



# Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

Mary Stamp, editor  
editor@pncuccnews.org

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

Summer 2017

## Annual Meeting explores church vitality

**Delegates, clergy, visitors seek to understand what church vitality is.**

Peter Ilgenfritz, PNC board moderator, opened the 2017 Annual Business Meeting at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center on Saturday, April 29, announcing a quorum with 48 of PNC's 79 churches and with 88 clergy, 77 delegates and 13 visitors.

The final total of 229 fit in the space for the first Annual Meeting held at one of the PNC camps.

"Although the room was definitely full, we're hearing really good things," said Conference Minister Mike Denton.

After welcoming messages from Conference Minister Mike Denton and a welcome to Pilgrim Firs by managing director Wade Zick, Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister of church vitality, discussed what "vitality" is.

Continued on Page 4



Annual Meeting participants fill long rows of chairs at plenary sessions in Pilgrim Firs' lodge.

## Board seeks to shrink distances in the Conference

The Board of the Pacific Northwest Conference met June 2 to 3 at the home of John and Dee Eisenhower on Bainbridge Island.

"We shared a meal, and had conversations around the table about our common history and commitment, and we shared powerfully poignant stories," said Kathleen Morgan, reporting on the meeting. "These stories identified our hopes, dreams and common threads as individuals, which draw us together as a body seeking to work together throughout the coming year."

On Saturday, the board came back together to pick up where they had left off and to learn some new skills from PNC Vitality Minister Courtney Stange-Tregear as they shared in one-to-one

**PNC Board of Directors learn about each other as part of the Conference.**

conversations and exercises.

Board members reflected on: "Why are we here? Who are we? What is the ministry we are called to do? and How shall we do it?"

In an exercise and small group discussions, the board members identified their challenges as the Board of Directors and as the Pacific Northwest Con-

ference.

It is: "How do we go from WE to the vast US, losing the language of "them," and do this as we shrink the distances between us across the conference?" Kathleen reported.

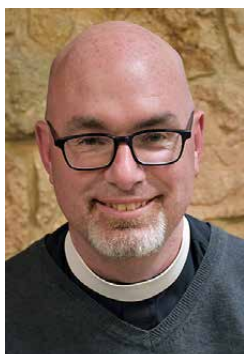
The bulk of afternoon was spent identifying a structure and time-line to develop and implement the challenge of furthering connections in the PNC, first with the members of the Board, then to the entire conference.

At the Fall PNC Gathering at N-Sid-Sen Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, there will be further training. The board hopes exploration of these challenges will grow in the PNC, said Kathleen.

**For information, call 206-484-9814 or email [pilgenfritz@universityucc.org](mailto:pilgenfritz@universityucc.org).**

# 'Conflict Unraveled' helps churches, individuals

## Conference Comments

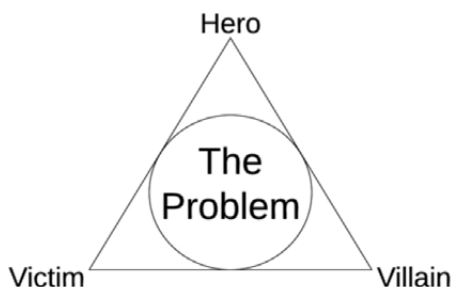


By The Rev.  
Mike Denton  
Conference  
Minister

**Stepping  
off the  
Victim/  
Villain/  
Hero cycle  
can be a  
good start  
towards  
peace  
on earth.**

In my last column, I mentioned a book I was in the middle of reading and this month I'm going to mention a book I read several years ago. *Conflict Unravelled* by Andra Medea is one of the books I've recommended to churches and individuals along the way, and I've found it helpful. In addition to it being easy to read, it has tons of helpful diagrams and tools that have helped me reflect on conflicts I'm involved in and churches are involved in.

One of the most helpful tools is called the Victim/Villain/Hero Cycle or, in other places, The Drama Triangle. It looks like this:



The basics of this are pretty simple and it usually starts with the realization that someone is feeling hurt. (This all happens with groups, too, but for the purpose of this article I'm going to use an individual to explain this diagram.) We'll call this person Chris, and Chris, by Chris' own description or the perception of others, is seen as a victim. It's at this point that blame is sometimes assigned for Chris' pain. When one person is identified as a victim, it usually means that someone else is identified as a villain. We'll call this person Taylor. When blame becomes part of the mix, some sort of punishment is easily rationalized and either Chris—or those who claim to be on Chris' side—begin to try and punish Taylor for causing Chris' pain. As this happens, Chris or Chris' supporters move a position and become heroes. However, as Taylor begins to feel pain, they begin to see themselves—or those on Taylor's side—as victims AND Chris and Chris' supporters as villains. As Chris becomes blamed for Taylor's pain, Taylor—or Taylor's supporters—feel justified in somehow punishing Chris and Chris's supporters, and on and on the cycle goes becoming faster and faster along the way.

In the meantime, there is some problem that remains unaddressed. Chris probably felt hurt because there was a communication problem or something was unfair or there is a difference

in approaches around something, etc. Instead of solving the problem that led to Chris feeling hurt, this system seeks to place blame for Chris feeling hurt. Sure, Taylor may have done something Taylor shouldn't have and Taylor may need to accept responsibility or be held accountable but only to the point where it contributes to solving the problem (admittedly, this is hard to figure out sometimes). Systems that insist on punishment and blame create their own problems and frequently solve none.

We've all become stuck in this cycle at one point or another. It's one of the ways we regularly interact and it's not limited to personal interactions. Lived out largely, this way of interacting is deeply rooted in our criminal justice system and our financial systems. Our last several election cycles adopted this way of interacting. We're now in a state of perpetual global war that demands more and more to feed it. Once we start to see some of the places this triangle is present, we start to see it everywhere. It's an insidious, tempting and addictive system that promises the permanence of heroism. It is built on the lies that we can avoid responsibility, that we can avoid pain, and that humiliation is more powerful than humility.

The good news is that we have the tools to step off this triangle. They might seem a little scary, at first, but in the long run the energy we have to put into slowing down and stopping this cycle is significantly less than the energy required to maintain this cycle.

First, we can confess or take responsibility. The truth can set us free ... from the drama. Then, we can make room to hear the concerns of those who might be stuck in the same cycle with us. We need to remember that they are also a good person doing the best they can. Together, we can name the problem in the middle of the triangle. We can pray together and for each other. Finally, we can make a commitment and plan to work on the problem together. We know that this isn't a magical formula, and we might have to go through a few rounds of it. We also should realize that it's a persistent pattern and that it's easier to fall back into it, at first, than move forward.

Many of us know the old song, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me..." Stepping off the Victim/Villain/Hero cycle—and inviting others to come along—can be a really good start.

## Transitions announced

**Becky Anderson** was installed June 4 as pastor of the Newport UCC, which she has been serving since March.

**David Weasley** will be installed July 8 as the pastor of youth, young adults and mission at First Congregational UCC in Bellingham. He grew up in Western New York, attended Chicago Theological Seminary and was ordained by the American Baptist Church.

**Lon Rycraft**, who served as pastor at Normandy Park UCC from 2008 to 2016, died April 30 in Corvallis, where he studied at Oregon State University. He earned MDiv and DMin degrees at Claremont School of Theology and served churches in Hawaii and Oregon.

**Darrel Goodwin**, pastor of Liberation UCC in Seattle and member of the United Church of Christ Board, will be the program director for the Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders.

## Regional authorizing ministry events are planned in the fall

"Make It Plain: Authorizing Ministry in the 21st Century" is the theme for three regional events: Sept. 8 to 9 in Boston, Sept. 21 to 22 in Denver, and Oct. 23 to 24 in Philadelphia.

The programs will look at the changing landscapes of church and denominational life and how they have impact on ministry, including ways the UCC calls, authorizes and oversees ministers.

The Manual on Ministry, last revised in 2002, will be re-imagined to meet needs of the church and Committees on Ministry in these times. In 2014, a 17-member denomination-wide committee with people from many aspects of church life, was formed to write the vision of authorized ministry. The regional gatherings will include Committees on Ministry, authorized ministers and members of the UCC.

*For information, search online for Make It Plain: Authorizing Ministry in the 21st Century.*

## Stewardship Workshop planned

"Journey to Generosity: The Way of Jesus" is a stewardship workshop to be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, June 24, at the Congregational Church on Mercer Island. Participants will look at changing patterns of giving, organizing a steward-

ship campaign, the UCC's 2017 resource packet, capital campaigns, electronic giving, endowments and legacies, and how to ask people for money. It is planned by Gary Southerton and Roberta Rominger.

*For information, email pastor gary3@gmail.com or roberta.rominger@ucc-cc-mi.org.*

## Our Whole Lives training set

There will be an Our Whole Lives training from noon Friday to noon Sunday, Nov. 10 to 12, at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center in Port Orchard. The event will explore holistic sexuality education following UCC values.

There will be sessions for grades K to 1, fourth to sixth grades, seventh to ninth grades, 10th to 12th grades, and young adults/adults.

*For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit [www.pilgrim-firs.org](http://www.pilgrim-firs.org).*

## JWM Committee offers calendar

The PNC Justice and Witness Ministries Committee prepares a monthly calendar of justice events. Steve Claggett said that submissions may be made by emailing him at [claget@comcast.net](mailto:claget@comcast.net).

*The link to the calendar is at <https://1drv.ms/x/s!At4A1ODoFJGKkFTuuyeE-U2zZ1mz>.*

## 'Table Turning' action held

For the third year, a multi-faith Holy Table Turning/Passover Action was held April 10 across the street from the Howard S. Wright headquarters in King County to protest the building of a new youth jail, the Youth and Family Justice Center, said Merlla McLaughlin of Northshore UCC.

"Institutional racism and greed fuel a massive prison industrial complex," she said. "Profits are prioritized over children and families of color, and faiths are often complacent toward racist public policies."

In the Howard S. Wright offices, people work to move construction of the new youth jail. In the action, young parents pushed strollers and shepherded small children to hand out fliers to passersby or to hold up signs. Clergy of different faiths spoke out, calling for justice and for healing wounds of institutional racism and white indifference, she said. Signs said: "No New Youth Jail." "Education Not Institutions." "Stop Caging Our Children." "Stop the School-to-Prison Pipeline."

"As we prayed and sang together, we symbolically flipped over our tables," Merlla said.

For information, call 206-909-8758.

## General Synod meets in June

Twenty-one resolutions are coming before the UCC's General Synod 2017 meeting June 30 to July 4 in Baltimore, MD.

Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of UCC members for witness, worship, fellowship and friendship.

The theme "Make Glad!" will be part of celebrations and debate. Delegates will return to report to the conference and their congregations.

Proposed resolutions address several social justice issues, including calls to:

- Participate in inclusive Boy Scouting programs;
- Advocate for children living under Israeli military occupation;
- End corporal punishment of children;
- Bring down the wall in the Caribbean;
- Address rights of adoptees to access to their birth certificates;
- Recognize gun violence as a public health emergency;
- Become an immigrant welcoming church;
- Establish a more just economy with living wages and job creation;
- Support legislation authorizing aid in dying;
- Enact a \$15/hour minimum wage;
- Establish programs for cultural diversity training for clergy;
- Support adult survivors of child abuse and neglect;
- Work for disability justice;
- Affirm the Immokalee Workers' boycott of Wendy's, and
- Affirm imperatives that the "Earth is the Lord's, not ours to wreck."

The program will also include a variety of speakers, such as author Glennon Doyle Melton, environmental activist Aaron Mair, senior minister of Riverside Church in New York City Amy Butler, Pacific School of Religion president David Vasquez-Levy, pastor of Living Water UCC in Philadelphia Kim Kendrick, UCC president and general minister John Dorhauer, chaplain Raven Rowe and Hartford minister Damaris Whittiker.

Delegates from the PNC are Peter Ilgenfritz, Wendy Blight and Kyna Shilling of Seattle; Jill Komura of Olympia; Nathaniel Mahlberg of Walla Walla, and Emma Ritchie of Bellingham.



# Courtney Stange Treagear reflects on vitality

Continued from page 1

“We are about being agents and ministers of vitality,” she said.

Part of being minister for church vitality has been to define the task in the PNC setting.

She told of being welcomed at a Board meeting by having board members write ideas about church vitality, put the papers on yarn and put it on her.

“All of you are the conference,” she said. “Last spring I preached at Annual Meeting about ‘Going out on a Limb,’ and then I did just that, moving my family from Baltimore. Since arriving, my focus has been to get to know you and define what church vitality is for the PNC.”

So she has traveled the conference to meet pastors and lay leaders, to hear their stories and struggles, and to find where they need help.

“I am your resource,” she said. “I want to know what makes your heart sing. I’m already impressed with the vitality here. You are doing amazing things and need to talk about it, to share your stories, your lives and your testimonies.”

Courtney told the story of Frog and Toad. Toad sees that Frog has a wonderful garden. Frog gives Toad seeds to plant. Toad does that, and then shouts, “Grow.” Frog hears the commotion and says if Toad shouts the seeds will be afraid to grow. Toad changes his tactics and reads the seeds a bedtime story and sings. Then the sun shines, the rain falls, and Toad falls asleep. The seeds start to grow.

“Toad needed to be patient and caring,” she said.

For eight months since arriving, she has been listening and meeting people. She’s aware churches in Eastern Washington and North Idaho feel isolated geographically and Western Washington churches feel isolated from each other even though they are near.



Courtney Stange-Treagear points to graphic on vitality.



Graphic is based on phrases from Micah 6:8.

“We need to reach out and be together more, so we can listen and care, so we can share our struggles and vulnerabilities,” Courtney said, inviting, “Lean on me. I can suggest a resource. More connections are needed for the seeds to grow.”

“Church vitality means that the conditions necessary for life are present. The tasks are to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly. It’s not just about stewardship, worship and committees,” she said.

She used a graphic to describe necessary conditions for vitality using what God requires of followers in Micah 6:8—to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

“From looking at actual

churches, we can see the most vital ones are those that find a balance between these different ways of being,” she said.

- **Doing justice includes** both charity and justice—supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, protesting unjust legislation, feeding and sheltering the homeless, visiting and caring for those in prisons.

- **Loving kindness includes** such Christian practices as worship, Bible study, faith formation and labyrinth walking.

- **Walking humbly is** about giving and sacrificing, including stewardship of time, talent and treasure, development and fund raising.

Each requirement is a different colored circle in the

graphic. In the space where the circles overlap is where vitality resides, Courtney said.

“We cannot attain vitality by simply insisting we be vital,” she said. Like seeds that need sunshine, rain and patient love to grow into plants—and cannot be forced to grow by shouting at them—we cannot force vitality by insisting we are vital or starting a praise band,” she explained.

When churches strengthen stewardship, justice-and-witness ministries and Christian practice, they have the necessary conditions to thrive and be vital, Courtney said.

“It’s not a formula that vitality = go to a protest, form a stewardship committee and continue Sunday worship,” she said. “Continuing to do things as you always have done will not increase vitality, nor will it help to add activities that aren’t authentic to your church.”

She believes that putting energy into these three areas of church life will create conditions that increase vitality.

In discussion, Marlin Brown of Eastgate said vitality requires difficult conversations, because it’s hard to be completely welcoming to someone who has been injured by the church, hurt by past trauma.

Courtney said, “Relationship is energy. If injured people do not share, people don’t know what’s going on. “We need to prioritize relationships.”

David Anderson of St. Paul UCC was grateful for Courtney coming Jan. 8 to bless the congregation and building as they began again to use the sanctuary after repairs from a fire.

Bruce Edwards of the Congregational Church of Mercer Island said the first step to being a vital church is to be open to truth.

Courtney is gathering and sharing “out on a limb” stories with the Church Development Committee.

## Three self principles build partners in sharing faith

Preaching for the morning worship at Annual Meeting, Conference Minister Mike Denton pointed out that gathering at Pilgrim Firs for many draws memories of happiness, because it is a place that has formed and shaped many in the PNC.

One of the “geekiest” things Mike said he owns is a T-shirt with an image of Rufus Anderson, a dapper, stiff-backed man in 1800s garb.

The T-shirt has led to some awkward conversations about who Rufus Anderson is and why he is Mike’s hero.

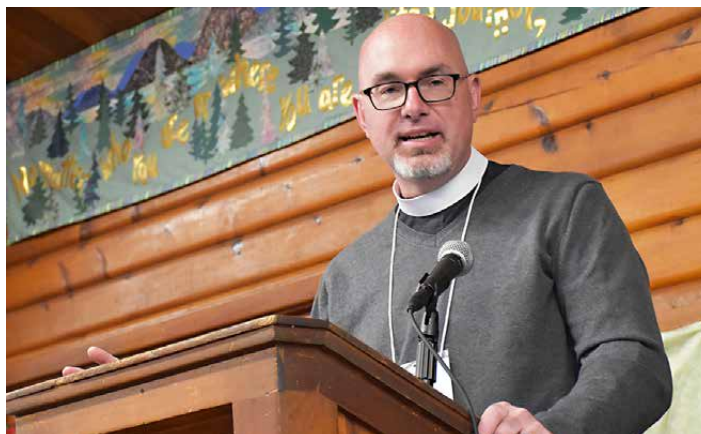
**In the mid-1800s**, Rufus was secretary for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) and suggested some “radical things” for the missionary movement. He is known for the three-self principles, that a missionary should stay in the field only until those at the mission site are educated and evangelized enough to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, which means the community has enough people to sustain its work. Once these elements were in place, the missionary is to leave.

**“These ideas also reflect** the basic responsibilities of a church in an congregational system,” Mike said. “These ideas compelled me to learn more about Rufus.”

The three-self idea sounds practical, he said, but emerged because of several problems.

“One was assuming a missionary’s task was to bring in the Gospel and civilize native people,” Mike said. “Civilizing meant using religious, military and commercial power to force communities to interact with, be subjugated by and become dependent on Western European and American institutions.”

Missionaries talked derogatorily and patronizingly about “rice Christians,” who associated with Christianity as long



Mike Denton preaches on Rufus Anderson’s idea.

as the missionaries fed them.

In addition, too many missionaries made themselves so central and powerful at some mission sites that people’s needs and the Gospel call became secondary,” said Mike, sharing a quote about Hawaiian missionaries: “They went to Hawaii to do good and did very well indeed.”

As secretary of the ABCFM, Rufus read reports from missionaries so he could direct support and set policy.

**“The three-self idea** came out of what he saw as corruption in the missionary community,” Mike said

Mike pointed out that at times of crisis, when churches are trying to figure out what to do and wondering about their existence, he lifts up these principles as the things a church must aspire to, recreate or renegotiate to be effective and stable, and to have the resources for a vital congregational life.

**“Calling a church** to seek ways to become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating was, to me, a call to life,” Mike said.

However, he is now convinced he has been wrong.

He read Isaiah 55:12-13: “For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field

shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

“Would being self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating send us out with joy and lead us back in peace? No!” he said.

They would not make the mountains and hills burst into song or the trees clap their hands. Focusing on them does not have “the majesty and powerful growth of the cypress and the myrtle tree.”

Mike notes that focus on them may leave people stuck in thorns and briars.

“Are they what we need or want to be a sign of our love for God and God’s love of us? Nope,” he said.

**Mike realized he mixed up** the ends and means: “I’m not a Christian and didn’t go into ministry because the idea of being self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating was compelling but because of the unrelenting call of a loving God, a liberating Christ and an empowering Spirit.

“Most institutions start to solve a problem or serve in mission as long as the mission is needed, but often institutions reach a point where their main goal is to perpetuate them-

selves,” he said.

“Most of us have been raised with the idea that institutions serve us or a greater good, but institutions over time usually shape us more than we shape them,” he said.

Mike said Rufus suggested the three-self principles as tools for missionaries to help new faith communities participate as partners in the movement to share the Gospel with the world.

A video presentation by UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer about the emergence of the church, dovetails with what Courtney is doing in taking the first year to discern what vitality means for the PNC.

**The ideas of Micah 6:8** are not new. The UCC uses them to justify the call to do justice along the continuum from charity to advocacy, Mike said.

“In doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly, we are sent out with joy and led to peace, freeing us from thorns and briars, and being a sign of our love of God and God’s love for us,” Mike said.

Two words he uses as a tool, “so that,” invite people to understand they are rooted in a mission, rooted in a task.

“The church is concerned about its future and it’s building, so that the people have a place to worship and gather, so that they will be in community so that they will serve the community,” said Mike.

**“If a church does justice**, loves kindness and walks humbly, then its building is a gift, not a burden,” he said, noting that the words are not a slogan, but a tool; not a formula for church growth, but to re-center to use our resources and ask for what we are using our building and resources.

“The principles serve the mission instead of the mission being to serve the principles,” Mike said.

## Delegates review, reflect on implications of budget

PNC treasurer Wendy Blight presented the conference budget, noting that 68 percent of funds that keep the conference afloat come from Our Churches' Wider Mission, \$453,000 of \$662,800 in income. Other sources are transfers from General Reserves, the Pentecost Fund and the Church Development Fund.

She presented the budget early in the one-day meeting, and later it was approved.

"The reserves," she said, are to be rainy day funds and now is a time to use them to invest in developing church vitality, finding new ways to communicate and building relationships."

Wendy reported that OCWM giving was down \$10,000 from last year, so there is need to increase OCWM commitment and use dollars.

She also reported that the PNC continues to send 31 percent to the national setting, "because we believe in what the national church is doing and what it is saying in preaching, teaching and speaking out as a progressive voice in the nation and world. Costs for the national UCC go up every year, too."

To help meet needs, the PNC has set a goal to draw \$10,000 from a new "Friends of the Conference" campaign,



Wendy Blight, PNC treasurer, listens to feedback on budget.

inviting gifts of \$500 or gifts of \$10 from individuals.

Expenses include \$396,600 in staff costs, administrative expenses, leadership committees, other mission support—including a reduction in funds for the Faith Action Network (FAN) from \$12,000 to \$8,000.

"We are not happy with doing that, but need to encourage churches and individuals to give to FAN," she said.

Funds for salary go for ministries, Wendy said, such as Mike Denton speaking out against hate and in solidarity with the Muslim community at a press conference after a woman wearing a hijab was beaten

in Seattle.

Those funds also are translated into the dream to build vitality in local churches through faith lived out in justice in a broken world through Courtney Stange-Tregear's ministry, Wendy added.

A small church is doing vital work in Eastern Washington as the only progressive voice in a conservative town, and Courtney is there to help that church not only survive but keep hope alive, Wendy added.

"We will continue to find creative ways to be financially viable, so our belief in an inclusive, loving God can spread in the region," she said.

The 2017-18 budget for N-Sid-Sen is \$417,000, which includes \$255,000 coming from non-UCC retreats, \$72,700 from UCC summer camps and \$49,150 from UCC retreats.

Pilgrim Firs revenue is a total of \$528,000, which includes \$424,500 from non-UCC retreats, \$59,800 from UCC retreats and \$32,500 from UCC summer camps.

The PNC also has capital budgets for N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs.

At N-Sid-Sen, projects include a new swim dock, a pedestrian path across Highway 97, outback shelters east of the highway, replacing the camp truck and pump house system. Five year dream projects include two mini homes south of Syringa, a manager residence in the North Cove area and building a new lodge like Spirit Lodge.

Pilgrim Firs projects include renovations of Huckleberry House, temporary staff housing, a septic system, and long term dream projects include staff/volunteer housing and a program building.

While at the time of Annual Meeting the Mattress Campaign was at \$72,196, the full \$75,000 has been raised and mattresses are in place.

**For information, call 206-725-8383.**

## National leader tells churches to know why they exist



John Dorhauer speaks to Annual Meeting by video.

UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer spoke to the 2017 PNC Annual Meeting by video.

He promotes envisioning the church's future and conversations of church vitality shifting from decline and diminishment to a future hope.

"Often we look at statistics getting smaller, but it's hard to do evangelism if guests in church hear of our decline. We need to believe the church has a calling, a future and a mission

worth living and fighting for," he said.

John urged congregations to focus on their mission, to understand why they exist, what they are about, their identity, core values and mission that makes them necessary. He calls churches to have purpose statements, mission statements and vision statements.

He likens what's needed to churches "updating their operating systems," just as computers need to do to be vital.

# Resolution invites UCC churches to be welcoming

Briana Brannon of the Justice and Witness Ministries Committee presented the resolution calling the PNC to become immigrant and refugee welcoming as a conference and as congregations.

The Annual Meeting delegates adopted the resolution.

“Fear for refugees and migrants is palpable,” Briana said. “Migrants and immigrants are not statistics. They are people with identities, stories and dignities.”

The resolution is based on the belief that every immigrant and refugee has inherent dignity and human rights, and that they should be able to live in safety, without fear and with access to basic necessities and opportunities.

**She encourages people** to share in ministries of presence, become friends, create hospitality and engage in the spiritual practice of welcoming people to “counter the narrative” against hate and fear.

The resolution calls for “offering a counter-narrative of humble hospitality, radical inclusivity and courageous resistance as a direct response to unjust and dehumanizing immigration policies, practices and rhetoric.”

With executive orders increasing deportations and stirring fear, the resolution also calls the PNC and congrega-



**Briana Brannon introduces resolution at Annual Meeting.**

tions to provide funding to offer immigrant-led preparedness workshops to help immigrants know their rights, and to support families affected by raids, detention and deportation.

**It also calls PNC members** to educate themselves, to discern opportunities for advocacy and direct services, to build cross-cultural friendships, to organize response teams, to offer sanctuary, to join in vigils, rallies and marches.

The JWM committee will offer educational resources, such as the UCC’s, “Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation: The Journey Is Made by Walking,” and the Church Council of Greater Seattle’s “Upholding Sanctuary in the Faith Community.”

Briana said the resolution is about challenging PNC members to consider how they will make it a living document.

**Paul Ashby of the JWM** Committee and pastor at Richmond Beach UCC in Shoreline said that his church voted in January to be a sanctuary congregation and is working out details of what that means.

“We have a message on our church sign that says, ‘No matter where you were born, you are welcome here.’ We are seeking how to live our commitment to be compassionate and courageous,” he said.

The church is asking what it means to care about those who pick Washington apples, do roofing, harvest vegetables, work in meat packing and are



**Paul Ashby tells of being a sanctuary church.**

targeted by immigration agents.

Paul said they also question a national budget spending to build a wall.

“We need to use the walls of our church to do more than hang up banners or pictures of a blond Jesus,” he said. “We need to use our walls to practice justice, to practice sanctuary more than one day a week. We need to use walls to challenge injustices in these times. To be a sanctuary means to be a refuge for the poor, who are immigrants and neighbors.”

**Briana invited churches** and the conference to consider joining community networks to go onto the streets to pray and protest, saying: “We are stronger if we use community networks.”

**For information, call 719-235-8072 or email [b.frenchmore@gmail.com](mailto:b.frenchmore@gmail.com).**



**John Eisenhauer led Friday evening singing of camp songs from the N-Sid-Sen song book, using the setting of Pilgrim Firs to draw on fond memories of camp experiences.**



**Andrey Conley-Holcom of Admiral UCC and Bianca Lovelace Jones of Eastgate read an appeal to recognize the struggles, violence and injustices transgender women of color face.**

## Church plants cypress tree for Arbor Day-Earth Day

The goal of Celebrate Trees! during Earth Month on Bainbridge Island was to raise awareness of and encourage involvement in Arbor Day and Earth Day, said Dee Eisenhauer, pastor at Eagle Harbor UCC on Bainbridge Island.

“We seek to inspire everyone to protect our trees, our environment and our planet,” she said. “Celebrate Trees! offered something for everyone, children and adults of all abilities.”

There were weed pulls and lectures on eradicating invasive species that attack trees. Tree books and art were featured at local galleries, the library and



Members of Eagle Harbor UCC and friends planted a Splitrock Hinoki Cypress tree on April 29 at the church.

Photos courtesy of Joel Sachett

bookstore, and local bakeries featured preparing tree-

and earth-shaped cookies.

Tours of significant trees in

the community were offered.

Two members of the Eagle Harbor church, Christine Perkins and Elissa Kratzer, were instrumental in organizing the Celebrate Trees! events for the community.

As a capstone event for Earth Month, members of the church and representatives from other faith communities planted a Splitrock Hinoki Cypress tree “to express gratitude for our living forests and bless a new community tree,” said Dee.

For information, 206-842-4657 or email [dee.eisenhauer@gmail.com](mailto:dee.eisenhauer@gmail.com).

## UCC joins thousands in the March for Science

Among the several thousand people who took part in Seattle’s April 22 March for Science in reaction to proposed budget cuts to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science, were clergy and members of UCC churches.

Tom Wert, pastor of the German UCC, hosted a gathering place at the church, which is across the street from Cal Anderson Park, where the March for Science began.

“Being the son of a science professor, who was also a deep person of faith, I was raised in a household where science and faith were friends,” he said. “I was always perplexed why people see science and faith as incompatible.

“As people walked by or came in the church to make a sign and meet friends, I heard them appreciate the strong community of all ages, races, faiths, education and lifestyles that came together,” Tom said. “We are in this together. Let’s not give in to cynicism or apathy but empower each other to work for justice, peace, the wellbeing of all people and



Top, Chris Marsh, Joan Henjum, Pete Thorn and Rose Bailey Bottom, Vanessa Curtin, Tom Wert, Andrew Conley Holcom and Dee Eisenhauer.

Photos courtesy of Joan Henjum

protecting our environment,” he said.

“Many spoke positively about the church being involved with the cause. They were glad they could make a sign or sit down out of the weather for a while,” he said.

“Science Is a Path to God,” proclaimed the reader board at Admiral Congregational UCC. From glimpses of our intricate biology seen through a microscope to the glorious cosmic displays of light and beauty revealed by the Hubble Telescope, many of us are re-imagining our relationship to all life. We are confronted with questions of what it means to be human, part of a vast ecosystem of life, while brought to tears and amazement by the wonder of it all,” said Joan Henjum who is organizing people interested in a faith-science dialogue.

“Our denomination embraces the challenge that science and technology present to traditional theology. God is a living God, calling us to expand our hearts, souls and minds,” she said.

For information, call 206-766-0097 or email [joanhenum@yahoo.com](mailto:joanhenum@yahoo.com).



Churches ask for prayers for peace

## Korean church partners reflect on rising tensions

By Ed Evans - co-chair  
Global Ministries Committee,  
a shared ministry of the Dis-  
ciples of Christ and UCC

With the increasing escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the Global Ministries Committee of the PNC has been in communication with church partners and friends in South Korea. They ask for American Christians to reflect on the mood in their country.

The committee counterpart in Seoul is the Overseas Mission Committee of the Seoul East Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK). In recent communication from the PROK, their leaders express hope that newly elected President Moon Jae-In “will cope wisely with the pending issues, praying that a peaceful change of government will lead to a fast recovery of peace and stability on the peninsula.”

The mood, they acknowledge, is tense.

They say national security is the most acute issue facing their country now. Concerns have been raised by all church partners on the Korean Peninsula about the continued U.S. deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system.

They fear that system “tends to needlessly increase tension for the entire region.”

“We doubt whether this system could be helpful for securing peace on the Peninsula,” writes the Rev. Lee, Joong-Tae, chair of the Seoul East Presbytery Overseas Mission committee. In addition, he said the people of South Korea feel they are facing strong resistance from both North Korea and China, whose economic and political influences cannot be ignored.

With the recent election of a new president, “the Seoul East



Ed Evans receives a stole from the Rev. Lee Joong-Tae in 2016.

Photo courtesy of Ed Evans

Presbytery and all the Christians in Korea are praying for a peaceful change of government and for a fast recovery of peace and stability on the peninsula,” writes the Rev. Lee.

Contacts in the Reconciliation Unification Department of the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCK) agree that while the mood in South Korea has been tense, it is more hopeful than it would be if ousted President Park Geun-hye had not been impeached, ending nine years of what they feel has been the hostile stance of two previous administrations toward North Korea.

Kurt Esslinger, mission co-worker with the NCCK said many in South Korea are hopeful that the recent election of Moon Jae-In to the presidency will help ease tensions.

During the presidential campaign, Moon was outspoken about his intentions to reopen negotiations and dialogue with North Korea, said Kurt. However, he added that it is unclear how willing President Moon will be to defy the wishes of the U.S. administration.

He said the effort to gain support for the NCCK campaign to replace the Korean Armistice with a peace treaty has

become more urgent because of what he describes as the big change in the equation: Trump. In response to the election of President Trump and his turn to more overt military threats and movements, the NCCK has been working with the National Council of Churches USA (NCCUSA), sending a delegation to this year’s Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington DC. While there, they met with participants in the Peace Treaty campaign as well as representatives from several government officers including staff of the State Department.

In addition, some NCCK staff and committee members were sent to the United States to participate in protests against the THAAD missile defense system. The NCCK sees THAAD as needlessly increasing tensions for the entire region including China—even more problematic than North Korean missile tests.

The NCCK has been coordinating special worship services of protest in Seongju, the village where the THAAD missile system is being installed. South Korean news agencies report that President Moon will ask the Korean National Assembly to hold a ratification vote on the

THAAD missile deployment, saying that a vote is necessary to bring the issue into public debate and as a diplomatic bargaining chip. Because the system has already been deployed in Seongju, the push for a ratification vote will not likely lead to the system’s withdrawal.

Kurt said the NCCK is currently planning its next Peace Treaty Campaign Tour in Europe to meet with partners in European churches to determine how much they might be able to persuade countries who were involved in the UN action during the Korean War to support the Peace Treaty campaign. Kurt said the NCCK continues to search for ways to pressure the United States to support efforts to create a peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the Korean War fighting.

Information on the Peace Treaty Campaign is on a YouTube video Ed created at the request of the NCCK: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r8mGvW6\\_08](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r8mGvW6_08)

NCCK General Secretary, Rev. Kim, Young Ju, is worried that President Trump “does not understand the value of subtle diplomacy that may spare lives.” The THAAD missile defense system and deployment of U.S. naval forces in the region, he said, “could push North Korea over the brink and lead to rekindling open warfare, which would mean the destruction of the entire peninsula.”

South Korean activist pastor Rev. Borah Lim of Sumdol Presbyterian Church (PROK) in Seoul is also concerned about what she believes to be excessive aggressive U.S. intervention. Tension, she said, is always with us. Their prayer now is for a peaceful transition with the South’s new leadership, followed by a peace agreement.

**For information, call 360-670-1073 or email [edevans@aol.com](mailto:edevans@aol.com).**

# Spokane clergy lead interfaith PRIDE worship

For the second year, local clergy led an interfaith service during the week before the Pride Parade in Spokane.

Last year, six clergy helped plan the service, and this year 12 participated in planning—Buddhist, the Center for Spiritual Living, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Jewish, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, United Methodist and Unity.

The UCC pastors are Andy CastroLang and Jan Shannon of Westminster Congregational UCC, and Gen Heywood of Veradale UCC.

Conference Minister Mike Denton was among six speakers at the service.

“The service is a way to demonstrate to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people that there are many affirming clergy from across a wide faith spectrum,” said Jan, who is assistant pastor at Westminster.

The service, held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 7, at McGinty’s, 116 W. Pacific, was held in a non-church venue out of awareness that many in the LGBTQ community do not trust the faith community, and because the 2016 service was planned for 60, but 120 came. McGinty’s is a larger facility. About 70 came, said Jan.

“At the service last year, people were overwhelmed, and joyful tears flowed. The room was too small,” she said.

Jan said she first went to a Pride Parade five years ago after she began attending Westminster. She and her wife, Deb Roth, have been together 10 years.

“I was terrified. I didn’t make eye contact with anyone, afraid I might see someone I knew,” Jan said. “Most people don’t realize what LGBTQ people go through when they go to the parade. We fear bombs,



Veradale UCC booth offers message of inclusion.

Photos courtesy of Gen Heywood



Pastors serve communion at the Pride Service.

hate groups and people yelling nasty things. That happens every year. Many overcome that fear by being brash.”

Now, Jan said, she has learned that marching in the streets is a way to be active in the community for the sake of community.

“The world tries to have us stuff our being gay back in a box,” she said.

That’s why it’s important to have leaders of so many faiths lift up respect for LGBTQ people, to speak the sacred words from their faith traditions, Jan explained.

It’s hard work for clergy to write words that participants will be comfortable hearing.

During the service this year, participants memorialized the Orlando shooting at a gay nightclub. Following a Jewish tradition of laying rocks on graves, they symbolically set down rocks in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the shooting and fire.

From a solemn opening, the service moved participants to a sense of joy, fun and pride, a sense of “acceptance by our Diety,” Jan said.

The Christian clergy who planned the service feel strongly that gays, who have been denied communion in their former churches, be offered communion at the end of the service.

Clergy of other faiths respected that need.

“It was hard for some clergy to participate, because their congregations and denominations to not affirm gay rights,” Jan pointed out.

“We are all brought together by our desire to advocate for and support the LGBTQ community,” she said.

Usually more than 50 from Westminster participate in the Pride Parade.

They also have a booth in the Pride Festival that follows the parade in Riverfront Park in downtown Spokane.

Like Westminster, Veradale UCC members participate in the service, the parade and at a booth in the festival after the march, said Gen

She said that one member, Ginny Foote, has been participating in Pride Parades for 17 years. Previously, she participated when she was a member of the Emmanuel Metropolitan Community Church in Spokane. When it folded, many members joined Veradale UCC.

**For information, call 509-624-1366 or 509-926-7173.**

## PFLAG and Pride Parade founder still advocating

The first Pride Parade in Spokane was in 1992, started by Helen Bonser, whose daughter Terri is gay, and Marion Dumotin, who has a gay son.

Helen, who is now a member of Veradale UCC, and Marion had founded the local Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) after Terri told her in 1981 that she was in love with the woman friend she had brought to Easter dinner,

“I was shocked as much as any parent. I was ignorant and afraid of what would happen to her when she came out to others, but when she told others, she was accepted,” said Helen.

“I went ‘into the closet’ as a parent and would not talk about it,” she said.

Katy Urbana, who had started PFLAG chapters in Kansas and California, started one in Spokane when she moved here. Helen went in 1984.

“I had always been an advocate for justice and I needed the knowledge that PFLAG gave me,” she said.

Helen has advocated on the local, state and national level.

“I always say I’m glad my daughter is gay, because otherwise I would not have met so many wonderful people who have enriched my life and who have appreciated what I have done,” she said.



**Helen Bonser of Veradale UCC and her daughters were grand marshals, leading the 2016 PRIDE Parade.**

Photos courtesy of Gen Heywood



### Clergy offer apology.

At the first Pride Parade, in which 500 participated, people came from Seattle and Montana, Canada and Oregon. They walked along the sidewalks, many were afraid and there were threats. Some wore sacks over their heads, so they wouldn't be seen and recognized by someone from work or someone they knew.

A man on a bicycle saw her

Pride T-shirt, he said he would go home and get his gun. Police detained him. When she returned home, her house was egged.

“I washed it off with pride,” said Helen, who appreciates now being in the UCC, which has stood for justice for centuries.

When TV and newspapers interviewed Helen, she told them, “This is not the only time you will hear from us. We will keep marching until GLBT people have full human rights.”

Spokane's march, she said, has been a family event, not a political or commercial one. It's for families, friends and allies as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

“Today, instead of there being hundreds in the march, thousands participate, marching on the streets. After the march, there is a Pride Festival in Riverfront Park with booths, including ones with Westminster and Veradale. It's not the people who make threats who are brave, but the people who march under the threat of danger are the ones who are brave.

Last year, she and her daughters were grand marshals of Spokane's Pride Parade.

Born in Bend and raised in Northern California, Helen said her husband was in the military. They lived in four states and many countries of Europe. He retired in Spokane in 1975.

She joined Emmanuel Metropolitan Community Church in 1987, and after it closed about 2010, she joined Veradale UCC in 2011.

Through the years, she has advocated educated other families to understand that people are born GLBT. It's genetic, not a choice, she said. She is glad that media today also help build understanding.

She has also advocated for marriage equality and other policies at the federal and state levels.

**For information, call 509-474-9964 or email [andrine1226@outlook.com](mailto:andrine1226@outlook.com).**

## Seattle Pride Parade seeks to show UCC commitment

For the Seattle Pride Parade on Sunday, June 25, organizers are planning to have “the biggest showing ever for the Pride Parade, to clearly demonstrate the UCC's active commitment to LGBTQ justice,” said Kathy Dawson, one of the organizers.

The UCC presence will consist of a conference float, marching in the parade and a conference booth at the Pride Festival. Organizers call for people to: march in the parade

and take a two-hour shift in the conference booth at the Pride Festival.

Co-chairs Kim Larsen and Merlla McLaughlin are gathering information for activities such as music, singing or marching in groups.

It costs more for organizations to be in the parade this year—\$1,500, up from \$500 last year, so the UCC churches in the Greater Seattle area are raising money to cover the cost,

said Kathy Dawson.

Some churches have held bake sales, bulb sales or taken special offerings.

Plymouth Congregational UCC is collecting checks with Pride on the memo line at 1217 6th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101.

Many have participated in Pride Parades, but the Pride Festival has been added.

Volunteers will be in the conference booth to greet visitors, hand out brochures, and

talk about how great it is to belong to a church that believes in justice and acts on that belief, said Kathy.

Those marching in the parade or working at the booth are asked to wear a plain white T-shirt or top with rainbow accessories.

**For information, call Merlla at 206-718-2433 or Kim Larsen at 206-818-1819, or email [mcmerrla@yahoo.com](mailto:mcmerrla@yahoo.com).**

## Couple excited to share about life in Sri Lanka

Gary Loyd and Mary Olney-Loyd have returned from volunteering through Global Ministries in northern Sri Lanka, teaching conversational English. They are ready share with UCC and Disciples of Christ (DOC) churches in the region to tell them about the global partners they served.

“Global Ministries, the UCC’s world mission unit with the DOC, works with our partner, Churches of American Ceylon Mission,” said Mary. “Beginning in 1816, our ancestors in faith sent missionaries to Ceylon—now Sri Lanka—founding schools and churches.”

Now Mary and Gary look forward to leading classes or preaching to share their presentation, “12-and-a-half Time Zones Away.”

Mary said “Ceylon” was the name of the island as a British colony.

In 1948, it became independent, and in 1971, it changed its name to Sri Lanka.

The country southeast of India is 75 percent Sinhalese and 15 percent Tamil. It was colonized by Portuguese, Dutch and then English.

“As was common in colonial times, the minority population were administrators, creating tensions when Sri Lanka became independent,” she said.

**A civil war began** in 1983 and “ended” in 2009, said Gary, explaining that the war ended, but the tension continues.

Now the Sinhalese hold most of the government positions, controlling the police, military, coastal area, roads and the economy.

Mary said it will take generations to recover.

**The tensions are not only ethnic**, but also religious, because the Sinhalese are mostly Buddhist and some are Muslim, while the Tamil majority are Hindu with some Christians.

“Our partners are a minor-



Mary Olney-Loyd and Gary Loyd visit with a family.

Photos courtesy of Mary Olney-Loyd



Gary Loyd visits the boys school.

ity religion in a minority ethnic group,” Mary said.

“After World War II, the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) became part of the Church of South India (CSI). About 10 years ago, the CACM churches separated from the CSI,” she said.

**Tamils live in rural areas** and have poor schools, making it hard for them to go to a university if they do not also go to an after-school program from 4 to 7 p.m., after school from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., she said.

“It’s tough to get a good education. Universities are free, but hard to be accepted to enter,” said Mary.

**That’s part of why** their presence in Jaffna at the Christian Theological Seminary to teach conversational English was important, and why the partners want others to come to volunteer to teach English.

Most learn grammar in school, but do not learn to speak English.

“The Church of American Ceylon Mission churches reach

out to the poorest of the poor,” she said.

Two women seminarians lead a war widow’s group, helping them heal memories from the war. It’s hard for widows to find support. Most do day labor in rice fields or tobacco farms, Gary added.

**The aftermath of the war** are evident in transportation, he said.

Roads are two lanes, so it’s hard to travel around in the country.

“We took a 245-mile trip and our average speed was 20 mph, so it took us 12 hours. Roads also go through the center of villages,” he said. “So it’s hard to build commerce and tourism.”

**Another effect is** the poor sanitation because of a lack of facilities to collect and dispose of garbage. In rural areas, they saw no garbage collection, so people burned their garbage. Some trash was dumped by the sides of roads.

“To educate the young so they can solve problems is the biggest single issue,” Gary said.

Mary said the government is supposed to fill jobs for teachers in rural schools, but there are many openings.

**“There are still many displaced persons,”** she added. “At a displaced persons camp close to the seminary, young men sit with no work. They smoke and play music.”

Gary noted there is little begging. Those with nothing try to sell something.

**Mary said churches** have preschool programs, training, after-school programs.

CACM trained and sent clergy and lay leaders in March for a listening day to learn about to needs of Hindus and Christians in Venni, the worst war-torn area, which is still recovering from the war.

The seminary trains pastors  
**Continued on page 13**

## Couple realize world is small, poor are near and far

Continued from page 12

and volunteers to visit and listen to people.

Only five seminary students are training to be pastors. Most are in lay leader training.

Only recently have people felt they could travel to do that. The seminary principal had not been to that area for 30 years.

"When they went, they did not have in mind a solution, but went to find the needs and help find solutions," Gary said.

"They thanked us for listening to their war stories, their pain as widows and orphans, and their pain about the loss of the disappeared," she said.

Mary said one idea that CACM leaders have been working on is to start a factory to make sanitary napkins at a lower cost to improve women's health.

For women to have access to low-cost sanitary napkins makes it possible for them to go to school and hold jobs, so they can support their families.

Church leaders from India are helping on the project, she said.

"The long-term goal of the seminary is to start new churches and to do youth work," said Mary.

"I have respect for the clergy. They work hard. While most pastors are men, there is one ordained woman," Mary explained.

Most pastors live where their church is, but their wives live where they have jobs or where their children go to school.

In addition to teaching English, Mary preached in eight churches.

While members are pious, she found that they work to address the people's need and live a social gospel in a culture in which Christians are a minority.

"Jesus tells us to take care of the poor," she said.

"Along with starting new



Mary Olney-Loyd and Gary Loyd, center join in a church meeting.



Mary Olney Loyd saw beauty in colors of vegetables.

churches, she learned that a women's fellowship in Venni was giving micro-loans to women," she reported.

Mary and Gary continue their connections with students they taught on Facebook.

"Even though they are half a world away, they are still our neighbors," said Mary, telling of using the song "Jesu, Jesu . . . neighbors are near and far away."

"We lift up how small the world is. Many of the poorest of the poor live not far from us in Seattle, as well as in Sri Lanka," she said.

To help students in Sri Lanka, Mary and Gary encourage people to connect through the Global Ministries website to send \$20 a month to support students.

Now home, Mary continues teaching English as a second language in a class in low-income housing unit in Lake City where many students are Asian, and an immigrant from Togo.

Gary was impressed meeting and working with Sri Lankans who he found to be people with energy and an ability to deal with difficult living conditions.

"Despite their conditions, they offered us generous hospitality," Mary said. "Our living conditions there were simple.

"No matter where a person is or what gifts and skills we have, we all have something we can give, and there are needs around the world and where we are," she said.

"We just need to pay attention to find where our gifts intersect with people's needs," she said.

Mary is a retired pastor who served both UCC and Disciple congregations. She co-chairs the Global Ministries Committee.

Gary is a retired business-

man.  
*For information, email*

# Pilgrim church in Anacortes changes its name

Like many who spend weekends in Anacortes, Becky and Paul Withington live in a boat. Since Becky began as the pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC there in February 2016, they have been able to fulfill their long-time dream to live in a boat.

Becky is on a pilgrimage with the congregation to find new ways to reach out to include and serve people in a “super-none-zone” in the “none-zone” of the Pacific Northwest. That refers to people who check religious preference in surveys checking “none.”

The 140-year-old church decided to sell its almost 100-year-old building in 2014 because of the extensive and expensive repairs required to sustain it, said moderator Nelle Jacobson.

There had been an arson fire in 2013. While repairs were being made it had more church attendees for the three months it met in different locations while repairs were being made.

After the repairs, they continued to meet in the old building, but the exterior stucco walls were crumbling, the upstairs concrete floors were slanted and there was no way to make the rest rooms accessible.

The small congregation did not have the funds to demolish the building and build a new one on the same property.

After their minister moved, about 20 members continued to meet for lay-led worship for two years at the United Methodist Church of Anacortes.

“They were a church without walls, using space in another church and exploring what being a church without walls meant,” she said.

When the church property sold and they had money in the bank, they decided to call a designated pastor.

Members realized they were re-inventing themselves



Velma Verral, visitor Dierdre and Paul Withington gather frequently around tables for “Church Cafe” as an interactive alternative to more traditional worship.



It's no lack for Becky and Paul Withington that New Pilgrims Community has no parsonage. Their dream was to have a boat, so that's where they live when they are at Anacortes.

when they called Becky.

**One way they express** that they are embarking on a pilgrimage into ministry in the 21st century has been to informally change their name to New Pilgrims Community.

“Our new logo is a Pilgrim ship sailing into the future,” Becky said. “We seek to reflect our commitment to new ways of being church today.”

“We are aware that we are on a pilgrimage as a journey, not for conquest,” Becky said. “The ship represents New Pilgrim’s ongoing adventure, from its treasured past into its excit-

ing new future.”

The official church’s name remains the same to avoid changing bank accounts and other documents, but it is officially “doing business as” New Pilgrims Community.

“Our mission also remains the same: ‘to create a caring community providing a spiritual home that welcomes doubt and inquiry, promotes love of creation and supports abundant life for all,’” she said.

**Instead of the church** having long-term committee commitments, members join in three-month mission, envi-



The church’s new logo.

ronment and faith formation groups.

They call the three-month commitment groups, “gorilla groups.”

“The idea is that we will take bite-size commitments,” Becky said.

**When they join** Anacortes’ annual environmental protection education day, Fildalgo Bay Day, on Aug. 12, they will have a scientific activity on water filtration.

“Everyone agrees water is sacred, people of different faiths and traditions,” she said.

For faith formation, they are planning a three-month Bible study, using the Still Speaking study on Acts 1 to 6.

**They have begun** some alternative worship approaches, which include café-style worship around tables and do-it-yourself sermons. For the latter, Becky uses a white board to facilitate discussion of the scripture, make an outline, list contemporary examples and explore the heart of the message.

New Pilgrims Community does each of these two styles every six weeks, or four times a year.

They worship in the downstairs fellowship hall on the

**Continued on page 15**

# Church chooses name to reflect its on a pilgrimage

Continued from page 16

garden level of the United Methodist church. Because the church has a new fellowship hall, they don't use the space, so New Pilgrims Community can worship at their traditional time, 10 a.m., Sunday.

While worship is traditional, those attending can comment and express their views in a talk-back time after the sermon.

**Becky previously served** as pastor for three years at Everett UCC and substituted at Alki UCC when Diane Darling was on sabbatical for four months. She graduated from Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry in 2001, entering after working as a librarian for eight years after she and her husband moved to Seattle in 1992. Then she was coordinator of children and youth ministries at Plymouth UCC.

She earned a master's degree in library science in 1991 from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Raised Lutheran in Minnesota, she said she and Paul found their church home in the UCC, which is compatible with their theology and progressive politics.

**"Pilgrim Congregational**



**"Spirited Conversations" meets monthly at a local bar and grill as a time for members and others discuss theology. Tom and Janet Miller join with Nelle and Dick Jacobson.**

UCC had been a classical, historic church building on the main street of Anacortes," she said. "Now we are becoming a new style of church."

Along with traditional and new styles of worship, they are exploring new ways to serve the community, focusing on homelessness.

**At the church council's** annual retreat in July 2016, they began talked of changing their name, brainstorming a list of options and then asking the congregation for ideas.

At their annual congregational meeting in January 2017,

they voted to change their name.

"New Pilgrims Community wants to keep the idea of being the Pilgrim church existing since the 19th century, but they are signaling they are open to change, to new currents in mainline churches," she said.

**"We are aware** that the original Pilgrims denied the first nations' sovereignty. So we clarify that we see ourselves as pilgrims on a journey, not as people coming to conquest. The idea is that we are on a pilgrimage, so we are a movement. We are moving forward.

**"We are using the word,** 'Community,' because people in Anacortes are free thinkers, the none zone on steroids," she said.

"We are expressing that we are open to everyone, including seekers and doubters, not just those who subscribe to certain doctrines. We share core Christian ideas and identity, but we bring in elements of other faiths," said Becky.

New Pilgrims Community is embarking on a marketing campaign with fliers, social calendars, local newspaper stories and facebook.

**"We are educating** ourselves on effective outreach," Becky said.

One outreach is a coffee hour at a coffee shop. Becky and some others sit at a table with a sign identifying her as the Rev. Becky Withington of New Pilgrims Community.

Once a month, the church holds "Spirited Conversations," which is a public theological group discussion held during the happy hour on third Tuesdays at the Rockfish Bar and Grill. While mostly six to eight members attend, a few others have joined them, dropping by for a beer and joining in discussions.

**They also promote** their church at the annual Shipwreck Day citywide garage sale on the downtown streets. Funds from that will help the church continue to help prepare backpacks for Project Homeless Connect.

They also support the Anacortes Family Center, a homeless shelter where people can stay for 60 days. In the summer, they may tutor children living there. Some may also help coach people on life skills such as cooking and finances.

**"Our new format** for outreach for our small, aging congregation, is to have it be part of three groups: mission, environment and faith formation.

This winter, Becky began a confirmation class for four youth in two families. "We have had no programs for children and youth for several years, so this was a big deal," she said.

**The church has drawn** several newcomers from people who retire and move there.

Becky lives in Anacortes half time. Like when she served Everett, she commutes from their house in Seattle.

Her husband, who in a pension actuary, can tele-commute, so he comes to Anacortes where they live on a trawler, the Oca Strait.

**For information, call 360-722-0815, email [bwithing@comcast.net](mailto:bwithing@comcast.net) or visit [pilgrimage-anacortes.com](http://pilgrimage-anacortes.com).**



**Tom and Janet Miller join in a weekly coffee shop gathering.**

## Justice leadership programs strengthen work of justice

Recently a protest was organized outside of the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. A Justice Leadership Program young adult intern, Iris Chavez, working with the Church Council of Greater Seattle helped organize the event.

As part of her work with JLP, Iris works with Keystone UCC.

Because of her connection to that congregation, Keystone members turned out in significant numbers.

“That is the Justice Leadership Program’s vision: young adults, social justice agencies and congregations working together for a better world,” said Rich Gamble, pastor at Keystone UCC and executive director of the JLP, as well as the Jubilee Justice program for older adults.

A little over five years ago the PNC sponsored a new program for young adults called the Justice Leadership Program, he said. That program placed young adults in social justice agencies and UCC congregations as interns.

At the end of July, the fifth class of interns will graduate. Interns this year have worked on immigration, housing and homelessness, environmental justice, racial justice and workers rights, said Rich.

“JLP interns carried these issues into congregations they served by preaching, teaching and organizing members,” he said. “We started the program as an experiment. We have had challenges along the way but year after year good outcomes have outweighed challenges.

“The work of justice in the region has been strengthened, young adults have grown in their ability to be justice leaders, and congregations have been drawn more closely into the work of justice,” he said.

This year a new Justice Leadership program, Jubilee, was developed. Like its sister



Iris Chavez speaks at rally at Northwest Detention Center.



JLP interns Denise Parry and Abi Velasco with Rich Gamble.



JLP intern David Choi, third from left, at Faith Action Network.



JLP interns Iris Chavez, Anya McMurrer, Denise Parry, back, Emily Martin and David Choi, front.

Photos courtesy of Rich Gamble

program, Jubilee placed participants in social justice agencies where they worked five or more hours per week.

The Jubilee program also offers a year-long series of workshops, classes and peer group gatherings to support vocational, spiritual and personal growth around making the world more just.

Five Jubilee participants worked with their home church in a justice leadership role. They also worked at the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the Faith Action Network, 350Seattle, Puget Sound Sage and the Meaningful Movies Project.

Unlike JLP, Jubilee participants continue to live at home and instead of being assigned a congregation to work with for the year, they work with their home congregations.

Whereas the young adult program asks interns to work full time, live together in community, as well as participate in groups, classes and workshops, Jubilee works with older adults to fit the Jubilee experience into their lives. Some of the participants in Jubilee this year were retired, some were employed.

This year was test to see if Jubilee would provide meaningful experiences for them, their congregations and agencies they served. It did, and the participants recommend continuing the program, Rich said.

“For those who want to make the work of justice a part of their lives, Jubilee provides the support needed to launch a new chapter in the lives of participants and their congregations,” he said.

The Justice Leadership young adult and Jubilee programs are taking applications for next year’s programs starting in September 2017.

For information, visit [justiceleadership.org](http://justiceleadership.org) (young adult program) and [justiceleadershipjubilee.org](http://justiceleadershipjubilee.org) (older adult program).



## Camp sites offer different mixes of staff because of locations

Four of the 2017 N-Sid-Sen staff are international young adults coming through Camp America to be there from June 7 to Aug. 21.

Buse Dogan and Atacan Guel from Turkey are Muslim. Olga Dushnovska from Ukraine, who is returning for her second year, is Catholic. Marat Shadian from Russia has no faith affiliation.

A fifth international staff member scheduled to be on crew was a Saudi Arabian young woman who was studying in Los Angeles. Her work visa was not renewed, and she was sent back to Saudi Arabia, even though an immigration attorney urged the court to let her stay, said Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen.

The international staff, who work in the kitchen and do housekeeping, are college students. Buse and Apachan are at



**Pilgrim Firs staff include Chris Berry, Mikey Staser, Trevor Knight, Charlotte Whitten, Marc Ventura and Ryan Lane. Not pictured are Kyna Schilling, Taylor Nagil, Melanie Pile, and Shayla Brosset.**



**N-Sid-Sen staff include Olga Dushnovska, Marat Shadian, Abuse Dogan and Amy Hipol.**

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

Ege University, Buse studying tourism and hospitality management, and Apachan studying tour guidance and computers. Olha is studying hospitality in Kiev, and Marat is studying international service and foreign language at Pyatigorsk State University in Moscow.

"International staff give guests and people who come to camp a change to meet with people from other countries, to meet them as people, rather than as representatives of a country's politics," he said.

"We struggle to recruit local staff because we are not near communities," he said.

Last year, international staff joined in a lesson with junior high girls, said the Lord's Prayer in their languages at camp fire, and joined in dances.

"They are part of the camp community, intermingling with campers and eating meals with them," Mark said.

In contrast, Pilgrim Firs does not have international staff, because they are surrounded by communities from which they hire staff. Their staff do not need to stay overnight, Mark said.

N-Sid-Sen has had a slower start than usual in preparing the camp because of the heavy winter and high waters. The dam at Post Falls has released water, so the level of the lake has lowered.

Work Camp is focusing more on cleaning up than building projects. Work campers have to put the docks out, clear trails, clean the beaches of debris and move logs to the campfire areas, to replace logs that floated away.

"Water came up within 20 feet of the Ford cabin and over the berms in the cove," he said.

While camp directors and counselors prepare for program around the 2017 theme "Branching Out: Connecting through Christ," Mark looks forward to meeting new campers and welcoming returnees.

Through the year, he anticipates that there will be more churches coming for week-end retreats. Those committed are Westminster, Colville, Chewelah, Pullman, Richland and Ritzville. Plymouth in Seattle comes for a week of family camp.

Other N-Sid-Sen staff are

Amy Hipol of Elk, a lifeguard and kitchen helper, Nicole Boyd, Mark's daughter who has been cook for two years, Buzz Hamm, maintenance supervisor. Others helping this summer are Henry Reinhardt of Veradale, one week, and Chatarra Hajja, a long time camper.

### 2017 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

**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](mailto:mark@n-sid-sen.org)

**REGISTER at [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org)**

**For registration questions,**

email [kyna@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:kyna@n-sid-sen.org)

### 2017 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

**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](mailto:wadezick.pf@gmail.com)

**REGISTER at [pilgrim-firs.org](http://pilgrim-firs.org)**

**For registration questions,**  
email [kyna@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:kyna@n-sid-sen.org)

## JWM committee embraces new communications tools

The PNC's Justice and Witness Ministries Committee expands and seeks to connect around to conference to empower justice work.

Thanks to the work of the Ministry Resources Committee, which acts as the conference's nominating committee, the Justice and Witness Ministries Committee (JWM) expanded after this year's Conference Annual Meeting from 10 to 15 members.

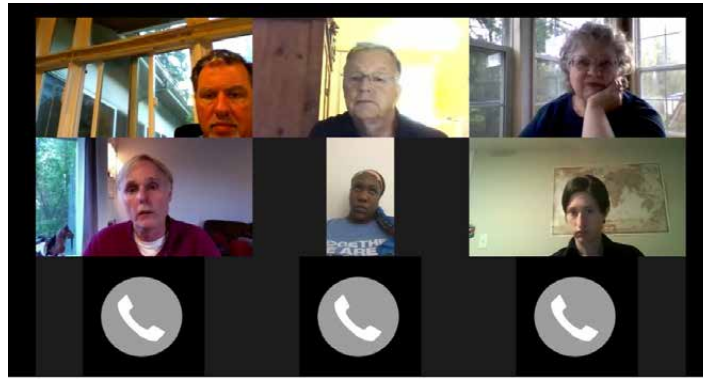
"The quality and breadth of justice experience of the committee's membership is humbling," said Steve Clagett, committee chair. "What's more, as we learn more about each other, we are finding mutual justice passions which bodes well for our future work together."

Some of those commonalities include racial justice, economic justice, and assisting immigrants and refugees.

JWM, like other conference committees, is making increasing use of Zoom Teleconferencing capabilities. Whereas the committee used to meet in Seattle and invite East of mountain members to join by phone of Skype, now the entire meeting is held online.

JWM does not shy from challenges.

Its history includes establishing the successful Justice Leadership Program, now in its fifth year and a model for the nation about how to nurture young adults' passion for justice into effective faith-based



**Zoom Teleconferencing screenshot of recent meeting showing Rev. Paul Ashby, Richmond Beach; Steve Clagett, Seattle; Becky Hoepcke, Everett; Rev. Steve Van Kuiken, Pullman; Rev. Bianca Davis-Lovelace, Bellevue.**

Photo courtesy of Steve Clagett

leadership, said Steve.

Three years ago, JWM decided to change how it operated.

Previously, it was following the justice interests of its members. Now, it is trying to follow a program that connects and expands the many justice initiatives that conference churches and members have started.

This work began with a survey of churches to identify PNC church members committed to a justice issue, Steve said. This work has yielded a database of 100 individuals from 34 churches.

"This year, the JWM is beginning a church directory of our justice work," he said.

The committee aims to have developed the first copy of the directory by this fall's Annual Meeting at N-Sid-Sen.

"The first edition won't include all the churches, but will

show attendees the format to be used for future amplified editions," Steve said.

The committee will let people hear more about how they can provide data for this project before the September Annual Meeting. There will also be opportunities at the Annual Meeting for delegates to help to fill out JWM's understanding of their church's justice, service and advocacy work.

"JWM wants to provide the conference with continual reminders of justice opportunities and responsibilities," Steve said.

"To that end, the previous conference blog it had is being replaced with a soon-to-be-launched, Justice and Witness website that mimics the format of the Conference website, so that movement from one to the other is seamless," Steve said.

In addition to information

about the JWM, what it is doing, who is on it and how it operates, the website will feature issue pages to serve as key hubs of conference initiatives and a "Justice Hot Sheet" listing upcoming justice events.

Unlike the blog, that required an active search within the conference website, the new JWM website is designed to be used actively where it reaches out and draws interested conference churches and members to it.

As an example, since January, the Justice Hot Sheet component has been posted monthly on the conference listserv. The hot sheet contains hot links to each item listed and, in the future, will also include links to the relevant issue page on the JWM website.

"As JWM develops issue pages, we are including links to relevant past Fig Tree and Pacific Northwest Conference News articles," said Steve. "In this way, we are pleased to extend the usefulness of the Fig Tree's and Conference News' reporting."

JWM is looking forward to the fall Annual Meeting.

There, the committee will work with attendees on implementing the PNC's Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Resolution passed at the Spring Annual Meeting.

"Finally, JWM has a strong commitment to telling the conference what it is doing, then holding itself accountable for producing action," Steve said.

The following is a link to JWM's 2017 goals: [https://1drv.ms/w/s!At4A1ODoFJGkKk\\_gSKxBMqsXnWb-](https://1drv.ms/w/s!At4A1ODoFJGkKk_gSKxBMqsXnWb-)

The following is a link to JWM's annual progress report to the conference is <https://1drv.ms/w/s!At4A1ODoFJGkjzlwz6CtTzHOg8o.s!At4A1ODoFJGkjzlwz6CtTzHOg8o>.

For information, call 206-795-9475 or email [clagett@comcast.net](mailto:clagett@comcast.net).

## Jenn Hagedorn to be honored at General Synod

Amy Johnson, commissioned Minister for sexuality education and UCC Our Whole Lives coordinator, nominated Jenn Hagedorn for the JWM Youth/Young Adult Justice Award, and she won.

Jenn will be at General Synod with her summer job for implementing the "3 Great Loves" initiative. The awards

will be given at 1:30 p.m., on Saturday, July 1, in conjunction with the Valerie Russell Lecture Series.

Jenn, who has completed her first year at Union Theological Seminary, been a Justice Leadership Justice intern in 2014-15 and then served as social justice liaison with Plymouth UCC in Seattle.



**Jenn Hagedorn wins award.**