



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

April 2015

Aqua campers send messages of peace

Project made campers aware of children in refugee camps in the Middle East

Pacific Northwest 2014 junior high aqua campers made connections for peace in Syria last summer and recently saw photos of Syrian children with prayer flags they had made and sent through the Amal ou Salam project.

Dana Sprenkle, who directed the camp with John Hubbe, both of Shalom UCC in Richland, shared a Facebook post with 11 photos from the refugee camp for Syrian children in Raymun, Irbid, Jordan.

Irene Willis Hassan, who has been a counselor and chaplain for junior high aqua camps at N-Sid-Sen for seven years, also originally from Shalom Richland, made the connection possible.

During her studies for a master of
Continued on Page 4



Nousha Kabawat, director of Project Amal ou Salam, displays prayer flags made by junior high aqua campers in 2014 at a refugee camp for Syrian children. Photo courtesy of Dana Sprenkle

Annual Meeting will consider two justice resolutions

Scott Ward, vice moderator of the conference and part of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, is upbeat on the theme for Annual Meeting 2015, "Spring Forth," based on Isaiah 49: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

Aware how easy it is for each congregation to become caught up in feeling alone without support, he believes it is important to gather congregations of the PNC to share, inspire, explore and celebrate what they are doing to make a difference and find greater meaning.

Resolutions to be considered are on the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy and a call for the UCC to take actions toward a just peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There is a proposed bylaw change

**Annual Meeting
2015 is April 24 to 26
in Spokane.**

for the moderator and vice-moderator to have the option of extending their one-year terms to an additional year, the scribe to an additional two years and the treasurer to an additional four-year term.

A new feature will be two sessions of mini-workshops. During each session, presenters will share on topics three times for 20 minutes, offering ideas and resources, reporting on their ministries or projects, and inviting collaboration.

PNC young adults will gather Friday and Saturday for conversations from

8:30 to 10 p.m. at the Saranac Public House, 25 W. Main, hosted by the Youth and Young Adult Task Force.

There will be an opening worship on Friday night with Conference Minister Mike Denton preaching, a morning worship on Saturday, and the Sunday worship, featuring a choir under the direction of Donovan Johnson from Metline Falls and keynote speaker Quinn Caldwell preaching.

Quinn is pastor and teacher of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Syracuse, N. Y., and author of *All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas*. He is a member of the UCC Stillspeaking Writers' Group and author for the Stillspeaking Daily Devotionals.

For information, visit www.pncucc.org.

Part 1 of reflections on

Wearing a collar for more than worship and protest

Conference Comments



By The Rev.
Mike Denton
Conference
Minister

What
does
it
mean
to wear
a
clergy
collar?

If I've visited with you or your church in the last few months, you might have noticed I was wearing a clergy collar. I've usually done this for worship and, like many good UCC clergy folks, for protests, but I hadn't worn a clergy collar every day for years.

The last time I did was when I served a local church in Ohio. As part of that ministry, I worked with folks on the street who were at high risk for contracting AIDS. Information and materials were shared to help them minimize their risk and, when some became ready to leave the streets, they were connected with resources to help them find their way to a different kind of life.

The clergy collar helped me be more identifiable to those who were looking for help and, realistically, also made it a little bit safer there.

I noticed other things, too. For those whose image of a pastor wasn't a 32 year old, the collar helped. In addition to street folks, other folks looking for help would approach me. There were several instances of violence in our community, and I was able to be received more quickly as someone who was supportive.

During a time I was trying to figure out how to live into this role, the collar helped other people remind me what my role meant to them, and helped me have my own inner-dialogue about it.

In addition to positive projections, there were difficult projections. Many automatically saw me as someone who wanted something from them.

On more than one occasion, people felt free to approach me and tell me how much the church hurt them. I was serving the church during early stages of the Roman Catholic child abuse scandals and more than one parent got at least nervous when I was around. That normal way you smile at a child when they smile at you was clearly unsettling to some parents who scowled at me. I'll always remember the parent of a child at a grocery store, who had just waved at me, pulling away their child while chiding them with the words, "I told you never to talk to priests."

When I started doing regional ministry I stopped wearing the collar and, frankly, I was kind of relieved. Even the more positive experiences of wearing a collar had started to grind away at this introvert. I was relieved to move in to a different sort of anonymity that could more easily be turned on and off. I kept the shirts and the collars but only to wear for worship or protests.

Over the Christmas season this past year, I found myself in the midst of a bit of a vocational crisis. Most of this will sound familiar to many

of you. I wasn't satisfied with my work and was feeling further away from many of the parts of ministry that I'd felt called to do in the first place.

The sense of meaning that had been more a part of the early days of ministry had faded. There were other things I felt as though I'd lost doing this particular kind of work. The pastoral muscles that come from regular contact with a geographic and spiritual community felt as though they had atrophied. I still felt connected to ministry as a job but had lost the connection to ministry as a lifestyle. I needed to do something different.

For reasons that weren't clear at the time, I thought wearing my clergy collar on a more regular basis might help. The deal I made with myself was that for the time between the new year and all of the way through Lent, I would wear my collar when my church day began and only take it off when I wasn't planning on doing other ministry related things for the rest of the day.

It was uncomfortable. I'd forgotten that people stared when you had it on. People talked to me differently. Neighborhood friends teased me a bit and weren't sure what to do with it. Folks looking for spare change approached me more regularly. It was clear how, um, completely rude a driver I'd become. I'd forget I had it on then see myself in the mirror and sometimes it was jarring. In the same way that non-clergy sometimes apologize to clergy for swearing, there were times I realized that just a few moments before I had not been a very good representative of our church. There was other stuff like that, too.

Although uncomfortable, these ended up also being the benefits of wearing a collar. I had been more in denial of my role as a clergy person than I realized. That very personal thing we name a call and the very public that becomes our role overlap, but are also in tension at times.

There are those things we feel are completely in sync with who we are and then there are those things that feel a little more like something we put on. By, literally, putting on a collar it helped to make this tension more real in a way that I couldn't avoid. I began to realize that the problem isn't the tension, itself, but trying to avoid it that can be so exhausting sometimes.

The actual physical act of putting on a collar and taking it off did something, too.

When my son Leo saw me putting my collar on, he started saying, "Daddy's going to church!" and that's what I started to feel.

Reflections on wearing a collar continue next issue.

Transitions announced

Elsa Peters ended her ministry with the United Churches of Olympia in February.

Eastgate Congregational UCC welcomes the **Renee McCoy** as its new bridge pastor.

First Congregational UCC of Bellingham is installing **Sharon Benton** as lead minister on April 17.

John Gibson, who served Plymouth UCC in Seattle for 40 years and from 1955 to 1959 served with the Washington North Idaho Conference, died Feb. 28 in Seattle.

He graduated from Boston University School of Theology in 1951. With the conference, he helped make Pilgrim First, Eastgate Congregational and Horizon House realities. His wife, Margie preceded him in death in February 2014.

Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Anacortes has sold its historic building, its third home since its 19th-century beginning, and is now meeting in Diehl Hall of the Anacortes United Methodist Church. As it seeks a new spiritual leader, it is focusing on its mission of increasing the love of the earth.

Clergy boundary training set

There will be Clergy Boundary Training for clergy with standing in the PNC from noon to 4 p.m., Thursday, April 23 and 8 a.m. to noon, Friday, April 24, at Bethany Presbyterian Church, 2607 S. Ray St. in Spokane. It is sponsored by the PNC-UCC Committee on Ministry and led by the Rev. Tara Barber.

The training is required for clergy once every three years, except for retired clergy with inactive status. Members in discernment are also required to be trained before beginning any internship.

With approval from Committee on Ministry, UCC clergy and others who work with children and vulnerable people may substitute a class offered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American Northwest and Southeast Washington Synods from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, May 29, at Christ Lutheran Church in Federal Way.

The training will be led by the Rev. Mark Nelson, coordinator for missional leadership of the Region 1 of the ELCA and the Rev. Susan Kintner, assistant to the ELCA Bishop of the Oregon Synod.

For information on either event, call or email Marj Johnston, Eastside chair, at 509-730-9969 or pastormarj@gmail.com or call or email Tara Barber, Westside chair, at 425-213-9335 or barbertara@hotmail.com.

Godly Play Training planned

Northwest United Protestant Church (Disciples of Christ), Shalom UCC and All Saints' Episcopal Church are co-hosting a Godly Play storyteller training on Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25 at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Richland.

Godly Play is a way for young children to explore their spirituality, learn sacred stories, and become familiar with rituals and ideas that are foundational to church life.

Training runs 6 to 9 p.m., Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. It will be led by certified trainer Cindy Spencer.

To register by April 15, call the Rev. Liv Gibbons at 541-543-7448 or email gibbons.liv@gmail.com or visit nwup.church/.../godly-play-worship-and-wonder-training/

Churches co-sponsor concert

Eastgate Congregational UCC and Kirkland Congregational UCC are co-sponsoring a concert by the Total Experience Gospel Choir at 7 p.m., Saturday, April 18 at Eastgate CUCC.

Pastor Patrinn Staten Wright started the group as a gospel music class at Seattle's Franklin High School in 1973. Since then, the choir, hailed as one of the Pacific Northwest's finest soulful ensembles, has grown to become a nationally and internationally known gospel singing group. Eastgate CUCC also sponsored them last year as a means to raise funds to support Our Church's Wider Mission.

For information call or email Linda Lynch at 425-970-3441 or linda.lynych@comcast.net.

Traveling art exhibit on display

A Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA) traveling art exhibit, "Touch, Anoint, Heal," will be on display in the chapel at University Congregational UCC in Seattle from April 30 to May 17. There will be a reception from 5 to 7 p.m., Thursday, April 30.

Since 1977, CIVA has encouraged artists to pursue "serious art and serious faith" and to create "a culture that magnifies

God's kingdom." "Touch, Anoint, Heal" is one of six traveling exhibits on different themes.

For information on the show and CIVA, visit CIVA.org.

Plymouth offers day camp

Plymouth Church UCC in Seattle will offer a Music and Arts Day Camp for Students, aged seven to 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., daily from June 22 to 25. Children will connect through drumming, hand bells/chimes, xylophones, mixed media art, ukulele, recreation and singing.

For information, call Rosemary Hashimoto at 206-290-0502 or register at plymouthchurchseattle.org.

Spring environmental justice training will be May 13-15

Worship resources for Earth Day on April 22 and ideas for church "green" teams to make their buildings more energy efficient are available in the menu at the right margin of the Environmental Ministries page at ucc.org/environmental-ministries, said Meighan Pritchard, minister of environmental justice.

Carbon Neutral Congregations resources are a ucc.org/carbon_neutral_web_resources_for_congregations. In 2013, the UCC passed a resolution urging congregations to be carbon neutral. This guide suggests resources to help congregations reduce their carbon footprint.

There will be an Environmental Justice Train-the-Trainer workshop from dinner Wednesday to noon Friday, May 13 to 15 at N-Sid-Sen.

The event will include a field trip to Kellogg, Idaho, to learn about contaminants leaching from abandoned mining sites into the water supply, cleanup efforts and impacts on communities and individuals.

Participants will explore how people of faith can work for environmental justice and create a sustainable, healthy and inclusive community that empowers conversation and actions for environmental justice.

They will discuss a faith-based approach to environmental justice—gratitude, humility, responsibility, justice and community. Materials include biblical readings, selections from the video "Renewal," insights from respected writers and suggestions for further study.

Registration is at n-sid-sen.org or call 208-689-3489. For information, call 206-370-4142 or email pritchardm@ucc.org.

Conference News Briefs

PNC youth make connections with refugee youth

Continued from page 1

divinity degree, which she completed in 2013 at Boston University School of Theology, she worked with two organizations on peace projects in the Middle East. The Arab Spring started when she was in graduate school and she wanted to learn more.

She first worked with the MEJDI Tourism Company, which brings together the conflicting parties, Israelis and Palestinians, to lead tours.

Through MEJDI, she did a pilot project as pastoral care manager for a three-week visit at a government-sponsored UN refugee prison camp on the Turkish-Syrian border. She helped prepare and debrief 36 graduate students in conflict resolution at George Mason University. The students experienced trauma as they saw and learned about refugee children in schools and camps. Irene helped them adjust and cope.

Many orphan refugee children, who lost limbs or part of their faces, have little contact with others. Some live in tents and stare at rocks or walls.

Now Project Amal ou Salam (Hope and Peace), led by a 25-year-old Syrian Christian woman, Nousha Kabawat, and a Palestinian, Aziz Abu Sarah, the founder of MEJDI tours, organizes day camps for refugee children to take them away for a short time “from the hellish situations they live in at the UN camps.” The day camps, which teach photography, reading, writing and sports, are held twice a year each in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Irene, who has been involved in the project for two years debriefing student teams, now mostly does advocacy and raises funds.

To better communicate with the children, she decided to move to Jordan two years ago to learn Arabic. She asked a friend in Boston to give her



Irene and Hamzah Hassan

Photo courtesy of Irene Willis

a contact in Jordan. It was Hamzah Hassan, a cell-phone store manager who became her husband a year ago. They knew each other six months before they married, because it’s not okay to date there, she said.

In Jordan, Irene has taught eighth grade and preschool, and opened a Montessori primary school with MEJDI friends. She worked with refugee children from Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Egypt.

Last summer, she returned for junior high aqua camp at N-Sid-Sen and explored with the directors a way to bridge the misunderstandings between American youth and refugee children in the Middle East.

In the Middle East, 50 to 65 percent of the population are young people, under the age of 24, angry with the West for destroying their economy.

“The young people have energy, but no place to put it with no jobs or money. They live in countries rich with oil resources exploited and controlled by the West,” said Irene.

“U.S. young people need a better understanding of living in a globalized world, especially in this time when people can talk on internet,” she said.

She also wanted to counteract negative images of Americans who come to Jordan with the United Nations or other programs for refugee relief.

“Many come with good in-



N-Sid-Sen campers use prayer flags in worship before sending them. Photo courtesy of Dana Sprenkle

tentions, but some have the idea that they are white saviors,” Irene said. “What many of them do creates more problems and political divisions.

“I just wanted to help American youth understand life there, so I took an opportunity at aqua camp,” she said.

Mary Lu and John Hubbe suggested making prayer flags to take to Syrian children at a refugee camp.

So the 70 junior high aqua campers made prayer flags, which are not a critical resource the refugee children might fight over.

“The prayer flags simply say that youth here are aware and care,” said Irene.

She sent them to Nousha who took them to a camp in March in Jordan and took pictures. Some of the youth wrote letters back, because they are learning English.

One letter said: “Hello Friend, How you? You are friends. Are you safe?”

Irene will bring a display to Annual Meeting, sharing about the project to help raise money for it. She will take letters and prayer flags the refugee children and youth sent back and then take them to aqua camp this summer.

“It’s good for our campers to be pen pals with refugee children and youth. Originally,

I did not think if it would be good for Syrian children. I wanted youth at our camps to be globally minded, to think of their futures as people of God doing what Jesus wants.”

Children in the camps in Syria are Muslim and Christian.

“When we made the prayer flags, I taught the youth at N-Sid-Sen some Arabic phrases, sayings about God, about loving one another. Many chose to write in Arabic, as well as in English.

Irene also showed the campers videos of children in the Turkish refugee camp.

She then divided campers into conversation groups where even awkward 12-year-olds brainstormed about different ways to help.

The N-Sid-Sen campers told their parents, who along with youth and members at Shalom Richland UCC, raised \$1,676 for the Amal ou Salam project for Syrian refugee children.

Irene returned to Washington in February and is settling in Bellevue, where she is looking for work in refugee resettlement, social justice projects with churches and church youth groups as she prepares for ordination in the Pacific Northwest Conference.

For information, contact Dana at 509-308-2856 or email irene.e.willis@gmail.com

Plymouth replaces organ, renovates sanctuary

Easter Sunday was Plymouth UCC Seattle's second Sunday back in its sanctuary after 10 months of renovations and replacement of its organ.

The 3,400 pipes, organ and organ installers from C.B. Fisk Organ Co. in Gloucester, Mass., arrived on March 8.

Two 53-foot semi-truck trainers parked on Sixth Ave., in front of the church.

At noon, 131 members of the Plymouth congregation lined up to help unload the trucks and carry in the pipes, ranging from .75 of an inch to 32-foot tall, and the rest of the organ. They moved a total of 60 tons in eight hours.

The \$2.4 million organ is modeled after the Cavaille-coll organ at St. Francoise Church in Lyon, France.

"It will be the only purely authentic French Romantic organ in the Pacific Northwest," said Douglas Cleveland, Plymouth's music director.

Following the installation the organ goes through a three- to six-month voicing process to completely tune it to be playable.

"By fall 2015, we plan to offer many free concerts for our downtown neighbors and visitors," said the Rev. Brigitta Remole, senior pastor of Plymouth UCC. "We are thrilled to introduce this 'king of instruments' to our community."

The C.B. Fisk Organ Co. installers said they never experienced such enthusiasm and community spirit with an organ delivery. C.B. Fisk makes only two organs a year and has a three-year backlog, because each organ is made by hand. The organ took nearly six weeks to assemble.

"The organ's funding was generously donated by several anonymous donors, and renovations were covered by a church-wide capital campaign last year," said Janice Randall, communications director for



Above: Worshipers gather for one of the first services in Plymouth Seattle's renovated sanctuary. Below, a contractor lays tile for the new flooring, part of the acoustical enhancements.



two years and now an enthusiastic church member, too.

The new organ was needed because the sound of the old organ had changed after the Nisqually earthquake in 2001.

The renovation was needed to install the new organ, extend the chancel for space for more choir members—up to 100—to sit for worship and for the many concerts given there.

Renovations also included improving the acoustics with curved wall board, installing tiles to replace carpet, replacing pews with chairs and replacing lighting.

In the process of replacing the lighting with a halo fixture that would hang from the ceiling, the roof was found to be weakened and was sinking because of snow loads. It needed to be shored up to hold the lighting.

"The present church was built in 1967 at the same site.

"Plymouth is celebrating its 145th anniversary this year. It has been in several sites and buildings, all downtown, over the years," Janice said.

The church worshiped in its Hildebrand Hall auditorium, which seats 220, so there were four Christmas services instead of three.

"The congregation came together and adapted to the temporary changes in the time of transition," she said.

In the auditorium, there were chairs that could be used to worship in the round or set up with a central aisle for weddings.

The same will happen with use of chairs in the renovated sanctuary.

Brigitta encouraged switching to chairs so there could be flexibility in the sanctuary for worship, and for use of the sanctuary by groups who rent the space.

"Ministry and arts are a key piece of Plymouth's life and worship," said Janice. "The congregation and staff now have more space for our own choir and for other choirs. Along with the organ and acoustics, we can offer more concerts as a gift to the community."

A Ribbon Cutting Celebration for the Plymouth sanctuary renovations will be held at 4 p.m., Sunday, May 3, at the church.

The organ dedication and inaugural concert will be held in the fall when the organ's voicing is complete. The voicing or tuning of each pipe is done one at a time.

Adjusting the tone of each is based on an aesthetic evaluation. It can take 30 seconds to two days for each pipe.

For information, call 206-622-4865, email jrandall@plymouthchurchseattle.org

Went to learn more about Palestine as General Synod delegate

Dee Eisenhauer visits Holy Land for first time

When Dee Eisenhauer, as a General Synod 2015 delegate, received an invitation to participate in a March 10 to 20 trip to Palestine with Tree of Life Educational Fund, she decided to go with a group of 31 people.

It was her first trip there.

“The invitation came because General Synod is considering a resolution in Palestine,” said Dee, pastor of Eagle Harbor UCC on Bainbridge Island.

Tree of Life Educational Fund grew out of an effort by the Old Lyme UCC in Connecticut to host interfaith conversations after 9-11. They found people wanted to avoid discussing the Palestine-Israel conflict. So they began taking people on one or two pilgrimages a year.

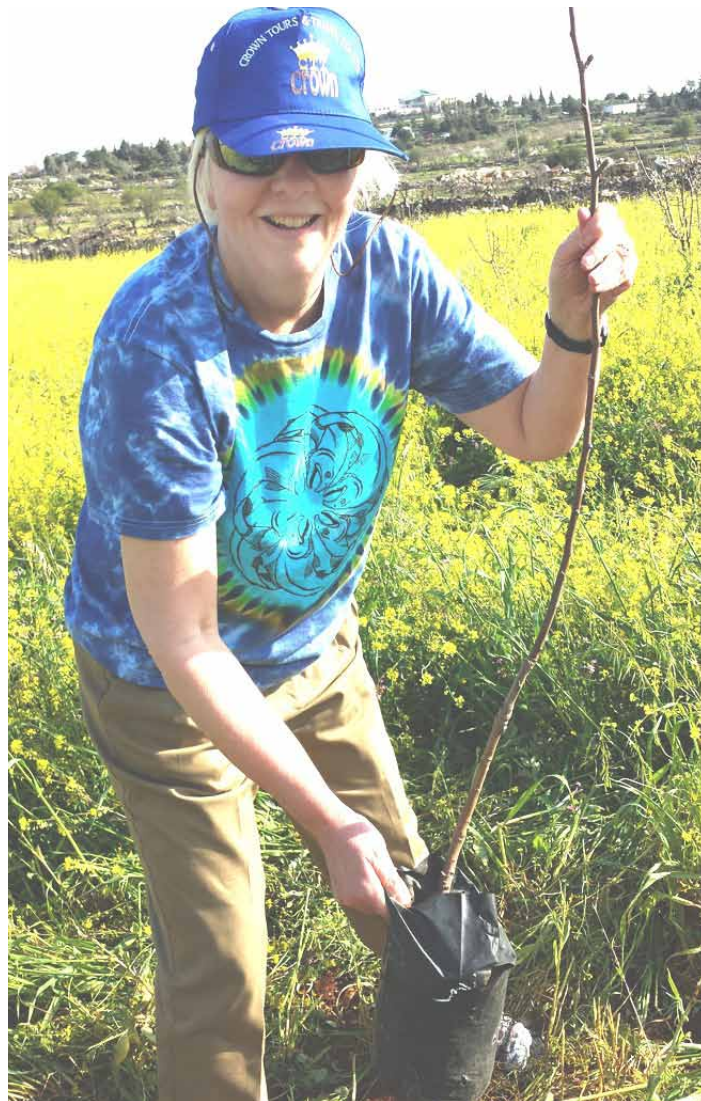
Leaders of her group included a pastor at Old Lyme UCC and the pastor of Storrs Congregational Church nearby. The group included six Muslims from a mosque in Old Lyme. Most participants were UCC, but there were also Lutheran, Presbyterian and Unitarian participants.

A Palestinian made arrangements for their visits in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Nazareth and surrounding areas—sites visited by many Holy Land pilgrims—and for four lectures or conversations each day.

“It was one-sided. The purpose was to learn the Palestinian point of view not filtered through the generally pro-Israeli U.S. media,” said Dee.

Cutting across the landscape, she saw the “big, ugly, horrifying” Separation Wall, which is twice as high as the Berlin Wall was, and will be 500 miles long if it is completed.

“I learned that life can be miserable under occupation and that Israeli settlements that now have more than 500,000 settlers, living illegally in the West Bank, forming whole, self-contained towns in closed-



Dee Eisenhauer plants a tree in Palestinian farmland.

Photo courtesy of Dee Eisenhauer.

gated communities. They claim the high ground on hills and gradually annex Palestinian farmland,” she explained.

Dee said settlers first establish one to six mobile homes on a ridge, build a guard tower and permanent housing. Then they invite people to move there.

Once a settlement is built, she said, Israeli settlers find ways to take Palestinian farmland that has been in families for generations, but they may lack a paper trail of deeds.

“Running from one settlement to the Palestinian farmland below, I saw two large

sewage pipes dumping raw sewage,” Dee said. “In another place, we replanted trees in an area where settlers had poisoned trees. We met a family who was involved in a 23-year legal battle to keep their land. Settlers came one night with bulldozers and uprooted hundreds of fruit trees.”

Dee heard of “bad behavior” and misery from ongoing harassment. She also experienced and observed some when traveling by bus through checkpoints, being asked for passports and waiting to pass through. Young Israeli men and

women soldiers with machine guns would board the bus.

For instance, one of the group’s home stay host who travels to Ramallah for work—about a 25-minute drive under normal circumstances—has to expect a three-hour delay to go through a the checkpoint on his commute, even though he is not crossing the border.

Violence has varied over the years during the Occupation, with two periods of open armed rebellion or Intifadas (“intifada” means “shake off”) in recent years. Palestinians are normally prohibited from owning weapons. So stone throwing is a frequent occurrence. Palestinians throw stones, and Israeli soldiers respond with gunfire, arrests of tear gas.

Dee witnessed one such episode at a refugee camp they were visiting in Bethlehem, when a 12-year-old boy was arrested for throwing rocks.

“Palestinian men are often arrested for days, months or years,” she said. “One was arrested for following our group on a street in Hebron where Palestinians are not allowed.”

“We had outings from and in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth to many of the headline holy sites, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Annunciation, the Dome of the Rock, the Wailing Wall, the Negev Desert, Jericho, the Jordan River, Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee.

The group had a feast with a patriarch in a tent, visited schools, refugee camps and an Islamic Druze group. They learned of efforts to rehabilitate the Jordan River and protect wildlife.

“In the U.S., talk of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is awkward because many feel guilt about the Holocaust and want Israel to exist as a Jewish

Continued on next page

Resolution addresses Israeli-Palestinian peace

Because there has not been peace in Palestine for 67 years, Seattle's University Congregational UCC's Palestine Action Group went to the Conference's Justice and Witness Ministry (JWM) Committee and proposed a resolution that was passed by five other UCC conferences and will be presented at General Synod 2015.

Ed Crouch, leader of the UCUCU Palestine Action Group, said the group hopes it can "move us toward peace."

The Central Pacific UCC Conference along with four other UCC Conferences passed resolutions to boycott and divest from companies that profit from the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

Fifty one members of both University and First Congregational of Bellevue signed the resolution.

In March, the JWM committee endorsed the resolution on the plight of Palestinians and sent it on to the Rev. Andy CastroLang, Pacific Northwest Conference moderator to present at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

JWM recommended that the Annual Meeting of the PNC endorse the resolution and send it on to General Synod in solidarity with the other conferences.

Several workshops will cover the subject at Annual



14 University Congregational UCC resolution signers.

Photo courtesy of Ed Crouch

Meeting.

The Resolution of Witness calls for UCC members, congregations and the PNC to:

1) Educate themselves on the Palestine-Israel conflict.

"We're learning that Arab, Christian and Jewish Palestinians lived relatively peacefully in historic Palestine for more than 300 years," said Ed.

"In 1947, the United Nations recommended that Israel be designated in 55 percent of Palestine. By 1949, Israel had seized 78 percent of the land, and it now occupies 87 percent of original Palestine" he explained.

2) Divest from companies that profit from the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and boycott products produced in these territories by Israeli companies.

"For instance, we are called

to divest from Caterpillar, which manufactures oversize bulldozers that destroy Palestinian homes and orchards in order to extend Israeli-only settlements into Palestinian Territories," Ed said.

"In 2014, 1,177 Palestinian homes were bulldozed. In separate actions, more than 100,000 Palestinians were permanently displaced. It is estimated that more than 500,000 Israelis now live illegally on Palestinian land in settlements," he added.

3) Petition Congress to abide by our U.S. Foreign Aid laws and the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, both of which prohibit the U.S. from giving aid to countries that engage in human rights violations.

The Geneva Convention of 1949, signed by the U.S. and Israel and 193 others, also forbids settlement on occupied

lands, Ed said. On Christmas Eve 2014, the state of Israel announced it was building 380 new settlements on Palestinian soil. The billions in foreign and military aid to Israel each year are not only illegal, but also further contribute to the suffering of Palestinians.

4) Promote more interfaith dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths.

For the full 2015 General Synod Resolution of Witness Towards a Just Peace in Israel-Palestine, see <http://synod.uccpages.org/>, click on Materials, then Resolutions and scroll down to Resolution No. 4.

The Palestine Concerns Task Force of the Church Council of Greater Seattle has met at University Congregational UCC for 25 years.

For information, email gecrouch@earthlink.net.

Pastor plans to be involved in debates about Palestinians

Continued from previous page homeland," Dee said. "Many are afraid to raise questions for fear they will be seen as anti-Semitic. We need to find a way to talk about the Middle East that supports the State of Israel, supports a state and freedom for Palestinians and tells of injustices Palestinians experience.

"We, the United States, send \$3 billion in aid to Israel

annually, mostly military aid for weapons and the army that enforce injustice and harassment. Since 1948, Israel has become the largest single recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, a total of \$121 billion—almost all for military purposes," she said. "Because we invest so much, we have a right and obligation to be critical about what our money supports and what hap-

pens in the West Bank."

At Annual Meeting and General Synod, there will be resolutions on the Palestinians.

Dee said she will be involved in debates, present slide shows, give talks and encourage local interfaith dialogue. In June, she will host two students from Palestine and arrange opportunities for them to speak on Bainbridge and in Seattle.

"I believe peace is possible," Dee said, "but people with power, as well as the underdogs, must want it. We in the UCC and U.S. are people with power, and we have a responsibility to *make* peace in the world, not just passively hope for peace."

For information, call 206-842-4657 or email dee.eisenhauer@gmail.com.

Group overturns table to challenge incarceration rate

On Monday of Holy Week, Jesus turned over the tables of the money changes in the temple. His act of righteous anger put attention on the economic exploitation of the poor in the context of the Roman Empire.

Inspired by this gospel story, the Rev. John Helmiere of Valley and Mountain Fellowship, an emerging church in South Seattle, launched the “Turning Tables Monday” campaign in 2010.

Intended to increase participation in faith-based efforts for economic justice, confront institutional wrongdoing and foster institutional repentance, past actions focused on issues such as divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in clean energy, and closing bank accounts at “big banks” in favor of credit unions.

For 2015, Seattle anti-racism organizers planned a series of events throughout the Lenten season, centered on the issue of mass incarceration and racial disproportion in the King County Juvenile Detention system, culminating in an action on Monday, March 30.

The Lenten Series included a Teach-In about the New Youth Jail being built in King County, a morning study and conversation about the Scripture, a Lenten devotional and resources for churches to integrate the preparation into worship.

Jenn Hagedorn, social justice liaison with Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle, is one of the leaders in this organizing work among communities of faith, along with members of a group called European Dissent.

European Dissent is a white, anti-racist group that works under the same organizing principles of The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. European Dissent follows the leadership of Youth Undoing Intuitional Racism



Lauren Cannon reads Scripture.

Photo courtesy of Alex Garland

(YUIC) and Ending the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC), multi-generational, youth of color-led collectives committed to dismantling systemic racism.

Jenn, who grew up in Northshore UCC, served as a Young Adult Service Community Justice Leadership Intern in 2013, working with Plymouth Church and the Church Council of Greater Seattle. She is also completing a graduate degree at the University of Washington School of Public Health.

Using networks within local congregations as a catalyst, Jenn said she is “excited to explore how predominantly white churches can authentically engage in an anti-racism movement in King County.

“As Christians, we are called to challenge systems of oppression that have become normalized,” she said. “While 8 percent of the King County population is black, more than 50 percent of those in the juvenile detention center are black youth. This isn’t right, but it has become normalized. If white youth were being locked up at those rates, we as a county wouldn’t stand for it.”

In fact, Jenn explained, this is what happened. Over the

last decade, King County has reduced its average daily bed count from almost 200 youth to between 40 to 60 youth per night. This was done by creating programs that diverted youth away from detention and into programs like drug counseling.

These programs worked better for white youth than youth of color, so while the overall jail population has gone down, the racial disproportion has dramatically increased.

“This is the result of programs that lack an anti-racist lens,” Jenn explained. “Without that, programs will always work better for white youth than youth of color.”

On March 30, 70 people of faith gathered outside the offices of Howard S. Wright, the company that has been granted a \$154 million contract to build the new Children and Family Justice Center.

This group stood in solidarity with EPIC and YUIR in opposition to building a new youth jail for King County.

The crowd made its way up to the offices of Howard S. Wright, where an executive came out to meet them and ask what was happening.

The Rev. Brandon Duran,

youth and young adult pastor at Plymouth UCC in Seattle, delivered the letter, which said, “We see bidding for a contract to build the new youth jail as a moral choice on the part of Howard S. Wright. Building the youth jail is participating in and financially benefiting from an unjust and broken system in such a way that legitimizes the system and perpetuates the damage done. You are making money off of the suffering of communities of color.”

The letter also held up the contradictions between the company’s own creed, to “do nothing less than Zero Harm for anyone who comes in contact with our work,” with their building a jail that causes pain and trauma to children and their communities.

The letter called on the company to put their contract with King County on hold until King County agrees to listen to EPIC and YUIR in a way “that ensures accountability to those communities most impacted and includes authentic collaboration on the alternative vision of juvenile justice coming out of EPIC and YUIR.”

The group then set up a table and held an offering of coins and cards that had been written based on discussions during the weeks leading up to the event.

The Rev. Lauren Cannon, a pastor at Keystone UCC, led the offering, read the Scripture and invited the group into a place of prayer.

The Rev. Mike Denton, Pacific Northwest UCC conference minister, said the group came to this event as a confessional action, because of their own complacency in unjust systems as institutional church.

The Rev. Rick Derkson, Mennonite pastor, with his two-year-old granddaughter standing next to him, talked about Continued on next page

Richmond Beach UCC hosts homeless camp

Richmond Beach Congregational UCC in Shoreline began hosting a 90-day United We Stand encampment of 25 homeless people on March 21.

The camp, which includes two children, can admit up to a maximum of 35 people who are seeking housing and jobs, said Marcia McLaughlin, commissioned spiritual director at Richmond Beach UCC.

"We're working with Greater Seattle Cares to provide meals and other needed items, such as blankets, batteries and tents," she said.

The camp has a microwave for cooking. The church is providing one hot meal a week, and is inviting other churches, neighbors and other organizations to help provide other hot meals.

"A few years ago, the Richmond Beach Congregational Church chose to make helping those who are homeless our top outreach goal," Marcia said.

"Prior to hosting the encampment, our outreach has included providing transitional housing by working with Compass Housing Alliance to use the two houses that we own, providing meals and needed items to Mary's Place and



Homeless set up tents for 90 days. Photo courtesy of Marcia McLaughlin

Elizabeth Gregory House, and making sandwiches for a day shelter operated by Compass Housing Alliance," she said.

The church has voted that hospitality was a top priority within their neighborhood, the church and beyond.

"This opportunity to host a small encampment is a perfect blend of our goals of working with those who are homeless and hospitality," Marcia said.

"Within less than a week of United We Stand moving onto church property, the church was working with the Richmond Beach Library and the neighborhood Syre Elementary

School to broaden our outreach to the encampment," she added.

The library is helping encampment residents get county library cards and will help with computer access at the library.

"This is a benefit because people need to register now for the lottery with the Seattle Housing Authority for Section 8 housing," Marcia said.

One camp resident and Marcia met with the 4th-to-sixth-grade service club to talk about the camp. The students will brainstorm how to help.

On April 8, Kae Eaton from the Mental Health Chaplaincy led a workshop on how to com-

panion those who are homeless.

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 13, Richard LeMieux, author of *Breakfast at Sally's*, will be a guest speaker at the church.

His book is the story of his own descent into homelessness.

Richard is a writer and ex-businessman who was once happily married and the owner of several cars and three boats. Evicted from his luxury home after his business failed, and living with his dog, Willow, in a beat-up old van, he wrote *Breakfast at Sally's* on second-hand typewriter.

Now an international public speaker, he tells of his experiences as a homeless person and speaks on behalf of homeless people, educating people and offering hope.

He lives in Bremerton with Willow.

"It's easy to look from afar," said Richard. "We see people panhandling and living in cars. Most figure they've always been down. Maybe they fell further than we think."

Marcia said the church is planning other educational opportunities, as well.

For information, call 206-542-7477 or email marcia_mclaughlin@comcast.net.

Clergy introduce symbolic action against racism

Continued from previous page the community he wants his granddaughter to grown up in. He wants it to be a community that cares for all its children rather than caging them.

Finally, the Rev. Mark Zimmerman, pastor of Madrona Grace Presbyterian Church in Seattle, invited the group to lay their hands on the table or the shoulder of someone near them, pray and collectively flip the table.

As the table landed on the ground, cards and coins scattering, and there was a moment of deep silence.

Systemic racism is a deeply rooted problem that requires long-term organizing, said Jenn.

The group looks forward to continuing to develop relationships with each other and with the anti-racist organizers of YUIR and EPIC.

They are discussing next steps and looking towards Pentecost for their next event of witness and action.

For information, call 206-622-4865, email jennifer-lin44@gmail.com, or visit tableturning.org.



Protestors put coins and message cards. Photo courtesy of Alex Garland

PNC Global Ministries adds two; Frees tell of floods

Contrary to the report in an earlier version of this article, the Global Ministries Committee of the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference with the Northwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will NOT be hosting itineration for Monica and Tom Liddle in August.

They visited several years ago and a detailed itineration schedule published in an earlier version is where they visited on an their earlier visit.

Co-chairs of the regional Global Ministries Committee, Lon Rycraft with the PNC and Lillian Moir with the NW Region, are working with the regional churches to develop new goals for the coming year when they hope to reach out to local churches in the Disciples and UCC with educational opportunities, said Lon.

The committee had a display at the PNC Annual Conference in April 24 to 26 in Spokane.

At the Annual Meeting, Lon ended his term of service on the Conference Global Ministries Committee.

Two new UCC members were elected, Ellen Blaise of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle and Mary MacKay of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane.

Continuing UCC committee members are Karen Haworth, also of Westminster, the Rev. Sandy Neal of the Community of Interfaith Celebration in Olympia, and the Rev. Ruth Brandon of Everett UCC. They will meet with other UCC committees as part of the PNC Leadership Retreat on Friday and Saturday, June 12 and 13 at N-Sid-Sen.

Lon submitted the rest of the article and researched to find the need for the correction regarding the itineration.

Noting that the Zulu ethic says, "I cannot be fully me un-



Road flooded out in Mozambique.

Photo courtesy of Kim Free

less you are fully you," Lon said that "sharing in community with others around the world means Global Ministries speaks out on issues of peace and justice, poverty and human rights, so nationally, Global Advocacy and Education raises awareness, encourages action in local congregations, and works ecumenically in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations to bring public witness to critical policy questions.

Advocacy priorities are shaped by the positions of the Common Global Ministries Board and by United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) resolutions, and by the first-hand experience of global partners and their communities around the world.

Lon said Kim and Eric Free from Oregon, who are completing their first year of ministering in Mozambique, have reported about devastating floods in late January. They have updated reports in a blog at thefreesinmoz.wordpress.com and a facebook page at facebook.com/Freesinmoz. Global Ministries also has a donation page for gifts to mission personnel such as the Frees.

The Frees report that

since Jan. 27, 157,000 people have been affected and 117 died in flooding in northern Mozambique, where infrastructure has been washed away and buildings of mud and stone collapsed.

"Getting help to the flooded areas is a challenge because transporting supplies by land or boat is slow and dangerous," they said.

As waters receded, people tried to go home to rebuild but were challenged by destroyed sanitation systems leading to spread of disease.

The ICUM, Council of Churches and community leaders are meeting to plan ways to help with rebuilding and replanting to replace the harvest and stores lost.

"Mozambique is one of the poorest nations in the world," the Frees said. "They work to improve infrastructure every year and prepare for the next year's rains, but every year there is flooding and destruction."

Asked if the U.S. has experienced flooding, Kim said she has told of Katrina and Ivan, explaining that "even wealthy countries can't prevent natural disasters from causing destruc-

tion and deaths."

She struggles to challenge the notion that people in wealthy nations are better Christians than people in poor nations, and that is "why God has blessed them more, and nothing bad happens to them because God protects them more."

People hope that if they are better Christians, bad things will stop happening to them.

As she encourages them to question that idea, she seeks to offer different ideas that encourages spiritual growth.

"Being a person of faith doesn't mean your house or belongings or person will be supernaturally spared from all suffering, but when bad things do inevitably happen because of the imperfect world we live in, as people of faith we have faith in God and something stronger to rely on than ourselves alone," she said.

"Help may not happen the way we ask but because we have faith, we know God is always with us," she added.

Kim requests prayers for those affected by flooding, for people who risk traveling to affected areas to offer assistance and for relief efforts and inspiration. Interested people may respond to the crisis through the Africa Office of Global Ministries.

From June 2013 to February 2015, Global Ministries has received designated gifts for the appointments of Erik and Kim totaling more than \$95,000 towards the total goal of \$200,000—\$50,000 a year for four years.

With their appointment, a new approach of personalized fund raising for missionary appointments was launched.

For information, call 206-824-1770 or email lon@npucc.org.

Mercer Island calls recent head of UK Reformed Church

By Megan Chenovick - Mercer Island communications chair

Mercer Island Congregational UCC Church recently called as their pastor the Rev. Roberta Rominger, who is the first woman and first American to serve as General Secretary of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom.

Roberta, a Silicon Valley California native was ordained into the United Church of Christ in 1982 and served a congregation in Tombstone, Ariz., before leaving the United States 30 years ago to serve as a UCC mission associate in the United Kingdom.

In the U.K., she served in local churches and in regional leadership before becoming general secretary.

While there, she reconnected with a Pacific School of Religion classmate, Dale Rominger, also a UCC minister, and they married in 1990. They lived in Newcastle upon Tyne in Northeast England, where they each had ministries.

In 2005, Roberta joined 600 women ministers from across the U.K. in a march to Make



Roberta Rominger, left, greets a parishioner at a U.K. church.

Photo courtesy of Mercer Island UCC

Poverty History. They gathered at Trafalgar Square and marched to No. 10 Downing St., the home of Prime Minister Tony Blare, where she was one of 12 who personally argued for an end to poverty.

After serving as moderator with the Thames North Synod for 10 years, she was called in 2008 to a seven-year term as the general secretary of the United Reformed Church (URC).

While in office, she sought a greater partnership between the URC and the UCC by joining in the “God Is Still Speaking” campaign.

In that role, she was also involved in ecumenical movements, including “Fresh Ex-

pressions,” a church collaboration between the URC, the Church of England, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and several other Protestant denominations.

Her work there, however, did not mute God’s call for her to return to the United States after she completed her term. Roberta’s parents moved to the Northwest five years ago.

She follows Mercer Island UCC’s interim pastor, the Rev. Mark Miller, previously PNC’s transitional interim minister.

Since calling her in February, the Congregational Church of Mercer Island’s office has received emails of congratulations from around the world.

One was from Keith Bradley of the URC in Woking, Surry, England. He said that although she may have been “rubbing shoulders with archbishops,” he thinks she will be at home “sharing your joys and sorrows, and inspiring, leading an enabling you to serve God in your community.”

The Rev. John Proctor, acting URC general secretary, said, “Roberta leaves with many friendships, our warmest thanks and high respect. She will make an outstanding contribution in her new post, as she and Dale settle amid new friends and responsibilities.

For information, call 206-232-7800 or visit ucc-ccmi.org.

Amber Dickson’s intern year introduces her to justice issues, a caring church

Working since September with the Faith Action Network (FAN) for her year as a Justice Leadership Program (JLP) intern with the PNC, Amber Dickson helps faith communities find common ground and engages people with issues.

“I update liaisons in congregations about progress on bills. At trainings, I meet people,” she said. “I write action updates, track bills in Olympia and see FAN’s action there.”

Amber works on FAN’s agenda: wealth inequality—wage theft, minimum wage and equal pay—criminal justice—secondary education in prisons and legal fee obligations—and expanding understanding of human trafficking to include labor.

When she visited Monroe Correctional Facility, she met with the Concerned Lif-



ers Organization to learn about issues for people serving long sentences or life without parole. They want “corrections” to help reduce recidivism of those released. She was impressed with how informed they are.

Amber appreciates the interfaith component of FAN’s work, bringing people of different faiths together to focus on the common good for the state.

“It makes a strong voice for

the faith community, in contrast with those who have money and faiths that judge rather than focus on compassion, justice, acceptance, inclusion and care of the most vulnerable as FAN does,” she said. “Many pieces of the faith voice are hidden by the loud tone of some churches.”

Along with systemic work for justice, being a JLP intern has also included intentional living with other interns and being involved with a church—Keystone UCC for her.

“Being at Keystone has helped me reconcile my relationship with church, deepening my faith and healing my disillusionment,” said Amber, who grew up in a non-denominational, evangelical megachurch

with formulaic beliefs and expectations that certain beliefs and actions would bring certain results. Having seen discrepancies, she now is pleased that at Keystone UCC there’s room for questioning without judgment.

“There’s room for inquiry and space to learn,” she said. “I’ve been able to dive into the Bible again.”

Amber, completed studies Seattle Pacific University in 2011 in psychology, also finds the small church caring about each other like family.

After this year, she’s gained skills and feels confident about entering the career world.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or email dickson@fanwa.org.

N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs summer registration open



Mid-Winter Retreat participants at N-Sid-Sen joined in a hungry-hippo game on the floor of Stillwater Lodge.

Photo by Mark Boyd

2015 N-Sid-Sen camp schedule is:

Junior & Senior High Midwinter Retreat

March 13 to 15 - grades 7 to 12

Women's Retreat - May 15 to 17
Lynn Nelson & Kaye Hult

Camp Staff Retreat - May 15 to 17
Katy Lloyd & Kristen Almgren

Leadership Retreat

June 12 to 14

Mike Denton

Work Camp - June 15 to 20
Mark Boyd

Young Adult Camp

June 21-23

Kid's Camp - July 5 to 8

Trudy Lambert & Gabe Peterson

Intermediate Camp - July 5 to 11
Bob Watrous & Kim Schulz

Senior High Aqua Camp

July 12 to 18

Tony Kliment & Lyn Stultz

Family Camp #1

July 26 to Aug. 1

Amy Johnson & Ryan Lambert

Junior High Aqua Camp

Aug. 2 to 8

Dana Sprenkle & Sarah McDonald

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

By Mark Boyd

The theme for this year's Midwinter Retreats was "All In: Living Your Life with Purpose."

Dana Sprenkle and Sara McDonald directed the junior and senior high retreat in March at N-Sid-Sen with 42 campers and staff.

Susan Andresen and Rich Porter directed the junior high Midwinter Retreat at Pilgrim Firs with 55 campers and staff.

Kristen Almgren and Andrew Conley-Holcom directed senior high Midwinter Retreat at Pilgrim Firs with 50 campers and staff.

In addition to great food, fun games and of course some version of the talent show, they talked about what it means to truly step all into our lives.

The youth at both Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen came to camp and looked at how putting yourself all into your life has both great potential and even greater responsibilities.

Midwinter retreats are designed to give youth a much-needed break at camp and come meet new and old friends during those sometime dark and wet days of winter.

It also allows youth who may be new or unsure of camp to experience a smaller, scaled down version of summer camp.

Many youth who come to a Midwinter camp for their first time register for summer camp right after returning home.

So if it's now time for children and youth to register for summer camp right away.

It's going to be another great year.

Registration for all camps is available not at www.n-sid-sen.org

Come home to the lake, Lake Coeur d'Alene at N-Sid-Sen or Lake Flora at Pilgrim Firs.

2015 Pilgrim Firs camp & retreat season

Deeg Nelson's Farewell
2-4 p.m., March 8 - see p. 3

Spring Cleaning/Work Camp
May 1 to 3 sign up on UltraCamp

Young Adult Retreat

June 19 to 21

Jen Towner & Max Aquino

Work Camp

June 18 to 21

Ginny Springer

Senior High Camp

June 28 to July 4

Kristen Almgren &

Andrew Conley-Holcam

Junior High Camp

July 5 to 11

Rich Porter & Susan Andresen

Kids Camp

July 12 to 15

Staci Schulmerich

Intermediate Camp

July 12 to 18

Katy Lloyd

Family Camp

Aug. 16 to 20

Rich & Leslie Porter

For information, call 360-876-2031.