



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

Mary Stamp, editor
editor@pncuccnews.org

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

Summer 2026

Nominating co-chair offers 'trial memberships'

Finance and Stewardship, Committee on Ministry and Nominating Committees need more members

Al Bentley, co-chair of the Pacific NW Conference of the UCC Nominating Committee, began his involvement with the conference through participating at Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen camps, the Zoom church moderators' meetings and attending an Annual Meeting.

In experiencing value on the covenantal relationships of congregations to the conference and wider church, he finds it important "for us to work together and respect the faith as manifested in urban areas and smaller communities of Washington, Idaho and Alaska."

Al had served as Plymouth Church's moderator in 2008 and 2021, and been involved on his church's nominating, stewardship, fellowship and community

Continued on page 5



Al Bentley, co-chair of the PNC-UCC Nominating Committee with Jenn Hagedorn, offers opportunity to serve on Conference committees.

Board of Directors announces Annual Meeting plans

Sandy Wisecarver, moderator of the PNC-UCC Board of Directors, announces a change to hold the 2027 Annual Meeting in two parts.

Part 1 will be held from 9:30 a.m., Saturday, April 24, to 3 p.m., Sunday, April 25, 2027, with one overnight at the Doubletree Suites at Southcenter in Seattle.

It will be a "Get Together" on the theme "Love in Action," Sandy said.

That session will include time for worship and interactions and sharing to-

gether for conversations.

Part 2 of the Conference Annual Meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, May 1, to "Do the Business." It will be only on Zoom.

On April 25, Annual Meeting participants are invited to dinner at the Samoan Congregational Christian Church at 437 S. 136th St. in Seattle. That is the church of the PNC-UCC vice moderator Danette Koloi.

More information will be provided in the next few months at pncucc.org.



Sometimes presence is the ministry

Reports & Comments



By The Rev. Dr.
Lorraine Cenicerros
Acting Conference
Minister

**Sometimes
we need
to show up,
listen
to one another
and be
willing
to stay
at the table.**

During my first three months with you, I have had the opportunity to be present with several of our congregations, sometimes to preach and sometimes to share significant moments in the life of a church. I have met with search committees and church leaders, both in person and online.

Each encounter has helped me learn a little more about the Pacific Northwest Conference and the people who call it home.

As I have traveled throughout the conference, I continue to be struck by the welcome I receive. Part of that, I believe, is simply who these people are.

Perhaps there is such a thing as “Northwest nice,” but what I have experienced feels authentic. People have been generous with their time, their tables and their stories. They have made room for me.

I have also noticed the warmth extended to visitors and members alike. I am learning that this kind of welcome is not unusual among our churches. This is church.

I believe the culture of a church is also found in how we treat one another when things are not going well, particularly among those who lead together.

In my short time, leaders from several churches have reached out for support in managing tension among leadership and staff. I find myself encouraged by those requests.

Conflict and tension are part of being in community. We are not always going to agree, and we will not always get it right. What matters is what we do next.

Reaching out and saying, “We could use some help,” tells me that our leaders care about the health of their churches and their relationships with one another.

A healthy church is not one where everyone always gets along. It is one where people can disagree and still remain in relationship. It is also a place where we are willing to look at ourselves as carefully as we look at the person sitting across from us.

I am also discovering something I did not expect. People still honor the office of the conference minister.

This conference has not had a settled conference minister for more than five years. I might have expected that, over time, the office would become less important in the life of our churches. Instead, I have experienced something quite different.

There is an expectation that the conference minister will be present for important moments in the lives of our congregations, and there is genuine appreciation when I am able to be there.

It is more than that. Leaders are also inviting me into places where things are difficult. They are trusting that the conference minister might have something useful to offer when they are trying to find their way through conflict.

I find that both surprising and heartening. It tells me that even through years of transition, the relationship between our churches and the conference has endured.

There may be places where that relationship needs tending, and perhaps even rebuilding, but the foundation is still there.

As I continue to travel, listen and learn, I am increasingly aware that part of my work during this interim season is simply

To show up.

To be present at the table.

To celebrate new beginnings and honor endings.

To sit with people when things are difficult.

To listen to the stories of our churches and let them know that their conference is present with them.

Sometimes presence is the ministry.

We do not always need to have the answer. Sometimes we need to show up, listen to one another and be willing to stay at the table long enough to find our way forward together.

It continues to be a privilege to witness this ministry and to share in it with you.

Transitions announced

Mark Travis was installed Sept. 27 as pastor of Eagle Harbor Congregational UCC at Bainbridge Island.

August 23, **Roselynn Selix Savini** was installed with dual standing at the Samoan Congregational Church #2 in Seattle.

On Sept 4, **Micah Buff** was ordained at United Churches of Olympia.

Retired pastor **Andrea Castro-Lang** was recognized as pastor emerita at Westminster UCC in May in Spokane.

Communities in Practice starts

Communities of Practice registration is open. Communities of Practice are support and learning groups sponsored by the PNC-UCC Committee on Ministry, led by trained facilitators. They are for folks in a variety of ministries in the PNCUCC, the Central Pacific Conference and the Montana/Northern Wyoming Conference.

Amy Hitchens coordinates the program on behalf of the Committee on Ministry.

For information, email amy@npucc.org.

OWL facilitators training set

In November, the PNC will offer three levels of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) training at Pilgrim Firs.

The curriculum helps inform people why the UCC faith connects to many of the actions of UCC churches, including rainbow doors, LGBTQ+ advocacy, reproductive justice, racial disparity and education.

Participants join with other people who value community, inclusion, and progressive faith beliefs.

The curriculum is part of a 25-year interfaith partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Association in this ministry.

Facilitator Amy Johnson said the program includes dismantling shame and stigma about bodies and relationships, which can save lives. She will co-lead the session with Melanie Davis of the Unitarian Universalist Church.

The OWL Facilitator Trainings are from 10 a.m., Friday, Nov. 20 to 12 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 22 at Pilgrim Firs. Facilitators will bring comprehensive, faith-rooted sexuality education to their congregations and communities. Pilgrim Firs will host concurrent training sessions for all age-levels of OWL curriculum, although only

one level can be attended. OWL facilitators must be a minimum age of 21 and be present for the full training.

For information, email johnsona@ucc.org. Registration is through Mark Boyd at mark@pilgrimfirs.org.

Men's Retreat is Jan. 29-31

The 2027 Pacific Northwest Conference UCC Men's Retreat will take place at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center in Port Orchard, Wash., from Friday, Jan. 29 to Sunday, Jan. 31, with the option of a silent evening on Thursday, Jan. 28 to Friday afternoon, Jan. 29. The planning team, coordinated by Rick Russell, is meeting to finalize the theme and leadership. Registration will be open in November.

For information, email myrtos@comcast.net.

Educate US seeks youth

Educate US has developed by a program to help high school students run forums with the candidates running for school board in their districts, so those candidates have to answer questions from high school students themselves. OWL is providing a guide, coaching and a stipend to students who wants to do it.

For information, visit educateusaction.org/get-involved/host-a-student-led-candidate-town-hall.

Retired clergy need training

Boundary Training for Retired Clergy will be offered at 11 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 15, by the national office of the UCC with the Revs. Tara Barber of the PNC-UCC and Melanie Oommen of the Central Pacific Conference. Retired clergy need to keep their boundary training current, said Tara.

National UCC invites stories

As the UCC nears its 70th anniversary, the church is gathering stories of welcome from across the country.

UCC members are invited to share a story of how they showed up exactly as they were with no expectations, no judgments and felt welcomed. They are invited to share what made them feel part of the community.

It could be the story of someone remembering your name after one visit, and how that small thing shifted everything. It could be the story that helped you realize

the UCC is more than a church, it's a community and a place where you belong.

Those sharing their stories can read a script or tell their story freely. Participants may apply and the story will be shared on social media, recorded right from their computer.

For information, visit <https://app.memoryfox.io/mobile/app?theme=national-ministries-of-the-united-church-of-christ-national-ministries-of-the-united-church-of-christ&identifier=national-ministries-of-the-united-church-of-christ#/event-signup/yourwelcomestory>

PNC offers guides for pulpit supply and pastoral care

The PNC-UCC has New Pulpit Supply Guidelines to use in compensating ministers who fill their pulpit. It is recommended to pay a retired pastor providing intermittent pastoral care \$35 to \$45 an hour.

The guidelines are at <https://pncucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Pulpit-Supply-List-Guidelines-09-2026-2.pdf>.

DEIB training is available

Cindy Bauleke of the Committee on Ministry (COM) West and Ann-Marie Illseley of the COM East remind pastors of the PNC-UCC that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Training (DEIB) is required by the end of 2026 and then once every three years (with the exception of exempt ministers). Pastors must send a certificate of completion to office@pncucc.org.

DEIB trainings approved by COM are:

- Enkei Resolutions offers Level 1 Racial Justice Trainings Oct. 27 and 28.

It is at enkei-resolutions.com/racial-justice-training-level-1 and Level 2 Racial Justice Trainings are Oct. 6 and 13 at enkei-resolutions.com/2026-racial-justice-training-registration.

- The Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ lists their many educational opportunities at sneucc.org, including Racial Justice Renewal Oct. 14 to 15 and Racial Justice Foundations Nov. 18 to 19.

- Convergence: Anti Racism Training for Clergy is self-paced on Zoom at convergencecolab.org/p/anti-racism-training.

- The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism Community Workshop is offered three days on Zoom or in person at pinwseattle.org/#.

For information, email cindybauleke@gmail.com or pastor@fccchurch.net.

Conference News Briefs

Amy Roon engages in a ministry of presence

Since starting a ministry of presence with incarcerated youth, the Rev. Amy Roon, has been hearing Jesus' words in Matt. 25:36, "I was in prison and you visited me," in a new way.

"Jesus does not say, 'I was in prison and you fixed me.' He does not say, 'I was in prison and you decided whether I deserved your compassion.' He says simply, 'I was in prison and you visited me,'" she said.

The ministry she is now doing provides chaplaincy and pastoral care to young people experiencing incarceration. Right now, it's mostly volunteer, as most of the chaplains at the King County Juvenile Services jail, which holds 30 to 60 youth from 17 to 25 years old for one week to several years. Most youth are released to go home with electronic monitoring devices.

She is working to build a base of support to do the chaplaincy full time.

For 15 years, Amy, who graduated from Pacific School of Religion in 2002, was on the ministry team of University Congregational UCC in Seattle. She left to pursue this new ministry. Previously she served at the United Churches of Olympia and as a licensed pastor at Lummi Island UCC.

"This ministry has been several years in the making, growing out of personal experiences with people in the carceral system and awareness that few people in progressive churches are providing a presence in the county jail or state prison systems," she said.

"Most chaplains are there to meet people in a vulnerable space spiritually, mentally and developmentally to bring them to Christ," pointed out Amy. "We need to be a non-anxious presence for someone, to pray for them in a troubling time. That has nothing to do with



Amy Roon invites others to learn about her chaplaincy.

Photo courtesy of Amy Roon

atonement theology."

While progressive pastors may visit someone in their parish who is in jail or prison, most are not in relationship with the prison system or culture to be regularly in the lives of youth who are incarcerated. Most guards and social workers who relate with the youth are not part of their lives, she pointed out.

Amy commented on the complex bureaucracies of the county juvenile and adult jail systems, and the state prison system, and how being 17 years and 364 days old compared to being 18 when one's case is being processed or there is a conviction can make a difference where someone is placed.

"I'm an abolitionist and would prefer an alternative

to these systems, but we cannot abandon those who are in them because the world is not working the way we want it to work," she asserted.

For her, Matt. 25 is not only a call to her own ministry, but also an invitation to the local and wider church.

"Not everyone in a congregation can regularly enter a juvenile detention facility, but every congregation can help make sure the church is present there," she said, noting that the ministry begins by showing up.

"Incarceration is by design about separation," Amy said, telling of young people being separated from neighborhoods, schools, friends, families, faith communities and much of ordinary life. Locked doors do more than restrict physical move-

ment. They make relationship, spiritual care, community and belonging much harder to access.

"Congregations gather in sanctuaries and invite people through their doors, but incarcerated young people cannot come through those doors," Amy said. "So, the church must find ways to go to them."

The heart of Amy's chaplaincy is showing up consistently, learning names and stories, listening without judgment, offering prayer when it is wanted, and reminding young people that they remain worthy of dignity, relationship, hope and love.

Amy has been struck by how readily young people welcome prayer when it is offered without pressure.

"Their prayers are deeply human ones—for freedom, for another chance, for people they love and for hope," she described.

She believes the ministry of presence is inseparable from the work of justice.

Young people experience incarceration within the realities of race, poverty, disability, unequal access to opportunity and systems that have treated some children and communities differently from others, she said.

"For Christians, racial justice begins with the conviction that every person bears the image of God," Amy explained. "If Christ asks the Church to recognize him in the person behind the locked door, Christians must also ask who is behind those doors, why some communities are represented there so disproportionately and what responsibility the Church has to respond.

"Presence does not replace the work of changing unjust systems. It gives that work names, faces, stories and rela-

Continued on page 5

Nominating co-chair believes it's important to ask

Continued from page 1

and care committees. He has also been a companion ministry welcoming people who are confused and lost and part of a church group that welcomed a family of Afghan refugees from Kabul four years ago.

Al had grown up in a family active in church life, with parents and grandparents involved in a Baptist church in White Plains, N.Y., and then his family involved in a Presbyterian church in Cortland, N.Y., in his teen years.

He studied government at Oberlin College in Ohio, graduating in 1967 before entering the Yale Law School.

After Yale, he began work in 1970 as a law clerk, with legal services and then as a federal prosecutor in Brooklyn. There he became active in a Congregational church.

In 1981, he moved to Bellevue to be assistant federal public defender in Seattle. He joined Plymouth Church and has practice law for 45 years. He retired three years ago.

About that time a member of Plymouth Church in Seattle suggested that Al join the Nominating Committee.

"I said yes to the suggestion," said Al.

"No one had asked me before if I wanted to serve on a conference committee," Al added, admitting that he had little idea about conference committees, even though he has been active on committees at Plymouth.

He joined the Nominating Committee before the 2024 Annual Meeting at Plymouth.

"It was an opportunity to learn something and make a contribution," he commented.

Now he knows the importance of asking, so on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC, he has sent out an invitation to members of the conference.

He is trying a new approach, offering people a "trial membership" on three PNC committees. Usually, service on a PNC committee involves a three-year commitment and election at the Annual Meeting.

However, the Nominating Committee needs to fill vacancies on three important PNC committees. Such vacancies can be filled during the time between Annual Meetings by action of the Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee is prepared to recommend candidates to the Board for a

trial period—that is, to serve until the 2027 Annual Meeting, which will be held on April 24 to 25, 2027.

Al invites people to put a toe in the water to learn about and contribute to the life of the PNC, to establish working relationships with other PNC activists.

"This no-obligation trial membership could be right for you," he entices.

Trial memberships are being offered for the following committees, Al said.

• **Finance and Stewardship** Committee helps organize the budget, investment, insurance, property management and planned-giving opportunities within the conference. It tells the story of why the conference matters and communicates that message across the conference. This committee meets the third Wednesday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Work outside meetings varies.

• **The Committee** on Ministry East member must be from the East Side, Idaho or Alaska).

The role of this committee is 1) to nurture pastors and congregations; 2) to assist local congregations in times of call and crisis; 3) to authorize people to practice ministry within the conference; 4) to maintain

covenantal relationships with members in discernment, and 5) to address ethical issues raised by congregations and provide ethics training to clergy.

This committee meets via Zoom on the second Monday at 10 a.m.

• **The Nominating Committee** identifies, recruits and nominates candidates for leadership positions within PNC and the national setting of the church. It meets via Zoom at 4 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month and more frequently as the Annual Meeting approaches.

After moving from Bellevue to West Seattle, nearer his wife's work teaching at South Seattle College, Al began commuting to his office in downtown Seattle by bicycle.

An avid bicyclist, he is exploring the state, discovering UCC churches in Metaline Falls, Cheney, Chewelah and other small communities of Eastern Washington.

Al invites others to explore the conference, if not by personal visits, at least through Zoom meetings with some of the committees needing more members.

For information, call (206) 669-5914 or email allen.r.bentley@gmail.com.

Prison chaplain is available to speak at churches

Continued from page 4

tionships," she continued.

"Our faith is built around repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, transformation, resurrection and new life," she said, explaining that chaplaincy creates relationships in which young people can be held accountable while someone continues to recognize their dignity and believe another future is possible.

Chaplaincy bears witness not only to what a young person has done, but to who that

young person is—and who they are trying to become, she said.

Amy knows that most incarcerated young people eventually return to their communities. The question is what kind of community is waiting when they do.

How can congregations and individuals can help make that presence possible? she asks.

Amy invites people to pray for the young people and relationships being formed, to give through mission support, special offerings or individual

contributions, to learn by inviting her to preach, teach or lead a conversation about incarceration, racial justice and this ministry.

She also calls people and congregations to discern how faith communities might become places of welcome and belonging for young people returning home.

Amy is available to visit churches to preach, teach and speak to groups in congregations to share more about the ministry as she seeks to build a

support base for the work that is also her passion.

She is conversing with several churches about being the nonprofit to receive donations and grants to back this chaplaincy. Amy also has been working as a consultant with 35 years as a pastor, educator, facilitator and motivational speaker, teaching, leading and mentoring diverse groups.

For information, call 206-605-6893, email amyroon@gmail.com or visit pastoralfamilysupportservices.com.

Olympia church installs solar panels, battery backup

On Sept. 15, United Church of Olympia celebrated the completion of its 18-month capital campaign and the installation of 108 solar panels with a battery backup system and EV chargers.

The campaign projects included 1) installation of a new, efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning system to replace the old boiler, 2) the installation of an elevator to make both levels of the church accessible to all who worship and visit, 3) the significant solar project and 4) the necessary electrical system upgrades for HVAC, solar and elevator upgrades.

The multi-year project is a result of the church's intention to have its physical space more fully reflect its faith values and as a legacy project for generations to come.

The community celebration shared about the benefits of solar and introduced the individuals and local organizations that made these projects a reality.

Organizers offered building tours and elevator rides for guests to see and experience the improvements to accessibility and environmental sustainability. They also heard from people who helped make it possible about the church's journey to making the improvements.

The endeavor expands the church's ability to serve the congregation and the broader community for years to come, with the added benefit of reduced carbon emissions and higher efficiency, said Lara Crutzing Perry, pastor.

"The solar panels are currently able to fully power the building on sunny days," she said.

The "United at the Corner: Building the Place Where Spirituality and Justice Meet" campaign at United Churches of Olympia grew out of strategic planning discussions that began in 2019.



Drone view shows new solar panels installed at United Churches of Olympia.

Photo courtesy of the United Churches of Olympia

Capital needs were identified in small group meetings.

In 2024, the Building Renovation team began work.

A capital campaign raised more than \$1.3 million and about \$ 624,000 in grants were secured for solar panels, backup batteries and EV chargers.

Additional funds came from selling the church's small lower parking lot to its neighbor, the TVW-WA public affairs network that covers the legislative sessions. They plan to build a parking garage United Churches could access evenings and weekends, Lara said.

So part of the celebration was about completing the project debt free, she added.

Construction began in 2025 and was done in 2026.

Lara said the church that draws 150 to 200 on Sundays is an engaged congregation with its members serving in various ways both in the church and in the community.

The United Churches is a downtown church, founded after a small group of folks met 170 years ago in a shop on the corner of 5th and Columbia, when First Presbyterian was formed.

The Congregational congregation—now UCC—was formed in 1873. When it needed a new building and the Presbyterian church needed a new pastor, the United Churches was formed. They agreed to federate in 1916, recounted Lara.

When the church building was damaged in a 1949 earthquake, the vision for the new space was initiated. Building began in 1951 and the sanctuary was dedicated in 1954.

"The space has grown over decades and generations for use by the vibrant, radically inclusive congregations," Lara said. "Now, on the corner of justice and spirituality, we celebrate that we have done good legacy work preparing this building for generations to come."

The project aligns the building with the churches' values of welcome, safety, health, accessibility, worship and environmental stewardship.

During the ceremony, solar project partners, Olympia Community Solar and South Sound Solar, presented information on how solar power works.

Lara said the building needed significant electrical

and efficiency upgrades to prepare it for the solar panels that are expected to produce 59,000 kilowatt-hours of clean, renewable electricity a year.

The battery storage system can continue to power the building for four days during cloudy conditions and infinite days under sunny conditions during grid outages. The system will provide power for the church's social hall and kitchen, spaces that will serve as an emergency shelter during disasters.

The United Churches' solar project received funding from the Clean Energy Community Grants program, which is supported by Washington's Climate Commitment Act and administered by the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Member David Nightingale prepared the decarbonization grant, which included the backup system that can power the lower floor with the social hall, kitchens and bathrooms as gathering space and shelter in case of a disaster.

For information, call 360-943-1210 or visit theunitedchurches.org.

Roselynn Selix hopes her calling, installation inspires others

Roselynn Selix's ministry is rooted in faith, family, Samoan heritage, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Her journey has included theological education, shared ministry with her late husband, grief, continued learning and a renewed sense of calling.

Roselynn said she and her beloved late husband, the Rev. Rex Gatoloai, shared a life of faith and ministry and were blessed with two children.

Together, they attended theological college in American Samoa and graduated in 2016.

Following their studies, they were called to serve at Ala I Le Ola Samoan Congregational Christian Church EFKAS, where they ministered together from 2016 to 2021.

After Rex's death, continuing in ministry brought profound challenges.

Roselynn had to learn how to move forward without the partner who had shared her calling.

Grief remained part of her journey, but through that season she found strength and guidance in God.

With renewed strength, Roselynn continued serving Samoan churches, supporting Emanuel and Ala I Le Ola, and pursuing further education in Washington.

Returning to the church where she and Rex had served became a meaningful step in facing her fears and continuing her ministry.

Through this experience, she felt God calling her to move forward and continue offering her gifts as a Samoan woman of faith.

In 2025, Roselynn married Wesley Harold Selix Sr., whom she met when she accepted a promotion in her work at the Department of Social and Health Services, moving to the Federal Way office.

His ministry in Tacoma includes counseling and support-



Roselynn Selix leads a presentation at a recent event.

ing people through Alcoholics Anonymous and assisting those affected by drug use.

Roselynn and Wesley's shared commitment to serving others continues to shape their life together, she said.

Today, Roselynn serves as associate pastor at Emanuel EFKSA Church in Algona, Washington, under the guidance of the Rev. Elder Topelagi Siva and with the support of the congregation.

She also assists other Samoan churches seeking support and connection through the United Church of Christ.

In addition, she serves as co-chair of Committee on Local Churches (COLC) within the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and as treasurer for the United Samoan Ministry PNC-UCC.

She also supports the Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM), a ministry of the national UCC, and participates in conference meetings and Annual Meeting planning.

On August 23, Roselynn celebrated her installation as a

minister with dual standing in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in America (EFKSA) and the PNC-UCC. The Rev. Elder Topelagi Siva sponsored her.

Already ordained by the EFKSA, she celebrated her installation as a new chapter in her continuing ministry.

The celebration brought together some of her theological college classmates, visiting ministers and members of Samoan churches throughout the Pacific Northwest.

She said guests also traveled from Alaska, California, Las Vegas, and Arizona.

"Their presence reflected the community of faith that has supported my journey as a Samoan woman in ministry," she commented.

A special part of the installation service was the sermon delivered by the Rev. Va'a Alaelua, pastor of the Christian Worship Center in Anchorage and also a member of the Committee on Local Churches.

Drawing from the Gospel of Matthew, he preached about

being chosen and called by God.

"For me, this anointed message affirmed my deeply held belief that Jesus chose me and called me to serve in Christ's ministry," she said. "It reminded me that my calling comes from God and that I can continue responding with faith, trusting God's guidance through every season of life.

"Following Christ's example, I understand my calling as a commitment to serve, not to be served," Roselynn added. "For me, ministry means walking alongside others with humility, listening with compassion and putting God's love into action.

"I seek to honor God through both my words and my care for others," she affirmed.

As she walks this new path as a Samoan woman in ministry within the UCC, Roselynn expressed that she is "deeply grateful to everyone who has supported, encouraged and prayed for me. I give heartfelt thanks to my family, congregation, pastoral leaders and UCC community for walking alongside me and supporting my calling.

"Above all, I give thanks and glory to God, my constant guide and source of strength," Roselynn said.

She believes that without God, she is nothing, and that God's grace has given her the courage to keep moving forward.

Her hope is that her journey will encourage other Samoan women to answer God's call, trusting God to guide their steps.

"Through loss, learning and new beginnings, my faith in Christ has remained central. My installation affirmed my continuing call to share Christ's love, honor my Samoan heritage, serve my community and faithfully follow wherever God leads," she stated.

For information, email kananafoualumni@gmail.com.

Special meeting called to welcome Samoan church

The Family of Christ Full Gospel Church (FOCC) in Tacoma has engaged in a prayerful process of discernment regarding becoming a member church of the United Church of Christ (UCC). Members met with UCC representatives and answered questions. The congregation and its leaders wish to move forward.

On Aug. 24, 2025, a UCC delegation—with Roselynn Savini Selix, co-chair of the Committee on Local Church (COLC), Bruce Wilson of the Committee on Ministry and Mana'o Vaovasa, also of the COLC visited FOCC for Sunday worship and fellowship.

The delegation experienced the congregation's worship, preaching, prayer, leadership, youth participation and hospitality. The visit provided an opportunity for UCC representatives to learn from the congregation and for FOCC to encounter the UCC directly.

After worship, the congregation conversed with the UCC delegation. Questions of the pastor, assistant pastors, elders, deacons, secretary and youth representatives demonstrated their desire to understand the opportunities and responsibilities of UCC membership.

- What is the United Church of Christ, and what are the requirements for membership?

- What are the expectations on attendance, dues and the UCC's "5 for 5" practice?

- What is the process for ordination into the UCC?

- What opportunities and resources are available for youth, leadership development, pastoral care and spiritual growth?

- How can the UCC help the congregation serve its community, including people experiencing homelessness?

After prayerful consideration and discussion, the leaders and congregation of 134 members, decided unanimously to pursue membership in the UCC. The pastor, assistant pastors, elders and youth leaders all supported joining the UCC and aligning with the UCC mission, values and fellowship.

FOCC completed the initial membership forms and affirmed its commitment to continue the process toward UCC membership and covenant development. The visitation reports describe the congregation as unified, engaged and committed to serving God and the wider community through its relationship with the UCC.

FOCC's discernment has



Members sing and dance, top, and the leadership, below.

included worship and relationship-building, direct education and dialogue with UCC representatives, questions from the congregation—including youth—and prayerful, collective discernment resulting in unanimous support to move toward UCC membership.

The Board of Directors have given their unanimous support along with the Committee on Local Church and requests that the clergy and delegates of the PNC affirm the

Family of Christ (FOC) Full Gospel Church for membership in the UCC at a Special Conference Meeting at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 10 on Zoom.

The COLC calls for a vote to accept the FOC Full Gospel Church in the PNC at a special meeting of the PNC-UCC Conference at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 10 on Zoom.

Registration is at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/Fblw3IdiSsep4Ym-JCmDYg#/registration>.

Office hours with conference minister sparks discussion on covenant

At several recent Office Hours with the conference minister, those gathered have shared discussed covenant relationships among the local churches and with the conference and national UCC.

Some UCC members may focus on their own congregation, but many find nurture and nurture others to be stronger in their faith and gain ideas to improve their leadership, education, advocacy and outreach because through their covenantal relationship with the conference, national and global ecumenical

church. As the PNC seeks new nominees and leaders, it's a time to reflect on covenant.

While UCC polity is local-church based, it is a connectional covenantal denomination.

Banners hanging around the upper walls at Stillwater Lodge at N-Sid-Sen express some of that covenantal relationship of their churches with other UCC churches and the wider church: "United to serve." "More light and faith." "One in the bond of love." "We are the hands and feet of God."

Those are a few expres-

sions of the covenant spirit.

The Annual Meetings, board meetings, committee meetings, camps and retreats, the weekly PNC News, the PNC-UCC News quarterly newspaper and the conference staff all work to strengthen the clergy, lay leaders and members of congregations.

The national website describes the United Church of Christ as "an inclusive and diverse community of Christians connected by faith that calls us to build a just world for all. Our ministries advocate at a

national and global level, but our roots are planted firmly in our local churches in communities. It consists of 4,794 local churches, 773,000 members, 10,000 authorized clergy and 300 global partnerships.

The national leadership includes elected its officers, board members and national staff associates who work together to support local church leaders.

The UCC has 33 conferences that send delegates every three years to the national General Synod.

Continued on page 9

PNC-UCC board members reflect on what it means to be in covenant

Continued from page 8

In a time of transition in conference minister leadership that has lasted four years since Mike Denton left in 2022. Often that role is what cements the ties, but with different people in that role, more is left to the overall glue of covenant.

PNC News editor Mary Stamp offered an email invitation for conference members and leaders to share that covenant means to them.

Four shared comments. They are people who have been involved in the conference in various ways for various years, offered as an invitation for others to think about their participation, interaction and enrichment from their associations in the region.

Sandy Wisecarver, PNC Board moderator and pastor at Blaine UCC, came to the UCC 15 years ago from the United Methodist Church.

She finds that the congregations, conference and national church strengthen her ministry.

"We can do more together. If we join together across churches, we can reach more. We can support each other," she said.

When the elevator at the Blaine church failed, they approached the conference which provided funds to help repair it.

"We believe in helping others beyond our local church, so we give to all five designated national UCC offerings," she said.

"When there were bills for No Hate Washington proposed, we learned about them at a board meeting. I shared the information with our church, and we joined in the advocacy to laws pass those bills in the state," Sandy continued.

She also appreciates the PNC email listserve as a resource where people around the conference post information on events, concerns and ideas.

"I look at Weekly Seeds on



Sandy Wisecarver, top, and Ron Patterson, below, offer their reflections on the importance of covenant.

national UCC website for ideas for sermons for the week based on the lectionary," she added.

In the Come and See videos for Annual Meeting, Sandy learned what churches across the conference were doing. They are posted on the PNC Youtube page as a resource and continue to give ideas on what churches might do and on different ways to be the church.

Ron Patterson, who came to the PNC 10 years ago after retiring in Florida, brings experience on the local, conference and national levels of the UCC, including attending every General Synod of the national UCC since 1977. He served as pastor of churches in Ohio, New York and Florida, retiring from a 1,200-member UCC church in Naples, Fla.

"I have served on the UCC national board, executive council and was moderator in three conferences. I'm now on the nominating committee for the national board of the UCC," he said.

Ron, who is scribe on the PNC Board, has seen a more positive spirit in the conference, beyond financially, during the last two years ago.

"I'm speaking of the spirit I have experienced at recent installations of new pastors and in the active engagement of local churches and pastors," he explained.

"That spirit was demonstrated by the 'Come and See' videos churches prepared for Annual Meeting," he added.

Fifth graders in his Sunday school class prepared the video for his church, Fox Island UCC.

"Our conference has many churches where exciting things are happening," he noted.

"For me, the connection of churches is enhanced as clergy hold one another accountable and support one another emotionally, while striving for excellence in local churches that empower local leaders through mission," Ron said.

For example, his Sunday school went to Tacoma to give lunches to detainees when they were released from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center in Tacoma.

"If a local church gets mission right everything else falls in place. Giving follows enthusiasm. People are excited when other people are excited," he said of the opportunities created as churches connect with each other.

"No one joins a church to pay the gas bill," said Ron, who comes from a German Reformed background and has been involved with the UCC wider church since 1974.

Continued on page 10

Two share on covenant: from history, from long involvement

Continued from page 9

Morag Stewart, a member of the Board of Directors, and former member of Cheney UCC who transferred to Westminster UCC in Spokane, spent her K-12 education in Scotland, where there is no separation of church and state and religious education is in the public-school curriculum. Like in most European countries, it is difficult to separate history and religion. They are frequently intertwined. She brings historic, European and Presbyterian perspectives.

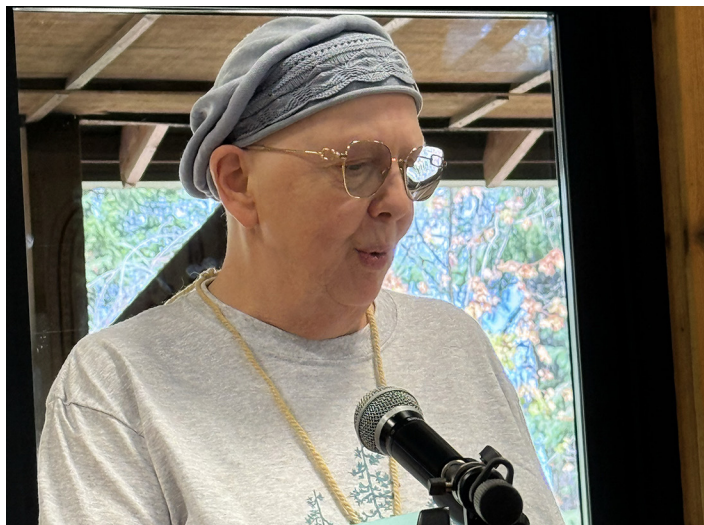
Morag was introduced to covenants at an early age with the 1638 Scottish National Covenant, defending the Presbyterian Church from attempted reforms based on the Anglican church by then monarch King Charles I.

"The notable reform stems from King Henry VIII's rule when he severed ties from Catholicism and made the English monarch head of the Anglican denomination. For Presbyterians, God is the head of the church. The Church of Scotland's general assembly elects the moderator for a one-year term," Morag explained.

In addition to those covenants, Morag heard about Covenants, "members of a 17-century Scottish religious and political movement, who supported a Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the primacy of its leaders in religious affairs. In 1638, thousands of Scots signed the National Covenant, pledging to resist changes in religious practice imposed by (King) Charles."

The covenants did not hold, so there were decades of religious wars involving Scotland, England and Ulster (Northern Ireland). At one time, a group of Covenanters were branded as outlaws and their Presbyterian worship was treasonous.

"Many were killed and bur-



Morag Stewart, top, shown at Westminster UCC and Dee Eisenhauer, bottom, shown giving a reading at N-Sid-Sen's 90th anniversary, share thoughts on covenant.

ied in remote areas during the Killing Time. In the 17th century Kirk O' Muir became a meeting place for Covenanters.

It's in the Stirling area of Scotland, the region where Morag was raised. The Kirk was on a remote hillside that afforded visibility of those approaching, increasing the safety for participants.

When she joined a UCC church in the summer of 1988, the concept of covenant and covenantal relationships was vivid in her memory, understood from her background.

"During my years on the

PNC Committee on Ministry Eastside, I found covenant a hard concept for some to understand and embrace, especially for those raised in hierarchical denominations that are organized like corporate structures.

"The UCC polity of covenant embraces relationships based on *free-choice* and a pledge to support one another," Morag said. "It was the practice followed by the earliest disciples and modeled by Jesus during his lifetime.

"Power and authority are not invested in a few leaders, but in the collective body: the

local churches, conferences and associations and the national UCC.

Dee Eisenhauer, who retired from Eagle Harbor UCC on Bainbridge Island, has been involved with conference from day one of her ministry and on conference committees and been doing volunteer work with the PNC for 40 years.

As a local pastor she tried to involve others on committees and at camps. She also insisted the church grant her a week of outdoor ministries in her contract. With her commitment to the wider UCC, she has served on boards and committees.

"Local pastors are tagged to be connectors and help maintain the vitality of the local church, camps, conference and national church," Dee said.

How many are involved in the wider church ministries varies from church to church.

"In my experience, wider church connection is an obligation and a privilege," she continued. "I am a big believer in collegiality, engaging with neighbor churches across state and community to consult with and learn from each other.

"In talking with other pastors, I have offered nurture and have been nurtured," she said. "As clergy we need to count on each other, bring our collective wisdom to common and unique problems in official and unofficial capacity. We need to put time into build meaningful relationships.

"Our system is a good one, but if a person has lone ranger or isolation tendencies, our system lets them do that to own peril. Those who are collegial benefit from the contributions of many," Dee said. "Like any relationship, if we do not serve on a committee, volunteer at camp or go to Annual Meeting, we may feel the conference doesn't care about us. With freedom, we need to have accountability."

FCCB teen joins 17 youth in Washington DC

At the beginning of this summer, Jonna Gillham of First Congregational Church in Bellingham traveled to Washington DC for a week of faith-based advocacy with other youth from the United Church of Christ (UCC) from across the country.

The 17 youth participating in "Youth Voices Bold Faith" were hosted by the staff at the UCC's Washington, DC, office from June 14 to 19.

"Throughout my week there, we learned about current legislation relating to LGBTQ+ and immigrant rights. We also heard about successful lobbying strategies, spoke with our congress people's offices, explored the city and heard from countless seasoned advocates and changemakers speak on how to organize and create a meaningful and lasting difference in the world," commented Jonna, who has been involved in the Bellingham church for 10 years.

One of the most significant parts of the trip for her was being able to speak with one of Senator Patty Murray's staffers about the bills that they had researched.

"It truly felt like I had a sway in the world when the staffer looked into my eyes and told me that he would run these bills past Senator Murray," Jonna said.

"Yes, the current political climate is very grim, but there is also still good in it, and the meeting brought me so much hope as it embodied everything right with democracy," she continued.

Part of the trip's impact was in the friendships with the youth that Jonna lived and worked with throughout the week.

They stayed at Friend's Place, a Quaker hostel used by advocacy groups right on capitol hill, just a few blocks walk from the Supreme Court and the Capitol itself.



Jonna Gillham joined 17 youth for a week of "Youth Voices Bold Faith" learning about and engaging in advocacy in DC.

Photo courtesy of Jonna Gilham

"When I first landed and walked out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, the humidity wrapped itself around me like a wet blanket," she said. I was shocked by the heat, shocked by the weight of the air and, quite frankly, terrified.

"Here I stood, across the country, in an unfamiliar city and thousands of miles away from my family, yet as soon as I stepped foot in Friend's Place, I felt right at home," she said.

"I was one of the last youth to arrive because of my long flight, and the house was already loud with laughter and voices from those who had arrived earlier," Jonna described. "I was quickly welcomed in.

"Throughout the week, all 17 of us youth and our wonderful chaperones settled into a community of laughter, singing, long talks, good food and meaningful service," she continued.

"It was incredible to be in a space with other young people who are also passionate about politics and advocacy, and especially through the lens of a shared faith background," she said.

She expects that her memories of wandering through the DC monuments, visiting then Library of Congress, touring

the Capitol building, sharing vulnerable stories while lobbying and probably drinking too much Starbucks too late at night with this group will last a lifetime.

Other youth were from California, Michigan, North Dakota, Connecticut, Illinois and Indiana.

On their final full day in Washington, the youth organized a rally on the lawn outside the United Methodist building, which is the building where the UCC DC offices are located.

It is directly across the street from the Supreme Court and the Capitol.

Their public witness allowed them to share what they had been doing that week, the bills they were lobbying on, the protest songs they had learned, and the values and faith behind what shaped their beliefs and led their action.

"We ended by singing together, so loudly and joyfully that random people walking by on the street couldn't help but smile in our direction," Jonna recalled.

"In that moment, legislation didn't matter, and political parties didn't matter, only the shared sense of joy and humanity that connected us all," she described.

"Because at the end of the day, no matter which party we belong to, or which person we vote for, we are all human, and for the most part want the same things: a safe, healthy and happy world," she pointed out. "We just all have different ideas for how to get there.

Jonna is grateful to the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC and to First Congregational UCC in Bellingham (FCCB) for providing monetary and spiritual support that allowed her to participate in "Youth Voices Bold Faith."

Jonna, a high school junior, received scholarships from both FCCB and the PNC-UCC. She was the only representative from Washington.

"I wanted to attend because I am passionate about advocacy and speaking up for what I believe is right," said Jonna. "I also feel a strong sense of community and collective action within the UCC.

"I was excited to have the opportunity to meet other youth that wanted to combine their faith with advocacy as well," she commented.

"This experience gave me more hope for the future of our democracy, with the people I met who are working hard to fight for change," Jonna affirmed.

She was heartened that other youth she met are also passionate about creating a brighter future.

"It was so meaningful to take my advocacy from a local and state level to a national level," she said. "I will continue to dream big about the change I want to see in the world, and I will keep showing up at every level to see that change through."

Jonna has been sharing her experience with her church and the PNC.

For information, email sharon@fccb.net.

Mark Boyd announces Councils of Stewards for sites

As executive director of outdoor ministries with the support of the PNC Board of Directors, Mark Boyd has created Council of Stewards, advisory groups for both Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen, to provide quick support for the sites.

The councils include representatives of the board of directors, churches, partner groups and people with specific skills and contact with contractors.

They will review decisions about making improvements at the sites that are proposed by the site directors. The councils will include people with expertise and history.

“Changes at the camps will need to benefit three partner groups, not just one,” Mark commented.

“By including people with history, they will bring knowledge about why to do or not do changes, not because we have always done it that way,” he clarified.

Mark said the search team is down to interviewing two candidates for site manager at N-Sid-Sen and will soon announce their choice.

He reported that both camps are doing well financially with Randy Crowe, volunteer site manager at N-Sid-Sen, bringing groups back.

Pilgrim Firs weekends and most weekdays are full through the end of January. N-Sid-Sen has the Lady of the Lake Dance camp, a North Idaho Women’s retreat and Quilters in October.

Mark also highlighted that the Casting for Recovery weekend retreat is now at both sites. He recruited it when he was at N-Sid-Sen, and Pilgrim Firs now has a camp.

Casting for Recovery works with women at different states of recovery from breast cancer and uses the symbolism of casting to promote healing.

There is one camper to one facilitator, who teaches the



Two women walking in the woods during Casting for Recovery.
Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Firs

woman partner to tie flies and to cast.

“Casting for Recovery pays to stock Lake Flora with fish when they come,” he said. “Women come for the weekend but build relations that they continue, so it’s not a one-and-done retreat.”

Mark said the national has headquarters in Montana.

A Silent Day Option has been added to the PNC-UCC Women’s Retreat that will be held Oct. 9 to 11 at Pilgrim Firs.

The weekend opens Thursday at 4 p.m. with a silent retreat until 2 p.m., Friday, time for silent contemplation and wandering the site.

“Just Breathe” is the theme for the Women’s Retreat, with invitational materials noting that “in the rush of daily life, we often forget the simple, sacred act of breathing.”

Leaders note the importance of slowing down, releasing what one is carrying and

simply being—finding rest, renewal and reconnection with oneself, one another and the Divine.

“Through guided reflection, creative expression, and gentle practices, we will rediscover stillness,” leaders said. “Each breath reminds us we are alive, held and enough. Come to breathe, release and renew.”

The retreat is inclusive of all women, cis and trans, and non-binary people who feel comfortable in a space centered on women’s experiences.

Mark also reported that N-Sid-Sen is hosting Pride Camp on “Rising Above with Love,” led by Spokane Pride and North Idaho Pride Alliance, Sept. 25 to 28. Pride Camp is a gathering of people from the Inland Northwest who share a commitment to creating a foundation that encourages individuals to show up and thrive in our community. Its goal is to cultivate con-

nection and fellowship among groups that have too often existed in isolation. In a world marked by ongoing turmoil, Pride Camp is “a collective balm—a unique opportunity to build a cohesive sense of who we are together. By strengthening our shared identity, we become more resilient as individuals and more effective as a cultural movement,” he said.

The weekend includes co-reflection, educational opportunities, facilitated group discussions, open dialogue and optional activities such as music, hikes, and campfires.

N-Sid-Sen’s Giving Back Camp (formally known as work camp) is Oct. 4 to 10.

“Giving Back” camps provide opportunities for volunteers to help care for N-Sid-Sen. Participants can come for an afternoon, a day or multiple days, bringing any skills they have to help with construction projects, cleanup tasks, clearing trails, cutting firewood, painting walls, planting flowers, making meals, stitching quilts, washing windows, sorting craft supplies, doing plumbing, mechanical repairs, sorting archives or recording history.

Campers will continue to help with cleanup and repairs needed after a destructive windstorm took down dozens of trees.

There is no fee to participate in this camp.

N-Sid-Sen is also offering a Textile Retreat Thursday to Sunday, Oct. 15 to 18 to come sew, knit, weave, crochet and chat with other folk from across the Northwest. Campers may choose a project, which will include quilting with demonstrations and teaching. MaryLu Vait is organizing it.

For registration information, call 360-876-2031, email executivedirector@pilgrim-firs.org or visit pilgrim-firs.org or n-sid-sen.org.

Randy Crowe highlights summer camp experiences

Randy Crowe, volunteer site manager at N-Sid-Sen, praised the volunteer leaders who made the 2026 summer camps for the PNC-UCC a positive experience.

"We need to get the numbers up," he said, noting that junior and senior high camps were up some in numbers, but there is still need to build back from COVID.

Family Camp and Camp Together went well. He and his wife, co-volunteer site manager, led Camp Together with 25.

Youth staff from PNC churches served at N-Sid-Sen from June through late August.

In addition to UCC camps, other groups came this summer.

"We are thankful that our camps were done without smoke from fires," Randy said, noting most camps did a giving back project to help clean up storm damage.

More work will be done at the Give Back Camp Oct. 4 to 9

One way he said anyone can back is to give a coffee mug. N-Sid-Sen's supply is getting short Campers can choose a mug at the start of the day and use it all day, to reduce dish washing.

"We are always open for



Intermediate campers do motions to campfire songs.

folks to volunteer outside of Giving Back Camp," he added.

Camp directors were Leah Bilinski, junior high; John Hubbe and Mary Lu Vait, intermediate; Bob Feeny and Aislyn Crane, senior high; Kim Kotlan, kids camp, and Debbie Peterson and Becca Hughes, You and Me camp; Ryan Lambert and Emily Hanson, family camp.

Warriors PATHH, which rents the whole camp for 10 campers, 10 staff, five facilitators and five volunteers, came three times. For folks suffering PTSD from service in the military, police and in firefighting, the full name is Progressive Alternative Training for Healing

Heroes.

"These retreats are intense. People come hardly talking with each other," Randy said. "By the end, they are visiting and laughing."

These camps are organized with a national foundation with one branch in the Northwest. The PNC-UCC has hosted Warrior Path retreats for several years at Pilgrim Firs.

"We are busy into early November at N-Sid-Sen, mostly weekends. Four of us are cooking, doing management, maintenance and cleaning," he said

This fall is the 45th year the Lady of the Lake Dance Camp has come to N-Sid-Sen and the 40th year for their June camp.

There will be 150 this fall.

Randy and Linda co-led Camp Together, an intergenerational camp for families and singles. It's a unique program because campers read a book, Narnia Chronicles, at morning watch and campfire all week

A new participant, Brandon Pickering of Westminister UCC, played guitar and led music for campers who ranged from high schoolers, young singles and others in their mid 80s.

At many camps, Randy led tours of the site and shared stories of the camp history. One was that the late Bob Grunewald, a geologist at Washington State University and member of Pullman Community Congregational UCC, told Randy that some of the solid rocks on the shore were 1 billion years old.

On Labor Day, N-Sid-Sen welcomed a multicultural, multi-racial, multilingual family camp drawing African, European, Hispanic, Hmong, Tongan and Vietnamese American friends and family of Karen Haworth from Westminster UCC and her friend Choua Vang who celebrated their 50th birthdays.

For information, call 209-689-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.org.

Rose Tompkins hangs prayer ribbons in a tree

Rose Tompkins, who is Nakota—with Dakota and Lakota parents—participated in the Westminster UCC-Spokane weekend retreat Sept. 11 to 13 at N-Sid-Sen.

She offered a craft of making dreamcatchers with red willow twigs campers bent into circles. She provided sinew and beads participants could use.

The Thursday before the weekend, her daughter, Dyan Rose Youpee, an anthropologist and archaeologist, as director of tribal historical preservation, brought back bodies of three children who had been taken to boarding schools. She had a



Rose Tompkins, right.

ceremony at the Fort Peck Reservation welcoming home the bodies of these youth, who were among the remains of children buried at the Carlisle Boarding School in Pennsylvania.

Through DNA, one was identified as the daughter of one tribal family and two others were identified as being connected with the tribe.

Because Rose was at N-Sid-Sen, she prepared four prayer ribbons in their honor in yellow, red, black and white, the colors of the tribe.

Rose told participants at the retreat about the repatriation of the bodies and that she

was hanging the ribbons in a tree outside Spirit Lodge, so the spirits of those children could run freely in the meadow.

"We are victims," she commented. "Our culture, practices and religions were stripped from us. Our children were separated from their families, but that history did not disappear," Rose said. "This is a way to respect our traditions, people, sovereignty and the need for dignity."

Rose, who has a bachelor's in sociology from WSU, was among the protestors at Standing Rock in 2016, fighting to protect her land from the pipeline.

Long time camp leaders describe work with youth

John Hubbe and Mary Lu Vait co-led the Intermediate Camp July 12 to 18 for two boys and eight girls in four cabins, simultaneous with the Junior High Camp.

They took to heart the theme, "Into the Wilderness," each day.

"N-Sid-Sen has more wilderness than most other church camps," John said. "Each day we took a wilderness moment, being quiet to listen to a bird or the water, to look up to the canopy of trees above and, with telescopes set up by an astronomer, to look at the universe and stars as part of the wilderness. We hiked to Inspiration Point and spent time every afternoon swimming, canoeing or paddleboarding."

"We did crafts and games and ran in Stillwater," he added.

Mary Lu and John have been coming to N-Sid-Sen since 1990 when she first came as a cabin leader with their daughter Laura in kids camp.



Mary Lu Vait and John Hubbe brought meaning to wilderness.

Since then, they have been cabin leaders and camp directors for all ages. For 20 years Mary Lu came as camp nurse.

John has served on the Outdoor Ministries Committee for many years and now is on the newly formed Council of Stewardship for Camp N-Sid-Sen. John said that council is to give the new site manager support.

For many years, they came from Shalom UCC in Richland and since 2018, from Westminster UCC in Spokane.

John particularly appreciates the name, N-Sid-Sen, described in the camp's history book in Chapter 5 as being suggested by elders of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe who were consulted when the camp started in the 1930s. They were told it

means "Point of Inspiration."

In a recent phone conversation with tribal leader Caj Matheson, John asked to confirm the meaning. Caj's wife found the words N Sied Esten as meaning "a place to lay my head and wake up inspired." Young people in the tribe were sent to a place to be inspired.

"It's meaningful to me that young people come here and gain a different perspective to see the world and be at peace. What we try to do here is to give a different perspective on the world and life," John said.

"I also witness that kids enjoy each other and being together. They have a sense of ownership," he said.

Mary Lu added that Melanie Childers, the new pastor at Shalom UCC in Richland, came for the week as camp chaplain. She wrote skits about animals and used puppets to engage the youth at morning watch and campfires.

For information, call 208-

Pastor appreciates chance to be present with teens

Bob Feeny, pastor at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, co-directed senior high camp with long time senior high director and Mid Winter Youth Retreat organizer Aislyn Crane of Admiral UCC.

She handled logistics, so he focused on being present and facilitating the program.

Bob had co-directed junior high camp two years ago with Leah Bilinski and been a cabin leader.

"We did team building activities and games. I was impressed with how willing the youth were to engage in conversations about faith and how it relates practically to living faith out practically.

"The youth love being here. Every day they are pulled in different directions, but here



Bob Feeny found it a blessing as a pastor to direct a camp.

they can be at peace," Bob said, impressed with how caring and respectful the nearly 25 campers were.

"I have hope for young people and how aware they are

of the world," he commented.

The senior high camp was run simultaneously with You and Me Camp July 19 to 22 and Kids Camp July 22 to 25.

"The teens had fun interact-

ing with the younger children, including doing a relay at the beach," Bob said.

"It's important for people in the conference to appreciate the value of camp. It's the main source of faith formation for many campers," he commented. "Campers form deep, meaningful, often life-long relationship.

"It was a blessing for me as a pastor to work with the kids. I was honored to serve the church in this way. We need to keep supporting our camps. More need to take the opportunity," he added, expressing gratitude for the volunteers and parents who made the camps possible, and for those who drove six hours to bring their kids"

For information, call 208-689-3419 or visit n-sid-sen.org.