



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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April-May 2021

Kelle Brown becomes Plymouth's senior minister

Seeks to guide Plymouth into being a laboratory on how to dismantle racism

With new leadership, Plymouth UCC in Seattle is becoming a laboratory in how to dismantle white supremacy.

When Plymouth UCC in Seattle voted in February to call the Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown as senior pastor, they were acknowledging that she had been involved in all aspects of the church and its ministry, and they were accepting her leadership to be a radically inclusive Christian community.

The church leaders saw that she “brings innovative approaches to ministry, a heart for social justice and invaluable insights from her lived experience as an African-American woman to help the church become a true representation of God’s Kin-dom here on earth.”

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Kelle Brown sings with the Annual Meeting 2019 choir at Bellevue First Congregational.

Moderator announces dates, content for Annual Meeting

By Hillary Coleman - Moderator

I am getting excited to gather as a Conference at our Annual Meeting later this month to be reminded of how we are all rooted in love.

Last year at this time we were coming to terms with the fact that an in-person gathering would not be possible and gathered for a shared online worship together. This year folks across the PN-CUCC have been working hard to bring together an online Annual Meeting that will have opportunities for gathering, participating in the life of the conference, taking important votes and sharing time for inspiration.

One of the great things about gathering online is that for many it can be easier to join. All are welcome. Each church

**Annual Meeting 2021
is online
Friday to Sunday,
April 30 to May 2**

has a specific number of delegate spots, but it’s possible for even those who are not delegates to join to be part of this work of the Conference.

Before attending our annual meeting, it’s important to read the Annual Meeting Report Booklet. It contains inspirational stories about the work that our Conference has done over the past year to support one another, our communities, people in need. It also highlights

the work being done to support public health amid a global pandemic and the journey of our collective work to address racism in our conference, churches and other settings.

This work has been possible because of our focus on deepening relationships.

In the coming days we’ll share more “asynchronous” videos with updates from committees and about the important votes we’ll take at the annual meeting: 1) a proposed constitution change: Anti-Racism Commitment, 2) PNC Bylaws Change from the Committee on Ministry, 3) Justapaz Covenant, 4) PNCUCC FY 2022 Budget, and 5) endorsement of Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers. There will be times to

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Emerging from the pandemic takes planning

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

The
year
has
taught us
that
the
world
needs
the
church's
work.

Habakkuk 2:2 says, “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.”

Although day-to-day planning in the middle of a natural disaster, at some point, it becomes crucial to begin to shift some of that planning energy into visioning energy.

It’s been repeatedly said that we’re going to find ourselves changed through the pandemic. However, those changes don’t all need to be passive ones. We also have the opportunity to center down a bit, listen to what God needs, and make plans to respond.

I’ve been praying and thinking about this quite a bit, and I keep coming back to three main ideas.

Hold public rituals: As we transition towards being near each other again, ceremonies that publicly recognize what happened in private will be welcomed and helpful. For example:

- Candlelight vigils to remember all those funerals that occurred in private.
- Mass wedding recessions where couples are invited to come to the church, have some sort of prayer together, then—couple by couple—walk out the church’s door to the cheers of loved ones.
- Services of anointing to bless those who are suffering from long-term COVID and COVID’s other debilitating effects.
- Graduation parades where all those who graduated from, well, anything, are invited to wear their school colors and march through the middle of town.

Get the idea? Making room for these sorts of public rituals is one way the church can serve now and establish a role for itself into the future.

Use consent-based decision making: During the beginning of this crisis, some difficult decisions were readily handed over to local church leaders and pastors.

In an emergency, that’s as it should be. Doing otherwise would have made as much sense as establishing a committee to put out a fire. As we enter the second half of the pandemic, setting a vision for what we may need to become will take greater and greater participation and respectful mutuality, otherwise known as consent.

Circle Forward, the organization I think teaches about consent-based governance the best, makes it clear that this doesn’t mean that every person has a say in every single decision. It means that a range of decisions that serve a particular purpose or mission are entrusted to a person or committee.

As long as the person or committee stays within those boundaries, the wider body supports the decisions made and actions taken. If there are ever concerns or disagreements about the scope of responsibilities or the situation changes, consent is renegotiated.

This approach takes the congregational structure’s expectation of covenant and autonomy and helpfully adds solidarity to the mix, an element our covenant-to-autonomy dualism has been missing.

Solidarity also helps us avoid the consumerist approach that co-opts this kind of duality. Sometimes, we have fallen into the trap of demanding or wanting to be served by covenantal systems in a way that protects our sense of autonomy. Adding solidarity to the mix helpfully messes this all up. It reasserts the obligations that come with just, fair and consensual relationships.

Commit to a deeply-rooted approach to injustice: It’s not unusual that there are multiple causes among UCC church members. That’s normal, healthy and good, but we frequently approach issues at more of the grasstop level than the grassroots level. If we dive deeply enough into any one issue or another, and we’ll start to discover that the roots of injustice are deeply intertwined and even grafted together.

Now is an excellent time to better understand the intertwined roots’ reality and boldly make plans for uprooting them. The pandemic has made some of these intertwined realities more straightforward than they’ll ever be again in our lifetimes. We must not lose this moment of pausing to plan for seasons of acting strategically.

If the last year hasn’t taught us anything else, it’s that the world needs the church’s work. Together we have comforted people, fed people and helped connect people. By serving God’s people, we have deepened our service to God. Let us continue to live into the vision that God is making plain before us.

Transitions announced

Jenn Hagedorn was ordained and installed on Feb. 28 in a zoom worship service at Spirit of Peace UCC in Issaquah.

Jess Peacock, a professor, pastor and author, was ordained and installed in an on-line service held on Feb. 20 at Chewelah UCC.

Lloyd Van Vector, who died Dec. 25, 2020, graduated from Yankton College in South Dakota and earned a bachelor of divinity from Yale in 1953, a master of sacred theology and a master's from Columbia Teachers College. Ordained in 1953, he served in eastern Montana and then served with the UCC of the Philippines, leading Dansalan College in the Muslim city of Marawi, where he was kidnapped in 1979. On release, he continued to serve until 1981, when he moved to New York City to serve in executive positions with what is now the Common Board for Global Ministries until 1992. He was a member of Northshore UCC in Woodinville where he was a chaplain and volunteer.

Delbert Elliott, who died on Feb. 2, was pastor emeritus at St. Paul's UCC in Seattle where he served for 27 years. A graduate of Northwest Christian College in 1959 and Lexington Theological Seminary in 1964, he also attended Whitworth College. In 1959 he was ordained by the Disciples of Christ and served Jefferson Street Disciples of Christ in Spokane, First Congregational Church in Aberdeen, St. Andrews in Kent and as a chaplain for Echo Glenn Juvenile Facility. While at St. Paul's UCC from 1971 to 1998, the church welcomed 12-step groups and he helped start Operation Night Watch.

Merrilyn (Merrily) Applewhite died on Feb. 10. She was a resident at Horizon House. Merrily, who taught math and was an accountant, was married to Rev. Harry Applewhite in 1975. They moved to Washington in 1977. He served at Bellevue First Congregational Church.

Merlyn Bell, 82, died Jan. 22. She received a degree in sociology from the University of Kansas in 1961 and a master's degree from the University of Washington in 1963. She was a sociologist and analyst in the field of criminal justice, who worked for Battelle, the United Church of Christ, and King County.

She dedicated her life to social justice and mental health. Her work addressed challenges such as jail overcrowding, inappropriate incarceration, and mental health services. After retirement, she continued to advocate for the mentally ill and homeless in Seattle.

General Synod announced

National UCC General Minister and President has announced that the Virtual 33rd General Synod of the UCC will be held July 11 to 18. Registration opens May 1. The theme is "Rooted in Love."

Preachers are the Rev. Michelle Higgins, pastor of St. John's UCC in St. Louis, at 5 p.m. PDT Wednesday, Aug. 14. Other preachers are the Rev. Benjamin Chavis Jr., a civil rights activist, preaching at 2 p.m., PDT, Sunday, July 11, and the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, associate general minister for Wider Church Ministries at 3 p.m. PDT, Sunday, July 18.

Delegates will consider a just peace for Palestine and Israel, bail bond reform, safety for women, trans and nonbinary peo-

ple in settings of ministry, whether nature's rights are on par with human rights, and an end to Roberts' Rules of Order as the way Synod meetings are governed. There are 11 resolutions and several bylaws changes.

There will also be time focused on the denomination's five missional priorities: inclusive excellence, innovative exploration, technological readiness, curriculum, training and development for a just world for all, and strategic organizational alignment.

Keynote speakers are Valarie Kaur, filmmaker, civil rights lawyer, Sikh activist and leader of the Revolutionary Love Project at 5 p.m., PDT, Monday, July 12, and the Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, who leads Sojourners, a social justice movement in Washington, D.C., at 5 p.m., PDT, Friday, July 16.

For information, see generalsynod.org.

Lenten devotional story series continues in 2021

During Lent, PNC members connected in the spiritual practice of storytelling for a devotional series along the theme "Rooted in Love."

This year, participation expanded beyond the Pacific Northwest Conference to include the Central Pacific and Montana Northern Wyoming UCC conferences.

"While we explore again the power of story, the prophetic act of connection, we also demonstrate collaboration and partnership amongst three conferences, and with the national setting of the United Church of Christ," said Courtney Stange-Tregear, PNC minister of church vitality who coordinated the sharing.

The theme "Rooted in Love" is also the theme for the UCC Virtual General Synod 2021.

For information, email courtney@pncucc.org.

Conference News Briefs

Hillary Coleman outlines Annual Meeting plans

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talk on zoom about these proposals in the two weeks before the meeting, as well as on Friday, April 30. Follow the Annual Meeting website for more information and make plans to take in this information before we gather for our "synchronous" time together on zoom

from April 30 to May 2.

During the Annual Meeting weekend there will be gatherings for conversations around topics brainstormed by the Conference on Friday, business on Friday and Saturday, and worship, connection and sacred space throughout.

We will vote on the propos-

als shared above and we'll also elect new leaders that the Ministry Resource Committee and other committees have been working hard to recruit.

On Sunday, May 2 we'll join together for a shared Conference worship. This is open to everyone, even those who aren't able to attend other parts of the

Annual Meeting. I hope your church will share in this worship service as an opportunity to gather for worship together from across the Conference.

Visit www.pncucc.org for the information about Annual Meeting and to register.

For information, email hillarycolemanucc@gmail.com.

Dismantling Racism invites difficult conversations

Christine Hanson, who chairs the Dismantling Racism Action Team of the Justice Witness Ministries (JWM) Committee, became involved in a group that started before Annual Meeting 2019 to raise concerns of African-American pastors.

“The work started in response to pleas of pastors of color in the conference,” she said.

This year, Dismantling Racism developed a document, “Our Call, Our Work: Anti-Racism to Reparations,” which will be discussed at Annual Meeting 2021.

Christine described the evolving document as a working document the team has taken to committees and the board for feedback. The intention is that it continue to transform PNC-UCC to work through an anti-racist lens.

The team asks people to read, reflect and respond to what is written to inform their individual and collective anti-racism journeys.

On behalf of the Reparations Team of JWM’s Dismantling Racism Team, Christine said, it is not a document she or team members have written, but a document that compiles suggestions from people throughout the conference. The team has coordinated and given structure to suggestions.

“It is not intended as something we will vote on, because the goal is for people to read and reflect on it in relationship to PNC work, to help us to change from any white supremacist ways and develop new ways to operate from an anti-racism lens,” said Christine.

She was awakened to the concern taking an Undoing Institutional Racism class during a year in the Jubilee Justice program. In addition, Plymouth UCC in Seattle, where she has been a member since 2018, is also discerning how to be an



Shalom UCC in Richland top, and United Churches of Olympia join in calls for racial justice and dismantling racism, below.



anti-racist church.

Her pastor, Kelle Brown, “makes sure we are pushed to an uncomfortable edge rather than being feel-good religion. She asks us to reflect so we grow as a church and individuals.

Christine said characteristics of white supremacy can infiltrate and limit the work of individuals and institutions. She referred to a 2001 workbook on dismantling racism by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okum, describing 11 personal and power dynamics that are “The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture.” They include perfectionism, urgency, defensiveness, paternalism, individualism, objectivity, power hoarding, fearing conflict and valuing quantity-over-quality, what’s written, one right way, either-or thinking, progress as bigger/more and a right to comfort.

“We have invited committees to read and reflect on the “Our Call, Our Work” document related to how the committee functions and how they could work in a different way through an anti-racist, rather than white supremacy, lens,” she said.

“We have met with committees several times on a journey that will continue,” she

said. “Racism and the problems are ingrained in all we do. Most institutions are based on white men writing rules and not meeting needs of most people.”

Christine has found that after people read the document, they see how they could do things in a more anti-racist way, not just serve needs of white people who are in power.

Instead of an academic approach, the document begins by defining the crisis arising because black and indigenous people “have been under the thumb of white supremacy for 400 years” and continue to be “enslaved by the institution of white supremacy” unable to move freely.

The document defines term it uses:

“Pastors of color” refer to Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander clergy.

“White supremacy” is the “system of domination and advantage based on the belief that white people are a superior race” to the exclusion, subordination and detriment of races and ethnicities.

“White privileges” are inherent advantages of white and white-appearing persons in a society of racial inequality and injustice.

“Institutional racism,” in contrast to individual overt racism, may be less perceptible but is based in established, respected societal forces.

“Reparations” comes from the biblical idea that there is need periodically to repair the society, such as through Jubilee.

The call to action invites the PNC-UCC to dismantle oppressive systems in its institutions and members, identifying how institutions serve those in power “at the expense of the global majority without power,” said team co-leader Lin Hagedorn.

The section on reparations for the PNC-UCC talks of changes needed and makes suggestions, understanding that it’s not limited to that list.

Out of the Fall Gathering 2019 in Richland, reparations drew much interest and several agreed to follow up, Christine said.

Team developed suggestions to prime the pump.

The first suggestion is to institute anti-racism training.

“In the UCC, we cannot require churches to do anti-racism training, but can suggest different trainings available,” she said. “We can require pastors to take anti-racism training through the Committee on Ministry (COM).”

- The document suggests that the Church Development Committee, Board and PNC-UCC offer training.

- A second suggestion to provide support for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) clergy has ideas from the COM and Stewardship Committee.

- A third suggestion to promote hiring BIPOC people in PNC-UCC leadership offers ideas from the Board for an Equity Advisory Body and from Educational Ministries on preparing congregations.

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2021 Annual Meeting theme is ‘Rooted in Love’

The Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting on the theme, “Rooted in Love,” from Friday, April 30 to Sunday, May 2, will be online this year, and there will be opportunities for involvement, engagement, information and inspiration.

“Rooted in Love” is the same as the 2021 national UCC General Synod theme, about how love can ground and inspire people as they live into what God has in store for them.

Pre-meeting videos will be shared leading up to the virtual gathering to help people prepare so the zoom time is “fruitful and connective” and deepens relationships.

The Board and staff changed the meeting date to ensure the Samoan congregations, who have their annual meeting the weekend PNC has usually held its annual meetings.

David Anderson, who is “logistics person” for the Annual Meeting, said Jim Castrolang of Colville UCC is recruiting a team of Zoom hosts.

Andy CastroLang, Lin Hagedorn and Chris Hanson

are organization Conversation Gatherings, rather than workshops. Information on those groups are coming.

Nathaniel Mahlberg and First Congregational UCC in Walla Walla will host a prayer and candlelight worship service on Friday evening. Other worship services will be Saturday morning and the PNC-UCC Conference-wide worship on Sunday morning, hosted by Normandy Park UCC.

Committee reports are presented by videos to invite people to be engaged in their ministries. Videos will be presented in place of live reports during the meeting.

The Stewardship Committee has prepared an overview of the budget and PNC finances.

Information on the agenda is at pnucc.org/new-page-1.

In the business meeting, several votes are planned, offering ways to live out PNC values and commitment:

- To affirm the partnership Covenant or UCC-PNC and DOC Northern Lights Region with Justapaz-and CEDECOL

in Colombia.

- To endorse Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers resolution that is also before the UCC General Synod

- To affirm a PNC Bylaws change relating to the Committee on Ministry and Manual on Ministry to be in line with the PNC’s covenant with the Wider UCC in the charge to the Committee on Ministry and its role of support and accountability for those seeking or holding standing, and the tools it uses to carry out its work, including the current Manual on Ministry.

- To change the PNC Constitution to articulate its commitment to anti-racism, racial justice and dismantling racism, while expanding understanding and awareness of the impact of racism and other intersectional oppressions such as classism, homophobia-homophobia, transphobia and misogyny.

- To elect leaders for conference committees.

- To adopt the fiscal 2021-22 operating and capital budgets to support ministries of the Pacific Northwest Conference.

There will be more information coming on the first four, so delegates are encouraged to come informed, and hearings on them on April 30.

In addition, there will be opportunities for informal chats in chat rooms after Friday worship, during lunch or after the meeting Saturday. Hosts are being recruited to facilitate those.

David said that sessions will be shorter and breaks longer to avoid zoom fatigue.

There is also information in the PNC-UCC Annual Meeting Reports with reports from conference staff, the board of directors and conference committees, along with conference transitions and other special reports.

“In spite of our physical distance for this meeting, I know the Holy Spirit will be alive and at work in our midst, not deterred by distance or electronics,” David said.

For information, email david@andersondd.net, visit pnucc.org/new-page-1 for the agenda and register at <https://bit.ly/2MHI5VW>.

Document calls for ongoing discussion, action

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- Fourth is to create forums for honest ongoing discussions on racism with the JWM’s Dismantling Racism Team and Education Ministries Committee providing resources.

- The document considers what reparations might look like in terms of acknowledgment, education and relationships with those who can guide anti-racism work.

It asks what reparations may look like for a church’s understanding, structure and practices related to learning a church’s history of harm and working to correct injustices—apologizing, relating with people of color, listening and com-

mitting resources to determine what reparations and changes look like for the church’s mission and culture.

The document offers a variety of resources.

“If what we put out is not right, we need to be committed to converse,” Christine said. “Conversations are not over. We are careful about language, naming groups to be inclusive.

“It does not fit as a resolution, because if it passed, we might think we had done the job, and there would be no action,” she said.

There is opportunity to sign up for Annual Meeting conversations—not workshops with a leader. Examples are: Beloved

Community, White Nationalism, Our Call Our Work and Restorative Justice.

“People need an opportunity to talk with each other,” she said. “If we work from a comfortable place, we will go nowhere. We need to work in a different way, to shake things up so learning sinks in and there is transformational change.”

Christine does not expect to wake up and say, “Oh, I’ve got it now.” Instead, she plans to live an intentional life, reflecting constantly on how to walk in the world with an anti-racist lens to stop doing damage daily to people of color.

“We will not transform unless we make mistakes and feel

uncomfortable,” she said. “I begin with changing myself. I’m a weaver who wants the creative process to be perfectly aligned. I need to accept failure, see my defensiveness and recognize my sense of urgency.

“Some whites rewrite religion to make it comfortable for them. I am done with negative things in the name of religion. We need to be open to other ways to be spiritual in the world and have empathy for other people in the world,” she said, inviting white people to understand the pain and wrongs many people of color have experienced.

For information, email hansonchristineadd@gmail.com or

Experience in integrated settings lends insights

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Kelle was already doing the duties of senior pastor, having started at the church in August 2015, temporarily as an associate pastor, operating on a collaborative ministry model.

Now she is the pastoral leader, she more fully and consciously takes on the roles for visioning, strategy and organizing the congregation, including guiding it as it works to dismantle white supremacy.

She seeks to use her gifts for the benefit of Plymouth and the church universal.

"I am gaining skills and learning that I hope to transfer to a curriculum other churches can use," Kelle said, "as we are part of the conference through relationships and connections with other churches.

"The church is in a process, seeking to be a church that is faithful, just and honors Jesus Christ," said Kelle. "We work to be the church, not known by our size or income, but as one of many churches struggling through the challenges of this time and place to find hope and healing."

Kelle brings insights from her background to that role.

Her growing up in San Antonio, Texas, and Columbus, Ga., as a "military brat" with a "great home life, nurtured by loving grandparents," included living near Ft. Benning in housing that was integrated and attending an integrated high school. She did well in school, leading many clubs, such as the National Honor Society, while nurturing musical skills as a drum major and playing flute in the school band.

Although she grew up in a black Baptist church, when her grandfather's cancer meant he needed to be close to home, they began attending a nearby white Southern Baptist church.

Kelle graduated in 1994 in psychology from Spelman College, an all-black woman's college in Atlanta, Ga., where

she led music for a new church, Amistad UCC, also in Atlanta.

Her daughter, Indigo, was born in 1996. She is a student at the University of Washington.

After working as a mental health provider, she came to Seattle in 2003 to earn a master of divinity degree from Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry in 2008.

In Seattle, Kelle served Madrona-Grace Presbyterian Church in a time of transition, was director of child and youth ministries at Bethany UCC, and worked in group homes and for nonprofits, while beginning a doctor of ministry degree at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo.

Ordained in 2011 as a Presbyterian pastor, she moved to Richmond, Va., to lead Daughters of Zelophehad, a Presbyterian ministry for families experiencing homelessness.

She returned to Seattle in 2014 as pastor at Mary's Place, which supports single women and families experiencing homelessness. She led empowerment and spirituality groups.

Kelle was introduced to Plymouth when invited to do the Seven Last Words of Christ with seven women.

The previous associate was leaving, and she was invited on the staff.

When her predecessor Brigitta Remole, the organist and some members left, Kelle stayed, picking up responsibilities and offering stability.

"I had no notion when I started I would become senior pastor. My role changed and meandered," she said. "I'm grateful the church has made the decision. As I came into the role I recognized the pain I felt functioning as minister of worship, faith formation, pastoral care and lead pastor, but not acknowledged as senior pastor.

"It's not about a title, but recognizing I was doing the du-



The Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown is now senior pastor at Plymouth.

ties of senior pastor," she said. "I hope it is a witness to the conference and national church.

"Churches of all denominations should be equity churches that are intercultural and intergenerational," she said. "We are still struggling with inclusion in white dominant culture churches, still in 2021 for churches to be inclusive."

Kelle believes what is happening at Plymouth is a sign of what can happen, acknowledging that "We have a long way to go, but we can be hopeful.

"There are people in our midst who are ready and able to have the courageous conversations needed to journey together as God's people," she said. "We need to be aware, observe and honor those in our midst, and leaders need to be ready to step up into a legitimized, empowered role."

Her encounter with an

African-American man outside Plymouth is an example. He could not imagine she was pastor of the big, white church at Sixth and University. She showed them her business card with a picture of the church.

He told her that growing up in Seattle, African-Americans might not walk on the same side of the street as that church, believing they were not invited inside, but he came the next week and was astounded she was actually the pastor.

"Members are willing to be introspective less concerned about being called racist than being racist," she said. "In the vein of truth telling, it's not about blaming or shaming, but about having difficult conversations and seeing vulnerabilities."

Kelle sees that people in the dominant culture become concerned about racism as they see

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Teen speaks at Spokane Stop the Hate Vigil

On March 20, several hundred people gathered at the Sister City Gardens in Spokane's Riverfront Park for a Spokane We Stand United Vigil to express solidarity with Asian Americans' call to Stop Again Hate.

The location was chosen because three of Spokane's sister cities are in Nishinomiya, Japan; Jecheon, South Korea and Jilin City, China.

One speaker was Jasmine Meredith, a senior at Ferris High School and member of Westminster UCC in Spokane. She has been involved in other activist actions, including with Students Demand Action for gun safety, Sunrise for climate change action and Youth4Change for targeting informational social media for youth to include world events and history.

Of Chinese heritage, she works with the Asian American Pacific Islander community to urge anti-racism legislation and public statements.

I started writing this after the Cherokee Country Sheriff's



Rosie Zhou is with Jasmine Meredith after both spoke at vigil.
Photo courtesy of Jasmine Meredith

Captain said the murder in the Atlanta shootings had "a bad day."

My bad day starts with the sun shining directly in my eyes before my alarm clock rings because I didn't shut the blinds tightly enough the night before my bad day continues when I accidentally bite my tongue as I consume a late lunch.

I stub my toe on my bed frame, give myself a paper cut, my hair wont corporate, I broke one of my dishes, and so on.

Resuming my bad day,

I forget about an assignment I had to do for class and miss my 11:59 deadline. Disappointed, my unproductive, underwhelming day ends with my insomnia lying in bed with me until sunrise.

My "bad week" consists of awkward encounters, discouraging news, exhausting work, an irritable attitude, and underwhelming events.

My "bad month" is a stressful one. Filled with dismay, regret, sorrow, fatigue, weariness, distress and so on.

My "bad year" begins with a judgmental stare, an unsafe feeling and a fearful mentality. It is one of repetition.

A ritual of scanning my surroundings as I walk into a grocery store, because I can't make anyone too uncomfortable.

Consistently watching my back as I spot a man glaring at me from down the aisle.

Repeatedly questioning my judgement when I avoid certain people. I've tried to not make snap judgements about those I pass on the sidewalk, but caution is valued etiquette for people who look like me.

My bad year continues with trepidation. I got my license last week, but I was hesitant, because I knew if I were able to drive, I would have to go places alone. I was planning on going on a summer road trip with my best friend after graduation, but now I'm not so sure. We look like each other and I'm afraid of what could happen.

Going out at night has been a no go because I am a woman. Now I take a risk go
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Plymouth seeks to develop anti-racism models

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the impact on people they know.

"The invitation is to be concerned about those who are unknown," she said.

"Through truth telling and honoring Black, Brown and Indigenous, queer and transgender people who dare to come in and be a part, we will become more of a vision of what God calls us to be" she said. "Several Black and Brown people recently joined. I believe they care to be part of Plymouth, not as tokens, but as integral to Plymouth's growth.

"Many people are aware we are doing anti-racism training—reading books, participating in the justice movement in Seattle

and in anti-racism change," she said. "Even if we do not end racism and may not ever solve it, we are in an ongoing process, growing and transforming, looking at power dynamics."

For Kelle, church healing happens when "justice is our foremost pursuit."

She told of a woman—a pillar of the church—inviting her to her home and telling her she had never been pastored by a black woman and did not understand Kelle's style. However, the woman blessed her and sought to honor her leadership despite the challenge.

"The conversation allowed me to realize there was a place for me at Plymouth," Kelle said.

"Still it's a dominant culture church, though there is and has always been some inclusion.

"As we grow, more racial and ethnic diversity will happen, but the goal is not necessarily to become any one distinction, such as any one race, ethnicity, orientation or identity as being dominant. The goal is to be faithful, to pursue our moral center and to be more culturally inclusive," she said.

"People are willing to do the work, which takes patience, compassion and love," said Kelle, who believes in building vision in community and conversations with those of different perspectives.

At Plymouth, her walk is

as a shepherd, caring for folks who are grieving, needing pastoral care and celebrating.

"It's a blessing to have a place to live my vocation," she said. "Members in covenant are partners who are innovative, creative, compassionate and faithful."

She believes Plymouth sees the Spirit moving and God at work even in coronavirus.

"The need for churches is pressing as always," Kelle said. "I pray we understand our gift at Plymouth is to be an example to make the way forward become more clear."

For information, call 206-622-4865 or visit plymouth-churchseattle.org.

Stewardship Committee appeals for donations

For the past few years, members of the PNC-UCC Stewardship Committee have appealed to those gathered for our Conference Annual meeting to give a gift in support of the Friends of the Conference/Camps fund.

This has been a way for those most involved in the Conference and our camps to personally support the amazing ministry we share.

They are now renewing that request.

As members of the Stewardship Committee and staff, we have each committed to

make a Friends of the Conference/Camps gift in an amount that is significant for us.

While these amounts vary, 100 percent of us have made a financial commitment that celebrates and affirms the importance of the Pacific Northwest Conference in our lives.

The committee invites local church leaders and delegates to the Annual Meeting to make a meaningful gift that reflects their commitment to the Conference.

There are opportunities to give online through the Confer-

ence website—www.pncucc.org—or send a gift to the Conference office.

Gifts may be designated to Conference ministries and/or to one or both of the camps.

“We hope for a generous response from those who best know the multi-faceted work of our Conference and those called to serve,” said members of the Stewardship Committee. “We hope to hear from you either before or at this year’s virtual annual meeting. As leaders we are called to lead, and a vital part of leadership is

our generosity.”

Members of the PNC Stewardship Committee and staff sending the letter are Kendall Baker, Ed Coleman, Ron Patterson, Martha Baldwin, Mike Denton, Kyna Shilling, Leah Atkinson Bilinski, Arlene Hobson, Courtney Stange-Tregear, Wendy Blight, Diana Kutas, Andy Warren, Jim CastroLang, Tom Miller and Wade Zick.

For information, contact Kendall Baker, chairperson, Stewardship Committee at kendall.clark.baker@gmail.com.

Jasmine Meredith speaks at anti-Asian hate vigil

Continued from page 7

ing out in the day.

Restaurants say we can take off our mask as soon as we get to our table, but I keep mine on to make others feel at ease.

I was worried about going back to school in person. I was supposed to be at “the top” of my school because I’m a senior this year, but when I see someone wearing that red hat, I feel trampled on. I’ve even been afraid of being fearful.

Some have even made me feel as if I deserve to be treated this way.

“Well, it did come from China,” they say, then they put me at the end of a punch line and invalidate my concern. Laughing at “kung flu” or “china virus,” they put me at the beginning of a pun and in the middle of a difficult situation.

My bad year is comprised of a myriad of “too manys”:

- Too many times has my mother felt the need to wait for me in the store as I walked out.

- Too many times have I been followed home from school. I don’t know if it is because I am a girl or because I’m Asian. I simply walk faster.

- Too many times have I heard language enabling racism come out of mouths of those

passing by.

- Too many bystanders, too many accomplices.

- Too many times a politician, who was to serve the people, divided them instead.

- Too many times racist rhetoric has been defended by those who are supposed to represent the people. Often a radio host has called Asian singers “some crappy virus that hopefully there will be a vaccine for soon as well.” Too often, an attack on an Asian not been deemed to be a hate crime, an Asian elder has been a victim of assault, someone has had to defend their fear or substantiate their rage.

- Too many, “I’m so sorrys” or “That’s so tragic” or “That’s horrible.”

Once is one time too many.

My bad year is composed of statistics: Asian hate crimes increased by 150 percent with 3,800 incidents reported in a year. Of them, 68 percent were reported by females. There were 503 incidents in 2021 alone. Asian women report hate incidents 2.3 times more than men

Headlines read, “death of 75-year-old Asian man after he was attacked on his daily walk.”

Captain Jay Baker de-

scribed the murderer as someone who was “at the end of their rope” and I could not identify with that description more. I’m at the end of my rope as well. I’m fed up with feeling unsafe in a country that I’ve lived in almost my entire life,

I’m sick of only feeling comfortable going out when I am with my white parents or white boyfriend, I’m tired of donating to funeral “go fund Me’s.” I’m over feeling unsafe because others feel unsafe around me.

When this pandemic is over, everything goes “back to normal,” we return to school and work full-time, we eat out, have dances and throw parties, I will be beyond grateful, but I know this past year will leave a scar on the face of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community for the rest of time.

We have become hyper visible in the span of a year. The red spotlight has been shined on us and made us out to be a villains while we are simply huddled under it with the ones we love. As history repeats itself, we will become invisible. Our community will be poured into a glass like water, morphing into the shape they want us to be, the model minority, the

intelligent, the incompetent, the disgusting, the odd.

As I finish this up, I ask a few questions.

When will ignorance and stupidity not be a viable pass for racism?

When will we start acknowledging these attacks for what they are?

When will we denormalize racist Asian rhetoric?

When will we put Asian history and culture into our high school history books?

When can we ensure we won’t be alienated in our own country?

When is the time when those who immigrate from Asia are not told “America is not all that it seems”?

When do I not have to worry about my friends who are Asian American and Pacific Islanders going to work or school?

When do I not have to worry?

I know no one can give me an estimate of time, but I know everyone can reassure me, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders everywhere, that they will advocate and act on what is right. There is hope.

For information, email jasmimeredith@yahoo.com.

N-Sid-Sen will follow protocols for precaution

After scrutiny, prayer and research by camp and conference leadership, N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center will be offering a different version of camp for 2021.

Mark Boyd, managing director, said he has been reviewing what other camps across the country have done and are doing that has worked, “we believe we have a set of protocols that will provide the best safety for both campers and staff.”

The camp is following Center for Disease Control, American Camp Association, State of Washington, State of Idaho and Panhandle Health guidelines to operate with precautions that allow it to safely welcome guests.

Mark listed requirements:

- Before coming to camp, anyone who can receive a vaccine must. Others must be tested and have a negative test one to three days before arriving. Campers are to restrict activities and contact with anyone outside their family group after the negative test and before camp.

- Campers are to self-monitor activities 14 days before camp; do daily temperature checks, self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms, not travel outside the country and have no contact anyone with COVID-19.

- Traveling to N-Sid-Sen, campers are to make only stops necessary for fuel and bio breaks, masking and physical distancing.

- Campers will be emailed a COVID-19 health check list and will be assigned a personal check-in time.

- They are to provide contact information—phone and email—for contact tracing.

- Campers’ temperatures will be checked on arriving while they are in their cars. They will drive as close as possible to their lodging.

Camps will be different. They will be shorter—only four nights from Thursday afternoon



Mark Boyd read poetry he has written to accompany photos for a Spokane Public Radio program. Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

to Monday morning.

There will be opportunities to greet people from a distance and share in big games and activities.

There will be daily temperature checks at breakfast.

Outdoor dining will be the norm for meals. Campers will arrive at pre-set times for a safe flow. Camp staff will set and wipe tables. No guests will be allowed in the kitchen.

Padded furniture and cushions are removed. There will be metal folding chairs.

Some buildings and spaces are closed: Syringa Lodge and shop, the library, storeroom, nurse’s cabin, craft room and fireside room in Forrester, any cabin or lodge other than their own.

Groups will be assigned a bathroom and shower. Cabins will be exclusively for a family group. Each lodge room will be assigned a bathroom.

N-Sid-Sen expects to have a maximum of 40 at one time.

“We encourage creative use of outdoor spaces for large worship, circles, big games with social distance and masking,” Mark said. “We have more than enough space for groups to be able to enjoy all that N-Sid-Sen has to offer.”

Canoes may be reserved

ahead, along with a life vest and set of paddles. Sailboats, paddleboards and noodles will not be available. Basketballs, volleyballs, and ping pong paddles and balls need to be reserved ahead of time.

Social distancing must be adhered to at the swim beach and the dock is marked at six-foot increments. It will not be possible to wipe ladders, docks, diving boards and ropes, so hand sanitizer should be used before going to the beach and on leaving it. N-Sid-Sen will have sanitizer and hand wash stations.

Camp fires and singing are to be socially distanced.

N-Sid-Sen staff will clean all surfaces in Forrester dining hall every two to four hours from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Private bathrooms will not be cleaned by staff while campers are there, but will be deep cleaned before and after every group. Upstairs restrooms in Forrester are for guest and staff use. Downstairs ones are closed.

Staff will haul garbage from outside Spirit Lodge, Ford Cabin, the Bathhouse and Stillwater. Campers are to empty garbage and recyclables into these.

Quilts and blankets will only be available as rentals along with regular bedding.

Sheets, pillow and case, a bath towel set quilt or blanket are rented for \$15 per guest.

Because more staff is needed for frequent deep cleaning and because of increasing food costs, the cost will not be much less than a traditional week.

If someone becomes ill, they are to contact the event leader and quarantine themselves. If there is no improvement in four to six hours, Mark will seek medical care outside N-Sid-Sen.

Each UCC sponsored event will have a nurse on site.

If someone has been within six feet for 15 minutes with someone with COVID-19, they will be tracked by the health department for 10 days.

Opportunities Thursday through Monday include:

- Families at Camp rentals for a single family residing together to rent a lodge or cabin for their private use. Campers are responsible for their own meals. These camps began in March and are offered through June 7.

- Family Escapes at N-Sid-Sen are like Families at Camp but include meals.

- Program UCC Family Camps with worship, games, discussion and service opportunities are three weekends July 15-19, 22-26 or 29 to Aug. 2.

- Senior High Camp Aug. 5 to 9 is a smaller, social distanced program that includes activities as above.

- Junior High Camp Aug 12 to 16 is also a smaller social distanced program with activities.

- Class of 2020 Camp Aug 5 to 9 for those who graduated from high school in 2020 and were not able to attend camp will include worship, games, discussion, and service opportunities.

There will be no Kid’s Camp or Intermediate Camp this year.

Registration is open.

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

Steve Clagett reviews PNC-UCC justice ministries

As chair of the PNC Justice Witness Ministries (JWM) Committee for five years, Steve Clagett has helped connect and coordinate people and congregations to act through ministry networks so the PNC becomes “an inclusive, repairing conference.”

Steve has completed six years on the committee.

During his leadership and out of the 2019 PNC fall meeting, several justice issue and action teams formed to do justice work. Those teams are for dismantling racism, reparations advocacy, environmental justice, economic justice, welcoming immigrants team and police use of force.

Those teams, some more organized than others, have more than doubled participation in social justice issues and action, Steve said.

“Those are ways people not on the JWM committee can expand the conference’s justice work,” he said, noting he plans to continue on the Economic Justice Team.

Steve, a member of All Pilgrims Christian Church on Capitol Hill in Seattle, said he has stayed in the United Church of Christ all of his life because of its commitment to justice. Growing up in Battle Creek, Mich., he attended First Congregational Church.

After graduating from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in economics and urban studies in 1969, he spent two years in Venezuela in the Peace Corps as an urban planning officer, followed by working three years with the Michigan Housing Development Authority for three years, and attending law school at Wayne State University. After graduating in 1975, he was regional planner two years at Martha’s Vineyard.

In 1977, he came to Seattle as King County housing planner for two years before helping found Common Ground, a



Steve Clagett has chaired Justice Witness Ministries five years.

nonprofit to help nonprofits and faith organizations set up low-income housing.

From 1993 to 2004, he did urban development with Snohomish County Economic Development, writing a chapter on how to develop an urban center, and then serving as executive director of 1,000 Friends of Washington, an advocacy group implementing growth management.

From 2004 to 2014, he worked with the King County Housing Authority to tear down older low-income housing and replace it with mixed-income, mixed use housing in White Center, Wash., south of Seattle.

As he retired in 2014, he had been “bitten by the need for economic justice reform” as presented by Robert Reich’s 2013 document, “Inequality for All.”

Steve became involved with the UCC resolution for a \$15 minimum wage, working with Don Bell and Jenn Hagedorn, then a justice leadership program intern, at Plymouth UCC. The conference passed

the resolution. He came on the JWM Committee in 2015.

After becoming chair in 2016, he first held meetings in his home with Eastern Washington members on the phone. Realizing that was not allowing equitable participation, he began holding meetings on Zoom, which “erased the Cascades East-West divide.”

In 2016, JWM began having issue teams on justice issues: environmental justice, dismantling racism, the Poor People’s Campaign, economic justice and welcoming immigrants.

• **The 18-member** Dismantling Racism Team began with building trust and understanding among members with a goal of undoing institutional racism. That led to an opportunity at Annual Meeting 2019 for hearing what black pastors face in dominant-culture UCC congregations, including one barred from worshipping at the church hosting the meeting. It led to further conversations.

JWM and Dismantling Racism member Bianca Da-

vis-Lovelace, a UCC pastor who is director of the Renton Ecumenical Ministry, co-chairs Washington’s Poor People’s Campaign. The campaign drew members of UCC and other churches on six Fridays to Olympia to call for ending poverty and racism.

Another JWM and Dismantling Racism member, Leslie Cushman, worked to pass Initiative 940 De-Escalate Washington to limit police use of deadly force. She is now organizing black families to advocate funding and implementing I-940.

Dismantling Racism also urged release of prisoners at high risk of COVID and supported the right of Yakima-area agricultural workers to stay off their jobs until COVID protections were in place.

At the 2019 Fall PNC Gathering, the six action teams set up included one on reparations, Steve said. Working with Dismantling Racism, the Reparations Action Team is meeting with committees and the board to determine appropriate reparations actions.

Dismantling Racism has also made recommendations to the PNC Board for bylaws changes, which will add a confession that the PNC has practiced institutional racism and is committed to inclusivity and dismantling racism, and will provide for better participation of people of color on PNC boards and committees.

• **The now 20-member** Environmental Justice Action Team has had leadership from former national UCC environmental justice minister Meighan Pritchard, previously on JWM.

“The team advocated for the Sustainable Farms and Fields bill in 2020 to combat farming and forestry practices that affect climate change,” Steve said.

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JWM coordinates and connects multiple ministries

Continued from page 10

Fifteen members of a that team, led by Roberta Rominger, pastor of Mercer Island, worked with the Environmental Voter Program in Boston to make 200,000 phone calls and texts to people who were identified as interested in environmental issues but not regular voters to urge them to vote in 2020.

“While I usually am adverse to such calls, I felt it was effective in activating some voters,” Steve said. “We had response from 10 percent wanting information on where to register and seeking more information.”

The Environmental Justice Team was also behind advocacy for a carbon fee bill in the legislature this session.

• **Another team formed** out of the PNC 2017 resolution on welcoming immigrants, with work coordinated by JWM member Paul Ashby, pastor at Richmond Beach UCC and Briana Brannon, a former participant in the Justice Leadership Program (JLP).

Steve said when the former President banned Muslim immigrants, Plymouth’s graphic artist designed a banner, “Love Your Muslim Neighbor.”

Steve gained permission to use the design and offered it on the PNC listserv.

After 21 PNC-UCC churches responded, he arranged with a Muslim-owned print shop to print the banners that were then put up outside the churches and carried in protests.

Another result of the 2017 resolution was that Mickey Beary, a JWM member from Shalom UCC in Richland, asked his church board to sponsor undocumented families in the Tri Cities.

“That’s how connecting and coordinating people works,” Steve said of the ripple effects through individuals, JWM, action teams and PNC Board/Annual Meeting actions.



Police officer had tape over badge numbers during sweep of homeless camp, top. On the right: 21 PNC churches displayed “Love Your (Muslim) Neighbor as Yourself” banners. Rep. John Lewis was a model for justice seekers to “get in good trouble.”

Photos courtesy of Steve Clagett

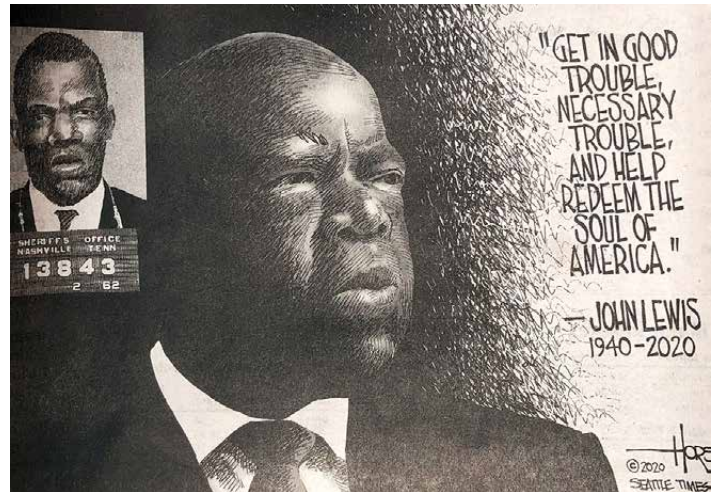
Then he went on to the next example.

Plymouth UCC pastor and JWM member Kelle Brown called him at 8:30 a.m. one morning to say Seattle police were in the International District where a homeless camp was set up. Police, masked because of COVID, had put black tape over the numbers on their badges.

Steve went there and took pictures of the officers, showing the tape over their numbers. “How can you do this?” he asked hoping to appeal to their decency. Having little response, he sent the photos to the Seattle Mayor and City Council, which then banned police from covering the numbers on their badges.

Then Steve expressed gratitude for the Ministry Resources Committee recruiting “incredible justice advocates” to serve on JWM.

“I won’t stop working for justice when I leave the JWM Committee as my term ends,” he said. “I’ll continue to work on and build up the Economic Justice Team,” said Steve, who



is co-leader of the Faith Action Network (FAN) Economic Justice Working Group.

When Steve joined JWM, the Justice Leadership Program was functioning under the former JWM chair, Rich Gamble, pastor at Keystone UCC in Seattle. As resources to keep it going waned, the Jubilee Justice program with older people emerged.

“Impact of the JLP continues in current leadership of “graduates” like Hillary Coleman, who is PNC moderator; Jenn Hagedorn, now pastor at Spirit of Peace in Issaquah; Amber Dickinson, who is on

the staff of FAN, and Briana.

“There is no more important work than education on institutional racism, starting with ourselves, so we can move to enact change,” Steve said. “To help dismantle racism, we bought 150 copies of *White Fragility* for PNC members to study. Along with study, we need to build relationships and walk with people who are different.

“When we are fully inclusive of all people, so much more justice will fall naturally into place,” he said.

For information, email clagett@comcast.net.

Global Ministries proposes ties with Colombia

The PNC Board of Directors is recommending that the Annual Meeting affirm a Covenant Agreement between Northern Lights Region Disciples of Christ, the PNC-UCC, and JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL in Colombia.

Citing verses in Ephesians 3, the resolution talks of “speaking the truth in love,” being “knit together” so the body “is working properly” to promote the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Mary Olney-Loyd, co-chair of the joint UCC-DOC regional Global Ministries (GM) Committee with Rick Russell, said the passage sets a framework for a partnership with Justapaz, an organization for justice and peace organized by Mennonites, and CEDEPOL, the Peace and Justice Commission of the Evangelical Council of Churches in Colombia Peace and Justice Commission.

The partnership is “something to which we are responding that has its origins in the creative movement of God,” states the resolution, which is about being called into a larger body of relationships to discover an engage with the Body of Christ in Colombia. A partnership connects people to mutually strengthen each church’s witness.

The Covenant Agreement calls for connecting in love, maintaining unity of the spirit in a bond of peace, for five years to:

- Pray for each other’s churches and ministries.
- Listen with open hearts to each other on the joys and challenges of ministry and life.
- Learn about each other’s countries, ministries and lives.
- Develop lasting friendships by e-mail correspondence, virtual presence and visits to each other’s countries and churches.
- Coordinate sharing resources, projects and people be-



Photo from the Justapaz video shared as part of the September 2020 Peace Pilgrimage.

tween the respective ministries.

- Celebrate the richness of affirming the fullness of life and the hope for enduring peace by sharing materials for worship for liturgies, music and resources of each other’s worship life.

The agreement recognizes that healthy relationships are based on awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses with U.S. churches at growing edges needing development and refinement.

It adds: “Often we find we are a people of affluence driven by a myth of scarcity. Our view of the world is often informed by self-interest, which lacks a global perspective,”

The covenant is entered with awareness that U.S. churches can learn about peace, justice and reconciliation from sisters and brothers in Justapaz and CEDECOL.

A hope is that the partnership “can help us learn how to promote peace, justice and reconciliation in the U.S.,” and “how different expressions of spirituality enrich our lives,”

“We celebrate the gift of openness, which God is nurturing in our life, readying us for this new relationship. While financial resources for support of special projects will likely be a part of lived relationship, it is our desire that these would be shared in a way which honors

the mutual nature of our relationship,” the agreement says.

As the UCC Statement of Faith says, “God bestows upon us God’s Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.”

In 2017, the PNC-DOC GM Committee began working toward a new partnership with the national Global Ministries, expressing interest in Latin America because of farm laborers in Eastern Washington.

The UCC-DOC in the region already had a partnership with South Korea and previously with West Berlin, both of which are dormant.

Tom Morse of Global Ministries met with the committee, suggested the Colombia groups and committee agreed.

In summer 2018, committee members began joining monthly zoom calls with JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL with Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto, Latin America secretary for Global Ministries, JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL leaders, persons from the East Coast and several committee members.

They were opportunities to learn about the situation in Colombia and the ministries.

In January and February 2019, a group of the committee prepared documents to send to

Rivera-Agosto, in Indianapolis, describing strengths and challenges of the DOC Region and UCC Conference.

In September 2019, Michael Joseph, mission co-worker to Colombia, visited the Northwest, spoke in churches and met with clergy groups and the GM Committee telling of the two ministries.

The GM committee proposed a mission pilgrimage to Colombia in September 2020, but with the pandemic Angel Agosto-Rivera and Lorna Hernandez from Global Ministries suggested a virtual pilgrimage.

The DOC and UCC each recruited eight participants for a virtual pilgrimage Sept. 21 to 26. Hosts in Colombia traveled to the remote area of Choco in NW Colombia, where they took videos as they delivered food aid and COVID-19 supplies to six villages. The videos included worship and interviews, which they put on a website at justapaz.org/pilgrimage-for-peace-medio-san-juan-choco/

On Jan. 21, 2021, the GM Committee recommended to the DOC and UCC Boards of Directors to form a partnership.

“We are enthusiastic about moving toward an official partnership,” said Mary. “It has taken nearly three years to come to this place, yet we are already living into something new and exciting!

“The Christian leaders in Colombia experience hardship and violence in their Christian walk as they deal with the aftermath of a 60-year civil war. We are challenged and heartened by their deep faith,” she said.

The GM Committee looks forward to learning from and sharing with Christians in Colombia, commented Mary and Rick

For information, email maryolneyloyd@gmail.com or myrtos@comcast.net.

More in PNC congregations are now vaccinated

Everett promotes shots

Everett UCC is doing several things to help people to be able to be vaccinated.

“We have no idea how many people have been vaccinated, but we are helping in a few ways,” said Betty Parry Fisher, moderator. “We have talked about vaccinations during our virtual coffee hour and during prayer time, encouraging everyone who can to move forward with vaccinations.

The church also has a group of folks who are helping others find appointments.

Especially at the beginning of vaccines being offered, signing up for an appointment was as competitive as buying a ticket for a rock concert, she said.

Jenny Deveraux Kearns, who works at home for Microsoft, pulled up the pages for vaccination sites and then refreshed the pages throughout the day. When she sees open appointments, she sends a text to a small group.

Betty has been keeping a list with those who want help setting an appointment. She jumps on her computer, schedules the appointment and lets the person know.

If transportation to and from the appointment is needed, several Everett UCC members provide rides.

Mercy Watch, a medical ministry for people who are experiencing homeless, comes to Everett UCC each Thursday when they serve a takeout dinner for low-income people in the community.

Mercy Watch vaccinated] kitchen volunteers and has been able to vaccinate several homeless people.

People in the community know that late Thursday afternoons, Mercy Watch will be at the “Rainbow Church.”

For information, call 425-367-3014 or email bettyparryfisher@gmail.com.



Dr. Mary Lou Hatcher and Sheila Murphy, ARNP, left, of Mercy prepare vaccinations at Everett UCC for meal for homeless.

Photo courtesy of Berry Parry Fisher

Pastor volunteers

Becky Anderson, former pastor at Newport UCC, has been volunteering with Medical Resource Corps of Eastern Washington at vaccination sites since Jan. 21.

She has been at Multicare/Deaconess downtown, Cancer Care Center and the Arena and the Veterans Hospital next week. Would you like more information on it?

I have had really great experiences, and come home feeling “bathed in gratitude” from those who pass through.

She just applied applied to volunteer at <https://www.spokanecounty.org/FormCenter/Emergency-Management-31/Volunteer-Emergency-Worker-Application-276>.

For information, email rev.becky.53@gmail.com.

100 percent of eight

Janel Rieve, pastor, reported in March that 100 percent of the folks who are attending Zion Philadelphia UCC in Ritzville have had their second dose of the vaccine.

“Eight of us venture out,” she said. “We began to worship in the church in October, masked-up and socially distanced. In the summer, we met outside.”

“We do not have the capability to do online worship. I

send out materials to 35 inactive members and call on two older members who can’t come,” Janel said.

For information, email janelriev@gmail.com.

Prospect UCC helps schedule appointments

An informal poll on Sunday, March 21, at Prospect UCC in Seattle showed that the congregation was about 75 percent vaccinated. The staff-clergy rate was closer 20 percent. The pastor and organist are not yet vaccinated, said Karen Eisenbrey, office manager.

The church is promoting vaccination by offering information from a member’s former student who is helping schedule vaccination appointments as a community service project.

Prospect have offered its building as a vaccination site but have not heard back yet and don’t feel it would be a preferred site because of parking and accessibility issues, she said.

“We are organizing brown-bag get-togethers in the building for fully vaccinated people, to happen on Tuesdays beginning April 13. We are exploring what re-gathering for worship could look like and when that might happen, especially if clergy and music staff are not

yet vaccinated,” Karen said.

“We have the added wrinkle of our pastor’s sabbatical this summer and whether the sabbatical pastor (not vaccinated) will want to re-open, or whether it is better to re-open before the sabbatical in May or wait until October,” she added.

For information, call 206-322-6030 or visit prospectseattle.org.

Colville worship is both live and online

In late March, Jim CastroLang, pastor of First Congregational UCC in Colville, reported that 80 percent of the congregation was vaccinated.

He has been leading worship, with a lay leader, pianist and singer (sometimes remote) from the sanctuary but lay leaders serve as zoom moderators to stream the service online.

Two older women who do not use computers or cell phones come wearing masks and sit at the back.

The church has worked with four other churches—United Methodist, Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist and Lutheran—for six years to serve a hot meal Mondays through Fridays. It has continued as a take-out meal in the pandemic, serving about 40 people.

“We look forward to worshipping together, but we will continue to do zoom because it’s an easy way to do video recording,” Jim said. “Previously I provided audio of sermons.”

He uses a webcam with the computer to give a quality picture. Using Zoom has drawn two people from Pennsylvania with family connections, another who grew up here but lives in Marysville, and a member of the church council who works in Olympia.

For information, call 509-998-7203 or email jcastro-lang@gmail.com.

Shalom UCC-Mennonite delivers boxes to Shalom Ministries

By Kaye Hult

Shalom Church Spokane (United Church of Christ and Mennonite), in cooperation with The Christmas People Foundation of Yakima, recently donated almost \$4,700 of Blessing Bags, crew caps, coffee and candy to Shalom Ministries, 518 E. Third Ave., Spokane.

Blessing Bags, using a reusable, draw-string bag, contain a T-shirt, three pairs of socks, hygiene supplies—such as a comb, deodorant, shampoo, face cloth, soap, tooth brush and tooth paste—adhesive strips, lip balm, cough drops and a chewy bar.

Each bag assortment was put together by Ruth Bishop and Fred Hutchinson, co-founders of The Christmas People and also members of Shalom Church.

Shalom Church contributed monetarily to the project.

Shalom Ministries has provided meals for hungry and



Fred Hutchinson and Ruth Bishop of The Christmas People and Shalom Church Spokane members Reanette Boese, Jerry and Marilynne Mueller, deliver boxes to Ray and Barbara from Shalom Ministries.

Photo courtesy of Kaye Hult

homeless people downtown since 1994. It began at the former Central United Methodist Church as part of an urban ministry of the national UMC.

The program brings together religious, business, political and social service communities to find solutions to poverty and homelessness through to

building relationships and community among people who are disenfranchised.

It provides breakfast Mondays to Thursdays and dinner Mondays and Tuesdays. Previously people would come into the social hall and sit down at round tables, along with volunteers. Now people come

through a corner door from Howard St., pick up a grab-and-go meal in the narthex and exit through a door on Third Ave.

The meals have been offered in a safe, loving and accepting environment that can open the door for healing and renewal, creating a sense of belonging to something greater than one's self, said Fred.

The Christmas People Foundation, in its 23rd year, provides meals, new clothing and bulk wholesale food supplies to marginalized and underserved populations throughout the year in Spokane, Yakima and Seattle.

Shalom Church Spokane is a yoked congregation of Shalom United Church of Christ and Shalom Mennonite Fellowship.

"Because of our low overhead, the majority of our offerings go to mission," said Marilynne Mueller, treasurer.

For information, call 208-771-1514.

Faith leaders seek art to express hope, solidarity

The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) of Eastern Washington and North Idaho invites artists from the sixth grade to adults to enter its first "Celebrate Curiosity" art contest, said Gen Heywood, pastor of Veradale UCC and convenor of the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience group coordinating the "Heart Interventions" contest.

The contest arose out of grieving violence against Temple Beth Shalom by someone painting graffiti on the exterior and a Holocaust monument, and the recent murders of Asian women in Georgia and shoppers in Colorado.

"We want to lift up our common humanity while breaking through apathy and helplessness," said Gen.

FLLC was looking for something to do in addition to



Inland NW faith leaders respond to hate with an art contest.

vigils, statements and legislation to reach into "the heart of our communities," she said.

Contest judges will choose one color graphic image to put in windows of businesses and homes, on social media, signs, merchandise and other media

to share the message that people of Eastern Washington and North Idaho "Celebrate Curiosity" through solidarity, inclusion, advocacy, accountability and truth.

Entries must be received by Wednesday, May 12, and

a virtual awards ceremony is planned for Thursday, June 10.

The goal is for the graphic to communicate that "all people, all religious and non-religious people, all those whose ancestors were the first on these lands and those new here, all genders, skin tones, sexual identities and differing abilities are connected, respected, supported and valued," Gen said.

The top winner's image will be used by Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience for publications, letter heads, social media and other outlets.

FLLC members have contacted teachers to spread the word and contacted several locations about having an exhibit of the entries.

They are thinking of a music contest for winter.

For information, email fllconscience@gmail.com.