



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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March-May 2020

Magnolia education leads to community action

Monthly learning sessions on homelessness, racism and food insecurity inspire congregation to action

In January, Magnolia United Church of Christ in Seattle chose to focus their intention and attention around learning about the causes and potential solutions of homelessness in their community.

In February, their focus was on racism, picking up from previous book studies.

In March, the focus was on food security and the congregation and its scout troops collected food for Ballard Food Bank.

Magnolia opens the learning sessions the church to the PNC, the Magnolia ecumenical community and the greater Magnolia community, said senior pastor Marci Scott-Weis.

For the first session on homelessness Continued on Page 4



Building team from Magnolia UCC helps build a tiny house, one way to address homelessness in the Seattle area.

Annual Meeting theme is 'Promised Hope'

The PNC-UCC Annual Meeting 2022, "Promised Hope," is a virtual meeting again. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., Saturday, April 30, as a one-day, business only meeting, with a 10:30 a.m., Sunday, May 1, worship to conclude the event.

The Zoom gathering on Saturday includes an opening prayer, Mike Denton's message, a budget hearing, two plenary sessions and elections of nominated leaders.

At 11 a.m., there will be written reports and visual presentations from various committees and organizations, said Tara Leininger, board vice moderator and nominee as board moderator.

After a break for lunch, the second plenary session will be a vote on the

**Annual Meeting 2022
is on Zoom
April 30 and May 1**

2022-23 budget and the election of leaders to committee and board positions.

The day ends with the installation of those elected, handing over the moderator's gavel and a concluding prayer and song.

Hillary Coleman ends her two-year tenure as PNC moderator and will pass the gavel to Tara Leininger, the pastor of Metaline Falls Congregational UCC, past vice-moderator. The new vice mod-

erator will be Indigo Brown.

Tara and Indigo expect the next two years to be a time of transition in many ways. Hillary will be honored for her commitment to the conference and still be relied on as "moderator emeritus," sharing her understanding of the complexities of the PNC from her time as moderator.

The documents for AM22 are available through the conference website at pncucc.org, including the slate for election, the annual reports from staff, committees and organizations, and the budget.

"Often the budget is a time-consuming issue," said Tara. "This year, with questions about the expenditures for the

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World needs the church as a movement

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

I've been thinking about George Orwell's book 1984 these days. It isn't a book I've picked up since high school, but some of the themes sound more and more familiar.

It's a description of a dystopian world where the boundaries of class are solidified by societal structure, propaganda, and oppression; all defined as boundaries that helped give protection and care for the citizens. There is always an existential threat at the door that helps rationalize it all.

Those controlling the limits have their actions justified by a control system that—they say—holds back chaos and death. Within this context comes one of the enduring quotes from the book.

The slogans of the ruling party are, "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength."

We're in a precarious moment. These fictional ideas have become a larger and larger part of our present reality. We're in a time of perpetual war that seems to be required to keep the peace.

We're told that freedom comes to those who give up privacy, resources, time, and ideals.

We're told that truth is limited to our immediate context and experience, or the opposite; that our immediate context and experience means nothing.

The Church gets wrapped up in this, too. We confuse living out our faith with nationalism. We confuse

loyalty to our institutions with allegiance to God.

Out of comfort and convenience, we sometimes separate our religious way of knowing from all other ways of knowing.

Peace is peace. Freedom is freedom. Knowledge is knowledge. All these things aren't worked out in isolation but in relationship. We still have to call for and work for peace in a long season of unjustified war.

As valuable as loyalty is, freedom is more significant and critical, and its limits and vastness have to be negotiated mutually and fairly. We might not always like what we hear and become uncomfortable when a different understanding comes from outside of our social, political, religious, or vocational sphere. However, we dismiss the meaning behind the articulation of that understanding at our peril.

Our faith is comforting but not always comfortable. Our faith becomes weaker in isolation but stronger through interaction.

I continue to believe the world needs the Church. Not as a force insisting on its way but as a movement that dares to love God, the world and all God's people.

It is in that daring that we can strengthen peace and freedom as well as be open to the truth behind new knowledge.

Peace is peace. Freedom is freedom. Knowledge is knowledge.

Peace

is

peace.

Freedom

is

freedom.

Knowledge

is

knowledge

Transitions announced

Enoka Rex Gatolo'i died in 2021. He was serving the Ala I Le Ola Church #5 that met in Burien.

Retired pastor **Ron Hutchinson** died in February at age 89.

Mac Buff who is at United Churches of Olympia, has been approved as a Member in Discernment.

Kevin Carr, a hospice chaplain at Evergreen Hospital, completed his transfer of standing in February.

Transferring to other regions are **Steve Davis**, formerly of Plymouth Church, UCC in Seattle, received a call to the Penn Southeast Conference.

Nathaniel Mahlberg, resigned as of March 20 at First Congregational Church, Walla Walla and received a call to serve the United Church of Christ in Valley Forge, Pa.

Paul Ashby, formerly of Richmond Beach UCC in Shoreline, has transferred out of the PNC.

Chris Hayward, former pastor of Greenacres Christian Church, received a call to the Iowa Conference.

The Committee on Ministry has approved exempt status for **Catharine Cline**, **Gail Crouch**, **Megan Crouse**, **Benji Files**, **Dennis Hollinger-Lant**, **Randall Mullins**, **Anthony Robinson** and **Wayne Wilson**.

Amara Oden began her ministry at Suquamish UCC in January.

Newport UCC has called **Larry Stalley** as pastor. He began on January 2.

Bonnie Dalious was approved for transfer. She is a full-time chaplain in Anchorage.

Stevi Hamill has been approved for ordination pending call.

Kelle Brown, senior pastor at Plymouth UCC in Seattle, has announced that she and Stephen Smith will marry on May 28.

Women's Retreat is May 13-15

The PNC Women's Retreat on the theme, "Who Do You Say I AM," is May 13-15, at N-Sid-Sen.

It's a weekend of faith, fellowship and fun, intentional time for renewal both individually and collectively.

The retreat includes creativity, dancing the labyrinth and listening to Spirit.

The facilitators are Sharry Nyberg and Bobbi Virta.

Registration is at <https://www.ultra-camp.com/info/sessionDetail.aspx>.

UCC seeks youth leaders

The national UCC is asking anyone who has regular contact with youth in the UCC to complete a short survey to provide additional insight to the Faith INFO team and national setting.

The survey is at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Youth_Min2022. For information, email [Trayce Potter](mailto:Trayce.Potter@ucc.org), minister for youth and young adult engagement at pottert@ucc.org.

Jubilee Justice planned

The Justice Leadership Program (JLP) has kicked off the first online session of the 2022 Justice Leadership Jubilee, a six-month program for adults who want to deepen their understanding of justice and learn practical organizing skills.

The online format removes geographic limitations, so the five Jubilee associates from around the PNC are joined by one in Texas. Their home congregations include Richmond Beach UCC, Normandy Park UCC, Keystone UCC, Spirit of Peace UCC and Colby UMC in Port Orchard.

The group gathers via Zoom for monthly workshops and discussion, while serving in their congregations, and volunteering with a nonprofit addressing the roots causes of injustice.

JLP recently received a booster grant from Volunteer Ministries of the National UCC and are recruiting now for the next cohort of Jubilee associates to begin in September 2022.

Applications are being accepted for the fall session. Adults interested in being more active in the work of social justice grounded in faith are encouraged to apply.

For information, email info@justice-leadership.org or visit www.justice-leadership.org.

OWL trainings are online

Our Whole Lives training is now available on a limited basis online, said Amy Johnson, UCC Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice. Applicants must commit to all dates and times listed. An endorsement is required from a church leader, which will be sent automatically at the time of application. Cost is \$250 plus OWL curriculum. There is a 20 percent discount available for OWL materials to UCC members taking OWL training.

Information and dates are at <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/health->

[and-wholeness-advocacy-ministries/sexuality-and-our-faith/justice_sexuality-education_training-schedule/](https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/health-and-wholeness-advocacy-ministries/sexuality-and-our-faith/justice_sexuality-education_training-schedule/)

Earth Day Seminar planned

The national UCC is planning an Earth Week Event, "The Faith of Prophets: Lessons for the Climate Crisis," at 10:30 a.m. ET on Saturday, April 23 beginning with a keynote and followed with an 11:45 a.m. panel discussion. There will be suggested actions for congregations to take.

Planners say prophets are needed as the world confronts the climate crisis, but it's not a time to wait for prophets. A recording will be available afterwards.

For information visit <https://bit.ly/FaithOfProphets>.

Join the Movements invites

The Rev. Traci Blackmon of the national UCC invites UCC members and congregations to "Join the Movement toward Racial Justice."

"When love is the lens through which we see the world, justice is possible," she said, inviting people to "imagine a church free of racism and a world where all people live without fear of violence or systems that harm God's human creation."

For information, visit jointhemovement.org.

Global partner video online

On March 14, Mary Olney-Loyd and Rick Russell, co-chairs of the Global Ministries Committee for the PNC and the Northern Lights Region of the Disciples of Christ recorded a Zoom Meeting with Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto, Global Ministries area executive for Latin America and the Caribbean, Xiomara Citron Garcia, and Alex Maldonado Lizardi mission co-workers in Colombia.

It introduces the work of Global Ministries with our partners, Justapaz and CEDECOL, in Colombia.

A link to 24-minute discussion is on YouTube link is below. A shorter version is planned. They urge sharing of it with congregations.

The link for the video is: <https://youtu.be/4W1b3kMNB2c>.

NOTE: Donations can be made for refugees and relief from the War in Ukraine at <https://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal>. This and other services are possible because of OCWM. It's also possible to give to the PNC, at www.pncc.org.

Conference
News
Briefs

Magnolia finds value in tiny homes and people in them

Continued from page 1

Greg Colburn, an assistant professor of real estate in the University of Washington's College of Built Environments, spoke on the causes of homelessness.

Greg, author of *Homelessness Is a Housing Problem*, researches housing policy, markets, affordability and homelessness, and is engaged in community efforts to address the Puget Sound housing crisis.

In the second housing session, Andrew Constantino, manager for Tiny Home Villages, gave the history of Tiny Homes telling how the villages run and communities support them.

Magnolia also sent a team of 12 to Sound Foundations for one day to build Tiny Homes. Several members continue to volunteer with building.

The church set a goal to raise funds to cover the cost of building a Tiny Home.

Betsy Fornoff, a member of Magnolia UCC—also on the PNC Justice and Witness Ministries Committee and the PNC Dismantling Racism Sub Committee—became involved after the education sessions.

She worked with the team, her daughter and on her own to build Tiny Homes for the South End Tiny House Village, which opens in April on the 9100 block of Martin Luther King Way South with 40 tiny houses.

"Greg said the root cause of homelessness is the housing supply—real estate—not drug abuse and mental illness," she said.

Betsy is impressed by the success of tiny villages moving people into permanent housing.

"Sound Foundations builds the homes, and the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) sets up villages," Betsy said.

LIHI brings in electricity and community showers, bathrooms and kitchens. Each tiny house has one room with a bed, a hanging rack, two windows, heat and a door to lock.

Betsy and church members have also helped at the Interbay Village Port of Seattle land. It started in 2015 as Tent City 5 on Seattle City Light property and moved to the Port of Seattle in 2017. Now 76 tiny homes have replaced the tents—30 of which were added in November, 2021, Betsy said.

Six Magnolia and Queen Anne area churches help Interbay Village with meals, and collect clothes and household items for when people move to permanent housing. As they established relationships while serving meals and meeting people, Magnolia residents saw the Tiny Home Village as part of the community.

"Building tiny homes and volunteering in a tiny home village is an incredible way to do something concrete to help people get off the street," said Betsy, whose husband is involved through the Episcopal Church and the diocesan Homeless Task Force.

Each Tiny Home village has a Community Action Council (CAC) that involves members in decision making with LIHI. An Ecumenical Group includes a member of the CAC, interested members from each church and one pastor.

Betsy, whose parents were charter members, grew up in Magnolia UCC. She studied nursing at the University of Washington, worked at Virginia Mason Hospital and Skagit County Health Department after graduating in 1975 and returned to the UW for graduate studies in nursing from 1977 to 1979.

After six years as a nurse practitioner with the Okanogan County Public Health Department in the Methow Valley and then with the Pierce County Health Department, she worked eight years with the Washington Department of Health immunization program in Olympia and TB program in Seattle. She then worked with



Team sets up wall, top. Betsy Fornoff, right.

Photos courtesy of Betsy Fornoff

Providence Health in Seattle and with Public Health-Seattle and King County's immunization program, TB program and primary care clinics until retiring in 2019.

Living three blocks from the church, she returned to participate there.

While she wondered how to help with homelessness in a tangible way, Betsy now sees hope in the tiny homes that are built to last 20 years. LIHI's data show that people stay an average of 115 days before moving to permanent housing, so each house helps three people go from the street to safe housing each year.

"A tiny house takes people off the street into a safe space where they can be warm, dry and lock their things. Villages offer services and transportation to help people move forward, compared to staying in a shelter three feet from the next person," she said.

"In a village, people gain stability not only with services but also by finding community with neighbors as they serve on committees and solve problems," she said.

In February Magnolia UCC's Learning Session featured Cheryl Cooke, who spoke on "What is Critical Race Theory and Why are Folks so Upset About it?"



In her practice as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, she treats children with ADHD and autism, as well as children and adults with anxiety and depression. She has researched the impact of incarceration on individuals, families and communities. She also discussed the experiences of people of color in nursing and academic leadership.

Betsy said Magnolia previously had book studies on Zoom, reading *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Idoma Uluo a Seattle author; *Hot to Be Anti-Racist* by Ibrahim Kendi, and *Caste* by Isabel Witherson.

"After reading books we wanted to move to action and partner with black, brown and indigenous people on projects," said Betsy, who completes her term on the Justice Witness Ministries Committee in April.

Magnolia began meeting in person in January. During the pandemic, most participated in livestream worship.

Now living in Lynnwood, 14 miles from Magnolia, she still attends Magnolia—online during the pandemic and now in person again.

For information, call 206-283-1788, or email marci@magnoliaucc.org or

Story of snow angels starts the theme of hope

By Courtney Stange-Tregear
Story: "Angels All Around"

My senior year of college, there was a huge blizzard that covered Annapolis in about three feet of snow. Maryland Avenue, where I lived in my tiny basement apartment, wasn't plowed for several days.

Before long there was a walking path through the middle of the street made by previous walkers tramping down the snow.

It was January, and senior essay writing season, which was the beginning of the process of thesis writing and defense required for graduation. A full month is dedicated only to this—no pressure.

One night, feeling frustrated and hopeless, my roommate and I left our apartment, and walked down the path in the middle of the street. We made our way to the pub for some comfort food and a couple of pints.

Time away from my paper, a warm cottage pie, and encouraging words from my room-



Lenten snow angel sets theme for stories of hope.

mate, had me leaving the pub feeling the tiniest hints of hope, or almost hope.

I was still certain I was doomed, but I figured maybe that wasn't so bad. Besides, the snow was beautiful.

Leaving the pub, walking

home along the narrow foot path, surrounded by high walls of snow on either side, I started to feel just a little lighter.

Maybe I could get through this, maybe. I suddenly flopped myself down in the soft snow. I lay in there, looking up at the

starry sky, and started waving my arms, as if willing an angel to appear in the snow. An angel surrounding my paper wouldn't hurt either.

Years later, at a UCC event, I met a clergy person who had also lived in Annapolis during college.

We reminisced about what it was like there then. He even remembered the same snow storm and the days of unplowed streets. It turns out he lived just past the end of Maryland Ave. Such coincidences!

Then he told me the story of how one night, during that snowy time, he was walking home and he saw a snow angel along the path.

He remarked that it brought him a bit of joy and a tiny glimmer of hope, in what had been a hard time for him. He still remembered that snow angel all these years later.

Prayer: Thank you for putting people and places and angels in our path to give us hope when we feel that we have none of our own.

'Sharing Stories of Hope' is theme for Lenten stories

"Sharing Stories of Hope (The Hopeful and the Hopeless) lessing01@gmail.com, for the PNC's Lenten Story Sharing on the PNC-UCC Conference Facebook Page.

The scripture reference to inspire stories is: "And we boast in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2b).

As Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister of church vitality, listened around the conference the first months of 2022, hope was an ongoing theme.

"Hope for glimmers of change, hope for what might come, hope as an antidote to despair. Some of us are feeling full of hope. Some of us are looking, yearning, eager

for hope. Some of us are deep in hopelessness. Still some—most?—of us feel all of these ways depending on the day. Sometimes we feel all these ways in the same day," said Courtney.

With Lent being a time of reflection and preparation, she invited people again to share testimonial stories with one another as a Lenten practice. The theme is "Sharing Stories of Hope."

"I noticed that when one person shares their feelings of hopefulness it often makes others feel a bit more hopeful themselves. I hope that this series will include stories about hope to inspire hope in others,"

she said, inviting PNC folks to share a story of a time they felt hopeful, or where they saw hope incarnated in the world.

"It is important to share these glimmers of hope when we see them. The hope of one person can fan the flames of hope in another," Courtney said. "Hope is contagious. Sometimes the hope of others is just enough to get us through our own lack of hope."

Aware that not everyone feels connected to any stories of hope these days, she clarified that more important than sharing stories of hope "is simply sharing yourself, sharing an authentic story that comes from you."

She noted it might be a story about hope, may be about struggling with hope or may be about feeling hopeless.

"No matter what, you, the real you, are welcome here," Courtney said, reminding that in the UCC we say, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you know you are welcome here"—with or without hope.

She invited people to share their stories and read the stories of others.

To subscribe to the daily story series, go to <http://eepurl.com/gfCsyv>

To submit a story, click <https://forms.gle/kcfK6pivw-fjG2Upc9>.

Andy CastroLang transitions into retirement

After 20 years as pastor of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) in Spokane, Andrea (Andy) CastroLang will retire Aug. 31—because she is turning 65.

“I’m retiring on a high note with Westminster and me in a good place, so we will have a *good* good-bye,” she said. “Westminster is ready to be challenged by a new leader. I’ve given them my best. It’s someone else’s turn.

Rather than the usual 60 to 90 days notice, Westminster consulted with Pacific Northwest UCC Conference Minister Mike Denton and Minister of Church Vitality Courtney Stange-Tregear on options.

Unlike usual transitions in the UCC to have an interim, Westminster chose a mentor successor model. On April 4, they called their new pastor Bob Feeney, who will move from Wellesley, Mass., to Spokane July 1 to have two months of overlap time with Andy.

When Andy leaves, she will cut contact with the church for 18 months, so the new pastor can establish bonds. She will attend worship at First Congregational UCC in Colville, where her husband, Jim, is pastor, or will worship with many churches are doing hybrid worship. She can also worship with her first UCC home, United Churches of Olympia and other PNC churches she knows from serving two years as moderator and on the N-Sid-Sen Camp Advisory Committee.

Andy helped establish the PNC model for someone to serve as vice moderator one year, moderator two years, and one year as immediate past moderator for continuity.

She realized it would be hard to follow a pastor who had served the church for 20 years. She remembers arriving at Westminster in 2002, being handed two folders by the in-



Andy CastroLang retires after 20 years at Westminster UCC.

terim minister and then having to take time to meet the people and sort out the ministry.

The usual pattern in the UCC is for an interim to help a church heal from any problems, but Westminster is not in any conflict.

It has momentum that includes:

- Ekklesia groups are looking at future options for the church to use its space at 4th and Washington and options for ministry beyond the location.

- Tuesday Night Talks, started in COVID and replaced Sunday adult forums. They explored racism last year and are looking at spirituality and activism now.

- A strong, active youth group is studying issues, taking cookies to elders, finding ways to serve Afghan refugees, learning about the Holocaust and connecting with Samoan efforts to remove a racist statue.

- Spokane Alliance involvement over more than Andy’s 20 years provides ongoing relationship building and community organizing, involving members in sharing stories to discern issues such as health care, apprentice workers, affordable housing and more.

- Strong financial support

and the possibility of 200 new neighbors in a six story apartment building planned for part of the block the church is on.

In 2005, the church was in a financial crisis and sold an apartment building next door, the Discovery School—formerly the church’s education wing—and a parking lot for Spokane Housing Ventures to develop affordable housing.

“We put some proceeds in our Second Century Fund and used the rest to help the church sustain itself,” she said.

The 2008 economic downturn meant Spokane Housing Ventures sold the property. The new owners discovered asbestos, stalling plans. A new developer plans apartments for young single people, health workers and college students who want to live near downtown.

The church decided not to pause to search for an interim and then for a permanent pastor.

They thought with an overlap the new minister would get to know the church and community while the church builds trust in that person. Andy would share what she knows and her connections in the community.

“Westminster has many committed, energetic lay leaders,” she said. “We have already

set statements of who we are.”

Andy said that her sticking through 20 years at the church was inspired by a book she read early in her ministry about pastors needing to commit to a place through good times and bad as “a form of spiritual discipline.”

That spoke to her, because she was influenced by Benedictine spirituality often going with her parents to a Benedictine monastery.

“Benedictine vows are not just poverty, chastity and obedience, but also include a vow to stability—not to get up and go when things get tough but to see if they can work through,” she said.

“There is much dismay, distrust and toxic relationships in churches as in society, but we are not to give up on people,” she said, telling of a conflict with a small group. The church evaluated her ministry and decided she was a good fit, so she renewed her call to the church.

“In my 20 years, there have been ups and downs,” she said. “By hanging in, the church was able to see what it was capable of, what it wanted to be and where it was going.”

Community organizing with the Spokane Alliance taught Andy what she felt intuitively that relationships endure beyond differences of opinion. Building meaningful relationships is more than talking over coffee on Sunday.

“The UCC covenant holds us together based on love and commitment,” said Andy, adding that she is ecumenical and interfaith.

“What I love about the church is we grow and grow and grow. We want to do better so we challenge ourselves to be better Jesus followers,” she said. “We show up and do what we have to do.”

For information, call 624-1366 or visit westminsterucc.org.

Shalom Richland opts to connect donors with needs

Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland has found a niche to support and welcome Afghan refugees since October.

“We did not adopt a family but recognized there was a need to coordinate donations,” said Marsha Stipe of the Mission and Social Action Committee and the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition.

Shalom’s church secretary, Lauralee Sorenson, developed a spread sheet of items and services that matches people in the church and community who offer items and services with Afghan refugees who have those specific needs.

The services and needs include furniture, bedding, household items, clothing, gift certificates, English tutoring and or transportation to buy coats, grocery shop or go to a prayer service.

The first four families came Richland in September. Then seven families came Nov. 16 and four by Dec. 20. Two individuals came in February.

The families range in size from one man to a family of 12, a mother, father and their 10 children. The children range in age from newborns to 18 years. Most families have young children.

To date, 17 Afghan families with 75 individuals have arrived in the Tri-Cities through World Relief, which had cut back its capacity and staff under the previous administration.

World Relief resettled 16 families in 2020 and now have more than 100—including refugees from other countries. Marsha said they have been working to hire staff.

“**Having the spreadsheet** has allowed us to match items and services to needs without stock piling items at the church or giving unneeded items to families,” said Marsha.

People can email or call that information into the church



Volunteers load furniture for Afghan refugees in Tri-Cities.

Photos courtesy of Shalom UCC Richland office. The potential donations are entered onto the spread sheet then matched with families’ needs.

Two members have volunteered to teach English classes at the Family Learning Center.

In addition, through its Mission and Social Action Committee, Shalom UCC has donated \$500 to the Family

Learning Center for English Workbooks and Oxford picture dictionaries.

“**These items make a difference** for the new families in learning English, but are difficult for them to afford,” she said. “The people receiving these books were thrilled and thankful. Each book has

a bookplate noting Shalom’s contribution.

Shalom UCC works with Tri-Cities Afghan Resettlement, which was started by Sabia Khan, a member of the Islamic Center of Tri Cities.

Originally Sabia planned collect donations. Then Shalom suggested it would manage the exchange of goods and services.

“Our members started with helping deliver furniture and items to newly arrived families,” Marsha said.

Marsha has begun to know families by going on home visits with Sabia, who is from Iraq and speaks some Farsi. Over tea they find out a family’s needs.

One need she discovered was for big bowls for the women to mix the big, round flat bread they eat at every meal. The church had big bowls it wasn’t using.

The Altrusa organization donated \$50 gift cards for each person. Marsha takes them to people.

When families first come, they stay in a hotel. One family was in a hotel for a month and did not have food, so the gift cards helped them buy food.

“Our church members just work with families as they need it, rather than adopting one family,” she said.

With a large Ukrainian population in the Tri-Cities and plans to resettle 100,000 Ukrainians in the U.S., primarily with families, Marsha is aware attention may turn from Afghani to Ukrainian refugees.

From conversations with Irene Hassan the national UCC minister for refugee and migrant ministry, Global HOPE (Humanitarian Opportunities for Progress and Empowerment), Marsha knows of concern that attention may shift.

For information, call 541-720-0131 or email tricitieimmigrantcoalition@gmail.com.

Fauntleroy resettles a single woman from Iran

Fauntleroy UCC in Seattle signed up with the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia Refugee Resettlement office to resettle an Afghan family, but were assigned a woman from Iran in February.

One reason is that two members of the church's 10-member Immigration Task Force has remodeled a garage as a studio apartment and made it available for the church to use for a refugee.

The space fit the needs of the 34-year-old woman from Iran, who had been in Turkey eight years.

"It's a delight working with her," said Bob Wyss, whose co-chair, Dianne Sprague moved with him to Seattle three years ago Connecticut to be near a grandchild and joined Fauntleroy.

Dianne had previously been involved with the Storrs



Fauntleroy Immigration Task Force volunteers Maria Groen and Ev Eldridge offer job raining for a refugee and translator.

Photos courtesy Bob Wyss

Congregational Church in resettling Syrian refugees about six years ago.

Committee members at Fauntleroy are involved in different ways. Having housing

provided free for as long as the woman needs it means the biggest task is ESL training.

Several members of the team are doing ESL lessons with her every day.

Others are providing transportation to the grocery store, orienting her to the bus system, finding medical and dental care, helping her find a job.

"She is learning English fast so she can find a job and be self-sufficient," Bob said.

Fauntleroy has a history of working with immigrants, first after World War II and then after Vietnam. Later they were involved with asylum-seeking families from Central America.

As others, they began working with World Relief, but cut off after the issue about not hiring a gay attorney in Spokane.

For information, call 206-932-5600 or email bobwyss@gmail.com.

University UCC partners to share Afghan family

University Congregational UCC's Immigrant Justice Committee is co-sponsoring a family through the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia Refugee Resettlement Office with Prospect UCC and University Temple United Methodist Church.

They began reaching out to learn about the agencies resettling in Seattle and participated in webinars with Irene Hassan of the national UCC.

"Refugee offices ramped up, but were overwhelmed with the numbers of refugees coming," said Cassie Emanuel of the church's resettlement committee.

Initially, they provided a welcome kit, stocking their pantry with food for a Halal diet. They also found a small mosque to attend in Renton

They have team of 25 volunteers divided in task groups to help orient them to the com-

munity. One is responsible for furnishings, a second is doing ESL work, a third is doing school enrollment and a fourth is providing assistance with finding health care and a fifth is taking them shopping for seasonal clothing and orienting them to the community.

The churches are also responsible for raising funds to cover rent and utilities when they find housing.

The diocesan resettlement office provides a case manager. The Episcopal Diocese is contracted with the U.S. government to assist them for three months, but suggests the churches commit to walk beside the family for a year.

The children ages six to 18 need to be enrolled in elementary, middle and high school and community college.

Only one member of the family has working knowledge

of English, said Cassie. The rest have mixed levels of English.

"So we have been able to manage without an interpreter," she said.

Housing is the main struggle, because the family needs permanent housing for the children to register for school and the parents to get jobs. The children have been out of school eight months.

They arrived in September at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, and came to Washington in late January, staying in an Airbnb, free housing and an extended stay in a motel.

"When they find an apartment, we can provide more support, helping them navigate the neighborhood, learn the nearby bus routes find medical care and furniture.

"We have good leads, but finding housing for a family of eight is hard," she said.

"For our congregation, it helps members be more aware of the rest of the world and extend our ministry beyond our doors," said Cassie, a retired UCC pastor from New Hampshire who moved to Seattle to be near grandchildren.

She has been involved with University Congregational UCC for 10 years.

Cassie also went with a group including some from Prospect UCC to take a welcome meal to the family and were surprised that the family had prepared a meal for them.

"They extended hospitality to us and served us a feast with their meager resources," Cassie said. "They are teaching us as much as we are helping them manage in a new world for them," she said.

For information, call 206-384-6111 or email cassieemanuel12@gmail.com.

Plymouth UCC welcomes Afghan family of eight

The Immigrant Committee of Plymouth UCC Seattle started efforts to resettle an Afghani family in August and finally received a family Feb. 14 through Viets for Afghans.

Carol Mooney, co-chair of the committee with Vicki Schoettle, said they had planned to work through World Relief until a new employee in Spokane was rejected by the national office because he was gay.

Viets for Afghans is a volunteer coalition mobilizing the Vietnamese community in Washington state because they relate to the trauma of Afghans fleeing after the U.S. military pulled out of their country and doors opened to resettle in the United States. The coalition has settled eight families in the Seattle area.

Plymouth is welcoming a family of eight—two parents with six children.

Viets for Afghans has suggestions for how to help families resettle in the first, second and third months.

Plymouth has connected with University Congregational UCC and Fauntleroy UCC in Seattle, which are also resettling families.

“We began talking with each other as the national UCC was encouraging churches help



Volunteers found sewing machine used by Irish immigrant.

Photo courtesy of Vicki Schoettle

resettle Afghans,” Carol said. “We are also connecting with Aneelah Afzali with the Muslim Association of Puget Sound.

Plymouth formed a Welcoming Circle to divide responsibilities for legal work, settling children in schools, involving parents in English classes, dealing with medical and insurance issues, finding housing and jobs.

“The father and two elementary age children speak some English, but the middle school girls, two preschoolers and mother speak no English,” Carol said.

Because the federal government requires that refugees receive \$2,275 per person, Plymouth has worked to raise funds from the Plymouth Com-

munity Action Board funds.

The temporary housing where they are staying is furnished, but the church is also seeking donations of funds and furniture for when they move into permanent housing. Families also receive food from food banks and the school.

Vicki added that they have a car donated and are helping them get drivers licenses and find housing.

“It’s an honor to be part of the group helping them. They are incredible people working through a great deal,” Carol said.

She is also impressed and inspired by working with this Muslim family for whom prayer is part of each day, rising early to pray and praying many

times in the day.

“I am humbled by the challenge they face in learning English, which has a different alphabet. Sometimes I’m trapped in my own world and don’t realize how blessed I am,” said Carol, who has attended Plymouth for 30 years and appreciates its focus on social justice work.

Having served in the Peace Corps in Togo and having visited Uganda, Nicaragua, China and Mexico, she likes working with people of other cultures and is aware that “much of our world just needs fairness.”

Vicki said the committee were told that Afghan women need sewing machines. She had planned to donate an old one she had, but it was broken.

Then she learned through Viets for Afghans that someone had a sewing machine to donate.”

“When I went to pick it up, I found that the antique sewing machine was used by the woman’s great-grandmother, who immigrated from Ireland. It had been used by every generation in the family,” she said. “They wanted to give it to a refugee family.”

For information, call 206-622-4865 or email clmooney08@gmail.com or vicki.schoettle@gmail.com.

Prospect UCC sponsors a family with University UCC

Prospect UCC in Seattle church is partnering with University Congregational UCC to sponsor an Afghan refugee family of eight.

Recently, eight volunteers from the two churches prepared a welcome meal.

Cora Trujillo of Prospect loaded it and five of the group in her car. They drove to Tacoma in rush hour traffic to deliver the meal to the family.

Whether it was because of a miscommunication or because of their generosity, they also

prepared a meal,” Cora said. “Even though they speak little English and communication was difficult, we learned about their experiences and needs.

“I sensed frustration,” Cora said. “They have been moved at least four times from one housing situation to another. It’s a difficult task to find permanent low-cost housing in the south Seattle area, but they can’t look for work or enroll their children in school until they have permanent housing.

“All are anxious to learn

or improve their English. The six-year-old girl showed me \ she could count to 100, name colors and parts of the body in English,” she said. “They are ready to start one on one tutoring as soon as possible”

Cora said the mother, a seamstress, asked for a sewing machine. The eldest son asked for a laptop so he can attend college to study computer technology. The two oldest sons and the parents want work.

To this family, coming to America means hope,” she said.

Cora drove home with renewed gratitude for being a citizen of the U.S.

“America, with all our problems, is a beacon of hope for so many. Why can’t I be grateful every day, just for where I live?” she asked.

“Please join me in praying for this deserving family and for the gratitude for the hope they have that their dreams will be fulfilled,” Cora said.

For information, call 206-322-6030 or email prospec-tucc@yahoo.com.

Richmond Beach UCC members resettle 10

Richmond Beach Congregational UCC reports that members' donations of time, materials and money are responsible for the successful resettlement of a 10-member Afghan family.

The church set up a "Circle of Welcome," partnering with the nearby St. Luke's Catholic and First Lutheran churches to co-sponsor an Afghan family through Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW).

The previous year, St. Luke's and First Lutheran had resettled a family from a small village.

The goal has been to assist with housing, job search, education and cultural orientation, so the family will move to self-sufficiency in their first year. LCSNW provides volunteer training and support as well as case management and translation services.

The family of 10—two parents, four boys and four girls



Afghan refugee twins celebrate their second birthday

Photos courtesy of Richmond Beach UCC

from ages two to 19—is from the northeast province of Badakhshan. The father served for

15 years as security guard at the U.S. embassy in Kabul.

After a hurried exit from Afghanistan, they spent two months in Germany, three months at a military camp in New Jersey and a month at an AirBnB in Seattle," Donna Leggett, co-coordinator in Richmond Beach Congregational UCC in Shoreline with Martha Clay.

"Thanks be to God that through their perseverance and our commitment they are able to settle in their new home and all of us will gain new experiences," Donna said.

It takes about a year of working with a family to help them find jobs, adjust to school, help with homework and adapt to the new language and culture.

"We expect to resettle another family in the coming year," said Donna.

They are responsible for raising funds and recruiting people to be involved. Last year for the first, they just raised funds—\$3,000. This year, members are involved as well.

"We had expected the family would be in permanent

housing by now, but that wasn't happening until March 28, when they moved into an apartment complex where the previous family lives. It's close to a mosque," said Peggy.

"I tutored the 16-year-old daughter, teaching her English and she taught me Dari, a language that has a different alphabet and reads right to left rather than left to right," she said.

The father of the eight children ranging from age two (twins) to 19, had worked in Kabul for 15 years as a security guard at the U.S. embassy.

"Much has changed since last year for our church," said Donna, a member for 25 years who moved to Seattle 50 years ago.

After nearly two years of observing COVID restrictions and the accompanying seclusion, the church's desire to be directly engaged with a family grew.

The church also welcomed Jill Bierwirth as interim pastor, and worship services are now both streamed and in person.

Donna, who worked 10 years as an activity coordinator in a retirement community, as a bus driver, sandwich shop owner and actress over the years, said that the resettlement activity grew out of the church's outreach committee.

That committee also does food drives for the local food bank, provides diapers and wipes for the Healthy Start program with low income mothers and has sponsored with five other churches a homeless encampment, Camp United We Stand, which moves locations every six months.

The church had hoped to use property it had for Housing Hope, but community opposition led them to sell the property to a developer who has built four homes.

For information, call 425-361-6499 or email donna-jleggett@gmail.com.



Oldest son appreciates view of Puget Sound.

N-Sid-Sen gears up for full summer program

After nearly 10 years as managing director of N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene, Mark Boyd will step down from that position the end of the summer season.

He and his wife, Julie, will move to western Washington, where he will become associate director at Pilgrim Firs at Port Orchard, where he previously served as associate director.

"Family needs are calling us back to Puget Sound," he said in an announcement on Facebook, expressing appreciation for his work at N-Sid-Sen with "so many amazing people—our campers, partners, guest groups and all the incredible staff and volunteers.

So along with sadness leaving N-Sid-Sen, he celebrates it as "sacred grounds, place to be cherished, where people grow in their faith live and work together in Christian community, learn about respect for themselves and others, and show God's love by truly caring for all creation."

In announcing the programs for 2022, Mark noted that church camp is both fun and a sacred place with intense relations and positive role models, as he invites churches to recruit campers for summer 2022.

'Campers and leaders live, work, play and worship from



The camp dog, Sage, swims in the sunset at N-Sid-Sen.

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

early morning until late evening," he said. "They grow together through shared experiences and form an intentional community as they hear faith stories and share their own.

The theme for 2022 is "What's in a Name?" Campers will look at how people of the Bible confronted expectations, confounded assumptions and forged new identities.

Mark asks churches to select a Sunday as Camp Sunday and use resources he sent in a promotional packet.

Summer camp information was also mailed to camp families whose members came the last three summers.

"Summer camp at N-Sid-Sen is an important piece of

year-round faith formation for PNC-UCC churches," he said.

To encourage church families to come to camp and send children, many congregations pay part of the camp fee.

Families and campers may also pay "basic fees" or "gratitude rates," the latter to cover the true cost of the camp.

"Recognizing families are differently gifted, we offer two rates for each camp. Families can choose the rate most comfortable for their circumstances," Mark said.

The basic rate covers direct costs and the gratitude rate reflects true costs including facility maintenance, equipment repair and replacement, and program development.

The Early Bird Deadline, April 15, includes a discount. There is also a discount for families registering three or more for a family camp.

To assure children can attend, churches also provide scholarships and N-Sid-Sen has a scholarship fund.

N-Sid-Sen seeks volunteer cabin leaders, session directors, nurses and resource people.

There are paid positions from mid-June through August. N-Sid-Sen seeks summer staff to clean buildings and grounds, and there are positions for hospitality staff to assist in the kitchen with meal prep, service and clean-up. N-Sid-Sen also needs certified lifeguards to supervise lakefront activities two to four hours a day and assist with weekly float trips.

Staff need to be fully vaccinated and boosted.

Work camps are another opportunity to help. There will be a Work Camp from 4 p.m., Thursday to 9 a.m. Sunday, May 5 to 8 to spruce up the grounds with carpentry, cleaning, painting, raking, power washing and brush removal. Youth and adult fellowship groups, families and individuals may sign up.

Meals, lodging and supplies are provided, but volunteers must sign up to participate.

Registration is online at www.n-sid-sen.org.

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

N-Sid-Sen has announced the dates for the 2022 summer adventures:

Kids Camp for grades 2-4 is July 10 to 13

Intermediate Camp for grades 5-6 is July 3 to 9

Junior High Camp for grades 7-9 is July 3 to 9

Senior High Camp for grades 10-13 is July 10-16

Emerging Young Adult ages 18-35 is June 30 -July 3

Family Camp 1 for all ages is July 24 to 30

Family Camp 2 for all ages in July 31 to Aug. 6

The Basic Rate per person for Family camp is \$370 for adults and teens, \$350 for ages 8 to 12, \$295 for ages 3 to 7, and no charge for under 3. The Gratitude rates are \$470, \$450, \$345 respectively.

Camps offer swimming, campfires, faith chats, canoeing, crafts, yummy meals, games, hiking, s'mores, singing and welcoming Christian community.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or email mark@n-sid-sen.org.

Conference invites donations to Anti-racism Fund

By Andy Warren
PNC Accounting Manger

Delegates, friends of the conference and conference churches will soon be receiving an appeal letter from the PNC Stewardship Committee asking for support to raise funding for the Conference work towards anti-racism.

The PNC-UCC has a \$52,000 budget commitment that was unanimously voted for by delegates at the last annual meeting.

The Conference has two options to fulfill the commitment: use our board-controlled funds—money used to sustain the conference when OCWM and other contribu-

tions are lower than expenses—or receive additional financial support from people throughout the PNC for this antiracism priority initiative.

If we exceed this \$52,000 goal, all gifts will go directly to the Anti-racism Fund and allow us to increase the impact made by our financial contributions

As a member of this committee, I wanted to share with you why I will be, and have been supporting our anti-racism fund. I believe I have been incredibly blessed and fortunate in my life. I grew up in white middle class suburbia, was fortunate enough to graduate from college

without loans, and was even more fortunate to hold senior management positions in accounting and finance at a variety of companies over a span of 45 years.

Frankly, while I always worked hard, I believe I was also this fortunate because I am white. I benefited from our white supremacy culture and the systems that support it. I had opportunities that were simply not afforded to others.

I believe it is my duty as a Christian and my sense of fairness to share my time and money to help break down this unjust system so all may be afforded the opportunities

I had. This is my personal belief.

Like many of you, I also believe in the work of the UCC and in the work of the Pacific Northwest Conference. The last four words of our Conference mission statement -“and working for justice”- says it all for me and

So I ask that when you receive this letter in the weeks ahead, prayerfully consider giving to justice and our anti-racism efforts. It is important that we make a difference.

It is important that our annual meeting votes are more than just words.

To donate, visit <http://www.pncc.org/donate>.

Andy CastroLang is the Annual Meeting preacher

Continued from page 1

PNC-UCC anti-racism work, Moderator Hillary will direct questions to those with the possible answers, keeping the budget hearing moving smoothly.”

To expedite matters, Tara suggests that everyone review the budget before the meeting. A budget and finance report packet is online at <https://pncc.org/new-page-1>, Delegates can direct questions to the Stewardship Committee and Budget Sub-Committee, or to the treasurer or bookkeeper.

The budget hearing begins at 9:45 a.m., with a time to focus on the overall budget with questions and answers prepared in advance.

“**The hard part** of the meeting will be reviewing the nominees,” Tara continued. “Many positions on the board and committees are not filled. Finding individuals ready to do Christ’s work in the PNC is becoming more difficult.

“There is a post-pandemic weariness that most can see, but the work doesn’t go away simply because no one is there



to do it. A call to duty is being given to all who find both the Spirit and energy to do so,” said Tara, speaking on behalf of the Annual Meeting committee.

What about personal connections made at Annual Meetings?

The committee plans an in-person fall gathering for the PNC with worship services, workshops and storytelling of the time apart—including “how we survived the pandemic thus far, what has changes and how we’ve grown,” she said.

The theme, “Promised Hope,” refers to the hope all

have clung to in these difficult years. The fall gathering theme is “Hope United,” referring to the “Hymn of Promise”—or “In the Bulb There Is a Flower.”

“In it, we find what we have consciously or unconsciously held tight to all this time, the promise that God gives to us that all things grow but only once they’ve died,” said Tara. “We all died a little in this pandemic, but now we’ve a chance to grow in new and wonderful ways.”

Preaching for the Sunday worship will be Andy CastroLang and the service will be held in Westminster Congrega-

tional UCC in Spokane, where Annual Meeting was scheduled to be held for two years, but had the in person gathering canceled.

While most people will join in the worship on Zoom—and Westminster is set up to do that—many of the PNC-UCC churches in Eastern Washington will close their doors and encourage members to come to Spokane to join in Annual Meeting worship in person.

One way this Annual Meeting will be different, or semi-post pandemic, is in the hope that churches will gather for the first time looking ahead to meeting in person the fall, Tara said.

Tara reminded that conference work and Christ’s church needs to be fulfilled and so attendance by the delegates and leaders is necessary.

Registration for \$25/person is open at www.pncc.org or registration may be done through congregations.

For information, call Arlene Hobson at 206-725-8383 or email arlene@pncc.org.