



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

Mary Stamp, editor
editor@pncuccnews.org

325 N. 125th St. - Seattle WA 98133 • (206) 725-8383 or (800) 954-8777 or (509) 535-1813

Summer 2022

Mark Boyd transfers from N-Sid-Sen to Pilgrim Firs

He will be associate camp director responsible for overseeing staff, maintenance and housekeeping

Mark Boyd, managing director of N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene for 10 years, leaves at the end of November to serve as assistant manager at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Retreat Center,

"He has served with with skill, grace, humor, faith and hospitality," said Alice Ling, convener of the N-Sid-Sen Advisory Committee.

There will be a party and barbeque to celebrate his service at N-Sid-Sen beginning with gathering about 1 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 20, at the N-Sid-Sen Cove.

After food is served about 2 p.m., there will a time of sharing stories to say goodbye and thank you.

There is no charge for the barbeque. Continued on Page 6



Mark Boyd cooking for one of many barbeques at the N-Sid-Sen cove.

Photo courtesy of N-Sid-Sen

New PNC moderator introduces herself, reflects on tasks

By Tara Leininger

I'm your moderator for the next two years. I was blessed to serve as vice-moderator while Hillary Coleman was your moderator the last two years. She has been a strong presence and a most enlightening teacher for me.

Being 65 years old, there is a bit of the "boomer" left in me; I'm rather blunt, honest, but try have a heart set on open and honest love and communication. Hillary was able to soften my edges and open my voice to a new age.

My bachelor's degree was in communication, history and religious studies in 1979 at the University of Montana, so you would think that communication would come naturally, but in this century, everything is different. I thought an

Board of Directors acts on PNC leadership and budget decisions from Annual Meeting 2022.

IBM Selectric typewriter was the height of technology in those days. A computer was about punch cards and whirling disks. Our attitudes towards anything were supposedly enlightened.

For those who do not know me, I've been pastor at the Metaline Falls Congregational UCC for 24 years. I am active in our community theatre/events center, and have been mayor of our small town of 245 since 2008. I'm married to a re-

tired music teacher and have one daughter (one now deceased), eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Welcome to the PNC-UCC in 2022.

Our Annual Meeting in April was moving along sufficiently well when everything seemed to fall apart. A covenant that we all agreed to at the beginning of the meeting was simply run over and there was little any of us could do to stop what was happening.

Whether you agreed with how the AM22 ended, the leadership and the Board of Directors did what they could and made the best decisions possible at the time.

Now we have to pick up the threads that were knotted and try to weave back together a diverse conference to do what

To make the world better, don't complain, organize

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

**Complaining
does
little
to change
systems.
Organizing,
planning
and
strategizing
will change
systems.**

There's nothing wrong with a little complaining.

Sometimes, we all need to vent and complaining can be a decent way to communicate we're upset.

Sometimes, it can be a way to find folks who agree with us and connect with them.

Sometimes, a well-placed complaint can be part of a problem-solving process with a business.

For those purposes, a little complaining can be just fine. That's about all complaining is good for, though.

When complaining works, it's because the persons being complained to want to keep some connection like friendship, affiliation or financial support.

Your satisfaction is somehow connected to the self-interest and calling of the person you're complaining to.

Not everyone has that same interest, though. Some see a complaint not as a means of connection but as a means of attack.

If a complaint inserts another agenda that doesn't align with the person being complained to, a complaint is easily ignored or diminished.

There's also the reality that some people aren't concerned all that much about what you say, at all. Period.

Before his execution in 1915, the famous organizer and songwriter Joe Hill wrote to a friend about his impending death saying, "Don't waste any time mourning. Organize!" Not too long afterward, this was shortened to the now often used slogan "Don't mourn. Organize."

"Don't complain. Organize." would be a great slogan for these days.

Like it or not, our increasingly socially and politically divided world has turned us into winners and losers these days, and "winners" tend not to care when "losers" complain.

When winning is the goal, how one won or by what means one won may mean a lot to those who lost but it is likely to matter little to those celebrating victory.

These are days when many of us feel we have lost.

Recent Supreme Court rulings have meant that long-held rights, responsibilities and expectations have been upended and undermined.

The ground under our feet continues to feel increasingly unsteady.

We didn't get to this moment by chance or because of the *complaints* of those who were on the losing side in the past.

Those people who made the difference on the Supreme Court were placed there by those who organized, planned and strategized over decades.

Now, there are new losers and new winners. The same folks who helped place Supreme Court justices who, in many of these recent rulings, increased the powers of states and regions have also worked to make sure that there are state and regional officials prepared to act on these rulings. This was the plan all along.

Complaining will not change anything.

It might help you feel a little better and more connected to those who agree with you but it is unlikely to change anything.

Organizing, planning and strategizing will. It's the only thing that will. A voice crying out in the wilderness may get some attention but that voice alone will rarely change things. Even Jesus, the one we've called "God with us," couldn't do it alone. He needed to start by organizing 12 others to try and get anything done, at all.

Yes, a little complaining is fine. It might help you get something out of your system but it does little to change the bigger systems we're all part of. If you truly want to make the world a better place, don't complain. Organize.

Transitions announced

Stevi Hamill will be ordained at 3 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 29 at Fauntleroy UCC in Seattle and online. Stevi, who graduated from Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry in 2021, is called as campus minister for retreats at Seattle University's Campus Ministry.

Lorraine Leist, who was approved for a transfer of standing from the Rocky Mountain Conference, now works as a chaplain.

Terry Rice, a member in discernment in Walla Walla, was approved for ordination.

Kelle Brown, Jennifer Castle and **Kevin Bechtold** were installed for ministry at Plymouth Church, UCC during their May 22 worship service. Rev. Dr. Brown's three way covenant was approved.

Amara Oden was ordained on June 5 at Suquamish UCC.

Maureen McLain was ordained at Magnolia UCC on June 26. She earned her master of divinity from Pacific School of Religion and is ordained to a covenanted ministry of Adult Faith Formation.

Amy Johnson was unanimously approved for ordination. Her ordination is Aug. 13 at Wayside UCC in Federal Way. She has been called to serve as the Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice in the national setting of the UCC, Justice and Witness Ministries.

Emily Linderman, who was ordained in the PNC in 2020, has transferred to the Northern California Nevada Conference.

Terry Rice's ordination paper was accepted unanimously.

Peter Ilgenfritz transferred his standing to the York Association of the Maine Conference.

David Weddington transferred his standing to the PNC from the New Hampshire Conference.

The Committee on Ministry consented to have **Jermell Witherspoon** authorized as a minister in the UCC. He is serving Everett UCC and Liberation UCC.

Jess Peacock has transferred his standing to the Ohio Conference.

Bill Comfort has transferred his standing into the PNC.

Communities of Practice begins

Communities of Practice groups are set to begin September 2022 and run through

May 2023. The program will be online only at the on-set. As the ever-changing COVID situation allows, each group can collaborate to decide how to proceed.

Like last year, participation is open to the Montana Northern Wyoming and the Central Pacific conferences. Active, retired, specialized ministers and members in discernment are invited to participate.

Coordinators are Brigitta Remole and Amy Hitchens, who will take over in September. Registration is \$250 and assistance is available.

For information, email Brigitta.ucc@gmail.com or amy@npucc.org. Registration is open at <http://www.ultracamp.com/info/sessiondetail.aspx?idCamp=367&campCode=nss&idSession=364405>

Conference News Briefs

General Synod 23 announced

National UCC General Minister and President have announced that the next General Synod of the UCC will be held June 30 to July 4 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The theme is "Making All Things New," Isaiah 43:18-19.

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

Boundary Training Oct 17

There will be Boundary Training for Retired Clergy from 3 to 6 p.m., Monday, Oct. 17, organized by Tara Barber, who will be sending out a link. It is for retired clergy, but others may take it, even though it will not account to their tri-annual requirement. Ministers with exempt standing are not required to take it, said Cameron Sharp, co-chair of the PNC Committee on Ministry West.

For information, call 253-334-1974 or email revsharp13@comcast.net.

Mushroom workers seek aid

Mushroom workers at Ostrom Mushroom Farms in Sunnyside are demanding a workplace free from threats, excessive pressure, harassment and retaliation, according to the Farm Worker Ministry Northwest.

Victoria Ruddy, United Farm Workers, reports on the struggle:

"The Ostrom committee has been busy organizing their community to support the campaign. They have been getting support for the community petition at local retailers that carry Ostrom mushrooms. I have attached a photo from this weekend at Safeway.

They have not heard anything from the company since the July 7th meeting. They requested a meeting last week and the company declined. We sent an additional written request over the weekend to the CEO Travis Wood and so far there has been no response from the company and the issues remain unresolved. The workers are continuing to organize and take action."

Ostrom Mushroom Farms workers want the company to know that people nationally are paying attention to this issue. Stand with them in solidarity.

A petition addressing their concerns is at act.seiu.org/a/ostrommushroompetition?contactdata=HQ4Gt-VotKnv9g4soOLm+RS13YwJugPbWXFaFmoARqQjRRdR5YpxqjUJ2Z0glu-jWfcsVYOOI4SHA8PT8SN8ryjaHDIUrvyfWQ0Npl17f4UndfJC5tx+VFAjZukF7NLp4UDdQf6qrLGLqEyQp3+yOceqr6X2GKFY+rOJ14keWEytj3gTcIOb+BTZZMEg==&ms=email&emci=23bb98f5-3af7-ec11-b47a-281878b83d8a&emdi=ea000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&ceid=179504.

UCC marks 50 years of ONA

The national UCC Open and Affirming movement is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ONA Coalition and the ordinations of Bill Johnson and Anne Holmes in an event 7 to 9 p.m., each day, Aug. 5 to 7.

"Shaping Generations: Queer Justice and Love in the UCC" honors the past, celebrates the present and claims a vision for the future of the movement for LGBTQ+ ministry and advocacy in the UCC. To date, 1,800 UCC congregations and settings are ONA.

For information, visit openandaffirming.networkforgood.com/events/44056-2022-ona=national-gathering.

Environment Webinar held

"Environmental Justice for All," a free UCC webinar on Water and Environmental Justice is planned 1 p.m., Aug. 10.

Register at ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/7316572289662/WN_6dlGQmngRTiXOya9pnhOQ.

Tara is committed to weave the PNC together

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we are called to do as a conference.

Nothing has stopped, nothing is suddenly different, but everything for us has changed.

Be aware that the Board has confirmed the slate of officers and committee members as presented at the AM22 business meeting, which is in accordance with our By-Laws.

All committees are able to conduct business as needed. All committees and the Board of Directors are encouraged to continue to fill vacancies as allowed by the By-Laws.

The Board has also confirmed that the Conference will work under a three-month provisional budget based on the proposed budget, with renewal of that provisional budget each quarter, starting with the financial year that began in June, 2022.

As soon as possible, a vote by the wider conference will be held to affirm the proposed budget for 2022-2023.

In other words, we're going to do the work that needs to be done.

This statement, however, now reflects deep emotions and unmet expectations, so the work we need to do now is not only growing, but is infinitely more difficult and delicate.

For those of you who feel your voice was stifled or ignored, for those of you angry or upset, talk to me! Email me at tm.leininger@yahoo.com, and I will respond to you personally.

I will take your message to the Board of Directors and to our Conference Minister.

All of us will work together to make the changes needed.

Be aware, however, that this is not going to happen in a few months or even in the next year.

This is going to take time. The Board of Directors is already considering several op-



Tara Leininger is the 2022-23 Conference Board of Directors moderator.

Photo courtesy of Tara Leininger

tions on how best to work for the future.

If you think things weren't happening fast enough before, then you need to become part of the solution. There are positions on the Board available. There are committees whose work needs physical bodies. There are opportunities to do good work.

One of the strong threads for this conference is in our new vice-moderator.

Indigo Brown is ready to take on the leadership of this conference and I expect her voice to be a strong one for all of us to hear.

The conference I want to give to her in two years is one of radical change, in our structure, in our by-laws and in our very heart.

The anti-racism work be-

ing done now will only become more relevant and important to our presence not only as the PNC-UCC, but in this corner of the country, in this nation and in the world.

We cannot belittle the work that has been done, but we also cannot wait for someone else to do it.

If we are to live in Christ, then we must be willing to take great risks in order to do great things.

While sometimes it seems as if nothing has changed, be assured that every step we take is one towards a future where God's children are all respected, cared for and loved.

One of the saddest observations I have experienced in my time as a mayor of Metaline Falls in Northeast Washington is that "decisions are made by

those who show up."

The number of people in the conference willing to "show up" to do the work that the PNC has set out for itself is shrinking.

Many of us are getting older—not too old to do the work—but we've been at it a long time, and the future belongs to another generation and so far, few are taking on the challenges this conference must face.

I'm not talking only about 20 or 30 year-olds, but those of in their 40s and 50s.

This is a call to do ministry for the greater good. This is a call to be a disciple of Christ. It has been said by others more wise than myself, there is a cost to discipleship.

We are a unique conference.

The tapestry that we have woven together may seem a bit frayed and tattered right now, but I assure you it is not beyond repair.

There are great changes facing us. This is where our strength and unity will prove itself.

We will unravel what has been knotted, weave together what might have frayed and discover that our colors are as bright and beautiful as they have always been.

The tapestry of the past really was lovely, but it is not the tapestry needed today, nor will it be the same in the future.

Come, join me in being a part of the future of the PNC-UCC.

Let God's presence be sent from us.

Let Christ's love be our love.

Let the Spirit's fire always grow from our hearts.

In the Triune God, I give you all praise and prayer!

See additional comments sent on Aug. 3 on page 9.

Mike Denton has accepted call to a Massachusetts church

Mike Denton announced in June his resignation as conference minister and his plans to begin serving as minister at South Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Mass., in September, after 14 years of serving the conference. He began in January 2008.

While he will officially start working there the second half of September, he, Lauren and Leo will move there Sept. 1, so Leo can start school. Mike will work remotely for his last month.

In September 2019, the 20th anniversary of his ordination, he realized he was halfway through his ordained ministry career.

In his resignation letter, he said his work with the PNC has been rewarding. He and Lauren Cannon, a pastor at Keystone UCC in Seattle, married during the time and welcomed son Leo.

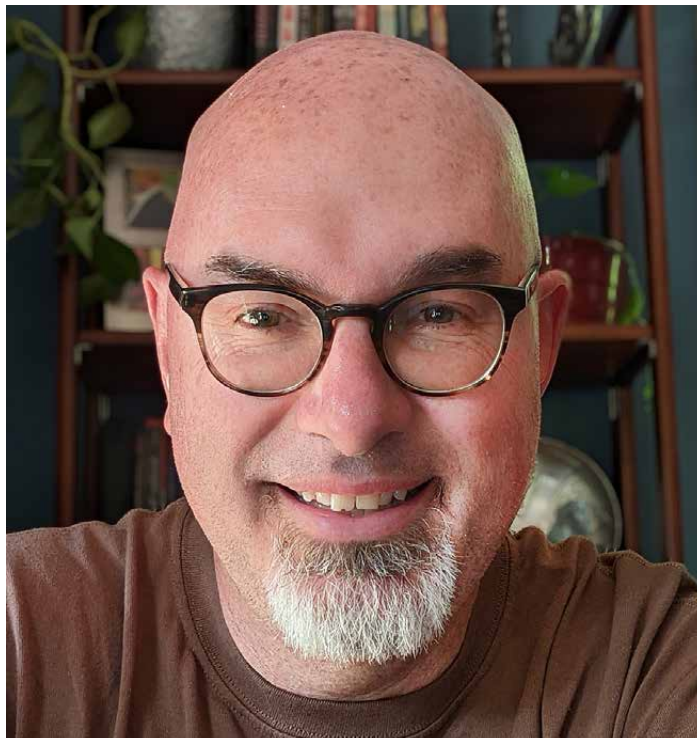
“When I was in seminary, I’d never thought about doing regional work. I expected to spend my entire career in small, urban churches called to service and advocacy, he said, noting that his ordination anniversary started him wondering about serving another congregation.

He and Lauren discussed moving close to family back East someday. Lauren was coming close to a decade of work at Keystone UCC.

That December, his sister learned she had lymphoma and family seemed far away. That furthered his motivation to find a congregation closer to family.

On Ash Wednesday 2020, Mike began preparing congregations for the pandemic.

“We all did the best we could with what we had and, with God’s help, we did some amazing things,” he said. We brought our loaves and our fishes and were blessed with abundance. In the middle of so much loss, grieving and disruption we supported each other and our neighbors.”



Mike Denton

Photo courtesy of Mike Denton

He guided the conference through the uncertainty.

“I’d never been prouder to be part of any group of people, ever,” Mike said.

By fall 2020, his sister’s treatments were going well and she’s in remission now, but family still felt far away with other health and life challenges that year, including deaths from COVID. Mike also faced some health challenges that made family seem far away.

As the pandemic began, he was home with his family of three for a month for the first time in 15 years. While he has enjoyed the travel as conference minister, he appreciated the time with family.

“Sometime in the late fall of 2020, we decided to be open to what the Spirit might do. I put my profile together and started searching for a local church position,” Mike said.

South Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Mass is a designated, three-fourths time position with a church that feeds about 700 families week-

ly through its food pantry. They are consolidating with another church in town, First Church of Christ (UCC), to form something new together.

“The challenges and the gifts of these churches and this place call out to me. The opportunity to be no more than a day’s drive from our family is exciting and a relief,” he said.

“As with any significant change, there are some other feelings mixed in, too. Even though we’ll be closer to family, we’ll miss all those we’ve served with, played with, and grown with here. Moving to Pittsfield will be starting over in many ways. It’s going to be exciting, and it’s going to be hard.”

Mike is aware that the conference is at a complex moment in its life.

“The turnover in local churches is unprecedented. Rich and challenging conversations are emerging about our budget, our commitment to being an anti-racist conference, restructuring and how best to provide our camps with the

support and accountability they need,” he said.

“There’s always a lot going on in our conference, and, like any ministry, there has always been more to do than our capacity would allow,” Mike reflected.

He believes the conference is prepared to take the next steps. Over the last 14 years, he has seen more people claim the conference as their own.

“Instead of complaining about what wasn’t being done, the people of this conference have pulled together and done some amazing things. People are doing more and more to self-organize around interests, support and causes,” Mike pointed out.

“Our collective response to the onset of the pandemic didn’t come out of nowhere. We’d been working at developing and investing in the skills we used for years,” he said. “The pandemic allowed us to practice all those things we’d learned and those same learnings will be helpful, now.”

He praised the skills of conference staff, the boards and committees for being ready to work, learn, listen and try new things.

The denomination is coming alongside the PNC to help it through this time.

“This conference, your conference, is ready to be open to what the Spirit might do,” Mike affirmed.

The board will soon announce plans for the conference through this transitional time.

He closed his letter of resignation with words he has often shared as he made announcements during the pandemic: “Take a deep breath. Let it out slowly. Take another deep breath. Let that one out slowly, too, closing with saying, “My wonderful, beautiful, Siblings in Christ, I look forward to seeing where the Spirit will lead us all.”

Mark Boyd reports on summer at N-Sid-Sen

Continued from page 1

In lieu of gifts, Mark suggests that people make donations to N-Sid-Sen at <https://www.pncucc.org/donate>.

There will rooms available and breakfast in the morning. Register at <https://www.ultra-camp.com/info/sessionDetail.aspx...>

N-Sid-Sen has a new website thanks to the work of Shirley Asmussen and Ben Crosby who spent many long days and late nights to make changes. They welcome feedback, reported Mark.

“We were excited to welcome campers, families and guest groups back to N-Sid-Sen,” he said. “Many of our Covid 19 protocols are still in place, but it is beginning to feel a bit more like camp as we know it.

“Numbers of campers were again low, but that did not translate into needing fewer staff,” he commented. “We need as much staff to serve 20 as to serve 100.”

“All groups—our camps and outside groups—experienced lower numbers, with some canceling a few days before because of getting Covid or out of fear”

There are two aspects of daily living that the pandemic boldly highlighted.

“The first is the basic human need for face to face, in-person interactions and to be part of a larger community. The second is the recognition that quality time in the outdoors is good for the mind, body and spirit. In fact, it is critical! N-Sid-Sen excels at both of these,” he said.

In 2022, having small groups as in 2021 again translated into more intimate contacts, such as for junior high and senior high camps, the Plymouth camp, two PNC family camps, two dance camps and a family reunion.

“Not having large groups and lack of a full-time mainte-



Mark Boyd ends 11 years as managing director at N-Sid-Sen and moves to become associate director at Pilgrim Firs.

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

nance person meant we did not have income to wrap up projects,” Mark commented.

“We normally have six staff, a head cook, second cook, maintenance person and two to three lifeguards, but we had four staff, no maintenance person and only one lifeguard,” he said.

To address the lack of lifeguards at N-Sid-Sen and other area camps, he has explored offering N-Sid-Sen as an open water lifeguard training site.

With the vote on the budget suspended at Annual Meeting, N-Sid-Sen in operating on last year’s budget until there is a vote in October and put maintenance on hold.

Mark said Wade Zick, managing director at Pilgrim Firs has experienced similar is-

issues with staff, has been busy with groups, has attracted new groups and has had lower attendance, too. New groups include a stone sculpture group and monthly healing group for soldiers and first responders with PTSD. The mission camp was on hold.

When Mark transfers to Pilgrim Firs in November, he will be associate director in charge of overseeing staff, maintenance, housekeeping and the kitchen. Wade will focus on building the program to bring more folks in to use the site.

Mark previously served four years at Pilgrim Firs, mostly responsible for maintenance. At the same time, he was also youth minister on staff with United Churches of Olympia, where he did church mainte-

nance for 11 years.

He worked for 20 years as operations manager for a wholesale water distribution company. Mark grew up in plumbing with his dad a plumber in the Olympia area.

He had attended church as a child with an aunt, but stepped away for many years until he became involved and found a home at United Churches in Olympia. He and his wife, Julie, have four children between them, two each, and grandchildren who live in Western Washington.

“My varied backgrounds have been helpful for all I do at N-Sid-Sen. Flexibility is important in this role,” said Mark, who is committed to the importance of camps in faith development.

“**Camp is an opportunity** to take quality time away with family and friends—new and old—to trade some screen time for green time by planning now to escape to the lake in late summer, fall and winter.

N-Sid-Sen is a camp and retreat center of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC). He reminded that its name comes from the Coeur d’Alene people and means “Point of Inspiration”.

Established in 1935, N-Sid-Sen has served thousands of children, youth and adults through summer camp and year-round retreat experiences. Nestled along the shores of Lake Coeur d’Alene among nearly 300 acres of woodlands, creeks and meadows, our facilities provide unique opportunities for exploration, growth, and renewal to groups of 16 to 150 participants.

Guests and campers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, faith traditions and community groups.

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

Pilgrim Firs builds Pride Garden on grounds

To celebrate Pride Month with communities around the world, Wade Zick, managing director, reported that Pilgrim Firs again hosted people from the community for the Kitsap Pride Picnic on Sunday, June 5.

The event welcomes people at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference center for a free lunch, lake activities and walks on the trails.

Donations received at the lunch support activities of the Q Resource Center for LGBTQ youth and the July Kitsap Pride event.

The 2022 event was the fourth time for Pilgrim Firs to host the picnic, which in 2019 drew 300 people.

Part of the 2022 activities were to officially open the new Pride Garden at Pilgrim Firs, which Wade said is an expression of its purpose statement “to provide a sacred oasis for creativity and community.”

“Last summer we were given a donation from Bob Roblee in honor of his recently passed partner of 50 years, Ron Johnson. It was designated to use for our new Pride Garden,” he said.

Bob and Ron, who were often referred to as the mayors of Southworth, were instrumental in many aspects of the Kitsap Pride community through the decades.

Recently they fell in love with Pilgrim Firs from attending various events there, such as picnics and stone sculpture shows, Wade said.

Ron wanted to make sure that Pilgrim Firs would be able to continue serving the community through events like the Pride picnics so he included Pilgrim Firs in his estate planning.

Wade said that both Ron and Bob have had ties with the UCC and Pilgrim Firs. Bob grew up attending the



Pride Garden at Pilgrim Firs is the result of the work and donations of many people—cutting trees, making raised beds, planting rainbow colors of flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables, and arranging them in a plot. Photos courtesy of Pilgrim Firs

University Congregational Church in Seattle and Ron was high school buddies with the son of Eddie Madson, the first director of Pilgrim Firs.

“We are delighted that because of their support of the camp and the ways they have

been amazing community members, we were able to make the new Pride Garden happen in their honor,” said Wade

The Pride Garden is a 70-foot by 40-foot garden that contains 18 planter boxes and will host a future chicken coop.

The garden in the field on the other side of the new basketball and pickleball court, which was given in memory of Sam Martinez, a former camper who died from fraternity hazing in 2019.

Wade said that several of the planter boxes have been sponsored by friends of the camp. The boxes are filled with flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables in a rainbow of colors.

The planter boxes were milled last summer from two trees on site by former employee Marc Ventura and his co-worker Eric Hudson.

Much of the finishing garden work this spring has been done by Ed Salerno, the current artist in residence.

“The plan is for various sculptures to be displayed in the garden and already the site is providing an additional tranquil setting for meditation and small group gatherings that our PTSD veteran’s group has been enjoying,” Wade commented.

“This has been a couple of difficult years for many reasons, and my hope for this June and Pride season was that the world might be filled with more love, more peace and that healing through art, nature and celebrations can mend some of our brokenness,” he said.

More than a year ago, Pilgrim Firs came up with an idea of doing a garden at the camp. Each of the 18 planter boxes are themed colors of the rainbow with pink and baby blue boxes as well.

“We were grateful for tons of help along the way,” Wade said.

“It’s still a work in progress and will always have need for ongoing care and maintenance, but I’m excited about this tranquil, inviting garden,” Wade said.

For information, call 360-876-2031, email wade@pilgrim-firs.org or visit pilgrim-firs.org.

Veradale UCC to share in pastor's sabbatical

After more than eight years of serving Veradale UCC in Spokane Valley, Gen Heywood is embarking on a three-month adventure for her sabbatical, filled with questions on how she and her congregation can be more faithful servants in these times.

She expects to deepen her relationship with God and recharge her photographic skills during this time.

Her sabbatical is an extension of the networking and community involvement of her ministry and congregation's ministry.

Through COVID, as Gen moved worship, Bible study, a Tuesday morning prayer, church council meetings online, attendance increase. She created daily online prayer meditations, weekly interviews with people of faith, vigils for grieving losses and work for social justice.

Gen goes with questions designed to bring back ideas for worship, creation care and creative ways to explore history and heal from the region's Christian dominionism and white supremacy.

Her travels to Iceland, Germany and New Zealand will include 11 days intersecting with people from around the world at the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly.

She left July 31 and plans to return to the church Nov. 14 and give presentations and share images of her experiences and learnings to help 110-year-old, 73-member Veradale UCC, strengthen its stands for social justice and relationships in the community.

Gen's daughter, Hana, is joining her for the first part of her travels in Iceland from Aug. 1 to 9. They will travel in a Subaru in which they can sleep, so they can photograph Iceland's night skies. They will also learn about Iceland's ecological sustainability, wildlife



Gen Heywood's three month sabbatical will take her to Iceland, Germany and New Zealand. Photo courtesy of Gen Heywood

and the brutal and healthy parts of its history.

"Today, Iceland is a good place for women and has women leaders providing a different type of leadership, but that was not always the case," Gen said she has learned from a book that talks in a matter-of-fact way about the good and the bad of the nation's history of hurting and stealing from people and emerging as a place with a good economy that cares for the land.

"I'm interested in what Iceland can teach us," she said.

In Germany, Gen comes with questions about how the country has been taking responsibility for its past.

She knows German from spending 1978-79 as a high school exchange student in Elze.

Gen begins in Berlin and will travel by train to visit Goslar, Leipzig, Wurtzburg and Munich before attending the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly as accredited media for The Fig Tree and Spokane Faith and Values.

She will take her questions

to people she meets in churches and will visit museums.

"In Berlin, I want to learn about resistance and how art is used to take responsibility crimes of the past," she said. "We need to go beyond individual responsibility to systemic responsibility. We may always have bigots. Changing hearts and minds of individuals is a great goal, but we need to make systemic changes not just for individuals to change."

To lift people's common humanity, she wants to learn about the hard work Germans are doing to confront their past and the present rise of extremism. She hopes to gain tools to address extremism in the Inland Northwest.

In Goslar, she will visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site mining museum to learn about silver, copper and lead mines that go back 1,000 years and compare their legacy with Bunker Hill silver mines in Idaho. What are/were mining practices there and what are the toxic legacies of lead, arsenic and heavy metals?

In Leipzig, Gen plans to

connect with church history through reformer Martin Luther, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Next in Würzburg, she wants to learn about the witch hunts from 600 to 1600, and how they connect with a history of bigotry against women, Roma, LGBTQ and Jews.

In Nuremberg, her goal is to learn how East and West Germany differed in holding people responsible for war crimes. She will also visit church artist Albrecht Durer's home, and museums of art and culture, and the Jewish community there.

While in Munich, she will visit Dachau concentration camp, which has been rebuilt, in contrast to efforts by some to cover up negative history of bigotry in the U.S.

Aug. 29 and 30, Gen will join pre-WCC Assembly workshops on indigenous cultures in Karlsruhe, and then participate Aug. 31 to Sept. 7 in the assembly as a photojournalist, submitting reports to The Fig Tree and Spokane Faith and Values.

Sept. 3, she will join a group from the assembly to visit the Hunsruck area for a program led by Renate Fuchs, who is active in the peace movement there and visited Spokane as part of a 1986 exchange of the national UCC global partnership with the Evangelical Church of Germany. She also hosted a PNC youth delegation in 1988.

Just as German churches told stories of faith through pictures and art, I will convey stories of my observations through photographs," Gen said.

After the assembly, she will travel to Elze, where she lived as an exchange student, and possibly Hamburg where her daughter studied as an exchange student and where she has ancestral roots.

Gen plans to fly from Frank-
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Tara Leininger invites greater participation in PNC

August 3: From The Moderator - Tara Leininger, pastor at MFCUCC

While everything needs to be moving quickly, the actuality is that things are very slow, indeed.

The Board has had difficulty in establishing a quorum in order to make necessary decisions, but I am hopeful that this logjam is breaking and we will soon be able to let the all in the PNC know what our steps will be.

The difficulty is finding people willing to step up and do some decision-making. Making decisions is not all that difficult once you have needed information and have discussed with others—multiple voices make for better understand-

ing. No, it's not the decisions themselves that is the sticking point, it is getting everyone to a meeting time where we can make those decisions. I am now under the impression that maybe about 10:30 p.m. would be possible.

As your moderator, I rely on others to give voice to the conference, but I am also a very impatient person and can be rather upset when things are not happening as quickly as they should. I hear Mike's voice at these times – breath!

We will very quickly need to put into place an interim or temporary Conference Minister and find our interim camp director for N-Sid-Sen, but I need your voices and your time. Contact me if you will be willing to serve on the search com-

mittee.

This will take time out of your busy schedule, including meetings, but the work needs to be done.

The tougher decisions about the future of the conference are going to be in the hands of the Board of Directors; we still have 4 empty seats at the table.

There are committees that are very short of members to do the necessary work. I'm getting some very worried voices about what is/is not happening. I'm worried as well.

Until those elected are sitting at a virtual table, nothing can happen.

Our conference is one

great big open space. There are people in it, but many have spent their time in work for the conference, while others do not think they have the skills or knowledge (which is so underestimating your abilities!), and too many think they just don't have the time.

We have to find the time. We have to do the work. I can't make these decisions on my own, although I seem to be getting the anxiety from others because I am the moderator.

This is my third letter begging for some input and help. The Pacific Northwest Conference is you. Where are you?

For information, call 206-725-8383 or 509-589-1044 or email tm.leininger@yahoo.com.

Pastor will participate in World Council of Churches Assembly

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furt to New Zealand Sept. 13 to join a group of professional photographers for a workshop and photography tour Sept 17 to Aoraki/Mt Cook, Fox Glacier, Punakaiki, Karamea and Kahurangi National Park, Nelson, Golden Bay, Abel Tasman National Park and Marlborough Sounds to improve her skills in landscape photography.

Returning in October, Gen will compile information from her observations to prepare presentations in December at the church and in the community.

Gen has received a Lilly grant for this sabbatical and is applying for other grants to help her take her presentation on the road and further explore issues that emerge from what she considers her brief encounters, just "touching the frosting and not getting into the depth of the cake" in the issues. She also hopes for further travel to meet

with theologian Susan Neiman in Germany.

Meanwhile, the congregation is committed to reflect prayerfully on how to improve their ministry to each other and the wider community, and to "discern where Jesus is calling us next," wrote members in the application for the Lilly grant. They will be served by a sabbatical interim pastor, Roger Lynn.

On returning, Gen expects to "receive a congregation that has discerned their gifts for ministry, and the congregation will receive a refreshed pastor who gained new skills and learned valuable lessons, deepened by her own spiritual journey."

The moderator, Wayne Shull, expects "to build stronger and lasting relationships inside and outside the church. Our small congregation does mighty things, taking a visible

stand, and collaborating with other organizations that work for social justice. The congregation fully supports this renewal time for our pastor. We believe by building more relationships beyond our doors, our membership and resources will increase, thus, enabling us to do even greater things."

Veradale UCC's community involvements have included N-Sid Sen, Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC), Spokane Interfaith Council, Hope House Women's Shelter, Spokane Valley Partners, Poor People's Campaign, its Community Garden, the Pride Festival, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Rosa Parks Birthday Party for the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center, social justice marches, a photography workshop and serving as a community meeting location.

Gen, who earned a master of divinity at Andover Newton

Theological School in 1989, and bachelor's degrees in German and music therapy in 1983 at Emmanuel College in Boston, was ordained in 1989 in Maine and served churches there and in Sunnyside, Calif, before starting at Veradale UCC in 2014.

In January 2018, she gathered people of faith and non-faith in the community in support of the Washington State Poor People's Campaign to overcome racism, poverty, the war economy and ecological devastation. Out of those gatherings, the FLLC was born as a ministry of the church. She will bring sabbatical insights back to that program, too.

For information, email genheywood@gmail.com or follow her journey in pictures at www.instagram.com/gen_heywood_photography and follow the church's journey at veradaleucc.org or facebook.

Orange Shirt Day on Sept. 30 recognizes boarding school abuses

The PNC-UCC Dismantling Racism Team recently sent a letter suggesting that churches commemorate Orange Shirt Day on Sept. 30. The letter was signed by Marilyn Burwell from the United Church at Ferndale and Chris Hanson, chair of the team.

During a Lenten study last winter, Marilyn and other members of Ferndale learned about historic abuses within the federal Indian Boarding School system. They joined with members of Christ Lutheran Church in Ferndale and some Lummi Nation members for a book study of *Tulalip from my Heart* by Harriette Shelton Dover.

The author writes about her struggles while attending the Tulalip Indian Boarding School near Marysville. At the age of 9, Harriett was severely beaten by the matron for speaking her native language. She also writes about Indian boys who were beaten by the school's superintendent and medical doctor.

In her childhood, the author said young girls were warned not to go to the beach alone because madams from brothels routinely searched beaches to capture unwary girls.

"We chose the book because it relates to Whatcom County and many children from the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe attended the Tulalip Indian School," Marilyn said.

In 2002, it was the second year the two churches and tribal members joined together to do a Lenten study on Zoom.

During their two year study, the Ferndale team became aware of the importance of Orange Shirt Day to tribes and nations of the U.S. and Canada.

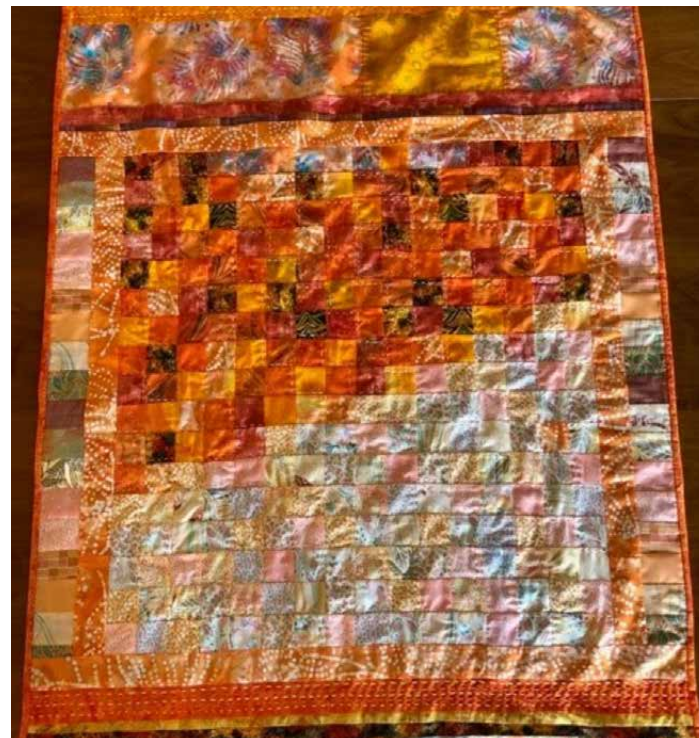
"The Orange Shirt is a symbol of the harm done to the indigenous children, who were forced to attend Indian Boarding Schools," Marilyn explained.

In the U.S., Orange Shirt



Orange shirt banners hanging in the UCC and Christ Lutheran Church in Ferndale.

Photos courtesy of Marilyn Burwell



Day was observed officially for the first time in 2021. The hope is that Sept. 30 will someday be commemorated as the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, as it is in Canada.

Marilyn told the story behind the day:

The orange shirt idea grew from the story of six-year-old Phyllis Webstad, a Shuswap native, who began school at St. Joseph Mission Residential School near Williams Lake, British Columbia, in 1973. To ease her fears as she boarded a

bus alone, Phyllis' grandmother gave her a brand-new orange shirt.

When Phyllis arrived at the school, she was stripped of her clothing, including the new orange shirt. Then she was given a bath, her long hair was cut short, and she was issued a school uniform.

Phyllis never saw her orange shirt again.

Even though she attended the school at Williams Lake for only one year, the experience contributed to low self-esteem.

Phyllis said, "that feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years. Even now, when I know nothing could be further than the truth, I still sometimes feel that I don't matter."

Her story is relatively mild, compared to other indigenous experiences, but her story was traumatizing, Marilyn said.

Other children, who attended boarding schools for longer periods of time, lost their native languages, native cultures, the nurturing presence of their families and sometimes their lives. They were exposed to cold, hunger, fatal diseases, like tuberculosis, even beatings and rape.

Many children died at the residential schools. In some cases, parents were not advised of their child's death, and children were buried in unmarked graveyards on school grounds, Marilyn said.

In the summer of 2021, and partly as a response to the more than 200 graves discovered at Kamloops in Canada in June 2021, U.S. Interior Secretary, Deb Haaland, announced the creation of an Indian School Initiative to quantify the problems and to create a way for Indigenous people to heal from their boarding school experience.

The U.S. Department of Interior released the first portion

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Dismantling Racism Team offers links on Indian schools

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of their promised Indian Boarding School report on May 11, 2022.

The findings stated: “The investigation found that from 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states, or then territories, including 21 schools in Alaska and seven schools in Hawaii.”

In addition, about 53 burial sites were identified. The federal investigation will continue, and the number of burial sites is expected to increase.

The May 2022 report also announced the launch of “The Road to Healing,” a year-long tour across the U.S. to allow American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian survivors of the federal Indian boarding school system to share their stories, connect communities with trauma-informed support and facilitate collection of a permanent oral history of survivors.

The report lists 14 federal Indian Boarding Schools in Washington: Oakville, Kettle Falls, Tacoma, White Swan, Davenport, Neah Bay, Squaxin Island, Taholah, Olympia, Federal Way, Omak, Tonasket, Tulalip Bay (Priest’s Point).

Marilyn is compiling the story of a small Indian boarding school, Stickney Indian Boarding School, which is not on the current list.

Marilyn’s background includes library research. She feels she has come full circle, because she spent four years as a child in the Four Corners area of New Mexico, where some members of her extended family still live and where she was first exposed to indigenous cultures.

After graduating from Washington State University in 1967, she worked as a teacher before marrying and starting her family. In 1978, she received a master’s studies in library science at the University of Washington. She worked 22



Stickney Indian Boarding School in Whatcom County was supported by the Methodist Episcopal Church’s Women’s Home Missionary Society from 1889 to 1913.

Photo courtesy of Whatcom Museum a#1996.10.9889



Nancy Tupper, Jana Schofield and Bobbi Virta, back row, Marilyn Burwell, Renee Swan-Waite and Cynthia Wilson.

Photo courtesy of the United Church of Ferndale

years as a technical librarian for a sanitary engineering firm in Seattle. After retirement, she and her husband moved to Bend, Ore., where she was active in a ministry in a Hispanic neighborhood with First Presbyterian Church. Marilyn and her husband moved to Ferndale in 2017 to be closer to family.

In Ferndale, Marilyn and her husband joined the United Church of Ferndale. Bobbi Virta, who was pastor until 2021, became acquainted with some members of the Lummi Nation.

Joel Asoved, a Methodist, who is now pastor, continues those ties, along with the Christ Lutheran pastor, Jana Schofield.

Marilyn co-led the 2022 Lenten program with Robin Ogmundson and Pastor Joel from her church, with Pastor Jana and Nancy Tupper of Christ Lutheran, and with Renee Swan Waite, Cynthia Wilson and Shirley Williams from the Lummi Nation.

“It is important to commemorate Orange Shirt Day because many people in our congregations and communities have no knowledge of the Indian Boarding School era,” said Marilyn. “It’s time for this history to become broadly known.

“What better place to seek the truth and reconciliation than through our churches?” she

challenged.

“Interior Secretary Deb Haaland is doing a tremendous job of keeping the federal boarding school initiative in the headlines. She will not be interior secretary forever, so we have a small window of time to tell the truth about the boarding school era and to give survivors the means to heal. Churches commemorating Orange Shirt Day is one way to help with a Truth and Reconciliation process.”

She offered links to various resources:

- A prayer written by an Anglican Church in Canada: Remembering the Children Prayer dq5pwpq1q8ru0.cloudfront.net.

- A PBS NewsHour account of the release of the May 2022 Interior Department Report at pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-live-interior-secretary-deb-haaland-gives-update-on-federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative.

- An article on the boarding schools in The Economist at economist.com/united-states/2022/05/14/a-report-on-native-american-boarding-schools-shows-their-horrors.

- A Department of the Interior Releases Investigative Report on Next Steps in Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative at doi.gov/pressreleases/department-interior-releases-investigative-report-outlines-next-steps-federal-indian.

- A Washington Post article at washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/06/11/deb-haaland-indigenous-boarding-schools.

- The Orange Shirt Day Proclamation at orangeville.ca/en/town-hall/resources/Documents/Proclamations/2020-09-30%20Orange%20Shirt%20Day_acc.pdf.

For information, email mburwell@rioua.com or hansonchristineann@gmail.com.

Global Ministries learns about celebration, election

Justapaz, one of the two partners of the Global Ministries Committee of the PNC-UCC and Northern Lights Region of the Disciples of Christ, is celebrating its 30th anniversary Sept. 21 to 23, said committee co-chair Mary Olney-Lloyd.

To celebrate, they are writing a book and planning a three-day event.

In a June 25 Zoom meeting, 11 committee members talked with Martin Nates, director of Justapaz, and the two UCC-DOC mission co-workers in Colombia, Alex Maldonado-Lizardi and Xiomara Cintron-Garcia about the plans and the June 19 election of Gustavo Petro as President of Colombia and Francia Marquez as vice president.

Martin was excited about the election results.

Mary said the committee is planning to have resources available Sept. 1 for UCC and DOC churches in the region to use Sept. 21 to 23, which are Days for Prayer and Advocacy for Colombia, the 30-year celebration of Justapaz and include the International Day of Peace on Sept. 21.

A sub-committee of the Global Ministries Committee is working with a national Global Ministries staff member to plan worship materials, newsletter articles and more.

"We don't know about travel yet but are hopeful for 2023," Mary added.

Ed Evans is preparing an edited piece on Martin's reflections on implications of the election of Gustavo as the new president.

There are also plans for a new video about the UCC-DOC mission co-workers, Alex and Xiomara, who have worked with Justapaz virtually since August 2021 and in person since September 2021.

Xiamoro's focus is on work around gender related to peace-making and armed conflict.



Alex Maldonado-Lizardi translates for Martin Nates on Zoom.

Alex's focus is on truth telling and healing memories from the trauma after years of conflict.

Martin, who is the third director in 30 years, said Justapaz was founded as an ecumenical effort by the Mennonites to focus on public service, peace building and conflict resolution/transformation. Alex translated his comments.

"We will celebrate our service to people and the world community," Martin said.

First is to compile writings of several authors into four chapters of a book. The first chapter is on the history of peace building in Colombia. The second is a biblical/theological analysis of peace building. The third is an analysis and documentation of healing memories from the 30 years. The fourth chapter is a prophetic call and expression of hope from the peace building and political processes/solutions to the armed conflict.

The book, which documents what Justapaz has done over 30 years, will be presented at a major event in Bogota on the International Day of Nonviolence and Peace. The celebrations will include thanksgiving for and recognition of their nonviolence and peace building work, and space to work together to discuss what needs to happen and challenges in Colombia to bring about healing in the new government.

Martin said the churches and ecumenical networks will have a role in reconciliation

and peace groups will explore together how to further the negotiated peace with the ELN (National Liberation Army).

"Every day will begin with biblical reflection on peace, women's rights and the role of churches in truth telling as part of healing memories and reconciliation. There will be an ecumenical liturgy one day asking God to bless our work," he said.

One day will also focus on the role of women in the reconciliation process, he added.

There will be round table discussions on the agenda of the new government and proposals to bring, such as an end to mandatory military service and efforts to reduce the militarism in the society.

Martin shared his reflections on the election, which he called "a historical moment"—the first time a leftist democratic movement won an election and that win expressing the desire of the country for peace.

"The traditional parties that usually win have been defeated," he said. "They held power for generations through promoting hate, conflict and war."

He said the new President comes from the peace movement that promoted signing a peace accord 30 years ago.

"Through that process, he gained experience in ways to end conflict through dialogue," Martin said. "Gustavo also signed the 1991 Constitution."

Xiamoro explained that for the first time Colombia has a woman and an Afro-Colombian

as Vice President, and someone who was a victim of the conflict. The inauguration of Gustavo and Francia is Aug. 7.

"The government is still a capitalistic model of development," said Martin, "but will address climate change, social justice for farmers and the poor, ending compulsory military service for the young generation and restoring rights of young protesters who have been political prisoners."

The new President will also need to "lower the political polarization in the country," he said. "Colombia feels calm and there is hope that victims' rights and for ex-combatants to be reincorporated into society."

Martin explained that combatants had taken up arms against the government because they had felt abandoned by political institutions.

He said that while Gustavo's Liberal Party Alliance did not win a majority, it holds a majority with a coalition with FARC, victims and other parties in Congress that will make it possible to put in place most of the agenda, despite expected opposition from different conservative groups and big businesses.

"It's why we need national dialogue to heal the country," Martin said.

Asked if Gustavo had ties to guerillas in the civil war, Martin said he had collaborated with the M-19, not participating in combat or as a terrorist, but as a politician, defender of human rights and social democratic capitalist. His focus was on writing the 1991 Colombia constitution and the Peace Accords, counter to some ways he is depicted in U.S. media. He previously served in Congress and was mayor of Bogota for four years.

Martin challenged media reports that depict him in the Cold War mindsets,

For information, call 206-291-8953 or email maryolney-lloyd@gmail.com.