



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Winter 2020-2021

PNC team makes virtual pilgrimage to Colombia

16 from conference join virtual pilgrimage to explore global partnership

Sixteen from the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC and the Northern Lights Region of the Disciples of Christ “journeyed” virtually on a pilgrimage to Colombia to “visit” partners of Global Ministries, Justapaz and CIEDERPAZ.

The regional joint Global Ministries Committee and the potential partners in Colombia had wanted to visit in person before deciding on a partnership.

The goal was to listen and learn about the life, culture, joys and sorrows of the persons in Chocó, the department (state) in far northwestern Colombia. It is a department populated by Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups, said Mary Olney-Loyd, one of the “pilgrims.”

“The President of Colombia was elected after the 2016 Peace Accords
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Ed Evans of the Global Ministries Committee skypes with Byoung-gil a pastor friend from the East Seoul partnership and joined the virtual pilgrimage to Colombia.

Photo courtesy of Ed Evans

Board adopts guiding vision for stewardship, budget

By Hillary Coleman - Moderator

Everything about this year looks different than any of us could have imagined. I have deep gratitude for everyone in the PNCUCC for showing up however you can in these COVID times.

The board continues our busy meetings and is doing good work to respond to current needs, plan for the new year and think into the future.

- At recent board meetings we adopted the Fiscal Policy Manual, Personnel Policy Manual and the Fiscal Year 21 revised budget proposal from Stewardship for 12/2020-5/2021.

- The Board blessed planning for a virtual Annual Meeting in April 2021 and identified areas of focus of work in our current times.

Guiding Vision for PNC Stewardship & Budget

- The Board also adopted a guiding vision to share with Stewardship Committee as they do budget work and share future plans with the conference:

“The Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC is called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) to create vitality. Our Board of Directors believes that in spite of financial difficulties and a pandemic, our Conference has a vitality growing in ways we didn’t realize would happen during these changing times.

“Our vitality is built on a strong

foundation of years of relational work, and we want to see it continue to grow so that we can change the world. In the coming years, we envision the presence of the PNCUCC being somehow bigger than it is now.

“We see specific action steps being taken to undo white supremacy culture in how our conference is run so that we can use an anti-racist lens in all aspects of conference life and truly deepen our inclusion.

“We see churches, members and people in the conference increasingly connected so that we can support one another and our communities in the work we are called to do.”

Thank you for being part of and inspiring this work.

'Love will save us.' 'Today I choose to love..'

Conference Comments



By The Rev. Mike Denton
Conference Minister

And then there was Love. It was fragile, but also beautiful and real.

The numbers are undeniably grim. As I write this, the pandemic modeling suggests that we are moving into a period when the number of daily deaths is likely to exceed 3,000 every day for the next few months. Essentially, a 9-11 every day. The number of people who are going to get sick or die is staggering.

Last May, a Pew study said that 20 percent of Americans knew someone who had been hospitalized or died due to COVID. That number is now up to 54 percent and is going to grow. At current rates, by the end of this pandemic, we will all know someone who has been hospitalized or died due to COVID..

I saw a headline somewhere last week that said something like this "Pandemic Fatigue Gives Way to Pandemic Rage." I didn't read the article, but obviously, the headline stuck with me. I could add other words in addition to rage. Bewilderment is one word I could add. On a practical level, I understand the policies, practices, and the science of it all, but there is a part of me mourning who I thought we could be. My hopes for people were higher than this.

Another word would be resignation. Although there is a lot we might have done and could do, it's clear we're not going to do it. Collectively, we've failed. You could probably add your own words, too.

At least once a day, I find myself just buried under the weight of all of what these days are.

And, it's Advent. This story of a couple seeking a place to give birth to a child the world needs during a time of chaos and uncertainty. Some of their setting might sound familiar. They were ruled by a force they didn't understand, and that didn't have their best interests in mind. They were forced to be counted by a government that didn't seem to believe they counted. They tried to find a place to sleep and ended up isolated in a stable (at least at first). They were exhausted by everything.

And then, there was Love. It was fragile but also beautiful and real. This was a love that needed to be nurtured, cared for, and protected, but it was also unstoppable. It was a love people were attracted to, drawn to, and hungry for. It was beautiful and nothing but good. Love. As the embodiment of love was held in a teenager's arms—in an isolated stable, in a world infected by oppression and fear—the eyes of a mother met the eyes of her child and, there was a beat of love sent out to the world that resonated in their chest like the bass buzz of a car stereo passing by.

Love will save us.

I'm going to ask you to try something that is way more woo-woo than I'm usually comfortable

with. Take a deep breath and then whisper this:

Today, I choose to love.

Say it again. And again.

Now, add the name of someone to the end of that sentence. Pick someone who is easy to love and, after you say it, bask in it for a moment.

Now, repeat the phrase and add the name of a person who you know is hurting a bit. Sit with that name just a little bit longer.

Now, repeat it one more time and add the name of someone with whom you're a little frustrated. Sit with that still longer. For right now, stop right there and hold the love you are nurturing in your arms. Allow it to rest.

The advent story started small. OK, there are the angels and the elders from the east who came to see this child, and eventually grandparents, aunts and uncles who fussed, and neighbors who played peek-a-boo. Then there were first steps and first words and, um, first miracles yet to come. Still, it started small, isolated and humbly. The immense love the world needed was first held in the arms of parents who loved, who chose to love. I bet they were angry about things, too. There was plenty for them to be mad about, but I imagine this child tethered them and this love transformed them.

There is plenty to be angry, frustrated, and sad about right now. These are justified responses to the condition of the world and these responses. I'm also beginning to recognize that where these responses emerge from matters a great deal. When these responses stand alone, they tend to move me on a downward spiral of contempt, despair and rage that become a ravenous, collapsing hole in my heart. This sort of downward spiral is at the heart of my own experience of depression, my unthinking participation in movements of supremacy, my own involvement in the world's destruction and decline.

The anger, frustration, and sadness that's rooted in love is different. These responses denigrate the world when they are ends in themselves. These responses emanate love when rooted in love. Where the one points to a disastrous relinquishment of control, the other is rooted in a healthily centered sacred power. Where the one breeds oppression, the other breeds freedom.

The love we celebrate entering the world over the Advent and Christmas seasons is coming just in time. It is a love rooted in a still deeper love that has more capacity than we can imagine. It is a love that helps right a world turned upsidedown. It is a love that is patient and kind but truthful. It is a love that is the root of everything good.

Today, I chose to love.

Transitions announced

Jenn Hagedorn is the new pastor of Spirit of Peace UCC in Sammamish.

Simon de Vol is the new bridge pastor at Squamish UCC.

Sophie Morse was ordained on Nov. 8 into the specialized ministry of Conflict Consulting for faith organizations. She will be in covenant with the Suquamish Church, the Pacific Northwest Conference, the Dispute Resolution Center of Kitsap County, and an independent Support and Accountability Board.

The United Church Renton hosted the Oct. 3 ordination service for **Trina Banks**, affirming her ministry as a chaplain and authorized minister in the UCC. In 1990, in the Seattle area, she began working with African Americans affected by HIV/AIDS. Over 30 years, her work included helping found Sojourner Truth Ministries Church, serving on the ministerial team at Liberation UCC, and serving as a clinical chaplain at Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. In 2017, she earned a master of divinity degree from Seattle University, School of Theology and Ministry. She completed a clinical pastoral education residency as a hospice chaplain with CHI Franciscan Hospice and Palliative Care.

B. JoAnne Conard died on Oct. 11. The youngest of four daughters of the pastor of All Pilgrims Congregational Church (now All Pilgrims Christian Church), she earned a bachelor's degree from Occidental College and master's from Berkeley Divinity School for a career in Christian education. That took her to Ohio, Colorado, California and Hawaii. She moved to Seattle in the mid-1980's and worked at Richmond Beach Congregational Church and then as the coordinator of the Conference Resource Center at the conference office on Capitol Hill and later on Beacon Hill. JoAnne was a member of Broadview UCC and later University Congregational UCC. She lived at Horizon House.

Men's Retreat is Jan. 29-30

The 2021 PNW-UCC Men's Retreat will be a virtual gathering Friday and Saturday, Jan. 29 and 30. It will be the men's 30th retreat, said organizer Rick Russell.

"Not surprisingly, it will be different this year. The retreat will be held online. It will be shorter, starting Friday evening

and ending on Saturday evening, but many of our traditions will not change, including music, small group discussions and the Wisdom Circle," Rick said.

Friday evening will include a welcome, worship and breakout discussion groups on how the pandemic is affecting the men's spiritual lives.

Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m., Phil Porter of InterPlay in Berkeley will lead the program on the theme, "Embodiment in a Disembodied Time."

"I don't have to tell you that we're living in challenging times," said Phil. "A steady stream of situations, crises, happenings and wonders swirls around us. We are traversing new territory without much of a road map. When things change, it is important for us to look anew at how we're living in the world. What creates stress? What creates grace? How are we "in our bodies." It may be time to reevaluate."

Through idea-sharing, helpful tools, storytelling, personal reflection and wisdom sharing, men will explore ways to enhance their sense of being in their bodies, embrace their humanity, invite mystery, celebrate their connections with each other.

Phil is the co-founder and co-director of InterPlay, an organization and movement that has spread around the world. He is an ordained UCC minister and served on the staff of First Congregational Church of Berkeley for more than 20 years. He is a visual artist, graphic designer, composer, author and self-proclaimed "body intellectual."

He will share tools and practices that can help men embrace who they are and how they are in the world, including ideas about body data, body knowledge, body wisdom, inner authority and the physicality of grace. He has also recently developed new skills in making Zoom meetings lively, enjoyable and revelatory, said Rick.

The 2021 Men's Retreat Planning Committee includes Paul Withington, Don Jenkins, Jim Gaudino, Larry Kiriluk, Hans Dankers, Wes Huffman and Rick. Don Bell of Plymouth UCC and Ed Coleman of University Congregational UCC will be the Zoom masters.

Communities of Practice still has openings

Communities of Practice 2020-2021, which continues to June 30, 2021, still has openings. Registration ends March 15.

The 2020-21 Communities of Practice program began Oct. 1 with all meetings virtual. Participants are from the Montana-North Wyoming Conference and the Central Pacific Conference, as well as the Pacific Northwest Conference. Some groups will be virtual even if COVID restrictions allow in-person gatherings.

Brigitta Remole is shepherding the program this year. **For information, email brigitta.ucc@gmail.com.**

The \$50 registration fee is non-refundable. The balance of \$225 is due by March 1, 2020.

To register, email Cameron Sharp at revcsharp13@comcast.net.

Annual Meeting planning is underway for spring

The Annual Meeting 2021 is on. Hillary Coleman, PNC Board moderator invites people to plan to join with others in the PNC-UCC.

"We'll be gathering virtually on or around the weekend of April 24," she said. "Conference staff and leadership are planning our time together and will soon be able to share more details, as well as open registration.

"There will be a cost for registration, so we can put on a quality event, especially with the added tech coordination that will be needed," Hillary added.

For information, call 205-725-8383, email hillarycolemanucc@gmail.com or visit pnucc.org.

Weekly meetings continue

The PNC continues to hold weekly meetings on ringcentral.com,

Courtney's Office Hour is 4 to 5 p.m., Tuesdays and her Community Office Hour is 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Wednesdays.

Worshipping together when we can't be together is from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays.

Pastoral Care: Care During an Outbreak is 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., first and third Wednesdays.

Children and Youth Ministers (through the Rocky Mountain Conference) meet weekly at 1 p.m., Wednesdays.

The Moderators Meeting is 7 to 8:30 p.m., Thursdays; Church Administration and Fiduciary Considerations is 1 to 2:30 p.m., Fridays, and Fun Friday Pastors Hour is 4 to 5 p.m., Fridays.

For information, call 206-725-8383 ext. 101 or visit pnucc.org.



Justapaz videos are way for others to join visit

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were finalized two years ago, but has not implemented them or allocated funds for those who laid down their arms.

“The virtual pilgrimage was not a cultural deep dive. We just visited two hours a day for four days from Sept. 21 to 26, with two days for the U.S. pilgrims to converse,” she said.

Ed Evans, who is also on the GM Committee and has been active in the partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea in East Seoul for about 30 years, has been participating in monthly Zoom calls with leaders with Justapaz and CIEDREPAZ.

Justapaz is a Mennonite nonprofit working with churches to improve living conditions of communities recovering from 60 years of armed and social conflict. CIEDREPAZ is the peace commission of the Evangelical (Ecumenical Protestant) Council of Churches.

The committee had planned an in-person visit in September. The partners in Colombia are church related, but not a church as previous global partners.

For two years, the committee has been looking for a new partnership, because of losing contact both with leaders of the Evangelical Church in Berlin, a partner since 1987, and with leaders of the PROK in East Seoul. Since his last trip to Korea in 2016, Ed has only maintained contact with a pastor who hosted him but has since moved to a church in the southern Korean peninsula.

Each participant paid \$325, half used for humanitarian aid packages of rice, sugar, cooking oil and COVID supplies that were given to 200 elderly and vulnerable people in six villages. Half of the funds were used to cover the costs of preparations, translation, videos and establishing a website.

Organizers in Colombia prepared aid packages in early

September, then took them by boat to six villages along the San Juan River in El Chocó, a region of Northwest Colombia in the Pacific Coast and bordering Panama. The area is the home of descendants of African escaped and freed slaves, and the Wounaan indigenous people.

Violence continues in that area from paramilitary groups supporting coca growing and drug trafficking by sea and land routes to the U.S. Illegal mining in the area and spraying herbicides to clear the coco crops—supported by U.S. tax dollars—has polluted the river.

The river is a source of drinking water and fish, a food staple. The river is also drying up, affecting their ability to water the crops of small farmers who grow rice, corn, cassava, plantain and cane to make a living and for their families.

Mary said the visit allowed “our friends in Colombia to make a trip by boat to provide food and supplies, and to document stories of the struggles and violence people in the villages experience.

“In the last village, they were not allowed to do anything but drop off the supplies because of the paramilitary presence,” Mary said.

In videos Justapaz took along the way and at the villages, U.S. pilgrims saw the Colombian representatives deliver humanitarian aid packages, share in a meal and join in an ecumenical worship.

The pilgrims also listened to documentation in testimonial stories of their lives and issues as they face in displacement from their land, pollution from herbicides and mining, paramilitary violence, human rights violations, struggle to survive, anger at injustices, difficulties under COVID, as well as their gratitude, hopes, joys and resilience.

Ed said he was moved by



The video of the pilgrimage for peace in the San Juan region of El Chocó is online for church groups to follow and learn.

Photos courtesy of Justapaz



Group prepares humanitarian aid packages in San Miguel.



Humanitarian aid packages loaded in boats.



Aid went to 700 people in 200 families in six villages.

Videos take pilgrims to villages to listen, see

Continued from page 4

the joint worship led by a Catholic priest and Mennonite pastor, sharing in communion.

Rick Russell, co-chair of the Global Ministries Committee, previously had participated in a mission pilgrimage to Puerto Rico to help paint and rebuild after hurricane damage several years ago.

He said Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto, the executive for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Lorna Hernandez, administrator for Global Ministries People-to-People pilgrimages, joined the Northwest pilgrims, along with two people who have long connected with Colombia, Charlie Pillsbury of New Haven, Conn., and Geri Foltz of Virginia.

Rick said the virtual pilgrimage was a successful model for people to connect, and gain a glimpse into another culture and setting without traveling in the pandemic

“It changes the face of mission,” he said.

“**We learned how** the U.S. is complicit,” Rick continued, “because our tax dollars fund the spraying defoliants to kill illegal coca crops. However, they also hit legal crops, making the soil unable to be used to farm.

“We appreciate the courage of those trying to document abuses and violence of paramilitary groups prevalent in rural areas. Ranchers hire paramilitary groups to protect their land for grazing,” he said.

“We don’t know our next steps yet,” he said, “But the fact that we were able to do a virtual pilgrimage during the pandemic is a hopeful sign that Global Ministries are alive and well.”

Those participating from Seattle were Steve Claggett, Wayne Daly and Mary of All Pilgrims UCC and Disciples of Christ Church; Cora Trujillo, Meighan Pritchard and Rick of Prospect UCC, and Dick Cunningham of Queen Anne Chris-

tian Church.

Other participants were Jan Kinney and Ed of Suquamish UCC; Ruth Brandon of Everett UCC; Janet Larson and Adam Janes of Othello Christian Church; Sandy Messick, Northern Lights regional minister, in Spokane; Bill and Connie Roby of First Christian Church, Puyallup; Gloria Soja of First Christian Church, Helena, and Annette Bratke of Grand Ave. Christian Church in Bozeman.

“**We can help tell** their story,” said Ed, “and it’s important that the people there know that someone cares and is walking with them as they seek to make peace a reality.”

The presence of U.S. partners helps the people in Colombia know nothing separates them from God, as God helps them work for reconciliation.

Sandy said that while she learned about the hardships and realities of the people, she also learned about their resilience as the ecumenical organization diverts youth from joining paramilitary groups or falling into drug use by organizing soccer teams and teaching God’s Word.

“I saw women singing joyfully. I couldn’t understand their words, but I heard their joy and resilience,” she said.

Steve said he first felt overwhelmed thinking how “we could solve their problems,” but then set that idea aside, realizing their job was to accompany the people, listen, learn and share, and never underestimate the power of the presence of the witness of a person of faith.

Videos from the pilgrimage, which are on the website, allow anyone in other congregations to share in part of the experience of the pilgrimage. They are translated and include recipes, Mary said.

For information, call Rick at 206-999-6968 or Ed at 360-670-1073 or visit <https://www.justapaz.org/pilgrimage-for-peace-medio-san-juan-choco/>.



Volunteers unload aid packages from the boats.



Elderly and vulnerable villagers receive aid packages.



Team members listen to stories of people in the villages.



Mennonite and Catholic clergy lead ecumenical worship.

A COVID surprise is PNC generosity, hope abound

By Kendall Clark Baker,
Chairperson, Stewardship
Committee, PNC/UCC

These past nine months have felt a bit like Groundhog Day.

One day blurs into the other. Every day is Blursday.

In the liturgical calendar, there are clearly defined beginnings and endings.

Nevertheless, I've been feeling a bit of Blursday in our transition from one season to the next.

It's not all bad.

Thanksgiving Day and the First Sunday of Advent fell on the same weekend, as one season morphed into another. Thankfulness and hopefulness happily blur together.

With the first of our four Advent candles recently lit—the Candle of Hope—I've been thinking about this relationship between thankfulness and hopefulness.

The Stewardship Committee has been living between these two poles ever since the beginning of Lent when the Coronavirus upset our doing business-as-usual.

The Stewardship Committee is grateful for the abundant generosity.

It's all been good.

Rather than experiencing scarcity, as one might expect under the circumstances, we have been overwhelmed with abundance.

Rather than feeling gloom-and-doom, we are filled with excitement about what the future holds for our work together as Christ's people in this corner of the world.

Here are some signs of abundance in our Pacific Northwest Conference that I am thankful for:

• **Changing Lives, Changing Times**—Faced with the grim prospect of virtually no income stream required to sustain our camping programs,



Kendall Clark Baker is impressed with generosity.

360 donors gave \$224,000 in response to a special appeal.

Imagine the audacity of running a campaign in a time of such great uncertainty!

• **Our Churches Wider Mission**—At last report, PNC churches were actually ahead of schedule in paying their 2020 OCWM pledges—101 percent of what would have been hoped for through October.

Of the \$333,000 pledged for the first 10 months, \$335,000 has already been received.

• **Solidarity Fund**—Anticipating that some of our churches could face life-threatening financial shortages from loss of rental and other income during this lockdown, one church donated \$300,000 for the Conference to distribute life-support as needed.

We are all bound together in covenant and are there for one another, perhaps like never before.

• **Doris Waggoner Gift**—One year ago, when a friend of the Conference died, we received an initial bequest of

\$120,000.

Last month we received an additional \$188,000—totaling \$308,000.

A bequest literally means “to say,” and Doris made a powerful statement in saying “thank you” in this way.

• **One More Great Hour of Sharing**: At the very moment when we normally receive this offering in support of emergency relief throughout the world—the middle of March—the pandemic causing greater need than ever prevented churches from promoting OGHS.

So nine months later in our Conference we're asking churches to extend this invitation to give one more time. Gifts are still arriving.

• **Giving Tuesday/Friends of the Conference**—We set a goal of \$40,000 for this year's December campaign for Friends of the Conference.

Even before the big day on Dec. 1, we had already received \$20,000 in sponsorships from individuals and churches.

Anyone who wants to participate but didn't get around to it on Giving Tuesday, can still do so.

Simply go the PNC/UCC website, click on “donate,” and then make your contribution on the “Giving Tuesday” line.

These are only some of the signs of abundance and sharing that I am thankful for.

What I am most thankful for is the profound commitment of members of the Stewardship Committee to engage in the work we are doing in support of the Conference.

There is 100 percent attendance at most every meeting.

Everyone actively participates.

Tasks are readily undertaken.

No one would have wished for this terrible plague to be inflicted upon us, but there are good things coming out of it.

I am thankful for the strong connections being made among leaders and churches. For deepening relationships even when faced with the challenge of being physically-distanced. For renewed vitality and excitement about what the future holds for us on the other side of this pandemic.

One of the scripture readings for the First Sunday of Advent speaks to this blurring, or blending, of thankfulness and hopefulness.

The Apostle Paul is writing to an early Christian community in Corinth:

“I give thanks to my God always for you ... as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Corinthians 1:3-9)

To believe in God is to live in hope, trusting that the future is open.

Thank God for the gift of tomorrow.

For information, call 206-407-1877 or email kendall.clark.baker@gmail.com.

Microhouses offer a temporary option for homeless

By Betsy Loyer of United Churches of Olympia

What began as a chicken coop had a ripple effect, becoming a new means of housing homeless people in microhouses.

Jeff Loyer of the United Churches of Olympia drew up plans to remodel a chicken coop he had made to serve as a "microhouse."

He and neighbor Dave of Faith Lutheran Church, Dan Andersen and Scott Bishop of the Community for Interfaith Celebration then built a model.

Lowe's sold Jeff the materials for \$500, which was \$300 below cost.

Then Jeff spoke to United Churches co-pastor, Tammy Stampfli, and to Tye Gundel, co-founder of the Just Housing homeless outreach about the project.

Tye took the shed idea to the Nickerson Encampment, a camp supported by the United Churches for the last two years. They liked the idea.

The men built another microhouse, and delivered the two to the camp. Two women were the recipients.

Tammy encouraged them and then checked with Keith Stahley, the assistant city manager, because the camp is on city property. Together with the fire marshal, Keith checked out the assembled sheds.

He said that the city could not "okay" the buildings because they were so small, and without insulation or electricity, but he saw them as a sturdy step up from tents and rat proof.

Roy Conover, chairperson of the church's Community Connections, upon hearing that the city couldn't officially bless these buildings, said, "Do we need permission to do good?"

He and the church's Community Connections Committee decided to fund five more microhouses.



Volunteers celebrate completion of six microhouses.

Photos courtesy of United Churches of Olympia

Pat Andersen agreed to coordinate the volunteers.

Peter Cook recruited folks from the FAITH Alliance community, a network of local churches that work to create tiny houses and other emergency shelters.

Deb Nickerson volunteered Interact Club at Black Hills High School. Despite terrible air quality from wildfire smoke, Jeff, Dave, Lisa Carroll and Jeff Hogan showed up. So did Rebecca Allen and Joe Brown, both from the Interact Club. They built a microhouse in one day. Tammy provided lunch.

The next day Jim Balz and Mark Hunter added their skills.

Each day another microhouse appeared in the United Churches' parking lot.

Each evening someone quietly took shelter in one.

By Thursday, there were five, roofed and ready for painting. On Friday, the painters showed up: Jane Appling, Ann Berney, Therese Springer and Karl Johnson from the Unitarian Universalist Church; Father Dave Geradot from Eumaeus Ecumenical Catholic Church, Dan Andersen and me.

Saturday more painters came: Tim and Tammy Stampfli, Lynette Hunter, and Dean Paulsen.

The following week, Dan,

Jeff and Duane Johnson, along with folks from the Nickerson Encampment loaded and delivered them to the camp.

Friday afternoon, Jeff received an email from Keith saying the City of Olympia secured \$110,000 in funding to build another 50 and would seek funding for a total of 100 microhouses to replace the failing tents at the Mitigation Site downtown. Providence wants to help fund them.

Longshoremen from the Port of Olympia are eager to help build and deliver microhouses to their destination.

Homeless people may be hired to help with the construction.

One little chicken coop grew into a small village. How many more people will be blessed by the ripple effect of "doing good?"

The song, "For All the Saints" keeps running through my mind.

Jeff and I have been members on and off for years. We transferred to the UCC church in Ballard when they were living in Seattle. Jeff is a retired computer engineer.

An article in *The Olympian* described the microhouses as "a dry place to stay" at Nickerson Encampment, which the United Churches has supported



Jeff Loyer at work on building.

since 2018.

The basic sheds are built from 2x4s, screws and six prefabricated plywood panels that can be taken apart and put back together again with power tools.

Jeff also helped with Camp Quixote and helped build tiny houses at Westminster Presbyterian. When COVID-19 hit, he began building a backyard chicken coop over the summer. By fall and cooler weather, he applied his engineering skills to create shelter for people he met in the tent encampment.

The structures are not meant to be permanent and are not on par with tiny houses that have power and insulation, but they keep out rats and provide security tents lack. People can put their things inside and lock the door.

United Churches has purchased propane heaters and arranges trash pick up and water delivery.

The City of Olympia added a water spigot, port-a-potties, a dumpster and a hand-washing station.

For information, call 360-942-1210 or email admin@theunitedchurches.org.

Dancing pastor connects people to God by motion

Kelsey Peterson Beebe's belief in an all-loving God, embodied Christ and an ever-moving Holy Spirit finds expression in her being a "dancing pastor," sharing her love of ministry, movement and embodied prayer.

While she now lives in Wisconsin, her roots, ordination and Dancing Pastor Ministries are based in the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC.

"I seek to help people find safe, embodied ways to connect more deeply to themselves, to others and to God," she said. "My favorite part of ministry is helping people experience the transforming love of God that moves around, among and within us all.

"God is love in motion all around us, and we just want to join the dance," she said. "I seek to reconnect people with the movement of God's love around them.

Kelsey said the goal of her ministry is a world in motion, healed through movement and united in love.

She was ordained in 2018 to a four-point covenant with the PNC-UCC, Wayside UCC in Federay Way where she grew up and her Dancing Pastor Ministries board.

When Kelsey was baptized, Wayside members were her godparents, so they have supported her through her years. Her late mother, Sheryl Peterson, was pastor at Wayside in the 1980s and retired in 1994. She died in 1996 with complications of multiple sclerosis.

Kelsey, four, began taking ballet lessons after her mother's death.

"It helped me process and connect with God. I realized dance is my way to pray and connect to the divine," she said.

Her father, Norris, continued to take them to Wayside. The Conference let the family



Kelsey Peterson Beebe combines movement and ministry.

Photo courtesy of Kelsey Peterson Beebe

to continue to attend after Sheryl retired because of her health. Later, because his second wife was Lutheran, they attended a Lutheran church as well as Wayside.

Going to camps at Pilgrim Firs every summer helped shape Kelsey's faith. She began counseling at camp at 15, and served 10 years as counselor or chaplain with junior and senior high camps.

At camp, Rachel Teigen Brackett introduced her to dance as an expression of faith.

Dennis Hollinger-Lant, pastor after her mother at Wayside, encouraged Kelsey to pursue her call to ministry. He also invited her to do liturgical dance on Sheryl Peterson Memorial Butterfly Sunday the week after Easter.

In 2010, Kelsey went to St Mary's College at Moraga, Calif., where she earned a bachelor's degree in dance with

a minor in theology and religious studies in 2014. On a full scholarship, she went to Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, where she earned a master of divinity degree in 2017, while completing a master's in dance at St. Mary's in 2016.

During studies, she was minister of youth, family and community life at the Orinda Community Church and also became accredited to teach yoga and participated in a four-week yoga training in 2017 in Costa Rica.

"I felt called to spiritual direction connected with movement and ministry," said Kelsey, who met her husband, Kevin Beebe, an ELCA Lutheran, while at seminary.

During his one-year internship in Missouri, she served two rural churches there. In October 2018, she started the Dancing Pastor Ministries as a nonprofit ministry to unite body and soul,

dance and religion, movement and faith.

Board members for Dancing Pastor Ministries are all from the PNC-UCC. They are Amy Johnson, Janet Ash, and Elizabeth Gregory of Wayside, Ron Patterson of Tacoma, Kristen Almgren of Fauntleroy, and her brother Kevin Peterson, who is music minister at Normandy Park UCC.

Through Dancing Pastor Ministries, Kelsey, who is executive minister, has taught yoga and led workshops on embodiment for UCC, Lutheran and United Methodist conferences, synods and churches. She had led retreats and workshops in the U.S. and abroad.

Kelsey also writes devotionals that focus on how people embody faith in their lives and brings professional liturgical dance into worship spaces.

"I seek to help people experience God in a new way, reconnecting body and spirit by experiencing prayer as movement," she said. "As people reconnect to themselves and to God, they also more deeply connect to one another."

With her husband now serving a Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Kelsey now is also three-quarters-time pastor for two churches south of Milwaukee—Union Grove Congregational and Raymond Community Church.

Pre-COVID, one church worshipped at 9 a.m. and the other at 10:45 a.m. Now on Zoom, she leads one service for both churches, which have been yoked for 30 years.

"At the churches, I teach children hand movements and invite adults to join in," she said. "Singing 'Spirit of the Living God' we move hands to embody prayer.

"In workshops, I help pastors and lay leaders incorporate movement in ministry, giving

Continued on page 9

PNC participated in 2020 Giving Tuesday

The PNC participated in Facebook's Giving Tuesday campaign on Dec. 1, raising funds while encouraging donors and sponsors who offered matching gifts to express what they are grateful for.

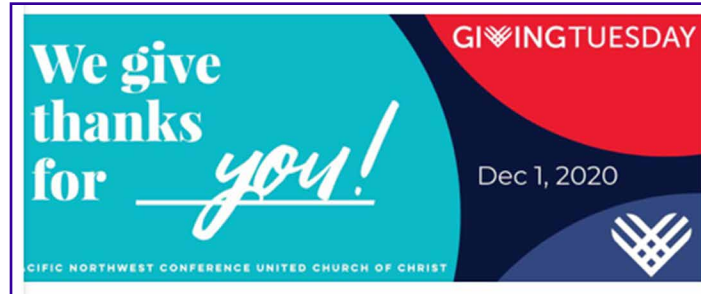
Courtney Stange Tregear, the PNC minister of vitality, said her family frequently engages in a thankfulness practice throughout the year.

"I tell my kids gratitude is like a muscle. It must be used and exercised for it to work well. When we don't practice our gratitude it is easy to lose sight of all there is to be grateful for, to be discouraged by what one does not have," she said.

She said that the practice is more important this year, when there has been so much loss, disappointment, grief and turmoil.

The PNC before COVID was prioritizing relationship, learning how to listen, share, be vulnerable and authentic, how to weave together.

"Relationship is at the core of who we are as a conference," Courtney said. "We have done these things *so that* we have a greater capacity for doing



Graphics through Giving Tuesday were colorful ways to express gratitude for each giver.

Photo courtesy of the PNC Facebook page

justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God. In the time of COVID, we have seen everything tested, but we have also seen our relationships and our gratitude continue to strengthen."

Leaning into relationship and gratitude, PNC leaders decided to increase support of the PNC with a year-end appeal for Friends of the Conference, people giving individual gifts to the Pacific Northwest Conference as a way to express their gratitude for the conference's impact on lives through camps and visits to congregations.

"These gifts help close the deficit in our annual budget and enabled us to increase programs

and PNC vitality," she said.

This year the theme was "Give Thanks for _____", inviting people to reflect on what they give thanks for in this time.

Anyone could comment, by sharing what they are thankful for.

This year the PNC participated in the world-wide generosity movement called Giving Tuesday, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving as an opportunity to raise funds so the PNC can equip pastors and church leaders through workshops, webinars, conversations, study and shared resources.

Participation happened on the PNC Facebook page

at <https://www.facebook.com/pncucc>. Giving Tuesday is primarily a social media movement, but people could give even if they were not on Facebook.

The PNC also received sponsors for this campaign to match gifts given to raise a goal of \$40,000. By Dec. 2, funds reached 70 percent of the goal and as of Dec. 8 more than 80 individuals and nearly 10 congregations and agencies shared in giving.

To build momentum for giving on Giving Tuesday, Kyna Shilling of Plymouth UCC in Seattle and publisher for the Facebook page used graphics and shared gratitude for each gift.

Those donating \$1 to \$49 received a certificate. Those giving \$50 to \$99 received a "Give Thanks" Christmas ornament and certificate. Donors giving more than \$100 are being sent a copy of *This Is Me: Stories of Lent during a Time of Pandemic*, the ornament and certificate.

Gifts can still be made at <http://pncucc.org/giving-tuesday> or by check.

Dancing Pastor Ministries is rooted in the PNC

Continued from page 8

them tools to incorporate movement organically in prayer, in daily life and in yoga," she said.

The first week of January 2020, Kelsey led a yoga retreat in Costa Rica.

In February, she led a workshop on Zoom with Carthage College, and another one with Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.

For Carthage College, the workshop was on arts and conflict resolution, so she guided participants in using movement to move through conflict.

Kelsey had people stand

in postures to represent feeling angry, defeated, stressed out.

"Working with conflict, we need to pay attention to body language," she said. "If tension is high, it also helps to stand up and move. The motion of walking, shifting right to left, helps people process conflict.

"It's not easy to do movement on Zoom," said Kelsey, who helped Margaret Iribara Swanson lead a youth summer camp, doing yoga movement prayers while seated in chairs.

Through Dancing Pastor Ministries, Kelsey writes weekly and seasonal devotionals, in-

cluding ones for Advent 2019 and 2020, and for Lent 2020.

Because she enjoys listening to podcasts, she started a podcast called Lady Preacher, inviting more than 30 women pastors over time to have one-to-one conversations online. They have reached people on seven continents.

"I interview pastors on their theology and what they have found about faith in the midst of the pandemic," she said.

The podcast helps her build connections with pastors across the U.S. As it reaches 10,000 people, it has been a way to

spread the word about workshops and virtual retreats.

"I learned there are many of incredible women doing ministry in the world," Kelsey said, noting that many conservative theologians have podcasts, and thinking a podcast would be a way to spread her progressive lens for sharing love of God and Christ, rooted in a theology of justice and inclusivity.

"God loves everyone and there are no caveats to that," she said.

For information, email revkelsey@dancingpastor.org or visit dancingpastor.org.

Wade Zick describes life running a COVID camp

By Wade Zick, managing director of Pilgrim Firs

An update with my thoughts from Covid Camp...

It continues to be pretty weird here at what I call COVID Camp. While we normally have guitar camp, stone carver camp, sobriety camps, banjo camp and a bunch of different camps, right now we serve our community to help bring some health and healing from this damn virus. More folks are now arriving positive than in the first eight months. They come needing refuge and healing.

Lalo and I are hunkering down as we quarantine and isolate from our guests. That feels awkward, safer and with a grateful privilege.

County volunteers and staff are absolute heroes who do all the direct contact work with the guests in their PPE. I pretty much do my best to be distant from them as well.

The camp provides a space of safety and health for people who are often at an amazingly difficult period of their life. One of my favorite things over the last 10+ days has been watching some folks that are here from a sobriety house go fishing on our lake every day, rain or shine.

I chat with them from our deck, and they give me updates on what they are catching and seeing. The community doctor who visits them every day continues to bring them fresh bait and new tackle.

I keep thinking what a difficult time to struggle with sobriety and now being positive—too much. Yet they get to be here, and I know are finding some healing in ways I may never know. They keep telling us they love the food we are making.

A different guest had to isolate here being positive instead of getting surgery on a tumor. I can't imagine the anxiety and



Tannon Siegel from University Congregational UCC, with 13 other Boy Scouts helping, completed his Eagle Scout project to build new beautiful camp chairs for Pilgrim Firs. Don and Brenda McClure Mallett's financial support made the project possible.

Photo courtesy of Wade Zick

fear and range of emotion.

I also know the healing space and comfort the lake and serenity will gift them in the next several days. I hold them in prayer as I can't imagine.

I thought about how we would help our guests have a special Thanksgiving away from their loved ones while they isolate or quarantine. We were busy and the staff surrendered their time with family to make sure our guests were well fed and cared for.

We are working to make the cabins and lodges feel festive for Christmas and the other holidays folks celebrate.

What a weird thing to make things festive as the reality of their life situation with a virus takes them away from their loved ones and the traditions they find so meaningful.

So, yeah, it continues to be strange, scary and an amazingly odd feeling of gratitude to be able to do something for folks in such a time as this.

It can feel overwhelming many days.

It feels like sacred work.

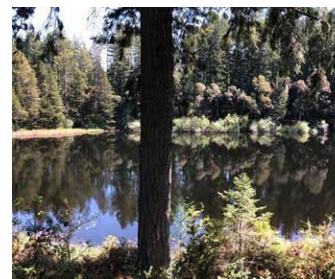
It feels like ministry. I

know that when I look back on this pandemic season we will be able to say we did our best.

So please wear masks and social distance, do very small holiday celebrations so places like ours can be empty on Christmas and after, and help some family who's struggling! It's really tough for so many...

Wade also shared an article from *The Kitsap Sun* about Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard as Kitsap County's designated quarantine and isolation center for people who have COVID-19 or are waiting for test results

The program includes people who are homeless, or who have roommates or a family



Walk around lake gives respite.

member who is vulnerable.

As of Nov. 22, about 70 people had stayed at the center for more than 120 nights.

Most have a cabin to themselves—with board games, puzzles and books. Outside, they can walk or hike trails in the woods around the lake, and to use paddle boards, canoes and fishing rods.

The Kitsap Sun article said that guests are referred by a health care provider, and are there voluntarily, so none have left early.

The camp prepares three meals a day. Volunteers take the meals to guests' doors.

In November, the center hosted 20, the most since the first guest came in April.

Volunteers and county staff keep the center operating.

In a thunderstorm when a guest was afraid, a volunteer was there to talk. Volunteers put walkie-talkies in every cabin so guests can communicate because the camp's wi-fi was not adequate.

When volunteers deliver meals, they wear personal protective gear—gowns, gloves, face masks and face shields—maintain a distance of at least six feet, follow strict health precautions and maintain a stringent cleaning regiment, said Rich Renner, a 70-year-old retired physician who has done more than two dozen shifts.

Several volunteers said they feel safer there than in the grocery store.

John Wilkins, 79, a retired firefighter, has worked nearly 100 shifts since April.

The article was recruiting volunteers who work through the Kitsap County Emergency Operations Center. Persons interested in volunteering can contact <https://bit.ly/KCEmergencyWorker>.

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

PNC co-sponsors performance of 'May's Vote'

"May's Vote," a play on two women who led the campaign that won the vote for women in Washington State in 1910, will be performed virtually twice the last week of January.

It is being sponsored by University Congregational UCC in Seattle, in collaboration with Plymouth UCC Church and the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC.

Performances are at 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 26, and at 6:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 29.

The play is an opportunity to learn about how Washington State's victory in woman's suffrage became a turning point in the fight to win the vote for women nationwide and the role Seattle's Plymouth UCC and other churches played in the Washington State campaign.

Prim and proper Emma Smith DeVoe and outrageous, flamboyant May Arkwright Hutton worked side by side—but seldom eye to eye—to win the vote for women in Washington State in 1910. Emma and May were as different as night and day, which makes for a live-

ly play, said Barbara Callander, a member of Magnolia UCC in Seattle, who plays Emma.

A professional actor, stage manager and arts administrator for more than 35 years, she grew up in Christ Congregational UCC in Silver Spring, Maryland, and graduated from Oberlin College. She received the "Write Women Back into History" Award from the National Women's History Project.

Denise Winter, artistic director of Key City Public Theatre in Port Townsend since 2005, plays May. The graduate of Kenyon College has been a professional actor, stage manager, director and arts administrator for more than 30 years. She and the theatre have received numerous awards.

Based in Western Washington, Emma was a professional suffrage organizer trained by Susan B. Anthony. She believed that in order to win the vote, it was imperative to approach men in a ladylike manner: to "persuade them, convince them, argue their resistance down."

May, a Spokane millionaire who had struck it rich in the Idaho silver mines, thought that the way to get the vote from men was to "clap 'em on the back, pass out cigars, and swap stories with 'em."

Written by Toni Douglass, "May's Vote" has toured throughout Washington.

In 2020, for the 19th Amendment centennial and 110th anniversary of women winning the vote in the state—the first suffrage victory in 14 years and a turning point in the suffrage movement, laying groundwork for the national amendment passing—"May's Vote" was mounted by Key City Public Theatre with a grant from the Washington State Historical Society.

Barbara and Denise planned to tour the state this year, until the pandemic hit, but like many women who fought for suffrage for decades, they persevered, and this fall began touring a virtual version of the play.

They give a brief live introduction before performing and then answer questions in a post-play discussion.

Barbara explained that in 1909, suffrage conventions for the Washington Equal Suffrage Association and the National American Woman Suffrage Association were held back-to-back in Seattle in late June and early July.

"A Suffrage Special Train brought delegates across country for the national convention," said Barbara. "Those on board spent a day in Spokane, organized by May, and then continued across the state, making whistle stops in Pasco, Yakima, Ellensburg and Tacoma before arriving in Seattle."

Barbara said that Plymouth Congregational Church hosted the state and national conventions, scheduled in conjunction with the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition at the University of Washington. July 7 was Suffrage Day at the exposition.

"Plymouth, with the support of many other Seattle churches and ministers, was involved in planning the conventions," she said.

For information, email b.callander33@gmail.com.

Bill Kirlin-Hackett offers a workbook on homelessness

To document the journey of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness (ITFH) to involve communities of faith, director Bill Kirlin-Hackett has published a curriculum on Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing. "The Stones Would Shout: Homelessness and Place and Faith" is in an 8.5 x 11 workbook format.

"It includes stories of local heroes, quotes from authors, poets and theologians, sermon excerpts, interactions with homeless people and learnings from failures and successes," Bill said.

The goal is to tell congregations how to put in place

tools and actions so people of faith understand how to respond to people needing help.

The book affirms the roles of people of faith in charity, compassion and justice, affirming each as gifts needed in response to the Matthew 25 mandate to care for the poor.

"There is need to feed and house people, to care for them and to change laws about feeding and housing people," said Bill.

"All are gifts and people of faith across all traditions need to see they are on the same team. We are not enemies because of different emphases. It's a mandate for

Christians, people of other faiths and atheists to reach out to the poor," he said.

He intends it as a working guide. It does not give discussion questions, because the goal is not for people to sit and talk to learn, but to act.

Bill said too often conversations on homelessness make it seem to be so huge a problem that people are paralyzed. People can become frustrated by talking about doing things but not doing anything.

"It's scary, so I go with a team of two to meet people living in vehicles. With COVID, we wear PPE. People are happy to see us, even if we come

with empty hands," he said.

"We may act incidentally, do a few things periodically, or have an intentional mission," said Bill.

He invites churches to look at their assets and where they can use them to practice mission in purpose, not accidentally or incidentally.

People don't know what to do, because they think about problems, not needs or people, he said.

Bill seeks a donor to provide the \$21 book to each of the 78 PNC congregations.

For information, call 425-442-5418 or email itfh@itfhomeless.org.

Blaine UCC performs 'A Very COVID Christmas' by Debra Jarvis

For 2020, Debra Jarvis, writer in residence at University Congregational UCC in Seattle, turned a 2016 Christmas pageant she wrote into "A Very COVID Christmas," but UCUC opted on a simpler option, so she offered it on the PNC Listserv email communication.

Sandra Wisecarver of Blaine UCC took up her offer. As of publication, some members had recorded parts to be spliced together in a video

to show on Christmas Eve on Facebook.

"I rewrote it into a screenplay with video parts people could record at home," said Debra. The story is bookended with a modern family, tired of COVID and upset at not getting what they wanted for Christmas. The narrator is an angel who sings a rendition of the Rolling Stones' 'You Can't Always Get What You Want.'

"The modern family learns Mary and Joseph did not get

what they wanted. They had to travel and deliver the baby Jesus in a manger, but the angel makes the point that we do not always get what we want, but what we need. God provides what we need."

There is a knock at the door of the modern family and a couple need to use their phone to make a phone call. They disinfect the phone to get help.

Sandy said that in Blaine there have been 205 cases and life is slower in the community

on the Canadian border. Fewer Canadians come to the Costco, and they can't shop or ski in Canada, so they are frequenting food-to-go at local restaurants and shopping local stores.

"About 30 attend worship on Zoom, but never the same 30," she said. "We visit with about 10 who do not do Zoom every few weeks."

For information, call 360-3323-6909, email blaineuc-pastor@gmail.com or visit blaineucc.org.

Youth leaders went door-to-door to take photos for pageant

Not expecting to do a live Christmas pageant, Randy and Linda Crowe, youth leaders at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane, went to homes to take photos for a photographic pageant

They visited children and youth, staying masked outside. They brought costumes stored in plastic boxes.

The kings' gifts were wet wipes, diapers, hand sanitizer and toilet paper.

Mary and Joseph were a brother and sister—because they are in the same house and could be photographed together.

There were three angels, three wisemen and several shepherds.

Some youth helped deco-

rate the church Saturday, Dec. 6, giving a Christmas background for the pastor, who leads worship from the church.

The Christmas Eve story that Linda wrote is "The Coronavirus Christmas Pageant."

"It shares the challenges of telling the nativity story with our church family, in the midst of social distancing, masks and only gathering on Zoom," Linda said.

"In the COVID season, Zoom is the only way some families can gather with family members in different homes and Westminster folk," she added.

For information, call 509-624-1366 or visit westminsterucc.org.



Shepherd Daniel Fasakiieiki with Randy and Linda Crowe.

Photo courtesy of Marijke Fasakiieiki

Steve Eriksen retires after 22 years at Shalom UCC in Richland

After 22 years of ministry at Shalom UCC in Richland, Steve Eriksen retires Dec. 31 and will spend several months as a "member in discernment" at the end of his ministry, looking at his options.

Shalom was his first church in the PNC. In his studies for a masters at United Seminary in Ohio, a United Methodist school, Steve realized he did not fit in the Open Bible Church but would fit in the UCC. He earned a master of divinity in 1988 at Earlham School of Re-

ligion at Earlham College, a Quaker school, in Richmond, Ind., and served UCC churches in Southwest Ohio and then in Bellevue, Ky.

At Richland, he has nurtured interfaith relations with Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus and Baha'i.

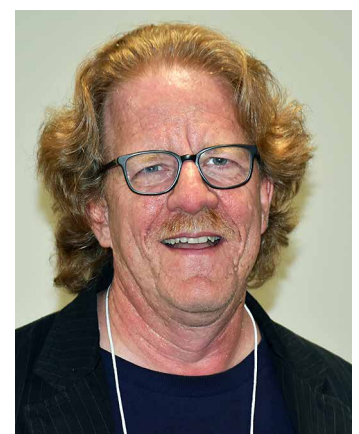
They have held interfaith potlucks and panel discussions in the church and joined the interfaith community in peace marches. The Buddhist meditation group met in the building Thursdays until COVID.

The church expanded its building over the last 10 years, giving architects information on what they did in the community to inform the structure needed.

Steve said his preaching has been a balance following the lectionary between pastoral and social justice components.

"I've enjoyed the intellectual stimulus of the church with many scientists," he said.

For information, call 509-943-3927 or visit shalomunit-edchurch.org.



Steve Eriksen retires from Shalom.

In a drive-through pageant Richmond Beach depicts vulnerable families today

By Staci Schulmerich – director of faith formation/ children and youth

For its Christmas pageant, Richmond Beach Congregational UCC in shoreline adapted its traditional “Spontaneous Christmas Nativity Pageant” into a safe, socially distanced Drive-Thru Nativity Pageant.

The experience began with Caesar greeting each car and sending them to be counted. Mary and Joseph were seen with their car broken down at the side of the road seeking help on the way to Bethlehem.

The shepherds were gathered. The angel proclaimed and gave out halos to the multitude.

Handbells were played.

Each household was given an Advent Take-Out Box filled with readings, crafts, advent candles and activities for the season, as well as an RBCC travel mug for each person.

Cars discovered the holy family in scenes with different and relevant interpretations of the nativity. There were several depictions of the Holy Family:

• A displaced Holy Family with mylar blankets, the belongings that could be carried were behind a chain link fence,

separating them from the cars. They were fleeing and waiting.

• A Queer Holy Family were shown with all their love, joy and hope—and their donkey dog named Bear.

• A Holy Family experiencing homelessness and food insecurity were depicted with the manger inside their tarp covered tent.

• A Quarantined Holy Family were separated from visitors and received gifts for the sake of the common good.

This year RBCC reflected on how Emmanuel, “God with us,” needs to be sought out, discovered and embraced.

The church sought to depict the nativity story through faces of not just traditional and familiar scenes that bring comfort, but in lives of those Jesus himself is reflected in—those of the displaced, the other, the marginalized and the compassion filled.

Pastor Paul Ashby, as a homeless shepherd told those driving by: “One in eight American families struggles with hunger. We can change this as a nation and as a human family.”

For information, call 206-542-7477, email staci@rbucc.org or visit rbucc.org.



Above, an overview and below, couple beside broken down car.



Above, a quarantined family; below, queer family.



Above, a displaced family and below, shepherds.

Photos courtesy of Staci Schulmerich



Families at Camp brings new options for N-Sid-Sen

Families at Camp continued to bring families to stay most weekends in lodges at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene up through Thanksgiving.

The Ford cabin and cabins are closed for that, so Spirit Lodge and the guest house near Forester Lodge are the only places being used.

Otherwise Mark Boyd, managing director of N-Sid-Sen, and his wife Julie are otherwise on their own there with no staff.

Mark spent time preparing the camp for the winter. He had three trees taken down, but and split for firewood near Forester lodge.

Families at Camp slowed to one to two per weekend with no meals.

He is the only one doing maintenance, but some projects need to be done by groups, Mark said.

"Some property and long term preventative maintenance will not happen," he added.

There was some electrical and air conditioning work to do in Stillwater. He is focusing on priorities.

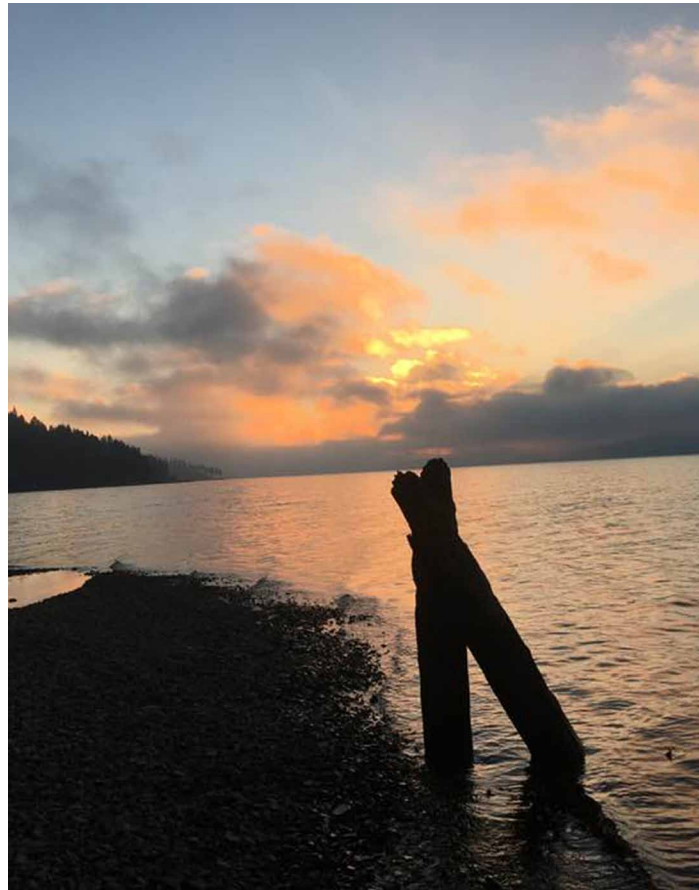
The dock damage in a windstorm will require a work party to help and will need to wait until spring. The float with the diving board broke from the dock and the gang plank to the dock ripped from the shore. The dock floated up on the shore.

"**The funds we raised** in the summer were enough to go through until next season," Mark said.

"I hope by then the vaccine will make a difference and that we can look to welcoming some groups in the fall," he said.

Mark is aware that there are still hoops for the vaccine in getting it to people and that some may not take it.

"I'm pleased Kootenai County brought the mask man-



Mark Boyd matches sunsets and scenes around N-Sid-Sen with inspirational verse shared on Facebook.

Photo courtesy of Mark Boyd

Meanwhile, Mark meanders with a camera along the shore sharing spiritual reflections and insights through his verse.

He recently wrote:

This is Life

*Winter's setting sun pulls the horizon into place
Reaching towards tomorrow it beckons me on
Gentle wind brings the lake lapping at my feet
Old pilings reveal memories thought gone
So I stand and listen to the waves tickling
I pause and feel the crispness on my face
Distant loons cry out as eagles soar overhead
All the living are creating this moving space.
I too want to be a part of this movement
Welcoming tomorrow out of delight and joy
To watch as the sun swaps with the moon
Setting aside fear and doubt for trust and love
To trust like the wind pulling night's shade
To feel love in the assurance of another day
To recognize my place in this moment
To be aware of all that is within and without
This is life.*

date back." said Mark.

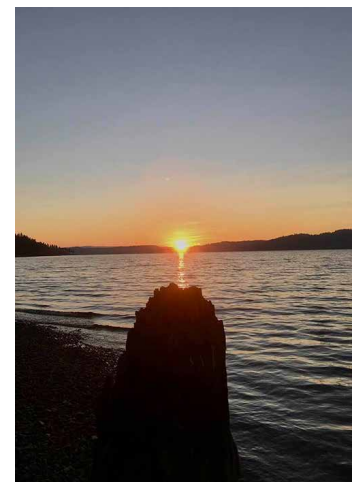
He anticipates that, while camp is available and is beautiful in the winter, Families at Camp will resume in the spring "with tweaks."

"We are looking at doing work so Syringa can be used. To do that, it would need a stove and more than a bar sink," he said. "With the demand, it make sense in the long term.

"**Families at Camp** is a way to bring in some income, but we need to draw more," he said.

"I hope the virus will be done, so we can re-open by fall. We are talking with our partner groups like the dance camps, but it's hard to do dance camps different, even limiting numbers. Are there other ways to dance without close contact of square dances?" Mark asked.

"How much hesitation will there be? Will it be hard for people to go back to do what they normally did? What part of online will continue? What will be the combination of on-line and in person?" Mark continued. "I don't think churches will go back to in person only."



Seeing a sunset spilling into old pilings inspires Mark to pen and post another verse at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4887409558>.

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

Grandmother carves grandchildren's animals in pole

In the months Patty Metzger has been sequestered at home away from her grandchildren during the pandemic, she embarked on an artistic and spiritual venture in her back yard.

She began carving the 10-foot stump left after she and her husband George had an old maple tree in their yard cut down in 2018.

She envisioned carving a pole of her six grandchildren's, her husband's and her own spirit animals. Patty spent the spring removing bark from the stump, "a nasty job" because many bugs crawled out.

In July 2018, she participated in a five-day retreat at the Grunewald Guild in the Cascades on carving wood and stone with carver John Thompson, who began his 30-year sculpting career carving wood dragons and ponies for the Misoula Carousel.

She began carving outlines of the grandchildren's spirit animals, but then set it aside. Patty learned about spirit animals, which are part of the spiritual tradition of Native American in the area, but has not yet connected with any tribes.

"Spirit animals are animals that resonate with a person through dreams. For example, I am drawn to eagles," said Patty.

Two years ago, she first talked with oldest granddaughter, Madrid, now 12, who readily said her spirit animal was a black panther. Grandson, Evan, now 9, was playful and goofy like a monkey, she said.

Louisa, now 6, said she was like a lion. Wesley, now 5, chose a frog, because he always leaped around on family hikes in the forest and liked finding frogs. Gian, now 4, would spin around like a honey badger.

The family decided Elizabeth, now 2, seemed like a wise old woman while in the womb, so they decided an elephant would represent her.



Carving backyard pole in tree stump was a spiritual and artistic journey for member of Fox Island UCC.

Photos courtesy of Patty Metzger

Louisa chose "Animals on a Safari," as the theme of her fourth birthday party, so Patty and a friend made models of the animals.

After going to the Grunewald Guild workshop, she returned to start carving.

"I realized the stump was too hard, so I left the wood to cure two years," Patty said.

In July 2020, she walked into the yard and decided the tree had "cured" enough to carve. For a week, she used a chisel, but then she went into her husband's shop and found bigger tools, power routers, dremels and air line tools, and bought a face covering.

She decided to carve a three-dimensional eagle at the top.

Her husband, George, built scaffolding that would rise to six feet high around the stump.

Patty decided to carve a blue female figure that was part tree and part spirit, modeled after a photo of her from the back. The figure's arms reached around the tree toward the animals. The arms became like branches and the legs, like roots.

"She is the energy of the love who holds us all together



in love. She has many names, God, Mother God, the divine feminine, Pachamama, ancestor, grandmother," said Patty.

George decided his spirit animal was the honeybee, so she carved one above a one-foot hole where they carved out rot and set octagonal shapes for a honeycomb.

Realizing there was rot, she and George decided that rather than leave the stump to disintegrate they would drill holes into the stump and inject copper naphthalene to get rid of termites and other bugs. Then they injected foam to fill the void and plugged the holes with silicon.

On the top, there were open channels. They sealed them with epoxy so water would not drip into the core. She decided to use exterior house paint on the animals. By October, lichen was growing, so she sprayed it.

In 2005, Patty read the book *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, a self-help book by Julia Cameron. Patty spent a week coming up with her mantra: "I am a channel of God's love and creativity."

Doing this project she felt she was living that mantra,

working for hours, waking up at night with ideas, energized and inspired.

"To me this is part of a lifelong spiritual journey of letting go of my ego, my false self and opening to the expansive love of Spirit, humbly touching on the ultimate reality of my true self," she said.

"I offer my hands, but the creativity comes from my loving Creator. I am simply the channel," she said.

The project took Patty back to her practice of meditation.

"Meditation puts me in the present moment," she said. "Carving the pole totally consumed me."

Living on three acres of forested land, Patty has since then taken her carving tools into the woods and carved in other stumps and on stones, particularly heart-shaped stones.

Walking in the woods, she has been aware of Indian people who were on the island and that land many years.

"I have not connected with Native American communities here yet, but I wonder how they would feel about it. I have walked the land they have walked. I feel the forest is sacred ground. I spend time in the forest meditating and think of whose feet walked the grounds. Friends have walked with me in the forest—at six-foot distance," she said.

Patty, who grew up Catholic in California, also lived in Georgia, Maryland and Saudi Arabia, pursuing careers—in engineering, construction, decorative painting and as a school principal.

After she retired in 2008, she and George moved 10 years ago to Fox Island, because her daughter lives in Washington.

In church shopping, she attended the Fox Island UCC, and they decided to attend there.

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