

CHURCH AND HOME

UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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Rev. Loren McGrail called as Bridge Minister of Care and Outreach



With the recommendation of the Bridge Search Committee, the UCUC Church Council has approved a call to Rev. Loren McGrail to serve as our Bridge Minister of Care and Outreach in 2022. Her official start date is January 10, and she'll be relocating to Seattle

(from New York State) in January.

She was ordained to a call as a hospital chaplain. In addition to being a Jonathan Edwards scholar, she graduated from Andover Newton Theological School with two certificates from the Boston Theological Center, in World Mission and Faith, and in Health and Spirituality. Her call is both pastoral and prophetic. She was a mission co-worker with Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Christian Disciples of Christ for five years serving in Israel/Palestine with the YWCA of Palestine and as an ecumenical associate with the Church of Scotland at St. Andrews.

Rev. McGrail initially felt called to palliative and hospice care and clinical pastoral education (CPE). Her call expanded and her passion today includes working for justice and peace. Pastor Loren is currently serving as an interim pastor in upstate NY (since 2019) and led the church there as a solo pastor through Covid-times.

Ed Coleman, Bridge Minister Search Committee chair, introduced Rev. McGrail to the Council and shared that she was the recommendation of the committee.

Pastor Loren shares the following thoughts: "My min-

istry path has been a labyrinth walk full of twists and turns rather than a straight or narrow line. September 11, 2001 was my first day of seminary. I had a clear call: get ordained and become a professional chaplain so I could be a healing presence. That was the deal, but September 11 changed everything for everyone, including me. I realized that my call to be a healer was too narrow. The repair and mending of the world needed more from me; it needed my activist and later, prophetic, and creative self."

During her discussions with Church Council members, Rev. McGrail was asked why she was interested in becoming the bridge minister here. "Your church has many gifts to offer," she said. "It is a larger church, working in partnership, and it is exciting to join this partnership. I have been wanting to find a church that is clearly progressive, and I have a soulful need to be working with other clergy."

Reflecting on her aspirations for her time with us, she said, "I believe I may have a role in helping the congregation to process grief and loss. The challenges of Covid have been difficult. Accustomed to meaningful in-person worship at the center of social life, we have been forced to reckon with the question of, 'If we can't gather in person, who are we then? What holds us together?' These are questions we will continue to ponder together."

If you would like to learn more about Pastor Loren before her arrival, [this YouTube interview](#) provides additional information and context.

Members of the Bridge Search Committee included Terry Moore, Margaret Stine, Carol Bryant, Christina Purdy, Joyce Jackson and Ed Coleman (chair).

Employee News

Benjamin Rogers named permanent Music Director



After being recommended by the Music Director Search Committee and affirmed by the Worship and Music Committee, Benjamin Rogers was approved as permanent Music Director for University UCC by the Church

Council at a special Council meeting on December 5.

A search committee to identify and recommend a candidate for the position of UCUC Music Director was formed in November. The committee was made up of: Betty Spieth-Croll (Worship and Music), Rose Morrison (Choir), Joyce Jackson (Personnel), Pastor Steve Jerbi (Music Director supervisor), and John Worthington (Worship and Music). The team agreed to consider Interim Music Director Benjamin Rogers before expanding the search. Benjamin has served as Interim Music Director since September 2020.

The Search Committee talked with each of the 2020 Interim Music Director Search Committee members and sent an online survey to choir members about their experience in the music program since autumn 2020. Thirty choir members responded. They talked

with Benjamin's supervisor, Pastor Steve, and with members of the tech team that the Music Director works with to create virtual music. And they held an hour-long conversation with Benjamin to hear about his past 15 months at UCUC and his vision for our music program under his leadership as Music Director. According to committee chair Betty Spieth-Croll, "From the input we gathered, it is clear Benjamin is well-liked, highly capable and skilled in both music and technology, deeply spiritual and attached to our faith community, and is committed to continuing the vision of an inclusive UCUC music program."

In announcing Benjamin's hiring into the permanent position, Pastor Steve Jerbi affirmed the Council's decision, "We are moving into a pivotal time for the life of our congregation and our music ministry is essential to shaping our life together. I feel blessed that Benjamin will be directing us as we navigate choir returning, new formats for online worship, the eventual return to congregational singing and all the hills and valleys we'll cross along the way. His vision, affirmed by the Worship and Music committee, is to create an inclusive space for people to participate in making beautiful music in service to God.

Benjamin himself is excited to move into this role on a permanent basis: "Besides the fact that this church has been incredibly welcoming and affirming of me, I am inspired by the commitment to social justice and I want to be a part of those efforts. Also, I look forward to helping congregation members deepen their worship through music."

Kiran Frank joins University UCC office staff

In mid-December, Kiran Frank began work as Office Assistant and Communications Coordinator.

Kiran was involved with the University UCC community as an undergrad at the University of Washington. They have most recently been living in Vancouver, BC, and have been involved with disability justice organizing. Kiran returned to the US this fall, with new pronouns (they/them) and a slightly different name. Kiran says, "I look forward to reconnecting with the University UCC community and supporting the great work you do." Director of Finance and Administration Kyna Shilling, notes, "We're excited to welcome them to the team."



News and Events

Women's Retreat – *Sharing our Caring*

Jan. 20 - 23, 2022, at Pilgrim Firs Camp

Greetings to all of you beautiful women. After so many months of uncertainty, worry, isolation, and being challenged by losses and new ways of being, we are eager to gather again in community and to support one another and reflect on the ways we have reinvented ourselves and experienced this dismantling time. To come together to share and care for ourselves and for one another.

As life ramps up again and we re-enter our lives more fully, what do we want to keep and what do we want to let go of? We were forced to slow down when we were in quarantine and maybe we don't want to necessarily rush back into everything as it was before. Did we learn anything interesting and unexpected?

Our 2022 Women's Retreat will be the weekend of January 20-23 at Pilgrim Firs Camp. As in the past, there will be a silent retreat beginning at noon on Thursday Jan. 20 with the weekend portion beginning at 4:00 pm on Jan. 21. We will depart following worship on Sunday morning, Jan. 23.

Participation is open to fully vaccinated individuals. Due to Pilgrim Firs' protocols, we are asked to limit the number of attendees to fifty participants. More

cabins will be utilized to keep sleeping areas lower in population. Masks will be required indoors except while eating and we will also have fewer people at tables during meals and encourage appropriate distancing during activities. For added safety, we are considering asking participants to get tested before the retreat.

We plan to spend this time reacquainting ourselves through small group interaction, creative exchange, and games—*Caring for Each Other by Sharing with Each Other*. To help us achieve our goal, we encourage you to consider sharing an activity. Perhaps you have an art or craft that others would enjoy trying. Maybe you have a short story that needs to be told. Have you learned something new that you would like others to know about? Or perhaps you would enjoy walking the lake trail with others, observing what nature shares with us.

If you are willing to lead others in an event like this, let us know right away. We are creating a schedule and now is the time to toss your hat in!

Watch for information about registration in the weekly church emails, the Sunday bulletin and the announcements during online worship.

Notice of deaths

Bill Bailey

Born: October 20, 1939 ,

Died: December 10, 2021

Bill died peacefully surrounded in love by his family. His gentle spirit will be missed at UCUC. Bill and Laura joined UCUC in 2012. They both served on a Capital Campaign and Bill participated in BeFriender Ministry and was on the Leadership Parish Relations Committee (LPRC). Always quick with wisdom, conversation, and being aware of others.

Please hold Laura and their children Carla, Mark, and Paul and families in your prayers.

A memorial service is being planned for a later date.

Maurine (Mo) Swanson

Born: November 24, 1934

Died: December 3, 2021

Mo died peacefully in her sleep. She joined UCUC in 2007 and has been a beloved member ever since. Mo participated in the Bible Study group, helped out with Superfluity, was an Office Volunteer, and a person who welcomed you into conversation and friendship.

Please hold her sister Leeann, brother-in-law Fred, and dear friends Mary and Terry Paananen in your prayers.

A memorial service was held at Horizon House on December 11th. Remembrances can be sent to University UC

News and Events

Covid-19 Update

Conference Minister Rev. Mike Denton recently shared a Covid-19 update with all our local UCC churches in the Pacific Northwest Conference. He writes, “We’re in a strange and dangerous time of the pandemic. In one way, we have more mitigation strategies than we’ve ever had. Between vaccine, treatment, and prevention strategies, we have the opportunity to knock back Covid significantly. However, because of a combination of weaponized theology and global inequities, Covid continues to gallop around the planet.”

With gratitude for the brilliant scientists in South Africa, we have a lot of warning about the latest variant of concern, omicron. But, with early detection comes a lot of uncertainty as each week new data and new analysis unfolds.

Rev. Denton writes “The good news that’s been most frequently reported is that Omicron, so far, seems to bring on more mild symptoms than previous versions of Covid for most people. So although it will still be deadly for many, the chance of dying from Omicron seems to be lower than many of the other variants.” However, he also shares a word of caution, “...although the symptoms may be less severe, Omicron is significantly more contagious and spreads much easier than previous variants.”

The UCUCS Covid-19 Action Team will be meeting in early January to review the latest data for King County and to prayerfully discuss our church’s Covid-19 guide-

lines. In the meantime, we encourage everyone eligible to get vaccinated and boosted. Get tested regularly. Stay home if you’re feeling sick. Practice good hand hygiene—it’s cold and flu season as well as being a pandemic. Make sure your cloth mask is well-fitting and multilayered. Consider upgrading to a mask with a removable filter, or an N-95 or equivalent mask. If possible, try to improve the ventilation and filtration of your indoor spaces. Pay attention to distancing. Practice consent and ask before entering others’ personal space. Talk to those around you about your comfort level and their comfort level. In this way, we extend grace and compassion to each other in this complicated time.

Covid-19 Q&A with Dr. Wes Van Voorhis

Sunday January 9, 1:00 pm on Zoom

Do you have questions about the new variant? Not sure what sources of information are most reliable? Wondering about what precautions you should take? UCUCS Member Dr. Wes Van Voorhis is the Director of the UW’s Infections Disease Center, and he will be offering a forum and Q&A session about Covid-19.

Check the weekly emails for the Zoom link.

Men’s Supper Group

January 3, 6:15 pm

The monthly meeting of the Men’s Ministry has returned to the Turner Lounge every first Tuesday of the month. Please join us when you can! We will be following the latest building protocols, so please plan to wear a mask inside the building, except when eating.

AWE (All Women Extraordinary)

January 24, 6:00 pm

All women are invited to Zoom in for an informal hour of chatting and virtual dining. Every fourth Monday 6:00 - 7:00 pm. We plan to continue using Zoom, as we have expanded our group beyond the Seattle area. Please join us! Questions or mailing list requests, contact Christina Purdy pyrdina@yahoo.com or 206-697-5376.

Visit the Scheyer Library!

Tired of the same old books at home? Waiting for a book from the public library? Looking to expand your literacy about racial justice? Or do you just love to browse books and magazines?

Stop by the Scheyer Library before or after church on Sundays. Explore our collections of books for children through adults, as well as magazines like YES! and Sojourners. In addition to an extensive non-fiction collection, we also have a decent fiction collection, where a higher than usual percentage of the novels are good ones! Although nearly all books and magazines can be checked out, we also have the memory book Virginia Felton compiled for Pastor Catherine for library use only. Edith and I hope to see you in the library in 2022!

—Jessie McAbee

Love and Justice Ministry

Racial Justice beyond our doors: partnering with the Poor People's Campaign

If there's one thing we at UCUC are good at it is learning and thinking. And on the subject of Racial Justice and Anti-racism we have done a lot of that. Since we accepted that racial justice is a spiritual imperative we have had study groups work on the UCC curriculum on White Privilege and on a couple of pretty challenging books, along with forums, workshops and talks on relevant topics. Some of us have undertaken to become Peace Circle leaders with a specific aim of leading such discussions. With an on-going racial justice book group and lots of input from Reverend Yolanda, UCUC is still thinking and discussing.

On the other hand, there comes a point when just sitting and thinking becomes downright self-indulgent unless we reach beyond our walls and do something with what we are learning. Our work with Tent City, Mary's Place, and the Northwest Community Bail Fund demonstrates that we have not been entirely self-focused. However, we need to do more. The Racial Justice Activists began searching a year or two ago for an organization or action where we could make a genuine and desired contribution. This proved to be unexpectedly difficult, because if there's one thing our learnings had taught us, it's that the work that needs and deserves to be supported has BIPOC leadership and the last thing they need is for a white-dominated group to turn up with even a faint whiff of "Let us help you. We can fix things," even when that is not at all our intention.

As it turns out, there is at least one solution. The Poor People's Campaign A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC) is solidly committed to being led by marginalized people of all stripes, and the Washington chapter responded to our overtures with warmth, grace, and

enthusiasm. The movement originated with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and spent some time in quiet mode after his death until the Reverends William Barber and Liz Theoharis took up the torch a few years ago. Now they are building momentum towards a massive march in DC on June 22, 2022, modeled on the 1963 event at which MLK made his "I Have a Dream" speech. This one is specifically in support of a Third Reconstruction — the first two being the post-Civil-War Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement. Their eggs aren't all in that basket, though. Senator Manchin has been getting an earful from the West Virginia chapter with a lot of support from members all around the country.

The PPC can use our help on many fronts — advocacy through phoning and letter-writing, turning up at actions (currently mostly virtually, but surely, eventually in person), reaching out to people who might be interested, and more. You can find out more — lots more! — at the local website (www.washingtonppc.org) or the national one (www.poorpeoplescampaign.org). And we are working on ways to keep UCUC activists posted about their needs and possibilities. The format is as yet undecided, but keep an eye on the website and the weekly Newsletter!

One of the features of the PPC that particularly draws me in is that they take their music very seriously. They have a whole section on Theomusicology, and a lot of rousing songs. One of my favorites is the first one I learned:

Somebody's hurting my sister [brother, planet, ...]
and it's gone on much too long,
Yes, it's gone on much too long, Yes, it's gone on
much too long,
Somebody's hurting my sister and it's gone on much
too long,
And I WON'T BE SILENT ANY MORE!!
There's our mission, right there!

- Ginger Warfield

Church Building updates

- **Staff holidays:** New Years, January 3
MLK Day, January 17
- **Church office hours:**
Tuesdays & Fridays, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm,
Sundays 9:00 - 10:00 am, and 11:00 am - noon.

- The office staff and program staff continue to work mostly from home.
- To access the building at other times, please contact the custodian on duty at 206-612-2144.
- A pastor is always available for **pastoral emergencies**. Please call or text 206-445-3378, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Love and Justice Ministry

United Churches Emergency Fund: Justice close to home

We begin a more hopeful year by highlighting one of our most helpful and long-lasting outreach efforts, **The United Churches Emergency Fund**. We are encouraged these days by the myriad folks working to respond to the homeless among us. To those many churches and other religious organizations, non-profits, and a host of motivated individuals, we say, “Well Done.” UCUEC’s primary efforts have centered on providing a place for tent cities and monetary assistance and office space for UCEF.

This ministry began in the U District when a handful of congregations started working on common concerns. For 35 years we have been giving small gifts that assist in the payment of rent and utility bills and thus keep people housed. As UCEF counselors listen to personal stories, it could not be clearer that its work is a Godsend to so many who are not, or at least not yet, statistics.

UCEF’s role is crystal clear: to work on **preventing homelessness in the first place**. With a \$150-\$200 gift to UCEF we can help a person keep his or her housing for another month or more, and to find the space during that time to line up a new job or other

additional resources to stay housed. Without such assistance, that same person may become one of the thousands who are homeless. When a person loses their housing, it delivers a heavy personal and family blow, even to the point of putting that person’s life in danger. It also costs society \$30,000 a year in public funds for every person who becomes homeless. So...you do the math: a \$150-\$200 gift to a person or family vs. a \$30,000 social cost...including the damage done to the person and family. This is, indeed, a personal and social tragedy we are facing.

UCEF observes its 35th year by simply carrying on, person by person, to offer a listening ear, the time and space to hear the story – to offer our neighbors in crisis the chance to experience a warm and accepting human being sitting across from them -- who then can help with the right referrals, with bus tickets to get to another spot, with snack packs and hygiene kits, and funds to keep the roof they have. Last year UCEF counted around 350 visits – all remote – representing over 500 people, including 80 children. During the pandemic, requests for assistance have risen nearly 50%.

Continued next page

Racial Justice/Indigenous Justice

Land Acknowledgement

We gather as guests of the Duwamish people on their traditional land that touches the shared waters of other Coast Salish tribes. We understand that their identity and richness of culture are deeply connected with the mountains, valleys, waterways and shorelines that surround us all. We commit to learning about the Duwamish, other indigenous cultures, and the historical and ongoing oppression of indigenous peoples. We strive to nurture our relationship with indigenous peoples, especially our neighbors, by joining their efforts to work for social justice and to care for this land.

A land acknowledgement is a gesture of respect and awareness of the land and its history. It becomes meaningful when coupled with informed action that builds relationships. To continue on the path toward relationship, we will be reading the above acknowledgment of the land our church occupies during the worship service each Sunday. We invite the Church Council and other committees to read this statement at the beginning of their meetings as well. Each month, we will offer steps you can take to further your commitment to this acknowledgement.

Action Steps for the month of January

1. Read the 12/6/2021 Seattle Times article by Linda Mapes on the Skagit Dams and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian tribe. [Go to article.](#)
2. Read the 12/6/2021 Seattle Times “Opinion: Honor Chief Seattle by building fish passage through Skagit River dams” by Nino Multos, chair of Sauk-Suiattle Indian tribe & Jack Fiander, legal counsel to the tribe. [Go to article.](#)

Love and Justice Ministry

Interested in helping

Afghan Refugees? Training offered

The Love and Justice Committee is partnering with World Relief Seattle (WRS) to support Afghan refugees in Seattle. Through their program of Good Neighbor Teams (GNT), they help train a support group of people in a local church to respond to the call of God to show love to foreigners and refugees.

Good Neighbor Team volunteers work directly with WRS staff to help welcome newcomers into the community by assisting with housing, language skills, employment, community connection, and other needs. Throughout this intense and disorienting time of resettlement for refugees and asylees, a GNT provides practical care, a compassionate network of friends, and empowering support of a family's goals and story.

World Relief Seattle divides the work of Good Neighbor Teams into three parts.

Preparation—Good Neighbor Team involvement is a high-responsibility partnership between the local church and World Relief Seattle. To prepare church members for such a commitment, it is important that church leaders are committed to the biblical teaching of welcoming and supporting refugees.

Training—GNT volunteers receive intensive training. An eight-session training and book study is provided, led by WRS staff and the GNT lead volunteer. Volunteers must also complete an application, background check, and other on-boarding steps.

Participation—Once trained, the GNT waits to be matched with a refugee or asylee family. With the support of WRS staff, the GNT works with the family on their resettlement needs for six months, including finding housing, transportation, appointments, job searches,

registering for school, and so much more. This community support and care can completely change a family's experience in the US, while also transforming the church as members learn from and walk alongside a new family.

Interested? Attend an information meeting

On Sunday, January 9, from 3:00-4:15 pm, World Relief Seattle's Good Neighbor Team leadership staff will provide an orientation for individuals interested in understanding how our church could participate as one of the networks of Good Neighbor Teams being formed across Puget Sound.

In addition to providing information, there will be plenty of time for participants' questions. You are welcome and encouraged to attend, whether or not you think you might want to serve on a Good Neighbor Team. Watch the weekly church emails for the Zoom information for this meeting. Or contact Liz Gilbert directly at Lizbeth.gilbert@gmail.com or 206-465-3237.

Become an organizer for climate justice

The Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary is offering a hybrid course called **Community Organizing for Climate Justice as Faith Active in Love**.

This web-based three-part training in the arts of faith-rooted community organizing for climate justice will equip participants with skills, knowledge, spiritual grounding, and a community of support for organizing to address the climate crisis in ways that build racial and economic equity. A three-day training session is followed by a mentored 12-week practice phase and a second training session of two days. The mentored section includes regular (weekly or bi-weekly) cohort gatherings for support and building a network of on-going support. Our own Rev. Steve Jerbi is a teacher!

To apply for this inaugural, empowering program, complete the [Application form \(click here\)](#).

Contact Kelly Marciales with questions at kmarciales@plts.edu. The formal deadline for application has passed, but there are still a few openings available for University UCC members. If you are interested, apply now! The initial in-person session is in the first week of February and the program runs through May.

(UCEF, continued from previous page)

We know our efforts can feel like a drop in the bucket of what's needed. We would like to do more, we would like to make our gifts more generous, and we would like to serve more zip codes than the four we have now. But we can promise you that whatever gift you give to UCEF will be put to very good use. The stories of thousands of people helped since 1986 are testimonies to what can be achieved when we work together.

Grief, loss and transition: *Here are some perspectives to guide us, from pastors and friends...*

A Reflection on 1 Kings 19:11-13

God said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of YHWH, for YHWH is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountain apart and shattered the rocks by YHWH's power—but YHWH was not in the whirlwind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but YHWH was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire—but YHWH was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper." *The Inclusive Bible*

Christian R&B artist Tauren Wells sings one of my favorite songs - [Hills and Valleys](#). It is such a reflection of my life and spirituality. Sometimes the highs are really high and lows are really, really low. Hills and valleys.

My family and I have been in a spiral of transition since we left Milwaukee in 2017. Trying to get rooted in Los Angeles just to find the ground shifting below us. A short-term bridge call in Hawai'i extending into a year. Jobs and schools and a pandemic and then relocating to Seattle felt like constant transition. These big moments are metaphorical—a whirlwind, an earthquake, a fire. Maybe you're feeling like you're being tossed too and fro in a whirlwind. Or the ground is shaking beneath you, shaking your faith to the core. What I love about this encounter between Elijah and God is that the encounter with the divine isn't massive. It isn't a phenomena. It is the soft presence of a gentle whisper.

When I'm looking for a sign from God, I want clouds to open, a voice to call out, a bush to burn. When I'm shouting at God or silent in grief I'd love the ground to shake so I know God is listening. Usually I get a whisper. A small gesture. A word of encouragement. A bit of scripture. A few notes in a song. The small, the ordinary - this is where the presence of God passes me by. Whatever season you are in, whether on a mountaintop or a valley, I pray for a moment of stillness to listen for the whisper.

~Pastor Steve Jerbi



The emotional course of grief— healing in motion

Years ago Judith Viorst wrote a book called *Necessary Losses*. In it she helps the reader to understand that all of life contains losses, some more challenging than others. Perhaps the most difficult losses are losing family members and friends through retirement, moving, and death. Some losses we anticipate and can prepare for. Others, such as a sudden death, hit us very hard, leaving us filled with often inconsolable grief.

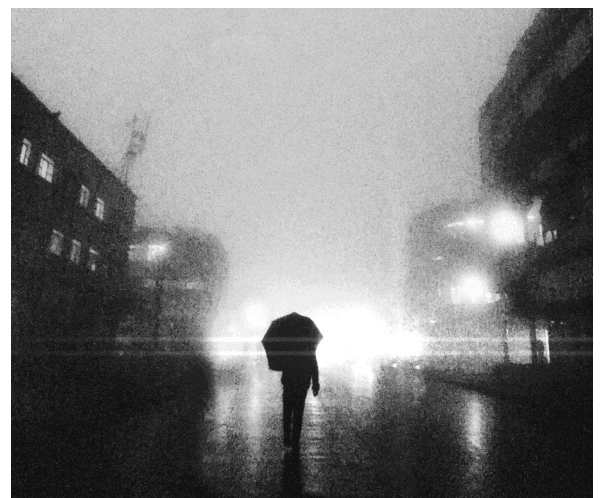
"Whether through the loss of a loved one, a way of life, or a cherished community, grief is the reaction to being torn from what you love."

Although it seems counterintuitive, the most effective way to grieve is to find the courage to step into the process rather than avoiding it. **"Grief plays an essential role in our coming undone from previous attachments. It is the necessary current we need to carry us into our next becoming. Without it, we may remain stuck in that area of our life, which can limit the whole spectrum of our feeling alive."**

By committing to grieving we can be freed up to love. By committing to sorrow we can also feel joy. There is an illusion that grief goes away, when it actually is with us as a constant companion that we need to befriend. One poet likens grief to a large pool inside us that we can dip into any time we need to. The tears that come quickly at memories of a loved one come from that pool. As those tears stream down your cheeks, let them be a baptism of love. (Quotes are from

Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home by
Toko-pa Turner)

~Carol Scott-Kassner



Grief, loss and transition: *Here are some perspectives to guide us, from pastors and friends...*

Caring in times of grief and loss

We have been living through difficult times, and many of us have experienced grief. Some have lost a dearly loved friend or family member. Some have lost a job or opportunity or something else that held great meaning. As a community, we have lost a beloved pastor. It can help to pay attention to physical, emotional, and spiritual needs that often accompany us as we grieve.

Physical needs may include adequate sleep, eating well, and exercise. To help others, consider offering to bring a meal, accompany on a walk out in nature, or help with childcare to allow time for rest. To care for yourself, reach out for support from trusted friends, family, and caregivers and let yourself be nurtured by them.

Emotional needs can be overwhelming, and a compassionate, non-judgmental listener helps create a safe and supportive environment in which one can name and express the many feelings of grief. For some, journaling and artwork can facilitate this process.

After a loss, people may turn to their faith for comfort or find themselves questioning their beliefs. Seeking out folks who can be present to you in your faith and doubts and allow for their open expression is helpful. When alone, sitting with a lighted candle, breathing and repeating a short prayer such as “I am... in God’s hands” may be soothing.

Always, be kind to yourself, reach out to others, and trust in your own unique process of grief.

~Mary Jeanne Phipps

Connecting makes a difference

“I miss Catherine.” “I miss singing hymns together at church.” “I don’t feel comfortable yet going to worship in a live setting.”

It’s been such a painful two years. All of us feel it in some way—and in different ways. Within our church setting we have experienced many forms of loss — no singing together; a beloved pastor of 20 years gone; many changes.

But we are not alone, because **all** of us feel loss and grief. Being together makes a difference. We may not be able to sing in worship, but there is harmony in our togetherness whether in person, on Zoom, or in a telephone call.

Connecting brings warmth, love, and joy into our lives. People will come and go but the community, the Body of Christ remains. Together we can diminish our grief and feel joy as we find our center in a community that loves God and works joyfully for justice. And we lean into a Jesus who says: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.” With hope and faith we move forward – together.

~Gail Crouch

A retired minister’s perspective

In my active ministry I was a settled pastor, a bridge pastor, and a governing body executive. I moved around a lot. I experienced many farewells and new beginnings. I learned that I could honor the folks/church/town I was leaving by having a strong ministry and witness in the new setting. So....if I am anxious about working with a new bridge minister, I can move into that future work with all the skills and grace I have learned from the pastor who has left.....and with gratitude that I have been given those skills and experienced that grace. And I can leave behind some actions that I had learned were harmful and be grateful that I had been so well taught!

I also worried about whether I would be remembered, or whether the person who left ahead of me would be remembered. In **Genesis 8**, in the midst of the flood that God unleashed on creation, there is this simple word: “But God remembered Noah.....” In the Lord’s Supper we say Jesus’ words to the disciples: “Do this, remembering me.....” We are re-remembered by the work of God’s Spirit in our midst. Our life together is the sign of our being remembered, held dear, and encouraged in our on-going journey.

So we can grieve the separation from people whom we love, but we can also celebrate their continuing life with us by the way we do future ministry and by the ways in which we re-member ourselves in Jesus Christ.

~John Worthington

Children, Youth and Families

A word of thanks from Margaret Swanson...

The Children's & Youth Ministry programs have been blessed by some amazing volunteers who have shown up consistently for our young people. We want to thank our amazing staff member, Teacher Holly Hendrickson who is there every week to offer program and care for our littles and elementary kids! Thank you to our amazing Children's Ministry volunteers – Sarah Wallen, Nathan Wallen, Anna Van Pelt, David Ovens, Miranda Meyer, Rosie Meyer, Benjamin Roon, Dennis O'Brien, Barb Carmichael, Sara Kerr, and Jordyn and Sydney Kerr. Thank you to our amazing Youth Ministry volunteer leaders – Cat Gipe Stewart, Brian Gregg, Katrina Fitzpatrick, Trent Siegel, and Mike Zevenbergen.

It is such a gift to have so many dedicated and caring folks to show up for our kids and youth each Sunday to create a safe space to learn, grow, and see God's love in the ways we are with each other. I have seen such beautiful moments at all ages – communion with our littles and elementary students, elementary students helping younger kids learn and grow, the thoughtful sharing and reflecting of our elementary and youth, the questions about faith, God and life, the way we all are able to trust in each other, to connect and play and share and learn and grow. I believe God is at the heart of all of these great connections! And it wouldn't be possible without staff and volunteers who see the importance of faith formation for our children and youth. So thank you leaders! And thank you families for all the ways you show up for each other. You are all such a gift and I am grateful for this community!

-Margaret Swanson, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries Mswanson@ucucc.org

Youth Ministry News

Youth Group continues...

Sundays January 9, 16, 23 & 30: 9am

(No Youth Group on 2)

All youth Grades 6-12 are welcome to attend Youth Group, which is available to attend online and in person (masked).

Middle School Online Game Nights

Wednesdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19 & 26 from 8pm - 9pm

The Van Dyck family continues hosting weekly game nights on Wednesdays. For the month of December, they will take a break December 22 and 29. Come every week or drop in when you can; it's casual. We are looking forward to playing together. Questions? Feel free to reach out, Amanda Van Dyck (Matthew's mom) amanda_vandyck@yahoo.com. Link goes out in the weekly youth ministry email or you can email Amanda for the link.

Our Whole Lives Parent Orientation

Sunday, January 9, 9-10 am at church

Parents/guardians of 7th and 8th graders are invited to gather in the morning to have a quick discussion about whether to run junior high OWL class (Our Whole Lives, Sexuality and our Faith) this winter/spring. If you cannot be there in person, but would like to Zoom in, please let Margaret know.

Junior & Senior Small Group

Sunday, January 9 6:30pm-8pm (in person)

Juniors and Seniors in high school are invited to gather for a time of connection and sharing. We plan to meet in person either at church or at one of the youth's houses. More info to come in the weekly emails.

Children's Ministry News

Sunday Mornings –

Activities & Care for Children

9:45 am – 11:20 am in the church lounge

We had a wonderful fall of outdoor and indoor activities for children. As we look to the winter, we know we will for sure be able to continue to offer programming in the lounge with teachers and volunteer leaders. And, we hope to begin to offer more structured programming on Sunday Mornings that looks more similar to pre-Covid times. If you are interested in helping lead in the children's ministry program, please be in touch with Margaret. Parents and families, make sure to read your weekly children's newsletter emails for more updates.

Children's Ministry news continued on next page

Stewardship and Administration

Update: 2022 pledge campaign

WE ARE grateful to each and every one of you who participated in our 2022 pledge campaign. Many of you increased your pledge this year—thank you. Our church has changed and grown a lot during this pandemic: bringing worship and Christian formation into your homes, moving committees and connection online, living out important traditions in new ways, meeting the increased love & justice needs exacerbated by the pandemic, helping staff work from home, and upgrading our building safety. And now, we are emerging into another time of change as we offer hybrid connections and both online and in-person worship. All this has increased the cost of being church: our 2022 budget is over \$100,000 bigger than 2021.

The budget passed at November's congregational meeting included \$1,285,000 in pledges. We are so close—but we are currently \$45,000 short of that goal. **Today we are asking you to consider a one-time gift to the operating budget, or an increase of your 2022 pledge**, to help us bridge the gap and allow us to live out all the dreams we have for this upcoming year. If we don't meet this goal, the Church Council is charged with identifying additional cuts to the 2022 budget at their January meeting. The budget committee recommendation has identified staff Cost of Living Adjustments as the first thing that will be cut. Given the high cost of living in Seattle, and current rates of inflation, we hope our members can meet this need and preserve the church staff COLA in 2022. Thank you for your prayerful consideration! You can make a gift online, mail a check to the church, or drop off your check on Sundays or during weekly office hours.

Maternity Leave for Kyna Shilling

Our Director of Finance and Operation, Kyna Shilling, is expecting a baby in late January. She plans to use a combination of various types of leave available to her to be away for five to six months for maternity leave. Once Kyna returns from leave, she plans to return three days a week for the first few weeks and scale to full time in June or July.

Wendy Blight has been hired to cover for Kyna in her absence, working 24 hours per week, Tuesday through Thursday. We will let you know an email address for Wendy next month. You can also contact Vicki Farmer (vfarmer@universityucc.org) or Amy Roon (aroon@universityucc.org) with questions that might otherwise go to Kyna.

November Council Meeting Summary

The Church Council met on Nov. 17 via Zoom.

The Council heard a report from Robin Turner, budget chairperson. After a robust discussion, the Council voted to accept the 2022 budget of \$1,548,592 as presented by the budget committee. If pledges do not meet expectations, the Council will consider further action.

The Council approved a motion to renew the church's contract with Gathering Ground and to continue to serve as Gathering Ground's institutional umbrella for fiscal management, nonprofit status, and other support.

The Council approved a motion to renew the contract between UCUC and the UCC Child Care Programs and to update the governance section of the contract, removing the requirement that all Child Care Programs board members be UCUC Church members.

(Children's Ministry News continued from previous page)

Save these dates in February 4 and 5:

Friday the 4th – 6pm – 8pm

Saturday the 5th – 10am – 12pm

At UCUC we used to have a tradition of a 4th and 5th grade sleepover. We're looking at February 4 and 5 to offer not a sleepover, but something fun to do together as a group. Something in the evening on the 4th and something in the morning on the 5th. So, elementary students in 4th and 5th grade are invited to join in the fun! Here is the registration link:

<https://bit.ly/FourthFifth22>

Call To Worship?

Would your child and family like to do the Call To Worship on video? We would LOVE to have your child and family be involved. Email Meighan Pritchard at worship@universityucc.org to let her know you're interested and she'll get you assigned to a date.

For information about any of our Children and Youth programs and events, please contact:

Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

Margaret Swanson

MSwanson@universityucc.org

News and events

PNC-UCC Men's Retreat

Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center

January 28 - 30, 2022

(Silent Retreat option January 27)

Although last year's Zoom retreat was a success, we missed being together. Therefore, this year, we are planning an in-person retreat. The topic is **"Gratitude and Practices to Enhance Gratefulness."** We will be drawing deeply from the book, *Grateful: the Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*, by Diana Butler Bass.

The cost of the retreat is \$140 for Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast with lodging for two nights. That price includes five meals beginning with Friday dinner. There is also a Silent Retreat from Thursday (January 27) after dinner to Friday at 5:00 pm, including dinner. The price for the total retreat, including the Silent Retreat, is \$195. That price includes seven meals beginning with Friday breakfast. Discounted pricing is available upon request to any who need it. Please reach out to Rick Russell, at myrtos@comcast.net.

Registration will begin December 6, 2021.

Go to www.pilgrim-firs.org

The planning committee has been wrestling with how to make the retreat as safe as possible. We will provide guidelines and ask that:

- ♦ All participants be vaccinated and if eligible, have a booster.
- ♦ Everyone is masked except when eating, which may be outside in a covered area with patio heaters.
- ♦ No more than two to a room and, if possible, share a room with someone from your bubble.

Singing is a major part of our retreat, but it is not certain if we'll be able to sing as a group. There will definitely be music, and if nothing else, humming along.

There is always next year, so please don't attend if you are uncomfortable with the risk. We are not able to offer a remote video option.

Of course, our retreat must comply with state, local and conference center guidelines. If the past is any indication, those will change between now and the retreat,

We'll send out periodic updates as the date draws near. We hope for safe travels and look forward to a fun and meaningful retreat.

The Conference Men's Retreat Planning Committee:
C. Torres, D. Jenkins, H. Dankers, J. Gaudino, L. Kiriluk, P. Withington and R. Russell.

The role of building regulations & policy in reaching green building goals

Stables tend to be drafty. More insulation in a Bethlehem stable probably would have made it more comfortable for a baby nestled in a manger. But that was a long time ago. And as we battle today's climate crisis, we must focus not just on the inns, but on commercial buildings in general.

Residential and commercial buildings account for 23.4 percent of Washington's greenhouse gas emissions. And there's growing support for making electric appliances and heat pumps mandatory for new construction. Removing gas-burning equipment and installing a network of heat pumps and more solar panels could/should also be a priority for UCUC members for their house of wor-



ship and for their own homes. As we contemplate New Year's resolutions, perhaps we could strive to have a net-zero church and residences by 2030. Think about it.

Updated last February, Seattle's Energy Code now bans gas furnaces and water heaters in new construction. Gas cooking is still allowed. The ban applies to commercial buildings and multifamily housing at least four stories tall. State law prohibits cities from imposing tighter energy codes on residential buildings less than four stories tall. The Metropolitan King County Council will likely conduct a public hearing in January on revisions to King County's building code. One proposed revision would require all new buildings to be all-electric and fossil fuel-free.

Governor Inslee's 2022 policy and budget proposal
(continued on next page)

Gathering Ground

Gratitude and next steps

Wow! Thank you! At the moment we write, friends have contributed and pledged 93% of the \$10,000 needed to responsibly commit to our sixth year. What a show of community and faith in the evolving future of meaning-making communities! With this encouragement, the leadership team is deep into listening and planning Gathering Ground's next steps.

We are guided by a model called Sociocracy, a process of governance that relies on consensus process, horizontal structure, and interlocking circles of work groups. January and February's gatherings will focus on this listening and structuring with a Spring Equinox event planned for the larger public. Curious? Would you like to weigh in or join a circle? Contact Beth Amsbary, Vanessa Wyant, Molly Ebert, or Faith Gray, or email GatherinGround.Seattle@gmail.com or call/text 206-880-3641. *Here's to widening circles!*



Gathering Ground is an independent program sponsored by UCUECC, where people of all beliefs come together to share and forge meaning. Programs are always free to attend with contributions welcomed.

You will receive a secure Zoom link for each event when you RSVP on our website www.GatherinGround.org, emailing us at

GatherinGround.Seattle@gmail.com or calling 206-880-3641

Would you like to make more meaning in the world? A seed from the tree of wisdom is determined to take root. Please support its growth through Gathering Ground's campaign for 2022 support. Learn more [here](#).

Gathering Ground's home base is on the territories of the Duwamish & Coast Salish Peoples.

(continued from previous page)

includes a 'net-zero ready' requirement for all new construction beginning in 2034. It would require all-electric appliances and equipment, implement electrical panel capacity and wiring for solar panels, to incorporate electric vehicle charging and battery storage, and allow local jurisdictions to lead the way instead of being restricted by state limitations. Inslee's December policy brief says, "Meeting this net-zero goal would establish a clear deadline to discontinue using fossil fuels in new homes and buildings."

Puget Sound Energy is currently testing battery and other storage options. Inslee's proposal would allow PSE and other consumer-owned utilities to fund incentive programs to enable customers to switch from fossil fuel to renewable electric space and water heating. Seattle City Light already has energy efficiency incentive programs for new construction.

Washington's 2019 Clean Building Act allows the Dept of Commerce to develop energy standards for buildings which exceed 50,000 sq. ft. Inslee's proposal would amend the current standards to 20,000-49,999 sq. ft. buildings, including large multifamily structures.

When the state legislature reconvenes for their session from January 10 to March 18, SEM's legislative priorities will include new bills along with a couple of energy

efficiency bills which failed to pass in 2021. One of those bills would require a cost analyses for competitive proposals for the design of public facilities to include at least one all-electric system. Approved in the House in 2021, time ran out in the Senate to pass the bill.

Anti-electrification lobbying and advertising by Puget Sound Energy and other gas-distribution utilities and unions representing their workers thwarted the other bill. It's being broken out into new 2022 bills.

—Lon Dickerson

Racial Justice Book Club: *My Grandmother's Hands*

The Racial Justice Book Club will meet on Tuesday, January 18 at 12:00-1:30 on zoom. We are continuing to work with the book *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem. This book truly leads the reader, one meditation at a time, through a practice evoking your feelings about trauma and then letting your body release them. For more information contact Beth.Bartholomew.208@gmail.com or contact the office at zoom@universityucc.org.

~submitted by Beth Bartholomew

January Special Offering

Join with 350 Seattle!

Help carry light and hope into this New Year by supporting 350 Seattle and their mission for climate justice. They work by organizing people to make deep systemic change: resisting fossil fuels; building momentum for healthy alternatives; and fostering resilient, just, and welcoming communities

Clearly the warming of the earth's atmosphere is having a drastic impact on human and non-human life - with each passing year, we hear and feel the impact of forest fires, more intense storms, floods, drought, and loss of critical habitat and food sources. And yet, much hope

Volunteer with children and youth

Might you be interested in volunteering your time with the children and youth ministry programs? Volunteering can mean working on behind the scenes prep for events, direct leadership with children and youth, administrative support, leading a craft or activity, and more. Please be in touch with Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, Margaret Swanson at mswanson@ucucc.org.

Flowers on a Sunday morning?

Have you noticed the lovely arrangements in our Chancel on Sunday mornings? These flowers are donated by members and friends of UCUC to honor or remember loved ones. If you would like to donate, whether on an annual basis or one time only, please contact Carol Fleagle, our flower coordinator, for details at carolfleagle@msn.com or 206-818-3157.

comes from acting together! The national UCC encourages Greening Congregations such as our own UCUC to affiliate with local chapters like 350 Seattle. **350 Seattle's** work happens in four focus areas for its volunteer-driven working groups:

RESISTANCE : This group focuses on fighting new and existing fossil fuel projects. Current campaigns include standing with indigenous communities and urging US insurers to drop their support for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion near the Salish Sea.

SOLUTIONS: These teams advocate for policy changes to support all communities in reducing their carbon footprint. Current projects include advocating for Green New Deal policies at the state level with 350 WA's civic action team.

ACCOUNTABILITY: These teams are working to hold non-fossil fuel companies accountable for their practices, including investment in large fossil fuel projects by banks and the shipping practices of large retail companies.

MOVEMENT SUPPORT: To support all of the other work, 350 Seattle works to remain both resilient and creative. Examples include monthly "artful activism" art builds, climate grief and empowerment sessions, climate "storytelling", anti-racism work, and volunteer training.

Please give online at www.universityucc.org by clicking on the Give button, or logging into MyUCUC and going to the Give section. Or, send a check to UCUC, noting on the memo line "January Special Offering." Or you may donate directly to [350Seattle](https://www.350seattle.org).

Superfluity, 2022 — April 21-23

Save these dates for 2022 Superfluity: Thursday, April 21 through Saturday, April 23. As we get closer to the sale, we will make decisions about limiting the numbers of people inside, and other safety measures.

We will NOT be taking donations in January. More information about the types of donations we will be accepting will be sent out in mid-January. We will be more selective this season! If you have something special to donate that cannot be stored until February, please contact Mary Sue Galvin.

Questions? Interested in volunteering? Contact Mary Sue at marysue.galvin@gmail.com or 206-718-1494.

Mwanzo

Brighter days ahead

Brighter times are truly happening. With all the negative “stuff” going on in our country and globally, it



would be easy to become consumed. I choose to think of hope and gratitude.

Four years have gone by quickly. When I first became involved with Mwanzo, I was attending church services regularly, and attended the informal gatherings held after Loyce

Ong'udi returned from her time in Rabuor, Kenya. Inspired by what I learned, I have made gifts to Mwanzo throughout the years.

I never thought I'd become so passionately involved. As a successful businessman I've been involved with numerous nonprofits. But nothing like Mwanzo! I could see through my involvement that my gifts were making a difference! I was helping to change lives. I was helping children with their education, providing meals, nurturing bodies and minds, and helping to build their self-esteem, as well as offering hope in their lives. As I became more involved, I was invited to join the Mwanzo board and later became board chair.

My heart is full of love and joy! Mwanzo is making a positive impact in many ways: the women's catering

and poultry enterprise, savings and loan services, peer-to-peer training programs, and the environmental group working to mitigate the effects of climate change.

With the generous participation from many of you and our Mwanzo partners in Rabuor, we're in the process of building a community center with a clinic, library, and internet café. Wow! We've built a school serving 285 students and providing jobs for 23 people from the community, purchased a bus, installed cisterns, solar panels, and access to the internet to name a few of the accomplishments. There truly is hope and we're making a difference!

If you feel moved and would like to become a part of our Mwanzo family, please visit our website at: mwanzo.org or contact me. I'm always available to discuss Mwanzo and the many ways you can help.

Once again, I see hope and gratitude—not gloom and doom!
~George Vestal, Mwanzo Board of Directors

Seabeck Book Club is reading *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*

The Seabeck Book Club will return to *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, reading and discussing as follows: 1/03 We will visit the state Poor Peoples' Campaign monthly meeting; 1/10 Chapter 7 Sea to Shining Sea; 1/17 Chapter 8 Indian Country; 1/24 Chapter 9 US Triumphalism and Peacetime Colonialism; 1/31 Chapter 10 Ghost Dance Prophecy. We have discovered that to get through white fragility reactions it helps to start each meeting in prayer for forgiveness and wisdom. Newcomers are welcome.

For the Zoom link contact Beth Bartholomew at beth.bartholomew.208@gmail.com, or contact the Church Office at zoom@universityucc.org.

~submitted by Beth Bartholomew

Book Review of *The Water Dancer* (a novel) by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2019)

This is a work of staggering imagination and rich historical significance about slavery in the South. Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage and his mother was sold away. Hiram was robbed of all memory of her – but was gifted with a mysterious power which puzzles him as it pops up from time to time. He works in the fields until his father, owner of the proud plantation, makes him a house servant to help entertain guests. Then, as the plantation goes down hill, he further complicates Hiram's life by assigning him as valet and protector of his uncouth all-white half brother.

This tale is backed by deep research to lay out for us the dramatic story of the atrocities inflicted on generations of women, men, and children—the violent and capricious separation of families—and the war they waged to simply make lives with the people they loved. Written by one of today's most exciting thinkers and writers, *The Water Dancer* is a propulsive, transcendent work that restores the humanity of those from whom everything was stolen. Be ready for the stirring of emotions as you read of those of Hiram and his fellow Taskers in the field and house.

~submitted by Beth Bartholomew

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Worship and preaching calendar for January Kin-dom of God: Family Stories in The Bible

The Kin-dom of God imagines a Christian community of real, messy people in connection to one another and the larger world. As we celebrate the ways God is revealed to us, we are reminded that it happens in both miraculous and ordinary ways. This Epiphany, we encounter family stories which contend with kinship and the kin-dom. In these stories, we see the ways God is always expanding our definition of family and our call to connection with one another.



January 9

Kin-dom of God: Aunties from the East

Preacher: Rev. Amy Roon

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 16

Preacher: Rev. Yolanda Norton

Sisters in the Struggle: Puah and Shiphra

Scripture: Exodus 1:15-21

January 23

Cousins: Jesus and John

Preacher: Rev. Steve Jerbi

Scripture: Mark 3:13-15, John 1:29-37

January 30, joining Sunday

The Daughters of Zelophehad

Preacher: Rev. Amy Roon

Scripture: Numbers 27:1-11