

Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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September-October 2015

Dayton's bell calls people to worship and pray

Van Whysong and Levi Laib helped the church restore its Eells bell

Marj Johnston, pastor at Dayton First Congregational UCC feels blessed that her church has a gift from a pioneer church planter, the Rev. Cushing Eells. It is one of nine bells he donated to area churches.

"It continues to give us opportunity to call people together to worship and pray," she said of the gift.

Eells had visited in 1875 and 1877, when the church was founded. In 1883, he gave the church its bell and parsonage, and helped secure the building for \$1,058.10, she reported.

Eells, who founded several Eastern Washington churches and schools, and Whitman College in Walla Walla, donated bells to nine churches: Colfax, Continued on Page 4



Dayton First Congregational UCC's bell was refurbished last spring before Easter.

Photo courtesy of Van Whysong

Mike Denton explores options for response to wildfire disaster

Recently Conference Minister Mike Denton called for prayer and established a PNC Disaster Relief fund.

He has been part of conversations with ecumenical partners, national offices, PNC Disaster Response Ministries coordinator Ken Coleman and clergy to explore ways to help.

"The potential responses are as fluid as the situation itself," Mike said.

Organizations that already support those who have been most directly affected by the fires say not to send any material donations like clothes or sheets. They have more than what they need.

There has been need for places to house farm animals.

Air quality concerns were a factor for every church east of the Cascades.

"In our conversations, we wondered if our churches might be places where

appropriate air quality masks and a one-page information sheet about dealing with poor air quality could be shared," Mike said, noting the need for medical professionals with expertise in respiratory issues might call to help think through the needs—206-725-8383.

Another suggestion is to help the most vulnerable make their homes more resistant to smoke penetration.

"As far as long-term recovery efforts, some ecumenical partners with experience in local fire recovery have been contacted to see if we might be able to join them in their recovery work," Mike added.

In terms of pastoral care, the threat of fire, the ever present reality of smoke and the possibility that the weather patterns may be "the new normal" are causing stress.

Mike said they discussed training clergy to be resources for their congregations and communities.

In terms of advocacy, one important response to these fires is increasing advocacy related to climate change.

"Our churches already have relationships with faith based organizations such as Earth Ministry and the Faith Action Network involved in this work.

"We are part of a denomination that has long been involved in environmental justice work. There is a UCC Environmental Justice Training Oct. 7 to 9 at N-Sid-Sen.

Individuals and congregations can send checks to the PNC at 325 N. 125th St. Seattle, WA 98118 with "Disaster Relief: Washington" in the memo line or can donate online at "DONATE NOW" at www.pncucc.org.

Transitions elicit five suggestions for churches

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

**Success
and
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both gifts
that have
things
to teach.**

Over the next few months, our conference will celebrate at least seven ordinations and installations of new pastors. It's normal for 10 percent of congregations to transition in a year but it's unusual to have this many installations and ordinations in this condensed a time period. With so many churches in transition, I am sharing five simple, but not exhaustive, suggestions.

First, pastors do not come to churches fully formed. To develop an excellent pastor, a church should give a pastor the opportunity and space to be a good pastor and leader, as well as to be a great and healthy person. To do that, a church should recognize the difference between feedback and criticism and give lots of feedback.

There is *always* more ministry to do. This is true for both the pastor and church as a whole, neither the church nor the pastor can do all that could be done. As a community, it's important to be strategic in making priorities clear or being unsatisfied with initiatives half done.

Although it is primarily the pastor's responsibility to make sure they take days off, work a reasonable number of hours and take vacations, sabbatical and sick leave, it is the church's responsibility, too. Pastors covenant with churches to have this time not just as a benefit but also as part of their promise to be spiritually, physically and emotionally healthy. Every study on clergy health says this time is not just nice to have but is central to clergy and congregational health.

Second, a church and pastor can plan in advance for when the pastor, the church and both will succeed, because they will. This is a strategic plan. It's easy to fall into the pattern of deciding to complete one thing and not have a plan of what to do next. On reaching a goal, momentum lingers, lapses or dissipates in trying to figure out what to do next with the momentum. Having a five-year plan, a 10-year plan and even a 50-year plan helps a church flow from success to success instead of starting and stopping. It takes time, resources and energy, but is worth it and gives a plan for the energy that comes with success.

Third, plan in advance for when the pastor the church and both will fail, because that will happen, too. Frequently, our responses to success and failure are the opposite of what they need to be. After a success, we tend to pause. After a failure, we tend to ignore it and keep moving. I suggest lingering there. Success and failure are both gifts that have things to teach.

When failing, a church needs to take time to figure out what went wrong, practicing the difference between taking responsibility and blaming.

A Personnel Committee and a Pastor Parish Relations Committee need to be set up before

there are problems. The Personnel Committee focuses on performance, priority and remuneration questions for all staff. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee focuses on congregational interpersonal, pastoral and ethical challenges, and on spiritually supporting and encouraging the pastor's health. The functions of these committees should and can remain separate.

Fourth, a congregation should take responsibility for its spiritual life and pray together all the time. The pastor is a person they invite to be in a relationship with, part of their community, and to work with them to the end. The church is not paying the pastor to provide them with spiritual health. A pastor may enhance members' spiritual life but doesn't mediate their relationship with God. Members are to keep up that relationship through daily prayer, Bible study and service.

Often when people leave a church, they say they are not being fed. Coming to church is not going to restaurant where you order what you want. It's coming to a potluck, where everyone's bringing what they have to share. If there is something lacking, that might be a call for a member to create something or ask for help.

Finally, members need to make loving each other, creating community, and serving God and God's people their goals and measures of their health. A crisis arises in a church arises when these things are threatened, not when an individual or group does not get their way.

Sometimes, it's more than that. If a member feels so much pain because what he/she truly believes should be the church's path is not the church's direction, I encourage that person prayerfully to consider whether this is a call to go somewhere else or to start something new. It's not losing or giving up. It's being faithful.

Although commitment to a community is important, a line is sometimes crossed where commitment becomes a claim of owning God's church or an individual's discernment of God's will for the church. When we think that what is God's is ours, we make God and our church idols.

Part of the good news is that God doesn't put us in that spot. We are freed from owning God's Church. It's God's Church. We share the care of it together. We are free from the weight of individual discernment for God's will for a congregation. As God's people, our task is to listen, together.

We have resources—like a building or finances—that we can use to serve God and God's people. We don't have to protect them. We are to share them well.

I hope these ideas helpful are. Please send your ideas to include in future columns to revdenton@gmail.com.

Transitions announced

Bruce Allen Wilson Jr will be ordained at 3 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 13, at University Congregational UCC. A graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill., he serves at CHI-Franciscan System Services in Tacoma as a chaplain.

The Congregational Church on Mercer Island will install **Roberta Rominger** at 3 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 27. A high tea will follow. She has served as General Secretary of the United Reformed Church in England, where she and her husband have lived for 30 years.

Alice Ling will be installed as pastor at First Congregational Church in Wallace, Idaho, at 4 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 4.

Brandon Duran, formerly associate minister at Plymouth UCC in Seattle, is now pastor at Central Union Church (UCC) in Honolulu.

Mike Titus, who served Sunnyslope Brethren-UCC Church as pastor, died Sept. 7 of a heart attack.

Tom Thresher, pastor at Suquamish UCC, died July 9. His service was Aug. 29 in Suquamish.

A memorial service for **Dave Knight**, a supporter of PNCUCC Outdoor Ministries was held Aug. 1 at Prospect UCC Church in Seattle. A memorial fund has been established for the campership program.

PNC has new ONA consultant

Jan Shannon, licensed to serve at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, is the newly-appointed ONA consultant for the PNC-UCC. She recently participated in training in Minnesota. She will help the Conference engage further and live into being an ONA conference.

Marj Johnston of Dayton previously served in the ONA role.

Water Wheelchair Fund starts

Jenny Palmason Kaiton set up "Let's get a water-wheelchair for N-SID-SEN!" at gofundme.com/yd55nx4.

"The idea came to me because my father is a long time UCC member and has been going to family camp for more than 30 years. A rare muscle disease doesn't

allow him to enjoy the water any more.

Jenny decided to try crowd funding among the UCC community so Mark Boyd can purchase one and all disabled persons who come to N-Sid-Sen can enjoy the water safely. *The crowd fund site is at gofundme.com/yd55nx4.*

Environmental Justice Workshop will be Oct. 7 to 9

The fall 2015 Environmental Justice Workshop will be held from dinner Wednesday to noon Friday, Oct. 7 to 9, at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center.

Participants in the event sponsored by the PNC and the UCC Justice

and Witness Ministries will explore how people of faith can work for environmental justice for all, and how they can create a sustainable, healthy, inclusive community. This "train the trainer" workshop will explore these questions to empower conversation and actions for environmental justice.

In initial sessions, participants consider a faith-based approach to environmental justice that considers gratitude, humility, responsibility, justice and community. Themes include biblical readings, selections from the video "Renewal," insights from respected leaders and study questions.

On Thursday afternoon, the group will visit Kellogg, Idaho, to learn about environmental damage from abandoned mines, cleanup efforts and impacts on communities and individuals.

They will work through issues of environmental despair to build communities based on hope; develop strategies and activities for participants' local communities, and create a plan for participants' workshops.

For information, call 288-689-3489 or register at n-sid-sen.org.

Church Council sets event

The Church Council of Greater Seattle's "Weaving Our Strengths" Conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday, Oct. 3, at University Congregational UCC, 4515 16th Ave. NE in Seattle.

This year Carrie Newcomer will be in Concert at 7 p.m., Friday, Oct.

Weaving Our Strengths is a day-long conference of fellowship, inspiration, and skill-building to strengthen local churches' efforts for the common good.

The day includes worship, two sessions of workshops, a resource fair, a celebration of the Gertrude Apel Pioneering Spirit Awardees, and an opportunity to weave together what we've learned through small group conversations. Workshop themes include worship, church management, tending the spirit, and social justice, including racial reconciliation, environment, homelessness, and human trafficking awareness.

For information, call 206-206-3855 email aerickson@thechurchcouncil.org or visit thechurchcouncil.ejoinme.org/WOS.

Lecture Series begins Oct. 9

The Lecture Series at University Congregational United Church of Christ will present Diana Butler Bass, speaking on "Grounded: The Spiritual Revolution All Around Us" on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 9, 10 and 11 at the church, 4515 16th Ave Ne in Seattle.

Her latest book is *Grounded: Finding God in the World – A Spiritual Revolution*.

She suggests a spiritual revolution is underway "when we understand that soil is holy, water gives life, the sky opens the imagination, our roots matter, home is a divine place, and our lives are entwined with our neighbors' across the globe. This world, not heaven, is the sacred stage of our times."

An exhibit on "Grounded in the Word," with works by artist Sandra Bowden, including a series of 23 collagraphs, images created from a printing process incorporating collage will be on display Sept. 27 through Nov. 22.

For information, call 206-524-2322 or email lectureseries@universityucc.org.

Bellevue First offers chairs

Bellevue First Congregational Church is relocating and currently has 60 chapel chairs to donate to any congregation that would like to have them. The chairs are padded and connect together with places for hymnals, said Kevin Brown, lead pastor.

For information, contact Kevin Brown at 425-454-5001.

Conference
News
Briefs

UCC churches near shootings pass paper cranes

Everett United Church of Christ dedicated 1,000 folded paper cranes on July 5 and sent them to Circular United Church of Christ, a few blocks from the Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., the site of the recent shooting massacre.

The cranes have been on prominent display in the Everett church since killings six miles away at Marysville Pilchuk High School last Oct. 24. A 15-year-old student shot five students before killing himself. Two of the five died at the scene. Two of those wounded died later, and one lived.

A Santa Barbara, Calif., UCC church, which was near a similar tragedy, sent the cranes after learning about Everett.

Becky Withington, then the pastor at Everett and mother of a high school senior, was “stunned and horrified to have such an awful event hit so close to home.” She offered prayer, support and pastoral counseling to church families experiencing anxiety and grief. There were vigils at several churches.

The next Sunday, the Rev. Mimi Lane, a retired chaplain who had served at the hospital where the wounded teens were, preached. Several students and former students came.

As she greeted the teens after the service, “there were hugs and more tears,” Mimi said. In the fellowship time, people also reached out to them.

The Santa Barbara church had received the 1,000 cranes from the Newtown, Conn., UCC where 20 children were fatally shot at Sandy Hook Elementary school in 2012.

The paper cranes are sent to bring love, strength and hope at a time of pain and sorrow, to assure the community of the solidarity of sister churches in communities of other tragedies.

The liturgy to bless the cranes as they go to their destination says: “We send these peace cranes as a sign and testament to our hope for peace with justice in our world and our belief that violence does not have the last word. We send them carrying our love that it may en-



Covey of paper cranes brings love, strength and hope.

Photo courtesy of Everett UCC

ergize overcoming of hate and racism. We ask God’s blessing on their flight and on their new resting place that once again these humble peace cranes may

testify to the presence of God in the midst of trouble.”

For information, call 425-252-7224, email churchadmin@everettucc.org.

Bell calls people to gather for worship and prayer

Continued from page 1

Cheney, Chewelah, Spokane First (now Westminster), Medical Lake, Sprague, North and East Tacoma.

Of bells at seven churches—Westminster, Colfax, Cheney, Chewelah, Fox Island, Blaine and Dayton—it is believed that six are Eells bells.

Van Whysong, who attends Dayton First Congregational UCC and Metaline Falls First Congregational UCC with his wife Lois, climbed into the bell tower two weeks before Easter this year when the church was doing spring cleaning.

He noticed that the bell had not been greased for a long time, it was strung incorrectly, a spoke was broken and the tolling hammer was not connected.

Van also noted that the bell was cast in 1883, so it likely survived a fire in the 1880s.

Pins or wooden pegs in the hardwood wheel hold the joints together in the wheel the rope goes around.

He said the cast iron brake on the wheel and one of the spokes it was mounted on were broken, allowing the bell to turn completely over if rung too hard.

Levi Laib, a young adult and third generation member, made welding repairs on the brake before Van remounted on the newly glued spoke.

“While the bell had been operational, the work made it easier to ring,” Van said.

Van also saw a huge cast iron hammer with a big metal

handle laying beside the bell on the belfry floor. Its broken mounting bracket was in place on the hardwood base frame.

Van attached it to the rope, and Levi repaired the cast iron bracket so the tolling hammer could be reattached to its rope to restore the tolling function.

The church rang the bell for Easter Sunday.

It was among the church bells “rung” via video, calling people to worship during the 2015 PNC Annual Meeting.

In response to a PNC invitation to ring bells as a call to pray for thousands fighting the region’s wildfires, hundreds dislocated by them and in memorial of three firefighters who died fighting the Twisp River fire, on Sunday, Aug. 23, Day-

ton’s bell rang and tolled with bells at 15 PNC churches, along with the bell at the Tewkesbury (England) Abbey.

This summer, the bell was also used to ring for 30 seconds followed by nine tolls, one for each of the victims who were shot at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.

In 2012, it also rang after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

At Annual Meeting 2015, a video played at the start of each service included church bells from around the PNC.

Marj welcomes information about other Eells bells.

For information, call 509-382-2471 or email pastor-marj@gmail.com.

Justice Leadership Program welcomes six interns

Justice Leadership Program (JLP) is growing in 2015-2016 to include six organizations, four churches and six interns working toward social and economic justice.

"We are delighted to welcome new partners, Prospect UCC, The Children's Alliance and Unite Here Local 8," said Elizabeth Dickinson, JLP program manager.

The interns began working on Sept. 7. They are:

Amber Dickson, interning this past year at the Faith Action Network, will spend a second JLP year, this time with the *Children's Alliance* and *Keystone UCC*.

In her work with FAN, she became passionate about criminal justice reform. She is available to teach in churches about criminal justice and statewide children's issues.

Ann Marie Do, a recent graduate of the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, will work with the *Church Council of Greater Seattle* and *Plymouth UCC* on human trafficking. She researched trafficking while studying in Europe.

She earned a bachelor's in communications with a minor in gender studies, and plans to go on for graduate studies after this gap year.

Hannah Long-Higgins, a native of Columbus, Ohio, will work with *Unite Here Local 8* and *Plymouth UCC*. She recently earned a bachelor's degree from Heidelberg University in international/cross-cultural studies and English/writing.

At Heidelberg, she was involved in Students for Progressive Theology, international Model United Nations conferences, the speech team and the Women's Leadership Initiative.

During her junior year, she studied abroad in Heidelberg, Germany. She is interested in the intersection of multi-media, performing arts, social move-



Amber Dickson



Ann Marie Do



Hannah Long-Higgins



Alyssa Nedrow

ments and the intermixing of cultures.

Alyssa Nedrow, who is originally from Chardon, Ohio, 40 miles from Cleveland, will work with the *Faith Action Network* and *Keystone Church, UCC*.

She graduated from Ohio University with a bachelor's in visual communication, with a major in photojournalism and a minor in history.

Intrigued by human connections, she wants to use photography to share stories of people and as a tool for social documentary and advocacy.

Julia Urban, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, will work with the *Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness* and *All Pilgrims*



Julie Urban

Christian Church (UCC & Disciples of Christ). She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology with minors in gender, women and sexuality studies, and family social science.

During her years at the university, she engaged with freshman mentorship programs, was active with freshman mentoring programs and OutFront Minnesota, an LGBTQ advocacy organization, and was a leader in the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority.

She appreciated the opportunity to work towards positive change and engage in conversations that lead to critical questioning.

Abigail Velasco, who earned a bachelor's in communication studies with a double



Abi Velasco Photos courtesy of JLP

minor in business, and sociology/anthropology from the University of Puget Sound, will work with the *Washington Low Income Housing Alliance* and *Prospect UCC*.

She spent her junior year abroad in London, where she worked with the West London Churches Homeless Concern, Glassdoor, stirring her interest in low-income housing advocacy.

The Pacific Northwest Conference's Justice Leadership Program is an affiliate of national UCC Young Adult Service Communities Network.

For information, call Elizabeth at 206-320-0432, or visit justiceleadership.org, [facebook.com/JusticeLeadershipProgram](https://www.facebook.com/JusticeLeadershipProgram).

Blaine UCC offers an adult vacation Bible school

By Carol Hogan

This year, because Blaine UCC has just four children attending, the planning committee decided to offer an adult Bible school instead, although children were welcome to attend.

They chose a Hawaiian theme, because Hawaii offers a rainbow of color. Each day was given a color and theme.

For example, Monday was Aloha, which can mean hello, goodbye, love and more and the color was yellow. The Scripture was Genesis 1.

Each morning Pastor Sandy Cheatham read the Scripture and talked about historical events in religious history. Hymns relating to the Scripture were sung and recreation followed with traditional Hawaiian sports, like "Hukihuki" (tug of war) and the hula.

Volunteer chefs created island-style lunches each day.

Then there were speakers from the Whatcom community with whom UCC partners.

Pastor Sandy presented various arts and crafts and each



Adults do vacation Bible school crafts at Blaine UCC this summer.

Photos courtesy of Blaine UCC

day ended with storytelling of Hawaiian myths related to the Scriptures.

Each morning, a mesh streamer reflecting the day's color floated overhead and by the end of the week there was a full rainbow in the sanctuary.

About 30 people attended the weeklong event.

For information, email sandycheat@gmail.com.



All ages participate in hukihuki outside the church building.

Korean partners invite PNC delegation May 16-23

The Pacific Northwest Conference, UCC, and the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples) are sponsoring the 21st International Exchange with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of South Korea (PROK) departing Seattle May 16 and returning May 23.

There will be home stays with Presbyterian families.

The conference and region have a continuing partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of South Korea, East Seoul. On alternate years, delegations visit and learn about the life and mission outreach of the churches.

The delegation is for persons interested in global min-

istries, wanting to know about sisters and brothers in Christ in Korea and seeking to learn how the church ministers in a different culture.

Coordinator Ed Evans said recruiters seek youth and others with a passion about global issues and thirst to learn about international issues, and a desire to share their faith experience beyond cultural differences

"The PROK has sought to reform the Presbyterian Church in Korea, setting aside the secular elements, authoritarianism and dogmatism, which became rooted in the Korean Presbyterian history," said Ed. "Since separation from the main body in 1953, the PROK has developed a prophetic stance in its

understanding of the church and its role in society.

"Seeking to go beyond the narrow, traditional concept of mission, the PROK is committed to participating in God's salvation work in society and history. A diverse fellowship, the PROK upholds the spiritual importance of dialogue, engagement, diversity and reconciliation," he said.

Ed added that the PROK has been a prophetic voice for democratization, human rights and reunification and protesting military dictatorship.

They have sent humanitarian food aid as well as funds, equipment and machinery to North Korea. They have an active commitment to ecumenism

and are members of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the World Council of Churches.

They were the first Presbyterians to ordain women as elders in 1956 and ministers in 1974, believing God calls both women and men.

"While maintaining a commitment to peace and justice, the PROK is responding to changing needs as South Korea journeys to democracy," he added. "The PROK continues to take a prominent lead in asking again the question of how to be a Christian in today's world."

For information, call 360-683-4704 or 360-670-1073, or email edevans@aol.com.

Communities of Practice make a difference for clergy

Starting in September and October, 47 West Side clergy in local churches and specialized ministries—more than half of the active Western Washington clergy—will participate in five small support and learning groups through Clergy Communities of Practice (CoP).

The PNC received a two-year \$23,630 matching grant from the Pastoral Excellence Network at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis to launch Communities of Practice. The PNC is raising matching gifts of \$25,000 through offerings, other grants, budget and participant fees over the next two years.

Those funds plus many participants' paying the full fee made it possible to give full scholarships to all who requested them and leave funds for a scholarship program next year.

"We urge every church to budget \$250 in 2016 and beyond so their pastor can participate," said program coordinator Tara Barber of Alki UCC.

Next year the program will expand to include East Side clergy and to find a way to offer groups that meet virtually—to include clergy in Alaska and other remote areas.

Tara and the Church Development Committee will offer an event to support pastors and congregations on Nov. 21.

CoP is based on a model the Massachusetts UCC Conference developed and has used for 10 years. It was funded by Lilly to bring clergy together to look at what they are doing in ministry, to engage in peer learning and to reflect on how they work.

"Clergy peer learning brings together the best of our experience and expertise alongside our growing edges. In conversation and faith, we will become better pastors, chaplains and human beings," she said.

Tara and five other PNC clergy went to the San Francis-



Bobbi Virta, Gail Crouch and Tara Barber are among the facilitators for Communities of Practice support groups for clergy.

Photo courtesy of Tara Barber

co Bay area in May. The others are Gail Crouch, retired at University Congregational UCC in Seattle; Peggy Derick of Mercer Island; Jill Komura specialized minister chaplain United Churches of Olympia; David Kratz, retired from Fauntleroy, and Bobbi Virta at the United Church of Ferndale.

Conference Minister Mike Denton said CoP is an "effective, proven, healthy and affordable program that has made a significant difference in lives of hundreds of clergy. On a conference level we've struggled with how to best support clergy in their variety of contexts. I'm convinced this is the ministry we've been looking for and I encourage PNC pastors to learn more, then get involved."

Groups will run through June/July 2016, with a one day summer retreat to evaluate and build support. There will be monthly assessments by facilitators, quarterly written responses from participants and year-end personal interviews to determine the effectiveness and growth areas for the program.

After the initial grant, Tara said the PNC will look to increasing participation and seeking funding through special of-

ferings and the PNC budget.

Facilitators shared their experiences and expectations.

David expects the groups will provide support, challenge and learning opportunities for UCC clergy who participate.

Gail hopes all clergy will join a small group to "find ways to become stronger, healthier and more vital pastors, finding joy in our vocations."

For Bobbi, the art of ministry is best when clergy are present with others in life's everyday joys and sorrows.

"Clergy do that best when they take care of themselves by nurturing their own minds, bodies and spirits in a community that understands the joys and challenges of holding sacred space for others," she said.

She values working on life's challenges with others.

"When the waves of tough times come, I need my support system firmly established so I know I am being held in prayer," Bobbi said.

Recently, her congregation and community grieved about the death of two students—one a member of the congregation—and injury of two others.

Bobbi relied on colleagues to intentionally hold

her in prayer so she felt God's strength and grace and could be fully present to those in need."

She asks clergy: "Have you ever felt empty as you prepare yet another season of Lent or confused about a situation? Have you ever wished you knew more about a subject for a sermon series, Bible study or book group? Have you ever felt lonely or overwhelmed by the work before you and wished you could get a neutral point of view to ground you?"

Communities of Practice is a structured way for clergy to come together with peers in a safe, nurturing environment where they are present to one another to offer and receive support and challenge so that they can be healthy, she said.

Healthy pastors make healthy congregations, which makes for a healthy ministry and helps ripple God's love into every community, Bobbi said.

Peggy, as a pastor several years in Massachusetts, belonged to a monthly CoP group of eight pastors.

"We shared joys and challenges of our ministries, learning and worshiping together. Sometimes we reviewed a case study, article or concept, or learned by discussing an issue in a member's church," she said.

A trust developed, deep enough to hold their uncertainties. The group's diversity made it a place to explore new ideas for ministry. It was also a place to step out of worship leadership to worship with peers.

Peggy could take anything that arose in her ministry, knowing she would be supported in prayer, and whatever she walked through, she would not walk alone. Being a part of this group enriched her ministry and personal life."

For information, call 425-213-9335, email barbertara@hotmail.com or visit <http://cpx.cts.edu/network>.

Camp re-energizes youth, gives a solid base

For Tony Kliment, a mental health counselor in Seattle and 2015 senior high aqua camp co-director, having a “quiet” week at camp was a sign that campers were thriving and doing well in their lives, as well as at camp.

The youth got along and the weather was not too hot, cold or rainy. Smoke from the region’s wildfires settled in after their camp, but there were no campfires all summer because of the fire danger. This camp used a light and handprints cut from paper the colors of flames.

In counseling, he sees anxious and hurting sides of people, so camp is re-energizing.

“It was great to see the energy and enthusiasm these youth have for life and each other,” he said.

“As we go through the curriculum, crafts, music and activities, we seek to help the campers when they are not at camp have peaceful memories they can use to reflect on and to help them through day-to-day stresses of life,” Tony said.

Directors and counselors seek to help the youth discover, define and make sense of their spirituality, said Tony, who has been a counselor or director of senior high camps for 11 years, twice as director.



Senior high campers dance in the pavilion.

Photo courtesy of Elliott Jensen

He plans to co-direct the 2016 camp with Sheila Thieme.

“Without adults stepping up to be directors and counselors, there would be no camps. The adults play an important role in providing guidance and safety for campers,” he said.

He is always using his counseling skills at camps in listening to campers and helping them reflect back on what they are learning. He has also found his skills handy when there is a crisis situation.

“It’s important for youth to know they have a safe place, a place they can always come back to when they need a time out. Camp is not just a place.

It’s also a community that’s there to support them, so they know they are not alone in the world when they face challenges,” he said. “After a great camp experience, the question is how to bring it back to their lives and school year. It’s more than a week.”

Since the early 1990s, Tony has been a mental health counselor on and off for 25 years. He began working with youth at the Union Church in Hinsdale, Ill. When his children were young, they went to the Tower Hill UCC camp in Michigan.

He did a work camp with youth, bringing his skills from his career as a carpenter, doing

woodworking and remodeling, to building and fixing houses.

“I found in conversations with youth, I connected with them. I realized I could make a difference, and a good education might help.”

While living in the hills of Helena, Mont., and building houses, he completed a bachelor’s degree in social work in 1994 at Carroll College. After moving to Spokane in 1995, he earned a master’s in social work in 1997. Three years ago, he moved to live near Ballard, Wash., in Seattle.

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

Linda and Randy Crowe now back in PNC spend time at camps

After several years of retirement as managing director at N-Sid-Sen, Randy Crowe and his wife, Linda, who retired as pastor at Verdale UCC, went to work camp at N-Sid-Sen, helped with program (Linda) and as a counselor (Randy) at junior high aqua camp at N-Sid-Sen and senior high camp at Pilgrim Firs this summer. They return with perspective.

“At the end of the camps, I had a smile on my face, recognizing members of the PNC camping family through the

years. I did generations of baptisms, weddings and counseling,” said Linda.

She and Randy are spending six weeks this fall visiting volunteer workers who served on the N-Sid-Sen staff in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. Then they will spend a month in Italy, which they have never visited before.

While Linda served as interim pastor of the UCC church in Brainard, Minn., she and Randy met Wade Zick, the new Pilgrim Firs managing direc-

tor, impressed with his work helping youth address bullying, developing faith formation experiences, helping children and youth understand why the UCC is so important.

“We took seven youth from the Brainard church to Pilgrim Pines, where they gained in the camp experience awareness that they are not the only ones in this church tradition,” Linda said.

“It’s important for youth to gain a bigger picture of their church family, community and

national denomination,” she said of camps in the Minnesota and the Pacific Northwest conferences.

While at the Westminster Congregational UCC retreat, Randy and Linda shared in some “maintenance” tasks. Randy reminded that camp, as the N-Sid-Sen’s managing Mark Boyd says, is “our home on the lake.”

“So we should share in responsibility for them,” he said.

For information, call 208-680-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.org.

Peace flags continue to connect campers, refugees

Irene Willis spent a day introducing the Syrian Peace Flag Ministry to junior high campers at Pilgrim Firs in July.

She brought flags made by Syrian refugees in northern Jordan. She put the flags up so campers could see them. She explained the project, which began last year at N-Sid-Sen.

"The flags the Syrians sent were 'Peace Flags.' N-Sid-Sen campers had sent 'Prayer Flags' with prayers of love and hope," said Irene.

Nousha, director of the camp in Jordan, asked Syrian youth to think about what peace might mean. They sent representations of that.

Their flags were variations of the Syrian rebel flag with flowers, hearts and religious phrases. They now are at N-Sid-Sen, delivered by Tony Kliment, senior high aqua camp director.

Irene spoke in the morning and showed a video she had shown N-Sid-Sen campers the previous year. She thought the Pilgrim Firs teens were overwhelmed by the information or bored, having no investment in the project.

"Youth today in the Information Age can see everything that happens in the world instantly through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other social media," she noted.

"I gave these campers a list of compassionate, common phrases in Arabic and said they could write their messages in English or Arabic," Irene said.

They tie-dyed the flags.

Concerned the campers had not understood the project, she did a follow up after lunch. She asked each camper to write five things that make up their identity. Then she invited them to share.

"Soccer," one ventured.

"No," Irene replied. "If anyone has a sports team or a club as an identity marker, cross that off. You don't have



Syrian refugee students show flags they are taking home.

Photo courtesy of Irene Willis

school programs any more."

Intrigued, more hands raised. "My family."

"Nope, gone. You were separated from your family when the forces invaded your home and killed your father. Cross it off."

"I have arms!" one said.

"No, those were blown off in an air raid."

They continued until most had nothing left on their papers.

"This is how it feels to be a refugee in Syria," Irene said. "You don't have any of those things any more. What do you have now?"

The students began talking.

"Hope?"

"Yes," I said. "Hope is by definition something that occurs. So you have hope. Hope in what? Who or what cultivates your hope into a future?"

"God?"

"Yes, but how? Who tells you God is listening? Who speaks for God?" Silence. "Does ISIS speak for God?"

"No!"

"They explicitly claim they do. They are instigators of hope are they not?" Silence.

"Is there another way to find hope?"

Irene divided the campers into groups to talk about how they would feel in that situation. The American students agreed that groups like ISIS

shouldn't be allowed to hijack hope. They wanted Syrian youth to feel cared for by people other than terrorists.

When Irene returned to the Syrian border two weeks later, she had a large package of prayer flags, colorfully decorated with messages of hope, peace and solidarity.

She said little at the Syrian school about the Pilgrim Firs youth. It was her first time meeting these Syrian children, so she spent time getting to know them.

The N-Sid-Sen flags were still strung up on the walls.

"I sang some songs with them and helped them learn to write their names in Arabic because their regular teacher was ill," she said.

At the end of the school day, she took out the flags from the Pilgrim Firs. Instead of stringing them up, she gave them individually to children based on the flags' messages.

She held up a flag and said, "This one says 'hope' in English." Some children wanted specific words. One girl wanted a flag that said "Peace" in Arabic. A boy wanted a flag that said, "Hope," in English.

"They were enthusiastic to learn English words for concepts meaningful to them, and to have something personal that was made lovingly just for

them," Irene said. "I bet that in some hillside tent city in Northern Jordan, a few dozen Syrian refugee children keep the flags among their sparse belongings, shining as a small heartbeat of empathy in a tide of silence from the outside world."

The campers also wrote long, heartfelt letters in English to the Syrian youth. She left them for older youth (ages 13-16), who are learning English, to translate. Some of them are talented graffiti artists and want her to send their art next time.

In Northern Jordan, a school funded by donations is a new addition to the Project Amal ou Salam project.

Syrians in Jordan are only to be educated at the UN schools in internment camps on the border, and they are not to go on to a university.

"In this context, Project Amal ou Salam's opening a middle-high school in the boonies is revolutionary," Irene said.

Aside from needing money, the school is not registered in the Jordanian system so it can't grant diplomas or transcripts.

Irene is working to register that school and the other Project Amal ou Salam schools as international schools. If students are proficient in English, they could attend a university, if they have scholarships from other countries and can leave Jordan to study.

"The Syrian children I met, despite their circumstances, retain hope and courage. It's a miracle. Not that they're not also deeply sad and traumatized, they just haven't given up," said Irene, adding, "I hope our camp children don't give up on them."

"We as Christians can't ever lose sight of what God is calling us to become in God's Kingdom, no matter how bleak it feels sometimes," she said.

For information, visit www.projectamaloussalam.org.

Interim Ministry Network Conference lends ideas

Ann Eidson, intentional interim at Northshore UCC, recently reported on the 35th Annual Interim Ministry Network Conference she attended in June.

“Why did I wait so long to do this?” was a question I asked myself several times earlier this month. I was in Baltimore attending the annual conference of the Interim Ministry Network (IMN). Since starting as an intentional interim minister in 2009, I’ve had yearly opportunities to attend the national conference, but I didn’t. This year, I did! I won’t miss another one if I can help it.

The Interim Ministry Network has existed for 35 years, an offshoot of the Alban Institute. Its mission is to “strengthen the spiritual and organizational health of the church-at-large by equipping and supporting those who lead during times of transition.” Its vision is that its work should make church bodies “stronger because they have effectively managed transition and are better able to share with their members and society God’s love that brings hope and joy in times of change.”

Intentional interim ministers, trained through the IMN, work with churches to strengthen congregational health, working through intentional phases, setting the stage for a new settled pastor/congregational match and the opportunity for long-term success.

An intentional interim is defined by the UCC national offices as: “a called position for a temporary term of congregational preparation for a settled pastor search, in which the minister does not typically move church membership...or move standing.” The intentional interim may not be called as the new settled pastor.”

The IMN is the primary source of training and mentoring for interim ministers. I became aware of their programs during my first interim call.



Ann Eidson shares about interim ministry conference.

There are three tiers of training.

Two courses in the Fundamentals of Interim Ministry, the Work of the Congregation (three days) and the Work of the Interim Leader (five days) are required to be certified as an intentional interim minister. With experience and mentoring, the minister can then achieve designation as a professional transition specialist.

Now well into my third intentional interim call, I’m working on that designation.

Over the four days at the IMN annual meeting, I learned new information and skills to enhance the future interim work I do.

The conference began with a highlight right from the start. The Rev. Loren Mead, an Episcopal priest and founder of The Alban Institute, spoke to the assembly of about 200 ministers on the current state of “church” in this world and specifically about the critical role he sees interim ministers playing in that world.

He talked about the major shift in attitudes and expectations of society and how that translates into necessary changes in the ways we “do” church.

There is a major shift going on, but it isn’t the first and won’t be the last.

The Christian Church has survived for several thousand years and will survive this, albeit in a different fashion to meet the cultural expectations of changing societies.

Part of an interim minister’s responsibility is to challenge congregations to adapt and become the church of today. I recommend the documentary, “When God Left the Building.”

The pre-conference included a full day of three sessions on the work of a congregational “Transition Team” when an interim is in place.

In congregations of less than 40 members, the congregation itself or the governing body (council) acts in this role.

Together, the transition team and the intentional interim minister work in a process that leads to congregational readiness to call their next settled pastor. The United Church of Canada requires churches and IIM’s to use transition teams. They’re used sporadically in the U.S.

A highlight was meeting the Rev. Malcolm Himschoot,

the minister for ministerial transitions with Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team, at the national UCC offices.

He’s working on more standardization in training and use of interims in the UCC. He spearheaded UCC reduction of titles used for ministry from more than 40 to four: settled, intentional interim, designated minister and supply. The first three are considered calls from the congregation to the minister. Also, he’s working with the existing leadership of the Association of UCC Intentional Interim Ministers (AUCCIIM... “awesome”) to reinvigorate the association.

The third day was a series of sessions with storyteller and speaker Hannah Harvey, who worked with us on the value of telling and sharing personal stories with “value added” when stories are used to make points, inspire, elicit forward movement.

I attended several workshops on dealing with grief in congregations. The most meaningful was the last one “Purposeful Life, Which Emerges Beyond Loss, Mourning, and Grief.”

Ivan Marable spoke about how images of the last or most significant traumatic experience are most often the ones that pop into mind when we think about a congregation or a particular member or minister. A large part of healing and necessary for moving forward is consciously creating opportunities to change or replace those images so that when we speak our voice is filled with the excitement of looking forward, not laced with the pain of the past.

It was a time of learning and connections with UCC colleagues and others from different faith traditions.

For information, email pastorann@northshoreucc.org.

Wade Zick begins as managing director at Pilgrim Firs

Wade Zick, the new managing director at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center in Port Orchard, Wash., has done youth ministry and outdoor ministry for 23 years in San Jose, Calif., and on the Minnesota Conference staff.

He began on July 1, welcomed to camp by Randy and Linda Crowe, whom he had met when they were in Brainard, Minn., where Linda did an interim ministry.

Linda was helping on the camp program for senior high camp, and Randy was a counselor this summer at Pilgrim Firs.

In addition, he had visited Pilgrim Firs three years ago, working with Margaret Irrabarra.

Growing up in Grand Rapids in the Reform Church in America, he was not a church camper but knew he wanted to do youth and children's ministry.

He majored in youth ministry at Kuyper College, a Reform Church college in Grand Rapids, in 1997.

After a year at Westminster Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich., he earned a master's degree in education in 2000 at Grand Valley State University.

After joining the United Church of Christ in 2000, Wade served for seven years in youth ministry at First Congregational Church UCC in San Jose, Calif., succeeding Catherine



Wade Zick from Minnesota begins role at Pilgrim Firs.

Photo courtesy Wade Zick

Foote, who is now on the pastoral team at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

He went from there to serve as youth and children's minister with the Minnesota UCC Conference, serving eight years. Five years of that time, he directed Pilgrim Point Camp.

In that camp, he saw the role of camp as bringing hope and attention to the local church setting, which to Wade is the heart of local church ministry.

"Camp is a tool to help the local churches strengthen relationships for congregations within themselves, across the

conference and across generations," Wade said.

"I understand outdoor ministry to be a tool for local churches and a hospitable place," he said.

Wade, who considers himself a fan of PNC Conference Minister Michael Denton, knew him from national gatherings of the UCC's conference ministers.

"I'm pleased to have the opportunity to work under him and with him," Wade said.

"I came in the heart of the camping season, a busy time, and jumped right in to see the

campers in action and meet folks involved."

One major difference is that at Pilgrim Firs he is involved more in hospitality and less in direct ministry.

As he looks at hospitality at Pilgrim Firs, he is working to improve the quality of the food and will work on maintenance of the buildings, grounds and trails.

"We are now clearing and widening the trails," said Wade, commenting that priorities at Pilgrim Firs will include developing ways to expand program space.

"In the summer, we used space to its maximum capacity. It will take time to come to know the ministry, program and people," said Wade, who is taking time to observe life at camp and ask questions.

"To me, this is a learning time," he said. "I'll also be looking at how camp is a ministry for the campers.

With spending time on the hosting tasks, Wade tended to be observing the programming from outside.

He believes the "gorgeous site" provides a natural setting for lake activities and for hiking.

"I hope Pilgrim Firs over the years will offer space for refreshment and retreat," Wade said.

For information, call 360-876-2031, email wadezick.pf@gmail.com.

The Seed is a new UCC-Disciples church in North Idaho

UCC Pastor Kaye Hult and Disciples of Christ Pastor Don Low are working with the PNC Church Development Committee and its counterpart in the Northwest Region of the Disciples of Christ to establish a UCC-DOC church in Coeur d'Alene.

"The UCC and Disciples churches have been missing in the Post Falls-Coeur d'Alene area," said Kaye, who has been a member at Veradale UCC.

Don is spiritual care coordinator at Hospice of North Idaho and Kaye has a singing group, HONI Singers, with the

Hospice of North Idaho spiritual care program. She is also administrative and volunteer coordinator with The Fig Tree.

The Seed (UCC/DOC) began services at 10:30 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 13. The previous Sunday, Conference Minister Mike Denton offered a service

of blessing for Kaye at the Veradale UCC.

There has been a felt need by both denominations to have a presence in the Coeur d'Alene-Post Falls area.

For information, call 208-771-1514 or email hultorr@gmail.com.

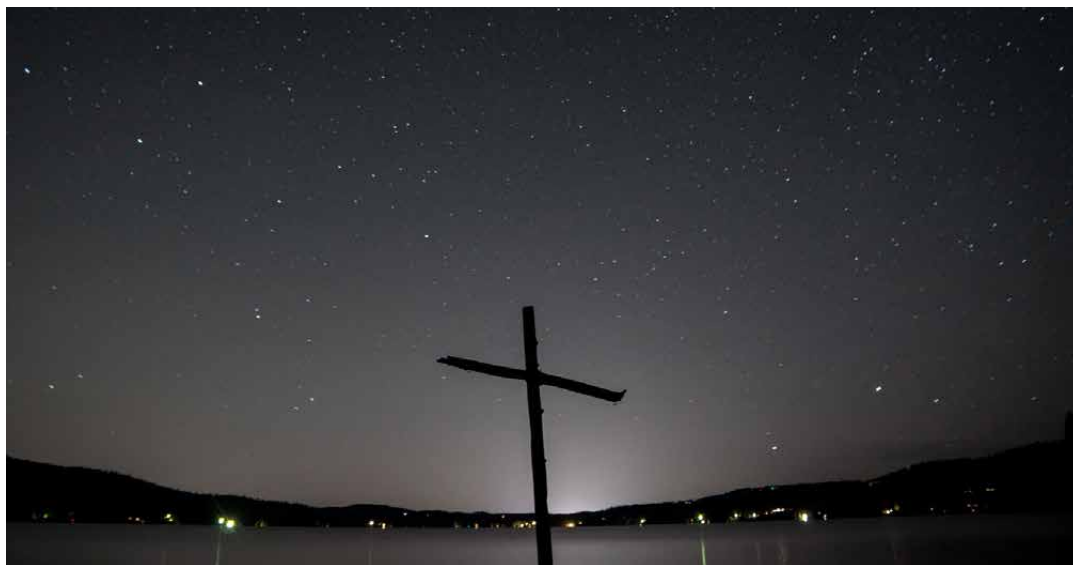
Water low for float trips, camp ready to help community

Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen, said that Junior High and Senior High Aqua Camps were up, Kids Camp drew new campers, and there were new counselors.

The float trips for the aqua camps, now on the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, rather than on the St. Joe River, were different. Water was low, and slow, so the float took longer to do.

The experience also gave campers information for discussion about climate change. Junior high, senior high, family camp and the Plymouth Church UCC camp did the float trips.

Three young people from Europe came through Camp America to join the camp staff. They were Ewelina Banasiak from Poland, Stephen Fullicks from England and Ezgi Goztas from Turkey. Other summer staff were Chad Caringnan



Mark Aquino, a long time counselor, taught a class on photography for senior high campers this summer at N-Sid-Sen. He captured one of the few smoke-free nights. Photo courtesy Max Aquino

from Montana, Ben Baldwin from Washington and Kendall Parrett of Idaho.

With fires in the region, Mark offered N-Sid-Sen, which is already a Medstar transfer site and medical evacuation site, for people who are evacuated from their homes.

"If the camp is full, we would find ways to share with people evacuated," he said. "We began in July and then put final touches on an evacuation plan.

"The closest fire was six miles away at Rose Lake. Several other small fires on Burma Road, at Mica Bay and near Harrison were put out early," said Mark.

"On some days, we could not see across Lake Coeur d'Alene because of the smoke," said Mark who felt good to be able to offer the field for landing helicopters and transferring people to vehicles.

Conference Minister Mike Denton put together a plan that requires camps to help in disasters as places of refuge.

Mark said that he also works with Harrison Ambulance and the East Side Fire District. N-Sid-Sen will be hosting a dinner for those orga-

nizations.

"We need to be in constant contact, because in the fire season folks may need a place to go to, to gather at or just to find respite from the storm. We are well set up to house, feed and provide some hospitality," he said. "We have background for understanding."

For fire safety, there were no barbecues, nor could vehicles drive on the fields.

Instead of a campfire, one camp had youth cut yellow, red and gold papers. Others used battery powered candles.

Luke Kreikeimier, a camper several years ago, learned to play guitar at camp and now is an "incredible musician" who plays multiple instruments.

Mark said he has become a quality musician, playing instruments. He has led music at different summer camps, has a recording studio in Seattle and travels with two bands.

He has compiled recorded music at Pilgrim Firs, N-Sid-Sen and his studio and recorded camp songs on a CD to help raise costs for camperships. They are being sold at both sites.

"We played it at the camps when campers were arriving.

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

2016 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

Junior High Midwinter Retreat
Jan 8 to 10 - grades 7-9

Senior High Midwinter Retreat
Jan 15 to 17 - grades 10-12

Men's Retreat - Jan 28 to 31

Work Camp - May 5 to 8

LGBTQ Spiritual Renewal Retreat - May 27 to 29

PNC Counselor & Director Retreat - May 20 to 22

LGBTQ Retreat - June 3 to 5

Work Camp June 16 to 19

Senior High Camp
June 27 to July 2

Junior High Camp
July 3 to 9

Kids Camp - July 10 to 13

Intermediate Camp
July 10 to 16

For information,
call 360-876-2031
email wadezick.pf@gmail.com
register at n-sid-sen.org

2016 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

Junior & Senior High Midwinter Retreat

March 11 to 13 - grades 7 to 12

Women's Retreat - May 20 to 22

Work Camp - June 13 to 18

Young Adult - June 17 to 19

Kid's Camp - July 3 to 6

Intermediate Camp - July 3 to 9

Senior High Aqua Camp
July 10 to 16

Family Camp #1
July 24 to 30

Junior High Aqua Camp
July 31 to Aug 6

LGBTQ Camp
Aug 5 to 7

Family Camp #2 - Aug. 7 to 13

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