



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

Spring 2025

Advocacy groups use United Churches building

The United Churches of Olympia opens space for nonprofit, faith advocates

The 2025 Legislative session, like much of the country, started out with trepidation and fear for the future, said Jessica Babcock, building coordinator for United Churches of Olympia who handles arrangements for the different groups using the building during the session.

With construction on the Capitol Campus limiting public spaces, United Churches became a prime location to host advocacy days, so they had several new groups.

“We hosted 38 nonprofit groups in more than three months. The building saw more than 4,000 people working on issues of hunger, nutrition, civil liberties, voting rights, healthcare, workers’ rights, Continued on page 5



One advocate from the United Churches, Julie Clark, was at a press conference with Senator Patty Murray, advocating for no cuts to Medicaid. See story on page 5.

Photo courtesy of Julie Clark

‘Finding Place/Sacred Space’ is Annual Meeting theme

The Pacific Northwest Conference UCC 2025 Annual Meeting will be held Friday to Sunday, April 25 to 27, at the Yakima Convention Center, 10 N. 8th St. in Yakima.

“Finding Place/Sacred Space” is the theme, based on Luke 14:12-14.

Business sessions will be hybrid—on-site and online.

The offerings collected at the worship services will be split between Mending Wings, a local Native organization, and N-Sid-Sen. Mending Wings empowers and heals Native youth through leadership development, cultural retention and revitalization programs with information at mendingwings.net.

Because of food bank shortages,

**Annual Meeting
is April 25 to 27
at the Yakima
Convention Center**

the Board encourages everyone to bring non-perishable food items to donate to Yakima food banks.

The PNC Annual Meeting will also welcome two new congregations, which the Board of Directors approved on recommendation of the Church Development Committee. One is Emanuele, Ekallesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiana Samoa (Emanuel, Congregational Christian Church Samoa in

America in Algonia, WA. The other is Live in Salvation Christian Church of Tacoma.

Arlene Hobson, executive administrator, said the planning committee seeks volunteers to help with tech, communication, worship, food, program and onsite logistics.

The registration link is at <https://pncucc.org/new-page-1>. For questions on registration, contact Mark Boyd at mark@pilgrim-firs.org or 360-876-2031. Hotel reservations are each delegate’s and attendee’s responsibility.

There are limited scholarship funds available by contacting the Rev. Phil Hodson at phil@pncucc.org.

Continued on page 3

What does it mean to be people of hope?

Reports & Comments



By The Rev.
Phil Hodson
Designated
Conference
Minister

**We
must
be
about
strengthening
the
ties
that
bind
us.**

We are an Easter People. Let us gather for Annual Meeting 2025 with that in mind.

Everywhere I've gone this past year, in visioning workshops and Sunday morning worship, I've been inviting us to consider what it means to be a people of hope—a people who offer a winsome, relevant, vibrant alternative voice to what we see happening around us—to the division, the anger and the anxiety.

We are called to offer something better.

I believe the gospel's core is love grounded in relationship.

We worship a Divine who is three-in-one, a constant interplay of relationship that extends out to the world and interacts with not just humanity but the whole of creation, seeking that which is good, just and flourishing.

Since late January of this year, we have found the opposite portrayed everywhere we look. To varying degrees, we have become fearful and reactive instead of hopeful and proactive.

I am regularly asked what we are going to do as a conference and denomination in response, and this remains my answer:

We must offer an alternative vision, one that is truly countercultural because it is rooted in love that exists in relationships.

We're living that out in many ways as the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Individually and collectively, we have opportunities to lift our voices for justice through the work of the United Church of Christ's Public Policy & Advocacy Office and the Action Alerts they post regularly.

Our congregations are supporting Church World Service through direct gifts.

Our churches are exploring what it will mean to be a sanctuary for those in need in

these difficult days.

A few weeks ago, I sat with a vibrant activist in the United Church of Christ and asked them what they were up to at that moment. Their reply took me by surprise.

They replied that they were caring for themselves and taking time to rest and renew—for they anticipate a long road ahead.

I, too, see that long road ahead and hope we will follow their lead where and when we need to.

Otherwise, we'll be worn out by Tuesday, which is exactly what others want of us right now.

We need to pick our spots carefully, respond in real-time to the needs of the communities where we serve, and hold space for our own spirits to draw strength for the journey.

As we prepare to gather in Yakima in a few weeks, this is my invitation to all of us: May we come together to be grounded. Rooted in our relationships with one another and God.

We must focus on strengthening the ties that bind us, sharing ideas about how our congregations can engage in our communities for the greater good, and committing to support one another in stepping forward and slowing down to gather breath for all that lies ahead.

We are an Easter people, but Easter doesn't come without pain. This season of Lent is one of challenge, denial, suffering and strife—not unlike where we find ourselves so often when engaging the world around us.

So let us draw strength for the journey, let us come together to praise God, to lean on one another in mutual support, and let us listen for Spirit's leading in those spaces where we can, individually and collectively, lift that countercultural, hopeful, winsome, and relevant voice of excellent news for our world that so desperately needs to hear it.

Transitions announced

The ordination of **Faatauva'a (Va'a) Alaelua** took place Feb. 2 at Christian Worship Center UCC in Anchorage.

The Eastside Committee on Ministry unanimously agreed to confer dual standing in the UCC on **Iotamo Faleallili**, pastor of First LMS Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Anchorage.

Everett United Church of Christ has called **Davi Wesley** as their new pastor. They began the end of February. Davi previously served at First Congregational UCC in Bellingham.

Class helps with feedback

As part of a mutual covenant with the Pacific Northwest Conference, the Rev. Sophie Morse, who has worked 15 years in conflict resolution and conflict skills training, continues to offer series of online classes on engaging conflict with greater skill and confidence.

The third class in the series, "Giving & Receiving Feedback," begins on April 10. Classes are held from 12:30 to 2 p.m. on Zoom. Sophie said the class is for people who have a hard time giving and receiving feedback.

The workshop will explore what is challenging in both giving and receiving feedback, what kind of feedback is appropriate for what purposes, and principles that can empower people in both offering and receiving feedback effectively and constructively to deepen relationships.

Sophie has presented more than 500 hours to diverse audiences including incarcerated populations, volunteer mediators, professionals and youth in Kitsap County and across the state.

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

Slot held for Seattle Pride

Plymouth UCC and University Congregational UCC are hosting a PNC slot for all local churches to join the Seattle Pride Parade on Sunday, June 29, said Stephan Gerhardt, moderator of UCUC.

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

Book exchange held at AM

Those attending Annual Meeting are invited to bring books they would like to share with their UCC neighbors

"We will make our own temporary

Little Free Library during the meeting," said Dee Eisenhauer, pastor of Eagle Harbor UCC on Bainbridge Island. "While all books are welcome, we are particularly interested in books on spirituality, faith and biblical studies.

"I benefited greatly early in my ministerial career from older ministers sharing their professional libraries with me," she said. "I want to keep that gift now that my local church ministry career is winding down."

For information, email dee.eisenhauer@gmail.com.

COM requires anti-racism training for standing

In support of then PNC's vote in 2021 to be an Anti-Racist Conference, the Committee on Ministry (COM) is now including a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training requirement for all authorized and lay ministers—parish, specialized, retired, dual standing, privilege of call—training to maintain authorized standing in the PNC UCC.

This training is to be taken once every three years, similar to the required boundary training. In this way, the PNC joins with other UCC conferences seeking to increase its core value of welcoming hospitality in following Christ.

The COM has identified three options for anti-racism training, one of which must be completed by the end of 2026.

Details of this requirement are given in the Annual Meeting Report and will be part of the COM Annual Meeting Workshop, said the Rev. Dr. Cindy Bauleke, Westside COM chair.

For information, call 360-303-1941 or email cindybauleke@gmail.com.

General Synod sign-up open

Registration is now open for the 2025 General Synod of the UCC, which will be held July 11 to 15 in Kansas City, MO. Synod gathers UCC folks for worship, fellowship, business, public witness and setting ministry priorities. The 2025 theme is "Into the Deep," based on Luke 5:4.

There is opportunity for visitors, delegates, youth leaders and exhibitors to participate in plenaries, workshops, worship, youth programs and resource sharing.

One-hour workshops on July 13 will be offered to equip local churches to live their mission. Workshops will be on spirituality, leadership, climate, decolonizing and

strengthening the church.

General Synod 35 is the last biennial synod. The 36th General Synod will be held in 2028 in a move to hold the synod every three years instead of two.

Decisions include electing two associate general ministers and 12 resolutions.

For information, visit generalsynod.org.

Magnolia plans forum

Magnolia UCC is hosting a forum at 7 p.m., Monday, April 21, on Zoom on "Homelessness and the Meaning of Home" with a grant from Humanities Washington.

Loss of a home—through financial difficulties, divorce, illness or natural disasters—is a growing problem in rural, suburban and urban areas. Author and professor at the University of Washington, Josephine Ensign, shares research on the history of homelessness in Seattle.

Registration is required at <https://us-02web.zoom.us/join/register/Rv1yKP-WIS36hJ2AosCsE7g#/registration>.

Annual Meeting - more

Continued from page 1

Workshops will include Faithful Advocacy with FAN, Environmental Justice, Moderators and Lay Leaders, Ending Sexual Abuse of Children, Serving the Poor and Sheltering the Unhoused, the Yakima Immigrant Response Network Faith Team, Active Anti-Racism Efforts YOU Funded, Committee on Ministry Discussion of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Training, and A Taste of Communities of Practice. All are on-site and the last three are also online.

The Ministry Resources Committee, which nominates people to serve on conference committees, is still seeking nominations for most conference committees.

Committee members serve the broader church by offering their voice, experience and creativity. Most terms are two years with monthly meetings.

The conference has eight committees served by lay people and clergy who represent diversity on racial and ethnic lines, and diversity of age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation and geographic location.

Those interested in serving may contact Jenn Hagedorn at 206-265-2834 or pastor@spiritofpeaceucc.org before April 9 so they will be on the slate of nominees before Annual Meeting.

For information, email arlene@pn-cucc.org.

Freeman Palmer is Annual Meeting keynote speaker

The Annual Meeting keynote speaker the Rev. Freeman Palmer, Central Atlantic UCC Conference minister, believes that the challenge for today is to live into what it means for UCC churches to say, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

He believes it is important for the UCC to live into that as individuals, churches, communities and a denomination—given that some UCC congregations are open-and-affirming and some are not and given that members may have voted different and have different beliefs about transgender siblings.

“The key is to come to the table and talk about it,” Freeman said, noting that the text for the PNC Annual Meeting is Luke 14:12-14, which says, “Then Jesus turned to the host and said, ‘The next time you put on a big dinner, don’t just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favor. Invite some people who rarely get invited like people who are marginalized, oppressed and othered. You’ll be and experience a blessing. They may not be able to return the favor in a way you’d expect, but the favor will be returned—oh, how it will be returned—at the resurrection of God’s people.’”

“I hope each of our lives bears witness of the Gospel led by the spirit,” he said, pointing out that his experience as a second career minister and part of the LGBTQ ministry and as a person of color, he believes it’s important to live a ministry that is not monolithic.

He is proud that the Central Atlantic Conference (CAC), where he began as conference minister in 2019 after nine years as associate conference minister for congregational development in the New York Conference of the UCC, is a



The Rev. Freeman Palmer, conference minister of the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC, will share insights with PNC.

Photo courtesy of Central Atlantic Conference

diverse conference with African Americans, Asian Americans and European Americans, a microcosm of the UCC with a lot of theological diversity. The CAC covers five states and Washington, D.C.

“I’m the covenant keeper, keeping relationships among open-and-affirming and non-open-and-affirming congregations,” Freeman said.

“My call and challenge, as all conference ministers are challenged, is how to be a united church of Christ that unites around the mission of Christ.

Freeman said that Phil Hodson, PNC designated conference minister, asked him to share what the CAC does around social justice and racial justice as the national government is dismantling diversity, equity and inclusion policies, and initiatives related to immigrant rights, refugee resettlement and asylum seekers.

One thing the CAC has done is to be a named plaintiff in the litigation against the

Department of Homeland Security related to rescinding the long-standing policy that I.C.E. would not enter churches, schools or hospitals to arrest and deport people.

April 3 there is a hearing on that lawsuit and Freeman hopes there will be a short-term injunction to prevent that happening.

In these times, he finds many ways to be a prophetic witness—from prophetic litigation to pastoral care for all who are suffering from threatened and actual cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food programs and more, as well as those losing or threatened with losing their jobs.

“They have pastoral needs. In D.C., we have 20 percent of the federal workforce, but they are all across the states—national parks and local program offices,” Freeman said. “Many are threatened, and we need to take care of each other with compassion for needs and with prophetic witness.

“What is happening nationally is hitting everyone where they live. No one is immune,” he asserted.

Freeman was ordained at The Riverside Church in 2004 as associate minister at Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan, where he served for five years. He is member of the Reformed Church of Highland Park in Highland Park, NJ.

He was also an original contributor to the African American Lectionary, an online worship, scriptural and cultural resource used principally by African American congregations. Originally from Washington DC, Freeman attended seminary after a 15-year career with CBS Inc. in television and radio financial management, before serving as head of Finance and Administration of WCBS-AM News Radio 880 in New York City.

After high school, Freeman earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from Swarthmore College, a master’s degree in finance from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and a master of divinity degree from New York Theological Seminary, where he served as comptroller while a student.

Freeman also served two years as chief financial officer for the North Jersey Community Research Initiative, one of New Jersey’s largest social service organizations serving people living with HIV/AIDS.

His spouse, Donal, is an ordained minister with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in Baltimore.

Commenting on the sermon by Episcopal Bishop Marian Edgar Budde at the National Cathedral, Freeman said her words were the kind of witness needed.

“We need to speak compassionately and boldly,” he said.

For information on Annual Meeting, call 206-725-8383 or visit pncucc.org.

FAN gathered 200 for 2025 Interfaith Advocacy Day

Continued from page 1

education, immigrant justice, housing, climate, environment, abortion access, mental health and gun violence,” said Jessica.

The church nearly doubled its revenue from 2024, receiving more than \$21,000 for building use.

The Faith Action Network of Washington (FAN) is one of the groups that uses space each year at the United Churches of Olympia. Blake Alford, operations coordinator for FAN, said that \ 200 showed up there on Feb. 20 for the Interfaith Advocacy Day.

“Our primary message was advocating for progressive revenue,” he said. “In a difficult budget year, we were advocating for our policy work to be maintained and expanded and, like on the national scene, to maintain vital programs and funding to support vulnerable and marginalized communities.”

FAN arranged policy briefings on criminal justice, police

reform, environmental justice, housing and immigrant rights in the morning session and had guest legislators, Rep. Osman Salahuddin and Sen. Rebecca Saldana also spoke.

Before the event, there were pre-caucus meetings allowing people from different districts to strategize. Then there were two legislative preview sessions and an advocacy 101 training.

The Latino Civic Alliance had nearly three times as many adults for the Latino Legislative Advocacy Day.

“An altar was constructed for the Farmworker Tribunal with Community to Community, and the Firelands Workers United reminded us that service to others is a participation in the sacred and should be chanted loudly,” she reported.

For information on the United Churches call 360-943-4822 or visit theunitedchurches.org. For information on FAN, call 206-625-9790 or visit fanwa.org.

Groups meet at United Churches



Latino group sets up an altar at United Churches of Olympia.

Photo courtesy of United Churches

Julie Clark testifies against cuts to Medicaid

Photo on page 1

At the invitation of The ARC of Washington, Julie Clark, a member of United Churches of Olympia for 30 years, recently joined a press conference with Senator Patty Murray to share her experiences as a woman living on Medicaid and struggling with cerebral palsy and bipolar disorder.

“I spoke about Medicaid and how cuts would affect people with disabilities,” Julie said.

“I am concerned about the cuts to Medicaid and how the cuts will affect the quality of health care people with disabilities will receive,” she said.

“I spoke about myself and what I

do to advocate for others as well,” she said.

Members from the church and her pastor, Lara Crutsinger-Perry came to the rally and press conference at the capitol to support her.

The ARC of Washington advocates for services and funding to meet needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Julie, who grew up and attended a UCC church in Portland, Ore., earned an associate’s degree in computer programming at a community college in Washington.

“I worked for the State of Washington for 17 years before retirement,”

said Julie. “Now, I work for and am on the board of Kokua Services, a non-profit agency that provides residential and community support services to adults with disabilities in Thurston County.

“I became involved in advocacy because I was retired and wanted to work in something I was passionate about. I am involved with advocacy groups like People First and the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council, as well as ARC of Washington,” she said.

“Churches should be involved because we believe in justice,” she explained.

Stories on other UCC congregations involved in advocacy this year, on FAN’s executive director Joyce del Rosario and on FAN’s advocacy director Kristin Ang are on pages 5 to 9.

Pastor serves church across from state Capitol

Being across the street from the Washington State Capitol with many people coming to testify before the state House of Representatives and Senate, the United Churches of Olympia offers its building for use by people who show up and want to engage.

The federated United Church of Christ-Presbyterian Church (USA), at 110 11th Ave SE, is where the Faith Action Network of Washington stages its Interfaith Advocacy Day (IFAD 2025), which was on Feb. 20 this year.

In addition to that one day, the congregation has a commitment to be a host and provide hospitality for church groups coming. It rents space to many community and nonprofit groups, sharing their space at affordable rates and having good relationships with their building partners.

Lara Crutsinger-Perry, who has been at the United Churches for 11 years, is now the senior pastor. Soon after she began to attend the church, she started working in youth ministry. As other staff left, she progressed to be children, youth and family minister, associate pastor, co-pastor and then solo pastor.

She began her journey into ministry and outreach attending a Southern Baptist Seminary where she studied before and after earning a master's degree in social work at the University of Texas Arlington. She grew up Southern Baptist in Texas but did not enter ministry in the denomination because she came out after graduating.

"I learned about the UCC attending the Cathedral of Hope, a Metropolitan Community Church that became a United Church of Christ," she said, "Them my wife and I moved to Washington, D.C."

In D.C., Lara worked for a national LGBTQ nonprofit un-



Interfaith Advocacy Day gathering at United Churches.

Photo by Mark White Photography

til her wife was hired to work with the state health department. When they moved to Olympia, they looked for and found a church home 11 years ago at United Churches, where she began her journey into UCC ministry.

As a member in discernment, the UCC accepted her seminary training. She took a church polity class, boundary training and did an internship with the national UCC Extravagant program, to learn about social media and spiritual practices. She was ordained six years ago as associate pastor and became solo pastor during COVID.

"Our church, which has 150 to 200 people of all ages attending on Sundays for an interactive chapel service at 8:30 a.m. and a 10:30 a.m. worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom, is ecumenical in the sense that many found it after leaving faith traditions that did not meet their needs. We are a blend and learn from each other," Lara said.

"Some left other churches and are healing from religious trauma, so we seek to be a place of healing," she added.

Many members are state employees and there are several retired UCC, Presbyterian and United Methodist clergy.

They are more than pew sitters. The congregation sets

aside 10 percent of its annual budget to use in the community. Their Community Connections team decided to support partner agencies through funds and service opportunities for members.

Lara described some of the ways the United Churches seeks to be a good neighbor.

- For 20 years one Tuesday a month, members prepare and serve a community dinner through the Community Kitchen. They are one of many groups that do that to provide meals every evening.

- The church supports a tiny homes community the city set up, moving people from camping in the woods to tiny homes villages where they have better shelter and resources.

"We delivered picnic tables to them," Lara said, "and members visit and sponsor meals."

- During Lent, the church is holding Monday Night Lenten Soup Suppers and Prayers as times to eat well and converse.

- The church recently started a Beyond Land Group to discover ways to be good neighbors with Indigenous folks. They offered an exhibit of local books on Indigenous history of the area and plan field trips.

"We want to move from our land acknowledgement to live its words," she added.

- The congregation is engaging with others in the commu-

nity in an Immigrant Coalition to support immigrants' rights. Members are concerned for the safety of immigrant neighbors.

- Recently to support trans kids and siblings of color, members are showing up at school board and city council meetings to promote justice values.

"We see how media twist values we hold, coopted by political parties in ways that do not reflect what we want to live," she explained."

- Its website says the church is committed to becoming anti-racist, denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery and repenting any participation in and perpetuation of systems that oppress or marginalize people.

- In addition, if there are cuts in services, the United Churches members are looking at how they can respond to the needs of neighbors.

"We are having conversations so we will be prepared," Lara said.

In their desire to be good neighbors, Lara said the church is beginning a \$2 million capital campaign to renovate the building—decarbonizing their energy use by putting solar panels on the roof, installing an elevator, putting in a HVAC system to replace on old boiler, upgrading its electrical system and "aligning the building with our values so it is ready for the next 50 years," she said.

After Easter, the congregation will use to another space in the building for worship so the contractor can begin what will be five months of work.

Lara feels the United Churches is the best place for her to be in ministry, coming from a social work and community organizing background and having pastoral sensitivity to people needing community and healing.

For information, call 360-943-1210 or email lara@theunitedchurches.org.

FAN director committed to advocate for the vulnerable

Faith Action Network's (FAN) executive director, Joyce del Rosario, appreciates her role as an opportunity to work on behalf of oppressed people.

FAN is Washington's state-wide, multifaith, nonprofit through which thousands of people and more than 160 faith communities—including many PNC-UCC congregations—partner to work for the common good.

“FAN organizes people to become powerful voices of faith and conscience advocating for a more just, peaceful and sustainable world,” she said. “It calls people to contact elected officials to advocate for a just, sustainable world.”

In Seattle, she and her extended Filipino family were active with United Methodist congregations and Filipino activities, culture and issues.

Joyce had expected to be a journalist when she graduated in 1996 from the University of Washington. She has since used her communication studies to do speaking related to ministry and nonprofits.

In 2000, she earned a master of divinity at Princeton Seminary, feeling called to ministry in the community.

Returning to Seattle, Joyce worked with World Vision's domestic youth program and Young Life's urban training in the Beacon Hill area. She connected with the interfaith community and Filipino churches.

When funding ended in 2006, Joyce went to Daly City, Calif., to do outreach with youth in a community that was more than 50 percent Filipino. While serving as a public-school counselor, she also worked weekends with young mothers. That led her to heading New Creation Homes, a program supported by Silicon Valley churches that provided a home and 24/7 care for mothers aged 15 to 22 years.



Joyce del Rosario is the new executive director at FAN.

Joyce learned of the discrepancy between those who could afford to live in the area and those who had little.

After earning a doctoral degree in intercultural studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, she continued to seek ways to bring together privileged and vulnerable folk, and to advocate for and with vulnerable people.

From 2019 to 2022, she taught Christian practice at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, training students to enter nonprofit or church jobs.

In 2022, she returned to Seattle as director of multi-ethnic programs at Seattle Pacific University.

Since beginning at FAN in November 2024, she has met with people in different faith communities and congregations, connecting with rich and poor. She also discovered her family was involved with FAN advocacy.

Joyce is one of four full-time staff along with Kristin

Ang, the policy engagement director, Elizabeth Dickinson, partnership coordinator and Blake Alford, operations coordinator. Other staff are Jess Ingman, North Central Washington regional organizer, and Brianna Dilts, Eastern Washington regional organizer.

Joyce seeks to expand funding to increase the staff and their hours so they can better mobilize our faith communities for just action.

“FAN has a stable base,” she said.

Joyce invites people from different cultures around the state to work together across culture and geography.

With her interest in youth, she seeks to inspire high school- and college-aged students to mobilize their passions to work toward justice.

From her study of scriptures, she believes that “God has a special love and compassion for the poor, the vulnerable and the oppressed,” said Joyce, who, as a brown Filipino wom-

an, is aware of the vulnerabilities people in her own family experience.

She believes faith gives people strength to stand against injustices and FAN is equipped to answer harmful, violent actions the most vulnerable face.

Joyce invites those in FAN to realize that “as we take action, we need to have faith that we, as the beloved community, can resist and create change for the common good,” she said, inviting FAN partners to help “educate our faith communities about local and state initiatives.”

During January, FAN announced the legislative priorities they shaped along with their coalition partners, state-wide network, the FAN policy committee and the FAN governing board.

Those priorities include advocating for and implementing policies that advance shared values grounded in faith and spirituality. Those values are belonging and human dignity, justice and equity, interconnectedness, collaboration and pluralism.

The agenda calls for strengthening climate justice and environmental stewardship; advancing immigrant and refugee rights; fostering community safety, democracy and civil rights; increasing safe affordable housing and preventing homelessness and expanding access to health care.

As the Washington State Legislature has been in session, Kristin has been in Olympia lobbying and others in FAN have followed the session to inform people around the state of the bills proposed, how they have been revised, what ones have passed out of committees and when to phone or email legislative representatives to ask them to vote “pro” or “con” on the bills.

For information, call 206-624-9790, email joyce@fanwa.org, or visit fanwa.org.

Kristin Ang gives overview of FAN 2025 agenda

Kristin Ang, policy engagement director of the Faith Action Network, recently reported on progress FAN priorities in the 2025 Washington State Legislature.

One focus of FAN's advocacy is for progressive revenue for the budget, along with advocacy for bills that have advanced, like rent stabilization, immigrant and student protections, and recycling reform.

Kristin has heard from many FAN advocates who are taking action and having an impact on legislators through their civic involvement.

For example, as of late March FAN helped generate 1,586 letters through its Action Network to support rent stabilization, senior nutrition programs, funding immigrant health care and keeping funding for struggling residents.

FAN constituents also sent 1,108 letters to Congress against mass deportations.

Kristin encouraged people to continue to take action by signing in PRO for progressive revenue solutions to make Washington's tax code fairer and fund vital services like education, housing and healthcare.

"We are advocating for bold, equitable tax reform," said Kristin.

She reported on four revenue bills scheduled for hearings in early April.

SB 5797, Financial Intangibles Tax, would create a 1% tax on financial assets such as stocks, bonds, ETFs, mutual funds—held by the wealthiest 0.1%—with more than \$50 million in assets—raising \$4 billion/year.

The House version, HB 2046, Financial Intangibles Tax, establishes a similar tax at a lower rate—\$8 per \$1,000 of financial assets above \$50 million—to ensure the ultra-wealthy contribute fairly.

SB 5796, High Earners Payroll Tax on Employers, closes



Kristin Ang at Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

a loophole in the employer payroll tax by applying a 5% tax on wages over \$176,000 for employees at large corporations with payrolls over \$7M/year. It would raise \$2.3 billion/year.

HB 2045, Restructure B&O Tax to Invest in Families, reforms the outdated Business & Occupation (B&O) tax by adding a 1% surcharge on corporate profits over \$250 million and increasing the bank surcharge from 1.2% to 1.9% for institutions making more than \$1B/year. It would raise \$2B+/year.

Kristin said to follow progress on these bills at fanwa.org

FAN organized people to testify on the progressive revenue bills to counter testimony by companies and wealthy people who don't want to pay more taxes, said Kristin.

In addition, Elizabeth Dickinson, partnership coordinator—dickinson@fanwa.org—recruited folks from congregations to share stories of their experiences with food banks, senior nutrition, mental health programs, immigrant/refugee support to show the need for progressive revenue.

A recent email from Kristin included links for writing letters on rent stabilization at

actionnetwork.org/letters/stabilize-rent-for-washingtonians-this-2025-legislative-session, on preserving funding for struggling state residents at actionnetwork.org/letters/preserve-funding-for-vital-programs-for-struggling-wa-residents, on fully funding immigrant health care in Washington at actionnetwork.org/letters/fully-fund-immigrant-healthcare-in-washington-state/?source=direct_link and signing on to FAN's senior nutrition funding letter at actionnetwork.org/letters/support-senior-nutrition-in-washington-state.

FAN also encourages people to use the legislative hotline (1-800-562-6000) to send comments on bills based on its recommendations.

Some bills FAN is supporting include SB 5284, the Solid Waste/Recycling Reform Act, SB 5284 the Recycling Reform Act, HB 1232 the Private Detention Facilities Accountability and Transparency Act, SB 5436, Prohibiting Interference with Access to a Place of Worship.

"This year's budget debate is a defining moment for Washington's values," said Kristin. "With a \$15 billion shortfall, now is the

time to push for fair, sustainable revenue solutions that don't fall hardest on those with the least. The proposed taxes on extreme wealth, high corporate payrolls and outdated exemptions are important steps toward a more equitable system—one that can fund education, housing, food security and public safety for all Washingtonians."

She continues to monitor the budget negotiations and advocate for revenue options that reflect values of equity, compassion, and justice.

Other bills FAN is supporting include a permit to purchase firearms, state recognition of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state unpaid holidays, improving access to mental health and substance use disorder services, unemployment insurance for striking or lockout workers.

Kristin testified for a bill, SB 5436, Protecting Access to Religious Worship, which protects the right to enter and leave places of worship without fear, obstruction or threats.

"Faith communities in Washington have reported increased harassment, vandalism, and threats," she said. "This legislation responds to the rise in religiously motivated hate crimes and reaffirms our state's commitment to religious liberty and community safety."

FAN urged lawmakers in the Senate Human Services Committee to pass Private Detention Facilities Accountability, which seeks greater transparency and oversight for private immigration detention facilities like Tacoma's Northwest Detention Center.

"Oversight agencies, including health professionals and legal monitors, have been denied access to investigate complaints of abuse," she said. "We must address ongoing human rights violations there."

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

Spirit of Peace team takes message with Valentines

Paula Harper-Christensen, a Spirit of Peace UCC member, arranged an appointment to meet with an office staff member in Congresswoman Kim Schrier's office on Valentine's Day.

"We asked her to protect clean energy tax credits, protect the IRA and sign onto or write a "Dear Colleague Letter," like one written by House Republicans in 2024, stating that tax credits "spurred innovation incentivized investment and created jobs."

Paula, who organized the visit as part of the UCC Climate Hope campaign, said the group also emphasized their call as progressive Christians to stand with those disproportionately impacted, vulnerable commu-



Group from Spirit of Peace takes valentines to Congresswoman.

Photo courtesy of Spirit of Peace UCC

nities, like low-income people and people of color, and to fight for environmental justice by transitioning to a renewable, prosperous energy sector.

"Personal stories were the foundation of our presentation, and the congregation made Val-

entines for our Have a Heart Climate Hope Action campaign," Paula said.

The Valentines were left as gifts for the member of Congress.

"I shared my personal story of my daughter-in-law, a doc-

tor of oceanography, who was fired from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) as the federal government eliminates federal employees," Paula added.

"She is known for her significant contributions to combating climate change. She is one of many essential scientific employees needed for solutions to the devastating warmer air and ocean temperatures," she said.

Paula said the group emphasized to the Congresswoman that their presence was part of a national United Church of Christ campaign with members across the United States.

For information, call 425-591-1327 or email paulah-c@comcast.net.

Members of several UCC churches were at court hearing on refugees

Members and pastors of several UCC churches were among those who went to the courthouse in Seattle on Feb. 25 for the hearing related to the administration freezing the country's refugee resettlement programs.

Members of the Congregational Church on Mercer Island went to protest, reported Suzanne Sanderson.

Pastor Jennifer Castle said: "It was a powerful morning watching justice at work, as we witnessed firsthand the federal court ruling blocking Trump's executive order to suspend the U.S. refugee program. Afterward we showed our support on the courthouse steps as the plaintiffs held a press conference. It gave us hope to put our faith into action!"

Dee Eisenhauer, pastor of Eagle Harbor UCC in Bainbridge Island, also attended the hearing on the federal case related to Church World Services, Lutheran Social Services and HIAS, the Jewish refugee agency. The federal judge in Seattle temporarily blocked the administration's executive order to halt the refugee resettlement program

and freezing funding to agencies that support refugees because it nullifies the will of Congress.

She went because she has worked with CROP Walks that raise funds for Church World Service's work.

For information, email jennifer.castle@uss-ccmi.org or dee.eisenhauer@gmail.com.

Attendees of Interfaith Advocacy Day involve many in advocacy



200 attend Interfaith Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Olympia.

Photo by Mark White Photography

As one of the 200 attended Faith Action Network's Interfaith Advocacy Day in Olympia, Barbara Anderson Preston, a deacon at Keystone UCC in Seattle, has followed up on issues.

She is sending out information to members of Keystone UCC on bills FAN is promoting.

Barbara has also gone to Olympia several times this session to advocate.

For information, call 206-819-4968 or email gepreston@msn.com.

Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen gearing up for summer

Mark Boyd, managing director of Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center at Port Orchard, returned from sabbatical to find a crazy, busy schedule and a new website.

Eleven came to a Work Camp from March 24 to 26 to prepare Pilgrim Firs for the summer when the You & Me and Kids Camps will be held there from July 6 to 9.

You & Me Camp is for those entering grades one to four with an adult and Kids Camp is for grades two to four.

All the other children's, youth and family camps will be held at N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

The Women's Retreat at N-Sid-Sen is May 16 to 18.

Intermediate Camp for grades five to six and Junior High Camp for grades seven to nine are held July 13 to 19. Camp experiences will include canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking, swimming, hiking, team building, crafts, campfires, worship, "wacky games and star gazing."

Sharing N-Sid-Sen the week of July 20 to 26 with the Senior High Camp for grades 10 to 12 will be You & Me Camp July 20 to 23 and Kids Camp July 23 to 26. Senior high camp will have extra time at the waterfront with activities listed above, along with worship, crafts and interaction with the younger campers.

Family Camps, which are July 27 to Aug. 2 and Camp Together is Aug. 2 to 8. They include all ages and family configurations, with waterfront time, morning watch, campfires, porch time and more.

The UCC Northwest Regional Women's Retreat is Nov. 7 to 9 at Skamania Lodge in Stevenson with registration at nrwr.org.

Our Whole Lives facilitators trainings will be held Nov. 21 to 23 at Pilgrim Firs, offering



Work campers put in foundation for retaining wall at labyrinth at Pilgrim Firs.

Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Firs



Pilgrim Firs adds a raised bed to its garden space.

Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Firs



Jim Grunewald of St. Paul's UCC and Bob Jenkins of Kirkland UCC make an old table look like a new one.

Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Firs

comprehensive sexuality education.

Mark said his three-month

sabbatical was personal and included working on poetry, giving him time for renewal to

return to camp.

"The camps are vital for times like these. People need a place to step away," he said, saddened that Canadians who often participate in the Northwest Stone Sculptors and with the Guitar Camp would not be coming this year.

At the camp during mid-March was a silent Sufi retreat. When arriving, he said campers expressed their need to step away and breathe.

"Pilgrim Firs is a sacred space for our folks, with more churches signing up to come with other churches to come for retreats this spring," he said.

The new website was created by Zach Norenberg, assistant director at Pilgrim Firs, Ben Crosby, a retired UCC minister who lives in Wallace and attended N-Sid-Sen as a child and Shirley Asmussen, a member of Fauntleroy UCC who serves on the Outdoor Ministry Committee.

Mark directed clergy and congregation members to view the "Helpful Suggestions to Promote YOUR Camps" at n-sid-sen.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Promote-Your-Camp-2025.01.18.pdf.

The flier encourages planning a Camp Sunday in April, inviting congregation members personally to camp, sharing personal testimonies of camp, use camp music, invite guests from Pilgrim Firs, N-Sid-Sen or Outdoor Ministries Committee, post the camp schedule around the building, invite low-income neighbors, have a special offering and more.

There is a new two-minute promotional video for the PNC-UCC camps at n-sid-sen.org/summer-camp. It shares stories of people developing relationships in a sacred space that changes lives.

For information on promoting the camps visit n-sid-sen.org or pilgrim-firs.org.

After acting manager resigns, team of three leads camp

In mid-March, the PNC Board of Directors received, with sadness, the resignation of Brian Wallace, acting managing director of N-Sid-Sen, who began in the role in mid-January.

As he began working, he found many repairs that needed to be addressed.

The Board said he had accomplished much, but the scope of maintenance needed at N-Sid-Sen combined with demands of day-to-day operations and marketing were too great.

So, the Conference Board of directors has formed a temporary team of three to provide the needed stability, management, maintenance and hospitality.

Randy Crowe will serve as resident manager with full time support from Linda Crowe. They will be living at N-Sid-Sen beginning the end of May.

"I'll be doing what I know best, overseeing the operation, supervising staff and providing a warm dose of hospitality," said Randy. "It will be good to spend time with Linda on site, unlike the 21 years of my time at N-Sid-Sen when we lived apart."

Joining them on the team part time will be Bill Bourdon, executive director of the Outdoor Ministries Association of the national UCC and consultant, along with Shirley Asmusen of the PNC Outdoor Ministries Committee.

Bill will come once a month for a few days to write and put together an operations manual for the future of the camp. Shirley will be on-site one week a month to help develop procedures for the manual, to recruit volunteers and to be there during the two weeks of UCC youth camps.

While Phil Hodson, designated conference minister, other staff members and volunteers of the Conference assess N-Sid-Sen's needs, which began with Brian's help before he leaves, there is work being done to build



Mary Lu Hubbe does some deep cleaning in the kitchen.

Photo by Leah Atkinson Bilinski



Linda Crowe scrubs kitchen cabinets, above. Leah Atkinson Bilinski folded and stacked linens, below.

Photos by Carol Bellinger



a better future for N-Sid-Sen.

"N-Sid-Sen is a sacred place for community building, training up our children and adults in the faith, and providing an oasis and missional outpost of extravagant welcome in rural Idaho," said Phil. "It is also one of the most beautiful UCC

camp in our nation and an asset to this Conference and God as ministry is engaged."

The board and Phil are dedicated to ensuring the future of this camp and retreat center, as well as Pilgrim Firs.

Even though the Board has many concerns related to

the Conference, and they are giving N-Sid-Sen the attention needed and are entrusting the needed work to those who are gifted to address it.

Phil has put together an N-Sid-Sen Vitality Task Force to begin discerning a long-range plan for the camp.

While this temporary team sets to work, the Outdoor Ministries Committee is preparing for the summer, and Phil presented the Board with several options for immediate oversight at the camp.

"We are hopeful for several prospects as to what a fruitful interim period might look like in the immediate future," he said.

Phil brainstormed with Andy Warren, conference accounting manager, Mark Boyd, managing director of Pilgrim Firs, who took on some responsibilities after Brian left.

They ask for prayers for their efforts, the Conference and for those N-Sid-Sen's hallowed grounds have served and will serve. Phil and the Board also ask people to consider what they might give as volunteers and in financial support.

"We trust in God that we have everything we need in our Conference body and other groups that support N-Sid-Sen to build a bright future on Lake Coeur d'Alene, calling to us even now as waves lap on the shores and eagles fly overhead," said Phil, quoting Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you," reminding "God is with us. We are with you, Conference friends."

With N-Sid-Sen needing some loving attention, conference staff and some volunteers who've been on the ground.

At the Outdoor Ministry Committee's invitation, volunteers came for a work camp to clean buildings and do some maintenance projects March 27 to 29. **For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.org.**

Team puts loving care into cleaning and maintaining N-Sid-Sen

Continued from page 11

A volunteer team of 10 came to N-Sid-Sen March 27 to 29 to begin tasks needed to do some deep cleaning and accomplish some immediately needed repairs. There will be more opportunities for volunteers to work there, including a week-long Work Camp June 6 to 12, which Randy Crowe will direct.

That team in March included Randy and Linda Crowe, Mary Lu and John Hubbe, Carol Bellinger and Bob Feeny of Westminster UCC in Spokane; Loc Reader and his son, Joel, who were at Kirkland UCC when Crowes led junior high aqua camps; Leah Atkinson Bilinski, pastor at Fauntleroy and Outdoor Ministries member.

Loc and his son, Joel, former campers, did repairs to the camp pickup truck so it would start. They had it checked at a shop in Coeur d'Alene so it will be usable and save need to purchase a pickup.

Rory McDonald of Spokane Valley came and repaired the metal roof of Forrester Lodge to fix leaks and repair the tile and insulation inside. Randy said that work will extend the longevity of the roof and save what would be as \$80,000 for a new roof.

"We did many necessary maintenance and deep cleaning tasks," said Linda.

One of those was to replace rotten wood in a ramp at the Ford cabin and other areas.

Linda knelt on the burners of the stove and cleaned years of grease off the inside of the vent above it.

Leah scrubbed bathroom floors and folded piles of linens in Spirit Lodge.

"Working together with a group of volunteers who love N-Sid-Sen and showed up to take care of the camp left us with a good feeling of community," said Linda, hoping others from churches around the con-



Rory McDonald repaired metal roof on Forrester Lodge and inside insulation and tiles from leaks. Photo by Leah Atkinson Bilinski



Randy Crowe and John Hubbe replace boards in Ford Cabin and other places around camp. Photo by Carol Bellinger

ference will share their love of the camp and skills to help with other deferred maintenance and cleaning.

Bob, who is pastor at Westminster, announced that he had witnessed "the resurrection" of the camp.

"I feel so good about all the

willing hands giving gifts of time and energy," added Linda, who also serves on Outdoor Ministries Committee. "There was a synergy in working together. It was a blessing to see the camp cared for by people who love it, just showing up and lending a hand.

Randy, Linda and Carol returned Monday noon to Tuesday evening to do other tasks.

Randy added that "it's always amazing the energy that comes from a bunch of folks working together. What we can accomplish together is exponential from what one can do. The more who come, the more we can accomplish."

The three-day work camp was not all work. The volunteers gathered before meals, stood in a circle and shared prayers of gratitude and joy about what they accomplished together.

He reported that there is a full schedule of camps from May through the UCC camps in July to mid-August. Those camps are announced on page 10. Volunteers will be in charge of hospitality in the spring. The caterers used last year will cater in 2025.

Other groups who have reserved N-Sid-Sen for the spring are a camp for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, the Lady of the Lake dance camp, a Juvenile Diabetes Camp, a Unitarian Universalist Camp and a Valley Assembly of God camp.

"Some are new groups and some are returning groups," said Randy, hoping to recruit some of the past regular groups.

He and Linda will be on site for both weeks of youth camps July 13 to 26 for support. There are volunteer directors for Intermediate Camp—Mary Lu and John—and for the other camps.

Randy, who attended N-Sid-Sen as a child, first directed the Junior High Aqua Camp with Linda in 1983. They did that for many years. From 1990 to 2012, Randy was managing director of N-Sid-Sen. Linda served as pastor of Veradale UCC from 1994 to 2012, when they both retired to begin retirement travels—except for two years Linda served as interim at a UCC church in Brainard, Minn.

Church considers what decolonization might mean

With funds from a Pacific Northwest Conference Anti-Racism and Community Engagement grant, Westminster UCC gathered more than 20 members for an eight-week Tuesday Night Talk Zoom series on “The Land Is Not Our Own: Seeking Repair Alongside Indigenous Communities,” created by Just Faith Ministries. It goes with book *The Land Is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery* by Sarah Augustine.

The eight-week class ended and now some participants continue to meet to find next steps for action and to involve more in the church.

Some in the class had participated in fall 2023 in an Industrial Areas Foundation study, “Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization,” with the Spokane Alliance. That study talked of building right relationships and identifying common actions, including supporting a campaign for a new building for the American Indian Community Center in Spokane.

Those in the class and follow-up group want to take the land acknowledgement said on Sundays beyond words and be accountable, aware that one of the church founders, Chief Enoch, was forced off his land onto a reservation to face the struggles associated with the Doctrine of Discovery.

The class followed Sarah’s book, which addresses the church’s role in bringing the Doctrine of Discovery, extractive capitalism, genocide and erasure of Indigenous peoples. The group also looked at the impact of theology and ways to reimagine it to build relationships of solidarity and repair.

They invited Sarah, a Pueblo (Tewa) descendant from Northern New Mexico and co-founder and executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, to speak at the church March 8 to



Sarah Augustine speaks at Westminster UCC in Spokane.

more than 60 church and community members.

Sarah said issues about the church and Indigenous people became clear when in 2005 she went to work for the Mennonite Church in Suriname. She cofounded the Suriname Indigenous Health Fund, an independent organization.

Then Sarah, her husband and child lived 18 years on a cattle ranch in the Yakima Valley, where she headed the Dispute Resolution Center of Yakima. She now lives in Tacoma and attends Seattle Mennonite Church.

Sarah unpacks harm from the Doctrine of Discovery—15th century laws that gave “Christian rulers” the right to seize lands they “discovered” even if they were populated.

She said the doctrine devastated Indigenous cultures and the planet, justifying exploitation of resources and people.

“What was done in the name of Christ must be undone in the name of Christ,” she said. “I believe there is hope to right wrongs and build a right relationship with God, others and the earth.”

Inviting people to breathe deeply and plant their feet on the ground, Sarah said, “We are here on sacred land, part of cre-

ation, together with the creator.

Sarah knew she was Tewa, but grew up attending a public school, part of the dominant culture, until she connected more with the Tewa community and learned Indigenous ways of knowing from elders. It is different from the dominant culture of individualism and competing for scarce resources.

“I learned from my elders that we live in a closed system of mutual dependence. There is no new water, air or soil on earth. There is enough unless we exceed usage of the life support system. The water today is the same as the water on the first day. There is no new soil,” she said, as a warning not to pollute.

While many Christians in the dominant culture give thanks for the bounty of the land entrusted to their stewardship, Sarah sees herself as kin, part of a kinship network of mutual dependence.

“I give thanks for life support systems on which I am dependent,” she said.

In history, nations sent armies across oceans so Christian monarchs could take over the world in the name of Christ, Sarah said, naming traits of settler colonialism. Traits include denying that other civilizations exist; believing the world’s re-

sources are there for those in power to extract and believing that man is to dominate creation.

“Exploitation-based capitalism expects to grow 2 percent a year by extraction that pollutes the water air and land,” she said. “Climate change is a symptom of consuming more resources than earth can replenish.”

Sarah challenges the green revolution’s reliance on technology like extracting lithium for electric cars and solar panels.

“Colonization is not just armies and monarchs 200 to 400 years ago. To dismantle it, we need a shift our world view,” she said.

When she helped start coalition 14 years ago, she called for a society not built on extraction but on what is good for creation—a win-win economy that respects the interdependence of all life.

“We need systems change that reframes our identity,” Sarah said. “We need collective action like what established laws to end slavery and segregation. To dismantle the doctrine, which is a system, we need collective action to change laws, not just change our individual consumption.

Sarah said repair involves telling the truth, taking responsibility, engaging in relationships with and led by the injured communities before there can be apology and forgiveness.

“It’s not an individual process. It’s about collective action,” she said. “We need to galvanize our communities. We need to ask congregations to engage with hundreds and thousands, 10s of thousands and millions of communities to dismantle systems of oppression.

The Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery needs many congregations, she said, because what was done in the name of the church must be undone by Christians.

For information, call 509-624-1366 or visit dismantlediscovery.org.

Forks pastor helps serve area through food bank

The Forks Community Food Bank held a grand re-opening and open house of its new marketplace where clients can come and “shop” for food, rather than drive by to pick up a box.

Warren Johnson, who is president of the food bank board and pastor of Forks First Congregational, said the food bank secured a \$50,000 grant from United Way renovate new larger space to serve people in need in the community.

His involvement with the food bank is just one of the ways he is present in the community to share “the peace of Christ.”

The Forks Food Bank relies on donations from individuals grants, businesses, churches, Lions Club, Food Lifeline, Salmon Coalition and North-west Harvest.

It is open from 3 to 5 p.m.



Glenn King of Forks Elks presents \$1,500 to Pat Soderlind, executive director of Forks Food Bank, Sena Engeseth, operations manager, left, and Warren Johnson, board president, right.

Photo by Christi Baron

Tuesdays and noon to 6 p.m., Thursdays.

Warren is also a chaplain providing palliative care and

grief support at hospitals to comfort people in a time of need. He is involved with the food bank, which serves about

20,000 clients in the area in 2024, fighting hunger.

“In our ministry we touch lives of everyone in the community. I’m everywhere. That’s where the God’s kingdom is,” Warren said. “Folks don’t just come to church. We take the church to our community, taking the peace of Christ where we go.”

Warren said Forks is a generous community. Recently the community raised \$218,000 for scholarships for local high school graduates to go to college or trade school.

“There are many established families willing support causes like the food bank and scholarships,” he said. “Kids come back to work here because the town supported their education.

For information, call 360-374-9382 or email wrijfork@hotmail.com.

Two events explore stewardship of church assets

Two ecumenical opportunities are being offered for congregations to explore stewardship of their land, buildings, parking lots, houses and other assets. One is in April in Spokane, and the other is in a cohort beginning this fall in Seattle.

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest is gathering faith, city and county leaders to share ideas for “Stewarding Faith Property for Community Good” from 9 a.m. to noon, Wednesday, April 30, at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 645 S. Richard Allen Ct. in Spokane.

“We seek to bring together leaders to address community needs,” said Drew Peterson, land stewardship guide for the presbytery and pastor at Knox Presbyterian, which just opened its gym as a women’s shelter.

City leaders will outline community needs. Faith leaders will explore how to steward

their land and buildings to meet neighborhood needs.

“We hope to help pastors and church leaders discover the sacrificial spirit of the early church,” said Drew, “and remind them of the words of Martin Luther King Jr., writing from the Birmingham jail, saying that unless the church can rediscover the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions and be disregarded as an irrelevant social club.”

Drew believes in the revival of churches through rediscovering the sacrificial Spirit of offering a church’s assets to God to serve neighbors. He reminds congregations they are not owners but stewards of their property as tools to accomplish God’s mission in the world.

“We are stewards of what belongs to God to spread God’s goodness in the community,” Drew continued.

Organizers will share examples of local congregations that are developing and have developed affordable housing, opened part of their buildings as homeless or respite shelters, like Westminster United Church of Christ, or two churches merging and using the second building to house non-profits.

For information, call 509-924-4148 or email drew@presbyinw.org.

In King County since 2020, the Faith Land Initiative has been supporting faith communities in practicing faithful and equitable discernment of faith-owned land, buildings, parking lots, houses and other assets through the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

The Church Council is beginning conversations with faith communities to start its 2025-26 Faith Land Discernment Cohort in the fall.

Through the Faith Land Discernment Cohort, participants explore:

1) What are congregations called to be in this moment as stewards of faith community resources?

2) How can local faith communities embody reflective, relational and impactful strategies rooted in their mission that center communities most impacted by systems of oppression?

3) What do they need to pay attention to in the midst of the economic, social, political, and spiritual moment today?

The Church Council is seeking three to five faith communities to participate, with the support of a grant from Trinity Church Wall Street. Those interested may email Joey Lopez at jlopez@churchcouncil.org.

For information, visit [the-churchcouncil.org/faith-land-initiative](https://churchcouncil.org/faith-land-initiative).