



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Summer 2014

University UCC installs solar panels

Proposal showed how solar panels would help church save on power bills

Paul Schafer completed a class in solar technology in 2010 at Shoreline Community College about the same time the church he attends, University Congregational UCC in Seattle, hosted the “Nickelsville” homeless encampment in their parking lot.

Someone in the UCUCS Sacred Earth Matters group suggested that the church provide the encampment with electricity. They also suggested powering it with a solar array on the roof.

So Paul researched different sizes of solar arrays, different sources of components and the return over time. Then he wrote a proposal that showed how solar energy would help the church save on electricity costs in an environmentally

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Solar panels should will take a few years to help University Congregational UCC in Seattle recuperate the costs and be able to produce energy for its needs and to sell. Photos courtesy of Paul Schafer

Alison Stendahl visits PNC during September

The Pacific Northwest UCC Conference and the Northwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will host missionary Alison Stendahl, who has served in Turkey, for congregation and cluster visits during September.

Alison, whose home church is University Congregational UCC in Seattle, is retiring this summer to Pilgrim Place in Claremont, Calif., after 34 years of public education service with the Near East Mission in Istanbul.

She has served in a joint appointment of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Global Ministries.

The joint regional UCC/DOC Global Ministries Committee is developing a schedule for her four weeks of itinera-



Alison Stendahl

at Bush School in Seattle.

She was assigned through the United Church Board for World Ministries to the Izmir Amerikan Lisesi from 1980 to 1985, and to the Uskudar Amerikan Kiz Lisesi in Istanbul as a math teacher and

tion in the region.

Before entering mission, Allison taught math for a year at Zillah High School, four years at Tonasket High School, and two years

academic dean from 1985 to 1989.

From 1991 to 1995, she was head of the math department at that school and involved with the Christian-Muslim Relationship Program. She was head of the math department there and developed a church history program at Bithynia Bible College from 1996 to 2001.

Since then, she has served at Uskudar Amerikan Kiz Lisesi as academic dean and math teacher.

In addition to speaking to congregations, she will speak to service clubs, student groups and other settings on the political situation in Turkey.

For information, email Mary Margaret Pruitt at marypaul@foxinternet.com or Marvin Eckfeldt at marveck@comcast.net.

Ministry is about letting go to be shaped

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

*We need
to be
open
to the ways
the Spirit
may come.*

From about mid-October to mid-April, I end up flying quite a bit. I learned my lesson the first year I moved here when Snoqualmie Pass was closed for a total of three and a half weeks during the winter. I had to cancel or miss a few meetings that year. There were a couple times I had to scramble to find a place in Ellensburg because the pass closed as I was heading home.

The last straw was the night the normally four-and-a-half-hour drive from Spokane took nine hours and I got home at 2 a.m.

Although planes still get delayed or cancelled once in awhile, flying frequently ends up being safer and more dependable than driving during those colder months.

It also gives me the time to write, respond to emails, study, respond to phone calls and read in ways that driving makes impossible.

That said, I really like driving. I've written about this before. I like seeing the landscape unroll and the flow of the seasons and small opportunities for creative travel decisions that emerge along the way.

I'm a member of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane and with that membership comes the ability to visit a lot of other local museums and cultural centers along the way. I've seen amazing displays of Native American Art and learned about the big histories of small towns that were part of so many bigger stories.

I've learned about agriculture and geology. I visited an exhibit about Bigfoot.

The more I learn about all this conference is, the better I'm able to be a minister here and the more this place I landed becomes a place I'm rooted.

I also listen to podcasts; lots and lots of podcasts. One of my favorites is the recordings of the radio show "On Being" with Krista Tippett. It's a collection of interviews with religious, political and cultural leaders from all around the world.

The focus of the interviews seems to be as much about the work people do as the vocations

behind them. I almost always learn something new about someone else—frequently someone who would seem to have a very different vocation than mine—whose story of vocation resonates with my own in some way.

An interview with Rosanne Cash from a year or so ago taught me a lot about preaching. When asked about performing she said:

"You know when I first became a performer, I was so anxious about it and it took me a long time to grow into it, because I thought that being a performer was about getting a lot of attention and I didn't want that much attention. I liked the writer's life. I liked the privacy and the solitude and being inside my own little mind cave. Over time I realized that it's not about the attention, it's about the energy exchange. I'm doing something for them, but they're doing something for me too, you know? There's no hierarchy really. It's—and some nights that exchange is so beautiful, you know, I can feel my own energy stretching out to the far reaches of the room and theirs coming back. There's something sublime about it, and also the temporal nature of it that at the end of the night it's over."

It spoke so clearly to the ways I felt I was growing into preaching. She named something that I'd never quite had the words for. It was a gift and a recognition that every attempt at preaching has to include an openness to be shaped and formed by those who are hearing the message.

More and more, I'm learning how much of ministry is the willingness to let go to being shaped: shaped by the people, the stories, the histories, the landscape, the seasons.

Being open to the Spirit is only part of the reality of being faithful. The other—sometimes more difficult—part is being open to the way the Spirit may come.

It's being open to the possibility that the Spirit comes both through the large and the mundane, the healing and the pain. It is as much a commitment as an intention.

Transitions announced

Genevieve Heywood completed her ministry at the Congregational Church of Sunnyvale UCC and began her ministry in June at Veradale UCC in Spokane Valley.

Prospect UCC has called **Meighan Pritchard** as their pastor. She also serves as UCC minister for environmental justice.

Tom Colwell, a member of Plymouth Church in Seattle for 46 years who brought vocal and guitar music to worship, retreats, camps and PNC Annual Meetings, died March 16. He was teacher, and executive coach in health care and academics.

Christopher Hayward will be ordained at 3 p.m., Sunday, July 13, at Veradale United Church of Christ.

Walter Lynn (Tex) Williams, the husband of the Rev. Trish Knorpp-Williams, died March 1.

Carol and Bill Stanley, who have long been active in the life and leadership of PNC, have moved to Charlotte, N.C. to be near their sons and grandchildren.

Two polity courses offered

UCC Course of Studies at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio is sponsoring a UCC History, Polity and Theology Online Course Sept. 20 to Dec. 20.

The instructors are the Rev. Brice Thomas, coordinator for UCC House of Studies at United, and Robert Sandman, former SONKA, Ohio Conference moderator, UCC Executive Council and chairperson for Office of General Ministries Board of Directors.

This course is required by UCC associations and conferences for members in discernment seeking ordination, privilege of call, commissioning or dual standing in the United Church of Christ. The first class is on from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 20. Online students can access the class via video conference.

For information, call 937-529-2256 or email bthomas@united.edu.

The Center for Progressive Renewal's online course that meets history and polity requirements for ordination and privilege of call began June 4 and runs through Aug. 27.

For information, visit progressiv-renewal.org/event.

Peace Walk is July 26-Aug. 11

"In Respect for All Life: A Nuclear Free Future," the 2014 Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk will occur Saturday, July 26 to Monday, Aug. 11, from Salem, Ore. to Portland, Richland, Olympia, Bainbridge Island and many cities in-between.

This annual peace walk is an opportunity for people to walk and learn together in a non-violent, spiritually motivated action to ensure a safer future.

Evenings offer social time, symposiums, movies and conversation.

Its sponsors include Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order in Bainbridge Island, Catholic Workers of Tacoma & Seattle, Ground Zero Center for Non-violent Action for Peace, and the Richland-based World Citizens for Peace.

For more information, or to join the Peace Walk, or to help with overnight hosting or food.

Shalom UCC in Richland will host the peace walkers during their stay in Richland on July 29 and 30.

For information, call 206-780-6739 or email senji@nipponzan.net.

Vashon Chorale performs

The Vashon Island Chorale directed by Gary Cannon will present two "No Bridges" concerts with 11 songs composed by Bron Edwards. One will be the world premiere at 3 p.m., Sunday, June 29 at the Vashon Island Center for the Arts and the second is at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 1. at Fautleroy Church in West Seattle.

Bron composed the lyrics and music to 11 songs about the Vashon Island to celebrate the Chorale's 25th anniversary.

For information, call 206-255-4590, email bron@sirensongweb.com or visit www.vashonislandchorale.org.

Annual Meeting 2015 set

Annual Meeting 2015 will be held April 24 to 26 at the Spokane Convention Center. **For information, call 206-725-8383.**

General Synod announced

The 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be held in the summer of 2015 in Cleveland, Ohio, with the theme, "Unexpected Places." Registration opens Sept. 8

Sage-ing Conference planned

The 2014 Sage-ing International Conference on the theme, "Gifting The World As We Age," will be held Aug. 21 to 24 at Seattle University, co-sponsored by the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University and the Northwest Center for Creative Aging.

Rather than focusing on the problems of growing older, the biennial gathering gathers people interested in aging in a holistic manner—mind, body and spirit, and spreading the good news that the aging process is also full of new opportunities no matter how old one is.

Conscious Aging leaders Bob Atchley, The Three Interfaith Amigos, Wendy Lustbader, Christina Baldwin, Connie Goldman, Rick Moody, Shaya Isenberg, Bahira Sugarman and Lynne Iser will be featured speakers.

In addition, there will be sessions led by 39 other presenters.

At the age of 56, Carol Scott-Kassner left a tenured full professorship in Florida to return to Seattle to care for her mother who was declining with dementia. During the seven years she walked with her mother, Carol fulfilled a dream. She attended the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University and earned a master's in transforming spirituality.

Now she is a commissioned minister of University Congregational UCC; chair of the Sage-ing International Conference in Seattle and immediate past president of Sage-ing International.

"I discovered a love of working with elders, in my church community and the broader community," Carol said.

A friend introduced Carol to Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's book, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*. She said he invites a vision of aging embracing introspection that cultivates wisdom and the potential to assume the role of sage in a world needing elder wisdom.

Sage-ing International is an organization developed from his ideas to further this discussion and learning.

Carol joined the Sage-ing community, drawn by elders who were positive, peaceful and full of life, and by people seeking understanding about their own aging process and how to find more fulfillment and a renewed sense of purpose in the second half of life.

For information, visit www.sage-ing.org.

Conference News Briefs

Solar panels on roof 'go live' as summer begins

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friendly way.

There were no funds, so the proposal sat. Two years later, the church held a capital campaign and urged groups to submit proposals. Paul submitted an item for the solar array. He was by then also on the Facilities and Equipment Board.

In 2012, the church raised most of its goal and decided which of the projects it would begin over three years. The solar project was chosen for the first year, so Paul contacted three solar contractors to have them submit bids and designs.

Because the church's roof is flat, it was possible to install solar modules by setting them on the roof in a stable racking system.

"From the time we first talked about it until last fall, the price of solar modules dropped dramatically, so we ended up with a larger array for the same cost," Paul said.

In January 2014, they began the permit process related to the roof's structure and changes to the church's electrical system. The components were in place



The solar arrays are 25.4 kilowatts, six times larger than most residences use.

by May and went live on June 15. Lines were connected into the building and a production meter was installed.

"As we produce electricity, our regular electric meter will slow or even turn backwards, decreasing our bill. After the utility reads production meter once a year, it sends a cash for the kilowatt hours we generated in that year," said Paul, explaining that a state law enabling this incentive expires in 2020.

"Our system goes live just as we get the sun's best rays in the summer," Paul said. "The array is 24.5 kilowatts. Arrays for most private residences have two to four kilowatts.

"Although the solar is ready, it will take more construction to provide electricity to the parking lot, so that will happen later," he said.

"It will take a number of years to recoup our investment, but we will use less hydroelec-

tric energy and we will contribute energy to the electric grid," Paul said.

Since 1992, Paul has been a technical writer for a software company. He graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1980 and completed a master's degree in 1985.

He attended Beacon Ave. UCC when he first moved to Seattle in 1989.

For information, email paul.schafer@gmail.com.

Retired travel guide's quilting becomes a ministry

Fabric artist Cathy Gunstone recently made two quilts that were included with those made by the Three Tee Quilt Guild, when 100 quilts were sent from Burien to Oso after the mudslide on March 22.

"We depend on our abilities and strengths from life experience to identify what brings us joy and what we are good at doing," she said. "My creative expression and love of quilting, color and design is something I can do. I have made it part of my ministry."

Baptized at Fauntleroy UCC in 1944, Cathy said her father was a church architect, who designed that building.

From her UCC roots, she



Cathy Gunstone shows a quilt she has been working on.

spent 35 years in Presbyterian churches and returned to the UCC five years ago, joining University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

After graduating from Colorado College in drama and fine arts in 1966, she earned a master's in outdoor education and administration in 1968 at George Williams College in Chicago. Cathy became a camp director for the YMCA and did church youth work for five years at Lake Burien, when she came back to Seattle.

Her current interest in quilting was sparked by her work as a travel professional when Joen Wolfrom asked her to arrange

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Student spends semester at Ecumenical Institute

Even though she grew up in a white community near St. Louis, Linda Gasparovic has been drawn to multicultural connections and inclusive community.

While her parents came from churches that had “the absolute truth”—Catholic and Southern Baptist—she attended a church where she experienced inclusion that paved her way not only into the United Church of Christ, but also into attending Seattle University’s ecumenical School of Theology and Ministry (STM).

In addition, from September 2013 to February 2014, she participated through the STM in the graduate studies program of the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva, Switzerland.

She was drawn to study at Seattle for a master’s in transformational spirituality because of the STM’s ecumenical vision and multicultural environment. At Bossey, she was immersed in intercultural, international and interchurch perspectives.

Linda has been aware of the beauty of “difference” and sensitive to issues of accessibility from having a partially sighted sister.

After earning a degree in art in 1976 from Southern Illinois University, she began a career in advertising, art and as creative director for several companies. While working at



Linda Gasparovic, with husband Paul Binneboese, shares experiences at Bossey.

the all-black Kentucky State University, Linda began attending a Methodist Church.

“I began talking with the church about how to make its message more attractive,” she said, wanting to apply her advertising skills to her church.

Having visited Seattle in the early 1980s, she and her husband Paul Binneboese, who married in 1987, moved there, where Paul would have opportunities as a software engineer.

Linda and Paul began attending Bethany UCC because of the bouncer ads in 2000. They now attend Liberation UCC.

She began thinking of going to seminary in the early 1990s and looked at the STM.

She began studies in 2009.

“I related with Asian and African American students, more than white middle class,” said Linda, who is from an Eastern European working class family. “I learned that people of color have power.”

Through the STM, she did an internship with the multicultural Rainier Beach United Methodist Church.

“I feel it’s important for diverse groups to understand each other,” she said.

At Bossey, Linda engaged in an ecumenical, multicultural environment with more than 30 people from around the world, people who were asking questions.

In in-depth conversations with other students, she found she had beliefs and concerns in common with other people, particularly from areas where they have less voice and are not included.

“People in dominant cultures do not realize that people need to be invited,” she said. “For Europeans, European approaches seem to be part of the natural order.

“I learned there are different ways to see things. In conversations, we explored why

we were different,” she said.

At Bossey, she had further opportunities for cross-cultural, cross-confessional and cross-national connections.

A few of the things she and others learned:

- A Syrian Orthodox sister said outsiders coming to do mission there had often caused problems. She also said the government had been helpful to Christians.

- A Ukrainian man told her about U.S. and Russian influence there.

- Two Orthodox Russians were surprised that students pay tuition to attend U.S. colleges, because they have free education through college.

- Romanian Orthodox did not know Ethiopian Orthodox used drums.

“People from all over the world were asking questions and learning from each other,” she said. “I found I had things in common with Orthodox spirituality.

Bossey was also an opportunity for education about what different Christian confessions believe and do in their different contexts.

For information, call 206-329-3076 or email creativespot@me.com.

Burien sends 100 quilts to Oso

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travel for a cruise of quilters.

“I had no interest in quilting, but took 150 quilters on a Caribbean cruise in 1992. The next year, they wanted to go somewhere else,” Cathy said.

After the first cruise, she was drawn to quilting when she became aware of the work of Caryl Bryer Fallert, who makes contemporary quilts with “mind-boggling designs.”

That exposed her to a different way of looking at quilting.

“I was hooked by the colors and designs,” said Cathy, who led quilting cruises to the Mediterranean, Baltic, U.S. harbors, the Caribbean and New England.

She also escorted groups to China, Russia, Greece and Norway.

For information, email cgunstone@gmail.com.

For Annual Meeting sermons and keynote addresses

Speakers examine culture of church today

Christene Cleveland said that the idea of love crosses cultural differences. She spoke at the opening of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC Annual Meeting at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

“We are to be the family of God, living in interdependent love. If we understand that, churches and communities will be affirmed and charged,” she said. “The Holy Spirit constantly pursues and empowers us as it first did on Pentecost, empowering the Galileans to speak different languages and see the world that is diverse.”

In her book, *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep Us Apart*, she says identity makes people part of a group with similarities.

“**We are comfortable** to be with people like us,” she said.

“Paul said if we are in company with the Spirit, we will come together in one spirit, mind and purpose, and not let selfish pride take over,” Christena said. “The Philippians church was diverse in race gender and class. If we love, we are of one mind, purpose and spirit, but that does not mean we will agree,” she said.

“When churches are alike, people think God loves people like us,” she said, “and judge those who are not like them.”

Christena said Christians need “to share brain space” with people not like them, so they can be the healing community God calls Christians to be, as people who secure their neighbor’s interests first.

“**We live in a society** where some parts of God’s family are seen positively and some are seen negatively. We connect when we want and step away when we do not want,” she said. “If we denigrate people in a different group to boost our self esteem, it’s a form of dehu-



Christena Cleveland talks about unity in diversity.



Lillian Daniel talks about the rigor of religious life.

manization, implying others are less human or less value.”

Christena talks about self affirmation, meaning to deal with people “based on self esteem overflowing and affirming our identity with God and other people. When we embrace true humility we secure our neighbors’ interest first. Power plays a role in how we see and interact with others. We need to operate out of an overflow of love, not a deficit.”

Lillian Daniel moved 14 years ago from a liberal college town, New Haven, Conn., to be senior pastor of the Glen Ellyn, Ill., UCC church in a Republican, affluent suburb of Chicago where megachurch evangelism is the presumed expression of Christianity.

Her recent book, *When Spiritual But Not Religious Is Not Enough: Seeing God in Surprising Places, Even the Church*, focuses on the hesitancy of UCC people to talk about their “experience of a living God.”

“**We’re more likely to tell** people how to vote than where to go to church, to talk about social justice rather than how we experience God,” she said at the PNC Annual Meeting.

“In our desire to be welcom-

ing and inclusive, we have lost our ability to talk about faith,” she said. “We will talk about a resolution on health care, gay marriage or the Middle East, but not about faith because it might offend someone.”

“**How do we talk** about faith in a multi-faith world? Whatever floats your boat is not enough. We say it does not matter, but it does matter,” Lillian commented.

“We end up in silos in cultural narcissism on the internet, only getting information and news from people we agree with,” she said.

Two decades ago, people shopped for a church for business and economic reasons, or looking for a self-help program.

What makes church compelling? What does the church do that others do not do?

“Faiths wrestle with the hard issues of life, yet cultural narcissism trivializes religious life,” Lillian said.

“The religious world and Christianity are complex and diverse. Organized religion is rigorous and real,” she pointed out.

People who go to church are often abused and broken by the world. Gifts to churches go for practical aid around the world. Church people love and

care about people, she said.

The Bible has inconsistencies, and Christians live with mysteries of differences in stories. Every faith community is changed by those who find it, she pointed out, acknowledging, too, that some people are hurt by churches and faith communities.

Preaching Sunday about people’s fear that doors will not open when they knock, Lillian called for Christians to see Jesus “in every person we see.”

Many invested in their homes to have security, but lost their homes in the last decade, Lillian said. Many also lost jobs, despite their efforts to build skills so they would always be needed.

“Maybe we can’t build security. Maybe we have to rely on God,” Lillian said.

“If we look on God from the prosperity Gospel, we call on to God to give us what we want,” she said.

On the road to Emmaus and at the empty tomb, Jesus says the same thing, to Mary, who thinks he is the gardener and the disciples who don’t realize they are talking with him: “Recognize me.”

“We need to see Jesus in every person we see,” she said.

Annual Meeting approves leaders, funds, resolutions

Acting moderator Andy CastroLang, pastor of Westminster UCC in Spokane, conducted Annual Meeting before being elected moderator.

She took on responsibility as acting moderator when moderator Tim Devine stepped aside mid-year.

There was a quorum of 65 of 80 PNC churches with a total attendance of 294 at the meeting. Its business included:

- Wendy Blight of Alki UCC and Conference treasurer, reported that this year begins a new fiscal year, running from June 2014 to May 2015. It includes salary and benefits for a coordinator of program development and implementation.

She reported that a two-year management review report was completed and the board accepted it. Those doing the review recommended 1) accounting for Church Development Committee loans to local churches; 2) determining the original value of fixed assets, such as camps, buildings and land, and 3) accounting for the permanent and temporary restricted endowments.

- Judith Rinehart Nelson of Zion-Philadelphia in Ritzville reported on a proposed bylaw change for the moderator and vice moderator to have the option to serve two years.

- Conference bookkeeper Michelle Doherty reported that 42 percent of conference income comes from the camps.

The next largest is from OCWM.

“If the PNC received \$60 for every member each year in OCWM, we could accomplish a lot,” she said.

- Edie Lackland, of the Stewardship Committee, said that 70 percent of funds coming for OCWM stay in the conference and 30 percent goes to the national.

“We will not nibble at that, because the national UCC needs it,” she said.



Andy CastroLang



Wendy Blight

- The budget passed.
- A resolution passed to endorse I-594, calling for a mandatory background check and to educate congregations about gun violence.



Edie Lackland



Linda Purdy sprinkles water in a baptismal renewal.



Members of Liberation UCC offer a concert for banquet.

- Another resolution that passed calls for educating congregations on the living wage and income inequality, listening to workers and employers and walking with them to a living wage future. It also encourages local churches to consider endorsing the Church Council of Greater Seattle’s Living Wage Principles.

- Nominations presented by Debbie Baden of the Ministry Resources Committee were approved and then new leaders

were installed.

- Meighan Pritchard, the UCC minister for environmental justice, said General Synod 2013 at Long Beach adopted a resolution on divestment from or shareholder activism with fossil fuel companies. Both the United Church Funds and the UCC Pension Boards are developing investment opportunities free of fossil fuel companies.

For information-free investments email pritchardm@ucc.org.



Dee Eisenhauer asks Lyndel and Don Mayer to sign a petition.

Denton reports on PNC, shares journey into UCC

Conference Minister Mike Denton reviewed PNC actions over the year:

- The board of directors has passed a safe policy for camps and youth events.
- The fiscal year is now June to May.
- The Stewardship Committee is viewing the PNC's financial pockets so the budget makes sense.
- Thirteen churches are in different stages of calling pastors.
- The PNC will soon hire a coordinator of program development and implementation to work with justice Ministries, camps and youth.
- OCWM in 2012-13 was down one percent, so the PNC is helping churches share the OCWM story.

The national UCC Board has a mandate to cut \$2.3 million, so programs are scaling back and positions being cut.

"Church is being redefined. As we face financial and personnel realities, we need to think of different ways to be church," Mike said. "We need to use the future as reference, not the past—when size was thought to mean success. What will the future look like if it is our guide?"

He anticipated future dynamics:

- The next reality for churches may be interreligious.
- The level people relate to the Bible



Mike Denton shares insights.

has diminished.

- As institutional life crumbles, affiliation around relationships in church life means less institutional identity.
- The role of clergy may become less important.
- The UCC is still among many voices for social justice.

Mike said relationships are key to understanding how "we live and work together. As we look at who we are,

know each other better and call for conversation, something exciting happens in our churches," he said.

For Friday worship, Mike reviewed his pilgrimage from the United Methodist Church, where six generations of his family were ministers. He was proud of UMC stands on racial justice and nuclear war, but uncomfortable that gay and lesbian friends were not included. A friend suggested he try the UCC, and he found friends and a place he could invite those who felt betrayed by the UMC.

"Many in the UCC come from other traditions and find a spiritual home, but there was pain getting here," he said.

Ideas of family and faith community are far from simple, he said, citing Mark's story of Jesus' family, sure he was out of his mind, coming to take control of him.

"Jesus said his family are those who do God's will. Jesus was aware family can be messy. Messiness is where life is," said Mike, noting that Jesus calls followers into the messiness of failing, learning, grace and reconciliation.

"Lives are transformed by love, pain and life. In the messiness we find joy and courage to be part of Jesus' family of love," Mike said.

New Beginnings Church joins PNC during 2014 Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting welcomed the New Beginnings Samoan Church in Lacey into the PNC.

The pastor Aleni Tonuao and a member Thomas Tavai said they chose to enter the UCC because in the past three years they lost two youth at the ages of 17 and 18—one was shot and one was stabbed.

Aleni said they were in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong crowd, because there was nothing for them to do. The church wants a place for the 50 youth in their church to connect with more youth.

"We want to take them places to experience good things, affiliating with other Christian youth," he said.

Aleni began as youth pastor and music director seven years ago under the first pastor. He



Thomas Tavai and Aleni Tonuao at Annual Meeting in Seattle.

has been pastor since 2010.

While he supports his family as a truck driver, he hopes to be a full-time, ordained UCC pastor. He grew up in Samoa and served six years in the U.S. Army in Kentucky, where he had two years of Bible school. He also took a six-month seminar at a Bible School in Lake-wood and is working to be or-

dainated as a UCC pastor.

When he moved to Lacey and his family began attending the church, there were five families. Now there are 19.

New Beginnings met at a retirement center until it began renovations. It now meets at 1 p.m., Sundays at Paramount Church in Lacey.

Coming from a non-de-

nominal background, Aleni seeks the consistency of a denomination.

Members come from different backgrounds—Latter-day Saints, Catholic and Methodist—with many ideas about how to operate. They have been working with the Church Development Committee to join the UCC and PNC.

In addition to looking forward to the church being involved with PNC programs—camps, men's and women's retreats, youth events—New Beginnings members are involved with a program feeding homeless people once a month.

"God is opening many doors for us," said Aleni.

For information, call 360-878-3926 or email pastoral-lentnpc@yahoo.com.

Jenn Hagedorn's presentation begins education process

By Jenn Hagedorn
Social Justice Liaison
Plymouth Church Seattle

During orientation week of the Justice Leadership Program last year, I realized the power of the faith voice on issues of economic justice. It was the beginning of the journey that brought me before you today, and as I have learned, I must understand my own story in order to authentically ask others to join with me.

My fellow interns and I showed up for an event called an "action" having no idea what we were getting ourselves into. We marched with a crowd of hundreds of workers, union leaders and community and faith folks, to the headquarters of Alaska Airlines in SeaTac to demand living wages and better protections on the job.

Along the march, I started talking to some of the people who work at SeaTac airport and some of the organizers of the march. I heard stories of people working long hours and still going to the food bank to feed their families. I heard about the lack of safety equipment that they needed to clean and fuel the planes. I heard about cancelled shifts and other ways that employers found to cut paychecks. The more I heard, the more angry I became. This was so far from any injustice that I had experienced in my life, and yet I had probably walked by many of these workers on my way to or from flights.

By the time we reached the headquarters of Alaska Airlines, I wanted answers. A delegation went forward and knocked on the door. An executive was sent down to speak with us and as his eyes looked out over the sea of people, you could see him notice with some surprise that there was a line of faith leaders and workers immediately before him. A few workers spoke about what they

had experienced working at the airport, and then several faith leaders spoke about our moral obligation to provide for workers, especially in the face of a record profit quarter.

The executive's voice shook as he responded, and I remember wondering whether it was the size of the crowd, or perhaps whether he was shaken by the moral voice that was asking him to make changes. Not only was this a powerful statement to the executive, but many workers told me on that day and at future actions, that standing with members of the faith community had given them courage and strength that they didn't know they had.

As Christian brothers and sisters, we are called to have a different relationship with money than our capitalist society dictates. These verses in Acts that are written at the top of this resolution demonstrate the way that the early Church set this example.

By everyone giving what they could and giving to those most in need, they ensured that everyone had enough. This individual accountability to each other is based on the belief that we are all Children of God, *deserving of justice and capable of acting justly*.

Economic fairness at the systemic level is built into the ethics of our faith traditions as well. In Hebrew tradition, debts were forgiven and slaves were set free every seven years. In the year of Jubilee, which came every 50 years, all the land was equitably re-distributed. This radical re-structuring of a society prevents against the accumulation of enormous wealth based on the understanding that the land and the people ultimately belong to God.

When we open our eyes and hearts, we see the way that our society is different from this vision of God's Kingdom,



Jenn Hagedorn

and moving further away from it at rapid speed.

Economic inequality has been growing ever wider in the last 30 years and has degraded the health, democracy and economic prosperity of our nation. Wages have not kept pace with rates of productivity or inflation, decreasing the ability of individuals or families to be able to buy the basic essentials.

In fact, if wages had kept pace with these rates, our national minimum wage would be \$21.72 an hour.

We know that while this economic divide has touched many of our lives, low-wage jobs are disproportionately done by women and people of color, strengthening the white patriarchal hierarchy that exists in this country.

As church members we don't need to hear the statistics to know the reality. Many of our UCC congregations work tirelessly to fill this ever-growing

gap between what people need to survive and what they are able to provide for themselves, even while working. We do this through giving to food banks, providing temporary housing and serving meals. While this is important, holy work, we know that this is only alleviating the symptoms of a broken system.

The concept of a living wage is about more than a specific dollar amount. It is about supporting wage, housing, and other policies that create affordable access to basic human necessities.

By adopting this living wage resolution, we agree to:

- Educate ourselves about issues of living wages and income inequality in the local church setting.
- Engage in the issues by listening to workers and walking with them towards a living wage future in our communities.

- Advocate for the creation of living wage opportunities with elected representatives and business leaders.

- Call on each of the local churches to consider supporting the Church Council of Greater Seattle's Living Wage Principles.

Adopting this resolution means we will be back here next year at Annual Meeting 2015, asking ourselves and each other: What have we done on the issue of living wages?

As Christians, our holy texts give us an alternative to the economic system that we see holding our brothers and sisters in poverty. We are called to be and create the communities that cancel debt and turn the tables. We are called to radically share because we believe in God's great abundance, and we are called to stand with those who are being exploited for profits, to amplify the voices of those who have been drowned out.

Spokane Alliance introduces issues, urges sick leave

At its June 24 Assembly at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, the Spokane Alliance raised issues of aging in place, mental health, affordable quality child care and paid sick time.

Andy CastroLang, Westminster's pastor, and Duane Cooper of the American Federation State County Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 270, co-chaired the gathering of 193 people on "Building Spokane's Future: By and For the People."

The church encourages actions for the good of neighbors and the entire city, Andy said.

Duane said that to gain power to address issues people need to act both individually and collectively.

"Strength comes from our institutions," Andy said, referring to the churches, unions, nonprofits, businesses and educators in the alliance.

"Collectively we can build the future and make dreams a reality," said Duane. "We are all better off when we are all better off."

Previously the alliance negotiated with Spokane Public Schools to provide job training for apprentices and adopt green building standards. It worked for a Jobs Bill that brought 18,000 jobs to the state, stimulating the local economy by building a medical school at Riverpoint and establishing a health equity class for medical students.

After participants discussed how the issues affect their lives, three people shared their stories.

Amelia Odeen, of the Association of Manufactured Home Owners has learned about aging in place as she visits people who downsize to be independent and live in manufactured home communities where they help each other.

"Cuts in home care force more people to go to nursing homes, even though home care



Ben Stuckart, Mike Denton and Martin Wells, top.

Assembly co-chairs Duane Cooper and Andy CastroLang, right.



costs less," she said.

Physician Gil Escandon of Westminster UCC saw a rise in mental health needs in 24 years of emergency room work and now as physician for the Spokane County Jail.

"We could provide better mental health care at less cost than jails and emergency rooms," said Gil.

Diane Clavel of the AFSCME Local 270, told of her need for affordable child care. She stayed at home with her four preschool children until her husband said they needed more income. After many calls to find child care, she found a job from 4 p.m. to midnight to supplement her husband's daytime job so one was at home.

"Family time was poor and I was sleep deprived," she said.

Mike Denton, Pacific Northwest UCC Conference Minister, committed to work on the issues, aware they affect him personally and as a pastor to the region.

Bishop Martin Wells of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America tells churches he visits that "God calls us into community to care for the common good."

He reminded how civil

rights activists organized and risked their lives in 1964 to resist racism in a peaceful way. He called for working together like them as "we struggle in a polarized society."

Aging, mental health and child care were introduced for the alliance to research.

The Paid Sick, Safe, Family Leave Policy Research Team urges that the Spokane City Council adopt the policy by 2015.

John Patberg, a second year medical student at WSU Riverpoint, had focused on activism, social justice and community organizing in college, but burned out, and chose to be a doctor to focus on individuals. His first year of medical school, he took the Spokane Alliance's community organizing class and realized the need to address patients' community as part of improving their health.

Shelly Kornmeyer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1439 grew up in the grocery business. If her four-year-old child is sick, either she or her husband has to stay home and lose a day of pay.

Jodi Harmon, an elementary school counselor with the Spokane Education Association, learns of families' strug-

gles. Parents send children to school sick, because otherwise they lose pay. One older son stayed home with younger brothers when they were sick so his parents could work. A good student, he was falling behind later in the year because of missing so much school.

The team met with 12 businesses and nonprofits to find out what they did.

Dentist Shancie Wagner has a dental hygienist with MS. She grants her sick paid leave as needed, and the hygienist does not take advantage of it.

Mike Dolmage of the Lantern Tap House Restaurant gives employees paid sick leave because he believes when his employees have quality of life it means better relationships with customers and coworkers.

"Being accountable to our employees is a way to have a positive impact on the community," he said.

Stacie Wenzel of the Spokane Regional Health District said it's a public health issue because paid sick leave can prevent spread of diseases.

Jon Snyder and Candace Mumm of the Spokane City Council pledged to work for the city to adopt a Paid Sick, Safe, Family Leave policy by 2015.

"Everyone benefits" from such a policy, Jon said.

Candace told of not seeking medical help when she didn't feel well during a council meeting. Later she found she had a ruptured appendix that endangered her life. Also, she does not want restaurant workers to work when sick and spread what they have.

City Council President Ben Stuckart promised to partner to make safe sick family leave pass, calling for assembly participants to testify before the council and keep up their efforts to overcome opposition.

For information, call 532-1688 or email carol@spokanealliance.org.

Camp managers anticipate improvements needed

In their report to Annual Meeting, Deeg Nelson, who has been managing director at Pilgrim Firs for 12 years, and Mark Boyd, who began as managing director at N-Sid-Sen in 2012, made the point that the camps belong to the members of the Conference.

"If you drive by the camp stop by. It's your lake house," Mark said.

"There are many opportunities to come to camp. It's not just for kids. Come regardless of age and ability," he said.

Beyond opportunities to come free as counselors for youth camps, there are opportunities to come free to work camp.

Both camps have grown with volunteers putting time, money and energy into them.

This year at work camp, N-Sid-Sen replaced two showers in Spirit Lodge, added a floating dock and a lifeguard chair, lattice around two cabins, new sandbox area, painted two cabins and lot's of trail clearing, he said.

In May, the Pilgrim Firs work camp helped with the peace garden, setting up outdoor seating and picnic tables.

Each described some of the



Deeg Nelson and Mark Boyd report on camps at Annual Meeting.

projects that are needed to improve the camps as part of an upcoming capital campaign.

Mark said the campaign will make it possible to build a tunnel under the Highway 97.

so campers can safely access 200 of the camp's 270 acres on the east side of the road, which a Boy Scout camp north of N-Sid-Sen plans to do, too. He also envisions tent platforms on that land.

In a hearing on the budget, Mark and Deeg spoke more about changes needed to help the camps grow and move into the future.

Mark said there are two-year and five-year projects. There is need for a new power boat, after one died. This year, N-Sid-Sen will rent a boat for the aqua camps.

There are also plans for another lodge, because N-Sid-Sen turns away groups that do not want to be in cabins that are cold during the winter.

Deeg said that in addition to the peace garden, there is need to remodel the 50-year-old kitchen, to replace a vehicle and to create more outdoor space for seating for outdoor programs in a covered but open shelter that can be used in rain in July.

Over the last five to six years, roofs have been replaced, but there is still need for new roofs on a cabin, a house and the manager's house.

There is need for new vehicles and for replacing the shop, turning to current one into an art room.

Pilgrim Firs gets funds by logging every decade.

Mark is looking into taking advantage of carbon credits related to the forests.

"PNC campers pay a UCC rate," he said, which does not cover the camp costs. There is a Gratitude Rate that does allow folks to pay more if they chose to do so. The costs are covered by non-UCC groups, Mark said.

Conference bookkeeper Michelle Doherty said 42 percent of overall conference income comes from the camps.

2014 N-Sid-Sen camp and retreat schedule:

Young Adult Camp

June 20 to 22

Max Aquino & Chris Walters

Kid's Camp

July 6 to 9

Trudy Lambert & Gail Peterson

Intermediate Camp

July 6 to 12

Kim Schulz & Bob Watrous

Senior High Aqua Camp

July 13 to 19

Lynne Stultz & Tony Kliment

Family Camp #1

July 27 to Aug. 2

Amy Johnson & Ryan Lambert

Junior High Aqua Camp

Aug. 3 to 9

John Hubbe & Dana Sprenkle

Family Camp #2

Aug. 10 to 16

Deb Tyler

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

2014 Pilgrim Firs camp and retreat schedule

Kids Camp

June 29 to July 2

Katy Lloyd & TBA

Intermediate Camp

June 29 to July 3

Jen and Chris Walters

Senior High Camp

July 6 to 12

Kristen Almgren & Andrew Conley-Holcom

Junior High Camp

July 13 to 19

Rich Porter

Family Camp

Aug. 17 to 22

Rich and Leslie

For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit pilgrimfirs.org.



Bob Boehmke tries out N-Sid-Sen's new lifeguard chair.