



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

April-May 2013

Yard art engages Magnolia neighbors

Art invites people to think about issues of faith and life, and builds attendance

For two years, Scott Ward, as director of community life at Magnolia UCC in Seattle, has been helping the congregation engage with its neighbors through art installations that raise questions.

Because Magnolia is a neighborhood in which many people walk but most do not go to church, Magnolia UCC is able to “do church” with them without their realizing it.”

This year, their Lenten yard installation, “A Place at the Table,” has eight chairs and offers an opportunity to reflect on hunger physically, spiritually and mentally.

“As we acknowledge our hunger for love, peace and justice,” he said, “we may find our place at the table of welcome to be filled with good things.”

Continued on Page 4



Brightly colored frames of chairs invite Magnolia UCC neighbors and members to reflect on hunger and having a seat at the table.

Photos courtesy of Scott Ward

Annual Meeting is a time to nurture friendships

Annual Meeting planning chair and acting PNC moderator Andy Castro-Lang said Annual Meeting is meant to be more than doing business. It’s about renewing our friendships and building new friendships.

“Welcome Home” is the theme for Annual Meeting, which will be held Friday to Sunday, April 25 to 27 at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

“Our team wants it to be a celebration of our love of, caring for and concern about each other,” she said. “That’s why the banquet at First Presbyterian Church is included in the registration.”

Andy, pastor of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, added that along with considering issues, discussing theology, doing business and

**Annual Meeting 2014
April 25 to 27 in Seattle**

sharing in worship, Annual Meeting is about “strengthening each other across time and distance, because these are hard times for churches. Many are facing economic difficulties and many are in transition.

“This is also a time with American churches are marginalized. We need to gather as a conference to laugh and sing as a vibrant, warm body of people,” she said. “Many small churches especially appreciate the chance to gather and sing with 300 other people.”

Andy described Annual Meeting

speakers Christena Cleveland, a social psychologist, and Lillian Daniel, who has written some “Still Speaking” devotions, as funny, irreverent, faithful women.

“Christena invites us to talk about differences among denominations and will offer strategies for unity.

Lillian, the senior pastor of First Congregational Church in Glen Ellyn, Ill., will share in the Sunday sermon reflections on why religious community matters, Andy said.

There will be two art installations. One is an open table by Kris Garratt of University Congregational UCC. The other is an open door by Scott Ward of Magnolia UCC.

For information, call 206-725-8383 or visit www.pncucc.org.

WRYE connects youth from the western region

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

Regional
events
help
youth
feel
part
of something
bigger.

Back when I was United Methodist, I was a part of my local youth group and it was great. For a couple hours every Sunday night we'd get together, do something fun, usually eat pizza and our leaders would cleverly try and figure out some way to make God part of our conversation.

God talk was always something that was a little awkward because it just wasn't one of those things that came easily. We were always afraid of saying the wrong thing or not being deep enough or having what was a pretty simple thing to us turn in to some complicated thing. Plus, we really didn't come together to talk about God. We just wanted to have fun, and talking about God just wasn't fun.

Regional youth events, though, had a whole different feel. For the first bit, I would usually feel just a little out of place among these large groups of folks that came from different areas, but the regional nature of these gatherings gave a whole different feel that I couldn't help but to be energized by.

I felt *part* of something *bigger*. It wasn't just me and my youth group but me, my youth group and lots and lots of other people in other youth groups. I was part of something and felt like, together, we were powerful. I knew we could change the world.

In the large groups, people expressed their faith in ways I had never seen or heard before. They told real stories. They made us laugh. A room full of more Christian youth than I had ever seen in one place would fall silent, at times, as we all experienced sacred moments. They prayed in ways that the words felt as though they could have been coming out of my mouth.

In the smaller groups, people my own age asked hard questions and spoke honest doubts. Some talked about hard parts of their lives. I learned a lot from those who knew how to show love for people in ways that were gentle and strong. We could read the Bible together and, sometimes, disagree with it, dialogue with it, study it and more.

Those regional events—and camp, too—showed me a way church could be. It's one of the reasons I'm a minister today. In many ways, I'm still seeking out and looking for that same

sort of experience as an adult.

This year from June 29 to July 3, the UCC's Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE) is being hosted by the Pacific Northwest Conference and will be taking place at Seattle University.

Tara Barber and Susan Andresen have been heading up the planning for this event along with the help of many others. The line up of speakers, music and other elements is fantastic.

Delegations of youth from every UCC Conference in between the eastern border of Colorado way out to Hawaii will be sending representatives to this gathering of hundreds of youth. Those planning this have done a phenomenal job pulling together what's going to be an amazing event.

I know for many—if not most—reading this, there's a bit of a distance between the time we were youth and now, but that doesn't mean we can't be supportive. The cost of this event is reasonable but not inexpensive for many of our youth: \$450 covers food, lodging, speakers, music and other activities.

If you haven't done so already, ask your church if they would consider helping with the expenses for the youth from your church attending WRYE. If your church doesn't have youth attending, consider supporting the youth from our conference who would like to go. **Give through the conference website at www.pncucc.org—click on the big DONATE button** and then type in WRYE on the “other” line. You can also send a check to our offices at 325 N. 125th St. Seattle, WA 98133, and write WRYE on the memo line.

If between registrations and fund raising, we raise enough money that all expenses for WRYE are covered, these monies will be passed on to help support the next WRYE.

The prayer I use before I preach is a version of a prayer I learned from Mac Kelly, one of the chaplains at a regional event I attended:

*“Dear God,
Meet us where we are.
Amen.”*

May we support the youth of our conference so that they may have the opportunity to meet God—and other UCC youth—at the WRYE.

Transitions announced

Alan Claassen is interim of First Congregational Church in Bellingham. He has served churches in Oregon and California.

Amy Furth, a member of University Congregational UCC, is a chaplain with University of Washington Medical Center.

Mark Miller returns to the PNC conference and is serving as interim pastor at Congregational Church on Mercer Island.

Jan Shannon has been licensed to serve at Westminster UCC in Spokane. She is working with middle school youth and leading an adult class.

Kathleen Morgan retired after serving multiple churches in the conference.

Boundary training offered

To maintain standing in the Pacific Northwest Conference, clergy with standing and licensed pastors are required to take a boundary training workshop once every three years.

The training offered to prevent misconduct by people in positions of power and those who work with children and vulnerable people.

Each is responsible to be sure his or her training is current, with verification sent to the Conference Office. Retired clergy who have been granted "Inactive Retired" standing in ministry are exempt from this requirement.

Members in Discernment are also required to have Boundary Training before beginning any internship placement.

A two-day Clergy Boundary Training session is planned from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., Thursday, April 24, and 8:30 a.m. to noon, Friday, April 25, at Fauntleroy UCC, 9140 California Ave. SW in Seattle.

Both sessions are required to obtain credit. The sessions are sponsored by the PNC-UCC Committee on Ministry and led by the Rev. Tara Barber.

For information, contact Marj Johnston, Eastside chair, by calling 509-730-9969 or emailing pastormarj@gmail.com, or Tara Barber, Westside chair, by calling 425-213-9335 or emailing barbertara@hotmail.com.

Another option is to participate in "Building Safe Communities" Boundaries Training session, being offered from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, May 29, at

Christ Lutheran Church in Fauntleroy, for rostered leaders and professional staff of the Northwest Washington and Southwestern Washington synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

This training will be led by the Rev. Mark Nelson, coordinator for missional leadership of the Region 1 of the ELCA and the Rev. Susan Kint-

ner, assistant to the bishop of the Oregon Synod.

To register, UCC clergy will need to approval from Committee on Ministry to substitute this class for the UCC Boundary Training. Contacts are the same.

Northshore starts film program

Northshore UCC in Woodinville began a Meaningful Movie program and community discussion with showing "Do the Math" on April 11. Lin Hagedorn said the movie is the first in a series being offered to members and community residents.

The film produced by the 350.org tells the story of grassroots movements trying to change tragic outcomes of climate change by challenging the fossil fuel industry.

For information, email mountainclimber4@gmail.com.

Meditation set April 19

Richard Rohr, an internationally known teacher of spirituality and contemplation from the Franciscan tradition, and founder of The Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in New Mexico, will present a meditation on the Resurrection from his book, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for the True Self*, from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 19, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish gym, 3401 SW Myrtle St., Seattle.

For information, email kukowskik@gmail.com.

Keystone holds series on evil

Keystone UCC, 5019 Keystone Pl. N. in Seattle is hosting a Tuesday Justice Leadership Program Lenten Study with a 6:30 p.m. potluck and 7 p.m. discussion on "Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation." Leaders are Cynthia Moe-Lobeda and research assistant Freddie Helmiere. Upcoming sessions are April 22 and 29.

For information, email lauren.cannon@keystoneseattle.org.

Preaching festival starts April 28

The Festival of Preaching Northwest from April 28 to May 1 will focus on "Preaching in a Post-Modern World." It will be held at First United Methodist Church of Seattle, 180 Denny Way.

Preachers and speakers include Debbie Blue, Lillian Daniel, Anna Carter Florence, James Forbes, Tony Jones, Scott Kisker, Jose Morales, Heidi Neumark, Rodger Nishioka, Rleming Rutledge, Melissa Skelton and Will Willimon.

For information on the event, sponsored by Congregational Leadership Northwest, visit www.festivalofpreachingnw.org.

Broadview sets presentation

Bobby Dykema will give a slide presentation and talk on "Beauty in the House: Art and Meaning in the Christian Church, 235 – 2014 AD" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 29, at Broadview UCC, 325 N. 125th St. in Seattle.

Bobbi, who is author of articles on artistic representations in the Reformation and of Mary Magdalene at the Resurrection, teaches in the humanities department at Strayer University. She is youth pastor at Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren in North Seattle.

She will report on findings of a soldier's 1920 digging in a trench near the village of Salhiyé in present-day Syria. He discovered a group of wall paintings, the earliest Christian church art yet known.

For nearly 2,000 years, Christians have labored to make the words of Scripture both visible and beautiful in the interiors and sometimes exteriors of churches, often creating new interpretations of familiar stories and giving them new power.

For information, call 206-363-8060.

Church shows health care film

Fox Island UCC will show "The Health Care Movie" at 7 p.m., Friday, May 2, at the church, 726 6th Ave.

The documentary tells the story of how the health care system in Canada turned out to be so different from that in the United States, when in the 1950s, they were essentially the same.

It reports that Canadians experience the benefits and peace of mind of Canada's universal health care system, but the forces against change in the U.S. are now stronger, with much at stake financially.

For information, call 253-549-2420 or email fuccpastor@gmail.com.

Conference News Briefs

UCC churches among sponsors of project

Continued from page 1

The display invites people to reflect on, "What do you hunger for?"

As the church changes the installations, Scott finds that people begin to anticipate new installations, as well as appreciating and participating in the installation that is there. He sees people walking through the colorful frames of chairs and sitting on the edges of them to meditate and contemplate.

The church houses a preschool, so children run out through the chairs.

Scott designed the chairs of two-by-two pieces of pine, nailed together and nailed into the ground, and members helped build them. He had intended to do 12 chairs, but only had time to do eight, because he had been away on a sabbatical. There are 12 old wooden chairs also set up in a circle in the sanctuary as reminders of people featured in the lectionary.

"So what is inside reflects what is outside," Scott said. "Each Sunday we have been adding another chair representing different people in the Bible based on the lectionary.

"It is a reminder that those people were in fellowship with God, and that we come to be filled with God. We sit at the same table with prophets and disciples, and with those who come before us," he said.

Scott said public feedback indicates that people "love what we are doing in our front yard." He hears the appreciation as he serves on the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce.

"It's thought provoking and helps people recognize that we are here and an integral part of the neighborhood. Our goal was to do things in the neighborhood so if we were not here, we would be missed."

Another time, Magnolia set up a lineup of chalkboard



Passersby and members write what they want to do or see happen before they die.



Scott Ward generates ideas.

people made of plywood and painted with a chalkboard paint. The sign offered people to share their reflections on: "If I die..." People were to fill in the rest of the sentence.

"I had to go our every four days and wipe the comments off, so others would have a chance to add their thoughts. There was some goofy graffiti, but it was minimal. Most of the answers were heartfelt, honest and moving," Scott said, including such comments as "find a cure for cancer, spend more time with grandchildren, fall in love, know God, be a good Christian and win a gold medal in gymnastics."

The art installations have not only drawn people into conversation within the church, but also helped draw more people to attend—along with movies, panels and speakers. About 45 to 50 several years ago. Now about 60 to 65 attend.

"These activities stimulate our people to be more creatively involved," Scott said.

During Advent, they set up a lighted, star-shaped labyrinth with small twinkly lights, for people to walk through prayerfully.

Last year, the youth and congregation set up six brightly-colored open doors, each with different themes that the youth chose—compassion, letting go, enthusiasm, patience, tolerance and balance. The idea was that by walking through the door, people would gain more of that characteristic.

Every year, Magnolia hosts families from Mary's Place, a program that supports and guides homeless women with children. The church shelters and feeds 14 people for a week.

Magnolia engages neighbors to help as volunteers to help feed the women and donating to provide food.

One year when Magnolia UCC did that, they set up A-frame tents in the yard with a sign, "Home Sweet Home."

Scott joined the church 10 years ago and has been in the part-time position for three years. For 15 of his 25 years in Seattle, he worked in Seattle as an artist.

"I felt called to be here. Together with the congregation, we created the position," said Scott, who grew up in Minneapolis and earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1986.

He took off two years in the process, looking at being a Catholic priest, but being turned down because he had homosexual tendencies.

In 1999, he began to paint after 10 years working in Seattle in graphic, interior and landscape design. As part of creativity groups in the 1990s, he had encouraged people to be more creative, and then decided to pick up a paint brush and do it himself.

As part of those groups, he also met Cathy Barker, then pastor at Magnolia UCC and came to the church to see what she was about.

"I was surprised by the genuine, honest welcome. I tested it a few weeks and found it was true," said Scott, who was soon invited to be on the worship and arts committee.

For information, call 206-696-2671 or email scott@magnoliucc.org.

Adult forum reflects on impact of war on vets

For four weeks Mary Rupert of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane and Larry Shook a Vietnam war vet shared the journal of Orrin Gorman McClellan, a Whidbey Island boy who signed up for the army after high school, expecting to get an education and have a grand tour.

His words in "A Soldier's Journal: Last Supper and No Goodbye" tells of his training, his serving in Afghanistan and his coming home, suffering post traumatic stress disorder.

Orrin helped his parents start the Whidbey Island Veterans Center. Even after he committed suicide July 5, 2010, his words raise questions about everyday experiences in war.

Mary said his journal captures a "poignant, heart-breaking journey" that helps people raise questions about "how we can welcome vets home and what we can tell young people about the realities of war.

She believes "we share a burden with veterans."

"We need to let young people know what war is about. It's not just about patriotism and fighting terrorism. We need to believe it's possible to have peace on earth, just as people ended slavery and won civil rights," she said.

Larry said that "as a society, we need to stop lying to ourselves about war and stop leaving soldiers and their families alone with the devastating truth about what war does to them. It shatters them so badly that many kill themselves. Three times more Vietnam vets killed themselves than were killed in the war. We now lose 18 times more soldiers to suicide than to enemy fire.

"As citizens, we are responsible for those casualties," he said. "America is killing its own. There's no way to romanticize this wanton slaughter of our own citizens.

"The public needs to understand that PTSD is not confined



Larry Shook, a Vietnam vet, and Mary Rupert, member of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, lead an adult forum to build awareness of vets' experiences.

to traumatized soldiers. It's a contagious disease. Family members are being diagnosed with primary PTSD because they are infected by the stress. PTSD destroys relationships. There is a growing epidemic of suicide among spouses, children and siblings of soldiers who commit suicide."

Orrin told of brainwashing in training, ethical dilemmas he faced as he killed, and the struggles returning home, swimming in sorrow, with memories he could not forget.

He returned to an information-age reality, in which people barely live in the real world. He identifies with vets returning with no marketable skills, standing on street corners.

He wrote of his "symphony of sadness," being treated for PTSD, getting drunk and stoned, learning of brain chemistry, communication and relationships, wanting to teach, but fearing he might hurt others.

Mary said that in leaving the journal, he has left a legacy, a commentary on the harsh realities of war.

Todd Fahn an Iraq war vet from Las Vegas came to the class on April 6, to share his story and a song he wrote.

He spent eight and a half years in the army, entering when he was young and "had no clue of what he was getting into."

Todd said his parents had no money to send him to college and told him to find a job or go into the military.

He was doing first aid when 9/11 happened. He realized he would be going to war. He was shot and blown up twice, and April 27, 2007, his vehicle was hit with an IED.

"It went off one second late," he said. "It would have cut me in half. I was lucky."

Returning to the base at midnight chow, he looked around at the other soldiers, and wrote a song on a napkin.

He sang that song, "Why Are We Here?" for the class and after worship, asking why some men and women, some so young, are condemned to die.

Todd thought of fathers, mothers and brothers crying, "Why are they there now?" He sang: "No one knows our fear. Everyone says 'yes' to war as long as they are not here."

He told the class, "War is hell on earth. I did things I'm not proud of to protect myself and my guys."

At one session, Mary asked what people learned about soldiers and war through Orrin's words, poems and photos.

Larry was amazed at Orrin's power self awareness, remembering his own numbness when he was a young man in the Vietnam war.

One participant said she sobbed about how "we are devastating our young people."

Another expressed frustration "that we keep doing this."

A third said no one had four tours to Vietnam, as with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In Sunday school, we teach children to respect and be kind to each other. I have never felt war was a way to resolve conflicts," said a fourth.

"I worry that our schools continue to indoctrinate us into the military-industrial complex," said the second speaker.

A vet commented: "We need to educate people that we don't need to go into the military to be patriotic."

Mary said she finds hope in Orrin's having left a vivid description and truth telling about war. Several find hope in more vets willing to speak out because more survived.

She again cited hope she finds in Steven Pinker's *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* that says violence has reduced over the centuries: "We have to believe change can happen, because people are telling the truth about war. We can raise people to be more tolerant and compassionate."

For information, call 838-7449 or email mary.l.rupert@gmail.com.

The oldest Congregational Church in Washington

Walla Walla church celebrates its 150th year

By Gwyn Frasco

First Congregational Church, at the corner of Palouse and Alder Streets, is celebrating 150 years of faith and service in the Walla Walla Valley.

It is the oldest Congregational Church in the state of Washington.

The Civil War was still being fought, and it was only 19 years later after the Whitman Massacre that steps were taken to form a Congregational Church in Walla Walla.

According to the writings of the first minister the Rev. Peasley Chamberlain: "From the closing of my labors in Portland in the spring of 1862 on through two succeeding years, my mind in various and somewhat peculiar ways was directed to Walla Walla as my next field of labor, which resulted in my visiting the place in April 1864."

He moved his family to Walla Walla to establish the church, which was dedicated on Nov. 13, 1864.

The first church meeting house was built on the site of the Pantorium Building at the corner of Rose and Second Street. Four years later this building burned and a new one was built.

A third church was built in January 1900 at the present site. The land, on the corner of Palouse and Alder, was a gift of Mabel Baker Anderson.

In 1912, the growing congregation raised funds to build a larger church building, but following the inspiration of their minister, the Rev. Raymond Brooks, the members decided instead to give all their pledged funds to Whitman College to enable the college to relieve its debt crisis and remain in operation in Walla Walla.

Nevertheless, when fire destroyed their church 10 years



Pastors Cecilia McKean, left, and Adam Kirtley with the congregation.

Photo courtesy of Cecilia McKean

later, the congregation was rapidly able to raise the funds to have a new brick church built and dedicated in December 1923.

That present building, with major interior modifications, was the church's Parish House.

Eight years later, the congregation witnessed completion of the present adjacent brick sanctuary building in a New England Congregational style.

Faith and service to the church and the wider Walla Walla community has been strong from the earliest years.

The Rev. Elvira Cobleigh, the wife of the second Con-

gregational minister in Walla Walla, returned to the East Coast after her husband's death and raised \$10,000 in funds that founded a number of churches in the Walla Walla Valley.

She became the second woman ordained in the Congregational denomination in 1888, when ordained ministers were almost always men.

The 1907 report of the church noted that First Congregational Church gave large donations to support small local churches, foreign missions and the new YMCA building.

In more recent years, First Congregational Church answered the need for more ad-

equated low-cost housing when the Marcus Whitman Homes were built in 1969.

In the early 1970s, the Rev. Emrys Thomas helped found and staff Pantry Shelf food share.

In 1991, the Revs. Roger and Pat Robbenolt provided meeting space for a number of 12-Step groups that continue to meet today.

For 20 years, the church provided space for Red Cross blood drawings.

In 2000, the church voted to become Open and Affirming, welcoming all people wherever they are on their life's journeys.

The church has provided space for a homeless shelter and warming center for the homeless. It regularly serves a free soup lunch on Wednesdays.

The church has helped support many of Walla Walla's social service outreach programs.

Many celebrations are planned for First Congregational Church's 150th anniversary. Church services in 2014 will reflect the church's heritage.

There will be "visits" from historical figures including Revs. Cushing Eells and Elvira Cobleigh, early ministers in the church's past.

Many pieces of church history and artifacts are now displayed in the church sanctuary.

Music has always been an important part of the First Congregational church service.

A number of hymns sung this year in Sunday services come from an old 1902 hymnal that was rescued when the third church building burned in January 1922 and two pieces of original music are being written for use in the Sunday service.

An all-church celebration will be held in the fall of 2014.

For information, call 509-240-2494 or email office@fc-church.net.

UCC members active in publishing *The Fig Tree*

As *The Fig Tree* celebrates its 30th year of publication, it's clear that many UCC members in the Inland Northwest have been involved, not only as readers and advertisers, but also as board members and as volunteers who help with editing, delivery, displays and the website.

Founding editor Mary Stamp moved from Tekoa, where she was involved in the Tekoa UCC, to Spokane to start *The Fig Tree*, which published its first issue in May 1984. The involvement of co-editor and co-founder Bernadine Casey, SNJM, who died in 2007, continues through the commitment of Holy Names sisters today.

The *Fig Tree* started under the Spokane Christian Coalition, which later became the Spokane Council of Ecumenical Ministries. With a change in leadership, *The Fig Tree* Committee decided in 2000 to become an independent non-profit to maintain an independent voice in covering religion.

"Our approach to 'religion news' coverage has been to cover stories of people who make a difference by putting their faith and values into action," said Mary, who was a member of Veradale UCC until 1991, when she joined Cheney UCC. She is now also a member at Westminster UCC.

The 30th anniversary celebration began at *The Fig Tree's* Benefit Breakfast and Benefit Lunch in March and continues at its 30th Anniversary Dinner at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 30, at Whitworth University's HUB. Michael Kinnamon, former general secretary of the National Council of Churches and lecturer at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry, will speak on "Telling Stories of Belonging Together: Ecumenism as a Movement of Communication."

Believing that ecumenism is more about relationships than



Mary Mackay and Chuck Fisk were among the early volunteers. Lorna Kropp is webmaster.

about dialogue and documents, he finds that *The Fig Tree* conveys in its stories relationships that give rise to reconciliation.

A 1967 graduate of the University of Oregon School of Journalism, Mary participated in the World Council of Churches graduate study semester near Geneva, Switzerland, with 60 people from 40 countries in 1969-70, establishing her ecumenical commitment. She worked for daily, weekly and monthly newspapers and wrote freelance human-interest features. She began editing the PNW Conference News in 1988.

Over the years, hundreds of people have served on the staff or as freelance writers, editors, web designers, board members, interns and volunteers, and more than 1,000 individuals, congregations, nonprofits and businesses have advertised.

Mary Mackay and Chuck Fisk of Westminster were among those involved at the start. She was on the organizing committee and returned 20 years later to serve on the board. Chuck has assisted through the years with delivering bulk orders, mailings and displays. He also served on the board.

Malcolm Haworth, formerly with Cheney and Veradale UCC churches, is the resource

directory editor, a board member and ecumenical liaison.

Other Westminster people involved include Sara Weaver, an editor; Lorna Kropp, webmaster; Barb Borgans, a board member, and previous board members Jim McPherson, Jan Wargo and Marian Thackray. Nick CastroLang has helped with the resource directory.

Jim CastroLang, pastor at Colville First Congregational UCC, and Duane Nightingale, active at N-Sid-Sen, assisted with planning for website development.

At Veradale UCC, Kaye Hult serves on the board and coordinates events, and is the North Idaho writer; Nancy Minard, now in Portland, writes editorials, and Kathryn Krauss was also on the board.

Speakers at the 2014 benefit events, reflected on the theme for the celebrations, "Empowering People through Hope, Justice and Action."

"The *Fig Tree* is motivated by a sense of God's call to use gifts to fulfill unmet needs in the community. Its stories of people of all walks of life who are attempting to further God's kingdom make Spokane a better place. The *Fig Tree's* belief that individuals and institutions can make a difference in the lives of people have been an in-

spiration to me and to countless people," said Dale Soden, professor of history at Whitworth University.

Bridget Cannon, director of youth services at Volunteers of America Crosswalk program for street kids said that *The Fig Tree* and Crosswalk begin with the same question, "What's right with you?"

"The *Fig Tree* shines light on what is right in our neighborhoods, communities, country and the world, emphasizing hope and illustrating the good. It helps people understand each other, breaks through divisions, connects people, stirs compassion and opens a dialogue that benefits everyone," she said.

"The *Fig Tree* is a consistent partner in promoting both media literacy and alternative voices in the region," said Jim McPherson, Whitworth journalism professor.

"Stories are powerful. The *Fig Tree* does a great job of gathering human-interest stories that exemplify faith in action, stories that empower, inspire and keep us informed of the great things our brothers and sisters are doing to make Spokane a better place to live," said Roberta Wilburn, president of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship.

For information, call 509-535-1813 or visit thefigtree.org.

Camps offer discount for youth going to camps and WRYE

The Outdoor Ministries Task Force, along with our wonderful camp site managers Deeg Nelson at Pilgrim Firs and Mark Boyd at N-Sid-Sen, are gearing up for a terrific summer at camp.

The theme this year is "Get Real: Finding Your True Self in Jesus."

"We'd love to come and talk to congregations about camp opportunities for all ages, including grown-ups and share the love!" said Mark. "Contact



Nearly 40 gathered for Midwinter Retreat at N-Sid-Sen.

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

tries co-chairs, Katy Lloyd at 206-930-1639 or revkayt@nw-link.com, or Kristen Almgren at 425-238-2038 or kristen.almgren@gmail.com.

"For junior high and senior high youth attending the Western Regional Youth Event and camp this summer, we are offering a discount on both events because we want our youth to take advantage of both of these amazing opportunities in our conference," Mark said.

2014 N-Sid-Sen camp and retreat schedule:

Women's Retreat

May 16 to 18

Lynn Nelson & Kaye Hult

Work Camp

June 16 to 21

Young Adult Camp

June 20 to 22

Max Aquino & Chris Walters

Kid's Camp

July 6 to 9

Trudy Lambert & Gail Peterson

Intermediate Camp

July 6 to 12

Kim Schulz & Bob Watrous

Senior High Aqua Camp

July 13 to 19

Lynne tultz & Tony Kliment

Family Camp #1

July 27 to Aug. 2

Amy Johnson & Ryan Lambert

Junior High Aqua Camp

Aug. 3 to 9

John Hubbe & Dana Sprenkle

Family Camp #2

Aug. 10 to 16

Andy CastroLang & Jan Shannon

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.org.

us for more details.

He suggests that Eastside churches contact him at 208-689-3489 or mark@n-sid-sen.

org and for Westside churches to contact Deeg at 360-876-2031 or deeg@pilgrimfirs.org or one of the Outdoor Minis-

WRYE planned in Seattle

The 2014 UCC Western Regional Youth Event will draw about 350 seventh to 12th graders from Hawaii to Texas an Montana to Seattle University June 29 to July 3.

Organizers Tara Barber and Susan Andresen expect about 90 PNC youth and adults.

Keynote speakers are Julian "JKwest" DeShazier, pastor of University Church in Chicago, who uses hip hop rhythm to tell stories of meaning, and Hoan Do, an inspirational speaker from Federal Way who provides practical strategies for student success. They will help youth explore the theme, "The

Great Commission."

Julian is a regular contributor to *Sojourners* and *Urban-Faith* publications. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School and McCormick Theological Seminary.

Hoan, a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., is an author and student success coach whose immigrant parents escaped from Vietnam.

Activities include worship, workshops, conversations, service projects, play and reflections on faith.

For information visit <http://bit.ly/PNCWRYE>.

Women to release creative spirit

"Release Your Creative Spirit" is the theme for the women's spiritual retreat May 16 to 18 at N-Sid-Sen with Susan Jane Russell, an artist and teacher of Sumi ink painting.

For 10 years, she has been artist in residence for the Washington State Art Commission. She previously taught high

school art and was an adjunct instructor at Seattle Pacific University and the Frye Art Museum.

Coordinating the retreat are Pastor Lynn Nelson of Colfax at 509-397-3011 or bamba2@q.com and the Rev. Kaye Hult at 208-457-3142 or hultorr@gmail.com.

2014 Pilgrim Firs camp and retreat schedule

PNC-UCC Leadership Retreat

May 16 to 18

Spiritual Renewal LGBTQ Retreat

May 30 to June 1

Work Camp June 11-15

The summer schedule is:

Kids Camp

June 29 to July 2

Katy Lloyd & TBA

Intermediate Camp

June 29 to July 3

Jen and Chris Walters

Senior High Camp

July 6 to 12

Kristen Almgren & Andrew Conley-Holcom

Junior High Camp

July 13 to 19

Rich Porter

Family Camp

Aug. 7 to 13

TBA

For information, call 360-876-2031 or visit pilgrimfirs.org.