December Newsletter

Conference Calendar

If you’d like your committee meeting or event added to the calendar, please send an email to pncucc@gmail.com.

December
1  Courtney's Office Hour; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906; 9:30-10:30am
2  Moderators Check-in; online; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1481017260; 7:00-8:30pm
2  Justice & Witness Committee; online; 5:30-6:30pm
3  Admin & Finance check-in; online; 1-2:00pm
5  Justice & Witness Committee meeting; online; 5:30-6:30pm
7  Dismantling Racism meeting; online; 5:30pm
8  Courtney’s Office Hour; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906; 9:30-10:30am
9  Westside Committee on Ministry; online; 9:30am-2:30pm
9  Stewardship Committee meeting; online; 6:00-7:30pm
10 Admin & Finance check-in; online; 1-2:00pm
14 Board of Directors meeting; online; 6:30-8:00pm
15 Courtney’s Office Hour; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906; 9:30-10:30am
16 Moderators Check-in; online; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1481017260; 7:00-8:30pm
17 Eastside Committee on Ministry meeting; online; 10:00am-2:00pm
17 Admin & Finance check-in; online; 1-2:00pm
22 Courtney's Office Hour; https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1490066906; 9:30-10:30am
24 Conference Office Closed all day
31 Conference Office Closed all day

Looking Ahead:

January 22nd, 9:00am - 1:00pm; Climate Summit (online) with the PNC, Central Pacific Conference, and Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference. Details to come later. Please save the date.

The 2022 Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 29, 30, and May 1
Someone once told me that you don’t even know what you don’t know. So I was happy to find a book with the subtitle of “The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know”. In *Think Again*, Adam Grant poses a strong argument for constantly unlearning and rethinking and gravitating towards people who challenge what we’ve already decided is true.

The book is divided into three parts: Individual Rethinking, Interpersonal Rethinking, and Collective Rethinking. He starts out saying that many times we cling to assumptions, instincts, habits, which doesn’t leave a lot of room for an open mind, which is what the first section focuses on. If we think like a scientist, we will be more likely to always look for the facts to support our thoughts and may just end up finding that we need to change our minds.

The second section shows examples of how individuals can use different methods to persuade others to reconsider many baked-in beliefs. He gives some solid direction on how to go slowly and seek common ground in different settings: school, work, and other real life situations. He makes it sound easy, but it will take practice and a desire to connect with others in a deeper level. I mean, one can hardly carry around this book and start flipping to a certain page when in conversation with other people, right?

Maybe not. Ellen Ochoa, an astronaut at NASA, first Latina in space, and deputy director of flight crew operations did something similar. She knew that people had to combat the “fear of looking like a fool, asking questions that people just dismiss, or being told you don’t know what you’re talking about.” She also carried a 3X5 note card in her pocket with questions to ask about every launch and important operational decision. And she was an expert. Carrying around prompts. On things she probably did every day.

The text is interspersed with a variety of illustrations, diagrams, and the occasional cartoon which keeps it even more fun and interesting. Then at the end, there is a handy takeaway section, which is kind of like a quick reference to each section of the book – and just like that, I see the pages I could flip to.
Hello Conference Folks!

We are writing to share with you that a small team has begun quietly working on how to address the challenges of finding bookkeeping resources needed by smaller churches in our conference to enable them to carry out the tasks required as an employer and non-profit entity. We have been gathering resource information from conference churches on their bookkeeping set up, such as:

- Bookkeeping provided by a volunteer or outsourced to a 3rd party bookkeeper/accountant
- Third party payroll services being used that support the unique aspects of clergy compensation
- Accounting software that supports the unique aspects of clergy compensation, church and nonprofit federal and state tax filings.
- Resources and experiences that churches can share with, and recommend, to other churches.

With the information that churches are sharing with us, we are working through how we might be a resource to share with churches in need of bookkeeping resources.

Of special note about a payroll service option: Paychex Partnership: The UCC Pension Boards has partnered with Paychex to benefit UCC-related employers by offering discounts on their services to UCC-related organizations.

You are welcome to join in our work as we work to compile resources and information.

You are also welcome to join the Friday afternoon Zoom gatherings of church administration folks where you can bring financial and other administrative questions.

For more information, please contact any one on the Task Force.

Bookkeeping Task Force

Courtney Stange-Tregear, Minister for Church Vitality
Andrew Warren, Conference Accountant
David Anderson, Magnolia UCC Bookkeeper, david@andersondd.net
Martha Baldwin, Fiscal Oversight Committee Chair
Diana Kelsey Kutas, Conference Treasurer - Current
Kyna Shilling, Stewardship Committee Chair
Why the UCC?

I have been thinking a lot about last years’ Annual Meeting theme lately, Rooted in Love, and what that theme means to me personally. I first discovered church and the UCC on my own in high school. Prior to that, my family had become non-church goers when I was in grade school. I attended a UCC church that had a fabulous youth group – a group where I and others, found comradery and refuge and purpose. When I went away to college, I drifted away from the church and the UCC. Then when my wife and I were looking for a church to raise our son in, I rediscovered the church and the UCC.

Why the UCC? For me, it represents a theological position I am very comfortable with – both emotionally and intellectually. I do not believe God is hellfire and brimstone. I believe in a God that has compassion and love. I do believe in Jesus’s teachings of love one another, no matter who you are. These beliefs may be simplistic but they work for me. And so ever since my first son was born, I have attended, volunteered at, and supported a UCC church. I support the UCC because those simple beliefs stated above are important to me to nurture and grow – that the roots planted in love need sustenance to grow. That sustenance in this world is time and money. That is why I support the UCC. And why I ask you to support the Pacific Northwest Conference and the UCC - to keep the UCC growing, to nurture the belief that God and Jesus represent love and compassion and acceptance of all God’s creatures alive. There are other forces out there that believe something else. That is their right to have that belief. I have my right to my belief of God and Jesus. I believe it is critically important to keep that belief of God and Jesus alive – through time talent and treasure. I humbly ask that you do the same. Keep this Root in Love alive. Please give to the Pacific Northwest Conference.

Andy Warren

Insurance Assistance

The Insurance Assistance Fund Sub-committee of the Conference Stewardship Committee is responsible for allocating assistance to clergy and local churches needing help with the costs of health insurance premiums.

If you would like help in covering the costs of your 2022 health insurance premiums, please contact Pacific Northwest Conference Treasurer, Martha Baldwin at mahtha@hotmail.com or (206) 948-9799. All information is kept strictly confidential and will only be seen by our group.

Thank you for the service you have offered to the United Church of Christ and we are blessed to be able to offer this assistance.
Want justice?
As Christians we are called on to stand up for compassion and in opposition to injustice. But it can be difficult to know how and where to get started and be effective. The Jubilee program exists to inform, equip, and inspire people to act for social justice. The 6-month virtual program is for adults who want to increase their understanding of social justice, deepen their faith, and gain the skills and confidence to take meaningful action while building relationships of support with a community of their peers.

Accepting applications now for our program starting in January.

www.justiceleadership.org
info@justiceleadership.com
Facebook/Instagram: Justice Leadership Program
PCC-UCC Men’s Retreat
at Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center: January 28-30, 2022

(Silent Retreat option begins 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 after dinner Thursday (January 27) to Friday at 5pm, and including dinner. **The price for the total retreat, including the Silent Retreat, is $195;** that price includes seven meals beginning with Friday breakfast. These are difficult times for many of us, so discounted pricing is available upon re-quest to any that need it. Please reach out to Rick Russell, at myrtos@comcast.net. **Registration through Ultra Camp will begin December 6, 2021. Go to https://bit.ly/31mrhpL.** The planning committee has been wrestling with how to make the retreat as safe as possible. **We cannot guarantee a risk-free retreat, but we will provide guidelines and insist 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. Unfortunately, Pilgrim Firs has poor Wi-Fi connectivity so 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 up-dates as the date draws near. We hope for safe travels and look forward to a fun and meaningful re-treat.

*The Conference Men’s Retreat Planning Committee*
Charlie Torres, Don Jenkins, Hans Dankers, Jim Gaudino, Larry Kiriluk, Paul Withington and Rick Russell

Not everyone has an equal voice and vote in our democracy when campaign contributions make the playing field of electoral races vastly uneven. Currently, the fossil fuel industry has an enormous impact on Congress through campaign donations. This is a matter that relates to core values of fairness, justice, and love of neighbor in the face of powerful forces that continue to damage and threaten people and planet for the sake of profit. This free webinar will feature three panelists from some of the leading organizations addressing the influence of fossil fuel money on Congress: Sarah Bryner from OpenSecrets, Tyson Slocum from Public Citizen, and RL Miller from Climate Hawks Vote. Even if you can’t make the scheduled time of 1 pm ET on Wednesday, December 8th, still sign-up, and we will send you a recording. Register now!

[Hyperlink: https://UCC.zoom.us/webinar/register/9516367368602/WN_6e8tOzopS2-0bop3mrfz6w]