

Welcome to a New Year!

A Note from the Conference Bookkeeper

Calendar 2021 is nearly at its end and it is time to report all Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and our Special Offerings payments to our National office. We must receive all 2021 contributions by **Friday, January 14th 2022** for year-end reporting to the National Office.

We are also working on preparing our Conference 2022-2023 budget. Please email or mail your 2022 OCWM pledges once they have been finalized. They may be emailed to accounting@pncucc.org or mailed to the conference office at 325 N. 125th St, Seattle, WA 98133. If possible, we would appreciate receiving this information no later than January 5th, 2022. Thank-you!

[Mike's Blog](#)

[Conference Calendar](#)

Building for the Future of Our Youth

On February 7-8th, the national setting will offer a virtual conference for 100 youth ministers and leaders to reimagine youth ministry, National Youth Event and other events for the future. Registration can be completed here: <https://cvent.me/Vy8PPK>

Additionally, we are asking anyone who has regular contact with youth in the United Church of Christ to complete a short survey to provide additional insight to the Faith INFO team and national setting. You may access the survey here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Youth_Min2022

Your responses and presence are greatly appreciated. For questions or additional information please reach out to:

Rev. Trayce Potter at pottert@ucc.org
Minister for Youth & Young Adult Engagement
Faith INFO (Faith Education, Innovation and Formation)

Conference Calendar

If you'd like your committee meeting or event added to the calendar, please send an email to office@pncucc.org.

January 2022

- 3 Board and Stewardship Leadership planning meeting; online; 11:30am-1:00pm
- 3 PNCUCC Moderator & Board Office 1.5 hours;
<https://washington.zoom.us/j/99953739164> 6-7:30pm
- 4 Dismantling Racism meeting; online; 5:30pm
- 5 Courtney's Office Hour; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906>; 9:30-10:30am
- 6 Moderators Check-in; online; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1481017260>; 7:00-8:30pm
- 6 Justice & Witness Committee; online; 5:30-6:30pm
- 7 Admin & Finance Check-in; online; 1-2:00pm

- 10 Board of Directors meeting; online; 6:30-8:00pm
- 12 Courtney's Office Hour; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906>; 9:30-10:30am
- 13 Westside Committee on Ministry; online; 9:30am-2:30pm
- 14 Admin & Finance Check-in; online; 1-2:00pm

- 17 Conference Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 19 Courtney's Office Hour; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906>; 9:30-10:30am
- 20 Moderators Check-in; online; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1481017260>; 7:00-8:30pm
- 21 Eastside Committee on Ministry meeting; online; 10:00am-2:00pm
- 21 Admin & Finance Check-in; online; 1-2:00pm
- 22 Climate Summit; online; 9:00am-1:00pm

- 26 Courtney's Office Hour; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906>; 9:30-10:30am
- 27 Stewardship Committee meeting; online; 6:00-7:30pm
- 28 Church Budgeting in a Time of Inflation with Andrew Warner; online; 1-2:00pm

February

- 5 Courtney's Office Hour; <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906>; 9:30-10:30am
- 7 Installation of Marci Scott-Weis at Magnolia UCC

Looking Ahead

The 2022 Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 29 - May 1

ONE HOME, ONE FAMILY

A Reflection on the Meaning of Stewardship

Kendall Clark Baker

*[based on a reflection at the October meeting
of the PNC Stewardship Committee]*

Preachers know that the root behind the word “stewardship” is a Greek word, ***oikos***, meaning quite simply, “house.” A steward (***oikonomos***) is, literally, a person who manages the household and its material resources—the one who does the shopping, pays the bills, oversees the calendar, sees that everyone is fed, makes sure the kids are picked up from school, and so forth. It’s an actual person, doing quite ordinary, yet essential, tasks.

The word “steward” shows up in the New Testament in several places. Like in Jesus’ parable of the shrewd servant. And the parable of the workers in the vineyard. In writing to the Christians in Corinth Paul introduces himself as a steward: “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and *stewards* of God’s mysteries.”

This same Greek root, ***oikos***, shows up in other words we use every day. Like ecology. And ecumenical. And economics.

- Ecology (***oikología***) is a study of how all living beings are interrelated in our one shared home called earth. How might our understanding of global warming and species destruction be impacted if we imagined Earth to be a home we share with all living creatures?
- Ecumenical (***oikoumenikós***) means all the inhabited earth; literally, the entire human family sharing the same home. How might our nation’s pandemic response to third world countries—prioritizing how vaccines are to be distributed—be changed if we recognized that the Covid virus thinks we all live in the same house?
- Economics (***oikonomía***) is a study of how the family’s limited resources are managed, how they are created and distributed. How might our approach as Americans to questions of affirmative action and reparations and policing be influenced by an understanding of the continuing effects of some members of the family having benefited from the unpaid slave labor of other members of the family?

To bring this all “home,” so to speak: The Stewardship Committee “manages” the physical resources of our home (***oikos***) which is the Pacific Northwest Conference United Church of Christ. As stewards we are managers. Or perhaps that is too grandiose. More accurately we are “assistant managers” helping the Board and all the Conference to oversee how shared resources are responsibly received and dispersed in a just, equitable, and accountable manner, enabling the entire household to be effective in its mission.

This is the same task we all have in our local churches when we bring our offerings to worship. When we create a budget and keep track of it throughout the year. When we carry out our annual stewardship drive. We are all stewards. Let’s do everything in our power to make sure our house is a home where all are valued and we function as one family.

Something's Missing



In this new normal that's not actually normal there are so many things we miss. Adjusting to this constantly changing world has made us all weary. Vaccines, boosters, tests, distancing, moving protocols, apprehension, tension. Just even stating this I feel tired.

Certainly, we have learned much. We have learned how to read eye-smiles. We have learned that sarcasm is hard on Zoom. We have learned that we can adapt, change, and survive. We have learned the importance of connection with each other and ourselves.

We have learned this because of the incredible hard work of so many around us. From frontline workers to medical professionals, we have seen it played out every day in so many ways. Our own clergy have stepped into roles they had never imagined they would be called into. Finding new and creative ways to stay connected, providing assurance to us all, as we wondered, what's next. They all stood up and heard Jesus' words, "Follow me". And they did. And we did.

Now as some of us begin to gather together in small safe ways we are able to breathe in a sense of relief. Having my own adult children and grandkids all at our home for the holidays has been a much-needed balm for Julie and I. We actually gathered in early December between Thanksgiving and Christmas for a new thing we are calling Thanksmas. A time for our family to gather without all the traditional hustle and bustle of the normal holidays. Vaccines all around, boosted and tested, we gathered together. It was incredible. It was a new thing we learned and we are going to continue to do this at least every year.

As I watched my family members depart, I thanked God for the scientists and doctors that helped this come to be. I prayed a prayer of gratitude for those many folks who believed in those scientists and doctors and got on board. I offered up a prayer for those still undecided, afraid, and unsure. I prayed for our pastors, chaplains, youth workers, interns, volunteers, and the others in our settings often uncounted. I imagine each of us has a story of a time when a church leader has gone above and beyond and made a difference in someone's life. Perhaps even in our own lives.

Yet, something is still missing. Yes, we are beginning to gather in small ways on-line and in person. And we are finding that we can connect in new and exciting ways. So why are we so tired? Weary, drained?

Twice a year there is a group of folks who come to N-Sid-Sen for a week long silent retreat lead by a Sufi teacher. This retreat is a Khilvat in the Sufi tradition. I find it best explained in this writing:

"Full moon, where will you be going from here?
Into a retreat.
Why do you take a retreat after fullness?
To make myself an empty vessel in order to be filled again."
- *Hazrat Inayat Khan*

"Know thyself"
- *Jesus of Nazareth*

Because it is a silent group, we don't get much chance to get to know them like we do with other groups. However, this year was different. This year I really understood how to read eye smiles, to see God in each and every person. To feel the holy presence of God in this silent community. I felt a part of this retreat, even though I was merely the host (and was not silent).

It was in this setting that I realized what was missing. Down time. Time without the committee in my head debating the world's problems. The only time measurement was the meal bell. Nothing to do but breathe and let my soul rest. Now I should point out that this is not my first silent retreat, in fact I have done multiple personal silent retreats. Some guided, and some not. Something was different.

I mentioned to the leader afterward that I felt like I had gotten to know these silent folk deeper than I ever had before. He shared with me that many of the folks had shared the same thing with him. And that there was deep need that we were all rediscovering about ourselves. It was a rekindling of our selves together, individually. There was an inviting calmness that filled those spaces that were being emptied in the silence.

As I pondered this I thought of our clergy. I wondered how many pastors, chaplains, youth workers, etc in our conference know that at both Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen we provide space for personal clergy retreats.

I know some of our clergy do know of this gift. I don't believe enough know about this opportunity. So here it is:

At both camps there is space set aside for clergy / chaplains / youth workers to be able to have their very own retreat. N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs will provide a private cabin or house with a kitchen and bathroom for your use. If we have a group on site, you are welcome to join us for meals, if not bring your own meals. The idea is for a personal retreat for up to 2 folks for 2 days to a week depending on time of year. Simply contact Mark at N-Sid-Sen or Chris / Wade at Pilgrim Firs and get a date on the calendar. Some folks have come on retreat and wanted to be left totally alone, while others wanted to visit and or help with a project. The cost is based on a goodwill offering. Please know that we have recently been gifted with funds to offset the cost of hosting clergy for a personal retreat. Do not let cost hold anyone back from a personal retreat.

We all know how much our church leaders have done over these last 2 years for us all, now is the time to give them some time for themselves.



GETTING CONGRESS TO ACT

**Strategies,
Tactics,
and Vision for 2022**

Wednesday, January 12th
1 pm ET

FREE WEBINAR



UCC Webinar

Getting Congress to Act: Strategies, Tactics, and Vision for 2022

Frederick Douglass once said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand." The next Creation Justice Webinar will focus on the art and craft of making a demand. Specifically, we will focus on how people of faith can best organize themselves to place pressure on Congress to act in 2022. For insight and guidance, we will turn to three panelists with local and national experience as organizers: the Rev. A. Kazimir Brown from the Poor People's Campaign, the Rev. Chibuzo Nimmo Petty from For Our Future, and Kim McMurray from Indivisible. Even if you can't make the scheduled time of 1 pm ET on Wednesday, January 12th, still sign-up, and we will send you a recording. [Register now!](#)

[Hyperlink: https://UCC.zoom.us/webinar/register/8616395978278/WN_H7QAUxZZREuUpooh8fb_fw]



January Celebrations

Best wishes to our clergy and their partners on their special days.

Ordinations

3	Andrew Conley-Holcom	7 years	16	Megan Crouse	22 years
3	Lynn Nelson	7 years	21	Rodney Case	60 years
3	David Royer	57 years	22	Ben Files	10 years
11	Ryan Lambert	18 years	29	Diane Schmitz	16 years
11	Deanna Murray	35 years	30	Thomas Carson	56 years
13	Steve Jerbi	15 years			

Birthdays

1	Roy Hoover	8	Candace Frawley	18	Courtney Stange-Tregear
2	Bill Kirlin-Hackett	8	Stephen Haddan	19	W. Craig Rennebohm
3	Allysa De Wolf	8	Shirley Hutchinson	21	Sharon Benton
3	Kizzie E. Jones	9	Carolyn Evans	22	Glenn Kalkbrenner
3	Gary Southerton	16	Carla Chase	22	C. Floyd Emerson
4	Andrew Conley-Holcom	16	Megan Crouse	22	Mark Stange-Tregear
5	Peter Ilgenfritz	16	Mary Olney-Loyd	23	Greg Kammann
6	Doris Berg	16	Mary Margaret Pruitt	25	Pam Ashby
6	Cecilia McKean	17	Jen Hagedorn	29	Jennifer Hackman
8	Kevin Brown	17	Louisa Halfaker	29	Dennis Hollinger-Lant

Anniversaries

26 Jim & Andy CastroLang

Rev. Joel Westby (ELCA) and Rev. Leslie Ritter-Jenkins (UCC) are offering *SIX* Empowering Communication workshops for clergy in January and February 2022 via Zoom.

Here is an invitation from them:

To last year's four foundational workshops, we've added two new workshops on Mediation and mediation for groups known as Restorative Circles. Both processes build on the unique and powerful empathy process in Empowering Communication.

Empowering Communication has been a framework that has given us confidence in how we choose to live out our faith in our personal and professional work.

As pastors, we have asked

- How do we move Jesus' life and teaching out of the Bible and into the church?
- How do we nurture respect and care, and truth and transparency in the congregation when conflict arises?
- How do we take care of ourselves so that we can show up in all of our church work with health and integrity?

Empowering Communication is both a skill set and spiritual consciousness that helps us answer these questions. It is not only consonant with Christianity, but in our experience, is a path that liberates the power of love within ourselves and in our relationships.

In the six workshops, clergy will learn tools that support congregational vitality and help heal in the world.

We have studied and practiced Nonviolent Communication, also known as Empowering Communication, cumulatively for 32 years and found it invaluable in our work with staff, committees, worship teams, pastoral care, self-care, and healing small and large rifts in congregations and denominational bodies. We hope you will join us for a workshop or series of workshops in the New Year.



Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification. Romans 14:17

Please find information about each of the [six workshops and registration on our website.](https://empoweringcommunicationinc.net/workshops-for-religious-leaders-2022)
<https://empoweringcommunicationinc.net/workshops-for-religious-leaders-2022>