



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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December 2009

National Outdoor Ministry Consult

Gathering reflects on sacred stories, places

Robbie Paul of Deer Park shared the history of unresolved grief and ongoing healing of people in the Native American cultures of the region at the recent national Outdoor Ministry Consult held Nov. 4 to 9 at N-Sid-Sen.

She led the more than 50 gathered from throughout the United States and around the conference in a presentation on the theme, "Sacred Spaces Sacred Stories." She helped outdoor ministry resource leaders gain sensitivity to the need to listen to stories, not just individual stories but the underlying historical traumas that may be part of different lives and spaces.

"As a psychologist, I have



Continued on Page 4 Robbie Paul and her husband, Phil Wise, of Deer Park join Outdoor Ministry Consult.

Annual Meeting speaker will be Rodger Nishioka

For the Pacific Northwest Conference 2010 Annual Meeting, Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., will be keynote speaker, addressing the theme, "Communication, Compassion and Community."

The gathering will be held from Friday to Sunday, April 23 to 25, in Wenatchee.

Rodger focuses on equipping pastors to be teachers and leaders in

educational ministries, with particular focus on building a congregation's youth and young adult ministries in mainline Protestant congregations and non-denominational independent Christian movements.

He grew up the son of a United Church of Christ pastor, who switched denominations when he served the Japanese Presbyterian Church in Seattle.

Rodger earned a bachelor's degree at Seattle Pacific University in education and taught

school in Tacoma. He earned a master's in theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, a doctor of divinity degree at Austin College and a PhD at Georgia State University.

Members of the 2010 Annual Meeting Planning Committee are Kriss Abbott, Kerby Avedovech, Linda Brindle, John Eisenhauer, Dennis Hollinger-Lant, Kathleen Morgan, Lon Rycraft, Donald Schmidt and Carol Stanley.

Donald said they will be meeting to discuss resolutions, displays, workshops, worship and other speakers during December.

For information, call 206-824-1770.

**Annual Meeting
2010
will be held
April 23 to 25
in Wenatchee.**

We need you to spread the word on PNC News

Conference Comments

By Mary Stamp
Conference
News Editor

**We need
your help
to spread
the word
about PNC's
new media
and stories
of our shared
life and
ministries.**

In this newsmagazine and online, we have content for Pacific Northwest Conference communication and connections. It's in news and features on life, resources, events, people and ministries in the conference and congregations.

Our goal is to build connections, pool ideas, share stories, offer resources, build awareness, inspire action and stir hope.

As we use new media, our first hurdle is for pastors and church leaders to let us know how to deliver the content we offer into the hands and computers of church members.

If you are reading this, you are accessing the website either through www.pncc.org or directly at www.thefigtree.org/pncc/pncc.html. (We will seek to simplify that website URL as we set up more pages.)

We need to inform people in the conference and congregations how to access the information, so we increase visits to the website.

To do that we need to call and email all churches, pastors, conference leaders and each person we interview to help us spread the word, to add website links, to print copies of the PDF files, to survey members on preferences and to sign up members. Will you help us?

Each person I converse with—and I hope you will do the same with each person you connect with in your church and the conference—I am asking questions to learn about their media use, habits and preferences:

- What media do you use and prefer?
- Will you access and read the copy online?
- Please include a link or links from your church website to the pnccnews website.
- Please add links to specific articles, perhaps on pages related to ministries?
- Do you want to be notified of new copy by email, RSS subscription, the PNC-UCC yahoo-group, the pncc website, our Facebook group or how?
- Will you download and read the pdf?
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regular email notices?

- Do you want us to a print copies?
- How many copies for your church?
- What are their names and mailing addresses or email addresses?
- Will you/they donate to help cover the costs of printing and mailing?

The questions are detailed, but your replies can be as simple. As we progress into new media, we need to be sensitive to maintain communication with those who *are* and *are not* flowing into and with the ever-changing media.

As we develop our use of media, we hope to make it possible for you to share stories—to submit ideas, send photos and report on ministries. Essentially, that is how the stories in this edition developed.

We learned of ideas and interviewed people. They sent photos. Some sent copy. They reviewed the copy, edited for clarity and to fit on the pages. You are the news sources. Sharing your stories is a phone call or email away—then we will schedule it with the other copy.

As online visits increase, we will include some stories only online, recognizing that we do not want an overload of new information—just enough to digest.

The Pacific Northwest Conference News is just one element of conference communication—the journalistic piece.

Other elements include the website, the yahoo group emails, the monthly packet, Skype and online conferencing for meetings, conference calls, events, camps, retreats and personal contacts.

The conference board plans to seek a temporary contractor, said Dennis Hollinger-Lant, moderator, to review the overall communication needs with a committee and make recommendations for an communication plan.

Your replies to the questions in this commentary will assist in that process, as well as with the news sharing.

Please let us know your needs and how you are already spreading the word about the News. You may call me at (509) 535-1813, email me at pnccnews@qwest.net or send the information to me by mail at 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202.

Recruiting begins for Western Regional Youth Event

“Reach beyond the Big Sky” is the theme for the 2010 Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE), hosted July 6 to 10 by the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ at Montana State University in Billings. It is for youth entering ninth grade

in fall 2010 through seniors.

Tara Barber, co-chair of PNC’s Education Ministries Committee, said youth will leave for the WRYE from Seattle the morning of July 5. They will spend afternoon and evening at N-Sid-Sen, and continue to Billings arriving July 6

when the program begins.

Montana State University-Billings is on 110 acres near the downtown and river, prairie and canyon ecosystems.

At the close on July 10, the delegation will leave Billings and spend the night at Westminster Congregational UCC

in Spokane before returning to Seattle July 11, in time for senior high camp at Pilgrim Firs.

Susan Andresen of the PNC Ministry Resources Committee said the cost is \$700 per youth. For information, email susan_andresen@hotmail.com or call 206-265-2987.

Conference News Briefs

PNC plans retreats, camps

The 2010 retreats and camps have been set for Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen.

Pilgrim Firs retreats start with Junior High Mid-Winter, Jan. 8 to 10 and Senior High Mid-Winter, Jan. 15 to 17. Suzanne Seaton will lead the Clergy Retreat Jan. 24 to 26. The Men’s Silent Retreat is Feb. 18 to 19; Men’s Retreat, Feb. 19 to 21; Women’s Retreat, March 5 to 7; Confirmation Retreat, April 16 to 18; LGBTQ Family and Friends, May 29 to 31, and Young Adults, June 26 to 28.

Summer at Pilgrim Firs includes Work Camp, May 28 to 30, led by Deeg Nelson, managing director. Other camps are Intermediate, July 5 to 10; Senior High, July 11 to 17; Junior High, July 18 to 24; Kids, July 25 to 28, and Family, August 29 to Sept. 2.

Dates at N-Sid-Sen are the Clergy Retreat, Jan. 31 to Feb. 2 with Celeste Crine; Junior and Senior High Mid-Winter Retreat, Feb. 26 to 28; Women’s Retreat, May 14 to 16; Work Camp, June 6 to 12; Kids, June 27 to 30; Intermediate, July 5 to 11; Senior High Aqua, July 11 to 17; Family Camp #1, July 25 to 31; Junior High Aqua, Aug. 1 to 7, and Family Camp #2, Aug. 8 to 14.

Two work camps scheduled

Two work camps in New Orleans will do long-term recovery and rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Randy Crowe, managing director of N-Sid-Sen, will lead Work Camp I,

which will be Feb. 8 to 14, and Bobbi Virta, pastor of Ferndale UCC, will lead a Work Camp II from March 20 to 27. Both groups will stay at the Little Farms United Church of Christ.

“We will again help people re-build homes,” said Bobbi. “To raise funds, Ferndale has set a Feb. 6 Mardi Gras dinner.”

There is space on both trips. For information, call 208-689-3489 or 360-384-3302. Register online at www.n-sid-sen.org.

Preaching conference set

Congregational Leadership Northwest is planning the Festival of Preaching Northwest from April 19 to 21 at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Seattle. Three of the six preachers are UCC, Martin Copenhaver, Lillian Daniel and Kenneth Samuel, who are in the UCC Writers Group and write for the Still Speaking Daily Devotions.

For information, visit www.festivalofpreachingNW.org or call 206-290-9884.

Delegation will visit Korea

The conference Global Ministries Committee is recruiting a delegation to visit the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, its global partner in the East Seoul Presbytery, during May. For information, call 206-382-3785.

Pugetarians learn of PNC’s global ministries connections

At a November luncheon at Horizon House, the Pugetarians—retired UCC clergy—had a program on “What in the World Are We Doing?” Mary Margaret Pruitt and Marvin Eckfeldt of the PNC Global Ministries Committee told of the partnership of the UCC conference and the Disciples of Christ Northwest Region.

They shared about Global Ministries work and recognized retired Global

Ministries personnel in the conference, including hearing reflections from people who have had global mission experience: Lloyd Van Vactor, who served in the Philippines, and Bob Porter, who served in Sri Lanka, plus Carlos Madrazo, who is currently serving in East Timor.

Pugetarians learned of the conference’s 15-year global partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, trips to China, Haiti and Dominican Republic, and joint UCC-Disciples hosting of itinerating mission personnel.

Committee sets up website

Christian Life Service and Action Committee (CLSA) has set up a website—www.pnc-clsa.org—to facilitate committee work as it plans events and reviews resolutions for Annual Meeting.

CLSA is forming networks among UCC churches and friends on such issues as justice, peace, creation and affirming all God’s people. Networks are the Veterans Welcome Resources Network led by Katy Lloyd and the Caring for Creation Network led by Nancy Hannah and Paige Garratt. For information, email addrme@pnc-clsa.org.

Fund offers treasurers’ event

The Cornerstone Fund “Church Numbers for Treasurers” seminar will be held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 23, at Cheney UCC, 423 N 6th, and 1 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 24, at Northshore UCC, 18900 168th Ave. NE in Woodinville. For information, call 206-725-8383.

New UCC President to visit

Geoffrey Black, the new national UCC president and general minister, will visit Seattle on March 12 and at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane on March 13 as part of his national “Listening Tour” to have direct contact with and speak with UCC members and friends.

Consult builds connections across UCC

Having decided to go into ministry while attending their first Outdoor Ministry Consult 20 years ago, Randy and Linda Crowe looked forward to sharing N-Sid-Sen with their colleagues. Out of connections over the years, those at the consult held them in prayer when they left to see his mother who was in failing health in Kirkland and enfolded them in their embrace when they returned to the gathering after her death.



Bruce Druckenmiller in N-Sid-Sen's fireside room.

Bruce Druckenmiller, a member of the national UCC Outdoor Ministry Association, said that the goal of the national Outdoor Ministry Consult is to connect people involved in outdoor ministry across the denomination.

"Outdoor ministries is in a fragile state in some conferences where the sites are dependent on conference finances," he said. "N-Sid-Sen is an exception. It is self-supporting and

\$30,000 ahead, in contrast to Hartman Center at Milroy, Penna., which is that far behind."

Bruce is director of youth, young adults and outdoor ministry on the Penn Central conference staff, working with Hartman Center since 2002, after serving as a pastor in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"It's crucial that outdoor ministries not fall by the wayside. Camps are a way for people to connect with their roots and sacred stories. They are a way people experience a call

to lay and ordained ministries. They are the way people, youth and children find and build relationships with God. They do not replace the local church, but build on the foundation of Sunday schools and youth programs," he said. "The best advocates of camp are campers inviting friends, expanding beyond the United Church of Christ."

The consult is a time to share ideas and realize participants don't need to "reinvent the wheel," but can take ideas

and can apply them in their settings.

"We listen to each other and learn new motion songs and graces for meals," he said.

"Our theme, 'Sacred Stories, Sacred Spaces,' reminds us that our sites are sacred places to us and to people who come through the years. People may never have felt closer to God, being in relationship with other people and God," he said.

Bruce added that many camps are taking seriously the sacredness of their space by becoming involved in green living practices as part of relating to creation, learning to lessen their burden on the earth and its resources.

"Camps are working on building green and living green, continuing conversations on how to make the camps green with new technologies, insulation and lighting. Beyond energy efficiency, camps consider what paper products and cleaning supplies to use. Many have recycling programs.

The consult is held every other year, moving around the country visiting different sites.

Stories can bring healing over generations

Continued from Page 1
heard many stories," she said. "I have prayed, sweat in sweat-lodges, laid on the ground and let the stories go, to be able to hear stories and honor each person."

Robbie, director of Native American health studies at Washington State University at Riverpoint Campus in Spokane, suggested that camp counselors and directors become natural listeners, and take care before they hear the stories of others.

As an example of the deep listening needed, she told her story of generations of losses and post-traumatic stress transmitted to her and part of her personal narrative of self-discovery and healing.

"We need to listen to learn,



Robbie Paul

and learn to listen—being connected to all things mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically," she said. "We know we are connected if we have learned to listen by being able to hear a bird take a drink of water on the other side of the mountain."

Her self discovery began

when she read about Nez Perce history and then heard stories of her great grandparents and grandparents—stories lost because they were too painful for the family to tell.

"I realized after reading and hearing stories that I needed to go to places where the stories happened," she said. "I needed to know protocols of the Seven-Drum, Longhouse and Christian religions."

After recounting details of that family history from her great grandfather's first encounter with another culture when Lewis and Clark came to Weippe Plains, through battles, slaughters, treaties made and broken, boarding schools and indignities previous genera-

tions suffered, she said that she needed to pass on the stories to her children and their children, the seventh generation.

"We are to obey the Creator to do good to all. God can heal wounds," said Robbie who works to recruit more Native Americans into medical care and health policy work.

"We gain understanding of the other so we understand that we all have humanity," she said, telling of her dream to form a Truth and Reconciliation Council for Native Americans, similar to the model developed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa to begin the healing process his country faced after the system of apartheid was abolished.

Technology can connect campers year-round

Jim CastroLang, acting pastor at First Congregational UCC in Colville, led a workshop on using technology to keep in contact with campers through the year.

"If you send a slide show out immediately after camp, the campers are fully in the energy of the camp," he said, suggesting sending it out two to three months later as a first "touch-point."

Then at six months, Jim said to remind campers of the excitement of last year and look ahead to next year.

He suggested blogging, texting and tweeting, using the tools the campers are using. Just to send a brochure to sign up for the next camp is not enough to keep their excitement.

"We need to remind them using the tools of technology

to bring back memories of the good experience," he said.

"Facebook is too public," he said, "but you can set its security. It's important to let parents know what technologies you will use and what security there is so they use technology and don't abuse it."

"Facebook has taught us the power of simplicity, streaming tidbits rather than four paragraphs," he said. "There will continually be new technologies. We need to experiment with them and discuss if they enhance our connections.

Technology can detract from or enhance the camp experience.

For example, because young people expect immediacy in their communications, technology may keep campers in contact with friends and family outside camp, diminishing



Jim CastroLang, right, leads workshop on "Cultural Clash."

community building at camp.

In contrast, if several enjoy and take photos of a sunset, those photos can be shared as part of an evening worship service to enhance the worship and the experience of the sunset, Jim said.

In helping lead a camp, he

doesn't plan worship ahead but lets it come out of the experience of the camp, bringing together things from nature and the beauty of the environment.

Jim said that the new technological tools need "to be incorporated organically so they enhance camp life."

Consult creates a song led by former N-Sid-Sen leader

Helping campers create songs from their experiences at camp solidifies their community.

Having assisted Randy and Linda Crowe at the second junior high aqua camp at N-Sid-Sen, Walt Lofstrom, who was active in Kirkland UCC for 13 years while working at Hewlett Packard, came from Colorado for the consult in November,

As a musician, Walt led a session on Song CAMP, which he started through his church, Parkview UCC in Denver.

He and his wife, Barb, were involved in camping 20 years in the PNC conference, and their son, Eric, who grew up at N-Sid-Sen camps later directed



Walt Lofstrom shares song-building process for campers.

junior high aqua camp with Brooke Peterson.

Walt and Barb moved to Colorado in 1992 and he worked in sales with Hewlett Packard. While working there,

he studied for seven years at Iliff Seminary, serving part time as a hospice chaplain. He retired two years ago in 2007.

Through Song-CAMP (Children's After-school Men-

toring Program), he helps neighborhood children write songs. About 30 third to fifth graders from Parkview Congregational UCC's neighborhood came attend each of the two nine-week semesters of Song-CAMP.

"The program exposes the children to the church, but we do not talk about God unless they do," Walt said.

He guides the children—or adults such as participants at Consult—to write words about their experiences at school.

"It can be done at camps, having children write words describing their camp experience," he said, telling of drawing stories out of the children and planning an instrument to put it to music. He plays the guitar and asks, "Is this what you mean?" Gradually, a song emerges.

He led consult participant through the process to write a song about their experience.

Lummi Island church integral to community life

Part of the island culture is that neighbors care for neighbors.

While Lummi Island Congregational Church's 100-year-old classic, white clapboard New England style building makes a statement of its roots, the congregation's five parish nurses express its current ministry of neighbors caring for neighbors.

As part of the building's centennial, the 106-year-old congregation has been celebrating both its history and its ministry to the community.

The first pastor, I.M. Dicks, traveled by canoe among the San Juan Islands to lead worship for islanders. The church was called First Congregational Church of Beach, which was the original name of the island, said Cindy Bauleke, part-time pastor for the last three years.

In 1906, the church bought land from pioneer families and called their first pastor, the J.L. Hudson. They dedicated the building in 1909 and used it until the 1930s, when wind damage made the building unsafe to use. They met in homes and the grange until the building was repaired in the 1950s.

After the church was rebuilt, an Episcopal Church and a Christian Science Church shared the building. The name changed in 1954 to the Lummi Island Congregational Church, and it was kept after they voted to be part of the United Church of Christ in 1960.

"There were resident pastors from 1906 to 1918, but then there was no resident pastor until 1978," Cindy said.

Pastors at Bellingham First Congregational UCC, where Cindy served 20 years as co-pastor, preached there. Since 1978, the Lummi Island church has had a half-time pastor.



Nancy Wong takes Mike Granfors' blood pressure in a room at the church.

Photos provided by Lummi Island Congregational Church

"Every year, the women of the Lummi Island and Bellingham churches have a luncheon, and because they shared a pastor for many years, ties are strong," said Cindy, who preached there several times while at Bellingham First. Still living in Bellingham, she takes the \$10, eight-minute ferry ride to Lummi Island twice a week.

Early settlers fished, logged, canned fish and made shingles. Then people came and built

summer cabins.

Today, the 1,000 winter and 2,000 summer residents also include "alternative lifestyle" people, retired people and artists. There is one store, a grange and a school for 50 children. Now some people are building expensive homes there, changing the flavor of island life, Cindy said.

Those who fish do reef net fishing for salmon, as the Lummi Nation, now on a reservation

on the mainland, once did.

"There's rarely a church meal or coffee hour without salmon or other fish served," said Cindy, telling how a former organist would rush into the church in his fishing gear, play the organ, and rush out after church to go fish.

For most of Lummi Island's history, there was only one church. In 2005, the church split, and an Evangelical church meets at the grange. Many also take the ferry to attend churches in Bellingham.

The 80-member church draws 40 to 45 to worship in the winter, and 40 to 50 in the summers when tourists and summer residents come, Cindy said.

In 1997, Elaine Granger, a registered nurse who worked at a hospital and nursing home in Bellingham, took a class in parish nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital in Bellingham. With the church council's support, she began the church's parish nurse program.

For more than two years, she was the only parish nurse. Now there are four parish nurses and two health ministers. Continued on next page



the 100-year-old building brings a New England ambience.

Its parish nurses provide spiritual and physical care

Continued from previous page serving the island community.

“There is no medical care on the island, so the program serves the entire island,” Cindy said. “They take blood pressure, do a foot clinic and provide basic services. When someone has a medical crisis, the person usually calls one of the parish nurses.

“They help set up home care when someone returns from the hospital,” she said. “Over the years, they have acquired medical equipment, which they store and loan for free.”

Elaine, who has lived on the island for 34 years and whose husband, John, is from a family that settled there in the late 1800s, retired as a nurse and continued as a parish nurse until a year ago, when she needed care for 90-, 86- and 84-year old family members.

The other nurses are Nancy Wong and Jane Phillips, who are church members; Dorothy Hansen, who is in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church; Candy Jones, a health minister at Island Chapel, and Megan Crouse, a member who is a pastor and a health minister. The health ministers are social workers or licensed practical nurses.

“Most of the people we help are not church members,” Elaine said. “We seek to keep our elders on the island as long as we can.”

The parish nurses run a food pantry in the church basement and also started the Elderberries senior center that meets at the church. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesdays, 15 to 20 seniors come to play cards, socialize and eat a simple meal.

For some, it’s their primary social outing for the week.

Through Elderberries, the nurses keep track of the seniors, answer questions on medicines, advocate for them when they need care and coordinate their care when they come home.

Listening during home vis-



Chris Morton and Kathy Jones walk on the labyrinth during its dedication.

its or when people come to the church Wednesdays or Sundays to see the parish nurses is a primary skill.

“I enjoy helping with end-of-life care, because along with keeping track of physical concerns, I enjoy listening to people’s stories. I visit a woman, a German immigrant, who tells stories of Germany in the war.

“As an intensive-care and coronary-care nurse before the hospital had a chaplain, I cared for patients and families, but did not do spiritual care,” Elaine said.

As a parish nurse, spiritual care—laying on hands and praying with patients and families—is part of the role.

Elaine is comforted to realize God is present.

“People new on the island are surprised that there’s someone to call and talk with them, someone from the church but not pushing church,” she said. “Regardless of their religious beliefs, we care. It’s what God wants us to do.”

Nancy came to the island nearly three years ago and has

been a parish nurse a year and a half. She earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1984 and a master’s degree in 1995 at the University of Delaware. She worked as a nurse practitioner in Delaware before moving to Iowa and then settling with her husband on Lummi Island.

She appreciates being able to bring in the spiritual dimension of healing, which she finds important for people, even if they do not attend church.

Cindy said the parish nurses fit in with “the islanders’ independence and strong sense of community.”

A new outreach is a labyrinth one parish nurse, an artist, two labyrinth facilitators, an engineer and a project coordinator have created in “a natural cathedral of trees” in the woods behind the building and a cliff overlooking Puget Sound, Cindy said.

The land was cleared and a temporary labyrinth laid out in the summer of 2008. In May, 2009, it was completed with stones marking the path.

At the dedication in June,

island harpist, Stella Benson played, and Bobbi Virta, labyrinth facilitator and pastor at the United Church of Ferndale, participated in blessing the church’s labyrinth.

Cindy said that the labyrinth is in a place accessible for all islanders.

“It is used by residents and visitors, as well as church members and friends,” she said. “It is an outreach to our community, a way to express our hospitality. It’s open for the community to use as a sacred space for personal meditation and spiritual reflection.”

The church’s vacation Bible school in the summer draws many of the island’s children. In addition, the church is part of the Whatcom County Interfaith Coalition, which offers a clinic, low-income and transitional housing. It also participates in Heifer Project.

“I seek to bring to the church a sense of the UCC’s radical hospitality,” Cindy said.

For information, call 360-758-2060 or visit www.lummi-church.com.

Four PNC churches shelter homeless families

Four United Church of Christ churches—one in Spokane and three in Seattle—are involved with a national program housing homeless families in their buildings or serving as support churches for churches providing shelter.

Now known as Family Promise nationally—Spokane chose to keep its name, Interfaith Hospitality Spokane—the program mobilizes community resources and faith groups to provide temporary housing, meals, case management and compassion for newly homeless families as they seek stable housing.

In Spokane, Westminster Congregational UCC recently became a support church, cooking, providing hospitality and overnight volunteers, when the Spokane Friends Church hosts families in their building. It is one of 30 Spokane churches involved in the Interfaith Hospitality Spokane.

Marj Johnston, associate pastor at Westminster, said they started last spring and have helped three times, rotating volunteers from the women's chapter and outreach board. Some volunteers want to do this, but rarely attend worship.

"We serve three meals each week, play games and do crafts with the children, and one stays overnight," she said. "Volunteers help transport people to the day center and do phoning or office work.

Interfaith transports cots in a trailer from church to church.

"Volunteers sharing meals with families build relationships," she said. "Families see the volunteers' genuine concern. Presence is a great way to start conversations. It's amazing what we can talk about over a wild card game."

Although she worked three years with the Homeless Program of the Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs, Marj learned never to assume understanding homelessness.



Women at Alki prepare airbeds for guests who will stay in a church school room.

Photos provided by Alki UCC

"We continually learn, because we are dealing with real people with real lives and real dreams and hopes. Our role is to accompany them to help them find the tools and resources to have the lives they want," she said.

Seattle UCC churches—Alki, Admiral and Fauntleroy—are among 18 congregations cooperating to provide the services. Temple Kol HaNeshamah, which meets at Alki UCC, supports that church.

Alki UCC, Kol HaNeshamah and Admiral UCC cooperate to assist families for one week every three months to both shelter and feed families in transition from homelessness to housing.

They provide physical sanctuary, transforming Alki UCC's space to house families. Classrooms become bedrooms and the fellowship hall becomes a family dining room and a children's playroom.

The synagogue and church members make these spaces homey with home-cooked meals and occasional art or recreational activities for guests.

Members of the congregations help prepare and serve meals, play with children and spend an overnight with the families.

The Kol HaNeshamah synagogue has found the shared ministry a way to be partners, sharing space and a vision for a more just world.

Julia Chase of Alki said her church was the first one in West Seattle to vote "yes" to be a Family Promise host church.

"It took three years to recruit enough host churches and to locate and furnish a day center. The program has been going since July 2008," she said.

During their vacation church school in the summer, children of Admiral Congregational UCC donated their "gently used" toys and games for children of Family Promise. Lessons focused on sharing, giving, growing and loving.

"The children were moved to learn that some children have no toys and no home," said the Family Promise website.

Family Promise can help up to 14 people at a time. Guests are interviewed and screened

by the director and agree to follow guidelines, including developing a personal plan of action. People with psychiatric, medical, legal or substance abuse problems are not accepted. They are referred to other programs.

Each site houses and feeds guest families one week every three months, providing sleeping space and using Family Promise's inflatable beds.

During the day, families are transported to the day center where staff help them find living arrangements and jobs.

Sally O'Brien, who has served on the Alki outreach committee, was one of the founders of Family Promise of Seattle and serves on its fundraising committee.

"Several years ago, our committee was burned out," she said. "We were trying to do too much, and spread our resources thin until we decided to focus on one area. We chose homelessness, because Seattle adopted a 10-year plan to eliminate homelessness."

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Members realize homelessness is about people like them

Continued from previous page

In 2005, they joined with others interested in starting an Interfaith Hospitality Network—the former national name of Family Promise—in West Seattle.

“While many people were willing to give a check, we realized it would take people power to develop,” Sally said.

Three years later in July 2008, the nonprofit formed. Alki was the first church in the network, along with Kol HaNeshamah.

“At Alki, we value working with Kol HaNeshamah. Our cooperation on this has brought us closer,” she said.

Sally’s husband, Michael, and 14-year-old daughter, Hannah, have joined her for overnights.

“The first night, there was someone Hannah’s age,” Sally said.

Hannah was quiet when they went home. Sally asked what was wrong.

“I’m mad,” Hannah told her. “That girl is no different than me. Why does it happen. This is a rich nation. Why can’t it work for everyone? It’s not fair!”

Beyond recognizing the injustice, she felt good she could help the family and has gone more times.

“We could just greet guests, but we also make dinner, play games and stay overnight,” Sally said.

The Family Promise board is still recruiting host churches to expand the network.

“As my first experience working with a nonprofit board, it was rewarding,” Sally said. “It’s great to see how people come forward and move out of inertia to do something.”

Some churches she invited to be a host or support church turned down the opportunity after learning they could not invite the families to worship or Bible study. Family Promise



Julia Chase sorts through toys for families sheltered in church.

does not allow proselytizing.

On faith, Sally believes “actions speak louder than words” as the program helps stabilize children and bears witness to systemic problems.

“It’s one small way I can make a difference,” she said, “and it reminds me not to take things for granted in my life.”

Because the program is underway now when funding is limited and needs are great, Sally said Family Promise of Seattle is using a national fund raising idea. They formed a 206 Club—using their area code—and ask people to donate \$206 a year, or \$17.17 a month. Grants that were \$2,000 are now \$500. The program was also hit because four months after a major fund raiser, the economy fell, and some could not fulfill the pledges.

As of mid-November, Family Promise of Seattle had helped 20 families with 50 children find sustainable housing—100 percent of those who

went through the program.

Marilynn Miller of Admiral UCC said the program started because there were no shelters to keep families together.

Admiral is a support congregation when families are six blocks away at Alki, which she attended for 30 years before going to Admiral.

“We help set up the aerobeds Sunday evening and take them down the next Sunday morning,” she said. “The churches provide mattress pads and sheets, which members take home after church to launder.”

Children go to school, and adults and pre-school children go to a day center, where there are computers for job and house hunting, a counselor/caseworker to help people find jobs and housing, and child care so parents can go out for interviews.

“Some find housing in two weeks,” said Marilynn, a retired teacher who first heard of the program five years ago.

With the Admiral build-

ing used by many 12-step programs, they could not house families, but could cook meals.

“After World War II, my family tried to stay together when we moved to Texas. We moved around and lived in different places, so I understand how hard it is to keep families together,” she said.

Marilynn added that after leaving the program, families who have met in it continue to network with each other, helping babysit or store furniture.

Fauntleroy, a 300-member church, does the program on its own. Lucy and Terry Gaddis, coordinators, host guests in their building, which they share with the YMCA. The Y has a gym, laundry, exercise room, showers and child care.

Along with hosting, the church provides the 30 volunteers a support church would send. Fauntleroy hosted five times last year and hosted when it was Our Lady of Guadalupe’s turn as a support church.

Fauntleroy was also one of the first involved in Family Promise of Seattle. One church member, David Jones, is chair of the Family Promise board.

Although the Gaddises lived in the Seattle area since the 1970s, they did not attend church until they were drawn to Fauntleroy by its social justice action, especially on poverty.

“Doing Family Promise is doing something about homelessness, not just giving money. We can also give our time and food,” said Lucy who serves on the Outreach Committee.

Terry is retired from Boeing, and she is retired from work as the city budget analyst.

Family Promise has 150 programs around the country.

For information, call Elizabeth Heath, Family Promise of Seattle director, at 206 937-1703 or Madelyn Bafus at Interfaith Hospitality Spokane at 509-747-5487.

Pastor publishes adult study book, 'Do Not Live Afraid'

Book helps study groups reflect on how motivation by fear runs counter to core of Gospel: love.

In his 10th book published by Upper Room Books, Christian education and study group author John Indermark of Naselle discusses how fear serves as a motivator, but not as a generator of the Gospel's core, love.

Do Not Live Afraid: Faith in a Fearful World explores biblical traditions related to the "fear of God" and biblical bases for living beyond fear.

He suggests that lives are better motivated by God's words: "Do not be afraid."

"We find hope in God's promise and in the experience of love given and received," he said. "It means to live by trust as disciples."

John, a native of St. Louis and graduate of Eden Theological Seminary, served 16 years as pastor of UCC churches in Metaline Falls for more than five years, Carnation for two years and Naselle for eight years before entering a ministry of writing Christian education curricula and spiritual formation books.

The curricula to which he has contributed include "Seasons of the Spirit," "The Present Word" and the "Northwest



John Indermark writes curricula and adult study books.

Photos provided by John Indermark

International Lesson Annual."

His other books are on hope, encounters with Jesus, parables for Lent, prayer, neglected voices of people on the margins, setting the stage for Christmas during Advent, and Genesis. Each of these books include leaders guides for adult study sessions.

John has been serving since last November as part-time transitional minister at a

Presbyterian church in Long Beach, Wash., as he continues to write.

Last June he attended a writers conference for the Seasons of the Spirit curriculum.

While he has previously written the adult track and biblical backgrounds, he is now writing the worship resources and ideas for liturgy, art and music.

In 1988, his mother's diag-

nosis with Alzheimers led him to decide to stop talking about writing sometime in the future and to do it. In 1989, he went on three-fourths time salary at Naselle and a Methodist church and spent one day a week writing. He did that for four years, paid for single articles and curriculum pieces for Bible Discovery.

In 1992, he wrote an eight-session study on the Gospel of Mark. In the 1990s, he wrote for "The Word Among Us" curriculum that became "The Inviting Word." One editor from that went to Upper Room Books. There was a market for small group studies, so he wrote his first Lenten study, *The Genesis of Grace* in 1996. It has sold 20,000 copies.

Most of the books are still in print, but one has been pulled.

Writing for Seasons of the Spirit which is used in the United States, Canada, Australia and Scotland, he has learned that it's important not to assume a single audience, denomination, culture, age or ethnicity.

Along with writing, he has done extended pulpit supply for Lutheran, Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Southwest Washington. For a while after he left the Congregational church in Naselle, he and Judy attended the Cathlamet UCC church, but he has returned. Dan Schnabel serves Naselle and Cathlamet.

For information, call 360-484-7291 or email jjj@wwest.net.

German pastor describes churches 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall

Noting that 20 years are a long time, the Rev. Uwe Dittmer, who has visited the PNC as part of our global partnership with the Berlin-Brandenburg Synod of the German United Evangelical Church, said that for an 18-year-old today the fall of the Berlin Wall is like history of former centuries.

"Daily life lets us forget that we were divided. Traveling around all Germany has become normal," he said, "but in the minds of many elderly people, the wall still exists."

Uwe finds that many former West Germans still think everything in East Germany (GDR) was wrong.

"It wasn't possible to sit at a table and talk about what we would do together in the future," he said. "Our good experiences, which we received as a gift of God, were not interesting to West German Christians. We do what was familiar to them.

"Many have left the church," he said. "Young people are sel-

dom seen. Worship services are mostly elderly people. In GDR times, our sanctuary was often overcrowded with people of all ages and many students."

Losing people and money, means churches are closed or one pastor serves so many villages no one knows where to find him or her, Uwe said.

UCC churches join voices with labor, schools for action

Two UCC pastors in Spokane are among the leaders for Spokane Alliance events that have promoted a statewide SustainableWorks project, now helping homeowners do energy efficiency audits retrofits to protect the environment and provide quality jobs.

Westminster Congregational UCC and Veradale UCC are among 32 faith, labor and education partners involved with Spokane Alliance efforts to discern problems people face and develop ongoing solutions to them.

"SustainableWorks did an energy audit and a lighting retrofit for Veradale UCC a year and a half ago, helping us save energy so we have more money to use on mission," said Linda Crowe, pastor. "They coordinated contractors and maximized incentives."

At an October meeting, Sustainable Works launched a project in the South Perry district of Spokane, where several members of Westminster Congregational UCC live, and have been going door-to-door inviting neighbors to have energy audits to see if their homes will benefit from retrofits.

Linda said most of the neighborhood's 50-to-100-year-old homes could save energy with new furnaces, hot water heaters, insulation, and sealing cracks and windows.

"SustainableWorks is arranging blower tests to find air leaks," she said. "Homeowners can install 95-percent efficient furnaces for \$2,000 or less."

Interested homeowners will go through a pre-audit, an energy audit and a consultation before deciding on a retrofit.

The process determines if improvements will save enough energy costs to offset the cost of the retrofit, Linda said.

For example, replacing the furnace at Liberty Park United Methodist Church cut its heating the building in half.



Jeremy Utley and Linda Crowe prepare for leading Spokane Alliance Assembly in October.

The program also is a means to train workers to do energy upgrades under the supervision of experienced contractors.

SustainableWorks will use a \$4 million Community Energy Efficiency Pilot Grant funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, combining utility incentives and homeowner investments to generate hundreds of new green jobs.

By organizing one moderate-income neighborhood at a time, the project hopes to achieve a high level of participation to reach energy efficiency goals.

"Our model provides a one-stop shop for customers," noted Steve Gelb, executive director of SustainableWorks. "Homeowners will be able to have an audit of their home, have workers ready to fix and retrofit any energy problems and their costs will be matched through low-interest loans with their energy savings."

SustainableWorks has been laying the groundwork for the project since summer. It is initiating its first energy-saving retrofits with 200 neighborhood homes in the Northeast Seattle and 300 in the South Perry

neighborhood of Spokane, with the goal of spreading to other neighborhoods and eventually to 3,700 homes statewide.

Steve Paulson of Westminster Congregational UCC said SustainableWorks has progressed because of support from the governor and state legislature.

"The Green Jobs Bill is now state policy," said State Senator Lisa Brown, pledging partnership at an October meeting, because the program means "utility bill savings for families in need, support for living wage jobs, fulfilling the national policy to reduce energy consumption and reduction of carbon emissions.

"Despite budget ups and downs, this program will help us achieve those goals," she said.

Andrea CastroLang, pastor at Westminster Congregational UCC, has also chaired alliance assemblies.

"Our church values the grassroots organizing, taking on issues members care about, paying attention to their needs and concerns," she said. "Issues are evoked during Listening Seasons, sessions in which

people share stories and find common concerns."

The alliance's Strategy Team analyzes those issues and suggests priorities. The Research and Action Team determines what issues members can do something about.

For nearly five years, one team has been educating members and testifying in Olympia on the state's regressive tax system that winds up with lower income people a higher percentage of their incomes than upper income people pay.

Westminster was involved when Andy came seven years ago. Lead organizer Joe Chrastil, a Westminster member, initiated the program in Spokane and has now moved to Seattle, where he is helping organize the Sound Alliance, which includes Admiral and Normandy Park UCC churches.

Andy said that being part of the Spokane Alliance gives her a more powerful voice, because it's a 9,000-member alliance of 32 organizations, in contrast her 200-member church.

It has also been an outlet for activism for her son, Nick, who is now at the University of Idaho. He has helped leaflet, phone bank and do advocacy in Olympia.

"With all the spin on talk radio, the best response to cynicism is to do something," said Andy, who has worked with the alliance on efforts to save Spokane Transit routes and challenge the sale of Deaconess Medical Center to a for-profit business. Once the alliance has agreements on issues, it continues to come back to businesses and government entities to assure compliance.

"The Spokane Alliance bucks the trend of civic disengagement that threatens democracy," Andy said. "It restores the power of people through civic engagement."

For information, call 509-532-1688.

Pilgrim Firs explores being an environmental center

Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center has entered conversations with the national United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries and Earth Ministry in Seattle to discern how the Pacific Northwest Conference's facilities might become a Center for Environmental Issues, said PNC Conference Minister Mike Denton.

Currently, there are two other national UCC camps that are centers focused on particular justice and peace issues:

- Franklinton Center on a former plantation in North Carolina focuses programs on issues regarding race.

- Centro Romero in San Ysidro, Calif., focuses on immigration issues and programs, including coordinating cross-border immersion trips.

Discussions are exploring how an environmental center might function, engage people and be used to address environmental issues.

In the Puget Sound area, Deeg Nelson, Pilgrim Firs' managing director, said there are many environmental efforts and stakeholders, so it's possible to add a program that includes theological reflection on issues of creation care, ecology and stewardship.

Pilgrim Firs' commitment to environmental sustainability that includes composting kitchen waste and recycling paper, plastic, metal and glass, which has reduced its garbage output.

It also buys in bulk to cut down on packaging and is using natural cleaning products rather than chemicals. In addition, to "return to nature," it has reduced use of fences, replacing them with natural vegetation," said Deeg. The goal is to set an example of earth-friendly practices.

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

PNC committee connects with Alison Stendahl in Turkey

Taking advantage of connections possible with Skype, the conference Global Ministries Committee conversed with Alison Stendahl in Istanbul, Turkey, at its October meeting.

Alison, a member of University Congregational UCC in Seattle is academic dean and math teacher at Uskudar American Academy through the Near East Mission in Istanbul.

Because Turkish families value education, those who can afford the tuition pay for their children to attend so they will have advantages the parents did not have, she said. There are scholarships and partial scholarships for others to attend the co-ed school of 620 students.

"Education through eighth grade is guaranteed for girls as well as boys, but some parents in some parts of the country do not send girls to school," said Alison, noting that the school is now run by a Turkish institution that partners with the UCC.

Global Ministries and its predecessors have had personnel there for 170 years. Once they had more than 100.

Now there are three, Alison, and Ken and Betty Frank of Claremont, who are co-general secretaries of the American



Peter Lin and Mary Margaret Pruitt join in Skype conversation.

Photo by Ed Evans

Board in Istanbul. Betty is involved with the Istanbul Inter-parish Migrants Program, aiding refugees and migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, providing food, clothing, shelter, education and health care. Ken, who is fluent in Turkish, promotes official interfaith dialogue.

"Betty and I do interfaith dialogue by living with the people," Alison commented.

"While we no longer own and operate the schools, people know the church cares," she said. "Uskudar American Academy is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-faith

school where minorities feel safe to go to school.

"It's essential the Islamic world know there are Americans ready to work with them and dedicate their lives to live with them," she added.

"We share with our diverse colleagues who are Jewish and Muslim. We sit down together and pray. We share a belief in God that transcends our politics and divisions," she said.

Alison said that, in her 29 years there, Turkey has changed.

"People are more aware of diversity, and there is growing awareness that allows freer

thinking, but there is also strong national pride," she said.

Alison finds insights from the Turkish people and society. For example, they see President Barack Obama as someone who cares and listens.

Attitudes on international politics are framed by Turkey being neighbors with Hamas and Iran, being in NATO and having troops in Afghanistan.

"They want negotiated relationships with Israel and its neighbors," she said. "Turkey has no historic problems with Israel or Jews. Jewish students attend her school with Christian and Muslim students.

In Turkey, Alison's media sources include Cable, BBC, CNN and al Jazeera on Internet, access to more viewpoints than most in the United States.

She said Turkey has socialized medicine, but is not a socialist country. There is a guaranteed level of health care, and people can buy more. Some sit in lines, but care is less expensive than the U.S.

Alison was in Seattle recently on family matters. She will visit the conference and region in 2011.

For information, visit www.facebook.com/alison.stendahl.