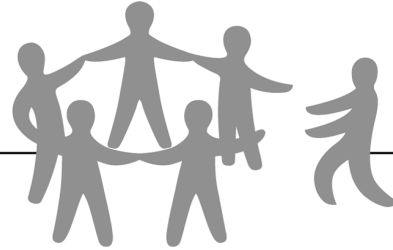


CHURCH AND HOME

UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



4515 16th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105-4201
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Celebrating Black History month

Children’s Ministry Presents *An African- American Historical – Cultural Experience*



Intergenerational

The Children’s Ministry of UCUCC is celebrating Black History Month with some exciting events for our children—and the adults are invited too!

The first of these is **Sunday, February 5, 12:00-3:00pm** to view **The Unspoken Truth Traveling Museum & Historical Cultural Display**. You can learn all about this traveling museum at their website: <https://www.unspokentruths.org>.

We are grateful to the Phyllis & Ralph Swanson Endowment for Children and Youth for sponsoring these amazing events.

To learn more about all the events, see the Children’s & Youth Ministry Events in this issue of Church and Home.

Happy 70th Birthday to our current building!

~Jack Clark



Stewardship

March 8th, 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the 1953 laying of the cornerstone in our “new” building. 70 years of worship, friendship, and community. In honor of the occasion, we asked some longtime community members to share their experiences about how they got involved in this church and the impact it has had on them. Elaine Mathies is a Pacific Northwest local who moved to Seattle in 1980, although her roots lead back to Univ. Congregational roughly 40 years before she became a member of the community. Gail Crouch began working at this church when she was still in seminary school, before being ordained and called as a pastor here. Greg Turner and University Congregational have long been intertwined, since Greg’s father was the Senior Minister at UCUCC from 1958 to 1982. Arlene Strong first attended University Congregational in 1969, and has served on staff as a part-time elementary coordinator, as well as providing lay leadership for the most recent capitol campaign, and on the search committee that called Rev. Shull and Rev. Ilgenfritz. Kathy Williams attended Sunday School in the previous church building on the Northeast corner of Brooklyn Ave. & 43rd St., and has been a part of UCUCC ever since. You can read their full reflections on our website. These stories are a testament to the strength of community: a community that values its members as much as the individuals value their faith. The next 70 years will undoubtedly be filled with new challenges and tribulations, however that will merely provide new opportunities for this community and its members to show the world what it truly means to be a member of University Congregational. Do you want to share the story of how you became part of UCUCC? Email it to office@universityucc.org

Events at UCUC

Zoom links are available in your weekly email or by emailing zoom@universityucc.org.

Men's Supper

Tuesday, February 7, 6:15 pm, Turner Lounge

Please join the men in our community for a simple soup supper every first Tuesday of the month. All those identifying as male are welcome.

T3—Third Thursday Theologians

February 16 at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Link in email version of C&H, and in the weekly email.

Meeting ID: 875 4663 9860 Passcode: 4515

This online class gathers our community with unique thinkers and theologians to encourage each other in the growth of our minds and spirits. In February we welcome Rev. Jonah Overton (they/them/theirs) for a conversation on Christianity and Socialism. Rev. Overton serves on the advisory board of the Institute for Christian Socialism. They are a queer and trans community organizer, and the lead pastor and church planter of Zao MKE Church in Milwaukee, WI. Zao MKE is a Jesus-rooted, justice-centered radically inclusive community where all are valued in the fullness of who God has made them to be.

Looking to future months, we will welcome Dr. David Vasquez-Levy, president of the Pacific School of Religion and Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, a professor of Theological and Social Ethics at the Graduate Theological Union.

Racial Justice Activists

Sunday, February 26, 11:30 am, Choir Room and on Zoom

The Racial Justice Activists group meet every 4th Sunday after church.

February Racial Justice Book Club

Tuesday, February 22, 12:15-1:30 pm on Zoom

All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake by renowned historian Tiya Miles, traces the life of a single object handed down through three generations of Black women. In so doing she crafts an extraordinary testament to people who are left out of the archives. This month we expect to read the last chapter and epilogue. Newcomers are welcome. To get the link please contact beth.bartholomew.208@gmail.com or zoom@universityucc.org.

Seabeck Book Club

Every Monday evening 7:00-8:00 pm

Seabeck Book Club is starting a new book in February, which makes a perfect time to join these lively discussions! We'll be reading *The that Made Seattle: A Human and Natural History of the Duwamish* by BJ Cummings. New participants are always welcome. For information, contact beth.bartholomew.208@gmail.com or zoom@universityucc.org.

African Roots of Christianity with Dr. Amy Oden -

March 5, 12, 19, 12:00 pm, Ostrander Hall and Zoom

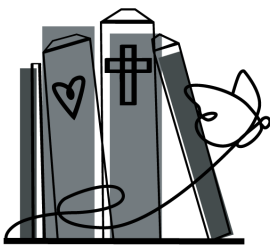
As part of our congregational work in support of Pastor Amy Roon's sabbatical and our commitment through the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship's Renewing Worship Communities grant, all are invited to participate in this three-part class focusing on church history with an emphasis on the vital role African communities had in shaping the church today. This class is led by Dr. Amy G. Oden, a professor of church history and Christian spirituality for several seminaries. Save these dates for these opportunities which now will all be available in a hybrid format.



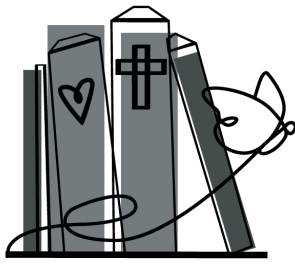
Calling & Engagement



Love and Justice



Christian For-



Christian Formation

Announcements

Land Acknowledgement Action Step: February

Our land acknowledgment includes a commitment 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.”*

This month, we have the opportunity to support the Jamestown S’Klallam tribe’s habitat restoration efforts on the Dungeness River by donating to the February Special Offering. Find out more about the tribe’s projects on their website (<https://jamestowntribe.org>) or in the Winter 2023 issue of Northwest Treaty Tribes Magazine ([Northwest Treaty Tribes Magazine - Northwest Treaty Tribes \(nwtreatytribes.org\)](https://northwesttreatytribes.org)).

February 2023 Special Offering

Our Special Offering this month will support the **Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe** in their efforts to protect and improve the environment in their Sequim/Dungeness River area. Aware of how climate change is damaging the waters of the Dungeness basin, their Natural Resources programs focus on three areas:

Environmental Review: Using current scientific research to analyze the habitat issues and concerns, the Tribe works with other agencies (i.e. NOAA, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, etc.) to have an accurate picture of the Dungeness basin resources.

Research and Monitor: One of the many programs monitors invasive species such as Knotweed and Buddleia which can prevent native flora from flourishing. They work with various volunteer groups to remove infestations of these invasive species.

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement: Restores healthy shorelines and estuaries, especially clean up of the Dungeness River, and works to solve problems at an ecosystem level.

This special offering combines University UCC’s passion for our sacred earth and Creation Justice with our recognition that racial justice work includes our Indigenous siblings whom often have borne the failures of our lack of environmental justice. This special offering is supported by both our Racial Justice and our Sacred Earth Matters committees. For more information: <https://jamestowntribe.org>



Racial Justice



Love and Justice

A Note from Pastor Steve

“Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.” Philippians 1:3 NLT

As I look back at the fall and the time of Pastor Amy’s sabbatical I want to give my deep thanks to the entire congregation. In so many ways we came together to continue our covenanted call to ministry and to being in caring fellowship together. With a handoff of leadership as I was returning from the Iona Pilgrimage, Pastor Amy headed to visit Mwanzo. We held a festive Hope-coming celebration, welcomed preachers through the Calvin Institute’s Renewing Worship grant, moved through our pledge campaign, budgeting process and congregational meeting, brought back Advent traditions and celebrated the joy of Christmas. While it looked like I was holding a lot (and at times I was!), I was never holding it alone. Every staff member stepped up to support congregational work. The council and particularly Ed and Rose as moderator and vice-moderator, lead with a strong hand. Sarah Marshall, Rev. Jennifer Butner, Rachel Haxtema and Katrina Fitzpatrick carried really specific work responsibilities throughout the sabbatical. The clergy caucus made sure that there was leadership in worship, pastoral care being offered, and a supportive place for me to continue doing ministry as a team. I felt the love and prayers of our congregation and for that I’m deeply thankful.

Heading into February, my schedule takes on a different time of fullness. January 28-February 2 I will be traveling with Sarah Marshall as part of UCUC's involvement with *The Vinery*. This program helps congregations explore their relationships with university communities. Our cohort will be gathering for an opening retreat. February 6-9 I will be in New Orleans for meetings with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. While these are work trips, my availability for pastoral care and meetings will be very limited due to full schedules. Beginning February 20, I will be on vacation through March 7. It has been my practice to set an out-of-office response that states I will not be reading emails received during that time and encourage folks to reach out to others at the church or resend after I'm back from vacation.

Sanctuary Art

~Nadine Santo Pietro, Liturgical Artist in Residence

So much activity happens over the holidays and so many different things happen between Christmas and Lent, my thought was to create something peaceful and contemplative for this time. I find shades of green to elicit calm and hope (of growing things in the coming spring). I was thinking about the way we use the word epiphany (a realization, an inspiration, a sudden idea or awakening...) and I thought about how sometimes paying attention to nature brings about an epiphany. The paper cuts are shapes inspired by nature: sun, sky, earth, wind, fire, water, feathers, flowers, branches, trees, snowflakes, moon and stars.

News for children, youth and families

Children's Ministry Presents *An African-American Historical—Cultural Experience* as we observe Black History Month.

It was Carter G. Woodson, (1875-1950) the "Father of Black history," who first set out in 1926 to designate a time to promote and educate people about Black history and culture, according to W. Marvin Dulaney. Carter G. Woodson was an American historian, a scholar, and the founder and President of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson was instrumental in launching Negro History Week in 1926.

Fifty years after the first celebrations, President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month during the country's 1976 bicentennial. Ford called upon Americans to "*seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.*" This month we celebrate that Black History is American History.

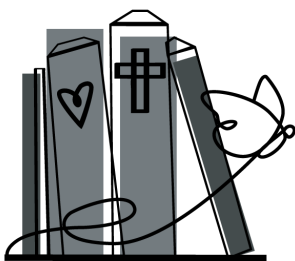
We are grateful to the Phyllis & Ralph Swanson Endowment for Children and Youth for sponsoring these amazing events.

Children's Ministry invites you to the following Black History Events

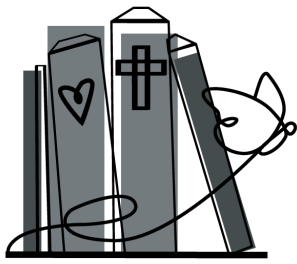
◆ Sunday, February 5:

The Unspoken Truth Traveling Museum & Historical—Cultural Display

- ⇒ African American Historical Storytelling 11:00am – 11:45pm – Children's Chapel
- ⇒ African American Cuisine Refreshments- 11:30am-12:30pm (After service) - lounge
- ⇒ Museum Tour 12:00pm – 3:00pm – Narthex (<https://www.unspokentruths.org>)
- ⇒ 12:00pm – 3:00pm—Display open for viewing in the Narthex & Chapel



Christian Formation



Christian Formation

- ◆ **Saturday, February 11: Black History Celebration Play Day**
 - ⇒ 10:30am – 2:00pm in the Narthex, Chapel & Lounge
 - Activities will include Parent - Child Black History Art Activities; African – American Cultural Storytellers Presentations and Indoor-outdoor play activities.
- ◆ **Sunday, February 26:**
 - ⇒ **Lift Every Voice: Intergenerational Worship Celebration:** 10:15am – 10:30am in worship in the sanctuary
 - ⇒ **Black History Display - Chapel** 11:00am – 1:00pm

All are invited to bring their African history and Cultural artifacts to share on display in the Narthex.

Children's Ministry Program

Sunday School Schedule

Kindergarten – 5th grade:

February 5 – Black History Month Chapel Time
February 12 – Service Project – In the Chapel
February 19 – Sunday School Classes
February 26 - Black History Month Chapel Time

Infants – 4 year olds:

February 5, 12, 19 & 26 – Childcare & Class

Family Ice Skating Event at the Kraken Iceplex!

February 25, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Families and their friends are invited to join us at the Kraken Iceplex for time to ice skate together! Join us from 11-12:30pm! UCUC has rented a whole rink that we can have just for ourselves! We will have part of the rink be the less smooth ice where folks can play broom ball. The other half will be available for ice skating. We will have some "seals" for little kids to sit on and some things that folks can use to help them learn to skate. We hope folks can help with the skate rental (\$5), but if not, just click on scholarship. We don't want money to be the reason someone doesn't participate. *We are very very grateful to the Phyllis and Ralph Swanson Endowment for Children and Youth for funding support to make this class affordable and available to all families!*

Sign-up at <https://bit.ly/UCUCCIceSkating23>

Sunday, February 26: BLAST Ministry

Our 4th and 5th graders are having a BLAST with new opportunities in Christian Formation. B.L.A.S.T. stands for Build, Learn, And Serve Together - and aims to meet the needs of our upper elementary tweens. Our Sunday morning time will have some new lessons giving them a good faith foundation. Then on 4th Sundays from 4:00 -5:00 pm we will meet for special activities and programming.

Future dates: March 26; April 23; May 5-6th—overnight at the church.

Friends are always welcome! If you have questions about B.L.A.S.T. and 4th and 5th grade programming, reach out to Pastor Steve at sjerbi@universityucc.org.

Youth Ministry Program

Sundays February 5,12,19 & 26: 9:00 am Youth Group continues

Youth Group continues for youth in grades 6-12. Youth are invited to join in-person (masked) at church in the Pilgrimage Room. Join us for discussions, reflection and connections.

Confirmation Class & H.S. Our Whole Lives Class

Confirmation Class continues for our 8th and 9th grade youth. Our Whole Lives, Sexuality and our Faith class continues for our 10th, 11th and 12th grade youth. Please hold them and their facilitators in your prayers as they begin this journey of learning, reflection, and discussion.

OWL Class: February 5 and 26

Confirmation Class: February 5 and helping with the service project on February 12.

Save the Dates:

Moving Mountains Youth Celebration & Fundraiser Event, Saturday, March 18

All Youth Retreat, March 31 – April 2 at Camp Indianola

Superfluity is really not about THE STUFF!

There is a lot of stuff involved, but that's not what keeps us humming about Superfluity. The **Friendships** we develop, the **Fun** of working together, and the **Joy** of **Giving** the proceeds to organizations in need (~\$30,000 per year!) makes Superfluity so special to those of us who have been a part of this ministry. And there is that good feeling that comes with cleaning out a closet and donating your gently used things!

We are now at a turning point in the lifecycle of this ministry. Many of our longtime department leaders are in their late 70's and 80's, and are taking a well-deserved retiring from leadership roles. We have been so blessed by the time, talents and energy of our leaders over the years, both recent and in years past, and there are some big shoes to fill!

In order to continue this 50+ year tradition at our church, we must have new volunteers step into leadership roles. Several departments need chairpersons (or co-chairs) as well as a need for general help ranging from 3-4 hours a month to 3-4 hours a week from February through the end of March. We also are looking at how we can change things so that more people can participate. We commit to setting up sorting times after work hours and on weekends, and evolving the sale to honor the time our volunteers can give. Other ideas under consideration include shortening the sale to 2 days, eliminating one or more departments, transitioning treasures sales to on-line and possibly having a quarterly "store" for children's and household items in the building. This can only happen if volunteers are able to step in with more energy and new leadership.

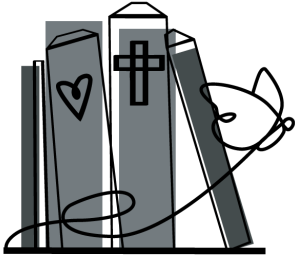
IF we have enough NEW help, Superfluity will be able to accept donations beginning on February 5. If not, we will need to either cancel or curtail this valuable tradition of turning the recycling of our gently used items into funds to support our community.

We hope you will step up to carry on this fine tradition of building FRIENDSHIPS, having FUN and sharing in the JOY of GIVING to our greater community. Please contact Mary-Sue.Galvin@gmail.com for more information.

A Book Review

A Cup of Water Under My Bed: A Memoir, by Daisy Hernandez, 2014, Beacon Press

The title of this book captured my attention: surely the cup of water was from the culture of her parents. It was. I learned more about Santeria and Christianity than I expected. I also enjoyed this lovely, introspective, and kind book as Ms. Hernandez shared the strangeness of school in another language and then the strain of translating for her Columbian mother and Cuban father. I was surprised by her exploration



Christian Formation

of her bisexuality and intrigued by the way she learned about money and credit cards as well as school, family, and racism in both Columbia and the US. She conveys her disjointed feelings by including a good number of Spanish words which I had to Google (ordinary words yet they were not in my junior high Spanish vocabulary). Her experience as an intern at the New York Times at the time of 9/11 and a later plagiarizing scandal of a Black intern turned reporter that revealed inner failings of the organization. At the same time it provided her a work home for becoming fully acclimated to American culture before moving to San Francisco and to another employer.

Altogether highly readable, insightful, and informative.

~Submitted by Beth Bartholomew

Upcoming Visit of Rev. Irene Hassan, National UCC Refugee & Migration Ministries

What Could it Mean for Us?

Rev. Irene Willis Hassan, of the Refugee & Migration Ministries of UCC National Ministries will be visiting with the UCUCG Afghan Initiative Members Sunday, Feb. 5. She hopes to learn more about our current Afghan family support, but more importantly, Rev. Hassan aims to stimulate our interest in expanded asylum accompaniment opportunities. We wonder what this expansion might mean for us at UCUCG: More families? From more countries? More participant effort? More financial commitment? More collaboration?

The UCC National Refugee & Migration Ministries works with migrants and refugees from many areas of the world who leave their homes to escape war, political or economic upheaval, & climate catastrophes. Going forward, we must ask what should our UCUCG role be in responding to the recognized needs of these migrants and refugees?

The UCUCG's Afghan Initiative has been blessed by ready volunteers and generous support from our congregation, by close collaboration with members of Prospect UCC and University Temple Methodist, and by critical information and space sharing with Plymouth UCC. What next? What more? We look forward to our conversation with Rev. Hassan on Feb. 5, but we also look forward to thoughtful conversation with you.

Please contact Cassie Emanuel, Afghan Initiative Chair for comments & questions: cassieemanuel12@gmail.com

Visit or volunteer in the Scheyer Library!

See the display of our collection of books to fill in the holes in your knowledge about Black History this month! Here are some highlights of our collection:

Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans, written and wonderfully illustrated by Kadir Nelson, for children in elementary to middle school

And Still I Rise by Kevin M. Burke and Henry L. Gates, Jr, a book filled with photographs and Black history from the last 50 years

Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America from 1619-2019, a compilation of essays by prominent thinkers, each covering one decade, edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain

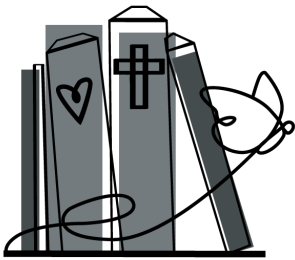
The library seeks volunteers! Do you have a little extra time before or after church to be in the library? Jobs could include just being present, helping people find books, shelving books, filing cards, or preparing books for the shelves. Commitment could be just one Sunday a month for an hour. Stop in the library before and after church and let Edith or Jessie know if you're interested!

Calvin Grant Committee Update, and A Personal Note

~ Lisa Coleman, Committee Member

As Pastor Steve recently noted in his social media promotion for the new series “Bumper Sticker Theology,” it is good to search for the deeper meaning behind a common or well-known scripture, or in this case, phrase. As a faith community, we are not unfamiliar with the concept of Ubuntu: *I am because we are*. Getting beyond the bumper sticker—to truly live out Ubuntu—is at the heart of UCUC’s most recent grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

This grant provides funds for our community to dive deep into who we are in and amongst our own faith community, neighborhood, city, and beyond. It allows intentional planning for learning and experiencing a deeper understanding of Ubuntu over a nine-month timeline from June 2022 through April of 2023. Some of the work that the grant has supported may be very familiar to you, and some may have only a hint of familiarity, because it is not work you are personally engaged in at this point in your church life.



Christian Formation

Some of the highlights of the ongoing work are sponsoring and supporting our guest preachers in our Sunday pulpit and at Seabeck, offering educational opportunities with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) cohort, Racial Justice trainings and retreat; coalition building in the city with other churches and congregations; ongoing work with organizations such as Rev. Norton’s Black Girl Magic Academy and the OFMN (Organizing for Mission Network, first introduced to us through Kelly Marciales at Seabeck). And there is more to come. For example, in March, we can look forward to learning more from Amy Oden about the African Roots of Christianity, and in the Spring, we will have a multi-day opportunity to experience one of the great benefits of coalition building, (stay tuned—more details to come!).

All of this helps is to paint a picture of Ubuntu—broadening our perspectives, adding to our knowledge. We are hearing other non-white voices, and thus learning non-white centered stories. We are learning what our own experiences bring to any table, so that we can do a better job partnering with others at the same table. We are stretching ourselves to not always be in the driver’s seat, not always be the loudest voice, to be with someone, and not just for someone. Whether you have engaged in this work through racial justice training, participating in the IDI, attending Seabeck’s morning program, and/or consistently attending worship in church or online, you are participating in this work, and on behalf of The Calvin Grant Committee, I want to thank you. When I look around and see all that is being done in the name of LOVE and JUSTICE, I am truly overwhelmed. There is so much being done, and still so much to do.

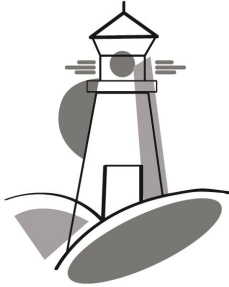
I have often struggled with feeling that I don’t know enough, am out of step with others in the congregation, and get frustrated with my own shortcomings (real or perceived). Perhaps others in our community experience the same. But mostly, I am deeply, deeply grateful. Grateful to be a Child of God, with you all part of my family. Having been a part of this family for 30+ years, I understand that there is always work to do, AND that I can jump in, whenever I am ready. And importantly, if I am not ready, I must not stand in the way of those who are. This community you all provide for me and for each other is committed to doing the hard work, and that path is fraught with missteps and do-overs. But our commitment demands that we be honest about where we are and what we are doing, offering apologies when necessary and receiving gentle nudges forward when stuck. Thank you for being my church family, my mentors and teachers, my fellow path-walkers. Thank you for not being afraid of hard work, and difficult answers to complicated questions. It is good to be with you. See you on Sunday!

Church Health Task Force (CHTF) Update

~Jan von Lehe

How would you define a healthy church? If one can't define it, measuring it is fraught or becomes ever more difficult. The Church Health Task Force was formed in September with the purpose of assessing how UCUC is meeting the needs of its members in all the ways that we are church together. We plan to assess church health primarily through a survey and also will use measures of various key aspects, such as attendance and pledging.

There were few models of church health that we could find that fit for us. Many of us remember Pastor Catherine talking about the inward journey, the building of community, and the outward journey, and we found a similar model in our research. Starting with the "journey" model, we integrated findings and themes from the Futures Task Force and the Rekindling Connections conversations as well as the Hosfeld Report on what matters to members.



Stewardship

Inward Journey: Faith and Spiritual Growth

- ◆ Inspirational & passionate worship services that feed the soul, mind and heart (sermon, prayer, music, movement, etc.)
- ◆ Learning and growth: Children, youth and family programming
- ◆ Learning and growth: Lecture series, bible study & other experiential adult offerings
- ◆ Support and adaptation for open and various faith journeys (believers, seekers and doubters)
- ◆ Offering a variety of ways for members to experience the holy

Companionship & Belonging for the Journey: UCUC Community

- ◆ Culture of all being welcome; Open and affirming, cultural/race inclusivity and diversity. (Radical hospitality); many ways to connect and participate
- ◆ Practicing love together; living our covenant together. Safe, comforting, intentional love, care and compassion.
- ◆ Caring and support for younger and older; Intergenerational cultural connections & small groups
- ◆ Responding and growing together in relation to UCUC missions

Outward Journey: Beyond our Walls

- ◆ Risk-taking missions and service, building on our strengths & generosity
- ◆ Living out God's word— focused justice projects involving outreach to form relationships & ally with others in our larger community
- ◆ Bring humility, love, grace and learnings of church history, anti-racism and settler/colonialism to community partnerships

Organizational Journey: Sustainability & Functioning

- ◆ Clear Missions and Vision, integrated within programs and staffing.
- ◆ Effective, responsive and adaptive representational church governance (Council and Ministries, ministers and congregation)
- ◆ Collaborative processes and supportive structures (includes reflection & evaluation)
- ◆ Transparent and sustainable finances; Resourceful asset management.
- ◆ Clear alignment and customization of activities with church membership spiritual and other needs. Organization adapts to changing needs of members
- ◆ Clergy teamwork and power-sharing; Accountability / role of clergy is part of

evaluation processes. Collaborative processes and supportive structures...

- ◆ Effective teamwork and power sharing between clergy, paid staff, congregational leadership and the congregation. Collaborative processes and supportive structures including clergy who can lead from behind. Lay leadership of all ages, merit, validation and thank you structures.
- ◆ Effective decision-making, collaboration and feedback loops & between Council, Clergy, Ministries and the congregation

This model of church health uses four interconnected spheres which interact across all ministries. The Church Health Task Force is refining and checking with council and leaders from various ministries to see if this model seems valid for a larger group of church members. There are undoubtedly areas that we will have refined before this article is published. We welcome your ideas! How would you measure church health?

This model was developed by: Jan von Lehe, Rose Morrison, Mary Sue Galvin, Ellen Naden, Rock Moulton, Patti Brandt with help from Jean Kruzich, & Virginia Felton.

If you have questions or comments please let me know: janvonlehe@gmail.com or 206-546-4123



Gathering Ground Event: Stories of Compost & Cultivation, featuring Carrie Newcomer

5pm – 7pm, Saturday, March 25 on Zoom

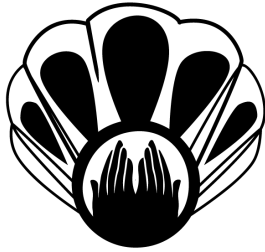
Just in time for Spring Equinox, join into an evening of stories of transformation. Three master story spinners share their real-life tales of compost and cultivation. What happens inside a compost pile? What if life becomes a compost pile? What can be grown or cultivated out of that glorious rot? The newest edition of Gathering Ground's popular story nights features the world-class singer/songwriter Carrie Newcomer along with Hannah Merrill and another guest. Newcomer's evocative songs, performed live for you, will hold the evening together.

Carrie Newcomer is a favorite of Gathering Ground, a Quaker activist and cultural worker whose songs fuel movements as well as meditations. Rolling Stone says: "Newcomer's material asks all the right questions and refuses to settle for easy answers." This story night launches Gathering Ground's 2023 theme of Compost and Cultivate, selected from listening to the community during this time of coming apart and growing anew.

Newcomer will also offer an online workshop as part of this Equinox weekend retreat on Sunday, March 26 from 2pm-4pm Pacific Time. Registration will open soon and is expected to sell out quickly.

We thank the Adult Education Endowment of University Congregational United Church of Christ, making it possible for all who wish to attend.

RSVP at gatheringground.org or by emailing gatheringground.seattle@gmail.com or calling 206-880-3641



Worship and Music

Worship series and Spiritual practice

Bumper Sticker Theology: I can do all things through a verse taken out of context

About this series:

Think about the bumper stickers you see around town – a sports team, a band, an honor roll student, a stick-figure family, a funny joke. These are all indicators of something different. They tell a part of the story, but not the full story. That same kind of short hand gets used with scripture. Often verses get shared - think guy in a clown wig with a John 3:16 sign or the “Do Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly” button - but we miss the whole context of the story.

This worship series gives us the opportunity to move beyond the pithy quote toward the depth of our sacred stories. We’ll share the verses before and after that give greater depth to our understanding of some well-known passages.

Spiritual Practice:

This series focuses on experiencing the full story of well-known Bible verses. For our spiritual practice you are invited to consider how these texts prepare you for worship. Here are some things to consider:

When does your preparation for worship begin? Is there a ritual that goes into this preparation? Does it happen as soon as you click a link or sit in a pew? Or is it something that begins when you wake up? The night before when you go to bed? When you finish your overnight shift?

How is your prayer life different when you arrive at worship with a specific prayer request? How does the prayers of others impact your worship experience? How would prayer help you prepare for worship?

What is your relationship with scripture outside of worship? Do you regularly read the Bible or rarely read the Bible?

Throughout this series we want you to expand your worship preparation. Read the lesson for that Sunday mid-week. If you usually read the lesson before participating in worship, then read a bit more – the whole chapter, maybe the whole book. Look for connections you make about the bigger context in relationship to the Sunday periscope.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent. The tradition is to receive ashes from previous times of celebration on one’s forehead as a sign of our deeply blessed and deeply flawed humanity. The “imposition of ashes” is an invitation to reflection and contemplation. We offer two opportunities to participate this year. (See back page)

The Sacred Spiral: A path to transformation

About this series:

Theory of Change is a phrase that gets used, especially among non-profit organizations, foundations, and grant funders, to describe the methodology for promoting social change. The sacred spiral of organizing was developed by women of color looking to transform their communities. It is a framework that has been introduced in a variety of ways at UCUC. Through connections with the *Organizing for Mission Network*, the theme from 2022’s Seabeck Church camp with Sister Kelly Marciales and Missioner Cesar Marciales, and with the “Faith and Land Initiative” cohort we are a part of with *Church Council of Greater Seattle*, we have pondered how this sacred



Worship and Music

spiral might meet us in the historic moment of potential for change.

The sacred spiral of organizing moves along a nonlinear path that builds relationships and moves toward transformation. This becomes a model for our inward and our outward spiritual journey. We begin with the “Sacred Encounter,” the place where listening draws us out of ourselves into something bigger; we move to “Sacred Unveiling,” revealing the place where we see there is potential for change and growth; “Radical Invitation into Sacred Movement” is the place where we seek to expand our circles of connection to include more people; “Sacred Action” is the place where we are mobilized through our community and the gift of the Holy Spirit to bring forth the Beloved Community rooted in collective liberation; the “Sacred Pause” happens at each step in the journey, and is the place where we make meaning, enter into discernment, evaluation and reflection.

Spiritual Practice:

With our Lenten theme focused on building and strengthening relationships, we are inviting the church to connect and grow together. We are inviting you to schedule a one to one conversation each week. These are intended to be natural but uncommon conversations to hear someone’s hopes, dreams and part of their story of faith. Plan to spend at least a half an hour just listening to their story. Here’s some ideas of folks to ask to meet:

- ◆ Someone you’ve seen at church or online but you don’t know very well
- ◆ A friend with whom you haven’t connected in a while
- ◆ Someone from a different generation
- ◆ Have a spiritual conversation with someone outside the church
- ◆ Someone involved in a ministry about which you know very little
- ◆ Someone in a small group, ministry, or worship service with whom you want to spend time catching up

Anyone you think of! Yeah, that person, who just popped into your mind. Ask them. Yep, that one too! You can have as many of these conversations as your schedule can handle.

If you are someone that struggles with asking someone to chat, feel free to use the line “I want to try our spiritual practice and I wonder if we can chat?” These can be in person, on zoom, or on the phone. They can be at a coffee shop or a corner of the sanctuary. Try not to squeeze it into a place you’re already doing something else (during a committee meeting or in a crowded coffee hour doesn’t lend to deep listening). Have fun with this!

Annual Congregational Budget Meeting Minutes 20 Nov 2022—excerpted

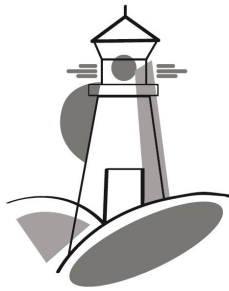
The discussion at the budget meeting this year was thoughtful as well as Thought-provoking. Here is a summary of the discussion.

Following a Covid update by Dr Wes Von Voorhees, Pastor Steve asked for a straw poll to help the Covid Action Team as they consider establishing mask optional spaces in church. We did a hand vote to see who would want to be in the sanctuary if there were a mask optional space. And a second vote to see who would want to sit in a mask mandatory space. The Covid team anticipates based on the response, that in early December we will start having the Main sanctuary and Narthex mask required, and the balcony and the lounge mask optional.

Ed Coleman declared that a quorum (more than 40 congregants) was declared pre-



Stewardship



Stewardship

sent, and opened the formal budget meeting.

Cristin Miller, chair of the Pledge Campaign reported that the goal was 1.3 million dollars, with the understanding that this was a stretch, in the recent past, UCUC has been hovering around 1.2 million dollars in annual pledges.

Currently we have 1.132 million dollars pledged from 264 households. There are another 40 households that usually give, and outreach efforts are underway to contact these members.

The committee is pleased to report that we have 12 new pledging “units”; 1/3 of the pledging units have increased & about 1/6 have decreased for a number of reasons. There has been decline in our pledges over time, but we are not declining at the same rate as most other congregations.

Over the last 4 years at UCUC, our pledges have been below budget (2019), above budget (2020, 2021) and at budget (2022).

Livio De La Cruz co-chair of the budget committee (with Terry Moore), presented the proposed budget. There is a gap or deficit of \$173,122 between revenues and expenses. When reviewing this deficit, Council resoundingly agreed to continue our efforts for wage equity for our staff (which contributes to the budget gap).

Ed Coleman, Moderator: Our budget is a major way in which we, through this budget, are good shepherds. Fixed costs for the building have increased about 20%. Two thirds of the budget is for wages. Wages plus fixed costs for our building are 90% of our budget and both together, are projected to be about 15% greater in 2023. We, as a church must wrestle with the value of the proposed use of endowment funds. At times such as these, is it better to have \$175,000 sitting in an endowment fund or working in our church?

Pastor Steve: asked us to imagine for a moment why we chose to make this church our church home. There is a legacy that brought us to this moment and the ways in which we measure our ministry and impact has shifted dramatically in ways we couldn't imagine the past. He affirmed that our worship numbers have remained steady throughout the pandemic. For sure, our ministry looks different with hybrid worship via Zoom, and with members in Texas and overseas. He stated that we are a congregation responding to this moment and looking forward and ready to expand for the future. The spirit is alive here and we are ready to grow!

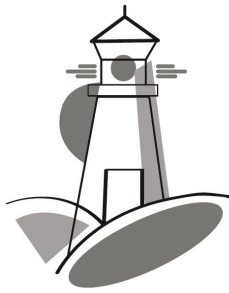
Discussion:

Virginia Felton presented some comments on behalf of the Personnel Committee.

The Asset Enhancement Task Force in the spring of this year started a review of all of our various assets to make sure we were using them appropriately and to best advantage.

One of our greatest assets is our church staff. In 2022, when we were not able to fill some key positions, we found that the front-line staff were being paid at the low end of the regional range for comparable positions. We started a wage equity initiative for many of our hourly employees, and increased pay about half way between the current wage and the median wage for the position (about 20%.) The 2023 budget year's compensation increases are for leadership staff who did not get a pay increase in 2022.

There was a request for more information re the endowment. How does this fit with our traditional financial stewardship? Kyna has a recording of her presentation on the church funds and would be happy to provide for folks who want to view it. UCUC's total endowment has 10 about different pieces, some of which are earmarked for specific uses. (Total endowment is 2 million for restricted funds and about 2 million for general funds)



Stewardship

Comments about use of endowment funds included noting that we are not a business, we are a church and that our resources are the endowment, people, our mission. In a business context it is not uncommon to cut back on a promised mission, but as a church we do not want to do that. Use of our endowment does come at a price. The choice is really between shrinking our mission or using some of our endowment to maintain our mission this year.

Clarifying questions:

What percent of our membership does 264 pledging units represent? We don't know; in the past, we have based comparisons on previous years pledging units, because of variable numbers of people in households.

Last year we had slightly more than 300 pledges, and we are reaching out to about 40 more households yet this year. Of the 264 households we have heard from, about 1/3 have increased over last year.

One sixth of those who have made a pledge have reduced that pledge for a variety of reasons. The church has also heard from others who are not pledging to the church this year.

Information about why people reduced pledges or chose not to pledge is still being gathered. We are viewing this as an opportunity for a pastoral call to better understand and talk with these congregants. This is confidential information and we are making sure that the right conversations are happening and that people's concerns are being heard.

Speaking in opposition:

Gap of \$175,000 really is plus another \$45,000 (because of the 2% increase in traditional draw from endowments). Our 5-year return at the end of the 3rd quarter was less than 3%.

2018 was the last time this church broke even; 2020 exception was the PPE loan which turned into a grant and then much was given away. We are currently running a significant deficit for this year. This speaker felt that by taking more out of our endowments, we are not honoring the wishes of our forefathers, and sending a mixed message that we have plenty of money and that this organization cannot properly manage the resources that it has. The speaker recommends the approach of balancing the budget and show all that wouldn't be funded and have the congregation step up to fund these items.

Conversations re impact of delaying a new pastor call:

The proposed budget includes funding a 3rd settled pastor starting April 1.

Delay of 1 month = \$10,000 savings; Delay of 3 months = \$17,000 savings;

Delay till Jan 2024 = \$50,000 savings

Church building updates and office hours

Church office hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm,

Sundays 9:00 - 10:00 am, and 11:00 am - noon.

Staff Holidays: Monday, February 20, President's Day

The office staff and program staff and pastors continue to work mostly from home. To access the building, please contact the custodian on duty at 206-612-2144.

Contact a pastor in an emergency A pastor is always available for pastoral emergencies. Please call or text 206-445-3378, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Stewardship

During Amy’s sabbatical, we are paying two covenant partners to continue work – Adult Ed, Calvin Grant and Ministry support. When Amy comes back, we will still be missing the entire 3rd pastor profile. Not filling the 3rd pastor role would require major discernment, realigning of minister roles and new letters of call for our existing pastors.

Council recognizes that continuing to use the endowment is not a sustainable way of funding the budget. More work from the Asset Enhancement Task Force will guide future budgets.

Historically UCUCS has not used endowment for annual operating expenses, what has changed? Personnel costs increased 16% for 2023 over 2022. We may need to look at staffing cuts for the future.

What is the plan to repay the “loan” of \$50K from the endowment used to balance the 2022 budget this year? It is a 3-year loan; we are not committing to repay the money used from the endowment in the 2023 budget, leaving that payment for 2024 or 2025.

Technology expenses have dramatically increased over the past 2 years. This is helping us to hold hybrid meetings like this one, and evening committee meetings in the comfort of our own homes. We have bible study on-line. There are costs to maintain all this and concern was voiced about how much our congregation will shrink if we don’t continue to support technology and our current offerings.

One member appealed that we vote for this budget on behalf of our children and all those who cannot vote.

Another respectfully disagreed for using the endowment funds to this extent, stating that it is not being faithful when we use endowment funds that we don’t see a way to repay.

The budget vote tally: Yay’s 63, Nay’s 23 with 3 abstentions, therefore the budget was approved.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Sue Galvin

Church and Home is a monthly publication of University Congregational United Church of Christ.

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YouTube: @UniversityUCC

University Congregational UCC is an open and affirming church, welcoming everyone of every of gender, sexual-orientation, race, ethnicity and ability.

Join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am for worship in-person or via live stream. (Check homepage of website for links to Zoom livestream), or connect with our online worship service on Facebook or YouTube streaming anytime throughout the week after 5:00pm Sundays .

All articles in this printed newsletter can be found on our website. Go to: www.universityucc.org/whats-up-now/

The deadline for submission for **next month’s** issue is the 15th of **this month**.

Email submissions to Churchandhome@universityucc.org.

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You'll find *About the Worship Series* and the spiritual practices for this month starting on page 11, in the Sunday Bulletin, or on our website. (Go to "What's up now" and choose News category Worship and Music.)

Bumper Sticker Theology: I can do all things through a verse taken out of context

February 5

Wherever Two or Three Are Gathered

Preacher: Rev. Steve Jerbi

Scripture: Matthew 18:15-20

February 12

I Can Do All Things with Steph Curry's Shoes

Preacher: Rev. Amy Roan

Scripture: Philippians 4:1-13

February 19

Behold the Plans I Have for You

Preacher: Rev. Steve Jerbi

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:4-14

February 22—Ash Wednesday

Ashes-to-Go 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm on NE 45th St.
Clergy will be outside on 45th Street offering ashes, conversation, and a blessing to anyone who would like them. If this fits your schedule, we invite you to come by and receive this imposition of ashes.

Ash Wednesday service

A traditional service at **6:00 pm** available in the building and online

Lenten worship series: The Sacred Spiral: A path to transformation

February 26—First Sunday of Lent

Sacred Encounter

Preacher: Rev. Amy Roan

Scripture: Acts 16:11-15