



# Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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## PNC gathers 212 scarves at Annual Meeting

### *Rainbow Scarf Project of the UCC General Synod is a way to challenge bullying*

Marj Johnston, pastor at Dayton UCC, said that given the level of despair because of violence and bullying, the General Synod decision to collect rainbow scarves is a “symbol that we can be people of hope and justice to eliminate language that violates LGBTQ youth.

“I serve in a small community where people say we do not have an issue here with prejudice,” she said, explaining the idea of the scarves.

“We have an opportunity with wearing the scarves to create an experience. People going to General Synod will pick up and wear a scarf as a sign that we are committed to offer hope by sharing with a person who asks about the what it means to wear the scarf as a sign of blessing.”  
Continued on Page 4



Marj Johnston of Dayton UCC describes how rainbow scarves can be tool for opening discussion about bullying and violence, to bring hope and justice to LGBTQ youth.

## *Annual Meeting adopts resolutions, funding*

Over 275 delegates, clergy, and others gathered in sunny Wenatchee April 26-28 for the PNC Annual Meeting, most arriving by dinner on Friday.

The “Geeks for Jesus” were on-site creating videos, taking pictures and creating a blogspot to help connect with those not present. Next year’s meeting will be held in Seattle for the second time in 17 years.

Delegates elected Tim Devine of St. Paul UCC as moderator and adopted five resolutions:

- One is a General Synod resolution to support outdoor ministries in the national UCC, including a capital campaign. Support for camps in important because camps help develop faith leaders and pastors. While PNC camps are

strong, other conferences need to raise awareness as some are closing camps.

- A second resolution is for the national UCC and PNC to stop new investment in and move to divest from fossil fuel companies as a way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions that are increasing climate change.

- The third resolution, “You Are Our Sisters, Too,” is a witness in support of American Roman Catholic women religious, pledging that the PNC will reaffirm that the Christian tradition today is enriched by their witness, that the PNC will offer prayers of support and solidarity, celebrate their works and honor their ministries as they are.

Concerns raised included that it is part of the continuing struggle of all

women in a church and world run by men and oppressing women.

After a resolution proposed at Annual Meeting 2012, members of the PNC engaged in conversations with Roman Catholic sisters, asking what would be helpful and what might hurt their cause.

- The fourth was a resolution expressing the Annual Meeting’s opposition to the construction of coal export terminals and the transport of coal by trains from Montana and Wyoming to these terminals. It also calls for a comprehensive environmental statement that assesses the impact of the four proposed terminals from mining to transport, to burning the coal and carbon emission in Asia. It also calls on PNC congregations to examine their energy consumption

# Reality may seem elusive, but it can be found

## Conference Comments



By The Rev. Mike Denton  
Conference Minister

**Lens  
of systems  
of manipulation  
and power  
makes  
reality  
seem  
unreal.**

What strange times we live in. Now, I know that every generation says this and, to some degree, this argument is used as one to dismiss every generation's saying this but, well, that doesn't mean its true. It just doesn't seem real, some days. I never really would have guessed that reading science fiction and dystopian futuristic novels would have prepared me for reality this much but here we are.

Sure, maybe we're not in a post-nuclear apocalyptic wasteland, but instead we seem to be creating a wasteland through greed, arrogance and neglect by slowly gaining momentum that dismantles our water, air and land. Our own government is killing and intimidating people throughout the world through the use of flying robots—otherwise known as drones—and, as they have admitted, it's not at all unusual that they don't get it right. We have willingly and unwillingly traded in privacy for security in a world where we have all been trained to be on heightened alert for a wide variety of possible threats—regardless of their probability—as real threats are minimized.

Our economic system and the institutions that support it have become nearly impossible to understand because they cannot really be understood except with through the lens of systems of manipulation and power. It all seems unreal.

Lauren, Leo and I recently attended a family member's wedding and, as part of their service, they read this piece of sacred text:

*'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.'*

*'Does it hurt?'* asked the Rabbit.

*'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'*

*'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'*

*'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly,*

*except to people who don't understand.'*

OK, so maybe this reading from *The Velveteen Rabbit* isn't a text recognized as scripture but, well, it should be. That which is real is being replaced by that which is not. That which can be loved is being replaced by that which can be desired. That which feeds is being replaced by that which fills. That which is wise is being replaced by that which is clever. That which is knowledge is being replaced by that which is information and so on. Its *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Animal Farm*, *1984* and *Mad Max* fit onto the set of "The Truman Show."

This struggle is not a new one, which is why every generation can claim it. This is an old struggle. This is that powers and principalities stuff that Ephesians 6:12 talks about. Its just that these days it seems like we are, well, losing.

If you are reading this—I mean reading it and not on some computer that merely collects the information—you are real. You have those possibilities for frayed edges and life and death and hope and resistance and love.

This is going to take work to resist so, today, see something. Drink in the sky whether it be dark, cloudy, sunny or stormy. Take some time to remember who you love and why. Take some time to remember who loves you, too. Turn something off that you don't normally turn off. Give something away. Spend 20 minutes with yourself and your brain and nothing else. Cook something for yourself and others that requires preparation and needs to have some dirt washed off of it. Pray about a problem in one of your relationships and listen for the possibilities to emerge. Refuse to compromise on one ideal, maybe two.

Then tell others what you did. Ask for their support. Ask how you can support them to do the same. Maybe you find you're a family or a church or a weekly potluck. Maybe you're a group of friends or a buying co-op or maybe a neighborhood organization. Then—group to group—start talking to each other. This may be work you do alone or start to pass on to the children in your lives—with an apology and actions of restitution for not thinking of them earlier. At some point, maybe this all becomes work we can't *not* do. These problems were slowly built but they need to be resisted quickly and soon.

And, yes, maybe this is idealistic and a little starry eyed but it also just might be true...and real.

## Transitions announced

The Rev. David Krueger-Duncan was installed in May at Cheney UCC.

The Rev. Elsa Peters was installed May 19 as pastor at the United Churches of Olympia.

The Rev. Jane Sorenson was installed June 22, joining her husband, the Rev. Tom Sorenson, as co-pastor at Monroe Congregational UCC.

The Rev. Herb Dimmock, 99, retired UCC pastor, died June 11.

## Conference News Briefs

## Baptist peace gathering set

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America Summer Conference, "Entertaining Angels: Peacemaking through Radical Hospitality," will be held July 15 to 20 at Gonzaga University in Spokane. Speakers and workshops will explore hospitality, inclusion and justice. A donor is providing free registration and half-price meals and room for people of color for the first 100 attendees who request it. For information, call 704-521-6051 or visit [www.bpfna.org/gather/summer-conference](http://www.bpfna.org/gather/summer-conference).

## Environmental Justice workshop canceled

The Environmental Justice Workshop planned for July 19 to 21 at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard has been canceled.

For information, contact meighan.pritchard@gmail.com.

## 2014 Festival of Preaching set

The Festival of Preaching Northwest 2014 on "Preaching in a Post-Modern World" is April 28 to May 1 in Seattle. Featured preachers/teachers will include Debbie Blue, Lillian Daniel, Anna Carter Florence, James Forbes, Tony Jones, Heidi Neumark, Fleming Rutledge, Scott Kister, Jose Morales, Melissa Skelton and Will Willimon. Registration begins Sept. 1.

For information, visit [www.festivalofpreachingNW.org](http://www.festivalofpreachingNW.org).

## Rebuilding teams helping

Bergen County (Moonachie and Little Ferry), New Jersey, is receiving volunteer work groups to rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Sandy last November. For information, visit [www.ucc.org/volunteer/disaster-recovery-volunteers/northern-new-jersey.html](http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/disaster-recovery-volunteers/northern-new-jersey.html).

## July lecture planned

Reza Aslan, writer and scholar of religions and founder of AslanMedia.com, an online journal of Middle East and world news and entertainment, will give the University Congregational UCC Lecture Series lecture at 7 p.m., Sunday, July 28, at the church 4515 16th Ave., NE, in Seattle.

He will speak on "Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth." For information, call 206-524-6255 ext.

3447 or email [lectureseries@universityucc.org](mailto:lectureseries@universityucc.org).

## Justice Witness Ministries seeks young adult Interns

Applications are still being accepted for openings for two more young adults, ages 21 to 30, to participate in the 2013-2014 team of social justice volunteers in Seattle. The year of service runs from late August 2013 through early August 2014, said Lauren Cannon of the PNC Justice and Witness Ministries Committee.

For information, contact Rich Gamble at 206-632-60212 or email [rich.gamble@keystoneseatle.org](mailto:rich.gamble@keystoneseatle.org).

## Camp registration continues

Registration for camps at Pilgrim Firs at Port Orchard and at N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur d'Alene continues.

With the "All things New" curriculum for all summer camps, Mark Boyd, managing director at N-Sid-Sen, said campers and counselors will seek God in each moment through new friends and new adventures.

N-Sid-Sen camp dates are: Kids Camp, July 7 to 10; Intermediate Camp, July 7 to 13; Senior High Camp, July 14 to 20, Family Camp 1, July 28 to Aug. 3; Junior High Camp, Aug. 4 to 10, and Family Camp 2, Aug. 11 to 17.

Pilgrim Firs dates are: Kids Camp, July 21 to 24; Intermediate Camp, July 14 to 20; Senior High Camp, June 30 to July 6; Junior High Camp, July 7 to 13 and Family Camp, Aug. 18 to 22.

Registration is on the UltraCamp Site, available by clicking "register for camp" on the [n-sid-sen.org](http://n-sid-sen.org), [pilgrimfirs.org](http://pilgrimfirs.org) and [pncucc.org](http://pncucc.org) websites.

For information, call Mark Boyd at 800-844-3489 or Deeg Nelson at Pilgrim Firs at 360-876-2031.

## Building funding event set

The national UCC Church Building and Loan Fund will hold a "Partners in Building" event Oct. 18 and 19 in Seattle on the theme, "Does Your church Need Money? God Is Still Building (and we're here to help)."

The session will include information on the process and requirements involved in property ownership and renovation, selection and purchase of real estate, insuring a church, architectural design and greening, the loan approval process, financial reporting and capital campaigns.

For information, call Shaena Ragin at 216-736-3822 or by email [ragins@ucc.org](mailto:ragins@ucc.org) or call Sheila Kinzer at 216-736-3829 or by email at [kinzers@ucc.org](mailto:kinzers@ucc.org), or visit [ucc.org/cblf](http://ucc.org/cblf).

## Plymouth Church has library

Plymouth Church in Seattle has a library with more than 5,500 books on religion, general interest, biography, fiction, and nonfiction for adults, young adults and children. It includes materials on teaching and parenting selected with the UCC community in mind.

The Plymouth Church Library Committee is exploring ways to share the library online with the wider community, such as serving as a lending library to members of PNC congregations, who can search for materials online and borrow them by ordering them by email. Items would be mailed by media mail with a return envelope.

For information, call 206-622-4865 or email [info@plymouthchurchseattle.org](mailto:info@plymouthchurchseattle.org).

## Women's Retreat is Nov. 1-3

"Celebrate the Joyful Journey!" is the theme for the 2013 Northwest Regional Women's Retreat, which will be held Nov. 1 to 2 at Kah-Nee-Ta Resort in Warm Springs, Ore. The keynote speaker is Da Vita McCallister, a partner, mother, ordained minister, entrepreneur, philanthropist, writer and advocate for youth and young adults.

Workshops are on spiritual energy, spiritual dance, holistic sexuality, health truth, geologic time, liturgical art, finger drawing, writing memoirs, spiritual discernment, coming alive and chakra balancing.

For information, [nrwrregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:nrwrregistrar@gmail.com) or visit [nrwr2013.eventbrite.com](http://nrwr2013.eventbrite.com).

# Discussion of resolutions builds respect

Continued from page 1 and find ways to reduce their carbon footprints.

• The fifth resolution changes the PNC’s fiscal year from January through December to June 1 through May 31 to be parallel to the election of officers and submission of annual reports. Recognizing the need for time to communicate the change and adjust accounting records, planning schedules and logistics, it will begin June 1, 2013.

A motion was adopted to have a full audit of PNC finances. A proposal to do a management review was tabled.

The budget that passed included a new staff position, tentatively called “program implementation coordinator” to assist with the work of Outdoor Ministries, Youth and Young Adult and Justice and Witness Ministries committees, so each of the ministries can be consis-



Stephen Eriksen of Shalom Richland and Kristine Zakarison of Pullman serve communion Sunday.

tent, clear and vital.

Conference Minister Mike Denton explained that the staff would “expand what we can do and stretch us to follow through and bring new energy in the life of the conference. We need a staff member rather than a con-

sultant working on a narrow set of tasks.”

A proposal to allocate \$12,000 for a Justice and Witness Ministry consultant to assist with young adult interns passed, as did a proposal to hire a program staff person to work in Justice, communication, youth and young adults, and new church starts and renewal. The proposal is to fund it from

the PNC’s endowment.

David Anderson of the Stewardship Committee said that the budget “looks at our ministry and mission together. It is a document of hope and possibilities.”

It supports expansion of the PNC’s participation in the national UCC’s young adult service internship program and a second staff person.

## Music takes new tone

Michelle Edwards and Marsha Williams of Eastgate UCC in Bellevue and Liberation UCC in Seattle led music for Annual Meeting worship services in April at Wenatchee.

Marsha, transitional pastor at Eastgate and Michelle, her life partner, a health unit coordinator at Tacoma General Hospital, both come from musical families. Previously Methodist, they joined the UCC in California four years ago.

Marsha, who played drums, accompanied with Marshan Goodwin-Moultry of Liberation UCC on piano.

*For information, email mcwill1007@yahoo.com.*



Michelle Edwards leads singing for Annual Meeting.

## Scarves add color to AM

Continued from page 1 ing, compassion and hope.”

Marj said the scarves were packed and sent to General Synod in California to wear as an opportunity to speak “truth in love” and to educate people about prejudice that continues regarding sexual orientation.

Jane Sorenson at Monroe UCC and friends across the PNC knit, crocheted and wove 212 scarves—as of Annual Meeting—toward the 3,000 hoped for at General Synod.

Among the many who made scarves, Katy Black, friend of Monroe UCC, crocheted 202 from yarn she bought at Goodwill, some among the 212 and 105 sent separately.

Jane said she knows other



Suzie Crapson adds rows.

churches are sending scarves and other delegates are taking them to General Synod.

*For information, call 360-794-7601.*

## Linda Jaramillo calls for liturgy being all we do

Linda Jaramillo, executive minister for the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries, preaching at Annual Meeting on "Masks and Mirrors," using James 1, less popular for justice types who like James 2's urging faith with works.

The first chapter sets the stage for Christians to do self assessment and put their faith into action by listening. Paul was writing to a Jewish-Christian congregation with a foot in the past and a foot in the future, between the Torah and the new encounter with who they are in Jesus. As a "tiny minority" in a population that did not like their beliefs, they were called to be faithful "in the midst of cultural disarray."

**Linda invited people to see** how they see themselves because of today's instant access to media that give images of what it is to be beautiful.

"We think we need to look and be like someone else," she said. "We are masked by our understanding of how we should look or be."

Admitting even if she is satisfied with her reflection in a mirror, she may wonder how others see her, rather than seeing herself as a child of God, in God's image and kin to others. That holy exercise when looking in the mirror, she believes, "should have an impact on our sense of value and importance.

"The general story is our story," Linda continued. "It values our individual experience and helps us find ourselves.

**"We are thrust into** a world of 'isms,' which are mechanisms to deny people their true identities and to betray their kinship," she pointed out. "We can't look in the mirror and lose track of ourselves or others. Removing our masks is a tall order, staying graceful while balancing between guilt and grace, chaos and community, our history and our future.

She grows weary of being stuck in cultural disarray,



Linda Jaramillo preaches for Saturday worship at Annual Meeting.

in disappointment, despair and disgust. Seeing the magnitude of injustice and wondering how to fix it, she said it's easy to slump into denial, inaction and complacency.

**"Then God interrupts** our thoughts, messes with our hearts, and reminds us to influence change, because "every living thing is connected and everyone is responsible for the common good.

"If we talk too much and listen too little, we may miss the chance to be shaken," Linda said, calling for the "bold public voice of Christianity to push for long-term change in institutions and systems, to create liberating, lasting social transformation. Those who are marginalized are tired of short-term, part-time, some-time solutions to long-range issues."

**Change challenges** current practices and comfortable thinking that create social isolation for some, isolation not

acceptable in a world aware of its caste systems, she said.

"In the information age, we cannot ignore the devastation of elitism and oppression," she said. "Survival requires progressive thinking."

Oppressive religious practices are not new. Throughout history, powerless masses have lost their authenticity in their quest for acceptance by powers and principalities.

**"To change** the course of history, we need a wave of liberation thinking," she said, aware it may cause discomfort like pains of birth.

Voices of historically marginalized and systemically powerful are essential in the mix," Linda said, aware that "voice recovery" requires quiet.

"We must be quick to listen and slow to speak. We must listen to whispers that emerge as the oppressed regain courage to speak. As new ideas emerge, the chaos can be holy chaos.

Change requires nego-

tiating and cooperation that strengthen relationships. She calls for new pastoral skills that challenge current practices and comfortable thinking.

Linda believes "the powerful will be stimulated to recover themselves in ways that are ultimately liberating and transforming. She seeks liberation that releases both the oppressed and the oppressor without compromising either.

**"Removing the mask** is an act of liberation for ourselves and the church," she said. "James challenges us to be sure the God we tout is God.

Given that the Greek word for religion is liturgy, then liturgy is about "all the ways we worship God," she said.

"If religion is liturgy, we are called to do more than come to church on Sunday to pray, sing, preach and fellowship. Worthwhile religious practice requires that we continue the worship experience every day in our lives," she said.

**"If religion is to be** authentic, James says we have to care for orphan and widows in their distress and keep ourselves unstained by the world," she said.

As author Alice Walker said, anyone can observe the Sabbath, but "we need to make it holy the rest of the week."

**Sabbath is a time** to bring things into balance, to be quiet and listen for the Holy Spirit.

"The pain of war, poverty is in every part of our being. We see so much injustice, we must overturn tables and continue our worship into every day. We need to extend beyond being human beings to be human doings, acknowledging our kinship with the Body of Christ, which compels us to be accountable to one another, do our part and help others do theirs. As we remember whose we are, we gain strength for the journey, removing the masks and reflecting the face of God.

**For information, 216-736-3701 or email [jaramill@ucc.org](mailto:jaramill@ucc.org).**

**God interrupts and reminds us to help bring about changes for the common good.**

## Leadership Retreat offers ideas on building teams, action

Participants in the May 2013 Leadership Retreat at N-Sid-Sen identified three areas for focus of conference work in the coming year: youth and young adults, communications, and church growth and renewal.

The fourth identified area was social justice, on which there are currently efforts in progress, said retreat facilitator Jeni Craswell, a member of the Ministry Resources Committee with a master's degree in leadership and community engagement from Seattle University.

"Teams grouped around the three priority areas and organized the different areas of work needing to be addressed and how the work could be presented as a Council Meeting Topic," she said.

"We finished the meeting with a round of people making commitments to do one thing to move the work forward once they left the retreat," she said.

At the retreat, participants:

- Gained a sense of where leadership felt the conference was thriving and where it needed to put attention;



Jeni Craswell facilitated PNC's Leadership Retreat in May.

- Tied the work into the vision statement created in 2012;
- Organized needed work into three focus areas and agree to work on one focus area at each Council Meeting in the 2013-2014 year, and
- Committed to do "one thing" to move a focus area forward so everyone attending the retreat had an action item and knew what to do next.

Jeni—a member of Bellevue First, community and donor relations officer of Imagine Hous-

ing and consultant in leadership and board facilitation with nonprofits—offered participants insights on leading meetings to build teams that commit to act.

"Eighty percent of the time should be in relationship building and 20 percent in doing the work," she said. "Time for building relationships helps people understand where others are coming from so they can more quickly make decisions."

People start with sharing what stresses and joys in their

lives to clear the air so they can be present for the work and those concerns do not overtake business later, she said.

"It's important that everyone speaks, so they feel a part of the group," Jeni said.

Teams form based on common interests. Teams set agreements and ask for commitments for follow through that includes how members will support each other and keep connected.

"There's a fine line between asking too much and not asking enough," she said.

"The best leaders have humility and can learn from each person in the room, from the 'wisdom of the crowd.' A team that can accomplish more through collaboration, in which everyone knows they need to work together," she said.

She said meetings need an agenda and objectives; ways to welcome and engage attendees, and time for everyone to know their tasks and how to communicate between meetings.

*For information, call 425-985-2505 or email [jenic@imaginehousing.org](mailto:jenic@imaginehousing.org).*

## Mike Denton's report expresses commitment to continue

In his report to the Annual Meeting, Conference Minister Mike Denton admitted that when he first came to the Conference five years ago, he had no idea about eagles, salmon, elk and moose. He had no idea about the mountains, rivers and wheat fields he would see traveling to visit the congregations and attend meetings.

"Now, this is home," he said. "The five years have been full of transitions. I have helped 43 of the PNC's 89 churches through transitions. We sold a building, voted to be an open and affirming conference, started the Environmental Justice Center at Pilgrim Firs, and set up the budget so numbers make more sense."

Mike has seen increases

in youth and young adult participation, Our Church's Wider Mission giving, and churches joining the PNC or starting up.

"Even with national OCWM up, there will be national staff cuts. Walls between local congregations, regional churches and the national setting are breaking open into talk of how to use resources for something new," he said.

Mike feels he has just started in his ministry with the PNC.

What some see as problems, he calls challenges. He called for being open to growth, to a new Pentecost movement, to new gifts, to the movement of the Spirit. The UCC is poised to be enveloped by movement.

Marriage equality is part of that movement.

"We must not lose the momentum for growth to institution re-entrenchment," Mike said. "We have reached our capacity as five staff. Conference committees of volunteers are busy, giving generously of their time. We are talking of adding new staff. Last year, Outdoor Ministries, Youth and Young Adult, and Justice Witness Ministries committees came to the Conference Council asking for staff."

Mike met with leaders to look at the budget to see what is possible.

"It's a loaves and fishes moment," he said. "We need to live into the innovative work we are called to do."

Mike reported that camps are in good shape, among the best in the UCC in terms of

financial stability and attendance. Of 38 conferences, only 15 have camps.

"Camps are a platform to expand our message. We will start a capital funds campaign for the camps," he said.

Mike begins a three-month sabbatical July 15 and will use the time to explore "how humans make decisions."

As he ends five years, he made a commitment to continue to help the PNC have life.

"The Pacific Northwest has become my home, with the mountains, rain forests, wheat fields and ocean," he said. "When I fly back here, I know I'm home when I smell fir trees and salt air. I feel called to this place, and I believe we are just getting started."

## Kizzie Jones' Oregon vacation became a book

Kizzie Jones' vacation a few years ago at Yachats on the Oregon Coast led to her children's book, *How Dachshunds Came to Be: A Tale about a Short Long Dog*.

At a restaurant, placemats told tall tales. Her friend, Edythe Stromme, a fiction writer, assigned her to write a tall tale that weekend.

Because there were some of the seabalason's lowest tides, they walked out and looked at the sea creatures. She looked up names of creatures visible at varying tide depths. It was the third week of July and for three days, gray whales could be seen from her hotel room.

Kizzie, who loves dachshunds, decided to make a tall tale connecting the sea life, whales and dachshunds.

She asked Scott Ward, an artist who is director of community life at Magnolia UCC, to provide illustrations for a fable about sea creatures that would be true to life.

Her goal was to instill creativity in children while they learned both about sea creatures on the beach and about kindness, compassion, collaboration and honoring diversity.

In choosing a publisher, she decided self publish with



**Kizzie Jones displays Scott Ward's illustrations.**

a company, through which she could print on demand. Since it first published in October 2012, 500 copies of the book have sold, and she is selling the next 500. It has received four national awards in 2013, in-

cluding first place in children's books in the Beach Book Fest and first runner up in the New York Book Fest, and first place for cover design in the National Indie Excellence Awards.

Kizzie, who is director of

spiritual care at Horizon House, said writing the book adds balance to her life and work of dealing with grief, loss and elder care. Now she's also involved with children's writers.

As one of two associate directors of spiritual care at Horizon House, she leads support groups, devotions, one-on-ones and peer conferences to help people with transitions, grief and loss and caregivers.

Kizzie previously worked more than two years at Providence St. Peters in Olympia. For 10 years, she has written nonfiction about spirituality.

"The book reminds me about the job of being in tune with what gives joy in everyday life, so I don't lose touch with it," she said. "It's easy for pastors who are busy caring for others not to know what makes them happy."

Having three dachshunds, she said her sequel is *How Dogs Came to Be: All Dogs Are Dachshunds in Costume*.

"When I was writing, it seemed to be the hardest. Finding a publisher next seemed hardest and now marketing seems hardest. Everything is a huge learning curve," she said.

**For information, email [kizeliz@gmail.com](mailto:kizeliz@gmail.com).**

## Display features stoles made by former Chewelah pastor

During the six years Sandy Johnson was pastor at Chewelah UCC, Susan Chamberlain, then administrative assistant, became involved in making stoles with Sandy, who came to Chewelah as her first church after graduating from Pacific School of Religion.

At the 2013 Annual Meeting, Susan displayed 18 stoles both she and Sandy have made and she sold several.

Susan lives on 80 acres of farmland that includes a 26-acre wildlife habitat and the house her parents built and she purchased in 1972. She has

been a member of Chewelah UCC since her teens.

After Sandy was called another church, Susan began making stoles and has made more than 20 for her pastors to use. As each pastor has left, she has given him or her a stole.

In the past 20 years, Sandy made more than 700 stoles and has been selling them for several website. Now she sells them on a website. She is taking more than 80 to General Synod this year where she has a vendor booth.

**For information, call 509-935-4063.**



**Susan Chamberlain displayed stoles at Annual Meeting.**

## As witness to marriage equality

# Gay couple's wedding is a lesson in past, today

Yisrael Bisman and Rick Rigdon's marriage celebration on May 19 at Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane was more than reciting vows, singing, dancing and feasting. It was a wedding seder.

Incorporating a seder meal, it became an opportunity for education by applying the format used in a typical Jewish Passover seder to tell the story of GLBTQ's exodus from exclusion and oppression into increased freedom and acceptance.

"A seder is an ordered 'telling' around a meal," said Yisrael, who has Jewish background. "It is part of the oral tradition of our ancestors."

Rick, from a Mennonite background, had the idea of a wedding seder as they began planning their service after the adoption of the marriage equality initiative passed. They had joined Westminster last year.

After 19 years of living in a committed relationship, they wanted more than a time to proclaim their love and commitment publicly.

They developed a script for the seder that preceded their vows based on typical readings and their faith exploration through Judaism, Buddhism, no faith and Christianity.

"We have experienced everything we talk about in our own lifetimes," said Rick.

**They began with lighting** candles, symbolizing the need to be "liberated from our fears." Martin Luther King Jr.'s words remind that "darkness will not drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Rededicating the light within, participants heard that the light in them reflects the Creator's light and "the need to illuminate unfulfilled hopes and dreams for peace and justice for all peoples."



Rick Rigdon passes candle light among the guests.

Rick pointed out that everyone lives with parts of themselves they do not acknowledge or accept.

"As light passes through a prism, it separates into many colors, but is the same light," he said. "What colors are you not comfortable with? What separates you from others?"

**Yisrael led a prayer** for "the end of hiding," including a quote in which former South African Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu said, "It's amazing that we are all made in God's image, but there is so much diversity." He prayed for the end of hiding so that "everyone has the courage to be the person God intends them to be."

They blessed the full rainbow of people present and celebrated their differences.

**A seder plate at each table** included unusual fruit, a reminder that "fruit," a name meant as an insult, is an opportunity to open people to the sweet and tart in themselves.

It included a pink triangle that Nazis had homosexuals wear in work camps; a bundle of sticks, a reminder that men were burned at the stake; bricks and stones, a reminder of the Stonewall riot against police; an empty cup, to remind that religious institutions denied spiritual equality of members; a sunflower seed, represent-

ing those locked in their shells hiding their inner beauty; and a broken ring, symbolizing exclusion from support of families, religion and the state.

**The first of four seder** cups was a reminder of the past.

From the past, the litany told of the first homosexual rights organization forming in 1897. By 1914, the group presented signatures of more than 3,000 doctors urging repeal of laws criminalizing homosexual relationships in Germany. In 1920, the founder was assaulted by anti-Semites. In 1933, more than 12,000 books were burned. The SS newspaper called for the internment of 2 million German homosexuals. In camps, homosexuals had to wear a pink triangle and punishments until 1945. After the war, homosexuality was a crime in East and West Germany, Britain, the United States and Soviet Union.

"Someone has to survive to tell the story," said one reader. "Bless those who hid friends, neighbors and lovers."

**The second cup was** for those who fought back, such as in 1969 when New York police went to raid a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn. Patrons threw bottles, beer cans and rocks at police, starting a new story in the human rights movement," in which "Stonewall" is syn-

onymous with "uprising."

"Bless those who founded early gay and lesbian organizations and put out magazines that offered hope and let people know they were not alone," participants read.

**The third cup is** for "the plague," for those who fell ill with HIV and AIDS and those who tended the sick, viewed and ostracized as "the lepers of our age."

In 1981, 12 gay men died of a mysterious illness and by 2000, AIDS was the leading cause of death among people 15 to 59 years old. Even as of 2012, only a small percentage were receiving AIDS drugs, but there is hope.

Participants read, "Bless those who spoke, while others covered their ears, and cleaned bed pans, prayed and listened."

**Andy CastroLang**, who officiated, introduced the fourth cup for those who refused to stand still, "allies of human rights who took a stand."

"We come in our story to the present time, happening as we speak, because this celebration, this new ritual, is now part of this story," she said.

The struggle for marriage equality is part of Rick and Yisrael's story.

**"Opposition exists,"** she said. "The desire for equal human rights became a desire for marriage rights. Couples in long-term relationships are no longer willing to accept a second-class relationship."

The Defense of Marriage Act strengthened those who deny rights, she said.

"Victories will continue. Now 12 states have adopted full marriage equality, three in the last few weeks, and 14 countries recognize same-sex marriage," Andy said.

**For information, call 624-1366 or visit [www.westminster-ucc.org](http://www.westminster-ucc.org).**



## Young adult interns near end of justice internships

*Four Young Adult Service Community interns have enhanced the capacity of organizations to do justice in the Seattle area, said Rich Gamble, chair of the PNC Justice Witness Ministries Committee.*

*They have also made justice alive in the UCC churches they relate with and built a sense of community with each other.*

*Interns work 32 hours a week with their agencies, four with their congregations, two in justice leadership education and two in spiritual reflection. Their term ends July 31.*

*Organizers have selected one intern for next year and are recruiting two more. They are also interviewing for an outreach coordinator for the justice leadership program, for which Annual Meeting allocated funds.*



Kathryn Murdock

### Kathryn Murdock gains hope

In her work with the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, Kathryn Murdock has realized that society accepts that it's impossible to end homelessness. Despite that she is optimistic and hopeful.

"I learned my faith and my work may connect. May faith can fuel my work," she said.

The Coalition on Homelessness involves 50 organizations, advocating for the safety and survival of people who are homeless and working to end homelessness by influencing policy and educating people.

"I learned how much we accept that it's impossible to end homelessness," she said, adding that she is optimistic and hopeful after her year of work.

While most of her work was about advocacy, she also engaged in some direct service. In September 2012, she helped low income, homeless people register to vote at a food bank.

One ex-felon who had committed a crime more than 30 years ago, learning the law denying the vote to ex-felons had changed in 2009, realized he could have a voice.

"Seeing joy on his face when he learned he could vote was amazing," Kathryn said.

Such stories make her want to work for nonprofits.

Recently, she has involved coalition members in preparing backpacks for school children.

On January 25, she participated in the county's One Night Count, helping organize thousands of volunteers to count people sleeping outside, in shelters or in cars between 2 and 5 a.m.

They found 2,736 people, a number that is used to appeal

for government funds and advocate for policies.

"We took the figures to Olympia to advocate for services and affordable housing," said Kathryn.

With 27,390 children in Washington public schools who were homeless in the 2011-12 school year, she said, "if we do not fund housing, we cannot help children. Children need food and shelter to learn."

Kathryn a graduate of the University of Puget Sound in foreign languages and international affairs, worked with the 30-member Keystone UCC. Having grown up in a large church, University Congregational UCC in Seattle, she found value in how a small, church can do things quickly.

Through Keystone, she connected with the national UCC Mission 4/1 Earth program, tracking progress of churches. She also worked with children planning services, connecting faith with justice and service.

**For information, call 206-406-9215 or visit [www.homelessnessinfo.org](http://www.homelessnessinfo.org).**

### Marianne Haney helped SAGE connect faith and labor

Through Puget Sound SAGE, an organization that advocates for policies based on connecting ideas and voices in the labor and faith communities, Marianne Haney gained experience organizing and testifying on urban development to supporting bus subsidies for students.

She heard of the UCC internship through AmeriCorps, with which she spent 10 months traveling and serving four nonprofits in the Pacific Region.

Much of her life she has worked with direct service agencies, such as tutoring children of migrant workers in California, through her involvement with the Pentecostal church in which she grew up in

West Seattle and during high school in Puyallup.

In her work, she learned about affordable housing, development plans and zoning policies that give incentive for developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their projects.

As youth coordinator for the Rainier Transit Justice program, Marianne worked with people speaking 120 dialects in the United States' most diverse zip code. The project helps students who live within 2.5 miles of their high school are not eligible to ride a school bus. Riding city busses to school was more than they could afford, but was necessary because their neighborhoods were not safe for walking. She



Marianne Haney

helped students organize to win funding from their schools.

She was also involved with SAGE's efforts to challenge work safety and wage fairness issues for Sea-Tac Airport fu-

elers. She was impressed that the airlines responded to people from the faith community.

"I want to make connections between direct services and systemic change, particularly working to empower young people," said Marilyn.

She helped All Pilgrims on neighborhood change.

"I'm excited about how open the UCC is to receive people where they are in their lives," she said. "Coming from a conservative background, we did not discuss justice in church. I have discovered there are many faces to faith, and have become more confident to ask questions about what I believe to lead me to faith."

**For information, visit [www.pugetsoundsage.org](http://www.pugetsoundsage.org).**

# Korean delegation visits Seattle for 20th anniversary

**By Ed Evans - Co-chair of the Global Ministries Committee**

The Global Ministries Committee of the Pacific NW Conference of the UCC and the Northwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) hosted six clergy and four lay persons from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) May 13 to 17 in Seattle.

The visit marked the 20th anniversary of the formation of a partnership between the PROK and the PNCUCC/DoC. Delegations have been exchanged between the two countries every year since the partnership was formed in 1993.

The visitors stayed with host families from UCC and Disciples of Christ congregations in the Seattle area.

**The schedule** for the visitors from the East Seoul Presbytery focused on ministries of outreach, justice, care for people and the environment.

They heard from JC Mitchell, the pastor of a new church in the Seattle area dedicated to the concerns of differently abled people.

They shared a meal at a community kitchen for area homeless people hosted by All Pilgrim's UCC/DoC Church on Seattle's Capitol Hill.

**The delegates also learned** about the Plymouth UCC housing project for the homeless in downtown Seattle, visited the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Visitor's Center, toured a Habitat for Humanity construction site, and learned about the tragic plight of short-haul truck drivers on Seattle's waterfront.

Their visit also included opportunities to learn about the health and environmental concerns over plans related to the movement of coal trains through the region to ship coal to ports in China and other Asian destinations.

Delegates placed salmon fry into a creek as part of a salmon restoration project co-



**Korean delegates present Mary Margaret Pruitt with portrait.**

ordinated by Fauntleroy UCC, and they visited Seattle's Pike Place Market.

**A highlight of the visit,** however, was an afternoon of sharing and open conversation about the spiritual and political role of the PROK church in South Korea, particularly as it relates to concerns about the reunification of North and South Korea.

While they do not believe the recent threatening rhetoric from North Korea's leader, Kim Jung Un, will lead to hostilities, they nonetheless live daily within the tension of concerns about the fragile nature of the peace between the two Koreas.

Seoul is less than 50 miles from the border with North Korea. Many families in South Korea still have relatives in North Korea, which is a factor which brings varying degrees of complication to the PROK's role in addressing the question

of reunification.

**Some in the delegation** expressed the belief that involvement in the politics of reunification are too divisive for the church and serve as a distraction from the primary role of the church, which should be spiritual nourishment and growth of the church. Others expressed the belief that the church needs to take a more active role in promoting reunification and offer assistance to people in the North out of a sense of love and compassion.

Some in the group said that they themselves were refugees, and acknowledged deep internal struggles of wanting to be compassionate, while at the same time continuing to be haunted by past experiences and lingering hateful feelings for the North.

**The conversation was** candid, rich, sometimes emotional and moving.



**Korean delegation and hosts with Seattle skyline in back.**

Photos courtesy of Ed Evans

The conversation was followed by a dinner and celebration of the 20th anniversary of the partnership with the PROK and the UCC/DoC at Normandy Park UCC.

UCC, Disciples and PROK participants ate together, prayed together, sang together and exchanged gifts.

**Words of greeting** were offered by Rev. Mike Denton, UCC conference minister, and Rev. Sandy Messick, Disciples of Christ regional minister.

Longtime Global Ministries Committee Member Mary Margaret Pruitt was surprised by the presentation of the gift of a portrait painted by 24-year-old Han, Chee In, the son of exchange delegate Rev. Han, Sung Soo.

The younger artist had only met Paul and Mary Margaret Pruitt once, during an exchange visit to Seattle seven years ago.

He majored in western style painting at Kuck Min University in Seoul, and was so impressed by Mary Margaret's devotion to Global Ministries and the PROK partnership, he painted a portrait of her from a photograph of the couple in front of their home church, Fauntleroy UCC.

The Global Ministries Committee appreciates the many churches and individuals who offered hospitality to make the visit meaningful.

Supporters included host families, churches that provided meals, transportation, and the anniversary dinner.

Funding for the visit came from the UCC and DoC regional/conference budget allocation.

*Video of 20 years of partnership is available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDp5VSdF\\_Vs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDp5VSdF_Vs)*

*Video of the 2013 PROK exchange visit is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6P1r5jLCEU>.*

*For information, email [edevans@aol.com](mailto:edevans@aol.com).*