



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Summer 2023

Jonna Jensen sees fruitful ministry ahead for PNC

While the transition is stressful, Jonna Jensen sees the PNC filled with gifted leadership

Jonna Jensen began as short-term half-time acting conference minister of the Pacific Northwest UCC conference minister in April, giving support while the PNC seeks an intentional interim conference minister, who will serve two to three years.

She is assisting the conference with basic needs until the end of October.

Jonna already was serving remotely 10 hours a week helping acting conference minister Courtney Stange-Tregear with congregations searching for ministers before she resigned as of Annual Meeting.

Interviewed June 22, Jonna said she finds “exciting, engaged, vibrant congre-

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Jonna Jensen attended Annual Meeting and serves the PNC on Zoom, email and phone.

Board establishes Search Committee for interim

On June 22, a committee was established, and voted on by the Board, to begin the search for an Intentional Interim Conference Minister who will serve for up to 36 months.

The initial training meeting for the Search Committee was led Lee Albertson from the national staff who is the resource person for conference minister search committees.

The timeline is as follows:

Always: Prayers for the Conference and this process welcome.

On May 15, 2023, the position was posted, with job description, on the national website

On June 30, 2023, the position posting closes.

Late June/Early July, profiles will be forwarded to the Search Committee.

During July 2023, the committee

Search Committee for Intentional Interim Conference Minister

will read profiles and have discussion, prioritize profiles and have interviews.

In early August 2023, a name will be brought to Board of Directors and voted on. The candidate may have to give 60 days notice. Once a contract has been signed the person will be made public to the Conference.

October 2023 is a possible starting date of the Intentional Interim Conference Minister for the PNC-UCC.

The process of selecting the person is confidential, but members of the

conference may forward any questions or concerns to Indigo Brown or Esther Sanders, co-chairs of the committee.

The members of the Search Committee are Indigo Brown of Plymouth Church UCC in Seattle, moderator of PNCUCC Board, indigo.brown@outlook.com; Niutunu Faiupu, pastor of the New Testament Church of Anchorage, tunuf55@gmail.com; Jill Komura, an ordained specialized minister, jill.komura@gmail.com; Esther Sanders, pastor of Eltopia UCC and Vice Moderator of the Board, stk.1085@gmail.com; Sandy Wisecarver, pastor at Blaine UCC and Board member, pastorsandywisecarver@gmail.com, and Jermell Witherspoon, pastor of both the Everett UCC and Liberation UCC, pastor@mylucc.org.

In Grace and Peace, Esther Sanders, Search Committee co-chair.

The Holy Spirit may call those nearby to ministry

Reports & Comments



By The Rev. Dr.
Jonna Jensen
Acting
Conference
Minister

*The
Holy Spirit
beckons
us to ask
if we
are
called
to
parish
ministry.*

I wonder if it might be you. I wonder if it might be me.

I've been supporting pastors and congregations in the search and call process for more than 14 years now.

It is the work of conference ministry that continually excites me, surprises me, challenges me, stretches me and fills my daily prayers with more than words.

There are cheers. Tears. Laughter. Sometimes groans and growls. There are prayers that rise on dancing feet and a few prayers that rise on desk-pounding. Very often, my prayers have the same refrain: "I love it when the Holy Spirit shows off!"

Dear saints of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, I do so love the ways that the Holy Spirit is showing off in these days, in our congregations, in ways that surprise us and inspire us.

In the olden days, when I was ordained, the path to authorized ministry in and for the United Church of Christ was by far most often a single path. Parish ministers earned four-year undergraduate degrees and then graduate degrees from theological seminaries. Mostly, they were about 25 years old when they were called to their first congregations.

It's certainly still possible to be authorized for ministry in and for the UCC by following this path. Now, fresh paths have joined the familiar path.

Persons are hearing and answering the calling of the Holy Spirit to parish ministry in all seasons of life, bringing such treasures of life experience.

One of my seminary classmates was at the very forward edge of the coming changes in parish ministry. I think his roots were in the Pacific Northwest Conference. He began his seminary studies in retirement, after a full career as a university professor.

It has been my honor and delight to meet searching pastors for whom parish ministry is a second or even a third career. I've met attorneys, educators, artists, farmers, pharma-

cists, and one air traffic controller from one of America's busiest airports.

While I served as the transitional conference minister in the Maine Conference, I learned a bit of the state language. Persons who did not have roots in Maine (and some whose roots were still too short) were said to be, "From away."

In the olden days, when I was ordained, most pastors called to serve congregations were "from away." Some went "away" to seminary and then returned to their home conferences. The careers of many parish pastors included ministries in at least a few different conferences.

Parish pastors still do come "from away," and, more and more parish pastors are coming not "from away," but "from within." Especially when a congregation is seeking a pastor to serve on a part-time basis, it is most likely that the next pastor is already nearby rather than "from away."

It is becoming more and more likely that the congregation's next pastor is not just nearby but already in the congregation.

The Holy Spirit absolutely beckons us now to nourish and strengthen a "culture of call" in our congregations.

The Holy Spirit absolutely beckons us to talk right out loud about the experience of being called to parish ministry.

The Holy Spirit absolutely beckons us to ask the question of souls in our congregations and in our communities: "I see gifts in you. Might you wonder about a call to parish ministry?"

The Holy Spirit absolutely beckons us to ask the question of ourselves – in any season of our lives: "I have gifts to share, Might I wonder about a call to parish ministry?"

If you hear an "I might" – or if the "I might" is rising from within you, please send me a note: jonna@pnwucc.org.

Your gift of a wondering will be a treasure!

Transitions announced

Sandy Wisecarver, pastor of Blaine UCC, graduated May 8 with a doctorate from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Lillian Pak is the new interim at the First Congregational Church in Colville.

Janel Rieve is retiring as pastor of Zion-Philadelphia UCC in Ritzville.

Deborah Tyler, who has standing in Wisconsin but spent many years at Pilgrim Firs and United Churches in Olympia, has been called as half-time minister at Dayton UCC.

Kenneth Coleman was approved for transfer of standing.

Sally Ballmer and Penny Matthews have been granted exempt ministerial standing.

Elizabeth Gordon was approved for endorsement.

Steve King was approved for ordination pending call.

Emily Linderman, who was ordained in the PNC in 2020, has transferred to the Northern California Nevada Conference.

Everett Marshallese Church, which joined the PNC-UCC at the Annual Meeting, is led by **Eldon Kahn**, its first and current pastor.

Matt Emery has transferred to the PNC-UCC. He serves Cloverdale United Church in Surrey, B.C., and is a member at First Congregational in Bellevue.

Carson Hawks, whose primary focus is spiritual growth and healing, is in covenant with Magnolia UCC.

Jillian Hutton, who was ordained in the Northern California Nevada Conference, is serving at Eastgate Congregational UCC.

David Weddington transferred from the New Hampshire Conference.

Ed Evans was approved for exempt standing.

Rachel Haxtema was approved for ordination pending a call.

Louis Vetri was approved for transfer to the PNC-UCC from the Heartland Conference.

In April, **Jennifer Castle** was installed as pastor at the Congregational Church on Mercer Island.

James Reynolds, a graduate of Pacific School of Religion who served churches in California and was associate minister at Faultleroy UCC in the 1960s, died June 1. He worked in real estate in the latter part of

his career. His wife, Adele, lives at Horizon House.

Deborah Rose, who touched the lives of many in PNC churches she served and belonged to with her fabric arts, was honored in a memorial moment at annual meeting when many came forward wearing stoles she had made or holding banners she had made. She died in April 15

Conference News Briefs



in Providence, Rhode Island.

Support groups start

Communities in Practice support groups organized by the Committee on Ministry will be offered again in September 2023 to June 2024. The groups are for specialized ministers, pastors in different contexts and congregation sizes, retired clergy, members in discernment and more. Most groups meet on Zoom.

For information, contact Amy Hitchens at amy@npucc.org.

General Synod is June 30

General Synod from June 30 to July 4 in Indianapolis, Indiana, will be in-person for voting delegates and will add cost-effective virtual elements for others.

For information, visit ucc.org/next-synod-now-a-year-away-will-be-in-person-hybrid-aspects-being-explored.

UCC offers movement

The UCC's "Join the Movement" campaign is offering stories and resources for churches and clergy looking for ways to become more anti-racist individuals and churches. The theme is "When love is the lens through which we see the world, Justice is possible.

For information, visit jointhemovement.org.

Four UCC grants available

The UCC Justice and Local Church Ministries has announced four grants for congregations: 1) Operational and Financial Support for churches in crisis needing help with staff, equipment and utilities; 2) Neighbors in Need Fund for congregations and organizations addressing systemic injustice; 3) New Church Planters Health, Dental and Pension Benefit Support for new churches; 4) CASA New and Rebirthing Church Grants for UCC churches seeking to be sustainable through coaching and financial support. Deadlines are Sept. 15.

For information, email Aaron Wade, minister for congregational leadership development, granting and scholarships at wadea@ucc.org. Applications are at app.smarterselect.com/programs/89418-United-Church-Of-Christ.

Churches join Seattle Pride

University Congregational UCC and Plymouth UCC co-sponsored an entry on behalf of the PNC-UCC in the Seattle Pride Parade June 25. Before the parade, there was a sign-making party on Saturday, June 17, at UCUC, said Kyna Grace Shilling.

Banners, doors restored

Fox Island UCC had its rainbow Justice for All banner vandalized in recent weeks.

Wayside UCC in Federal Way had its rainbow "God's doors" smashed recently. They are patched together and back up.

Renton United also had to repair their rainbow doors again.

Veradale UCC reported that at about 1:15 a.m., Sunday, June 25, three people ran from their car to the church and took down a rainbow flag, a Black Lives Matter flag and a rainbow flag saying such messages as science is real...love is love. They also took about 25 small Pride flags decorating the path to the door, sprayed diesel fuel on the lawn with Lev. 20:13.

Veradale UCC decided to hold a "Love is Greater than Hate" Flash Mob Potluck and Dance on Sunday, July 2.

Meighan Pritchard, pastor at Prospect, said its banner has destroyed many times in the past year. "We have hung it for years without issue, but now it seems to be a thing to destroy statements of affirmation. It's sad that people live in such boxes of hate."

Transitional minister brings sense of hope for PNC

Continued from page 1

gations with a wealth of gifted pastoral and lay leaders. I also appreciate working with the conference staff, who are splendidly gifted, to provide support for their work.”

Jonna comes to the PNC after two years of working as the transitional conference minister for the Maine Conference.

For two years she was on-site in Augusta, Maine. For the PNC, however, 10 and now 20 hours a week does not give time to visit congregations or have much direct contact, but she could fly for such a visit if necessary.

“I am working remotely by emails, calls and Zoom,” she said, noting she also continues to work part-time with the Tri-Conference ministry of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota, helping with pastoral searches.

“**The UCC has** an increasing number of small churches seeking part time pastors,” Jonna said, noting the difficulty of pastors relocating to a community for part-time ministry opportunities. “There is a need to look for people within congregations who will answer the call to authorized ministry.”

It’s quite a contrast to when she graduated from seminary at Andover Newton Theological Seminary in Newton Centre, Mass., in 1981 when she was told there were more pastors than churches and she might not find a call immediately.

In the spring of 1982, she was called to serve Olds UCC in Olds, Iowa, where she was pastor for seven years, followed by 19 years at Central City, Iowa, UCC, before joining the Iowa Conference staff.

That staff morphed to be shared by three conferences in a creative ministry, which she said is at the “forward edge” of new approaches to conference

work. The three conferences have not merged but share staff. In contrast, the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences voted in 2017 to merge to be the Southern New England Conference.

She sees many options for the future for UCC conferences, especially now with remote work possible.

In the Midwest, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota conferences remain independent while served by a single “Tri Conference UCC Ministries” staff. The staff includes one full-time and two-part-time associate conference ministers, two full-time and one part-time support staff. The newest addition are 17 conference deacons—retired ministers, part-time ordained ministers and lay leaders—who are each responsible for checking in with 20 to 30 congregations to provide care and connections.

She sees these models as emerging from conversations about how to effectively use resources, given the shortage of people available to serve as pastors today.

Jonna said Lee Albertson, on the national UCC staff, helps conferences find conference ministers, not only working with those applying for such work but also recruiting them.

She added that it is amazing what ministries can happen using email, phone and Zoom.

For example, the previous week she joined in a Zoom meeting between the Iowa conference and partners in the German church in Bremen.

“We get together every other month, sharing a time to talk and an educational piece. The Bremen church offered a speaker on immigration in Germany, giving rise to conversation on common concerns related to immigration across the

miles geographically,” she said.

Jonna said her roots and second language are Norwegian. After graduating from high school in 1973, she studied a year in Norway and spent a summer as a nurses aide.

She then went to the University of Iowa and earned a bachelor’s degree in religion.

“I felt called to ministry and began a doctoral program in theology and ethics, while my husband began law school. He was able to complete his studies at Harvard, so that I could complete a master of divinity degree at Andover Newton Theological School, a seminary known for its strengths in the study of pastoral care and for its vibrant field education programs.”

While committed to parish ministry, she decided, at the impetus of the Holy Spirit, to apply when the Iowa Conference was seeking an associate conference minister.

“I did it as a spiritual discipline to offer myself. My congregation laughed. I was chosen for an interview, expecting not to be chosen, but when I was called, I accepted,” she said. “My happy place is in parish ministry, but I have gifts for working with pastors in conference ministry. It’s hard work, but I find joy and excitement in it.

“It requires patience and a sense of humor,” she said noting that she has a knack for that given that she began ministry in her second congregation part-time, supporting herself by doing comedy.

The Tonight Show held a comedy contest, and her husband urged her to enter.

“I did to prove him wrong, but I was a semi-finalist in the regional competition,” she said. “My winning at that level got press, so people began contact-

ing me to do comedy programs. That sustained me for ten years, while the congregation grew to support me full time.

“What we experience in life is serious. Doing the work of ministry, we are dealing with life changes, suffering and loss. Comedy can help sustain us, as a means to find rest and balm to restore our souls through the difficulties to revive our gifts with playful stories,” Jonna said.

“Part of comedy has come naturally to me from listening to my Norwegian family tell jokes on themselves. I used to sit behind a chair with my cousins while my grandfather and uncles told stories about their lives,” she said.

In her second congregation, Jonna learned to keep a sense of perspective.

“In the church we are used to counting souls who worship on Sundays. Instead, we need to count souls touched by the congregation’s ministries, people we may not see in worship.

“We need to count those who connect through our wedding ministry, our bereavement care, our food pantry and our Bible school,” she said. “There are many ways people connect to church other than Sunday mornings. If we count those numbers, we will see the church is not dying but is involved in the lives of many people.”

In that spirit, Jonna is confident about the future of the PNW Conference because it is rich in human assets.

“This transitional season is stressful, but there is a fruitful season of ministry ahead,” she said.

For information, call 206-725-8383 or email jonna@pn-cucc.org.

Camp managers announce summer camp plans

Mark Boyd, managing director at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center, is overseeing registration for the PNC camps at N-Sid-Sen. He reported June 21 that there were about 10 to 12 each at the Kids and Intermediate camps, and about 20 each at Junior High and Senior High camps.

Pam Peterson, managing director at N-Sid-Sen, has recruited summer staff to cook, clean, lifeguard and serve the campers who come to N-Sid-Sen. Two hired through the Camp America program include a young man of Pakistani background who is studying in Hungary and a young woman from Turkey.

Registration numbers are lower than pre-Covid but growing.

The new You and Me camp for an adult and child the first part of the week of Kids camp is a new draw, said Pam.

Family camps are nearly on par with past years.

Registrations are continuing to be received for summer camps at n-sid-sen.org/summer-camp-2.

Volunteer camp directors plan the programs for each camp.

July 2 to 8, Intermediate and Junior High Camps share N-Sid-Sen with Shirley Asmusen of Seattle and Laura Lee Sorenson of Richland leading the Intermediate Camp for those entering fifth and sixth grades.

Leah Atkinson Bilinski of Fautleroy and Amara Oden of Suquamish share leadership of Junior High Camp which is also that week.

July 9 to 15 N-Sid-Sen will be shared by You and Me Camp for children entering grades one to five and an adult, and the July 9 to 12 and Kids Camp July 12 to 15 for those entering grades two to four, both directed by Kaila Russell.



N-Sid-Sen's summer staff are left front to back, Malia Silver, Karma Fredericksen, Bengi Kaska, Haseeb Khurram, and right front to back, Kaiden Schmillen, Ann Ogle, Freddie Tanner and Tevita Fakasiieiki.

Photo courtesy of N-Sid-Sen

Senior High Camp will also use N-Sid-Sen from July 9 to 15 and be led by Elliott Jensen at Shoreline and Mark Cuilla of Salem Lutheran Church in Spokane.

Family Camp 1 is July 23 to 29, led by Ryan Lambert and Amy Johnson, and Family Camp 2—Camp Together—led by Janet Malley, is July 30 to Aug. 5.

“FruitFULL Faith” is the 2023 theme for camp curriculum as campers of all ages take time to “unplug and jump into a week of awesome, low-tech fun” that includes canoeing, crafts, nine-square, basketball, beach fun, crazy skits, nature discoveries, goofy songs, team building, campfires, camp worship, paddle boarding, swimming, picnics, faith chats, water games, field games, river floats and hiking.

“Church camp is about building relationships with oth-

er campers in a setting where they can connect to God and nature,” Pam said. “We will share stories of fear, pain and new ideas for this transition time within the conference.”

N-Sid-Sen's 2023 T-Shirt design represents “Transforming Faith” depicted as a monarch butterfly with milkweed.

“With interest in bringing back monarch butterflies we will plant patches of milkweed,” Pam said.

Information on tiered pricing and financial assistance is available online. Campers who bring a friend will receive \$100 off for both the returning camper and new camper for a full week and \$50 off for part of a week.

“My focus is to get churches and church kids back to camp,” said Pam at Annual Meeting when she and Mark shared about the various partner groups that use both camps.

“I believe we can build on those who come and have them invite at least two others.”

“The small camps are wonderful in terms of campers building deep connections with each other,” continued Pam, who has focused time on contacting pastors to introduce herself and offer the camp for them to come on personal retreats.

She also is inviting the Samoan and Marshallese churches, in particular, to use the camps.

On June 11, Pilgrim Firs hosted a Pride Picnic for 120 people, gathering at the Pride Garden, a gift from a gay couple in the Southworth area. One of the men had grown up coming to the camp.

“It was a wonderful way for people in the area to know that Pilgrim Firs is a safe space for them in Kitsap County,” said Mark of the one-day annual event.

2023 N-Sid-Sen camp & retreat season

Intermediate Camp
July 2 - 8 - grades 5-6

Junior High Camp
July 2 - 8 - grades 7-9

You and Me Camp
July 9- 12 - grades 1-5 & adult

Kid's Camp
July 12 - 15 - grades 2-4

Senior High Camp
July 9 to 15 - grades 10-13

Family Camp 1
July 23 - 29

Family Camp 2 - Camp Together
July 30 - Aug. 5

For information,
call 208-689-3489
register at n-sid-sen.org

Senior high camp directors anticipate a fruitful week

Elliott Jensen, who is co-director of Senior High Camp with Mark Cuilla, are looking forward to “deep and meaningful conversations” on the theme, “Fruits of the Spirit,” interspersed with times of play.

Elliott, who is from Richmond Beach Congregational Church at Shoreline, grew up going to youth group and N-Sid-Sen.

“Both church and camp have been impactful experiences for me, so I like to give back by assisting with youth group at my church and returning to N-Sid-Sen as much as I can. I was honored to be invited to co-direct with Mark,” he said.

He looks forward to campers making lifelong friends.



2022 senior high campers engage in a craft with each other.

Photo courtesy of Mark Cuilla

“I believe that camp sparks genuine connections between campers and it’s wonderful to see them begin new friendships and just have a blast,” he said. Mark responded to the email inquiry to tell something about himself reported that he

is getting married June 24.

“I am a member of Salem Lutheran Church in Spokane, but I like to think of myself as a honorary UCC member because everyone has been so kind and welcoming,” he said. “Senior High Camp at N-Sid-Sen is always a special week, not just for the campers, but for the staff and volunteers as well.

“Watching campers experience the freedom to be themselves—the freedom to play and be silly without the pressure to act a certain way—feels like watching magic happen,” Mark commented.

For information, call 509-499-1149 or 206-473-1173, or email mark.cuilla@gmail.com or elliottjensen33@gmail.com.

Groups using camps through the year are partners

Instead of considering groups that rent the camp facilities in the spring, summer, fall and winter “user groups,” N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center for the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ (UCC) on Lake Coeur d’Alene refers to them as “partners.”

“They love the camps as much as we do,” said Mark Boyd, former director at N-Sid-Sen, now director at Pilgrim Firs, the conference’s camp at Port Orchard. “The groups are introduced to the United Church of Christ when they come to the sacred oases we offer.”

Pam Peterson, his successor as director at N-Sid-Sen since April 1, said N-Sid-Sen is a gathering point of community, for community and with community.

Some of the groups using its facilities are Lady of the Lakes square dancers, Inland Northwest Sufi Camp, a quilts group, Dances of Universal Peace, Casting for Recovery (fly fishing group healing from



Puget Sound Guitar Workshop at Pilgrim Firs



Warrior Path healing events at Pilgrim Firs

Pam Peterson and Mark Boyd speak at Annual Meeting.

breast cancer), and the East Side Fire District which has a boat house at the waterfront with emergency response boats.

The Pride Picnic drew about 120 to celebrate Pilgrim Firs’ Pride Garden, established in recognition of many in the LG-BTQIA+ community, said Mark.

At the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop melodies fill the camp day and night beginners to nationally recognized artists alike learning, teaching and jamming.

Mark said the Warrior Pathh Progressive, Alternative Training for Healing transforms those experiencing PTSD—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—by giving those experiencing that PTSD “Permission To Start Dreaming.”

He added that both camps offer clergy retreat spaces.

“Healing happens at camps and partners are introduced to the UCC, seeing the camps as sacred oases for creativity,” he said.

For information visit pilgrim-firs.org or n-sid-sen.org.

Director finds family camps like family reunions

For Janet Malley of Bellingham First Congregational UCC, summer 2023 will be her 22nd year of family camping, including serving as director of Family Camp 2, also known as Camp Together.

She first started coming to family camp as a single mother when her daughter, Erin Majeske, was in kindergarten. Erin, now camp musician, will bring her eight-month-old son.

“We have a strong sense of community and it’s like a family reunion every year,” said Janet, who comes for Family Camp 1 and stays to direct Camp Together, which she described as an intergenerational camp where people can come even without children.

The Ford family, whose grandparents gave the PNC the camp property, will be at Family Camp 1 with seven members, including triplet great-great-grandchildren, Janet said.

“Camp Together started because some loved camp so much that the Family Camp overflowed,” she said.

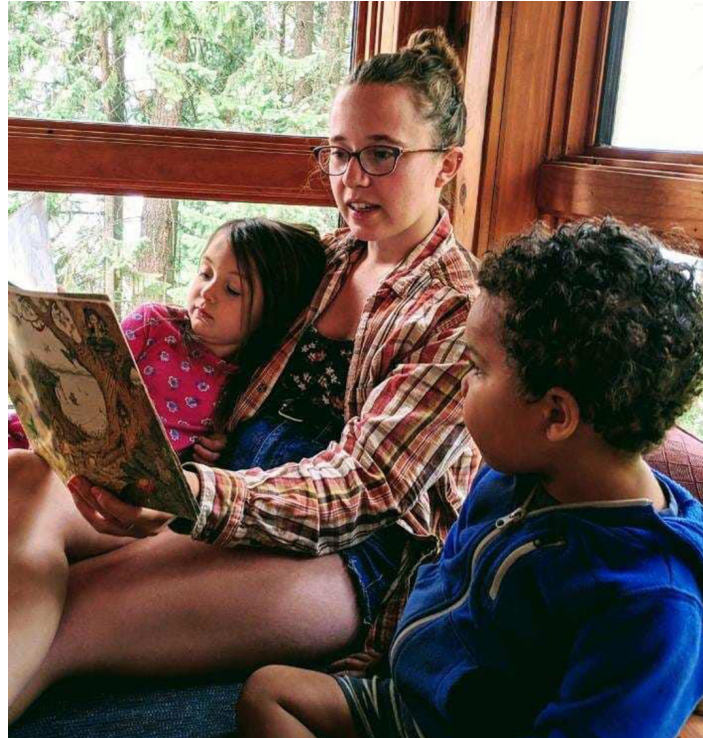
Pre-Covid about 100 came to Family Camp 1. Janet expects 55 this year. Camp Together, which previously had 60, expects 40 this year.

Janet, who has attended Bellingham First Congregational UCC since 1991, is church clerk and is part of the church’s One Accord singing group, said music is a big part of Camp Together. They built drums and have drumming circles, along with spending much time singing.

Artist Scott Ward, also of Bellingham First, will be artist in residence at Camp Together. He designed the 2023 T-shirt related to monarch habitat restoration along the shore.

Janet has recruited a staff team to carry out the 2023 theme, “Transformation,” in activities.

Each year those activi-



Family camper reads to two children. Music is a big part of Camp Together. Janet Malley and Erin Majeske enjoy a moment on the porch steps of the lodge. Photos courtesy of Janet Malley

ties including reading a chapter book together during their morning gathering and at night around the campfire.

“We hear the continuation of the story all week,” she said.

The camp has an adventure group, a play group and discussion groups in the morning groups that “provide rich conversations.”

At Family Camp I, Dee Eisenhower of Eagle Harbor Bainbridge Island often leads classes and her husband John shares in music leadership.

With camp being intergenerational, parents have a break and children have a sense of freedom—with all the adults watching all the children, said Janet, who was born in Issaquah and came to college at Western Washington University, graduating in 1984 in history and music education. Her career has included being a social worker and teacher.

“Each year I see how long I can keep this aspect of my real life alive as I return to my workaday life,” Janet said. “It sustains me every year.”

Janet’s dedication to N-Sid-Sen found expression in her being one of the volunteer camp leaders who came to N-Sid-Sen for a week in the winter to be there during the transition in leadership.

For information, call 360-920-4765 or email janetmalley@gmail.com.



Scribe Ron Patterson summarized the Annual Meeting

On behalf of the Board of Directors, PNC scribe Ron Patterson offered an overview on the 2023 PNC Annual Meeting in Bellingham.

“We gathered face to face, in person and virtually, at First Congregational Church of Bellingham April 28 to 30 for sharing, truth telling, community building and business in an Annual Meeting that took place in the context of worship,” Ron wrote.

“We began with a Service of Lament, Truth and Compassion calling us to remember our brokenness as individuals, congregations and Conference,” he said telling of Cheryl Lindsay, of the national UCC serving as a process guide, “to hold one another accountable in compassion and forgiveness as we seek to further the goals of our Conference including our special call to be an anti-racist community.”

Friday included affinity groups for moderators and those in small and rural congregations and workshops which included “Pandemic Learnings and Remaining Challenges,” “Anti-racist Theology for Majority White Congregations” and “Caring for our Trans, Non-Binary and Queer Youth.”

That evening, Traci Blackmon, associate general minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, gave an inspirational take on the state of the wider church and “our call to faithfulness in a broken world.”

The evening included a celebration of the PNC acting conference minister, Courtney Stange-Tregear, ended her ministry with the PNC. At a reception, the board asked her to commission a stole at this summer’s General Synod of the UCC as a gift. She received expressions of appreciation from Conference members.

Saturday morning, Amy Johnson, worship planner,



Dawn Koloj, Courtney Stange-Tregear and Cheryl Lindsay.



Marshallese Church welcomed into the PNC-UCC.

opened with a Service of Release for Courtney, words of appreciation and tears.

Traci then preached a reminder that “despite our failures” as those of other disciples “we are called to rebirth and renewal.”

The worship services featured music by groups from Bellingham UCC. Each service also involved members in discernment and the newly ordained clergy as liturgists.

Moderator Tara Leininger called the business meeting to order announcing a quorum. Cheryl, as process consultant, led a delegate training stressing “the importance of our relationships with one another.”

After the agenda and standing rules were approved, the first order of business was passing an emergency resolution that called for the By-Laws to be updated to allow for both virtual and in person meetings. This resolution was carefully crafted by a Community of Practice Group. The goal, en-

dorsed by the Board, was to enable gatherings to be more diverse and more inclusive. The resolution passed and the 20 delegates who registered joined the meeting virtually as full participants. This revision was necessary to be compliant with Washington State law, which says nonprofit organizations must have a by-law provision to enable virtual participation.

There were other highlights to the business meeting:

- **The new Acting** Conference Minister Jonna Jensen. Ron interviewed her from her home in Iowa and explained that she will be with the PNC for several months while the Board seeks an Intentional Interim Conference minister to serve up to three years. Lee Albertson, Conference Minister Search Coordinator for the United Church of Christ, will provide support to the Board during the search.

- **There was recognition** of Five for Five Congregations and special legacy gifts

given by All Pilgrims of Anacortes and East Congregational Church of Bellevue. They chose to invest in the future as their active lives were ending.

- **Delegates passed** a resolution brought by the Committee on Ministry updating the by-laws to make pronouns more inclusive.

- **The written reports** from the PNC acting conference minister, moderator and other committees were received and are available at pnucc.org.

- **The Dismantling Racism** Task Force presented a report and details on anti-racism funds.

- **The Marshallese** United Church of Christ JRD Congregation of Everett was welcomed by a unanimous vote as the newest PNC congregation. Their choir was featured in worship Saturday.

- **Managing directors** Mark Boyd of Pilgrim Firs and Pam Peterson of N-Sid-Sen reported on what’s happening at camps.

- **The budget** for the conference and camps passed after “a careful presentation and good discussion.” Details are at pnucc.org.

- **Delegates thanked** departing leaders and voted a new slate of officers including new moderator, Indigo Brown and new vice-moderator, Esther Sanders. These officers and other board and committee members were also approved.

- **There was a time** of remembrance for clergy who died and celebration of newly ordained clergy with the laying on of hands.

The meeting adjourned after Sunday worship.

“**We hope we can do** the work and invest the energy to build trust, work toward becoming a less racist institution, and live into the justice and love of the kingdom of God,” Ron concluded.

For information, call 239-253-1512.

Moderator lends perspective, leads bylaws discussion

Moderator Tara Leininger opened the PNC Annual Meeting April 29 at First Congregational UCC in Bellingham reporting that there were 126 delegates from 39 of the Conference's 75 churches, establishing a quorum.

"We are the church when we gather. Christ unites us as we gather in love, truth, hope and community. There is messiness. It's what it means to be human with different experiences," she said, pointing out that there are rules and guidelines for being in relationship, and the greatest is love.

"If what is spoken is not spoken in love, we need to love the one speaking and take the truth to heart, remembering. Who we are and that we are gathering as church. I am here to pray for and with you," she said.

"We are to treat each other with respect and do what my grandmother told me to do, act with good manners," Tara continued. "We are to talk and work together. Our agenda is our guideline. We are to act with the guide or our parliamentarian, Cheryl Lindsay of the national UCC. We are to treat each other with dignity, courtesy and Christ's love."

The first action was to approve a by-laws change so those attending online could participate and vote.

"Online was never the same during Covid. We did heavy lifting with technology to make it happen. There is financial impact to having hybrid meetings," Tara commented, inviting discussion.

David Anderson of United Churches of Olympia said staff had gone above and beyond to implement hybrid meetings and it takes additional work and expense. Hybrid costs more.

Jim CastroLang, retired, said having voice and vote is important so we can hear voices of those online.

Andrew Conley-Holcom of



Tara Leininger reports on developments since last AM.



Steve Jerbi notes that online is not secondary for young.

Admiral in Seattle, asked how it would affect the choice of where Annual Meetings are held.

Amara Oden of Suquamish said that for 20 years in five churches as a mother raising three children and working full time she found her first experience of Annual Meeting online broadened the table to those who are a vital part of the church but unable to get away.

Leah Atkinson Bilinski of Fauntleroy in Seattle said there are costs to be accessible for those online and "we need to pay for a quality experience."

Robert Anderson of Guemes Island said "it's not my cup of tea" and called for balancing the inclusivity with

the need for privacy, concerned about theft and abuse of information. He urged that there be mechanisms built in for protections.

Indigo Brown, vice moderator, said Zoom is hackable but can be shut down.

Steve Jerbi, of University Congregational UCC in Seattle, told of the joy of working with youth ministry and as parent of two disabled teens. For this generation, online is not a secondary expression, but increases accessibility.

Kate Forrester of Plymouth UCC in Seattle is new to the denomination, coming from the Catholic tradition, which she said is resistant to change.

She urged moving forward.

Kelle Brown of Plymouth UCC said she thought the process of engaging people equitably online and she understands the need for gatekeeping, but also believes there is need to keep the church open and adaptive.

The Annual Meeting delegates voted to approve accepting participation of voting delegates online.

In the moderator's report, Tara said, "I liked being moderator with the challenges. The work was not easy but I worked with the best people on the board who dedicated time to the conference. I am also thankful to the staff and Courtney in a time of transition. Even though the conference minister position was in flux, Courtney was to there put out fires.

Mark Boyd transitioned between from being managing director at N-Sid-Sen to being managing director at Pilgrim Firs, providing stability and growth of camps as places of renewal. Arlene Hobson and Andy Warren if there was a problem or concern they contacted the moderator, board, acting conference minister so someone's voice would be heard and someone would listen, Tara said.

"The entire conference cared for well and nurtured members," she said. "I tried my best to make judgment calls. I watched for feedback."

She pointed out that pastors and lay leaders didn't have to "go it alone." There were regular online groups for moderators and financial officers.

"Tiny Metaline Falls Congregational UCC's church council has had the same 12 people for 17 years," Tara observed. "Whether a little church or a church of 1,000 needed help we had resources to offer loving and caring."

For information, visit pn-cucc.org.

Traci Blackmon believes growth is a church's reach

At a time when the country is growing more unchurched, the Rev. Traci Blackmon, associate general minister of justice and local church ministries for the national UCC, reported to those at the PNC-UCC Annual Meeting April 28 to 30 in Bellingham, that in 2022 the national UCC had 747,000 members in 4,735 churches.

"We add new churches every year, but have lost more members than we've gained," she said, asserting, "the power of the church is not defined in numbers."

"Megachurches are not a thing in the Bible," she said. "We do our best work in community. Our power is not a measured by the number of people gathered in pews but by the impact of those who scatter."

"Rumors of a dying church are overrated. Scripture says the church will not die," Traci said, telling of her whirlwind of visits to UCC churches.

- In Chicago, she was with people in the Afro Christian Church stream of the UCC, which "has hidden stories we need to tell."

- Before that, she met with leaders in Wisconsin, a state where 800 business partners decided it was good business to have diversity and formed the One Wisconsin Campaign.

- In DC, Traci met with Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, in which she is lead plaintiff of 14—with three in the UCC—in Traci Blackmon vs the state of Missouri, a case on the attack on the rights of women to have control over their bodies.

- The next day, she was lobbying Senators. Whether R or D, she calls for advocating for being a just society, aware of the "impact of ideology chasms of polarization on congregations and society."

"Since Jan 25, some states have introduced 150 laws to



Traci Blackmon gives a presentation on Friday evening.

restrict voting laws and make it harder to register and stay on the rolls, particularly for the poor and people of color," she said. "There was no voter fraud, so the legislation is not solving a problem. Its purpose is to intimidate voters to fear voting."

- She is also concerned about laws to impede rights for LGBTQ and trans youth, the right for women and families to make decisions about reproduction and laws banning books and drag queens but not school shooters.

"We are divided," she said, like when Martin Luther King Jr. wrote a letter from the Birmingham Jail to white clergy to call them to unity, despite the hate they had expressed in a letter because they did not want the change King was bringing.

"Their actions were driven by what the cost of change would be rather than what change could bring," Traci said. "Change did come and change

is yet to come."

Traci then turned focus to delegates saying "the journey to justice does not start with proclamation protest or revolution. It starts with seeing one another." She invited delegates to spend a few minutes actively listening to each other.

"We are starved for human attention. If we are listening we are not forming our response or figuring how our stories fits in their story," she said inviting attendees to discuss their hopes for their time together.

She then invited people to notice who was present and who was not: "Who is not here? Why are they not here?"

Traci recalled the 1967 film, "Guess Who is Coming to Dinner?" about the daughter of a well-to-do white family introducing her fiancé, a black well-to-do doctor. Interracial marriage was illegal in most states until then. It presents a taboo about who is at the table and who is not.

"The table is not where we say grace but where we extend grace," Traci offered as a challenge to a united, uniting church, to a conference with the theme, "Loving Deeply." "Tables are important in human narrative. They were where we share wisdom and culture, mark identity. What does our eating company say about us?"

She called attention to who is invited to the table and who is not, who has the authority to invite and who does not.

"Tables are places of power and division. They are central to community building," she said.

Traci pointed out that the Hebrew word for justice is Tzedek. It means righteousness—not in the sense of super holy, doing no wrong, but in the sense of being in right relationship with the Creator and Creation."

After the senseless killing of Michael Brown Jr and too many young blacks—Emmet Till, Trayvon Martin and the list goes on—the call for law enforcement to be more responsible was met with rage.

Traci was among citizens who sat at tables for nine months of conversation and collaboration on a way to move forward in Ferguson. They came seek peace, but there are different interpretations of peace—controlling others, the absence of conflict or don't stir the pot.

"I travel representing the denomination in which 84 percent of the people do not look like me, but I am at home," she said. "I acknowledge that if you knew I was coming and you showed up, you want things to be better because despite our differences we are of one heart."

"Silence will not save us," Traci said. "Peace is the presence of justice, and justice necessitates conflict."

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Justice requires endless effort and grace when failing

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“We were at a table that was so long it included Palestinian and Brazilian young people who came to Ferguson to teach young people there how to protect themselves from tear gas and to know what hand symbols mean, because U.S. police go to Israel to be trained.

“**Common tables form** around injustice and need include both sides. We need mediation tables so we can come to agree and eat,” she said.

Traci was among the clergy who went out different nights. At 10 p.m., she was ready to go home, but committed to stay until the protesters left the street. Then Katherine Daniels, Mama Kat, came, a woman with a street ministry of feeding people.

Traci feared there would be confrontation of youth and overworked, tired police, but Mama Kat came with free food. She drove her truck through the barrier across from the police station. She and her spouse pulled out four church tables, dressed them with linen and set out chafing dishes, pots and disposable plates and utensils. She took a megaphone and invited protestors and police, “Y’all come and eat.”

“It was the greatest communion,” Traci said, realizing that Jesus fed people, nourishing them physically and spiritually, inviting the poor, crippled, lame and blind. Traci invited people to consider how they practice hospitality in churches, schools, state houses and their homes to break through theological barriers and moral barriers.

“**Jesus first says, ‘Peace be with you,’** when the disciples are fearful and disoriented,” she said. “Tables give hope in the midst of horror.”

Instead of lamenting days gone by, she called for families to shape relationships to build



Traci Blackmon preaching on Saturday at Annual Meeting.

the community they want to remember now.

“**Work for justice is** what our denomination has done and will continue to do,” she said, quoting Coretta Scott King saying the struggle for justice is a “never-ending struggle” for every generation.

“When we remove barriers, it takes time to see clearly,” said Traci, inviting people to stay at tables even when they are uncomfortable.

“**Representation and** diversity are not justice, only box of different colors of crayons,” she said. “If we measure anti-racism by color we are in trouble. Anti-racism work is not about making sure we see blackness of people but making sure we see whiteness.

“Whether we are white,

black, brown or just a color, we need to open tables, forgive ourselves, know we will work on forever and commit to work for justice together.”

She invited people to learn more about how to be anti-racist at the website: jointhemovement/ucc.org. That movement invites people not just to show up in the street but to have strategies for the prolonged need to protest.

Later, preaching for the Saturday worship service, she said that as a child of the South, her great grandmother, who never went to school, sang, prayed and went to church with Traci, teaching her never to be ungrateful.

“Peter reminds me of the unapologetic passion and imperfection of those of us who

time to time mess up,” she said.

In spite of his promise and potential, Peter made huge mistakes. He denies he knows Jesus three times. Peter gets three chances and stumbles over the same issue again and again, Traci said. His heart wants to do what is right, but his mind and body want to do different.

“Guilty conscience can ruin relationships,” she said. “The Bible calls us to confess what we try to hide holds us back from fear we messed up.

Peter wrestles with a guilty conscience.

The angel who met the woman at the tomb told her to tell the disciples and Peter that there can still be mercy after they mess up – joy after broken heart. Redemption is possible for everyone and Peter.

“What Jesus desires for Peter is love, life giving, hope filled grace,” she said. “The good news is that in the midst of cancel culture and in spite of failure, God still wants us to belong to him.

“**God wants us not to be** defined by our past mistakes but by our present potential,” she said.

“We are to be accountable, atone and find our way back to at-oneness. New hope is possible,” Traci said, aware people may abandon racial healing because words cause wounds leaving people a hostage to failures.

“**The promise of God** is true. We need the moral courage to tell the truth to save selves, others and planet,” she said. “There is no reconciliation without facing our failures.”

She closed with words of a hymn that “God calls us to build a house where all can safely live, where hearts learn to forgive and where the love of Christ will end divisions so all are welcome.

For information, call news director Connie Larkman at 216-736-2196 or visit ucc.org.

Sophie Morse was ordained to address conflicts

As part of a covenant with the Pacific Northwest Conference and the Conference Committee on Ministry, Sophie Morse is offering a series of six 90-minute classes on engaging conflict effectively.

The classes are Thursdays online every two months. The first series began in April, continued in June and continues through January 2024.

The classes are geared to help lay people and clergy gain confidence and competence in a church climate to handle emotionally charged situations and lead effective meetings.

“Our comfort level affects how we handle the heat of conflict,” said Sophie who was ordained to a ministry of conflict resolution in the fall of 2020 as part of the conference commitment to engage around conflict resolution.

The April class, an “Introduction to Conflict and Conflict Resolution” helped people learn how to diagnose a conflict so they could treat it.

“Often conflict brings with it a sense of chaos and helplessness. When we can identify the core elements of any conflict we face, we can not only reclaim our presence, but also know how to treat the conflict,” said Sophie.

“This means being able to make intentional choices about how to de-escalate and constructively move forward in a way that serves all stakeholders,” she explained.

The second class, “De-escalating High Conflict Behavior,” on June 15 emphasized that calm response to a conflict is a vital leadership skill. Participants gained an easy-to-remember tool for responding to high conflict communication, whether in the form of challenging verbal or written “feedback,” meeting hijacking, or hallway ambushes.

Twenty years ago, Sophie



Sophie Morse offers keys to resolving conflicts in churches.

moved to the Pacific Northwest from Massachusetts and Rhode Island where she worked professionally in experiential and outdoor education with mariner programs on sailing vessels.

With mariners—experienced sailors—on both sides of her family, Sophie sailed in high school and before her college degrees, and she worked 10 years professionally with boats.

During college, she spent summers sailing on the ocean, complementing her studies at the University of Rhode Island on marine policy. She earned a bachelors in 1993 and masters in 1996 in environmental and natural resource economics.

“I felt called to ministry in the late 1990s but did not follow through. Growing up in the UCC, I thought I would save the world through environmental policies until I realized I liked working with people,” she said.

In 2004, Sophie moved to Poulsbo where she did odd jobs and was done with sailing.

Through the Compassionate Listening Project, Sophie decided to train in conflict resolution. She volunteered with the Dispute Resolution Center (DRS) of Kitsap County until she became a certified mediator in 2009. In 2010, Sophie worked as a paid intern for six months with Keystone UCC in Seattle and began working with the DRC of Kitsap County.

In 2006, she began attending Suquamish Community Congregational UCC and was accepted into the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University to work on a master of divinity degree.

“I realized I wanted to do dispute resolution, not be a church pastor,” she said.

From 2010 to 2018 as a member in discernment, she decided to be ordained when the Committee on Ministry of-

fered guidance.

“I saw how painful it was to be in conflict, especially in a small organization with a passion around a mission of wanting to help,” Sophie said. “I was ordained with a five-way covenant with the PNC, Suquamish UCC, myself, the place I work and an independent oversight board I convened for support and accountability. It includes my pastor, Amari Oden.

“I proposed an introductory session in August 2021 to introduce conflict resolution in work with congregations, funded by congregations,” she said.

Sophie described typical conflicts in churches:

- People in churches hold different political views and levels of comfort on how progressive the church is.
- Conflicts arise in pastoral care and how volunteer lay leaders manage pastoral staff.
- There is anger, anxiety and frustration because the role of the church is changing.
- Conflicts arise over which programs to fund.
- Conflict resolution helps people address anger.
- There is regular organizational conflict with people triangulating and not addressing issues directly.

“If conflict is present in a community it may distract members from engaging with one another,” Sophie said, “yet engaging with one another around conflict is how we create the kingdom of God.

“Conflict is not distraction, but what we do to be the church and be more of the church we want to be,” she said.

“While many run away from conflict, I run toward it like a firefighter runs toward a fire,” she said. “I seek to transform the painful experience so the church can be who they want to be with one another

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Dismantling Racism TF offers perspectives of meetings

The Dismantling Racism Task Force reported on their work to help the PNC become more anti-racist conference by supporting hearing from Black and Brown pastors.

Lenore Marentette of All Pilgrims Christian Church in Seattle said that after emotional chaos at the last Annual Meeting there was need for additional perspective.

At the last two annual meetings, conference leaders received the holy gifts of vulnerability, challenge and change through the voices of Black and Brown clergy," she said.

"We experienced breaking open long standing concerns that deeply challenged delegates. The standing business was set aside so these experiences could be heard," Lenore said.

"In the last two annual meetings, the Spirit shook us with the voices of those excluded and the ways the conference has fallen short. Those who continue to show up tell us it is easier to leave and take their pain with them," she added, "but BIPOC pastors and members still have faith in us as a conference."

The Dismantling Racism Task Force helped the conference realize the liberating, chal-



Steve Clagett, Lenore Marentette and Chris Hanson of the Dismantling Racism Task Force report at Annual Meeting.

lenging work that is needed to dismantle racism, setting aside agendas to hear voices and transforming the conference to call the PNC to a new way of being.

Lenore pointed out that if people of color are frustrated, they may disengage.

The Dismantling Racism Task Force urged the delegates and participants as a collective body to engage in prayerful discernment about how the "disrupters" influenced the annual meetings in a positive way.

"Our job is to recognize the healing power of anger. We seek to flourish in the PNC with respect and love," task force members said.

"I embrace ideas of dis-

ing work in covenant as white Christians," said member Steve Clagett also of All Pilgrims. "Our part of the covenant is to love deeply and stay in conversation and not walk away. We need healing as a body experiencing emotional trauma.

"I tell white Christians to lean into the anger people of color trusted us with and to accept it as a blessing," he said. "We need to be able to say, 'I messed up,' and keep talking to each other, not just at Annual Meetings."

In its report, the task force says it sees need to "continue the lifelong work of dismantling racism within ourselves, our team, our churches,

and the broader community," to be intentional about "how we show up both at our meetings and out in the world," endeavoring to call out racist words, actions, and systems.

They call for whites to learn the truth about our white supremacist, colonial history and share this truth with others, working to build a community "where we can learn from each other and share the mistakes and progress being made."

They invite efforts to build relationships of accountability, encouraging the conference to show up where Black, Brown, Asian and Indigenous pastors and laypeople lead the conference.

They seek to provide a safe place for people to openly discuss their anti-racist journey, to promote the Conference Anti-Racist fund and to promote the Sacred Conversations to End Racism workshop and Undoing Institutional Racism training.

Task Force members are chair Christine Hanson, Amara Oden, Andrew Conley-Holcom, Elizabeth Maupin, Gilbert and Mary Escandon, Kelle Brown, Lenore Marentette, Lin Hagedorn, Marilyn Burwell, Robert Brown and Steve Clagett.

For information, visit pn-cucc.org.

Communication key to build understanding to prevent conflict

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and with God. To be caught in conflict is embedded in human experience.

She urges people to communicate through conflict to better understand themselves, their community and their faith.

In addition to the workshop series, Sophie goes to churches and leads workshops tailored to a church or community.

She offers one-on-one conflict coaching and consultation when a church asks for help.

She does coaching with leaders, mediation between two people and multiparty Restorative Mediation.

"I seek to help people reset, refresh and restore a sense of togetherness so they engage with conflict in the moment," she said.

Sophie weaves in scripture, prayer and theology to help people be aware God is present in conflict.

"I apply an equity lens and incorporate understanding sys-

tems of power and individual power and structural imbalances in my work.

Sophie said it is important in resolving conflicts to consider the intersection of a community's overlapping layers of historical oppression.

"As both a woman and queer, I experience certain layers of oppression. Race would add more layers," she said.

Sophie explained how understanding the intersection of different layers of oppression

in an individual has impact on how she might coach people in conflict.

Upcoming classes are Aug. 17 on "How to Listen Effectively," Oct. 19 on "How to Ask for What We Want," Nov. 16 on "How to Encourage Effective Meetings," and Jan. 18 on "How to Navigate Conversations on 'isms.'"

For information, call 360-870-8024, email sfmor1@gmail.com or visit solacepathwaysllc.com.

Pastor takes ecological ideas to heart to build house

From her long-term commitment to environmental justice, Meighan Pritchard, pastor of Prospect UCC in Seattle, decided in 2018 to act on her dream to buy property, build a house and grow food.

She learned Gail Crouch, a retired pastor of University Congregational UCC in Seattle, and her husband planned to sell five acres on Whidbey Island. They had purchased the land in 2007 from Catherine Foote, also a retired pastor at UCUC, where Meighan grew up.

So Meighan bought it soon after her sibling Molly died at the age of 53, realizing it was important to live her dream.

Meighan was the UCC minister for environmental justice from 2013 to 2015 and continued to give environmental justice workshops around the country through 2017.

In the 1980s, she left Seattle to major in English at Yale University, graduating in 1984 and working in academic publishing there. She later earned a degree in music education at the University of Washington, taught elementary music four years and worked with the Seattle Symphony five years.

Her passion about environment grew when she joined CrossWalk in 2006, walking across America with 10 people from progressive churches, from Phoenix on Easter Sunday to Washington, D.C. on Labor Day. They were hosted by churches and individuals who joined them along the way.

During the walk, Meighan felt called to seminary. Before acting on that, she worked as an office manager with Sightline Institute, where she learned more about sustainability and climate change.

"I went to seminary to explore the intersection of faith and environment, graduating from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley in 2010. I filled in at University UCC when Cath-



Salvaged cabinets and wood, and big windows on the south and open design allow for passive solar and saving on lights. *Photos courtesy of Meighan Pritchard*

erine was on sabbatical in 2011 and was called to Prospect in 2012," said Meighan.

As she embarked on building a house, she read books, researched house plans for ideas on sustainable and green building. She sold her 800-square-foot house near Shoreline to build a 1,200-square-foot house, that was still small. She hired a contractor to build it.

Church members have helped build fencing and plant fruit trees in the garden, which she plans as a group endeavor. There are already many blackberries.

"Eventually I hope to grow a lot of food and invite people to be part of that in a way that feeds them body and soul," she said.

Meighan has involved Prospect UCC in environmental concerns through book studies on environmental and social justice, and on climate change.

The church also participates in Seattle's Rainwise Program to reduce storm water from overflowing into lakes and Puget Sound. Six years ago, the church set up two large

cisterns that take and hold roof runoff so it trickles out.

Meighan started the house in 2020. She just finished it and moved in a few weeks ago, with a few projects left to do.

Inside the house, many elements are built by reusing components. She has also used low or no volatile organic compound paints and installed low flow toilets.

"I have used salvaged materials wherever possible with 90 percent of the wood flooring and much of the tile from salvage shops. Pedestal sinks in bathrooms came from the Habitat Store," she said.

The cabinets came from two sources that didn't match, so she sanded down one set and stained it to match the other.

For a window seat with drawers in the great room and a built-in 11-foot desk in her loft office, the drawers were from salvaged cabinets.

Meighan salvaged the medicine cabinet and refrigerator from her mother's house when her mother moved into a retirement community.

"The medicine cabinet is an

antique my father bought," she said. "The refrigerator works fine so I brought it to my house instead of taking it to the dump."

Butcherblock kitchen counters were salvaged from University Temple in Seattle. Two members of Prospect cut and finished them.

The butcherblock countertop on the kitchen island is from a table her sister Molly gave her years ago.

The house is sited in an open meadow with the largest span of the roof facing south so she can add solar panels. She had wiring for them installed before the drywall went in. The solar panels will be installed on the roof next year.

To take advantage of passive solar heat, Meighan enlarged windows facing south and has few north-facing windows. The house is full of natural light, so she doesn't need to turn on lights during the day.

There is no gas or oil furnace. Heat is from a mini-split heat pump that also functions as an air conditioner. A ceiling fan keeps air circulating.

The water heater is hybrid electric. The washing machine is energy efficient.

"Because dryers take a huge amount of energy, I plan to hang clothes out to dry. It's easy for one person," she said.

Meighan just bought a used electric car, with a range of 250 miles/charge, and will have a charge outlet installed so the car can quick charge at home.

In addition, she wanted the house to be accessible to people with mobility issues so the hallway and doors on the first floor are extra wide and there is a ramp from the parking area. The main floor bathroom has a roll-in shower, hand-held shower head and a bench to sit on. The bathroom is across the hall from the guest bedroom.

For information, call 206-370-4142 or email pritchard-meighan@gmail.com.

Enroute to join 40 UCC members from 7 churches, couple shared why they were in the Pride Parade

This past Sunday, my husband Tim and I headed to the Roosevelt light rail station with our signs in hand (We Say Gay! Love your Neighbor!) ready to march in Seattle's annual Pride Parade.

On the way, I said to Tim, "Why are we doing this?" We'd already had a long, busy weekend and staying home was tugging at my already tired body.

He immediately responded, "Marching in support of our LGBTQ+ friends is more important now than ever." Of course, he was right. Pride banners are being torn down from churches from Seattle to Spokane, and LGBTQ+ rights are threatened once again. It's no time to stand down. Any second thoughts I may have had were quickly dispelled upon arriving to the joyous sights and sounds of the parade assembly.

If spreading joy is an act of resistance, the Pride Parade is one of the most effective forms of subversive protest! We were surrounded by joy everywhere we looked, from the colorful (in every way) expressions of the participants to the laughter, waves and cheers from hundreds of thousands of viewers along the parade route.

We marched alongside 40 PNC members from seven churches including Prospect, Plymouth, UCUCC, Northshore, Normandy Park, Mercer Island and Fauntleroy, and with our PNC Moderator Indigo Brown.

Parade planners assigned us an early slot, just before the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and the ACLU.

Perhaps this was their own form of resisting stereotyping – placing a church group close to the front of the parade. As we passed the announcement stand, the emcee read from the card describing the PNC, then went off script to say "This is how to protest, friends. You don't just sit on the sidelines and cheer, you march in the parade! Thank you Pacific Northwest Conference UCC for your courage!"

Yes, that's why I came to march. We are all God's children. God loves every single one of us. No exception. I'll march to that!

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Isaiah 43:1

Betty Spieth Croll
Member of University Congregational UCC - Seattle



Betty Spieth Croll and Tim Croll with their signs for Pride Parade.



Pictured above are banners carried in the Seattle Pride Parade by Northshore UCC in Woodinville, Plymouth UCC in Seattle and University Congregational UCC in Seattle.