



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Winter 2022-23

UCC leader leads church conversation on racism

61 members of the United Churches of Olympia join in weekend journey in liberation, restorative justice

On Oct. 28 and 29, Velda Love, UCC minister of racial justice for Faithful Action Ministries, led “A Sacred Conversation on Racism” for 61 members United Churches of Olympia.

Through lecture, videos, music and body work, she invited participants to join black and brown siblings in a journey of liberation and restorative justice with Join the Movement, said Marcia McLaughlin of the Uprooting Racism Team of United Churches of Olympia.

Velda told how this journey started 500 years ago and how people of African descent and indigenous people became enslaved or were killed through the European-Christian Doctrine of Discovery.

“Not only did she tell about the

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Lara Crutsinger-Perry, pastor at the United Churches of Olympia, visits with Velda Love of the national UCC after worship Sunday, Oct. 28. Photo courtesy of United Churches

Board of Directors works to increase communication

Tara Leininger - moderator

The Pacific Northwest Conference is led by delegates elected by local churches at our Annual Meetings. Between Annual meetings, leadership is delegated to an elected Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is made up of volunteers, both lay and ordained, who have been called to serve the wider church and the conference through their leadership on the Board.

Over these last months and years the Conference has experienced myriad challenges, magnified by transitions. At the last Annual Meeting, held on Zoom April 30, 2022, delegates and friends of the conference lifted up significant concerns about the budget and leadership of the Conference. Wanting to truly hear

Annual Meeting 2023
will be Saturday, April 27
at First Congregational
in Bellingham - page 15.

and consider these concerns, the then Moderator Hillary Coleman did not call for a vote to pass the budget or affirm election of Board Members.

At the Annual Meeting, Board leaders proposed that there could be another gathering of the conference, in Fall of 2022, to revisit and complete these items of business. We are writing now to acknowledge that a Fall gathering did not happen. Due to a variety of transitions

and challenges, we were, regrettably, not able to accomplish what we intended.

We understand that communication has been limited and covenant was broken. We are in the process of scheduling meetings for listening and learning across the conference and we hope you will all participate. More information will be coming soon.

In the meantime, the Board of Directors has had to approve the budget on a quarterly basis in order for the Conference to function.

The board also needed to approve the new officers, including: Tara Leininger, pastor at Metaline Falls Congregational Church, as PNC moderator and Indigo Brown, member at Plymouth Church, as
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Transitions announced

Elyse Jaeguri was ordained in November at Eagle Harbor Congregational UCC in Bainbridge Island.

Several transitions have been confirmed by the East and West Committee on Ministry in November:

Tara Young Brown, a hospice chaplain who is a member of the Community of Interfaith Celebration in Olympia, has been approved for ordination.

Jim CastroLang will retire from his ministry at First Congregational UCC in Colville on Dec. 18. See article on his years of ministry and future plans.

Bob Feeney has been approved to transfer from Massachusetts to the PNC to serve as settled pastor at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane. He will be installed on Jan. 14.

Carson Hawk, who ministers to trauma survivors and other kinds of healing with a team at Magnolia UCC, has been approved to transfer to the PNC.

Yuki Schwartz has been approved to transfer to the Southern California Nevada Conference.

Sub-Committee assists

The Insurance Assistance Fund Subcommittee of the PNC Stewardship Committee allocates assistance to clergy and local churches needing help with the cost of health insurance premiums.

Confidential requests for that assistance for 2023 health insurance premiums go to Martha Baldwin of the Stewardship Committee. **For information, call 206-948-9799 or email martha@hotmail.com.**

General Synod announced

The theme for General Synod June 30 to July 4 in Indianapolis, Ind., will be "Making All Things New," based on Isaiah 43:18-19. Voting delegates will attend in person and planners are exploring ways to add cost-effective virtual elements.

For information, visit ucc.org/next-synod-now-a-year-away-will-be-in-person-hybrid-aspects-being-explored?inf_contact_key=58d474aa756bbfab8cbea5f8b71c165209c74070ac2bf3cfa7869e3cfd4ff832.

Webinar on climate issues

Monthly Creation Justice Webinars fo-

cus on climate justice in 2023 and beyond.

Co-hosts Brooks Berndt, the UCC's minister for environmental justice and Michael Malcom, executive director for Alabama Interfaith Power & Light and the People's Justice Council, will guide discussion on "When it comes to climate justice, how do we make it out of the wilderness and arrive at the promised land?" The discussion at 10 a.m., PT, Dec. 14, focuses on the midterm elections and the impact of young voters who care about climate issues. The webinar seeks to equip

faith rooted advocates for advancing climate justice in the coming year.

The link is [UCC.zoom.us/webinar/register/8716684482996/WN_AB2UsaK-kRtWlGJ4cfK4hUQ](https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/8716684482996/WN_AB2UsaK-kRtWlGJ4cfK4hUQ).

Giving Tuesday draws gifts

Hillary De La Cruz, past moderator, thanked those who donated on Giving Tuesday "to make possible for us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God to create vitality in the Pacific Northwest Conference. **Those interested may still donate toward the \$25,000 goal at www.pnucucc.org/giving-tuesday.**

Group for retired clergy begins

Bobbi Virta is leading a new Community of Practice group for newly retired clergy who are trying to figure out what life looks like in retirement. The retirees will meet over zoom with other newly retired colleagues.

There is still space in the October through May Community of Practice group offered by the Committee on Ministry, said Amy Hitchins, coordinator. **For information, email amy@pnucucc.org.**

Men's Retreat is in person

The Conference Men's Retreat Planning Committee is announcing an in-person Men's Retreat the weekend of Feb. 3 to 5 at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center. The retreat will be "back to normal" with music, singing, a wisdom circle and an optional silent retreat the evening of Thursday, Feb. 2.

"We were disappointed to have to cancel last year's in-person retreat," said team member Rick Russell. "We had hoped to follow up the success of the prior year's remote retreat and maintain our ties and

bonds. Unfortunately, it has been difficult the past few years and now normal isn't exactly what it used to be."

He and the other planners, Charlie Torres, Don Jenkins, Hans Dankers, Jim Gaudino, Larry Kiriluk and Paul Withington, recognize that living into the new sense of normal means varied levels of risk tolerance.

"Vaccines have reduced by not eliminated the chance of illness or ongoing symptoms," said Rick, advising men uncomfortable with the risk not to attend.

Because Pilgrim Firs has poor Wi-Fi connectivity, it is not possible to offer a remote video option.

"Our retreat will comply with state, local and conference center guidelines," he said. "Details will be provided soon."

For information and to register, visit ultracamp.com/info/sessionDetail.aspx?idCamp=367&idSession=382908&campCode=nss..

Board welcomes voices

Continued from Page 1 - Board the vice moderator.

While Tara and Indigo are our board leaders, we are all the Conference. There is much work before us. May God guide us on our journey.

Already serving on the Board were Hillary De La Cruz, immediate past moderator; Diana Kutas, treasurer; Jillian Hutton, scribe; Danette Koloi, Central West representative (rep); Esther Sanders, Heartland rep; Janet Ott, Northwest rep, and Ron Patterson, Southwest rep.

With diversity in mind, the board continues to work in engaging BIPOC and LGBTQIA conference members and people of a spectrum of ages.

The Board also keeps in mind the diversity of the conference when it comes to urban, rural and remote congregations.

Tara said the board is continually open to voices that may not have been heard or heard well enough, and it welcomes contact to board members and conference staff.

For information, call the PNC office at 206-725-8383 or Tara at 509-589-1044 or email mfc.ucc@yahoo.com.