



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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April 2017

Arlene Hobson values PNC staff's teamwork

In her 20 years with the PNC office, Arlene Hobson has adapted to changes.

Given that change is a constant in the PNC life, Arlene Hobson has seen much and been flexible with it in her 20 years working at the PNC office in Seattle.

Her role has evolved from office manager to executive administrator.

She has worked with nine conference ministers, countless moderators and committee members, helped move the office three times and seen the PNC office shift from paper to online communication.

Communication is a primary task as she coordinates the work of staff and committees, connecting 79 churches.

Arlene is the go-to person who
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Conference Minister Mike Denton introduced the staff team at Annual Meeting 2016—Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister of church vitality; Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs; Michelle Doherty, bookkeeper; Mark Boyd, managing director of N-Sid-Sen, and Arlene Hobson, executive administrator.

Moderator invites people to Annual Meeting April 29

By Peter Ilgenfritz - Moderator

Early on a Sunday morning, two days after President Trump's executive order restricting travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries, I came back to church with several emails from PNC's Justice and Witness Ministries Committee, inviting our churches to gather at Plymouth Church in downtown Seattle to pray together and to march as a group to a rally in Westlake Center.

I shared the news with our congregation that morning and by mid-afternoon more than 100 of us had gathered from UCC churches and other faith communities throughout Seattle and our wider region for song, prayers and sharing of poetry. We appreciated again the power of what happens when we show up together.

As I looked around the room, I saw

PNC Board calls for Annual Meeting to be a vital community gathered together for mission.

us, the Pacific NW Conference, here in the form of particular people in a particular place with a particular call to be a presence and prayer for justice and love.

One member of my congregation shared that because of her professional role she is not allowed to take part in political rallies. "However," she shared, "no one says I can't go to church."

We made room for folks like Mary

who otherwise might never have been able to come out on a day like this. We made welcome and room for those who wouldn't know how to do this alone but could do this together.

As I looked around the room, I saw what it means that we here together. One church sending a few representatives is a powerful thing, but all the more so when we join together to become a larger and more diverse community of hope.

Throughout this year our Board of Directors of the Conference has been wrestling with what it means to be a vital community of churches gathered for mission together. We've made our plans and tried on some experiments of deepening connections and taking risks, some of which have worked, and some of which have not worked so well.

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Church is place to practice, encourage empathy

Conference Comments



By The Rev. Mike Denton
Conference Minister

I've started reading the book *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* by Adam Alter. So far, every few pages I find something that causes me to set the book down and think a bit. A paragraph on page 39 has that stuck with me:

"Online interactions aren't just different from real-world interactions; they're measurably worse. Humans learn empathy and understanding by watching how their actions affect other people. Empathy can't flourish without immediate feedback, and it's a very slow-developing skill. One analysis of 72 studies found that empathy has declined among college students between 1979 and 2009. They're less likely to take the perspective of other people, and show less concern for others."

There's a few reasons that this piece has me thinking. The first is just how much logical sense it makes. I think many of us have the perception that empathy is more of an innate trait that comes with being human *as opposed to* a skill that needs to be developed and nurtured.

A lack of empathy has often been stated as an accusation. It almost has been considered something a person ignored or chose not to use as opposed to an undeveloped skill. The idea that there may be societal responsibility or corporate intent that leads to a lack of empathy as opposed to individual responsibility changes things a bit. It opens up the opportunity to move from blame to more intentionally taking responsibility.

There's rarely just one reason for a decline like this and, as several of the articles written about this study suggest, there are some pretty strong corollaries to the rise in personal technology usage in 2000 and a marked decrease in empathy. I can see that every day.

Although technology has helped open some doors that were once closed and helped keep some conflicts in the problem solving stage, that's not always true.

If personal relationships are not in place and the commitment to be in community isn't an intrinsic expectation of the conversation, a conversation waged using technology can easily overwhelm compassion and empathy.

That said, read the quoted paragraph again. The decline is tracked since 1979. The study cited started that year and one could assume that there was something the researchers saw before 1979 that lead them to see the need for such a study.

So, even though this decline in measured empathy has decreased more quickly starting in 2000, it was decreasing before then. Sure there was other technology emerging then, but none of the articles I could find alluded to that. So, I'd like to suggest another potential corollary.

What if the decline in empathy has a connection to decreased church involvement and the way our relationships in church have changed?

In previous articles, I've written about the way church conflict has changed. I've also written about how the church might be able to encourage civil conversations in the political realm.

What if what we really need is to recommit to teaching, increasing and practicing empathy?

Although he didn't call it empathy, Jesus clearly saw this as an important element of the faith walk. When confronted with sabbath legalism, Jesus pointed to the person suffering in front of him (Luke 13:10-17). The story of the Good Samaritan, a story about empathy, is Jesus' answer to the question "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:24-37).

Even the scripture about turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:38-48) can be seen as Jesus's method for awaking empathy in those who were persecuting others.

I've never been someone who believed we have to do something perfectly ourselves before we try and practice or advocate form something more widely. However, church is a great place to practice and encourage empathy.

Where might empathy need to be promoted in your congregation's life right now? Where might it be needed? Where might you need to practice it? Where else might your congregation be a voice for empathy?

Where
might
our
congregations
be
voices
of
empathy?

Transitions announced

Sandra Kay Neal died Jan. 20 in Centralia. She had bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in psychology and a master of divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary. Before coming to the PNC in 2005, she served as pastor in Ohio and led a substance abuse program. She was on the Global Ministries Committee.

The **Cheney UCC** voted to leave the UCC on Sunday, March 6.

Open Door Congregational UCC in Deer Park voted to leave the UCC on



ization and tools that enable members to build a lasting support network. The program is free and open to residents of Horizon House and the public. **For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 206-529-3870.**

April 9 is Camp Q&A

There will be a Camp Q&A Session 2.0 to share about changes at Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen over the next two years as there are plans to expand camp opportunities.

It will be held from 1 to 3 p.m., Sunday, April 9, at First Congregational UCC of Bellingham for campers, parents, clergy and others.

33 churches take five offerings

Michelle Doherty, PNC bookkeeper, reports from the accounting department that 33 PNC congregations—more than 40 percent—are 5 for 5 churches, participating in giving basic support, and participating in five of the national UCC's five annual offerings

Those offerings are Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support (OCWM), One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), Strengthen the Church (STC), Neighbors in Need (NIN) and The Christmas Fund.

OCWM supports operations for the regional, national and global church.

OGHS the fourth Sunday in Lent supports work with people around the world.

STC on Pentecost Sunday invests in church development and local church projects.

NIN, taken on World Communion Sunday in October, supports U.S. ministries of justice and compassion.

The Christmas Fund on the fourth Sunday of Advent, supports retired clergy and clergy in times of need.

Plymouth hosts Good Friday

"Seven Sisters Share the Seven Last Words of Christ," an ecumenical observance of Good Friday will be held at noon, Friday, April 14, at Plymouth UCC, 1217 Sixth Ave. in Seattle.

The observance features the Rev. Bianca Davis-Lovelace, the Rev. Patricia Hunter, Min. Emily Linderman, the Rev. Eliana Maxim, the Rev. Jane Pauw, the Rev. Amy Roon and the Rev. Linda Smith with the Rev. Kelle Brown as host and officiant.

For information, visit plymouth-churchseattle.org.

Workshops teach dialogue skills

Keystone UCC in Seattle will host a program on "Bridging the Divide: Constructive Communication in Difficult Times," as a three-part series from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, May 3, 17 and 24, at the church, 5019 Keystone Pl. North.

The workshops, led by certified mediators and conflict engagement specialists Nora Ludviksen and Jim Levy, are geared to help people confidently engage conflict and have constructive conversations. They will offer techniques to assess, initiate and hold difficult conversations and engage on constructive, respectful dialogue.

They are for people who feel stuck, alienated, or reactive when talking with loved ones, friends or colleagues who hold different views.

The workshops offer a model for building trust in these polarized times, using self-knowledge, purposeful listen, common courtesy and good faith.

For information, call 206-632-6021, email lauren.cannon@keystoneseatle.org, or register at [Brown Paper Tickets](http://BrownPaperTickets.org).

Fund drive continues

The Adopt-A-Mattress campaign continues in its quest to purchase 300 mattresses for Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen at a total cost of \$75,000. It invites commitments of \$250—the cost of one mattress—or any amount.

Plans are also underway for a bigger capital campaign to fund projects at the two camps.

N-Sid-Sen seeks to build pedestrian paths under Hwy. 97 and lodge-style year-round housing for older guests, and relocate the managers residence to the North Cove area.

Projects at Pilgrim Firs include new RV sites, improved staff housing, a program and performing arts building and purchase of additional acreage.

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

UCC joins in Climate March

The UCC is participating on Saturday, April 29, in the Climate March in Washington, D.C., organized by a coalition of groups that drew more than 400,000 people in 2014 in New York City. The UCC Council for Climate Justice and the Justice and Witness Ministries are co-sponsors.

UCC signup is at ucc.org/climate_march_in_washington_d_c and there is information on sister marches around the nation at peoplesclimate.org/sister-marches.

Post-Easter Retreat set

The Post-Easter Clergy Retreat is from noon to breakfast, Monday, April 17 to Wednesday, April 19, at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center.

Women's Retreat is at N-Sid-Sen

"Celebrating Sisterhood: For Such a Time as This" is the theme for the Spiritual Retreat for Women May 19 to 21 at N-Sid-Sen. Participants will focus a study of gender and scripture on Hagar in the book of Genesis.

The Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear, PNC's minister for church vitality, is the speaker along with the Rev. Kelle Brown of Plymouth UCC in Seattle.

"We will look at what it means to be a women in our day and time, how gender bias affects us and what each of us can do at such a time as this," said organizer Jan Shannon of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane.

Karen Cady, a massage therapist, will offer her services during the retreat.

It is a time of rest, relaxation and renewal for women of all ages with opportunities for worship, fun, creativity, quiet prayer, music and laughter.

For information, call 206-725-8383.

Alzheimer's series planned

The Horizon House Marketing department will be hosting a new Alzheimer's Association program called, "Staying Connected" at 10 a.m. for Thursdays, May 4, 11, 18 and 25 at in the Sky Lounge.

"Staying Connected" is a health promotion and social support program designed for older adults with early-stage memory loss and their companions.

The 90-minute sessions will include discussion of related topics and concerns, as well as provide opportunities for social-

Requiring flexibility

Tenure has been a time with many changes

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knows people and the resource person with access to information to help staff, committees and congregations function.

Arlene earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1981 at the University of Akron.

When she first came to Seattle, she did prepress work six years with a printer, and had various jobs before answering a newspaper ad and being hired when Lynne Fitch was conference minister and Char Burch was interim after David Brown had retired.

The other conference ministers she has worked with include Randy Hyvonen in Spokane, Christine Boardman (interim 2000-2002), Stephanie Haines (2002), Gail Crouch (acting Aug. 2004 to March 2005), Mark Miller (transitional interim 2005 to 2007), Hollis Bredeweg (acting June 2007 to Jan 2008) and Mike Denton since January 2008.

Richard Cook was managing director at Pilgrim Firs, followed by Deeg Nelson and now Wade Zick. Randy Crowe was managing director at N-Sid-Sen, with Mark Boyd now in that role.

As a resource person, Arlene, who attends Keystone UCC where her son Elliot is music director, handles the nuts and bolts of conference background work.

"I started as office manager before we had the internet we know today. Information was primarily sent by mail for committee announcements and other communications," she said.

"Now we have shifted from paper to online, communication is more immediate," said Arlene. By 2007, the Monthly Packets shifted to mostly electronic delivery with a handful of hard copies continuing to be mailed each month.

Arlene remembers starting on a computer with Ecunet

and green letters on the screen, learning on the job. She has used three different programs to build the PNC website.

When she first came, there was also a receptionist, a planned giving coordinator and a bookkeeper.

The office was housed in a 6,000-square-foot mansion on Capitol Hill in Seattle, where the conference hosted many of the committee and board meetings, including overnight stays and meals.

By 2000, the PNC moved first to the parsonage of the Beacon Ave. UCC, then soon after into an accessible modular unit on that property and is now in a 1,000-square-foot office in Broadview Community UCC.

Sharing the office with her now are Michelle Doherty, accounting manager, along with Mike Denton, conference minister, and Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister for church vitality.

"When I began, each staff person was designated as support staff for each committee," Arlene said.

"Now committees are more committee-led than previously. Each person has their own way of doing things. We find that out and let them lead," she said.

Arlene and other staff work with committee chairs as needed. Much of her committee work is with the Church and Ministry Committee.

With many different volunteers providing leadership in the conference board and committees, Arlene said her role is "fluid," working closer with some committees and the board moderator doing varying amounts of the work.

"I enjoy working with the variety of people involved in the conference," she said, expressing appreciation for the people she works with. "I learn something from everyone.

"My work continues to



Arlene Hobson

Photo courtesy of Arlene Hobson

evolve. I feel we are in a great place now, working as a team supporting each other in the work of the conference," she said. "We are willing to be ourselves and respect each other's contributions.

She regularly contacts the committee chairs to find out what they need to include in the monthly packet, published online.

"Staff work cooperatively as a team, supporting and helping each other," she said.

Two years ago, she took a week to work with Mark at N-Sid-Sen, a time that included reviewing the conference and N-Sid-Sen websites and discussing how to improve them.

Previously, staff had clearly defined roles and worked independently doing their own job descriptions.

"We talk with each other more, especially now with Annual Meeting hosted by the camps this year," she said.

In her early years, part of her role was to arrange hotels and travel for conference ministers. She does not do that now.

Working with the Annual Meeting Planning Committee

and coordinating details for Annual Meetings are a central role.

This year will be the biggest change in the Annual Meeting with a shift to two one-day events, one April 29 for business at Pilgrim Firs, and one Sept. 30 at N-Sid-Sen for workshops, speakers and education.

"We are going out on a limb this year to allow more conference members to experience each camp for themselves," said Arlene.

This is a model that has been suggested several times, and changes with the 2017 venue let to trying it this year. Next year the Annual Meeting is booked at the Yakima Convention Center.

In 2010, Arlene took a sabbatical in which she visited the national UCC office in Cleveland and drove to visit 30 churches to learn more about the churches, pastors and staff, and seeing the landscape—which then included the post-wildfire landscape—of the conference. This year she is planning another sabbatical.

For information, call 206-725-8383, email pncucc@gmail.com or visit pncucc.org.

Uniting voices makes a difference to be vital witness

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We've struggled with coming back to doing what we are most comfortable doing, making lists and to-do's, and finding that there is so much more work than we could possibly do without the energy and the people to bring it to life.

We've felt frustrated, overwhelmed, tired, worn out sometimes, and no, not new experiences for those in church life.

On that Sunday afternoon, however, something different happened. I looked around and I saw what wasn't just a dream but what was right there. For sure there are ways we can strengthen our communication and ways of doing some things, that's always there and needs to be done.

We also need to look around as well and get what we got in that gathered community that afternoon—that this matters—that is, that our being together.

Uniting our voices and witness, sharing our stories of what brought us here and becoming part of a larger more deeply connected story matters. It's not only a nice idea, but it also actually makes a difference.

These are times that are calling the church to remember and live who Jesus is always



Justice and Witness Ministries called for rally for welcoming immigrants at Plymouth UCC in Seattle.

Photo courtesy of Peter Ilgenfritz

calling us out to be: a community of and for love and justice.

We've said the words for a long time but in days like ours the words carry a new urgency.

This coming year, I hope that wherever we are we will look around and see who's out

here with us. That we'll reach out and make a connection and experiment with what happens when we come together.

I hope that we'll share those stories of what brings us out here on cold rainy days like it sometimes is around here and

witness the powerful new story we make when we bring our stories together.

Let's look around, reach out and celebrate what happens when we come together.

It sounds like who Jesus is calling us again to be today.

We look forward to seeing you at Annual Meeting on April 29.

Peter Ilgenfritz, Chair for the Board of Directors

Gen Heywood, Vice-Moderator

Andy CastroLang, Immediate Past Moderator

John Eisenhauer, Personnel Chair

Wendy Blight, Treasurer
Ed Evans, Scribe

Sandy Cheatham, Northwest Area Representative
Stephen Eriksen, Southeast Area Representative

Andrew Conley-Holcom, Central West Area Representative
Hillary Coleman, Young Adult Representative

Janet Matthews, Southwest Area Representative
Emma Fjermedal, Youth Representative

Judith Rinehart-Nelson, Northeast Area Representative

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

Internet tie with John Dorhauer part of Annual Meeting

The PNC Annual Meeting begins with an optional Friday evening arrival at 6 p.m., with a 7 p.m., dinner and fellowship at Pilgrim Firs, 3318 SW Lake Flora Rd. in Port Orchard.

The program on Saturday, under the theme, "Further Out on a Limb," will feature time with the national UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer at 10 a.m. through a live internet connection.

He will provide information on life in the denomina-

tion and answer questions sent in advance to Gen Heywood at genheywood@att.net.

After a 7:30 a.m. breakfast, 9 a.m. invocation and plenary, 11 a.m. worship, there will be plenaries at 11:40 a.m., 1:15 and 3 p.m., ending at 4:50 p.m.

At lunch, there will be time to explore the camp, and there will be an optional dinner and fellowship for those staying overnight.

Registration is through the camp website at <http://tiny.cc/>

PNCAM17, with orders for optional Friday and Saturday dinners by April 20.

There will be displays of information and resources.

Attending Annual Meeting will be clergy with standing in the PNC, three lay delegates per congregation plus one for each 100 members beyond 200 and one more under the age of 26.

The Reports for the Annual Meeting and a packet with Budget and Finance Reports

are online at pncucc.org, follow the links to Annual Meeting.

The reports include a review of the life of the conference by PNC staff, the moderator, treasurer, committees and special programs. It also includes information on clergy memorials and transitions, nominees for committees, and a resolution on being refugee and immigrant welcoming.

For information, call 206-725-8383, 800-954-8777 or email pncucc@gmail.com.

At the Faith Action Network

David Choi learns about organizing faiths to act

David Choi, one of the 2016-17 participants in the PNC Justice Leadership Program for young adults, is bearing witness to his interest in the connection of faith and justice in his work with the Faith Action Network of Washington.

In 2016, he earned a bachelor's degree in government and political theory at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va.

At a job fair in Washington, D.C., he learned about the UCC Justice Leadership Program (JLP). It was the first time he heard about the UCC, he said.

From involvement with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in college, he said his faith dovetails with his love of politics and community organizing.

David grew up in a Korean Presbyterian church and in college fell away from faith. In a time of questioning, he was invited to attend the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

"I began looking at the Gospel, at who Jesus is and at my understanding of my own heritage as an Asian American," said David, noting that his experience of Christian faith has been different from the experiences of others in the 2016-17 JLP cohort.

The Justice Leadership Program intentionally brings together participants of different races, cultures, classes, ethnic, gender and faith identities, David said.

The young adults join in a program to grow in faith as it relates to justice, Scriptures and interaction with each other.

"Two grew up in churches where they were hurt and fell away. Two grew up in the UCC and others are agnostics or not interested in Christian faith," he said. "Our interactions have taught me the wide breadth of spirituality and the variety of the Christian church."

David serves at All Pil-



Organizer David Choi, left, with Faith Action Network staff co-director Elise DeGooyer, organizer Chasity Jones, policy advocate Velma Veloria, co-director Paul Benz and administrative and development coordinator Erin Parks.

Photo courtesy of Faith Action Network

grims Church and his supervisor is Greg Turk.

His first Sunday there, he realized that he was just one of few Asian Americans in a predominantly white congregation, in which the majority of members are older.

Used to a contemporary worship service, he found worship with an organ and choir different.

This congregation serving Capitol Hill, members are both straight and LGBTQ.

"I have grown to appreciate All Pilgrims, wrestling with an open and affirming church that aims to be home where many people of the LGBTQ community have returned to church to find the Christian faith to be relevant in their lives," David said.

"I have gained a new perspective and appreciate that welcome," he said.

In his work with FAN, he finds "second-wind" professional retirees with a passion for social justice volunteering.

"They are on fire with a passion for social justice. They

want to find how to work better and are devoted to speaking out and speaking up," David said.

He appreciates FAN's role in organizing an interfaith movement with faith communities partnered for the common good.

Last summer, David had an internship with IMPACT in Charlottesville, Va., doing direct action and community organizing to influence local government.

David said his work with FAN has gone by seasons. In the fall, he helped organize cluster gatherings where FAN listened to people in the faith communities to learn what policies they find important. Next the focus was on the annual dinner and fundraiser with advocates after the election.

"People feel passionate that we advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves, the weak, vulnerable and marginalized," he said.

In February, FAN was busy with the Interfaith Advocacy Day, inviting advocates to Olympia on Feb. 9 to connect

in face-to-face conversations with legislators in 49 districts.

Now FAN's focus is outreach to invite new faith communities to join.

"It's important to have the faith communities across Washington state mobilized and organized to influence policy," he said.

This year is the sixth year for the Justice Leadership Program of the PNC placing young adult interns in advocacy and organizing for faith-inspired justice with partner agencies and UCC churches.

The interns are recruited through the national UCC Young Adult Service Community program.

In 2013-14, the first year, four interns participated. This year there are six. The interns live in intentional community, housed at an apartment at All Pilgrims Christian Church and a home called "Eden House" in Seattle. They work 11 months with nonprofits engaged in doing justice.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or visit fanwa.org.

Mission couple listened before starting projects

By Ruth Brandon

Global Ministries Committee

Who knew that motorcycle repair and compost were keys to community. Who knew that when heading into a mission field it is wise to spend a whole year listening before trying to run a project.

These were some of the observations Eric and Kim Free shared when visiting 19 locations in the Pacific Northwest in February, starting in Anchorage, Alaska.

These realities were part of their message about their time embedded in the United Church of Christ of Mozambique from 2013 to 2016.

Their hosts in Mozambique insisted that they should listen, improve their language skills, and learn how local people lived and thought as they set priorities for their first year.

The Frees said they were antsy, but when something they tried failed, they realized they were indeed too early into their experience to be making suggestions.

Meanwhile, they met other missionaries who had just jumped in with little or no listening, and then complained that nobody was responsive and their efforts were not working.

Kim and Eric were assigned to a rural church community to help with agriculture, health



Kim Free answers questions during an itineration gathering at the Veradale UCC in Spokane Valley.

Photo courtesy of Gen Heywood

and women's empowerment.

They realized that in everything they should be accompanied by local folk who were both learners and helpers so they could carry on when the Frees were not there.

Compost was one lesson. They said that locals thought them crazy as they gathered piles of sticks, grass, leaves and even went farmer to farmer requesting manure.

Visit by visit they said they developed their compost pile and relationships. Many hands helped them turn the pile and after it had time to work, they chose a Sunday to continue the lesson.

Large numbers of curious

people were at church.

Eric brought a rod, thrust it deep into the compost and asked the skeptical observers who would like to touch it when they pulled it out.

Finally, a brave soul accepted and was astounded at how hot the rod was. Then each and every one wanted to try despite their fear of touching excrement or spiny irritating things they knew had been put in the pile. It was changing into fertilizer.

The teacher at the school run by the church brought a class to learn hands on.

Before the Frees returned to Oregon, compost was distributed to all the farmers. The com-

munity had grown stronger, a good farming tip was learned. Now though they are gone, they know that compost-making will continue, that crops will be stronger and that there will be less hunger.

The motorcycles also helped. Eric was bored with too much down time and discovered that the church had a shed of broken-down motorcycles.

Most pastors had four to five churches they were responsible for and long distances to cover.

Motorcycles helped, but the pastors were not mechanics and had no money to pay mechanics.

When Eric began to repair the motorcycles they had left in the shed, some asked to learn how to do that.

Eric and Kim made clear that it was local needs and aspirations they learned to relate to, starting from their church base.

They made it clear that Global Ministries missionaries with the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) do not go to dump their own priorities on others but to work side by side with them as they discern what God is calling them to do.

For information, call 425-220-2476 or email aremb@me.com.

Northshore UCC learns about witness of Valve Turners

During the March 19 worship service and after the service, Northshore UCC in Woodinville hosted presentations on "Love in a Time of Cataclysm" by the Valve Turners, five environmental activists who are facing felony charges in four states as a result of engaging in direct action to mitigate a climate catastrophe.

Justice Leadership Program Jubilee intern Lin Hagedorn, a member at Northshore and for-

mer chair of the PNC Justice Witness Ministries Committee, organized this event with 350 Seattle's Nicky Bradford as part of her internship there.

"Valve Turners" shared what brought them to move from peaceful protest to committing an illegal act and being arrested.

On Oct. 11, 2016, the five and their support people, simultaneously shut off the flow of all tar sands oil from Canada

into the United States for a day. Their actions included trespassing onto private property, cutting protective chains and turning a safety block valve on the pipeline. The Valve Turners now face felony charges, fines and possible jail time.

Annette Klapstein, Emily Johnston, Michael Foster, Leonard Higgins and Ken Ward shared their motivations for these actions, including love as the spiritual or religious

basis for doing what they did.

Ken said pipelines "destroy the conditions that allow the wild riot of diverse life on the planet and that make civilization possible.

"Pipelines represent greed, fear and lassitude," he said. "Our only hope is to step outside polite conversation and put our bodies in the way."

For information, call 206-310-6203 or email mountainclimber4@gmail.com.

Jill Komura helps people address transitions

The PNC's delegates to the national UCC General Synod June 30 to July 4 in Baltimore bring varied backgrounds and perspectives of ministry.

Along with Conference Minister Mike Denton, Church Vitality Minister Courtney Stange-Tregear and PNC moderator Peter Ilgenfritz, other delegates are Jill Komura of United Churches of Olympia, Nathaniel Malkberg of First Congregational UCC in Walla Walla, Kyna Shilling of Plymouth UCC in Seattle, and Emma Ritchie of Bellingham (who was not available).

As Jill Komura's education and career path has taken her through teaching history, practicing law, seminary studies and chaplaincy, she now is settled in Olympia and involved with the United Churches of Olympia.

Along with concern about helping people address life changes as they age and addressing justice issues in the state capitol, her ministry with the United Churches is as administrative pastor, which focuses on the business and property management side of church life, as well as being available for pastoral needs of people in transition.

"Many move to Olympia to downsize and retire. There is grief associated with the life transitions, particularly changes with aging, bodies deteriorating, spouses sick and dealing with dementia," she said.

Focusing on people in one church, she said, is an extension of her goal to be a chaplain/pastoral counselor.

She also connects the downtown church across the street from the State Capitol building to the community, supporting groups doing justice and witness work.

Jill, who grew up in Ojai, Calif., earned a bachelor's degree in 1985 in history and English at the University of



Jill Komura at Annual Meeting in 2015.

California in Davis, followed by a law degree in 1988 at the University of Washington.

She worked at a law firm in Los Angeles, but found law not to her liking, so she moved to Baltimore, taught high school history and moved into counseling because of the emotional issues the students faced.

Jill earned a master's in counseling at Johns Hopkins University before going in 1998 to teach at Chewonki, an environmental education organization in Wiscasset, Maine, teaching high school juniors.

In her four years there, she connected students to stewardship of the natural world.

With grandparents and parents aging and dying, she returned to the West Coast to be near them. In 2002, he settled in Seattle, where she joined University Congregational UCC, having been involved in Congregational churches in Maine.

While there, she began seminary at the School of The-

ology and Ministry at Seattle University, working on a master of divinity degree and in care with a number of others who attended that church. She taught part time at a private nonprofit school, while attending seminary, graduating in 2009.

After Seattle University, she began in the clinical pastoral education program with the goal of being a chaplain.

After being ordained she moved to Olympia in 2010, following love and marrying Debbie Leung. She began at United Churches of Olympia as interim associate part time and is now administrative pastor. She completed clinical pastoral education and became a board certified chaplain in 2013. Her goal had been to be a pastoral counselor, but she decided to stay at United Churches, serving through several pastoral transitions.

"Many chaplains focus on health care or the institutional world in which they work—

hospitals or prisons—rather than denominational polity matters," she said. "It's more an issue for chaplains in the current health care environment. As health care providers consolidate and merge, chaplains are caught in a constantly changing work place. In many hospitals, chaplain positions have been cut or downgraded to per diem on contract employees, with spiritual care seen as 'fat' that needs to be cut.

"Many health care decision makers in our secular society have no idea what chaplains do," she said.

Even some of the health care systems with faith-based origins have shifted their commitment to spiritual care. Some have eliminated spiritual care as an independently managed department and now manage their chaplains under nursing or social work.

"Too often, chaplains don't have the opportunity to justify their professional existence or have time to provide evidence of how spiritual care is contributing 'added value' to positive patient outcomes," Jill said.

Jill also facilitates one of the Clergy Communities of Practice, a group of chaplains and pastoral counselors.

"In addition to dealing with increased pressures from changes in health care, they deal with people in crisis and need all day, and really need time to share—a safe, healthy place to decompress away from their work place with folks doing similar work," she said. "I hope the PNC will continue to support the Communities of Practice program to support professional sustainability for ministers."

At General Synod, she expects to learn more about the realities of changing UCC polity at the national level.

For information, call 360-701-6735 or email jill@theunitedchurches.org.

Kyna Shilling brings theater skills to worship

Kyna Shilling, a life-long—32 years—member of Plymouth UCC in Seattle, incorporates her backstage theater skills into creating a 9 a.m. intergenerational, interactive worship experience that has some spill-over in the 11 a.m. worship.

During Lent, she and her mother have designed the early worship services as a time of contemplation, incorporating writings by young people and based on services at Holden Village.

“We have the room darkened and use no bulletin or projection,” Kyna said. “The music is simple, Taizé style. Two worship leaders present the spoken word and prayers. We have 15 minutes of singing chants.

“We invite people to come forward and kneel at a long, low table to light a candle,” she said.

In the time of praying for people, some people who seek to be prayed for come forward and others, including middle school youth, come forward and lay their hands on the person.

“It’s a powerful prayer presence,” Kyna said.

During Lent in the worship space, there are bare branches above the orchestra shell. Light hits them and casts a shadow on the wall behind.



Group gathers for prayer, kneeling around low table and reflecting on a cross. This is one of the worship experiences Kyna Shilling has helped to prepare for the community at Plymouth UCC in Seattle.

Photo courtesy of Kyna Shilling

Not only did Kyna design that visual, but also she climbed up on a ladder and put it in place. She also worked with the carpenter who built the low table for the candles, designing it so it could be folded and put away.

That’s how she brings her artistic design sensibilities into worship.

“We have strong lay leaders who participate in planning worship, taking time to brainstorm how to express a worship theme,” said Kyna.

In addition to being on the

PNC staff as the camp administrator for Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen, working on the online registration and running facebook for both camps, she has worked for 10 years as production associate at Taproots, a Christian based theater out of Seattle Pacific University.

Kyna, who grew up in Seattle where he parents moved in the early 1980s from Chicago, earned a degree in theater and backstage work in 2007 at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Her work with Taproots combines two things she cares

about: faith and theater.”

Kyna is involved with props, lighting, painting, organizing, sound, stage management, technical direction and sometimes costumes.

“I love storytelling and the collaborative process of working with people to bring a story to an audience,” she said, noting the connection with worship planning around a theme.

“The church tells the story of our relationship to God. We read Bible stories of previous people of faith and tell stories for immediate impact,” Kyna said.

She helps incorporate into Plymouth’s worship tactile, technical and visual ways to make worship interactive, using her theater skills.

“Plymouth is committed to change the ways we worship,” she said.

Kyna finds the pastor, Kelle Brown, who came in 2015 encouraging of working collaboratively with a planning team and worship coordinator to worship in a creative style.

They are also consulting with the national Center for Progressive Renewal to develop a strategic plan.

“We are changing our worship culture to be trusting as we try things out,” she said.

For information, call 206-919-5962 or email kyna-

Resolution proposes being welcoming as a conference, churches

Among the items of business at Annual Meeting will be consideration of a resolution proposed by the Justice Witness Ministries Committee on “A Call to Become Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming as a Conference and in Congregations.”

Submitters Briana Brannan and Paul Ashby from the JWM Committee said the resolution is based on the belief that “every immigrant and refugee has

inherent dignity and human rights,” should be able “to live in safety and without fear, and should have access to basic necessities and opportunities.

The resolution acknowledges that U.S. foreign policy, militarism and exploitation of natural resources have contributed to the global human migration crisis, and many U.S. immigration policies have been based on racism and xenopho-

bia. It challenges spending funds for for-profit immigration detention centers and spending billions to build a wall.

The resolution also says immigrant labor is a significant means to maintain the U.S. food system and other infrastructure.

It calls for the PNC to declare itself an “Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Conference,” and people in the PNC offer “a counter-narrative of

humble hospitality, radical inclusivity and courageous resistance in response to “unjust and dehumanizing immigration policies, practices and rhetoric. It also invites people to offer workshops and legal defense, to educate themselves and support the 2017 General Synod “Immigrant Welcoming Resolution.”

For information, call 206-698-4454 or email b.frenchmore@gmail.com.

Committed to local church pastoral ministry

Pastor plans to involve church in synod preparations

Nathaniel Mahlberg, as a young, recently ordained pastor at First Congregational UCC in Walla Walla since 2015, will be one of the PNC delegates for General Synod.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and religion at Amherst College in Massachusetts, Nathaniel packed his car and drove to Santa Fe, N.Mex., where he worked in a bookstore, played in bands and volunteered teaching workshops on nonviolence with Veterans for Peace.

Although he grew up Lutheran in Wisconsin and spent some time as a seeker, he was a Quaker until he found the United Church of Santa Fe, was drawn back into the Protestant tradition and began exploring his call to ministry.

While at Union Theological Seminary from 2010 to 2013, Nathaniel continued peace and justice action with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and was a community minister at Judson Memorial Church, where he was ordained in 2015.

He did clinical pastoral education at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in New York City and then a chaplaincy residency with the medical trauma team at Einstein Medical Center in North Philadelphia.

"I dealt with people suffering from gun violence, other forms of violence and car crashes, ministering with people in times of crisis," he said.

Nathaniel wanted more chaplaincy training and was there for one year, but he became convinced he wanted to work in pastoral ministry.

"Here I deal with all different crises that come up, and from chaplaincy training learned to listen deeply and be attuned to group dynamics and spiritual life," he said of his



Nathaniel Mahlberg has served Walla Walla First Congregational United Church of Christ since 2015.

Photo courtesy of Nathaniel Mahlberg

commitment to pastoral ministry.

"I want to preach, and I love having different things to do, having sustaining pastoral care relationships and being a public voice for faith," he said. "A chaplain parachutes in when everything is exploding in someone's life and needs to build trust quickly."

He appreciates now having sustained pastoral relationships and seeing people through the seasons of their lives—baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals and more.

Nathaniel said that the Walla Walla church is a multi-generational community.

The 153-year-old church, which is open and affirming, hosts an emergency winter warming center, cooks and serves monthly meals at the Christian Aid Center, is a meeting site for local 12-step pro-

grams and has a commitment to bring attention to local, national and global issues of social justice. The congregation continually finds ways to be involved.

"I love the UCC and I feel the UCC is an important faith voice in these times. People are looking for and need moral clarity," he said, expecting that he will gain more insights from interactions and resolutions at General Synod.

He also values the opportunity to be a delegate, because it will help him bring a sense of the value of First Congregational UCC in Walla Walla being affiliated with the national UCC and PNC.

"As I prepare for General Synod, I will have sessions after Sunday worship to talk about the measures and resolutions being proposed there," he said.

"I will ask people how they

think about the issues and will help them feel connected to the larger body," he said.

When he returns, he will debrief, telling the congregation, what happened, why it's important and what its meaning is.

"I believe a local church gains strength by connecting with the conference and national body," he said.

Nathaniel is also continuing covenant groups at Walla Walla, a program started by his predecessor Cecilia McKean, and he is taking over her leadership of that program for the PNC Adult Spiritual Formation Task Force of the Educational Ministries Committee.

For information, call 509-525-8753 or email pastor@fc-church.net.

"Make Glad" is the theme for General Synod 2017 from June 30 to July 4 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Every two years, the gathering draws thousands of UCC members for witness, worship and fellowship.

Along with amendments to the constitution and by-laws, delegates will consider resolutions on participating in inclusive Boy Scouting programs, advocating for rights of children living under Israeli military occupation, corporal punishment of children in homes and institutions, bringing down the wall in the Caribbean, the disparity of rights of adoptees to birth certificates, studying gun violence as a public health emergency, becoming an immigrant welcoming church, living wages, cultural diversity training and more. For information, visit synod.uccpages.org.

Flooding and snow cause damage at N-Sid-Sen

Water levels of Lake Coeur d'Alene have receded since flooding in March and the roads to access N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center are passable.

There was just one lane in several areas between the camp and St. Maries, Idaho.

"We had 110 inches of snow rather than the usual 60 inches this winter," said managing director Mark Boyd.

Under the weight of snow, the roof on the boat barn across the highway collapsed on one boat. The other boat was out for repairs.

A neighbor snowshoeing by the barn reported the damage. Mark and Buzz Hamm, onsite maintenance supervisor, had to shovel their way to the barn and took pictures.

Mark is consulting on insurance coverage and looking for options for a newer boat and rebuilding the barn. He and Buzz plan to tear down the boat barn and hope there will be insurance to rebuild it.

As water recedes, they have to do considerable cleanup.

"It's the highest water in the six years I have been here and has remained for an extended period," he said.

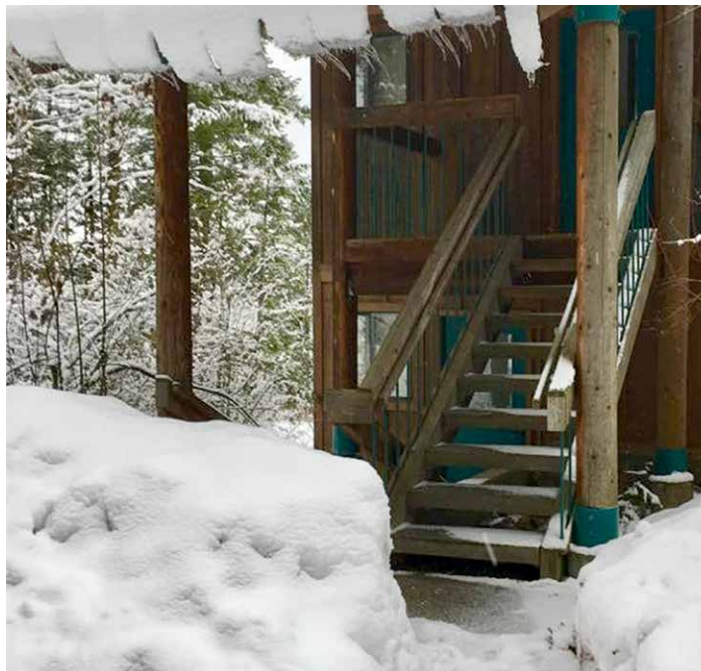
Along the front shore, the water covered the campfire area and came up to the edge of the chapel and over the basketball court. The campfire logs were tied and chained in place. Other logs have floated in. Some will be usable.

"The buildings are high enough that the water did not reach them," he said.

On the cove side of the camp, one part of the dock broke loose from one piling and spun around and stuck in the mud. Mark and Buzz have put it back in place.

The swimming docks are moved each year from the inside of the cove to the south side and chained to the boat docks, which are located so that they are protected from stormy weather that usually comes from the south.

The docks rode up the pilings, with just five feet of the



pilings above the water. The level was 10 feet below the Ford cabin.

"With all the water coming out of the mountains and hillsides, it brings more sediment, so the lake is not clear now," said Mark, who is also concerned because of threats to change environmental protection laws and funding for Super Fund cleanup from mining sediment.

"The lake is muddy and brown. Some is normal sediment, but it is quite smelly," he said.

"Our goal here at this site is to look at overall land management. Beyond work on the forests, there are two creeks and the waterfront we need to look at and assure that it is managed for future use and for future storms."

The weather also meant that a few winter camps were canceled because it was hard for people to drive to N-Sid-Sen.

"We plowed and cleared the trails, so we could have accommodated people," Mark said.

Three camps in January, one in February and one in March were canceled, meaning a loss of money. Midwinter in March was also canceled.

With a drop in the number of midwinter campers coming to N-Sid-Sen in March when it is cold and snowy, Mark said they plan to host a fall youth event.

For information, call 208-689-3489.

Top photo shows the flooded campfire area in front.

The second photo shows the level of the lake rising to the edge of the chapel below Forrester Lodge.

The third photo is of damage to the boat barn from the weight of the snow collapsing the roof.

The bottom photo shows the pathway cleared to Spirit Lodge.

Photos courtesy of Mark Boyd

New mattresses arrive in time for Annual Meeting at Pilgrim Firs

Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center at Port Orchard has been focusing his energies on details of hosting the PNC Annual Meeting there on Saturday, April 29.

As of early April, 200 were registered.

New mattresses from the Mattress Campaign will be in place in time for Annual Meeting at Pilgrim Firs.

Some guests will stay at the camp—and there is still some space there—and some will stay in nearby hotels.

Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen said that all



New mattresses piled in the lodge ready to be taken to the beds at Pilgrim Firs.

Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Firs



New mattresses are ready to go on beds at N-Sid-Sen.

the new mattresses will be in place there by summer. He is transporting mattresses.

The Mattress Campaign still seeks donations for another \$15,000 of the \$75,000 goal, but the PNC went ahead with purchasing the mattresses at a good deal. The campaign also includes the cost of transporting the mattresses and disposing of the old ones.

Kyna Shilling, camp administrator, said that donations can still be made at www.n-sid-sen.org.

Wade said he is also focusing energy on discussions about the new model for camps, with intergenerational church mission camps at Pilgrim Firs for two to three weeks beginning in 2018.

He noted that given the variation in summer break dates for schools in the region—some mid-June to mid-August and others late June to

late August—reduced the number of weeks youth can gather at traditional camps.

He is making contacts in Kitsap County with social service agencies working on housing, environment and other justice issues for mission opportunities.

The idea is for congregations to bring youth and adults to “do mission trip” experiences, he said.

Wade is also promoting weekend retreats for churches, and Annual Meeting will be an opportunity to introduce Pilgrim Firs to more PNC members.

“Studies show that when a young person forms a significant relationship with older people—at least five older people—in a church, the young person tends to stay connected to the church,” said Wade.

“In retreat settings on weekends and in mission

camp, such relationships are fostered,” he said.

“It’s huge for a church to have a retreat,” Wade added. “Connections happen when people come together, pray together and play together.”

For information, call 360-876-2031 or email pilgrim-firs.org.

2017 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

Annual Meeting - Business
April 29

Work Camp
June 16 to 19

Kids Camp
June 25 to 28
Sharry Nyberg

Senior High Camp
June 25 to July 2
Kristen Almgren & Kelsey Peterson

Intermediate Camp
July 16 to 22
Sandy Cheatham

Junior High Camp
July 16 to 22
David Reese Weasley

Leadership in Training
LIT Camp
July 16 to 22
Wade Zick & Kaila Russell

OWL Training
Nov 10 to 12

For information,
call 360-876-2031

email wadezick.pf@gmail.com

REGISTER at pilgrim-firs.org

For registration questions,
email kyna@n-sid-sen.org

2017 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

Women’s Retreat
May 19 to 21
Jan Shannon

Work Camp - June 12 to 17

Young Adult Retreat
June 16 to 18
Todd Kamp & Jen Towner

Senior High Aqua Camp
June 25 to July 1
Sheila Thieme & Tony Kliment

Kid’s Camp - July 9 to 12
Trudy Lambert & Gale Peterson

LGBTQ Retreat - July 14 to 16
Jan Shannon

Family Camp #1
July 23 to 29
Amy Johnson & Ryan Lambert

Intermediate Camp & LiT/CiT
July 30 to Aug 5
Kim Stultz & Bob Watrous

Junior High Aqua Camp
July 30 to Aug 5
Leah Atkinson Bilinski

Family Camp #2 - Aug. 6 to 12
Janet Malley & Andrew Conley Holcom

Fall Youth Retreat - Oct. TBD

For information,
call 208-689-3489

email mark@n-sid-sen.org

REGISTER at n-sid-sen.org

For registration questions,
email kyna@n-sid-sen.org