



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Church builds relationships with neighbors

Community dinner is one of several ways Normandy Park UCC is reaching out

Normandy Park United Church of Christ is building new relationships into its local communities of Des Moines and Normandy Park through its long-time ministries working with a Homeless Shelter in the Presbyterian Church and the Des Moines Food Bank.

“We discovered it through our church family, who are volunteers, teachers and parents involved in our local schools,” said Jane Lohry Armstrong, who was moderator when the effort began last January. “We took note of the growing face of homelessness and struggle just outside our doors, next door.”

The church learned that children from at least 10 families were coming to the nearby school by taxi from a shelter,

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Ron Weightman, chair of the outreach committee, prepares to cook a recent monthly dinner for people in the Des Moines and Normandy Park communities.

Photo courtesy of Normandy Park UCC

Annual Meeting will be April 25 to 27 in Seattle

“Welcome Home” is the theme for the 2014 Pacific Northwest Conference UCC Annual Meeting, which will be held Friday to Sunday, April 25 to 27, at University Congregational UCC in Seattle.

Featured speakers are Christena Cleveland, assistant professor of psychology at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minn.; the Rev. Lillian Daniel, a pastor, writer and teacher who has been senior minister of the First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn, Ill., since 2004, and the Rev. Mike Denton, PNC conference minister.

Christena, the author of *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep Us Apart*, is a researcher and teacher with organizational experience



in building unity as she consults with pastors and organizational leaders on multicultural issues.

Lillian, author of *When Spiritual But Not Religious Is Not Enough: Seeing God in Surprising Places, Even the Church*, offers a case for why religious community matters.

She co-authored *This Odd and Wondrous Calling: The Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers* with Martin Copenhagen. Her first book, *Tell It Like It*

Is: Reclaiming the Practice of Testimony is the story of one church’s attempt to get people to talk to each other about God.

Mike, who was ordained in 1999 after graduating from Chicago Theological Seminary has been conference minister since January

2008. He has worked 25 years with religious institutions in street ministry, housing rights and as association co-minister for the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the Illinois Conference.

Annual Meeting includes worship and singing, business and resolutions, workshops and fellowship.

For information, call 509-624-1366 or email pastorandy@westminsterucc.org.

Church conflicts influenced by political fights

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

As you can imagine, a good bit of my time is spent learning about churches in conflicts of one sort or another. I've been involved in regional church work for about 10 years now, and—for better and for worse—this means I've seen, heard or been involved in a pretty wide spectrum of what church conflicts can be.

Church conflicts are not getting easier. Church conflicts have never been simple because of the personal nature of faith, traditions and the sense of ownership many have about their churches but in the last 10 year I've been doing this work church conflicts have become meaner and more entrenched. As I mentioned in a previous column, church conflicts are one of the primary reasons people are distancing themselves from churches.

The style of church fights seem to be more and more influenced by the style of our political fights than any of the ideals laid out in the gospels or the epistles. Instead of our churches seeking to model healthy conflict for the world, we seem to model more and more of our conflicts after the most dysfunctional, messy conflicts that are tearing the world apart.

We can do better. *We need* to do better. So, let me throw out five things that I think would help.

Get to know each other. I know this might be self evident and most church communities think they're friendly but being friendly and knowing each other are not the same thing. Many churches end up moving in to conflict because folks don't have the relational base to solve disagreements in better ways. That time of coffee after church? Committee meetings? Volunteer opportunities? Mission trips? Retreats? Faith formation classes? Bible study? These aren't just central to church life because of the content of these activities but because of how these activities help build relationships and community. As these activities decrease, more difficult conflicts increase or, just as worse, apathy settles in and smothers congregations.

Pray for each other and with each other... *especially* if you're in conflict. What is your community being called to do? What is your church's vocation? Prayer is weird and beautiful and I really don't understand it *and* I know that doing it makes a difference. If you're courageous, specifically ask those you disagree with to pray for you. Which reminds me...

Be courageous. Yep. Every conflict, every single one, requires courage. Every conflict, every single one, is just as much about what people aren't saying as what they are saying. Folks hold back about what something means to them or what their stake in a decision is. Sometimes, the main reason people are involved in a conflict is because a person they consider to be their friend is involved and they're taking sides (see #1 and #2). Be courageous enough to disagree with your friends and name what is true for you. Otherwise, conflicts will just get bigger and bigger and encourage people to take sides when compromise might have been possible.

If money is not the issue, do not make money the issue. This is huge. I can understand people being hesitant to give financially to a community if the stewardship of that money is the primary concern. There is some logic in that, but, withholding monies or offering monies to try and manipulate the *mission* of a church is a betrayal of the whole community and a form of hostage taking or bribery. The community discerns what their call is and choosing to be part of a community means that you do not always get what you want. Belonging to a church means sharing what you can. If you can no longer do this because you are not called to the same mission the rest of the church is called to, you need to seriously consider seeking out a new church community; graciously and kindly. If there are folks in your church doing this, listen to them, pray with and for them and—if it becomes clear that their vocation and the vocation of the church are incompatible—except their resignation graciously and kindly.

Make. A. Decision. In the end, we can't do everything and can't make everyone 100 percent happy. Churches' tortured decision making processes are what makes many conflicts so painful. The majority of church conflicts aren't because the church *can't* make a decision but because they won't. Read #1-#4 one more time, please. Its not difficult to find resources that might be helpful, here. Carefully consider if some of the same resources you use in your family or work life to manage conflict might apply.

What are some other things you'd add? I'm going to be posting this article to my blog <http://thoughtsandprayers-mike.blogspot.com/> and on our conference Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pncucc?ref=hl>. Feel free to add your own suggestions there.

- **Get to know each other**
- **Pray for & with each other**
- **Be courteous to each other**
- **Continue to give**
- **Continue to make decisions**

Transitions announced

The Rev. Cindy Bauleke, minister of Lummi Island UCC for nearly seven years, retires in January. After she retired from First Congregational UCC in Bellingham, she served Lummi Island UCC part-time.

The Rev. Donald Schmidt has been called as the new associate conference minister for the Hawaii Conference. His last day at Admiral UCC is Dec. 29.

The Rev. Ernst Sprenger, who served churches in Selby, S.D., Longmont, Colo., Middle Haddam, Conn., and Philadelphia Congregational and Zion Churches in Ritzville, died in October. He retired in 1986 in Ritzville.

Stewardship Committee seeks interest in financial training

Cheri Lovell, who has developed educational programs for the UCC Cornerstone Fund, will lead a training on “Money in the Church: Talking, Raising and Managing Money for God’s Work in the World” from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 1, at Plymouth Church, 1217 6th Ave. in Seattle.

While people of faith bring a variety of financial and other skills to their church leadership roles, management of church finances differs from business and non-profits. This seminar will help participants learn about the spiritual context to thinking about money, how church numbers differ, church-friendly financial statements, narrative budgets, and policies and procedures.

To register, call 206-725-8383.

Festival of Preaching planned

The 2014 Festival of Preaching Northwest, sponsored by Congregational Leadership Northwest, will be held Monday, April 28 to Thursday, May 1, at First United Methodist Church of Seattle, 180 Denny Way, Seattle.

It is a day longer than in the past. The festival welcomes 12 preachers and speakers, twice as many as in the past. The theme is “Preaching in a Post-Modern World.”

Featured speakers are Debbie Blue from the House of Mercy, Anna Carter Florence of Columbia Seminary; Scott Kisker from Wesleyan Seminary; independent theologian Tony Jones; young Disciples of Christ

leader Jose Morales; Heidi Neumark, Lutheran pastor and author; Rodger Nishioka from Columbia Seminary; Fleming Rutledge, Episcopal teacher and author; Melissa Skelton, head of the Congregation for Congregational Development and Pastor of St. Paul’s Episcopal in Seattle; Will Willimon of Duke, and Jim Forbes, pastor emeritus

of The Riverside Church in New York City.

Festival director Anthony Robinson said that there will be four pre-festival workshops, scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon Monday with Willimon or Carter Florence on the craft of preaching, and from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., with Nishioka or Skelton on the “post-modern” landscape and its implication for the church.

UCC co-sponsors include Plymouth and University Congregational UCC churches in Seattle.

For information, visit <http://www.festivalofpreachingnw.org>.

UCC Ministerial Profile changes

The United Church of Christ Ministerial Profile is changing. It will have the same purpose, but new technology was developed this year to better meet the needs of authorized ministers, conferences and calling bodies.

The new profiles portal goes live on January 31, 2014. It is already praised for being responsive, timely, strategic and user-friendly. Approved ministerial profiles as of January 31, 2014—now known as a vintage profile—will continue to be honored until the criminal background check expires. Anyone with a current criminal background check may choose to incorporate it into a new profile.

Authorized ministers may add information as a searchable “Snapshot” in the profiles portal during the first quarter of 2014.

For more information, visit <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/profile/>.

Our Whole Lives training set

Our Whole Lives (OWL) trainers Amy Johnson and Anil Oommen will lead an OWL facilitator training from grades K-6 May 16 to 18 at the Hillsdale Community Church, 6948 SW Capitol Hwy., in Portland, Ore.

They will provide sexuality education information for parents, teachers and pas-

tors to use in churches.

For information, call 503-246-5474, email pastor@hillsdaleucc.org or visit <http://www.hillsdaleucc.org>.

Conference News editor attends WCC 10th Assembly

Pacific Northwest Conference UCC News editor Mary Stamp attended the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches Oct. 27 to Nov. 9 in Busan, South Korea.

Attending as accredited press for The Fig Tree, which she also edits, she participated with 4,000 Christians from around the world as the WCC delegates voted to embark on a “pilgrimage for justice and peace” and committed to move together into the future. They called for Christians to “engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions” and churches “to be communities of healing and compassion.”

Mary wrote several articles for the national UCC News:

- One on a Disciples/Reformed communion service involving UCC leadership is at <http://www.ucc.org/news/WCC-Communion-11062013.html>.

- A second article on restoration of the hula in worship services in Hawaii is at <http://www.ucc.org/news/WCC-Hawaiian-hula-11072013.html>.

- A third is the story of Louis Blue Coat, a lay UCC minister from the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, who is involved with WCC indigenous work. It is at <http://www.ucc.org/news/wcc-2013-louis-blue-coat-11272013.html>.

Articles Mary wrote for The Fig Tree are online at <http://www.thefigtree.org>. They include an overview of the Assembly; a story from the pre-assembly on the community of women and men with women sharing stories of gender injustice; the opening prayer expressing cries and hopes from around the world; a story on a woman in North India who empowers women and men to challenge domestic violence and human trafficking, and a report on the 2011 agreement of the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Roman Catholic Church on mission and evangelism.

“Global friends give us new eyes to see what is happening here and elsewhere, and new ears to hear perspectives here and around the globe. These ties help us see that consistency in faith and life are possible and we need to be in solidarity with each other to make that happen,” she said.

For information, call 509-535-1813 or email editor@pncuccnews.org.

Conference News Briefs

Seeks new ways to serve the community **Wayside UCC completes reconstruction project**

For five years, Wayside UCC in Federal Way has been working on a remodeling project to expand its fellowship space, to make its rest rooms roomier and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and to expand and rearrange its kitchen.

Dennis Hollinger-Lant, the pastor, said that the \$650,000 reconstruction has added space, taken care of acoustical problems in the fellowship hall and added to its accessibility. Nursery space was also added.

It also replaced windows and floors, and redid the electrical, heating and plumbing systems. A new sidewalk leads to classrooms and a retaining wall was added between the parking lot and fellowship hall.

“We wanted to improve the space we have to enhance our ability to engage the community,” he said.

Two AA groups, an Al-Anon group and a Marshallese United Church of Christ and the Federal Way Chorale use the building.

“We also want to use the space to find new ways to do mission and outreach to the community,” Dennis said.

The church is involved in financially supporting an overnight shelter.

“We seek to nurture and empower each other, join ecumenically with other faith communities, reach out with love and understanding to all of God’s people, and promote peace, justice and respect for all creation,” he said.

In its community, Wayside’s outreach already includes budgetary support of and involvement of members in the Domestic Abuse Women’s Network, the Federal Way Community Caregiving Network, the Federal Way Multi-service Center, FUSION (Friends Unit-



Wayside UCC rededicates renovation of space in September.

ed to Shelter the Indigent, Oppressed and Needy), REACH OUT of Federal Way, and Valley Cities Mental Health Treatment Centered on Wellness, Resiliency and Recovery.

During the rebuilding, his sermons have challenged the church to consider how they might use the expanded space to reach out to the community.

Members also pitched in to save costs by helping with interior and exterior painting.

“Like families helping build a Habitat for Humanity house, we believed that if members put in ‘sweat equity,’ they would have more pride and the satisfaction of having worked on it,” he said.

“We worked with the UCC Capital Campaign Services representative, the Rev. Priscilla Bizer, and have a loan from the Cornerstone Fund after raising \$600,000 in pledges toward the total in a capital campaign we began in 2012,” he said.

“The capital campaign pledges are coming in. We seek to pay off the principal in two years,” he said.

The campaign has the commitment of 77 pledging units that set amounts by Easter 2012. Other pledges have been coming in since then. The church has a membership of 178 with about 80 attending each week.

Wayside UCC was founded in 1959. The chapel and fellowship hall were built in 1962. Two classrooms have been added, and in the 1980s, a meeting room and the office space, said Dennis, who has served the church since 1995.

“The building is now bigger and more welcoming, giving us space to play with,” Dennis said.

For information, call 2053-838-0915 or visit <http://www.waysideucc.org>.



Exterior includes sidewalk to classrooms. Photos courtesy of Wayside UCC.



New fellowship area includes more space.



New kitchen cabinets allowed for rearranging space.

Jim Spraker revisits sites of New Orleans recovery

Beginning early in 2006, the Pacific Northwest Conference sent work groups to help rehab houses in New Orleans.

"We provided 150 plus of the nearly 7,000 volunteers involved in the UCC Disaster Ministry," reported Jim Spraker, who participated in several of the work camps.

Randy Crowe, retired managing director of N-Sid-Sen, led seven conference teams and Bobbi Virta led four from her church in Ferndale.

This fall, Jim took a week-long vacation in New Orleans. In addition to the French Quarter and other tourist sites, he worshiped at Little Farms UCC, the site of the PNC's first project.

The work team replaced the siding on the church and the roof of the education wing.

"This small church lost 60 percent of its members as the result of Katrina," Jim said.

The Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC financially supported the church through its struggle to survive.

"The current moderator is so grateful to us," Jim said.

Little Farms UCC had a

part-time pastor during the past eight years, and he has retired. Their interim pastor is helping them work toward a new future.

"I revisited some of the projects we worked on. The first house we cleaned out is now restored and looking beautiful," Jim said. "A house in the central area, which is a traditional shotgun style, was a total rebuild. It is now filled with a family."

While New Orleans has recovered, he saw that there are still scars from Katrina.

"There are still abandoned houses in areas affected by flooding. In the 9th Ward, where 4,000 houses were destroyed, the Brad Pitt Foundation has built 90 houses with a goal of 150 houses," Jim said. "The houses are LEED, energy efficient and built six to eight feet above the ground."

"I was pleased to be a part of six of the Conference work groups and see that our efforts resulted restored housing for the people of New Orleans," he said.

For information, call 206-935-3214 or email jim@spraker.net.



Before-repair photos a home in 2008, above, and in 2006, the brick house, and photos of them in 2013. Photos courtesy of Jim Spraker



Through the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness

Minister advocates to end homelessness

Bill Kirlin-Hackett began volunteering with the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness (ITFH) soon after it grew out of a 2001 conference to “Create the Political Will to End Homelessness.”

In 2004, he became its director and in 2011 established a covenanted ministry between University Congregational UCC, the PNC, the ITFH and St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, where the offices are.

Bill adapted the companionship model developed by UCC pastor Craig Rennebohm with the Seattle Mental Health Chaplaincy, which is for individuals, to the ITFH to be a companion for many groups addressing homelessness.

“We had hoped that in 10 years we would reduce homeless so much that system remedies would handle it,” said Bill, “but it’s worse. Political systems are caught in power struggles, so agencies and people of faith need to understand that too many people do not have safe places to sleep.”

To help faith communities understand, he and the ITFH educate them to undo fears as many in society seek to criminalize homeless people. They also call all congregations to open their doors to those needing emergency shelter, while they help work to bring into reality a roof over every bed.

“Caring for homeless people is a mandate of our faith as Christians, Jews and Muslims,” he said of the interfaith constituents the task force connects.

“We confess one God and serve our neighbor first. Then talk about faith,” he said, noting that recently Union Gospel Mission has shifted from a policy of prayer first then soup.

The task force seeks to be an “informed, reliable and consistent voice of the religious community on homelessness



Bill Kirlin-Hackett serves as a covenanted minister with University Congregational UCC, the PNC, the ITFH and St. Luke’s Lutheran.

in Seattle and the King County area,” he said.

It provides a means for the religious community to exert moral leadership among leaders in the public, business, non-profit and private sectors, and to urge them to form regional solutions that end homelessness and create affordable supportive housing.

One effort started in early 2010 has established Safe Parking options for homeless families living in their vehicles. Because of advocacy, the City of Seattle and Seattle Parking Enforcement no longer apply the Scofflaw Law (four or more unpaid tickets) to boot vehicles, in which homeless families live.

In addition, it has recruited six churches to open their parking lots 24 hours for four vehicles of homeless people. University Congregational UCC has agreed to provide safe places for singles and families without children to park in its parking lot, which is beside a building it owns that Catholic Community

Services uses weekdays.

For two weeks at the time of the interview, UCUC was also hosting overnight in its main building 14 women and children from Mary’s Place Seattle. So families in vehicles have access to rest rooms and showers in the building through a keypad code. When temperatures drop below 30 degrees, they can sleep indoors.

Families are welcome to participate in all activities of the congregation—meals, study groups and other events.

Intake for the program is through Compass Housing Alliance, which provides case managers for the families.

The ITFH is the lead in building Safe Parking networks in the county with vehicle camps in Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, Kent, and Seattle. Conversations continue to widen the network to provide immediate protection and create paths to stable housing.

Seattle funds a safe parking outreach coordinator who

goes to public locations where people park to assist them in finding opportunities for safe parking and other needs.

The task force also seeks to engage participating congregations in studying topics related to homelessness, said Bill, who transferred his standing as an ordained Lutheran pastor since 1985, into the UCC in 2011.

“I entered ministry with a strong justice consciousness focusing on hunger,” said Bill, who last served a church in Newport Beach, Calif., with his wife Susan, who has been pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Lake Stevens since they came to Seattle in 1999.

Bill, whose bachelor’s degree was in finance, volunteered and did some part-time work in finance, before working with ITFH, which fits his commitment to justice ministry.

“I believe people of faith need to be engaged to solve and alleviate systems that harm people,” said Bill, noting that most of the other 10 clergy in covenanted ministry with University Congregational UCC are in various chaplaincy ministries. One covenanted minister, Marie Fortune with FaithTrust Institute addresses domestic violence and clergy ethics.

Working in a justice ministry with homeless people, he said part of his role is to educate members and connect them with opportunities to engage in homelessness ministry, such as the Safe Parking program.

“The task force is doing pioneering work,” Bill said, “so we learn as we go.

“People love to be educated, but the next step is to do something. Many hesitate to act unless there is something for them to do right away out of a study program,” he said. “Once they engage in action, they realize they have the ca-

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Church's energy is more positive, faith-filled

Continued from page 1

to keep them in their familiar school.

The church was already involved in the food bank and homeless shelter, which they helped start 13 years ago with 11 other churches.

Members were preparing meals to serve homeless people and people in need through the church kitchen, but delivered and served those meals to the Family and Adult Service Center, originally started by the UCC and now run by the Lutherans for chronically homeless people downtown.

"We observed there is as much need in the suburban communities as downtown," she said. "It was becoming more difficult to go downtown, park and deliver the meals as downtown demographics and our demographics were changing."

So they tweaked their approach.

"Now our approach is neighbor-to-neighbor," Jane said.

The women's fellowship had over the years upgraded the kitchen to a commercial food service set-up, and a number of years ago the congregation had built a fellowship hall with a place to serve meals.

The church decided to serve an outreach dinner in its fellowship hall, and put a sandwich-board sign out on the fourth Tuesday to announce that a community dinner is served and all are wel-

come.

The food bank also coordinated with a United Methodist, Lutheran and another church to serve meals on the other Tuesdays.

The local food bank has a notice up when the dinners are scheduled.

Now people are coming. Families are coming. Seniors are coming from a retirement community.

"We share the food together, and the numbers grow," she said. "New branches are growing on our tree as Normandy Park UCC."

Lon Rycraft, the pastor for the last six of the church's more than 50 years, said that when they started, they were serving about 25 people and recently served 60.

"These are people in between who need help," he said. "This is what the church should be doing—offering services that connect us with what is happening on the street and in the larger community. Some are homeless, and we help them find other help."

About 25 of the church's 130 members have been involved over the year. They help prepare and serve the meals. They greet people at the door. They play the piano. They also sit with people, sharing the meal with people and listening to their stories.

"We have no problem finding people to volunteer," Lon said.

Jane, who is also chair of the Pacific Northwest Conference personnel committee, described some of the "new branches" that are coming from Normandy Park UCC's new way of doing ministry.

People who attend the dinner have donated items to the rummage sale, which raised record funds this year. More people shopping the rummage sale rounded up their ticket, saying, "You are doing good things here."

New people are joining in worship. The summer Bible school program has grown from 36 children to more than 50.

"In December, we invite parents with VBS children to drop off their children for Advent and Christmas activities, and pizza, while they have a weeknight evening at home or out," Jane added.

In the summer, the church worships in the courtyard, outside in the natural setting of its five-acre landscaped lot of Douglas firs.

"We hear the birds—as well as the planes. Doing that has brought more people in our doors, as has our rainbow banner that says everyone is welcome," she said.

"The energy of our church has changed. It is positive and faith-filled," she added. "No longer do we keep the building and our community to ourselves."

"Sometimes change is a gentle breeze, a Spirit," she said. "It is happening for us as we open the doors and let it in."

**Members
serve meals,
dine with
the people,
and listen to
their stories.**

Task force coordinates work of nine agencies

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capacity, because it's just being with people as a person."

Bill encourages his congregation to include a line item for homelessness ministry, rather than just take special offerings.

In his leadership with the ITFH, Bill has also mediated between neighbors and cities about the location of Tent City 4, often in church parking lots. He addresses negative responses to build acceptance.

In 2013, the ITFH also

played a formative role in forming Camp Unity to facilitate a meeting of congregational hosts of the initial Tent City 4 to assure the health and survival of camps and to double tent shelter beds on the East Side.

The task force continues to companion and advance a variety of regional groups, including the Ballard Community Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness, the University District Conversation on Homelessness, the Lake

City Task Force on Homelessness, the Northshore Housing and Homelessness Group, the Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee, the Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches, the South King Homeless Forum, the Westside Interfaith Network, and the Executive Committee of KentHOPE. KentHOPE includes more than 25 congregations in greater Kent, working with Seattle Union Gospel Mission to open a day center, scheduled to

open mid-December 2013, and an overnight shelter.

During legislative sessions, the ITFH plans advocacy days, leads workshops for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance conference. It held its 13th annual "Creating the Political Will to End Homelessness Conference, "Engaging Homelessness," two September evenings in Kent and in Shoreline.

For information, email itfh@comcast.net or visit <http://www.itfhomelessness.org>.

Camp programs help campers discover who they are

The 2014 summer camp curriculum at both N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs has the theme, "Get Real: Finding Your True Self in Jesus."

Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen, said the curriculum fits needs of today's young people and families.

"In today's overwhelming culture of phony and misleading profiles, images and reality shows, we offer a place for youth to discover who and whose they are," he said.

He quotes from the curriculum published by Chalice



Family Camp #1 participants at N-Sid-Sen line up on the beach ready to join in aqua olympics.

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

2014 N-Sid-Sen camp and retreat schedule:

Junior & Senior High Midwinter Retreat
March 7 to 9

Women's Retreat
May 16 to 18

Work Camp
June 16 to 21

Emerging Adult Camp
June 22 to 22

Kid's Camp
July 6 to 9

Intermediate Camp
July 6 to 12

Senior High Aqua Camp
July 13 to 19

Family Camp #1
July 27 to Aug. 2

Junior High Aqua Camp
Aug. 3 to 9

Family Camp #2
Aug. 10 to 16

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

Press: "We are created in the image of God, who loves us just as we are and asks us to love others in the same way."

"At both N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs we will provide opportunities for folks from second grade through adults to

experience the Real Jesus as we play, learn and worship together," Mark said. "We will do that by sharing stories, hiking, singing, dancing, swimming, and of course eating amazing food."

"So come to camp!" he said.

Pilgrim Firs hosts a 2014 Environmental Justice Camp

Meighan Pritchard, minister for environmental justice with the national UCC, announced that Pilgrim Firs will host an Environmental Justice Workshop February 19 to 21 at Pilgrim Firs.

The event is a "train the trainer" workshop that is open to adults from college age

through retirees.

A participant in a previous workshop arrived feeling discouraged and cynical, but left feeling called, renewed and curious about what would come out of it.

To register, call 206-370-4142 or email pritchardm@ucc.org.



Participants of October 2012 retreat learn about pollution in the Duwamish River at the Port of Seattle.

Photo courtesy of Meighan Pritchard

2014 Pilgrim Firs camp and retreat schedule

Junior High Midwinter Retreat
for grades 7 to 9
Jan. 10-12

Senior High Midwinter Retreat
for grades 10 to 12
Jan. 17-19

Men's Silent Retreat
Jan. 30 to 31
Men's Retreat
Jan. 31 to Feb. 2

PNC-UCC Leadership Retreat
May 16 to 18

Spiritual Renewal LGBTQ Retreat
May 30 to June 1

Work Camp June 11-15

The summer schedule is:

Kids Camp
June 29 to July 2
Intermediate Camp
June 29 to July 3
Senior High Camp
July 6 to 12
Junior High Camp
July 13 to 19
Family Camp
Aug. 7 to 21

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

From inside South Africa in 1990

Mission associates recall freeing of Nelson Mandela

Ana and Tod Gobledale, mission associates serving two congregations in London, England, since 2010 with the UCC/ Disciples of Christ Global Ministries, recently reflected on their experience living and serving in South Africa when Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was released after 27 years of imprisonment.

They previously served as missionaries in South Africa from 1984 to 1991, in Zimbabwe from 1994 to 2000. They were in Cleveland while Ana served on the Global Ministries staff from 2000 to 2003. They served four-and-a-half years in Australia, then as interim co-pastors of Kirkland Congregational UCC, before going to London.

“Today we give thanks for the life and accomplishments of this father of a nation, beloved by the world,” they wrote recently.

They recalled that when they listened to the “live” account of his release and his first steps into freedom on Sunday Feb. 11, 1990, they had not joined the world celebrating that morning.

“We lived inside South Africa, at Mfanefile, a “black spot” in the hinterlands of today’s KwaZulu Natal,” they said.

News was heavily censored by the government.

“Often large black blocks of ink would remind us of items prohibited to be shared in print,” they said. “Other times, the news would just be missing.”



Tod and Ana Gobledale in 1990 with their children and local children on the steps of the house where they lived in Mfanefile, South Africa.

Photos courtesy of Tod and Ana Gobledale



People on the road in the village of Mfanefile, South Africa.

Ana and Tod relied on family and friends writing them about South African news from The New York Times, which they could share in their Zulu-speaking community.

“On that global day of joy, we lived in darkness. Our community’s hope had been so severely snatched, we had only one more unbelievable rumor to dismiss as we gathered for church,” they recalled.

“Yes, we had heard President de Klerk had supposedly removed Mandela from Robben Island. Yes, we had heard new rumors that Mandela was to be set free. Yes, we had

heard.

“But none of us believed. Like Doubting Thomas, ‘until I can thrust my hand into his wounds,’ until I can see his face,” they said.

No one, however, knew what Mandela looked like any more, because no image of him had been seen since June 6, 1986, and then it was only a reprint of a 1964 photo printed in The Weekly Mail.

It had been illegal during his imprisonment to publish his photo.

“So, we wondered, could we even believe any photos the



A copy of the London Herald which confirmed news that Nelson Mandela was freed.

white press cared to release?’ they explained their experience.

In their community, which received no newspaper deliveries, not even to the local shop, “living proof” would be long in coming, Ana and Tod said.

When a copy of the Feb. 11 newspaper finally arrived at Mfanefile, it made the rounds to choruses, cheers and dancing.

“Hope. Hope restored! Hope that one man’s first steps into freedom might set the path for the people of the nation to follow, walking together from the darkness into light,” they recalled their experience.

“Thank you Tata Mandela for leading the way,” they wrote just before his funeral. “Today our prayers are with the people of South Africa, at Mfanefile and throughout the nation.”

One of their blogsites is at <http://spiritualstepping-stones3.blogspot.co.uk/>.