom County needed to support people experiencing homelessness.

Then they researched options. Volunteers and staff spent the months after voting to renovate the daylight basement doing preparatory groundwork. In November 2017, a congregational meeting voted overwhelmingly to move forward with a three-year capital campaign—along with other ongoing fund raising—to raise \$850,000 from the congregation of more than 400 members, plus funds from the community and grants.

**They have met with** and requested a grant from the PNC Church Development Committee to share in the project.

"Our hope is that other PNC churches will learn about the project and see it as a model

to partner with other nonprofits," said David.

**Once pledges are made—**and they are nearly \$150,000 on the way—they will begin building this summer and into the early fall.

For the foreseeable future, The Ground Floor will provide day-use space for youth, ages 13 to 24, experiencing homelessness in the community. The program will be staffed and operated by Northwest Youth Services with support from First Congregational Church.

Church members has supported the model of Northwest Youth Services serving youth in the community.

**The Ground Floor will be** flexible in services it will offer, including showers, laundry, lavatories, nap rooms and meeting space, said David, who has an online tour envisioning the transformation of the basement at [fccb.net/the-ground-floor](http://fccb.net/the-ground-floor).

"The Ground Floor will be set aside, in perpetuity, for local mission work in the Bellingham community and, should Northwest Youth Services no longer need this space, other nonprofit community services will have first consideration for the space in the future. The Ground Floor will continue to serve justice work without regard to religious belief and honoring our Open and Affirming covenant," said David.

"A 2012 study revealed that about 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness are LG-BTQ youth," said David.

**In Bellingham,** of the more than 700 homeless people on a given day, about 23 percent are under the age of 18. Currently Northwest Youth Services outreach team with five staff, interns and volunteers sees 20 youth a day, meeting them on the streets or in their small quarters. They expect to be able to each more in the larger space.

"Our goal is to provide a safe space where 13-24-year-olds experiencing homelessness can connect with resources to connect with education, housing, job training, mental health and other services, and can experience radical welcome," he said.

**The renovation will** also include an outside ramp for wheelchair access.

There will be a gathering space with couches and chairs, a reception area for snacks and access to services, meeting rooms for counselors, a family-style kitchen for cooking together, a washer and dryer area,

"This is not something extra, but it's a starting place for us as community of faith, as followers of Jesus." David said.

**For information,** call 360-734-3720 or email [groundfloor@fccb.net](mailto:groundfloor@fccb.net).



## UCC has toolkit to help people find a better bank

By Lin Hagedorn

In 2011, I learned that the UCC's General Synod 28 unanimously approved a resolution, "Putting our money where our values are: Evaluating church financial relationships."

The resolution calls on all UCC churches and other UCC settings to "faithfully examine their relationship with financial institutions and, where practical and prudent, deliberately move toward relating to financial institutions that have records of fair lending, business and investing practices as each body discerns for its setting."

I began thinking how our family spends and invests our money, and even though our resources are limited, our choice to align our values with our financial resources was an important step to take.

In 2016, I decided to more fully participate in the PNC justice work and left a part-time job to join the inaugural year of the Justice Leadership Jubilee (JLJ) program, a sibling of the Justice Leadership Program (JLP) begun by the Rev. Rich Gamble of Keystone UCC.

JLJ is "a non-residential 10-month commitment for

adults who want to deepen their faith and learn practical organizing skills with a community of their peers—skill building, community work, church engagement and collective reflection focused on systemic change and political advocacy."

I chose to intern with 350 Seattle, an environmental social change organization. Working with 350 Seattle, I was reintroduced to defunding banking and investments from financial institutions that support the fossil fuel industry as a way to support our planet's health.

In an article, "Do Justice with Your Money: Financial Alternatives to Big Banks," Brooks Berndt, UCC minister for environmental justice, said, "Did you know Jesus spoke more about money than about love? That is because money can both elevate and oppress people. Money is a form of power. How we spend our money, and where we save our money, are issues of justice."

He spoke of campaigns to divest from unjust financial institutions, and said there are financial institutions which have the goal of doing justice in their communities, so switching fi-

ancial institutions "is a pragmatic way to do justice."

At a Northshore UCC (NUCC) Council meeting in early 2017, our treasurer, Claudia Farnsworth-Smith, gave the financial report and mentioned our banking relationship with Wells Fargo. My eyebrows raised and eyes blinked in disbelief. We began a process of discovery at NUCC.

After several conversations with Claudia and the financial ministry team, we agreed to align our values at NUCC with our financial operations and investments, and to divest from Wells Fargo. The council unanimously supported the resolution, and the task of divesting/finding a better bank began.

Lynn Childs, past treasurer, did research into better banking options. We returned to council with a resolution to join the Mazaska Talks campaign and complete a plan for divesting within a year. Our vote to sign the Mazaska Talks campaign, made Northshore UCC the first religious organization to do so.

Renee Lumia, 350 Seattle JLP intern, added that Mazaska Talks, which is both an environmental justice and social justice

movement, honors treaty rights which fossil fuel companies are violating by construction on tribal lands without permission from tribes.

The financial ministry team documented the process of finding a better bank, and defunding our banking operations was completed within five months after passing the first resolution. We have aligned our banking ties with a credit union that shares our values for a sustainable planet.

Alec Connon of 350 Seattle asked NUCC to create a UCC Find a Better Bank Toolkit, so other UCC churches interested in divesting have a guide to help them through the process.

Claudia, Lynn, Alec, Rev. Brooks Berndt and Rev. Meighan Pritchard all contributed to the Toolkit. The Toolkit is also being shared through The Pollinator, a UCC environmental justice newsletter; 350 Seattle JLP intern Renee Lumia, Steve Clagett, chair of our conference Justice and Witness Ministries Committee, and others.

For information, email [mountainclimber4@gmail.com](mailto:mountainclimber4@gmail.com).

## Diane Schmitz will offer an anti-racism seminar

UCC minister Diane Schmitz is a trainer for Allies for Change, an organization started by Melanie Morrison, a previous PNC Annual Meeting speaker.

Diane and Joanne Johnson will co-facilitate an Allies for Change workshop, "Doing Our Own Work: An Anti-Racism Seminar for White People," from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, March 16 and 17, April 13 and 14, and May 11 and 12, at Everett UCC, 2624 Rockefeller.

Participants will be people from ministry, education and nonprofits.

"At this time, we are wit-

nessing an alarming resurgence of white supremacy and state sanctioned violence," she said. "It is imperative for white people to claim and embody an anti-racist identity, understand the privilege we carry, and interrupt racism where we live, work, study and volunteer."

In more than 40 hours, the workshop helps white people move through places where they often be stuck, so that they step up with courage, humility and compassion to participate in movements led by people of color and help move other white people to greater anti-racist awareness and action.

"Doing Our Own Work" is

a supplement to, not a substitute for, contexts where people of diverse races discuss how racism can be challenged and dismantled, Melanie said.

Anti-racist action and reflection are the goal. Each participant identifies a "sphere of influence" as a focus of action and reflection.

Topics and issues include 1) the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural realms of racism and change; 2) historical roots of U.S. racism; 3) U.S. movements for racial justice; 4) white privilege and unearned advantage; 5) claiming and shaping an anti-racist identity; 6) skills of interrupt-

ing racism; 7) strategies for institutional change, and 8) developing networks of support and accountability.

"Facilitators help participants create a respectful and truth-telling environment where they may bring their whole selves to this vitally important work," Melanie said.

Enrollment is limited to 20 and attendance at all six sessions is required. The cost is \$525. Scholarships and time payments are available.

For information, call 206-409-7551, email [malaniemorrison@alliesforchange.org](mailto:malaniemorrison@alliesforchange.org) or visit [alliesforchange.org/doow-everett-2018.html](http://alliesforchange.org/doow-everett-2018.html).

# N-Sid-Sen plans youth camps, has boat fund

“Beyond Belief! The Universe of God” is the theme for the curriculum for youth camps this coming summer at N-Sid-Sen.

Directors have been selected and are recruiting their counselors and planning their programs.

Mark Boyd, managing director of N-Sid-Sen is on sabbatical until March, so more announcements will be made after his return.

He is, in part, using his sab-



**N-Sid-Sen seeks \$10,000 for new sail boats.**

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

**Clergy Retreat**  
April 2 to 4

**Women's Retreat**  
May 18 to 20

**Emerging Adult Camp**  
June 15 to 17

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

**Senior High Camp**  
July 8 to 14

**Kid's Camp**  
July 15 to 18

**Intermediate Camp**  
July 15 to 21

**Rainbow Retreat**  
July 20 to 22

**Family Camp #1**  
July 29 to Aug 4

**Junior High Camp**  
Aug 5 to 11

**Family Camp #2**  
Aug. 19 to 25

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

batical to put the photos and verses he has written and posted on Facebook together as a daily inspirational book.

N-Sid-Sen has the offer of a \$10,000 matching grant if it can raise \$10,000 to purchase up to

four new sailboats. Mark has looked at small sailboats that would be more “user friendly” for new sailors, as well as boats in between those and the camp’s Cape Dory boat.

For information, call 208-

689-3489, email [mark@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:mark@n-sid-sen.org) or visit [www.n-sid-sen.org](http://www.n-sid-sen.org).

Donations may be made by mail to N-Sid-Sen, 36395 S. Highway 97, Harrison, ID, 83833 or online.

## Common Fire is focus at Pilgrim Firs

Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center in Port Orchard is inviting congregations to bring their youth groups to one of two Service/Mission Weeks being offered this summer in the Kitsap Community.

The camps are June 24 to 29 and July 15 to 20.

Wade Zick, managing director at Pilgrim Firs, has been organizing work sites throughout the Kitsap Peninsula. It will provide housing, meals, evening snacks, evening programs and vespers.

Youth groups provide transportation for their groups to Pilgrim Firs and to the work sites. The program needs a one-to-five ratio of adult leaders to youth. Groups must commit to

participate fully in the service work and camp programs.

Churches will choose an area of focus for their week, so Pilgrim Firs staff will pair the church with area service organizations that connect with their chosen focus.

Areas of focus include housing, food, environment and social services. Housing programs will involve building, renovations or landscaping. The food programs relate to the food bank or meal distribution. Environmental projects will be clean-up, trail work and parks department projects. Social services are with people experiencing homelessness, elderly people and at-risk populations.

The weeks will be limited

to 80 participants. For information, call 360-876-2031 or email [wade@pilgrim-firs.org](mailto:wade@pilgrim-firs.org).

## 2018 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

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

**Service Camp in the Kitsap Community**  
June 24 to 29

**Service Camp in the Kitsap Community**  
July 15 to 20

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