



# Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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## Alki ready to help build 18 more tiny houses

**Westminster Spokane p. 5**  
**St. Paul's in Ballard p.6 open**  
**basements for shelters**

Alki UCC in West Seattle is one of many congregations, faith groups, high schools, technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, businesses, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts who have recruited thousands of volunteers to partner with Low Income Housing Institute in the state to help build and donate funds and materials for tiny houses.

Cinda Stenger, who is helping coordinate the project with Kathy Herigstad, said Alki UCC recently finished building its 13th tiny house at Camp Second Chance, 9701 Myers Way South in Seattle, five miles from the church.

They built the first eight tiny houses with \$21,000 they raised at a dinner in February 2016. Each house costs \$2,500 to \$3,000.

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Members of the Alki UCC choir sing during the September dedication of eight tiny houses at Camp Second Chance.

## Annual Meeting, board, churches build relationships

Annual Meeting 2019 will be held on just one day: on Saturday, April 27, at the First Congregational Church in Bellevue.

The day-long session will include business, learning sessions and approving the budget, said Wendy Blight, moderator of the PNC Board of Directors.

Andrew Conley-Holcom, pastor at Admiral UCC, is working collaboratively with various ministers and lay leaders in the PNC to prepare a heart-centered worship experience on Friday evening before the 2019 Annual Meeting opens.

“We will combine contemplative and charismatic worship practices designed to connect us with our emotions and invite us out of our heads so that we

**Annual Meeting 2019  
will be held  
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First  
Congregational UCC  
in Bellevue.**

can deeply feel the abiding presence of God,” he said.

Hilary Coleman, vice moderator, is working with the Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

Wendy reported that the Board of Directors continues to be working on the goal of deepening relationships among people in the conference.

A sub committee on deepening relationships among clergy held an Epiphany Party for ministers in the Seattle area at Wendy’s home.

Among the congregations she visited in the conference is Bellingham First Congregational UCC, where she said the community has a holiday festival where small choirs perform on street corners. Several church members sang in those choirs.

She said that was a witness that “our churches are an important part of the fabric of the community.”

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

# What if the church offers accompaniment?

## Conference Comments



By The Rev.  
Mike Denton  
Conference  
Minister

*What if  
we  
requested  
and offered  
the company  
of people  
who were  
interested  
in being  
present  
with others?*

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds have a song called “Jesus Alone” that I really can’t recommend for everyone. Whether you know who Cave is or not doesn’t matter. He wrote this song in the time after the death of his 15-year-old son, and it’s heart breaking.

In the trailer produced for the whole album, he asks, “What happens when an event occurs that is so catastrophic that your just change?... So that when you look at yourself in the mirror, you recognize the person that you were, but the person inside the skin is a different person.”

When I listen to it, what I hear is not a healing song that, in and of itself, pulls you out of the depths or gives you a sense of comfort but a song that names that prolonged sense of sadness and grief that comes into almost every life when we lose people we love; or make the kind of mistakes that seem to put us in a negativity feedback loop; or have what we thought was a good thing turn out to be a bad thing; or are told, and internalize, the message that we are somehow awful; or experience one of those thousand other experiences, devoid of light, that are some of the harder parts about being human.

“You believe in God, but you get no special dispensation for this belief now,” says one line in the last verse of the song. “You’re a distant memory in the mind of your creator, don’t you see?” says another. This song is not a fountain of hope.

Then, the refrain rolls around. The first part of it is simply a repeat of a phrase that came before it: “With my voice, I am calling you” but then, in between this repeated line comes the words, “Let us sit together until the moment comes” followed by “Let us sit together in the dark until the moment comes.”

I don’t know what Cave meant here for sure. I don’t get the sense, from what he said previously, that this is meant as a means of offering of one-sided accompaniment as much

as one hurting person reaching out to a world of hurting people so that, at the very least, they can be hurting people together.

The offer is not to heal the reasons for another person’s pain. It’s a simple suggestion and request to not have this mutual experience of pain be compounded by loneliness.

I’ve been writing a lot about loneliness and isolation the last couple of years. I presented a lot of reasons for doing so in last month’s article but, simply put, we’re in times when more people than ever are saying they’re lonely, and I believe the church has a special role in addressing this reality.

That said, one of the mistakes the church has made has been suggesting it is an antidote to the world’s problems.

We’ve gotten in a consumer mindset that looks for the problems of the world so that we can offer a hope filled solution that, regardless of our good intentions, has the assumption of success that is defined by new members; problem > solution > product > profit.

This is more than we can honestly offer and, as we’ve been discovering for the last 50 years, more than we can sustain.

What if, instead of naming healing as something we can offer, we requested and offered a kind of accompaniment that included prayer, potlucks, bible study, ritual, making music together, and volunteer opportunities?

What if we requested and offered the company of people who were interested in being present with others who were so isolated that they had no one in their life who was willing to share their food with them? No one visiting them in prison? No one to hear about the hurting that comes before healing?

What if we recognized that this was a need of not just a person but a community? What would that sort of church look like?

## Transitions announced

**David Schlicher** was called as pastor and teacher of Northshore UCC in Woodinville. He comes from the Hawaii Conference.

**Ryan Murray**, who is working as a hospice chaplain with Assured Hospice in Olympia, has had his standing transferred from the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference.

**Georgann Peck**, who has retired from ministry, has had her standing transferred from the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference.

**Charles Blaisdell** has entered a four-way covenant as a regional mission interpreter with the Church Building and Loan Fund.

**Donene Blair** is working in a part-time contract position with Plymouth UCC.

**Peter Ilgenfritz** left University Congregational UCC in Seattle as of Dec. 30 after 25 years of ministry there to seek new opportunities.

**Darrel Goodwin** has been called from ministry at Liberation UCC and Everett UCC to serve as the associate conference minister of the Nebraska Conference, which is in a Tri Conference Ministry with South Dakota and Iowa.

**Jermell Witherspoon** will serve at Everett UCC.

## Men's Retreat is Feb. 1 to 3

The PNC's 27th annual UCC Men's Retreat at Pilgrim Firs will be Friday to Sunday, Feb. 1 to 3, beginning on Friday evening with an optional day of silent retreat starting Thursday evening, Jan. 31. The theme is: "Vitality in Our Own Lives and Communities."

"We will meet together and in small groups, as well as join in song, share good food, take walks around Lake Flora and participate in the Saturday evening Wisdom Circle for those who want to share reflections," said Rick Russell, organizer and member of Prospect Congregational UCC in Seattle.

"The Silent Retreat on Thursday is always meaningful for those able to participate," he added.

*For information and to register, visit [pilgrimfirs.com](http://pilgrimfirs.com) or <https://www.ultracamp.com/clientlogin.aspx?idCamp=367&campCode=nss>.*

## N-Sid-Sen plans dinner

N-Sid-Sen is planning a Dinner and

Auction Fundraiser, "Grow with Us," Wednesday, April 10, at N-Sid Sen Camp and Retreat Center. Organizers seek volunteers to share their time and talents.

*For information, email [nicole@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:nicole@n-sid-sen.org).*

## General Synod announced

National UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer has announced that the 32nd General Synod of the UCC will be held from Friday to Tuesday, June 21 to 25 in Milwaukee, Wis.

The keynote speaker will be Matthew Desmond, professor of sociology at Princeton University and Pulitzer Prize winner for the book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.

Preachers include Kaji Spellman Doussa, Traci deVon Blackmon, Sharon Meishern MacArthur and Amy Butler.

General Synod will celebrate the ministries of retiring leaders, Jim Moos, associate general minister for global engagement, and Don Hart, president and chief investment officer for United Church Funds.

General Synod will re-elect the general minister and president, and elect a new associate general minister for global engagement.

*For information, visit [ucc.org](http://ucc.org).*

## National reports due

Arlene Hobson, the PNC's executive administrator, shared information that the national UCC's Data Hub is now open for churches to enter their yearbook data.

Video tutorials are available to help with entry at [www.ucc.org/research\\_data\\_hub](http://www.ucc.org/research_data_hub).

The reporting allows churches to be part of the national "Find A Church" at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) to help people looking for a church. It shows denominational trends on membership, ministerial compensation and church finances, including OCWM and special offerings.

The numbers help the conference understand congregations to provide support and resources. Numbers reported also determine how many delegates the PNC has to General Synod.

It allows the UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data to conduct advanced statistical analyses that contribute to important research for all mainline denominations.

It also creates a historical statistical re-

cord for your congregation that historians will learn from in the future."

*For information, call 206-725-8383 ext. 101 or visit [pncucc.org](http://pncucc.org)*

## Prospect UCC to rent space

Prospect UCC on North Capitol Hill in Seattle is offering a newly renovated, 110 square-foot unfurnished office space in its building to rent to a nonprofit organization.

*For information, call 206-322-6030 or email [prospectucc@yahoo.com](mailto:prospectucc@yahoo.com).*

## UC Funds offers webinars

United Church Funds offers webinars on <https://ucfunds.org> on planned giving and ways to ensure the future sustainability of a church or ministry.

It recently produced a webinar series on "Why Your Church Needs a Planned Giving Program," "Five Steps to a Successful Planned Giving Program," "Using Technology to Promote Planned Giving" and "Charitable Gift Annuities."

## Insurance help available

The Insurance Assistance Fund Subcommittee of the Conference Stewardship Committee is responsible to allocate assistance to clergy and local churches needing help with the costs of health insurance premiums.

*For information, contact PNC treasurer Martha Baldwin at (206) 948-9799 or [mahtha@hotmail.com](mailto:mahtha@hotmail.com).*

## Loren McGrail tells about settlement in Israel

Becky Anderson, pastor at Newport UCC, said that itinerating Global Ministries co-worker who has served in Palestine, offered members of her church an educational overview of Palestine political issues and shared stories of struggles, particularly with Israeli settlements.

"I was shocked to realize that these settlements are not just a few homes in a cul de sac, but house 900,000 people and include schools, stores and all the businesses of a metropolis," Becky said. "Loren is an artist and her art bridges the gaps between facts and heart."

She is sharing a UCC News article, videos and curriculum churches can use for adult education or Lenten studies at [globalministries.org/video-resources-on-plight-of-palestinian-children-prompted-by-general\\_synod\\_resolution\\_3\\_great\\_loves](http://globalministries.org/video-resources-on-plight-of-palestinian-children-prompted-by-general_synod_resolution_3_great_loves).





# LIHI coordinates efforts to build tiny houses

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Camp Second Chance is an tent encampment where the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) permits tiny houses to be built because it is in a rural area and there is space," said Cinda, who coordinates Alki UCC's effort with Kathy Herigstad.

**The church is working** with others to raise \$60,000 to house 18 more tent residents there in tiny houses.

LIHI is a state-wide non-profit that contracts with the City of Seattle to give funding for administration, resources and case managers at the tiny villages. LIHI is one of the largest providers of tiny houses in the nation. It is in its 28th year of providing innovative solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis.

More than 300 tiny houses in 10 tiny house villages in the Seattle area have already housed thousands of singles and couples. In the last three years, LIHI social workers have helped hundreds of people obtain employment, healthcare and housing, moving 171 people from tiny houses to long-term housing in 2018.

"When we started building tiny houses at Camp Second Chance, it was just us. Now volunteers from many groups come to build beside the tent residents," she said.

**The 10-by-12-foot houses** are insulated, weatherproof structures with electricity, an overhead light and a heater. The villages include facilities with restrooms, showers and laundry, a counseling office, and a welcome/security hut where donations of food, clothing, and hygiene items can be dropped off.

Cinda said most tiny houses, which will last five years or more, house people in transition into long-term housing.

"With the lack of low-income housing in Seattle, the 10 villages compete for a handful

of apartment openings," she said.

**The tiny house residents** experience the benefit of safety for themselves and their belongings, because they have locked doors, and a warm, dry space with a bed. They can leave their tiny house to go to school or work, while those in tents hesitate to leave their belongings.

"At Alki, we became involved when we formed the Faith and Family Homeless Project with a \$10,000 grant," Cinda said. "We educated ourselves on homelessness, learning what people experience. We participated in Seattle University's 2012 Poverty and Homelessness Project.

Alki, which has about 100 members, has a strong group of lay leaders and a core volunteer group taking responsibility. They started with 50. Now, at least 12 go to the encampment to build every Saturday.

**Cinda has been involved** in the congregation since 2001, when a co-worker at Nordstroms invited her to go to church with her.

"Everyone has pre-conceived understandings of what a person who is homeless experiences and what a camp is like. After they go to a camp what they thought is transformed by their experience," she said.

**On Sept. 22, the Alki choir** went to the camp for to dedicate eight houses that were built.

"Volunteers build relationships and friendships with those at the camp," she said. "I was on a ladder painting the soffit of one house and started talking with John who was on a ladder painting the side of the next house.

He crossed the killing fields on his grandfather's back, then emigrated to Thailand and the U.S. In a Cambodian neighborhood in California, where they settled, they were isolated without many prospects. Many youth to be in gangs, so he grew



**Kathy Herigstad and Cinda Stengar**

Photos courtesy of Cinda Stengar

up with violence and no stability or sense of home. At Camp Second Chance (CSC), he has stability and a sense of family, Cinda said. "Sharing stories is life transforming on both sides of the saw or ladder.

Kathy said, "We are building relationships with our neighbors at CSC. This work is life changing to volunteers and to residents who join in building the houses, partnering to make these houses a home until permanent housing is arranged."

Cinda hopes they see the volunteers' commitment to come every week and work on their behalf and work with them. She hopes that commitment motivates people to apply for jobs and find opportunities.

**"Being around people** who are homeless, we see that they are like us. Our prejudices and assumptions are wiped away as we build true relationships," she said.

Especially after the choir came to sing at the blessing in September, some of the Camp Second Chance residents wanted to come to church.

On Dec. 16, Alki had a Christmas concert to raise

money for the camp and for the work of West Seattle Helpline, which seeks to prevent homelessness by helping people experiencing financial crises stay in their homes.

About 30 residents of the encampment and tiny houses filled the two front pews.

**"I'm impassioned** as a leader at Alki to engage my faith community in the issues around homelessness," said Cinda, who grew up Lutheran in Tacoma. She moved to West Seattle when she was in her mid-30s and a friend invited her to Alki 17 years ago.

"The UCC appeals to me with its strong social justice emphasis," she said.

**Cinda said the leaders** at Alki are available to share about their experiences with other congregations to spread the idea of building tiny houses.

LIHI seeks volunteers and donations of funds and building materials, supplies and meals.

**For information, call 206-276-3552 or email tinyhouses@lihi.org.**

**For information, call 206-356-7559 or email cstenger49@gmail.com.**

## Westminster UCC offers basement for shelter

Recognizing that many strategies are needed to address homelessness, Westminster Congregational UCC trustees, then the church council, congregation and volunteers said “yes” to an immediate need for emergency warming shelters on freezing nights in Spokane.

Last winter, the House of Charity had accepted up to 400 homeless people for overnight stays in facilities with a real capacity for 174 people.

The City of Spokane’s Community Housing and Human Services Department knew they needed to find a solution, but winter arrived, and the need was on an emergency level.

First, Salem Lutheran Church in West Central Spokane opened its fellowship hall, which was secure and separate from the rest of the church, for 60. A building on West Cannon opened for 40. Westminster opened and in last December the Salvation Army opened a shelter in an empty former furniture store for 65.

Andy CastroLang, Westminster’s pastor, received an email from the city about the need. She talked with the chair of the trustees and moderator. They met with folks from the city to learn about the need and let them know what was needed to make it possible for Westminster to accept some people.

“We needed doors that locked between stairs to the basement and the narthex/sanctuary. We needed a security camera. We needed for there to be staff skilled to interact with the homeless people,” she said.

The city said staff from The Guardians Foundation would set up, do intake, clean up and put away the mats every day.

“We didn’t have the human resources to do it, but we have a building near downtown, and our gift could be to offer the space rent free,” Andy said.

The trustees met and said



Members of The Guardians staff warming shelter in Spokane.  
Photo courtesy of Andy CastroLang

“Yes, this is what we should do.”

The council met and said, “Yes, this is what we should do.”

To the many questions raised, the city offered answers, saying the church had a good location near the Shalom Ministries site that served breakfasts, near the Crosswalk program for youth and near Frontier Behavioral Health.

The church also had lights, heat and bathrooms.

In fact, church volunteers were already in the process of remodeling the basement restrooms. They put their efforts on fast track.

The church was also concerned that 150 children use the building during the week day afternoons and evenings—Lego League groups and Spokane Youth Choirs and Spokane Youth Symphony.

“There were many parents and volunteers with those groups. We needed to assure that they would be safe from harassment or panhandling,” Andy said. “We needed to be sure the building would be secure for the renters who use the building, while we stepped up to say that our homeless neighbors are our neighbors, too.”

So the shelter uses only the west door on 4th Ave. and restricts access to the rest of the building with the elevator closed, a baby gate across the stairway and a fire door on the main level. There are locks on kitchen and boiler room doors.

A security camera outside the east door on 4th Ave. means those inside can see who is outside, knocking to come in.

The fire marshal said there was need for two exits from the basement.

“Westminster went to work to make it happen fast,” Andy said.

Security doors were ordered, but had to be modified to fit the uneven doorways of the building built in 1890.

The City of Spokane is paying about \$20,000 including the cost for extra hours for the church’s custodian and secretary.

Since it opened after Christmas, there have been three to 22 young people staying there.

“The city has a low threshold for allowing people to come into a shelter out of the cold,” she said.

Some with pets may bring them, but they can’t bring a shopping cart of belongings down the stairs, which are the

access to the basement.

Being a downtown church, Andy said that Westminster has had education programs about homelessness and has been involved with and raised money for the Volunteers of America Crosswalk program for homeless youth, for Transitions programs for homeless women, including a Mardi-bras collection.

It has been involved with the Odyssey program for at-risk youth and with providing meals periodically for homeless families staying in the Spokane Friends Church through the Family Promise program partners with 35 churches, 14 of which host families for a week at a time in their buildings.

“This was something concrete we could do this winter,” said Andy.

Opening doors to welcome up to 24 young adult men and women from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. on cold nights took the church saying “yes,” the city saying “yes” and the fire marshal saying “yes.”

At Spokane’s permanent shelters, Union Gospel Mission, has 255 beds; Family Promise, 80 (soon); House of Charity, 174; St. Margaret’s Shelter, 18; Volunteers of America’s Crosswalk, 21 for youth; Hope House, 36 for women; Truth Ministries, 65, and YFA Connections, 16 for children.

That’s not enough to meet the increasing numbers of homeless people, said Tija Danzig, program manager with the city’s Community, Housing and Human Services.

The shelters provide services to help move people from the streets to education, health care, jobs and permanent housing.

The Guardians Foundation, which helps run several warming shelters, provides security and referrals. Frontier Behav-

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## St. Paul's UCC will host men's shelter

As of Jan. 20, St. Paul's UCC in Ballard hosts an overnight shelter Seattle's SHARE / WHEEL partner organizations housed at Trinity United Methodist Church until it sold its building.

SHARE / WHEEL refers to the partnership of the co-ed Seattle Housing and Resource Effort, and the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League. SHARE was founded in 1990, and WHEEL in 1993.

They partner self-help organizations of homeless and formerly homeless men and women to self-manage King County's network of 15 indoor shelters and three tent cities, working to eradicate homelessness, educate the community and empower homeless people.

**Tim Devine, pastor** at St. Paul's, learned about it when Arlene Hobson, PNC executive administrator, sent an email about the shelter for 20 men closing and the need for a new church location.

"We are just eight blocks away and on the same bus line," said Tim.

The people are pre-screened and are the same people every night. It's an overnight shelter, but people can store things there, too.

**During the day, some go** to work, and some go to do volunteer projects.

"Those who work have minimum wage jobs and cannot find anywhere they can afford to live," he said.

Representatives of the shelter met with the church council and held a neighborhood meeting.

The shelter is in the social hall on the lower floor where there is a kitchen and storage. There is access to a microwave for coffee. Guests sleep on mats.

**"After the fire** in March 2016, the church added security and building upgrades so there



**Tim Devine reports on new use for church.**

is no access to the upper floor from the lower floor," said Tim. "That made it easier for hosting the 12-step groups that meet in the church."

Previously the groups had keys and could go anywhere in the building. Sometimes some stayed and slept there and cooked.

**Each week, 35 12-step** groups meet, so 1,200 to 1,500 people are in the building each week, plus a few other groups. The \$20,000 to \$25,000 income from building use is 20 percent of St. Paul's budget, but basically covers the cost of the custodian help and supplies.

The shelter organizers are to clean up after themselves, clean and restock the bathrooms. They will pay no rent. St. Paul's will absorb utility costs.

**Tim said the shelter** may become permanent because homelessness has exploded in Ballard in the last five years.

Already St. Paul's has been working with five other churches to serve a Sunday dinner for 70 at a Lutheran Church in Ballard on first Sundays.

Volunteers help at Urban Rest Stops that provide private showers and laundry facilities in Ballard, as well as downtown and the University District.

"We are aware of people on the streets, living in Nickelsville, in tents under bridges and in parking lots," Tim said.

"Many people are under employed and if they miss one paycheck, they are in a dire situation. Some are also suffering from mental illness or substance abuse," he said.

Those staying at the church will be screened, so there will be no sex offenders, no alcohol or drug use.

**SHARE / WHEEL** programs, which provide up to 450 people with a safe shelter each night, have a community with strict rules.

Four or five times a year, St. Paul's UCC has let people park overnight in the parking lot. It has just 16 spots, which need to be available to people coming for the 12-step groups.

**For information, call 206-783-6733 or email info@st-pucc.org.**

## City seeks long-term solution

**Continued from page 5**

ioral Health also provides teams to help people find long-term solutions.

One church member's daughter is bringing food from Campus Kitchen—sandwiches, veggies and breakfast burritos.

"The temporary shelters are at least a safe, warm place to be and connect with resources," Tija said. "While the City of Spokane is supporting these warming shelters this winter, it seeks long-term solutions, including 100 to 150 more beds in a 24/7 permanent shelter space by summer."

Meanwhile, Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington continues its commitment to build 800 permanent housing units for chronically homeless people—with 525 built.

**When one staff member** of the Guardians walked through the sanctuary for an orientation to the location, he saw the rainbow flag, an earth flag, a transgender flag and a flag from Felsorakos, Romania, a sister congregation.

"I'm going to go home and tell my husband about this," he told the pastor.

Andy said that this is something that the church is offering this year until the city develops a long-term solution and shelter.

**"Church basements** shouldn't be a city's solution for homeless people," she said.

"Outreach needs to include mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment, and other ways to address issues that give rise to homelessness as families, culture and economic opportunities break down," Andy said.

**For information, call 624-1366 or email office@westminsterucc.org or visit www.westminsterucc.org.**

## Randy Crowe leads Puerto Rican Mission Pilgrimage

Mary Olney-Loyd and Rick Russell, co-chairs of the Global Ministries Committee—a partnership between the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ Northwest Region—contacted Randy Crowe asking him to head up lead a Puerto Rican Mission Pilgrimage from March 31 to April 6.

Volunteer workers are invited to participate in this disaster response mission pilgrimage to Puerto Rico.

The volunteers will serve as pilgrims, ambassadors and friends, while working to restore homes affected by Hurricanes Maria, which hit a 50-mile swath across Puerto Rico in September 2017, followed by the eye of Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm, passing north of the island two weeks later.

**The work will be** in partnership with Iglesia Cristiana (Discipulos de Cristo) en Puerto Rico (ICDCPR).

The partnership with ICD-CPR will help the people of Puerto Rico recover, while strengthening their networks and preparing people for the next disaster.

Mission pilgrimage volunteers will work on hurricane affected homes. Exterior and interior work can include everything from roofing and installing windows and doors to framing, finishing work, floor-



**Randy Crowe valued work camps in New Orleans.**

ing and painting.

Repair and rebuild work are important parts of this pilgrimage, but being a skilled laborer is not a requirement, said Randy.

**“Absolutely essential are** open hearts, willing hands, and allowing God to work in and through you and others,” he said. “Also essential is a commitment to building relationships and to learning about life and the church in Puerto Rico.”

Volunteers will be based at Campamonto Morton, a church camp operated by ICDCPR. Long-term recovery work will focus in the municipalities of Toa Baja and Bayamon on the northern part of Puerto Rico, Humacao on the east, and Ciales in the middle of the island.

Participants are responsible for air travel to and from the airport in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Volunteers will also pay \$315 to cover transportation, meals and lodging while at Campamonto Morton. The Puerto Rican Mission Pilgrimage is limited to 25 volunteers.

**Randy, who was** managing director of the PNC’s camp and conference center at N-Sid-Sen for 22 years until he retired in 2012, led six PNC teams from 2006 to 2010 to help with rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005. Damage was from storm surges and levies breaking and flooding homes.

In contrast, the damage in Puerto Rico is mostly from wind ripping off roofs and

“horrific rains,” said Randy.

“Those who went felt they gained more than they put in, including gains in understanding faith and service,” Randy said. “We listened to people’s stories, which was often more important than the work we did.”

Missing that experience, he said he welcomes the opportunity to return to do this type of service and ministry.

**He appreciates** a difference, in that this effort is called a “mission pilgrimage.”

Without much publicity, he already has nine of the 25 interested.

“In Puerto Rico, we will do more work on reconstructing homes, while previously, much of what we did was tearing structures to the frames,” he said. “There have already been many teams who have gone there.

**“Like in New Orleans,** I expect we will be rebuilding beside the people who live in the homes,” he said.

Randy remembers in New Orleans that many of the people were still in shock and experiencing trauma about their loss. That’s why he believes that listening to people and hearing their stories will be important.

**To register, go to** [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org) **For further information, contact Randy Crowe at** 509-232-9589 **or** [randycrowe.crowe@gmail.com](mailto:randycrowe.crowe@gmail.com).

## Youth camp dates have been set at N-Sid-Sen

The theme for the 2019 youth and family summer camps at N-Sid-Sen, is “Peace Works - Empowering the Next Generation of Peacemakers.”

The curriculum says that “peace is a prayer for some and a life’s work for others. It’s a blessing we share with others and a longing within each of our hearts. Scripture is filled with the stories of peace and justice and camp is the perfect place to share them. Peace isn’t always easy, but it’s always worth the effort, because we know that

peace works!” said Kaila Russell of the Outdoor Ministries Committee.

Kaila asks churches to begin recruiting youth to go to camp this summer.

**Intermediate and Junior High Camps** will be July 7 to 13.

**Kids Camp** is July 14 to 17, overlapping a few days with **Senior High Camp**, which will be July 14 to 20,

**Registration is online at** [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org).



# Ford grandson's family enjoys family camps

Eric Ford, his wife Laurie, their three children and grandchildren have been enjoying the site since 1989, when they first began going to family camps.

Eric is the grandson of Arthur and Margaret Ford, who in 1935 bought the property north of Harrison, Idaho, on Lake Coeur d'Alene that is now the PNC's N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center.

Arthur and Margaret had bought the property to start a church camp and in 1939 gave land south of the log cabin they built in 1936 for a youth camp when Eric's father, Peter, was a teenager.

**"My grandfather had a vision for a church camp. He saw that the property could be a blessing for youth, and had a vision of what he wanted to see there. I believe N-Sid-Sen today has fulfilled his vision,"** said Eric.

Arthur, who was born in 1888 in Birmingham, England, had immigrated from England as a young man, going to Canada to work in logging, mining and railroad companies as a cook and paymaster.

He went to Washington State College to be a farmer, but answered God's call late in life to be a minister. He married before going to study at Pacific School of Religion and returned to Washington. Margaret was from Scotland and Seattle. They met at Plymouth Church.

As a Congregational minister, Arthur served small churches in Forks, Colville, Gig Harbor and Vaughn Wash., and Kellogg and McCall, Idaho.

He retired from ministry in 1947 and became a farmer in Sunnyside.

Because Arthur and Margaret were unable to be at the cabin all year, Eric said, they advertised in South Dakota and a couple came to be caretakers. They gave them a pig, a cow to



**Arthur Ford about 1949.**

Photos courtesy of Eric Ford



**Margaret Ford in the cottage about 1948.**

milk, a cabin and barn in the meadow. Different caretakers came for a year or two, but it was hard to be there in the winter. One caretaker decided to make a living by growing iris.

**Before Forrester Lodge** was built, the cooking for camps was in the basement of the Ford cabin, he said. In addition, Margaret led Bible studies for people sitting on chairs on the porch.

The first cabins were Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the John," he said.

Eric was born in 1951, the year his uncle, George, died, and was two years old when his

grandfather died in 1953.

"A few summers, I went with my grandmother Margaret when I was in high school and college, and stayed in the cabin above the cove," he said.

**Eric went to the cabin** with his parents and siblings only a few times as a child, because his father was a physician in Portland, Ore., and had six children.

"Even though the lake was gorgeous, it was quite an undertaking to take our family of eight there for a weekend or even a week," Eric said. "There was no electricity or indoor plumbing. We used kerosene

lanterns and had an outhouse."

So the cottage on the cove was not used much.

After Eric's grandmother died in 1978, the property with the Ford cabin became part of the camp, and the cove became the swimming and boating area, shifting from the beach below Forrester Lodge..

In the late 1980s when Eric Johnson was camp manager, N-Sid-Sen added Spirit Lodge.

Eric and Laurie, who live in Seattle, said their two sons, Brian and Jay, and a daughter, Lizzy had gone to children's camps at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard.

**In 1989, they first went to a PNC family camp at N-Sid-Sen.**

"That was a low point for the camp, because there were water problems. Just three families went. There was no program staff, so we had to figure out our own schedule of activities," Laurie said.

For 30 years since then, they have gone every year to family camp at N-Sid-Sen with their children and granddaughter.

Last summer, there were nine preschoolers, eight of whom were grandchildren of families who are long-time attendees.

**"It's like a reunion with a second family,"** she said.

Phil and Pat Eisenhower are still going, along with their son and daughter-in-law, John and Dee Eisenhower, their daughters and now a great-granddaughter.

Sometimes it's just grandchildren coming with grandparents, Eric said.

For several years, Shawna and Ryan Lambert, pastor at Kirkland UCC, have been leaders.

Rather than staying in the Ford cabin, Laurie and Eric usually stay in cabin 6.

"Our children don't want

**Continued on page 9**



## Eric, Laurie Ford share history of camp N-Sid-Sen

Continued from page 8

to stay anywhere else,” she said. “When they were in high school, we brought extra children with us.

“It has always been a great place to vacation, especially when the children were little, because it was a vacation for me as a mother, not having to cook,” she said.

“It’s meaningful to go there and have the connections with my family history,” said Eric. “Many who go do not know the story of how the camp began.

“There are meaningful connections for other family campers: Ryan and Shawna Lambert, and Randy and Linda Crowe met there. Randy is a former managing director,” said Eric, who works with a wine importer in Seattle.

Laurie works in employment services for people with disabilities.

Eric and Laurie are members of Broadview UCC in Seattle. They met Broadview’s former pastor, Dan Stern, at camp and decided to check out the church. They had attended Methodist churches. After college did not go to church for many years, but they went to camp every summer.

Does Eric wish the property still belonged to his family? No.

“We can come and enjoy the camp. Someone else does the repairs,” he said. “In addition, every year, hundreds of people enjoy the camp and, over the years, many thousands have enjoyed it.”

The Ford family had a reunion in 2017 after Labor Day. Eric’s four living siblings from North Carolina, Arizona, California and Oregon came. His siblings are Marcus and John Ford, Bronwyn Rhoades and Paula Ciesielski.

“It was the first time they had been to camp since they were children. The air was



Ford cabin being built in 1936



Arthur, his son Peter (Eric’s father), his father-in-law, George Kyd, and his son George in about 1936.



Eric Ford with granddaughter Finna, son Jay, and wife Laurie on the porch of the Ford cabin.

smoky, but it was special to share that space,” Laurie said, “because we love going there so much.”

When Eric’s mother, Barbara died 10 years ago, they had buried her ashes in the family graveyard beside the Ford cabin.

Last summer, they buried Eric’s father’s ashes there.

“We bring flowers to put on the graves of Eric’s grandparents, parents and uncle,” Laurie said.

Laurie’s family has a cottage on American Lake near Tacoma, and they also go there weekends in the summer.

“It’s a second home and lots of work,” she said, so “it’s nice to go to N-Sid-Sen have someone else responsible.

“We bring our ski boat to N-Sid-Sen and teach children to wakeboard and waterski,” she said. “We go there for a week and put our feet up.”

Eric and Laurie remember when N-sid-Sen was more isolated, with only a pay phone in the basement.

Laurie said she values the conversations about faith among adults at family camps.

“People are welcome to share in discussion of faith even if they are not sure about faith,” she said.

“It’s a break from the normal routine and duties,” she said.

“I appreciate morning watch, as a way to express gratitude for the start of the day, reading scripture and thinking about it.”

“It took more than the gift of my grandfather to the Washington North Idaho Conference,” said Eric.

“Many other people over the years have stepped up in many decades since the camp started to build additional lodges and cabins,” he said.

For information, email [mark@n-sid-sen.org](mailto:mark@n-sid-sen.org).

# Pastor leads bystander intervention workshops

After the November 2016 election, Andrew Conley-Holcom of Admiral UCC in Seattle developed Bystander Intervention workshops, which he offered once a month for a year and now offers quarterly.

For Thanksgiving 2016, the congregation asked him to develop nonviolent communication training and a workshop to gain skills in talking with people in their families they disagree with.

Andrew has worked for a dispute-resolution center and taught conflict resolution.

“Nonviolent communication within families is different from bystander intervention for someone witnessing harassment on the street, at a coffee shop or on a bus. It’s about people in a committed relationship,” said Andrew.

“**With harassment** and hate speech on the rise across the country and with effective intervention being difficult and risky, these interactive, immersive workshops has participants practice intervention strategies to learn what works and what doesn’t through role play, interactive games and follow-up discussion to reprogram our automatic fight/flight/freeze reactions and learn to safely, respectfully de-escalate tense situations,” he said.

**Andrew had attended** an “all head” training focused on coming up with “good ideas” about how to respond to harassment without role play. While he found the theory a good place to start, it did not address emotional responses, the effect on brain chemistry and the triggering of hard-wired survival responses.

He believes these forces need to be directly engaged to effectively equip participants to respond to harassment and hate speech in ways that de-escalate situations.

Based on the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) developed by



**Andrew Conley-Holcom**

Augusto Boal of Brazil in the 1970s to support the peasants’ engagement in social and political change. He studied TO in a Star King Unitarian Theological School class while studying at Pacific School of Theology.

“**It is especially useful** for bystander intervention because it tries out various intervention strategies and allows group processing, reflection and analysis of both practical outcomes and emotional consequences,” Andrew said.

“Rather than relying on an expert to explain what works and what doesn’t, TO participants observe effective and problematic intervention strategies through participation,” he said. “TO is inherently uncomfortable, because it plays directly with oppressive dynamics and is profoundly liberatory, because it invites the gathered body to find solutions from within.”

**He uses improvisational** theatre and games to guide people to ways to renegotiate power relationship and problem solve responses to hate speech.

Andrew, a 2014 graduate of PSR, did research into workshops and found many bad, dangerous approaches that encouraged people to be direct in unsafe ways.

“I had never seen theater of the oppressed used for what I am now using it for,” he said,

noting that theater is different from a workshop writing ideas on butcher paper, sitting in a comfortable chair with people with whom participants agree.

“**The goal is** to concentrate on what will help us engage with our own fears, anger and discomfort. If we do not become uncomfortable and stressed out, we don’t know if the intervention will work.”

In the first half hour he invites participants to get in their bodies and think of how they would posture themselves in their emotions, getting in touch with and speaking the voice of their own “internalized oppressor, the voice within that is self-dismissive, insulting or unkind to oneself.”

Andrew said in the workshop “we ask polite people to be racist, sexist, Islamophobic or homophobic, which we normally control. That way we are practicing with real vitriolic, harmful speech in a safer environment, but not a comfortable one.”

**The workshop has two** objectives, he said:

- 1) to support the targeted person—a term we use rather than victim, and
- 2) to de-escalate emotional energy in the room.

“If we intervene and intimidate the oppressor, the oppressor might hurt the person intervening,” he said. “The goal is to de-escalate the energy to make everyone in the room safer, the oppressor, the targeted person and the intervener.”

**Andrew said there are** a myriad of ways to de-escalate a tense situation, differing if an older white woman intervenes or a young white man or a young black woman.

Workshop participants play different roles of the persecutor, the targeted person and the bystander.

Techniques include empathy, kindness, humility, humor, ridiculousness—whatever

breaks the force of the oppressor.

Ways to intervene include “being a presence, standing near the targeted person, making it clear you are listening. When a person is aware they are being watched, their willingness to continue the behavior changes,” he said, adding that it’s important to “be aware of your skillset” and have an exit plan if it’s dangerous.

Hundreds have participated in the workshops he offers usually to groups of 12 to 30.

“**It calls for a high level** of self-awareness, and the training is not about going to one workshop, coming once and learning skills. Some come to multiple workshops. It’s about reprogramming the brain to deal with stress and conflict, to interact below the surface level.”

He has done them for Magnolia UCC, Alki UCC, Fauntleroy UCC, a St. John the Baptist Episcopal, St. Therese Catholic Church, Bellevue College, Seattle’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration and the Urban League of Seattle.

**While he has led** workshops for many in community and secular settings, he believes the “Christian faith is the way, the path to peace is the path of vulnerability, integrity and loving kindness. Bystander intervention is a Christian practice.

“Our ministry is a ministry of reconciliation to help people live out the core Christian values,” Andrew said.

In church settings, he talks about theological implications.

“My ministry is a call to address violence and trauma,” he said.

One participant commented that the workshop was a way “I was finally able to do something positive to work toward a solution instead of just worrying about it.”

**For information, call 206-932-2928 or email [officemgr@admiralchurch.org](mailto:officemgr@admiralchurch.org).**



# Jan Van Pelt retires from multidimensional ministry

In the fall, Jan Van Pelt retired from a multidimensional ministry as a community organizer with farm workers, a court reporter, a conflict resolution consultant and an interim minister serving 12 congregations over nearly 20 years.

In a recent interview from her new home in Panorama Retirement Community in Lacey, she will continue coaching clergy on conflict by phone and do occasional preaching.

A Lutheran preacher's daughter, she was born in Seattle but grew up in the Chicago area, graduating in English in 1960 from Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. Influenced by a UCC uncle who taught at Union Theological Seminary, she took a year off and then went to Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, because her parents then lived in California.

After earning a master of divinity degree in 1966, Jan married a fellow student, who worked summers with her in migrant ministry. They worked 10 years with the National Farm Worker Ministry of the National Council of Churches, organizing with César Chavez in Delano, Seattle and Los Angeles.

Because the farm worker ministry's grape and lettuce boycotts were contentious issues in Protestant churches—more than her involvement in the anti-war movement—she did not participate in a church.

"It was incredibly rewarding to work and live with farm workers, seeing life through different eyes," she said.

She moved to Seattle before her husband and in 1978 finished studies to be a court reporter at Edmonds Community College. Jan opened her own business as a deposition reporter for civil cases, working with lawyers she knew from farm worker organizing.

While Jan continued that work as a single parent of two



**Jan Van Pelt**

Photo courtesy of Jan Van Pelt

daughters to support her family, she became involved with social justice in Central America and the sanctuary movement.

"As a court reporter, I saw how conflicts were litigated, and that led to my next career: mediation," Jan said.

While continuing to work as a court reporter, she learned mediation over a decade working with the Snohomish County Dispute Resolution Center, before Seattle had such a center. She also trained with the Alban Institute to do conflict resolution in faith communities.

"I wanted to be part of a reconciling ministry, to help people work together across their differences," she said.

Selling the deposition business in the early 1990s, she became a full time mediation consultant, working with churches in conflict in many denominations and faith communities, some through the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

"There are so many different forms of conflict," she said.

In 1988, Jan began attending Plymouth UCC in Seattle, drawn by its commitment to social justice. She was involved in the Plymouth Housing Group and headed the Mission Committee. That was her church home base until she recently sold her home of 40 years in Seattle. Jan now lives in Lacey and attends the United

Churches of Olympia.

"Plymouth supported me through two long episodes with cancer in the 1990s and early 2000," said Jan. "I learned about how a church can be a circle of caring."

In 2010, she was ordained at Plymouth UCC.

Aware that sometimes between ministers, churches experience difficult times, Jan took training with the Interim Ministry Network in 1998 at Vancouver, B.C.

In 1999, she went to her first call as an interim at the Cathlamet UCC, serving nearly two years. In 2017, she did the service to close the church.

Jan served 12 churches from 1999 to 2018 in six denominations, four United Methodist, two Presbyterian one Disciples of Christ, a Lutheran-Episcopal church in Quito, Ecuador, and four UCC churches, including filling in for Mark Dowdy at the United Churches of Olympia for four months during an illness. Her last interim—now-called transitional ministry—was at St. John's Chapel by the Sea in Moclips, Wash. Nine of the 12 churches were congregations with conflict.

"It was different working as a consultant to churches from the outside, compared with working as a pastor," Jan said.

Conflicts included person-to-person and personal-ity conflicts, boundary issues by pastors, and conflicts about change—the changing times and the church's transition.

"If I worked with a church early in a conflict, it was easier than if a conflict had been going on for a while," Jan said.

"I trained people in congregations to deal with conflicts, doing workshop and leadership training on dealing with conflict," she said. "Often by example, I showed a different way."

Jan plans to write more on the range of conflicts and her

experiences addressing them.

When asked what reconciliation is, she said that in some churches people were unable to sit in the same room. Some left. Relations broke. Some could hardly tolerate others. They were still there, but were polarized and tensions were high.

Jan helped them be able to sit in the same room and speak their truths to each other to build trust. Eventually they heard each other and grew by working through the conflict.

"I have seen resurrection," she said. "When others see no hope, I believe there is hope. It is possible to bring people together so a congregation can do its ministry."

Jan is aware there is some degree of conflict in many congregations, but when it's toxic, it's hard to do ministry.

"I hope I left churches healthier. It takes a while, so some interims were two years," she said. "People don't trust overnight, but in little steps."

While most clergy understand the need for boundary training, Jan said many lay people don't realize there needs to be boundary training for them.

Jan, who is on the PNC Ministry Resources Committee, plans to discern where Ito put her energy.

"I'm excited about new ministries I see in congregations. Despite diminishing numbers, I'm hopeful for the church," she said, noting that working in conflict settings has often been challenging.

Jan appreciates the support of colleagues, family and friends, and "the persistence, dedication and faith of the people I served," she said. "My faith has been deepened as I've been allowed to see with my own eyes God's transforming, resurrecting power."

**For information, call 206-941-8631 or email [janvp@comcast.net](mailto:janvp@comcast.net).**



# Peter Ilgenfritz reflects on ending a ministry well

*Peter Ilgenfritz, a recent past PNC moderator, reflects as he closes his ministry at University Congregational UCC.*

*Peter opened with a quote from Frederick Buechner in an April 2006 article in Christian Century, "At the Last Supper: Bidding Farewell": "It's hard not to believe that somehow or other there's always going to be another time with our closest friends, another day, so the chances are we won't know it's the last time, and therefore it won't have the terrible sadness about it that the Last Supper of Jesus must have had.*

*"Not knowing is sad in another way because it means that we also won't know how precious this supper is, how precious these friends are whom we will be sitting down with for the last time whether we know it or not."*

I walked through the fall months, knowing it is the last time. Dec. 30 was my last Sunday after 25 years as pastor and member of the leadership staff at University Congregational UCC in Seattle. I spent almost half of my life here. The congregation saw me grow up here from my 32-year-old self, when Dave Shull and I were the first gay couple called to a church, through many incarnations of "Peter" over the years. Peter as young social activist and as elementary church school coordinator. In my 40's, Peter as youth minister and as staff liaison to the Lecture Committee, Worship and Music ministry, and Peter as sailor in ups and downs, losses and gifts that life has given me. I have had many lives in this one place.

This place deeply changed me and made me the man and pastor I am today. The congregation's high expectations and deep love were a good combination for growth and transformation. By "deep love" I not only mean the thank-you's and notes of appreciation but even

more the risk of speaking truth in love to me in an experience of hurt or disappointment so we could talk through the issues.

It was working closely with an amazing team of colleagues and sharing in ministry with them in a unique model of a team ministry.

When I asked how I would like to be remembered I said it would seem fitting that I not be remembered in a particular room, object or thing in the church but in a verb and an action: namely, to think outside the box. Dave and I were called to the church in June 1994 because the church thought outside the box. The parts of my ministry that I am most excited about were working side by side with members, imagining new ways of doing things and carrying out ministry together.

I didn't anticipate how my leave-taking would be transformational. I had not done endings well. This time I wanted to, but I knew I needed help. It help came in surprising ways.

It came with sitting down with Conference Minister Mike Denton, who offered a simple road map for navigating tasks in ministry in the last three months. His reminder that putting down would not solve the other issues that I'd had in other endings in my life – and for sure it would bring them all up again. It did. He recommended I up my connections with people who could listen to and walk with me through this time. I did and with the help of good counselors, soul friends and writing I found my way.

I cleared my schedule to meet with folks. The first meeting was the day after my letter to the congregation saying I was leaving at the end of the year. At the end of our conversation, Sharon said to me, "It sounds like you want to spend the fall worrying about what you are going to do next year."

Part of me did. I had felt



**Peter Ilgenfritz at final service.**

Photo courtesy of University UCC

the Spirit calling me out for some new work in the world, and yet I was also unclear the form that would take. I knew it had something to do with what I learned in sailing, the journey of transition from stepping off the dock and onto a boat where everything is different. Something about the deeper connection and conversations that arise on a little boat sailing together and something about the gift of empowerment, encouraging others to take the helm and sail the boat themselves. There was something in this work of transition and helping folks step into it that I wanted to explore in some new ways.

I needed to give myself a sabbatical to make room for listening and wonder, but the lack of a plan and a pay-check also woke me at 2 a.m. in sheer panic! Sharon suggested, "Perhaps instead of worrying about next year, what if this fall you are just present with us? I mean, what if you had a good goodbye, did your grieving and letting go with us this fall? That would be the best preparation for you and for us for what lies ahead in the new year. In January, you will know what you need to do."

That sounded like the Gospel. I know it is the Gospel because my first reaction is I don't want it, my second is, I don't like it, and my third, DARN!

I knew it was true and won-

dered if I had enough faith to do it. All fall, I stepped into being present and letting go of my worry of what came next. It served me well as I sat with members and friends for last conversations of thank you, forgiveness, love and goodbye, and as I met with groups and reflected on the ministry we did together, what we wanted to celebrate, what we needed to release, and what we wanted to remember.

It was a surprising gift for me to become the pastor I had never been before—another face of "Peter"—the pastor who cries. I never cried with members of the church. All fall I became the pastor who did. I'd show up for a gathering and ask for the tissue box. At the heart of those tears was opening me to receive the congregation's love and gratitude. I hadn't been good at that. Perhaps I was too much of an independent New Englander, walled off and not trusting a relationship of interdependence where together we share and feel joys and sorrows of life and walking in it together. All fall I experienced that. It was a miracle to my soul and a healing in my life.

It helpful when John, a retired pastor at church, mentioned to me at coffee hour one Sunday, that it was his experience that endings are always messy and he cautioned me not to clean them up. I told him that was exactly when I got in trouble, when I tried to "clean up" organize my way through the emotional turmoil of this ending instead of letting myself be present to it. John's invitation to me freed me to not just be the organized and dependable and "together" pastor but the messy one, as well who could feel and be present in a way I had not been always able to be present. It was a gift and grace to cry my way messily through the fall.

**Peter's poem on a Messy Ending is online. For information, call 206-524-2322.**

## Paul Ashby plans six-nation interfaith mission

Paul Ashby, pastor of Richmond Beach Congregational UCC, is on a six-nation interfaith "Peace, Respect, and Love in Action" Mission **this spring?** in Penang, Malaysia; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Hanoi, Vietnam; Chang Mai, Thailand; and Taipei, Taiwan.

He will have public interfaith dialogues with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Daoist religious leaders as part of his travel through March.

Paul and his wife Pam also plan to visit temples, mosques and synagogues in various cities.

A group of monks in Chang Mai has promised to be their guide but add with a note of joy that "there are more than 400 temples in this city of 900,000 people!" They advised them to bring good walking shoes because they will "walk more

than a mile in the shoes of ancient faiths in Asia."

Last spring, Paul was one of more than 700 people who applied for a Lilly Endowment Sabbatical Grant. Because a packet was lost in the mail, he did not discover until late September that he was awarded a fully funded grant of \$46,533.

His project is to do interfaith peacemaking in six different Asian nations.

The goal is to go into regions where televangelists and missionaries have spread a message of rejection and judgment against other faiths and share in dialogue about the compassion of the Jewish rabbi named Jesus of Nazareth.

Often televangelists ignore the truth that Jesus was never a Christian nor did Jesus ever tell anyone they were going to hell, he said.

Paul will base dialogues on

a theme central to Richmond Beach Congregational Church: "Peace, Respect, and Love in Action."

His inspiration for this mission project was spiritual writer and Trappist monk Thomas Merton. In the late 1950s, Merton was a pioneer of interfaith dialogues across many faith groups. Merton provides a method based on sharing common ethical values, speaking respectfully about differences, and reflecting on ways different faiths open the human heart and consciousness to compassion, mercy, service to the poor, and forgiveness. Merton also adds the humble recognition that no one has all the answers, Paul said.

This grant follows three decades of interfaith outreach and peacemaking for Paul.

He has received a community service award for helping Tibetan Buddhist refugees,

The Oklahomans for Equality awarded him the "Spiritual Inclusion" award for leadership in creating peace and understanding among faith groups, and he received a postdoctoral fellowship to study Asian religions at Harvard University.

In addition to his service as pastor of Richmond Beach Congregational Church UCC, he has been elected twice to serve as vice president of Seattle Soto Zen.

Also, after having numerous sermons published in Global Vedanta (a Hindu journal), he received the honor of being a lifetime member of the Vedanta Society of Western Washington.

This fits one of Paul's favorite sayings, "God is greater than any one theology or anyone's imagination."

**For information, call (206) 542-7477 or visit [rbucc.org](http://rbucc.org).**

WHEN

## Guemes UCC invites island to create peace art

Guemes Community Church UCC is working on a year-long, participatory "Peace Pole Project," asking families, groups and artists to make peace poles on the island for constant visual reminders of peacemaking, said Bob Anderson.

There have also been some peace education events.

The church is providing poles, resources and financial help to any artist that requests it. It has a short resource sheet to recruit peace pole makers.

The project kicked off with a labyrinth celebration the evening of Sept. 21, the United Nations' World Peace Day and the Equinox. The celebration included readings, luminarias, candles and torches, and a soup supper to give out peace pole suggestions. **##?** signed up.

It continues into the spring of 2019.

Bob said the island project

seeks to promote peace through awareness, art projects and action.

Peace Poles made by Island artists, families and organizations are to be placed in public spaces and private roadsides, "drawing on Island creativity and as a continuing future reminder to work together for peace, in ourselves, our community and in the world, said Bob, who is coordinating logistics. Gary Rainwater is helping with materials, placement and construction advice.

The church is providing some funding for materials peace pole makers need.

Bob said the hope is to inspire peacemaking, to support current and future activists to engage in local and wider community peacemaking.

"The church is one catalyst, and all Islanders and organizations are invited to initiate actions," Bob said.



**Bob Anderson**

Peace pole makers are starting with four-by-four or larger pressure treated poles six to eight feet tall. The bottom two feet are treated to be buried in the ground and the upper four to six feet are to be creatively designed with peace-related words or images.

"Other options include banners, plaques, panels, rocks, birdhouses, mobiles or chimes," said Bob.

Traditional peace poles of-

ten are simply white with the words in black.

Options for words include "peace on earth," "grow in peace," "find peace within," "believe in peace," "work for peace," "do everything peacefully," or "life is a peaceful garden."

Often the same phrase is on different faces of the pole in different languages.

"Simplicity in words and images is recommended so poles can be quickly read by passers-by," Bob said.

Dedication of the peace poles and peace art will be at Spring Equinox, Memorial Day or Summer Solstice events.

"We are 'locavores' and this project is all about Islanders inspiring and supporting each other and the local economy," said Bob. **###**

**For information, call 360-293-3770; [earthspiritcircle@earthlink.net](mailto:earthspiritcircle@earthlink.net).**



## Online newsletter reports on Pilgrim Firs programs over 2018

Kaila Russell of the Outdoor Ministries Committee reported that in the summer and fall of 2018, Pilgrim firs welcomed 10 new groups and camps among a total of 42 camps and groups. It hosted four wider community public events and its income ran about 10 percent higher than budget as it welcomed more than 2,100 campers and guests.

During the fall, the PN-CUCC Board of Directors adopted a purpose statement for Pilgrim Firs: "Pilgrim Firs provides a sacred oasis for creativity and community," she added.

That purpose will guide its story and give insight as it sets priorities for improvements and funding.

"How might this purpose statement strengthen our wider impact into the communities and groups we are currently serving? Imagine what may grow from our intentionality of being a sacred oasis for creativity and community!" Kaila said.

Wade Zick, managing di-

rector of Pilgrim Firs, reported that Common Fire, the mission-based youth camp program, welcomed 29 youth and leaders from Chicago for a week in June. They partnered with Rebuilding Together on five worksites making homes more accessible for low-income and disabled people.

"Fox Island UCC members led the work projects and look forward to being involved again next summer as we welcome groups June 23 to 28," Wade said.

"Part of each day was spent doing service work in the community with the rest of the day spent having a camp experience at Pilgrim Firs. Besides swimming, canoeing, hiking, and hanging out, there is evening program helping youth focus on the systemic issues that foster situations that many homeless, disabled and veterans in need are currently facing. Through discussions, youth came to realize that changing systems takes time and hard work," he said.

In June, Pilgrim Firs hosted about 150 people from the community for a family fun picnic, music, lawn games, crafts and hikes as part of Kitsap Pride. A grant from the national Outdoor Ministry Association helped underwrite the cost of this event continuing to make it free for the community.

Over the past three years, nearly \$5,000 has been raised from this picnic to support the Q Resource Center for LGBTQ youth in Kitsap and the Kitsap Pride Event.

Nearly 80 senior high students and their leaders from around Western Washington gathered for leadership training in late August led by Planned Parenthood.

Students were given tools for leading peer groups at their schools to combat bullying, build safer communities for LGBTQ youth, and look at ways to improve their own leadership skills.

Because some groups are too small to have the whole camp to themselves, this past

summer several weekends had groups from as many as three of UCC churches sharing space: Liberation, First Christian Taiwanese and Prospect UCC churches shared one weekend, and Mercer Island, United Churches of Olympia and St. Paul churches shared Pilgrim Firs another weekend.

"While the intention was often separate events, something amazing happens when people gather to share lives, share stories and share meals," said Wade.

Mid-Winter Youth Retreats are being held Jan. 18 to 20.

The Men's Retreat is Jan. 31 through Feb. 3.

On Nov. 28, Pilgrim Firs was selected for the 2018 Best of Port Orchard Award in the Conference Center Category by the Port Orchard Award Program, which every year identifies companies that have achieved "exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category."

*For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit [pilgrimfirs.com](http://pilgrimfirs.com).*

## East Side Fire District recognizes N-Sid-Sen

The Coeur d'Alene Lake East Side Fire District 2018 Chiefs award went to N-Sid-Sen and its managing director Mark Boyd.

The award is for an individual or individuals whose dedication and commitment consistently rise above the rim in service to East Side Fire District and the community.

The theme for its 25-year celebration, "Power of Community," expressed the East Side Fire District's commitment to serve the community.

In the spirit of community, they chose N-Sid-Sen because of its continuous dedication, support and contribution to both East Side Fire and to the community.

Year after year Mark and N-Sid-Sen contribute to the success of the district's Pancake Breakfast, host their annual banquet and are always there when the district or community needs help.

This year, N-Sid-Sen has stepped up above and beyond by supporting the upgrade of the fire district's fleet with a new dock and boathouse for the fire boat. *For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org).*



**Fire Chief Dan Cussic presents award to Mark Boyd at N-Sid-Sen. Below is construction began in November on the fireboat dock.** Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

