

CHURCH AND HOME

UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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1st week of Advent

Sunday, December 1

Advent Potluck Breakfast
Ostrander Hall 8:45-9:45am

All are welcome to our Advent breakfast potluck. Bring your favorite Christmas breakfast dish to share.

Superfluity Christmas Sale

Turner Lounge before and after worship

Find items suitable for gifts or decorating your home for the holidays. Books, Décor, Housewares (kitchen), Linens and Treasures.

2nd Week of Advent

Sunday, December 8

Offering of Gifts
During 10:00 Worship

Today we bring forward the gifts for our “Christmas Families” and organizations we are supporting.

- ◆ See page 15 for a Christmas Family form
- ◆ See page 13-14 for the Offering of Gifts wish list

3rd Week of Advent

Sunday, December 15

Poinsettias to honor & remember



We honor friends and loved ones with our Advent Poinsettia display through December 29.

- ◆ See page 2 for the poinsettias donation form.

Advent Workshop
11:30—1:30 in Ostrander Hall

Friends and family of all ages are warmly welcomed to join us for Christmas crafting on a grand scale. Make Christmas gifts and decorations to take home while enjoying music, food and fellowship.

- ◆ See page 9 for more information

4th Week of Advent

Sunday, December 22

Longest Night Service
7:00pm in Turner Lounge

Preaching: Todd Smiedendorf

In a time of year when the culture is full of glitter, let’s gather to acknowledge also the sacred darkness of the winter passage and such passages in our life and in the life of the world. It is an opportunity to acknowledge, feel, and offer up in prayer our griefs, questions, and concerns, and to do this in community. Our contemplative gathering will have readings, silence, music, and candlelight.

December 24, Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm Everyone’s Pageant

A worship service for everyone: an all-congregation pageant. Everyone is invited to participate in making the Christmas story come to life!

8:00pm Service of Carols & Candles

Preaching: Amy Roon

A joyful family-friendly worship service featuring a brass quintet. Sing your way into Christmas Eve.

11:00pm Candlelight Service

Preaching: Amy Roon

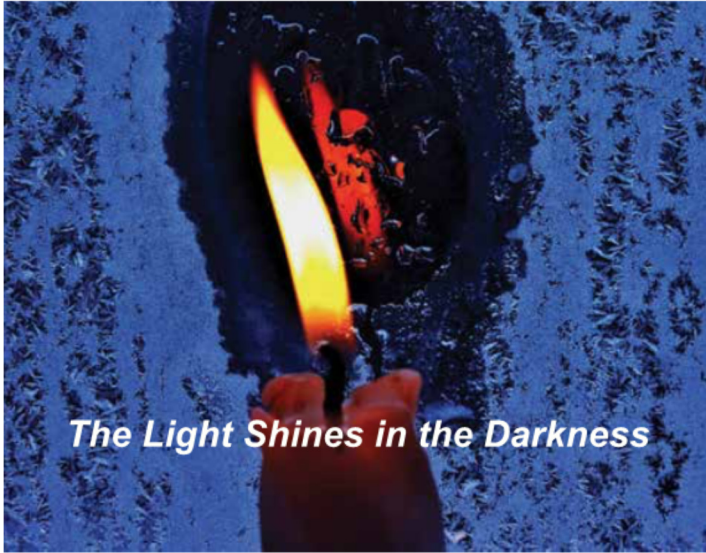
A traditional candlelight service filled with carols led by our Chancel Choir.

Wednesday, Dec 25—Thursday, Dec 26
Building is closed in observance of Christmas

December Special Offering

The Christmas Fund: for the Veterans of the Cross Emergency Fund

Please help take care of those who have taken care of you.
Give generously to the December 2019 Special Offering.



In 2018, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled

- ◆ Supplementation of health benefits for 174 retired clergy and lay employees (\$429,903)
- ◆ Emergency grants for 49 individuals and families (\$60,526)
- ◆ Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 401 retired clergy and lay employees (\$214,100)

Dec 29, Noisy Coin offering

On the 5th Sunday of the month, bring your loose change to worship to support the special offering.

Holiday Poinsettias Place your order now!



Each year, we invite our church members to honor and remember friends and loved ones by contributing to our Advent Poinsettia display. Your contribution will help fill our Sanctuary with holiday spirit, and additional funds will ensure we have chancel flowers on those Sundays when there aren't donations.

We purchase poinsettias from the Nathan Hale High School Horticulture and Urban Farm.

Our purchase support their program wherein students grow edible and ornamental plants using sustainable methods. Visit their facebook page for information: [facebook.com/hale.horticulture/](https://www.facebook.com/hale.horticulture/)

Plants will be delivered the week of December 9.

If you would like to be a part of chancel decorating team, contact Emma Fjermedal at 206-524-2322 or office@universityucc.org.

The poinsettias will decorate our worship services December 15 through 29. Each Sunday through the end of the year, we will publish the names of those honored by the poinsettias in the Sunday Bulletin.

Please **CLEARLY PRINT** all names. We will use your spelling for all names we print in the bulletin.

Name (s) _____

Phone _____

I/We want to donate _____ plants(s) at \$15 each
Payment in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Return this form by Sunday, December 8 to communications@universityucc.org or the church office, 4515 16th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98105
You can put an envelope with your form and check in Vicki Farmer's box in the copier room.

Thank you from the 2020 Pledge Campaign

Thank you to everyone for your courageous generosity in pledging to the church for 2020!

As of November 15, we raised just over a million dollars toward our goal of \$1.3 million — almost 80% of the way there. This is a fantastic start. Because of your gifts of time, talent and treasure, our church will be able to continue our tradition of over 125 years



of bravely standing for justice and courageously helping our neighbors both near and far. We will continue our courageous hospitality, making possible preschool programs, drop-in daycare, high school programs, food packing, and many more activities that occur within the four walls of our building.

However, to continue all of our current work and to fully build on the generations of good work that have come before us, we do need a little more courageous generosity. If you are called to pledge and have not yet done so, or would like to increase your pledge, you can still do so. All pledges are important, no matter the size.

Pledge cards are in the church office, or you can pledge online at universityucc.org/give/pledge-form

Thank you for all the gifts that you share with our congregation and the wider community!

~ Your 2020 Stewardship Pledge Campaign Committee
Rachael Brackett, Virginia Felton, Allison Hastings,
Miranda Meyer, Sven Peterson, Anna Van Pelt, David Anderson

Office volunteers

Twice per month, 1:00-4:00 in the church office

~ Emma Fjermedal

We have a fantastic crew of volunteers who help us in the afternoons as the first face people see when they step into the office. We need two or three more volunteers to fill out our monthly schedule.

If you are available week-day afternoons, and would like to be a part of our little church office community, please get in touch. We create a list of tasks for your shift, and train you how to transfer calls and use the copier.

Contact us with your questions or interest:
206-524-2322, [office @universityucc.org](mailto:office@universityucc.org)

Deaths

Jane Doughty

Born: November 26, 1946

Died: November 4, 2019

Jane died peacefully with family by her side at Hospice House in University Place.

Jane joined UCUCS over 30 years ago and was involved in various ways during some of those years, including Superfluity. The last couple of years she was unable to attend worship due to health reasons.

Please hold Jane's sons, Gavin and Bradford, and daughter Ann in your prayers during this tender time.

Memorial Service: Friday, November 15 at 12:00 in the UCUCS Sanctuary

Helen Carter

Died: November 3, 2019

Helen joined UCUCS 56 years ago in November 1963. She loved this church and was devoted to attending worship services as long as she was able to. Helen appreciated the church music and hymn singing. She always had a positive outlook on life.

During summers past, she shared her love of folk dancing at our annual UCUCS all church camp at Seabeck.

Please hold Helen's daughter Laurie (a member here), son Jeff, and his wife Lisa in your prayers during this tender time.

Memorial Service: Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 in the UCUCS Sanctuary

Sign up for MixSups 2020

Looking for ways to connect with people in our community?

This is a great way to do that.

Once a month, from January to April, you will be grouped with different people who also signed up, to enjoy a meal and conversation. These can be hosted in one's home or a space at church.

Information at the Narthex sign up through Dec 1.

If you have questions before then you can contact Mary Sue Galvin at Marysue.galvin@gmail.com or 206-718-1494.

Church Council meeting summary

October 16, 2019 Council Summary

~ David Anderson

David reported

- ◆ Erin Lovejoy-Guron will be leaving UCUC, as she accepted a position as church administrator at Ronald United Methodist Church on Aurora. We will celebrate her in worship during November. Friday, Nov 22, will be her last day at UCUC.
- ◆ St Luke the Evangelist Orthodox Church approached UCUC to see if they could hold a Sunday evening service (7 pm worship; 6-9 overall) at our church. They are a very tiny group and will be using the chapel. They will use (natural) incense, and we'll run the Chapel HVAC overnight after to dissipate it. This is an open and affirming congregation with a female bishop. David sees this as a good partnership; this is an in-kind use.

Futures Task Force Report

Council voted to receive the report of the Futures Task Force and to dismiss the task force with deep gratitude to the task force members: Co-chairs: Kathy Kripps and Pris Kloess; Steering Committee: Pris Kloess, Mary Kollar, Kathy Kripps, Becca McMullen, Catherine Foote (leadership staff liaison). Members: Carol Bryant, Tim Croll, Joan Davis, Mary Sue Galvin, Tim Johnson, Bart Klingler, Emily Morishima, Ellen Naden, Mary Jean Phipps, Margaret Stine, Denis Streeter.

Voted to affirm recommendations:

- ◆ The present leadership structure including 3 pastors and a church administrator be reduced to 3 pastors, with search for a Business Manager to begin immediately.
- ◆ Voted to appoint a church *Business Manager Search Committee* composed of: Terry Moore, Virginia Felton, Roger Garratt, Rich Folsom, and Catherine Foote, Pastor. Committee is charged to review and revise position description as appropriate, search for and find an acceptable candidate, and present the candidate's name and credentials to the Church Council for approval. Moderator is authorized to expand the Search Committee if needed for balance, workload, efficiency, or other reasons. Committee will choose a chair

Council agreed to defer further action for one week to allow council members time to read the report.

Gathering Ground

Voted to renew the *Spirit Workshop Convener Contract* with Beth Amsbary for the calendar year 2020. Funding to come from the Spirit Workshop Revolving account, established by the Imagine campaign. Beth Amsbary reported some highlights of the program (now named Gathering Ground). 280 people attended the Carrie Newcomer concert.

The *Gathering Ground Steering Committee* is taking more initiative and moving towards becoming financially independent. A UCC national grant has been applied for, response pending. There are funds left in the *Imagine* campaign which will cover another year of operations.

October 23, 2019 Council Summary

To further consider recommendations from the Futures Task Force

Margaret Stine made a motion that council adopt a $\frac{3}{4}$ rule for this vote. With 12 voting members present, the motion would need 9 votes to carry. Motion carried.

The Futures Task Force report proposes:

- ◆ a leadership team of three pastors, with one pastor also responsible for leading the team, helping the team articulate goals, objectives, and common understandings and expectations. This pastor would also have authority and responsibility to provide for supervision and evaluation of all leadership team members individually. This work is to be done in close collaboration with the Personnel Committee. All three pastors would have more specificity and authority in their designated areas of responsibility. Other detail for all three pastors was articulated in the proposal.

Following a lengthy and faithful discussion, the vote was called. The motion failed to pass by 75%.

Vote was 8 yes, 4 no, 0 abstentions.

Council members then joined hands in prayer and expressed our sentiments once around the room. The meeting was then adjourned.

Following the meeting, moderator Margaret Stine drafted a resolution to charge a *Staffing Proposal Committee* to develop a proposal that grows out of and incorporates information in the prior Futures staffing report, gives some additional definition for responsibility, authority, accountability, and the role of the Personnel Committee and Church Council. Committee will begin in November and report at the January council meeting — moving ahead with deliberate speed. Council will vote on the charge at the November meeting.

Living into our Racial Justice Church Resolution

~ Alex Bacon, Racial Justice Task Force

Since our congregational vote in August, we are continuing to get concrete in our commitment to be a Racial Justice Church. This has required the work of many congregants and staff. Our Racial Justice Task Force held numerous outreach sessions, conducted a written survey, and listened to and reflected on the voices raised at the congregational vote. Out of that, we now have a mission calling us to *“Meet the moral and spiritual imperative of addressing racism in our congregation and broader community through sacred study, conversation, community building, and worship so that we can act as effective allies to dismantle it.”*

Our goals for the coming year include:

- ◆ To make UCUC C a place where people of color feel welcome and included.
- ◆ Provide educational opportunities to the congregation that will:
Explore theologies that offer alternatives to white supremacy and racial hierarchy.
Deepen our awareness of racial injustice and harm in everyday life, and guide us to make racially just decisions.
- ◆ Become an antiracist church through worship, policies, practices and structure.
- ◆ Provide an environment for children, youth, and their families, to actively engage in antiracism work.
- ◆ Partner with groups both inside UCUC C and in the community to promote actions and events that dismantle racism.
- ◆ Provide ongoing communications that keep the issue of racism continually in front of the congregation.

Oct 26, Racial Justice Retreat

Two-dozen congregants, staff and community members joined together on October 26 for a half-day retreat. At this retreat, we prioritized working on action items to help us work towards the goals above based on those that had the most energy. In addition to a communications group, five work groups were formed based on common action steps, including:

Racial Justice Book Group held on 3rd Tuesdays at noon after Bible Study.

- ◆ The group will be discussing *Becoming* by Michelle Obama on Dec 17.
- ◆ *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor on Jan 21.

Partner with Sacred Earth Matters (SEM) to develop a UCUC C land acknowledgement statement to show respect for and honor the Indigenous People of Seattle and the Puget Sound.

- ◆ This will be discussed further at the SEM meeting on January 12 and is open to all.

Worship Action developed initial plans to potentially use the season of Epiphany to focus on racial justice issues in our worship, add a monthly segment to our worship bulletin and/or service that lifts up racial justice and developing a statement regarding cultural appropriation in worship.

Connect with Mt. Zion Baptist Church: took the first steps towards sharing an activity together before year’s end that will further nurture this budding connection.

Partnership with local faith communities to learn how they and our Conference are responding to God’s Call to end White Supremacy. Research and recommend a people-of-color led organization in Seattle that works on racial justice issues, and would appreciate our support.

~

Our continued initial steps are modest when laid bare against the violence of white supremacy and racism. These systems of oppression have been hard-baked into our faith for over five-hundred years, and despite our work so far, the violence and harm continue even in our own Church walls. As a white person, I know I must seek support from others to avoid the pitfalls of getting stuck in fear, guilt and shame. Instead we must imagine a truly liberated world free of oppression and take concrete steps towards that world.

The more of us involved in these efforts, the more impactful we can be. Please contact Ginger Warfield at vwarfield@mac.com to get connected to this work or if you have questions.

The Racial Justice Task Force is planning a follow-up meeting after the New Year.
You can also join the UCUC C Racial Justice Facebook group to stay current.

Along the Way

~ Rev. J. Todd Smiedendorf

Back in February's "Along the Way," I said if I were to write a book titled *Why I'm Still a Christian*, the biggest chapter might be titled "Original Blessing." That's still true, but the second biggest chapter would be "Thank God for Job." (It's pronounced Jobe like robe, long O sound.) I truly would not be a Christian, let alone a pastor without this sacred story.

Have you read this book of the Bible?

Short story: Job, upstanding, faithful man, has a great life.

God says to The Accuser (Hebrew ha-satan), one of God's court, "Have you noticed Job and how faithful and good he is?"

Ha-satan responds, "Let me have him for a while and you'll see."

Enter misfortune. Job loses his children, his fortune, and his health. His friends come over to weep and then tell him to repent for whatever sin of his has brought on this misfortune. They have a super long debate, his friends maintaining that he must repent, Job maintaining that he is undeserving of his suffering and that God has messed up.

Finally, God answers Job's accusation, essentially telling Job that he, as a human, has no ability to comprehend what it takes to create or hold a world together, that he is in no position to critique the Creator. God's impressive speech quiets Job into repentance and humility.

Enter massive plot twist. Instead of ending the story there, as if Job was simply wrong and his friends right, God then tells Job it is his friends who must go and repent. Job goes on to have his health and blessings restored.

Wait, what?

The common theological frame of the time was that people got what they deserved and soon. The equation of faithfulness and morality with the blessings of health and wealth was a simple one. As a mythic tale, the story of Job defies such theological simplicity and certainty. It makes room for a world in which bad things happen to good people (See Kushner's book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*). Job is the one whom God ultimately honors as one who humbly bows into the Mystery of life and the unknowing about such matters. God's admonishment is for those who think they have it all figured out and don't make room for any mystery in misfortune and suffering (Job's friends).

I am indebted deeply to Rabbi Harold Kushner's book and grateful to the Spirit that got the story of Job included in our sacred canon. As I see history and biography, it is difficult to see that those who do good always escape suffering, and vice versa.

There is plenty of suffering that humans have brought on themselves, individually and corporately. Such suffering has been an occasion for me and others to wisely re-view and repent of certain ways of being. More is needed. Yet, there is also an inexplicable kind of suffering in life that can happen that does not correlate to one's own morality or karma or character. Whether through systems of injustice or the actions of others, some people and Creation suffer. Beyond that, inexplicable suffering happens. Job makes room for that mysterious truth and I thank Spirit for that room, for the acknowledgement of that truth.

Whether it's Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, or the Longest Night service, I always take a little of Job with me. Couldn't be a Christian without it.

For Those Who Cannot Attend Church (And those who can)

~ Carol Scott-Kassner

Advent is the season of anticipation within the church year. This anticipation is both for the birth of the baby Jesus and the return of the risen Christ among us.

The tradition of lighting the Advent candles assigns a reading on each of the four Sundays of Advent according to the following concepts.

- ◆ Hope (or promise)
- ◆ Preparation (waiting or prophecy)
- ◆ Joy (peace)
- ◆ Love (adoration)

Take time during this season of darkness and quiet to meditate on each of these ideas.

Youth Ministry

Contact Director of Youth Ministry Margaret Swanson for information, MSwanson@ucucc.org or 206-524-2322 x3315.

Youth Group & Worship

Sundays, December 1, 8, 15, 22

(No Youth Group December 29 or January 5)

9am Youth Group, 10am Worship & Youth Pew

Youth Group is open to youth in grades 6 – 12. You are invited to come for discussion, reflection and activities to explore your faith, and connect with your peers for friendship and support. Throughout the year there will be retreats, service projects and other fellowship events outside the 9am time-frame.

Our Whole Lives Class continues

7th – 9th grade youth

6pm – 8pm in the Pilgrim Room

- ♦ 12/8/19 Workshop 2
- ♦ 12/15/19 Workshop 3

Youth Group Christmas Party

Friday, December 20

6pm – 9:30/10pm in Turner Commons

Youth in grades 6-12 are invited to come celebrate the season! We will have dinner, play a few games and then hunker down with hot chocolate for a Christmas movie! As always, friends are welcome to join in the festivities. More details via email as we get closer.

Junior & Senior Small Group

Wednesday, December 18 - *date might change*

7pm – 8:30pm Pilgrim Room

Juniors and Seniors in High School are invited to participate in this small group that offers support and encouragement to each other in these last years of high school. We will do a check in and then have different topics for discussion to help in your discernment throughout these years. We meet every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Note: date and location might change for December, we will be in touch via email and our groupme group.

Christmas Eve

Greeters & Marketplace helpers:

The 5pm Christmas Eve service will feature our beloved *Everyone's Pageant* Service. We are looking for Greeters and folks to help in our costume

“Marketplace” to welcome folks to worship. The greeters and marketplace helpers wear costumes and encourage attendees to put on a costume. We have many costumes for shepherds, wise people, angels, kings/queens and multiple kinds of animals. If you and your family would be interested in greeting and helping in the marketplace, please email Margaret at mwsanson@ucucc.org.

2020 Dates to Anticipate:

- ♦ January 12: Youth group starts again
- ♦ January 29: Teen Feed
- ♦ February 29: Moving Mountains
- ♦ March 20 - 22: Boys & Girls Retreats

Children's Ministry

Contact Director of Children's Ministry Betsy Herring for more information, bherring@ucucc.org, or 206-524-2322 x3302

Children's Choir

9:00 Sunday mornings in the choir room

Kids in grades K-5, come meet our wonderful children's choir director, Rachel Teigen-Brackett, for a fun way to grow your faith through singing! Children's choir practices Nov 24, Dec 8, 15, and 22.

Co-Leaders needed in Children's Classes through Advent

We are looking for co-leaders in children's classes in December. This fun volunteer service involves reading a Bible story, making a craft, playing a game, and saying a prayer with the children. It's nourishing! Thank you for prayerfully considering volunteer ministry with our children. To sign up, email Betsy Herring at bherring@universityucc.org.

Dec 7, Christmas Party

4:00 – 7:00 pm at the Hoff/Locke Home

All families with children are invited to our annual Christmas Party, and you're welcome to bring friends. Neil Hoff and Emily Locke are hosting at their home in south Seattle. This potluck dinner is a chance for parents to connect and kids to play--a good time for all to enjoy the Spirit of the season.

Let's see if we can beat last year's record for most icing on the roof of their group-made Gingerbread House!

For address and directions, please RSVP to Betsy Herring: bherring@universityucc.org or 206 524-2322.

December Calendar

December 1

- ◆ 8:45 Advent Potluck breakfast
- ◆ 9:00 Superfluity Christmas Sale
- ◆ 12:00 Gathering Ground vigil for common good
- ◆ 2:00 Gathering Ground writing group

December 2

- ◆ Recology tour with Sacred Earth Matters

December 3

- ◆ 6:15 Men's Soup Supper

December 7

- ◆ 4:00 Children's Ministry Christmas party

December 8

- ◆ Offering of Gifts
- ◆ 11:30 Sing-along carols
- ◆ 2:00 Helen Carter Memorial service

December 9

- ◆ 12:00 Senior Lunch

December 15

- ◆ New Member Sunday
- ◆ 11:30 Advent Workshop
- ◆ 7:00 City Cantabile Concert

December 20

- ◆ 6:00 Youth Christmas Party

December 21

- ◆ Northwest Firelight Chorale concert

December 22

- ◆ 11:30 food-packing service project
- ◆ 7:00 Longest Night service

December 23

- ◆ 6:00 All Women Extraordinary dinner

December 24

- ◆ 5:00 Pageant service
- ◆ 8:00 Carols service
- ◆ 11:00 Candlelight service

December 25 and 26 Building closed

Dec 2, Recology Tour

Several members of Sacred Earth Matters are going on a tour of Recology, an integrated resource company which collects and processes solid waste, reclaiming useful materials which otherwise would be buried in a landfill.

Come and find out the latest about what can and cannot be recycled. We have room for 8-10 more people. Contact Francie Rutherford at 206 300 2791.

Dec 3, Monthly Men's Soup Supper

Our monthly soup suppers include fellowship, sharing food, and usually a video followed by a discussion.

An open invitation to become a member of our church

~ Virginia Felton, Welcome Committee

On December 15, we will receive new members during our worship service. If you are interested in becoming a member of our church and have been attending for at least a few months, we would be happy to welcome you at worship.

Membership in a church can mean many different things to different people. For some, it is a threshold moment in their lives—an opportunity to deepen their commitment to their own spirituality and to a community of faith. For others, membership may seem like an unnecessary formality, of no real interest. As we are fond of saying in the United Church of Christ, “No matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!” That applies to membership here. You are also invited to meet with a pastor if you are not sure whether membership is right for you or you have questions about your faith journey.

If membership does appeal to you, we want you to know that you have an open invitation to join. We advise that those interested in membership attend a Welcome Lunch (held several times a year after worship). However, if you have been attending for a while, and feel you know us well enough, you are welcome to bypass this step.

Interested in joining?

Contact Virginia Felton, Welcome Committee Co-Chair, 206-979-7539 or inquirers@universityucc.org.

Dec 15, Advent Workshop

11:30-2:00 in Ostrander Hall

~ Lisa Klingler

Friends and family of all ages are warmly welcomed to join us for Christmas crafting and merry-making. Create Christmas gifts and decorations to take home - all while enjoying music, food, and fellowship.

There will also be opportunities to share the love of the season, including creating cards for use by the parish care ministry, decorating/filling snack bags for the United Churches Emergency Fund (UCEF), and decorating cookies for Teen Feed. Plenty of help will be on hand, so artists of all (or seemingly no) abilities can be successful. Come join the fun!

Volunteers

Volunteers are still needed in all areas to help with this beloved annual UCUC event: set-up, teardown/cleanup, leading a craft, providing cookies/frosting for decorating, bringing potluck healthy finger foods, and more.

To volunteer, please sign up in the narthex Nov. 24, Dec. 1, or 8, or contact coordinator Vicki Farmer at vickifarmer@hotmail.com or 206-714-7743.

Donations for UCEF Snack Packs

~ Lisa Klingler, Hunger Outreach

You may have seen a recent announcement that the United Churches Emergency Fund (UCEF) is looking for help with snack packs to give out to homeless clients coming in to their office (housed in our church building).

As part of our Advent Workshop on December 15, Hunger Outreach (an action team of the UCUC Love and Justice ministry) will have a table for decorating and filling lunch bags with snacks.

Can you help by donating the following items requested for this project?

- ◆ Individual chip bags (48 needed)
- ◆ Fruit cups (48 needed)
- ◆ Candy bars (48 needed)
- ◆ Pudding cups (48 needed)
- ◆ Juice box (48 needed)
- ◆ Granola bars (sign up complete - thanks!)
- ◆ Water (water boxes - sign up complete - thanks!)

Please contact Lisa Klingler or the church office to arrange dropoff/pickup prior to the event.

Thank you and hope to see you at the Advent Workshop in O Hall on December 15!

Gathering Ground

(Formerly Spirit Workshops)

The Gathering Ground Community offers alternative observances for the final months of the year, especially designed for folks who seek meaning outside of traditional faith holidays. All programs free with contributions welcomed.

For information or to RSVP:

GatherinGround.Seattle@gmail.com or 206-524-2322.

Dec 1, Standing for the Common Good

Sunday Vigils 12-1pm.

On the corner of 45th Street and 15th Avenue NE. Come stand for a few moments or a meditative hour.

Dec 1, Writing, Reflection, & Really Good Beverages.

2-4pm.

An informal group for writers of all levels. Helpful writing prompts and friendly atmosphere provided. Choclati Café in Wallingford in the upper back room.

Dec 21. Rock & Roll Solstice

Singalong & Fundraiser House Party.

7pm - 10pm.

Led by seasoned rock musicians, sing through a book of favorite songs and toast the ancient reason for this season. Bring some finger food to share.



Dec 22, Food-packing service project

After worship in the first floor hallway

Bring the kids to pack grocery bags with nonperishable foods for the hungry. This 30-minute activity is a fun, easy way to involve the whole family in serving others. Little ones can look at the list, pull those items off the shelf and put them in a bag.

It's a great introduction to the topic, and the act, of service.

Planting Trees & Restoring Forests

The Earth is Sacred – Not Ours to Wreck

~ Lon Dickerson, Sacred Earth Matters

A new study found that reforestation is much more powerful than expected. Letting saplings regrow on land where forests have been cleared and planting trees where there were none before (afforestation) could result in 1.2 trillion new trees across the planet. These trees would capture two-thirds of the carbon we've put in the atmosphere over the last 150 years.

The fires in the Amazon rainforest are devastating because forests are being destroyed and the stored carbon released into the atmosphere. Equally alarming are the Trump administration's plans to allow the logging of old-growth trees in Alaska's Tongass National Forest and building roads there for energy and mining projects. It's the world's largest intact temperate rainforest. Its centuries old trees store more carbon removed from the atmosphere than any other national forest in the country.

Forests are also disappearing because of urbanization and the clearcutting of woodlands for livestock ranching and agricultural expansion. Seattle has a tree-protection ordinance which requires developers to replace all large or "exceptional" trees they remove. But it's not being enforced, and Seattle has lost 1,200 acres of canopy cover to developers since 2009.

Washington entered into a Shared Stewardship Agreement this year with the U.S. Forest Service to protect our forests from wildfires, insects, disease, and droughts and restore the forest we have lost.

A good example of protecting and increasing the size of old-growth forests is a 7,600-acre tract of land owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) near Washington's Willapa Bay. TNC is working with contract loggers to enable young industrially-planted stands to become old growth (150+ year old trees) by thinning young trees to provide more growing space, and replacing some trees to intermix species.

Forests managed for timber (e.g. Weyerhaeuser) sequester carbon almost as well as wilderness woodlands. Sustainable forestry increases CO₂ absorption from the atmosphere, as young trees absorb higher levels of carbon dioxide than older trees. The Nature Conservancy advocates for the cross-laminated timber industry to effectively use young, small diameter trees from managed forests. The good news is that we're planting more trees in working forests than we're cutting down.

Think of the impact we could make if everyone who attends UCUC planted or sponsored the planting of one tree each year.

What's new in the Scheyer Library

~ Jessie McAbee, Scheyer Library

This month, we have several new books for all ages.

While we may have an inclination to protect children from much of the unfairness in the world, talking to them about current issues like poverty, racism, and homelessness is important. Children are very observant, and will notice all of these things in the world around them.

To develop children's empathy, the adults around them need to show that it's a good thing to notice and care. One of the easiest way to open this conversation is with a book. Lisa Klinger has donated several children's books with social justice themes to the library. Check them out with a child in your life.

I had the great pleasure to read *The Last Stop on Market Street* to three 3-year-olds at the Good Works Bazaar in November. What a wonderful story about riding the bus and finding beauty! The book was written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. It has been recognized with Newbery, Coretta Scott King, and Caldecott Honors!

Our library grows mostly from donations. Also new to the library are two books donated by Mary Sue Galvin, *Biased* by Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt and *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. I am currently reading *Biased*, and find this analysis of "the hidden prejudice that shapes what we see, think, and do" fascinating and often quite disturbing. Blending the results of her own research and others with personal experiences and interviews, Stanford psychologist Dr. Eberhardt reveals how ingrained our prejudices are. While the book covers a range of topics, including housing and employment, she has also worked with police departments and taught classes in San Quentin prison, and offers a fresh perspective on police violence and mass incarceration.

For those in-between ages with in-between interests, the library has also recently acquired two books about Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth (*In Their Own Words*). Reading one of these with a school-age child would be a great companion to watching the current movie out about Harriet Tubman.

Stories of Awakening

~ Candyce Rennegarbe, The Sacred Feminine Team

What are the ways we experience the Holy?

Is the voice of the sacred feminine the voice of trusting and sharing our own voices – the voice that patriarchy has sought to extinguish? How do we acknowledge our divine nature and respond?

In her book, *Another Way Home*, Lonardelli writes, “At the heart of the Jesus movement ... there are individuals experiencing an awakening to the presence of the Sacred” (26). If you are interested in nourishing and opening your heart to Spirit, come join this book discussion!

Join our book group exploring the divine feminine

- ◆ *Another Way Home* by Ruth Ann Lonardelli
Luminare Press, 2018
- ◆ Instructors: Candyce Rennegarbe and
Dr. Cindy Caldwell

Over four consecutive Sundays, from 11:30 to 1:15, we will explore our own awakening stories to the sacred feminine. Dr. Cindy Caldwell will provide a historical overview of significant issues and decisions related to women in Christianity over the past 2,000 years. We will reclaim our use of a feminine lens to explore transformative stories of seeking wholeness that is often hidden in the Bible stories. We will also begin exploring the apostle to the apostles, Mary Magdalene, and her awakening.

- ◆ Session 1: February 9, 2020
- ◆ Session 2: Feb. 16, 2020
- ◆ Session 3: February 23, 2020
- ◆ Session 4: March 1, 2020

A simple soup lunch will be provided.

More details on purchasing this book to come when registering in December-January.

See online announcement for more detailed course description.

Contact Candyce Rennegarbe with questions:
crennegarbe1@comcast.net

Seabeck 2020

~ Beth Bartholomew, Seabeck Committee

Coming July 5-10, 2020:

Faith, Science & Environmental Stewardship with David Roon, PhD.

Christmas Reflections

In this time of long nights, as we await the Winter Solstice and the return of longer days, we metaphorically await the birth of Jesus, who became the Christ, and we enjoy the sparkling and aromatic Christmas trees with which we mark the season.

Let our thoughts dally on the forest of evergreen trees and sparkling water of Hood Canal found at Seabeck Conference Center. Take a moment to say a prayer for Seabeck and bend your mind to planning for next summer's All-Church camp.

Living responsibly with God's creation

We look forward to meeting David Roon in February on a date to be arranged. He is looking forward to beginning to share the spiritual and scientific sides of ecology and conservation biology.

Reflections from the Seabeck Book Club Selection

“Wild meadow sweetgrass grows long and fragrant when it is looked after by humans. Weeding and for the habitat and neighboring plants strengthens its growth.” (61)

A prayer – as we ponder God's Creation and the miracle of Jesus's birth – from the “Thanksgiving Address” of the Onondaga people, known to them as the Words That Come Before all Else:

Today we have gathered and when we look upon the faces around us we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now let us bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People. Now our minds are one. (107)

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Communicating your values on your road to planning, protection & preparation for life's decisions.

~ John Kloess, Planned Giving Committee

A few months ago, through a survey to our entire congregation, we asked what is important to you as you plan for your future and the futures of the people and organizations important to you. How can you best have your values and commitments become reality - both in your lifetime and beyond? How can legal documents, medical directives, responsible investing - to name a few - assist in your efforts?

Thanks to all of you who responded to our survey. We are pleased to announce that, beginning early next year, we will be sponsoring seminars after a number of Sunday services on a variety of topics in which you expressed an interest! More specifics will be announced as we get closer to the seminar dates, but our topics will most certainly include

- 1) Wills and Trusts – how can I be sure I have correctly covered everything – Trustees, POA's, Medical Directives, etc?
- 2) How can I best plan for Elder Care – either for me, my spouse, my elderly parents?
- 3) How can I invest in a Socially Responsible manner
- 4) How can I best make Tax Advantaged Charitable Contributions, during my lifetime or after, given the variety of options available – Gift Annuities, IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's), Donor Advised Funds – to name just a few?

Professionals in various fields will lead these discussions. More to come later as we close out this year and begin 2020!

Superfluity is around the corner!

We will start taking donations on January 21.

We welcome volunteers for sorting on Wednesdays, starting on January 29.

Seeking Peace & Justice in the Holy Land Interested in visiting Israel and Palestine in April?

Tour with “Churches for Middle East Peace”
April 25 – May 2, 2020.

There is an additional extension May 2 – 5, 2020 with Mejudi Tours, founded by an Israeli and a Palestinian.

I'm going and I hope that you will go, too.

Interested in learning more, please contact me, Kathy Williams, at kawsa92@comcast.net or 206-328-3592.

Alternative Food Bank Project

~ Cassie Emanuel, Immigrant Justice

Thank you to all who contributed cash, groceries or Safeway gift cards to the “Alternative Food Bank” project at the end of October. Numerous grocery-filled bags plus \$1800 in gift cards were provided for food-insecure immigrant families, who are vulnerable and wary of using government-funded food banks and resource centers.

Congregation Beth Shalom generously served as the collection site for our donations.

Our Immigrant Justice Action Team will be collecting your donations again in January or February, 2020. Watch bulletins in early 2020 for more information.

Interested in US-Mexico Border Crossing?

~ Cassie Emanuel

Are you interested in a 3-4 day mission trip plus the Border Issues Fair?

Common Ground on the Border and *Border Issues Fair* is a three-day event, featuring classes in art, music and a variety of lectures. The Borderlands is the perfect place to explore the arts, touch the culture, and have deeper conversations about the complicated issues that collide there.

For more information, contact:

- ◆ Common Ground on the Hill at www.commongroundonthehill.org/cgotb_home.html
- ◆ The Good Shepherd UCC at thegoodshepherducc.org/

Questions? email me: cassieemanuel12@gmail.com.

Work with Habitat for Humanity

Feb 22—Mar 2, 2020 in Guatemala

Plymouth Church is sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity team to the highlands of Guatemala, in Panajachel, on Lake Atitlan. The work is 5 days of helping build latrines or wood stoves to improve the health conditions of Mayan families.

- ◆ Kathie Vitz is our church point-person
kbvitz@yahoo.com

Contact Ruth Williamson, 206-313-5931, ruthewill@gmail.com, or Greg Anacker, 206-542-0224, benanacker.gl@frontier.com, to talk about joining the team!

Offering of Gifts: Sunday December 8, 2019

It's time for our annual Offering of Gifts! Ten local agencies have been selected to receive Christmas gifts from our congregation. Below, you will find information about the agencies, their work, and their wish lists. You are invited to choose one or more of the agencies, shop joyfully (gifts should be new), and help brighten the holiday season for someone in need! On Sunday, December 8, bring your gift(s) into the worship service with you. During the time of offering, gifts will be brought forward and placed at the base of the communion table.

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Please be sure that your gift is clearly labeled with the agency name and note that many of our agencies prefer unwrapped gifts. Clear labeling helps things to flow smoothly when gifts are being sorted following the service, and will ensure that your gift gets where you want it to go. Include applicable details such as age or clothing size. Please see each agency's description for specific labeling instructions.

ARION COURT, a property of LIHI, is a single-room-occupancy apartment building in South Lake Union for homeless men, most of whom are U.S. veterans. **Some gift suggestions include:** clothing items for adult men (coats, jackets, sweatshirts, pants, flannel button shirts, T-shirts, sweaters, and pajamas – sizes M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, and 4XL), radios/CD players, Walkmans, alarm clocks, small appliances (toasters, crock pots, coffee makers, coffee grinders, etc.), and cookware. Gift cards to places like Target, Fred Meyer, grocery stores, etc. are very popular with clients. Unwrapped gifts are preferred. Please label gift with agency name.

CHILD LEARNING AND CARE CENTER AT UCUC provides nurturing care in a multi-cultural environment to the children of working parents. **The center would be pleased to have** natural and cultural fabrics/cushions, natural baskets, and new or gently used books (especially about diversity, science and nature). There is a “wish list” for CLCC on amazon.com with additional ideas. Please label gifts.

COMPASS HOUSING ALLIANCE provides essential services for those who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability in the Puget Sound area. With 20+ locations spanning emergency shelter to permanent affordable housing, Compass serves well over a thousand individuals each day. **Gift suggestions include:** New XL-5XL sweatshirts and sweatpants, M-3XL sports bras, underwear for men and women sizes M -5XL, and \$5-10 gift cards to Fred Meyer, Subway, McDonalds & Starbucks. Solid, dark or neutral colors preferred for all items. Unwrapped gifts preferred. If wrapped, please label gift.

FRIENDS OF YOUTH has given over 67 years of service to youth and families in our community. In 2018, Friends of Youth positively impacted over 6,500 youth and families, operating facilities and providing services across the Puget Sound region for foster youth, refugee youth, homeless youth and young families. **Gift suggestions include:** warm clothing, underwear, and coats for the winter (adult sizes L, XL, 1x 2x); toys, books, and games for children; backpacks, sleeping bags, and tents for homeless youth; household items for a transitional living unit such as cookware, dishes, and pillows and bedding sets for twin, queen, or cribs; diapers, bottles, and clothing for babies and toddlers; art supplies, headphones, make up, bus tickets, movie tickets, and gift cards to places like Fred Meyer, Walmart, and Target. Unwrapped gifts are preferred. Please label gift with agency name.

MARY'S PLACE believes that no one's child should sleep outside. They provide safe, inclusive shelter and services for women, children and families on their journey out of homelessness. The women's day center and eight overnight shelters in King County keep struggling families together and provide connections to resources for housing and employment. **Gift suggestions include:** cosmetics, warm coats, gloves, hats, African American hair care products, gift cards to grocery stores, and/or financial donations. Gifts do not need to be wrapped, but must be clearly labeled with the agency name.



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

helps people in 40+ countries whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover, and gain control of their future. Since 1976, the IRC in Seattle has helped thousands of refugees, immigrants, and survivors of human trafficking in Washington. Some people served by the IRC report they are unable to supply enough food for their families, especially at times of major transition or crisis, such as moving, job loss or job changes, health emergencies, and other major life events. The IRC's in-office emergency food pantry will help relieve stress and provide food essentials to help refugee and immigrant families get through tough times.

*** Please follow these guidelines for food donations:** no glass or canned food; expiration dates must be at least one month out; non-perishable foods and unopened/unused containers only.

Item	Variety	Quantity
Lentils	Red, green, yellow, split pea, etc	1-5lb bags
Rice	Brown or white	1-5lb bags
Dried pasta	Bagged or boxed, all types	
Cooking oil	Canola, safflower, sesame, etc	No larger than 1gal
Olive oil		No larger than 1gal
Rolled oats		1-5lb bags/ containers
Sugar	White or unrefined evaporated cane juice	No larger than 5lbs
coffee	Ground or beans	
Tea	Green, black, herbal; bags or loose-leaf	
salt		

SOLID GROUND

runs a Family Shelter which provides temporary housing for families in crisis. **Gift suggestions include:** diapers, baby wipes, flat sheets for full/double beds, blankets, pots and pans, and alarm clocks. Please label gift. Unwrapped gifts preferred.

TEEN FEED

is an agency that serves homeless youth and young adults ages 13-25. The Teen Feed program provides warm meals to youth every night of the week and strives to create a safe and nurturing environment for youth to speak with volunteers trained in advocacy and referrals. Case management and outreach services are also available to help youth complete goals such as housing, ID and employment. **Teen Feed especially welcomes** gift cards (max. value of \$40) to music stores, bookstores, and grocery stores (purchase card that cannot be used for alcohol or cigarettes). Other ideas: pre-loaded ORCA cards, pre-paid phone cards, sleeping bags, L and XL hooded sweatshirts, hand warmers, backpacks, travel alarm clocks, flashlights, batteries (especially AA and AAA), waterproof outdoor boots (size 11-13), wool socks (no cotton or synthetic), medium and large underwear and boxers, gloves, stocking caps/beanies, scarves, and tarps. For clothing, darker colors are preferred. A full wish list can be found at www.teenfeed.org. Please label gift.

TIERRA NUEVA

is a multi-faceted ministry in Skagit County which is collecting gifts for children who have a parent who will be in jail over the holidays. Tierra Nueva will not only provide much needed presents that help relieve the financial burden on these families, but will also personally drop off the gifts so they can support and pray with the families. **For children in primary and intermediate grades:** soccer balls, basketballs, school supplies, and art supplies tend to be the biggest “hits.” **Other gift suggestions include:** warm coats; mittens; gloves; hats and scarves; toys (none that suggest a violent theme, please); barrettes and hair ribbons; books (Spanish-English if possible); games; and jewelry; and wrapping paper to wrap the gifts. Tierra Nueva prefers that gifts not be wrapped. Please label clearly with the agency name.

TRETTIN DROP-IN PRESCHOOL

is described by many parents as a “lifesaver”. Between 8am and 4pm each day, a diverse population of children “drop in” to Trettin, which is housed in our church. **This activity-filled preschool would be pleased to have:** natural and cultural fabrics/cushions, natural baskets, and new or gently used books (especially about diversity, science and nature). Please label gifts.

Spiritual Practice:

The Inner Journey of Advent

~ Worship Team

To prepare for this season we created art as a community. You were invited to bring photos, drawings, names or quotes to place on a large image of Mary and Elizabeth that are a part of our Advent liturgical art.

During this season, we will be invited to continue naming the women in our lives, the ways their gifts have shaped us, and claiming those gifts for ourselves. One way to experience this is to set aside a specific centering time each week to light an Advent candle. You can do this as an individual or a family.

Each week in the bulletin and the weekly email, we will supply a brief devotional for this centering time. It will include a few words of reflection, a time of naming, and a prayer of gratitude. You might also simply do this on your own, using the following outline.

- ◆ The week of December 1: Growing
- ◆ The Week of December 8: Connecting
- ◆ The Week of December 15: Imagining
- ◆ The Week of December 22: Birthing

Office news

Vicki Farmer as Interim Lay Ministries and Communications Coordinator

~ David Anderson, Church Administrator

I'm delighted to let you know that Vicki Farmer has agreed to be Interim Lay Ministries and Communications Coordinator for the months ahead. Vicki has had this role earlier, before Erin Lovejoy-Guron. She has also filled in for other church office positions and special projects over the years. She brings a good awareness of the position, great familiarity with UCUC and our operation, and an understanding of the database and procedures. She will bring some important stability and institutional awareness for the months ahead, well into 2020.

Vicki will start with some part-time hours, overlapping with Erin, to get up to speed on the changes we've made since her last stint. She'll be up and running by the time Erin finishes her time with us on Nov 22.

Please join me in saying thank you and welcome to Vicki!

Adopt a Christmas Family

Over the years, this congregation has supported thousands of children and families at Christmas time. Our families are referred to us through the Compass Housing Alliance, Bethany United Church of Christ, and the Lake City Holiday Project and they are so appreciative of our partnership to benefit their families in need.

Help make a child's Christmas special by participating in the Christmas Family Project where families and groups of friends at our church are matched with families in need.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Return form to the church office
(4515 16th Ave. NE; 98105) or bring to
the narthex table by December 1.

Sign up in the narthex to adopt a family through Ccc.1. Families are varying sizes, so everyone can participate. If you are part of a small group you might want to share a family.

We will provide information about your family and give suggestions for gifts. **Gifts need to be brought to the church on Dec.8** or make alternate arrangements.

If you'd like to get an early start on your shopping or have questions, please contact Sarah Puckett: 206-367-2155, (206-718-6792) or sarahmpuckett@gmail.com.

I can help in the following way:

_____ I'd like a family of about _____ people.

_____ I've enclosed \$_____ for those
needing help during the holidays.

_____ I will be a stand-in shopper/wrapper using
Christmas Family Funds.

_____ I would like to be a committee member.
(This is a fun, short-term project to be involved with.)

_____ I can make deliveries on December 8.
(Drivers with vans or cars with considerable
room are needed to transport gifts to
distribution points).

Worship and Preaching Calendar—Sunday worship service—10 am

The stories of Advent and Christmas are not just about the birth of Jesus — they are woven through with the stories of women: Mary in her youth; Elizabeth in her older years; the prophet Anna living long enough to witness God's gift of Wisdom in her manifestation.

In fact, Advent is what happens to everyone's story when God steps into our world. This Advent we listen to the stories of the women, and grow in our understandings of the ways women and Wisdom have shaped our lives and our world. We will name the power and insight we can claim for our own lives when God shows up, and we recognize the Christ, born anew in us.

December 1, 2019

The Women. Mary the Child: Growing

Preaching: Catherine Foote

Scripture: Luke 1:26-30

December 8, 2019

The Women: Elizabeth: Connecting

Preaching: Todd Smiedendorf

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45

December 15, 2019

The Women: The Innkeeper's Daughter: Imagining

Preaching: Amy Roon

Scripture: Luke 2:7b

December 22, 2019

The Women: Mary the Mother: Birthing

Preaching: Todd Smiedendorf

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

7:00, The Longest Night Service

Preaching: Todd Smiedendorf

December 24, 2019

5:00, Catherine Foote preaching

8:00, Amy Roon preaching

11:00, Amy Roon preaching

December 29, 2019

The Women: Sophia Wisdom: Creating

Preaching: Catherine Foote

Scripture: Proverbs 8:22-35, selected vss; John 1:1-5