



Pacific Northwest CONFERENCE NEWS

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Summer 2026

Acting conference minister will make space to listen

PNC acting conference minister began serving conference on June 1

As the Rev. Dr. Lorraine Cenicerros joined the Pacific Northwest Conference as the acting conference minister beginning June 1, she began meeting with the board and with groups to get acquainted.

Hearing of grief and conflict, she believes her skills as a pediatric hospice chaplain of having difficult conversations with families can help move the PNC from stuck to being curious.

“As a chaplain, I could walk into conflicted situations, hold space and hear the pain that was not being articulated,” Lorraine said.

“I hope to foster conversations to help people share their beliefs and concerns openly,” she said, “to help people be clear about what they want in a settled

Continued on page 4



Lorraine Cenicerros will have hybrid ministry—in person and online—with PNC.

Board of Directors recently held its Spring Retreat

The PNC-UCC Board of Directors met for their annual spring retreat on Friday, June 5, at the DoubleTree Inn and Suites in Seattle, where the conference held its 2026 Annual Meeting.

The focus was on connection and getting to know the new Acting Conference Minister Lorraine Cenicerros better.

On Saturday, June 6, the board met at Fautleroy UCC in Seattle to discuss where their vision for the next 12 months. The group also reflected at length on questions from the Search Committee, Nominations Committee and Stewardship Committee.

“The board looks forward to its work in the next year,” said Sandy Wisecarver, moderator.

She reminded members of the conference that the board meets from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the first Tuesdays of the month. The meetings are open to the public. Committee chairs are granted voice but no vote on discussions related to their committee. Everyone else is invited to participate as observers.

For information, email pastorsandywisecarver@gmail.com.



Board members at the June 5 dinner included Leah Atkinson Bilinski, Ron Patterson, Dawn Koloi, Diana Kutas, Amy Johnson, Sandy Wisecarver, Ryan Lambert, Lorraine Cenicerros, Edwin Galeai and Melanie Childers. Morag Stewart was present but not in the picture.

Photo courtesy of the Board of Directors

PNC is in a season to learn to lead from the truth

Reports & Comments



By The Rev. Dr. Lorraine Cenicerros
Acting Conference Minister

Curiosity invites us to slow down and ask: 'What do you mean by that?'

When I began my doctor of ministry work, I thought I was studying leadership. What I discovered was that I was really studying myself.

My project explored the experiences of a third-generation Mexican American woman serving in leadership within a predominantly White denomination.

Through research, reflection and telling my own story, I began to understand things I had not fully seen before. I examined how assimilation had shaped me, the ways I carried internalized racism and how I had learned to navigate spaces where some parts of me felt welcome while other parts remained hidden.

The work was both liberating and unsettling.

I learned that self-awareness is not something we achieve once and then move beyond. It is the ongoing work of telling ourselves the truth. It asks us to acknowledge both our gifts and our wounds. It asks us to pay attention not only to what we have learned, but also to what we have learned to avoid.

One lesson continues to stay with me: healing often begins when we become curious rather than defensive.

Another lesson emerged as I explored how people understand themselves and one another. We often assume that the words we use mean the same thing to everyone listening. However, words are shaped by culture, experience, history and identity.

Take the phrase "woman of color." For some people, it means any woman who is not White. For others, it specifically evokes the experiences of Black women. Neither understanding is necessarily wrong. The challenge comes when we assume everyone hears the phrase in the same way.

What I have learned is that many misunderstandings do not begin with bad intentions. They begin when we assume we mean the same thing by the words we use. Curiosity invites us to slow down and ask, "What do you mean by that?" It is a simple question, but it can open the door to deeper understanding and stronger relationships.

As I have begun learning about the Pacific Northwest Conference, I have also become aware of the grief present in the conference's life. Some of that grief is connected to specific events and experiences. Some of it is connected to transitions, disappointments, unmet expectations and strained or broken relationships. Some of it is simply the grief that accompanies change.

What has struck me is that this grief is not unique to the Pacific Northwest Conference.

Across the church, conferences and congregations are carrying grief. We grieve declining numbers, changing patterns of ministry, financial uncertainty, cultural shifts and the loss of familiar ways of being church. We grieve conflicts that were never fully resolved. We grieve leaders who left, members who departed and dreams that did not unfold as we had hoped.

Often, we carry these losses quietly.

The challenge is that grief does not disappear simply because we stop talking about it. Unacknowledged grief often finds other ways to express itself. It can become anxiety, resistance, suspicion, exhaustion or conflict. It can make us cautious about trusting one another or reluctant to imagine new possibilities.

Grief itself is not the enemy.

Grief is evidence that something mattered.

The question before us is not whether grief exists. The question is whether we are willing to face it with honesty and care. When we do, grief can become a teacher. It can help us understand what we value, deepen our compassion and prepare us to move forward without pretending the past did not happen.

As I begin serving alongside the Pacific Northwest Conference, I find myself carrying these lessons with me. I do not arrive with all the answers. I arrive with curiosity, a willingness to listen and a belief that every conference has stories that deserve to be heard before anyone attempts to write the next chapter.

At this point in my life, what I bring is not certainty. I bring experience shaped by both successes and mistakes, joys and disappointments. I bring a greater awareness of my own blind spots and assumptions than I had when I first entered ministry. I bring a willingness to sit with difficult truths without rushing to fix them or explain them away.

I also bring a deep belief that God is still at work, even in seasons of uncertainty, grief and transition. Some of the most important things I have learned have emerged not from moments of success, but from moments of discomfort, loss and change. Those experiences have taught me that healing rarely begins with answers. More often, it begins when we are willing to be honest about where we are and curious about where God may be leading us next.

Peace and courage,
Lorraine

DEIB training held July 22

Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Training is required for authorized and lay ministers by the end of 2026.

Registration is July 8 for the last training, called “Culturally Responsive Ministry Training Module 1: Culture and Race”—by the New York UCC Conference specifically for PNC ministers will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., PDT Wednesday, July 22, said Cindy Bauleke, Committee on Ministry chair.

For information, visit <https://pnucc.org/authorized-and-lay-ministers-for-more-approved-DEIB-trainings> or email cindybauleke@gmail.com.

Conference News Briefs

Seattle churches join Pride

Seattle churches may join the Seattle Pride Parade after worship on Sunday, June 28. At a time of trans and queer siblings face increasing attacks on their dignity, safety and belonging, University Congregational UCC believes people of faith have an important role to play. UCUC is sponsoring an entry in the Seattle Pride Parade on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Conference on the theme, “Louder.”

They invite progressive churches to march, walk or roll in the parade together as a visible Christian witness celebrating the sacred worth of every person, said Kyna Shilling, Pride Parade point person.

“Let’s proclaim a message of joy, affirmation and belonging! Let’s show that faith communities can be places where LG-BTQIA+ people are not merely accepted, but cherished!” she invited.

The parade route is along 4th Ave. in downtown Seattle, starting at Westlake Park at Pike & 4th and ending after 12 blocks at the Seattle Center at 4th & Denny.

For information, email kshilling@universityucc.org.

Pension Board offers series

The national UCC Pension Board will offer a Seven-Part Summer Webinar Series on “Because of Ministry—Financial Security and Self Care Sustain the Call” that begins at noon PDT, Wednesday, June 10. It will be on “Multi-Vocational Struggles.”

As more clergy serve outside traditional full-time roles, sustainability requires creativity, adaptability and intentional planning. Retirement readiness is essential for leaders whose income streams are diverse or nontraditional. The session ex-

plores how leaders are building diverse income models while honoring their calling and preparing for the future.

The second session on “Burnout Prevention” will be held at noon PDT, Wednesday, June 24. It will focus on sabbatical stories and formation practices, exploring how rest, reflection and self-care extend the lifespan of ministry and support wiser long-term decisions, including retirement readiness.

Other sessions are on “Mid-Career Check-In” on Thursday, July 16; “Sustainable Investing” on Tuesday, July 28; “Leadership Skills” on Wednesday, Aug. 5; “Money and Ministry” on Wednesday, Aug. 19, and “Employer Support” on Monday, Aug. 31.

For information, visit <https://buff.ly/GCb00Di>.

Pastor leads trauma workshops

Rebecca Sumner, pastor of the Welcome Table Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is offering Trauma-Informed Church Workshops in June to help people in worship address trauma they bring.

A trauma-informed church learns to notice and change small things so the people can stay present, included and empowered. Sessions, which are limited to 12 people, will look at case studies and simple practices. They are 5 to 7 p.m., Monday, June 8, 12 to 1 p.m., Tuesday, June 9, and 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Thursday June 11.

For information or to schedule a workshop for your group, call [Katy Lloyd at 206-930-1639](tel:206-930-1639), email revkaty206@gmail.com or visit <https://forms.gle/JM7PxuuZHAml79CA>.

Clergy support groups start

Communities of Practice offers clergy support and peer learning groups, said Amy Hitchens, who began participating in Communities of Practice when they began in 2006 and has been coordinator for three years.

Amy finds the COP groups a way to counterbalance the pressures of ministry today, helping restore hope and finding meaning in struggles.

“I was in a specialized ministry group when I was a chaplain at Highline Medical Center,” said Amy, noting that previous coordinators were Tara Barber, Cameron Sharp and Brigitta Remole. “COP was a good place for me to continue to imagine

and reimagine my call to ministry and understand where I was at vocationally and to troubleshoot situations in hospital or church setting.”

The groups meet nine times from September through June as ways for clergy to find support, engage in learning and find accountability and encouragement.

In 2026/27, there are groups for specialized ministers, LGBTQIA+ church pastors, a mixed group of specialized and church pastors, pastors of rural churches in the Montana/Wyoming conference and a group for retired ministers. In the past there was a member in discernment group. New groups can form based on interests. The PNC has expanded to the Central Pacific Conference and hopes to draw more from there.

Some of the groups meet only on Zoom, some meet in person, and some do a little of both depending on the season of the year. Groups have from four to eight participants.

Because this program is under the Committee on Ministry, the coordinator and facilitators are all from the PNCUCC.

The cost remains \$250.00 and there are scholarships available.

For information, email amy@npucc.org.

FAN informs on energy credits

The Faith Action Network (FAN) and Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG) are hosting a Zoom webinar to share how to open energy tax credits with elective pay from noon to 1 p.m., Wednesday, June 17. The session will help the FAN partners better understand opportunities for churches, faith organizations, schools, hospitals, nonprofits, businesses and other institutions invest in clean energy solutions.

They will look at free services through the Washington Clean Energy Tax Assistance Program (WA CETCAP) with funds from the state Climate Commitment Act

For information, visit climate.wa.gov/irataxcredits.wa.gov or email churchill@fanwa.org.

FAN workgroups gather

Faith Action Network work groups will gather people across the state to help shape the FAN legislative priorities.

The Interfaith Network for Indigenous Communities met June 8 on Zoom. The Environmental Justice Work group is reconvening said Elizabeth Dickinson of FAN.

For information, email dickinson@fanwa.org.

Lorraine Cenicerros shares her journey and gifts

Continued from page 1
conference minister and in their life together as the conference.”

Lorraine, who is the third generation of a family who immigrated from Mexico to California, said that she hopes to help people clarify their goals and prepare the PNC for to live into them.

Lorraine served from 2022 to 2026 as the conference minister of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference UCC and from 2019 to 2022 as associate conference minister for the Southwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference.

While pastor at a church in California, she also was chair of the Board of Directors for the Southern California Nevada Conference and on committees in the wider church.

Lorraine’s path to ministry began later in life. As a child, she and her sister attended a predominantly White, affluent, pentecostal Foursquare church. It tolerated the diversity of having Hispanic kids until her sister was of dating age. Then that toleration stopped. They didn’t want their sons to date her.

“While my family and I left that church, God never left me,” she said. “God has pursued me in unexpected ways and places.

“I grew up assimilating into the White culture because my parents believed that would be key to me succeeding,” said Lorraine.

After 20 years working with General Telephone of California, she took a buyout and moved to Sedona, Ariz., with her two children when she was seven months pregnant. She worked her way up to be a hotel desk manager and manage a stem cell storage facility.

When her daughter was 16, the daughter applied to do childcare at a predominantly White, affluent UCC church.

Lorraine went a few times. “I perused a UCC website and decided that was the place I

needed to be. I said, ‘Ok, here I am,’” recounted Lorraine, who accepted when she was invited to teach Sunday school.

“God was calling me back to church,” said Lorraine.

She completed a bachelor’s degree in political science and government with a focus on race, class and gender in 2008 at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Then she returned to California to study at Claremont School of Theology, where she earned a master of divinity degree in 2012.

Lorraine served a local church as a pastor and then worked in pediatric hospice ministry with a Catholic hospital in Santa Monica.

She began to recognize when she was a hospice chaplain that her ministerial skills would be useful in mid-judicatory ministry in the UCC.

She accepted a call to the Wisconsin Conference.

Meanwhile, she began work on a doctor of ministry degree at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. For that program, she wrote her thesis in 2025 on “Assimilation to Liberation: Ethnographic Narrative of Third Generation Mexican American Female Serving in Predominantly White Denomination.”

“Seminary was a safe place to deconstruct my theology and reconstruct a theology authentic to who I am and where I am in life,” she said.

“I hope to make a such a safe space here for people to deconstruct beliefs about race, so we do not call others racist. The system of racism is the water we *all* swim in,” Lorraine said.

She continued by explaining that growing up focusing on assimilating to succeed, she internalized racism, even against “people who look like me.”

“If I could be racist against my people, I needed to understand how we all keep systems

in place that benefit White people,” she said, telling of unpacking that assimilation so she could more authentically be who she is.

“I know what it is like to be Hispanic and think White, and I know what it’s like to be proudly Hispanic. It’s hard to unpack systems that inform us before we are born,” said Lorraine.

“I am able to bring a big picture systems approach to help us visualize what is needed to put the pieces in place,” she continued.

“Systems and relationships are a central dynamic of change in church culture,” she explained. “I feel called to support the church and her pastors as we grow into a new way of being.”

Versed in the Manual on Ministry and UCC history and polity, Lorraine cares deeply about supporting UCC congregations and pastors in their work, especially when churches face conflict.

“Over time, in my early ministry, I developed a preaching style that sought a middle road, trusting that if I stayed there, everyone might find themselves somewhere in the Word,” she said.

Recently, however, she has been stirred by the prophetic call—during a vigil for Renee Macklin Good—from Episcopal Bishop Rob Hirschfeld of New Hampshire, advising clergy to prepare their wills, because the “cruelty, injustice, and horror that has been unleashed in Minneapolis” calls faith leaders to “stand with our bodies between the powers of this world and the most vulnerable.”

She noted that “the most vulnerable” now include those exercising their First Amendment right to protest and to make their views known.

Straddling the world of her ethnicity and the world of not wanting to alienate congrega-

tions, images of young people being arrested, targeted for being brown expanded her discomfort.

Her support of eight Kansas Oklahoma clergy who went to Minneapolis was not about Republican or Democrat, right or left, conservative or progressive.

“It’s about our shared humanity,” she said. “It’s about the Gospel call to love our neighbors, and to love others, every single other. It’s about treating the vulnerable among us with dignity and care. It’s about standing between powers and principalities and those who are being dehumanized.”

Just after Lorraine decided it was time to leave the Kansas Oklahoma Conference, she contacted Diane Wieble, the UCC national staff person who places conference ministers, and learned the PNC was open.

“I follow where the Spirit leads, and it was to the PNC,” she said.

Since starting her hybrid ministry with the PNC, Lorraine has learned about the spoken and unspoken grief in the PNC about Phil Hodson not being called as settled minister, about not having a settled minister for a long time, about some wanting a woman of color lead the conference.

She calls for honest conversations about where people are and calls for people to give each other the space to listen to each other.

“To move forward, we need people to be curious about what that means for different people,” Lorraine said, believing it’s “possible to create a space of love so we can hear, learn from and unpack each other, recognizing we are all racist, and racism supports systems that separate us.

“We never know where Spirit will lead us,” she affirmed.

For information, email lce-nicerros@pncucc.org.

CM Search Committee holds listening sessions

The Search Committee for a settled Conference Minister (CM) continues to hold both virtual and in-person listening sessions to gather feedback from members of the PNCUCC before beginning to write our Conference Profile.

As of early June, there have been 12 listening sessions with between three and 25 participants each.

“We’ve heard from more than 100 people who are passionate about our conference life,” said Dee Eisenhauer of the Search Committee on June 7 just before meeting with folks gathering in person at Veradale UCC in Spokane Valley.

The same day, another group was meeting at Christian Worship Center in Anchorage. A virtual session is set for June 11 at 7:00 p.m., and at 11:15 a.m., Sunday, June 14, there will be discussions with the Search committee at University Congregational UCC in Seattle and at Wayside UCC in Federal Way.

Dee, who retired last year as pastor at Eagle Harbor in Bainbridge Island, added that a few other sessions are in the works, inviting folks to watch the weekly conference emails for updates.

“We are not able to visit each congregation but are aiming for as wide a spread of geography as we can attain,” she said.

The Search Committee has a tab on the PNCUCC website, where people will soon find the listening session questions in a google form so conference members who have not attended a conversation can provide written feedback.

To widen the participation and reach those unable to attend a session, Dee said that the Conference Minister Search Committee invites people to send their responses to their committee’s listening session questions.

Before talking about the conference, the questions first



Bianca Davis, Search Committee chair, leads a listening session at Spirit of Peace in Issaquah. Photo courtesy of Bianca Davis

check in about responders’ congregations.

1. How would you describe the “soul” of your congregation right now?

Let’s talk about our perceptions of the Conference and our needs and hopes for a new CM.

2. How would you describe the PNCUCC to someone who didn’t know anything about us? Please share three descriptors.

3. What benefits do you perceive from our covenant relationships through the PNCUCC? What challenges do you perceive we are experiencing as a Conference, if any?

4. Where do you feel the “growing pains” in our Conference? What is one thing we aren’t doing yet—or aren’t doing well—that a new leader should prioritize?

5. What are the biggest hurdles your congregation is facing today—such as building costs, aging membership, social justice fatigue? What kind of support do you need from a conference minister to meet these head-on?

6. If there were positive changes in the Conference for the next five years, how would you describe the future PNCUCC? Who is God calling us to become in this corner of the world?

7. “Where two or three are

gathered, there will be disagreement...” When we disagree as a Conference—whether it’s about theology, justice issues or finances—how do we treat each other? What would you like our next CM to role model when disagreements arise?

8. What communities or causes is your congregation passionate about serving? Do you expect your CM to work shoulder-to-shoulder with you in those concerns/causes?

9. Anything else you want the Search Committee to know? “Please keep the committee and the candidates who may apply in the coming months in your prayers,” said Dee.

Along with Dee, members of the search committee are Bianca Davis, chair, May Alaelua, Tyler Torres, Lauralee Sorenson, Ann-Marie Illsley and Byron Monohon. They are receiving feedback from congregations, clergy and conference leaders to draft a profile of the conference, which Diane Weible, the region’s liaison with the national UCC to assist in conference minister search processes, will circulate to interested applicants.

Once the committee prepares it, Diane will review and approve it.

In listening sessions so far, Dee said she is hearing that

people are longing for better connections and communication among churches.

“Some feel isolated. Some local members are not aware of the conference, seeing their congregations as stand-alone bodies,” Dee said. “Some are concerned about a recent history of conflict and how the conference handles conflict.”

Generally, she is hearing hope, hope that a new conference minister will be a good resource person to help local congregations find the resources to help with their varied interests so they can be excellent in their ministries.

The conference minister is the primary spiritual and organizational leader of the PNC, cultivating relationships that strengthen the vitality, connection and shared mission of the church across the region. This role includes building and sustaining meaningful relationships with clergy, congregations and lay leaders—offering guidance, care and accountability in times of discernment, transition and renewal.

The conference minister also equips local churches for ministry in their contexts and fosters covenantal connection across the conference, guiding search and call processes, providing pastoral care and consultation to clergy and church leaders, interpreting and advancing the mission and priorities of the PNC and representing the Conference with the wider UCC and ecumenical partners.

In addition, this leader invites churches to deeper engagement with God’s movement in the world—encouraging communities and to participate faithfully in that work together.

For updated information on the search for a conference minister, visit <https://pncucc.org/conference-minister-search>.

Everett UCC moves and makes next steps to future

Everett UCC voted to sell its building to Housing Hope to use the property to build affordable senior housing in downtown Everett, said Davi Weasley, pastor.

Until March, the church rented space at their old building from Housing Hope.

They began using their new worship space, which they are renting from Everett Community College about two miles or a 10-minute drive away from its former location.

In addition, the church moved out of the old office and into new office space in April.

Housing Hope expects to tear down the building and begin construction in the next few months.

The church draws about 25 to 35 to worship on Sundays from throughout Everett and around Snohomish County

“Our new worship space is flexible. The chairs and tables are on wheels so we can do creative movement and small group conversations,” said Davi, who began as pastor in March 2025, after serving as a pastor at First Congregational UCC in Bellingham.

An American Baptist pastor, they previously served 16 years in ministry in Baptist and Lutheran churches and at Night Ministry in Chicago.

“I’m excited that Everett UCC is the kind of congregation that looked at itself and neighborhood and decided there was a better use for the property and that funding from Housing Hope could help the church discover who it is and what God has for us,” Davi said.

For 25 years, the church has had a Thursday evening



Everett UCC squeezes office and meeting space into a downtown strip of offices that is accessible and visible. Below is the new worship space in a classroom. Photo courtesy of Davi Weasley



community meal. It will not continue that, so they are imagining new ways to serve the community in the future in two locations.

They are now renting office space in downtown Everett about five blocks from the old church site in a strip of office buildings. The office has a front room and two back rooms.

The front room has space for Bible study and meetings.

They have space there to restart the Food Pantry they have had for 10 years on a modest basis. Eight came to the first day it opened, five regulars and three new. Several members packed food bags to give out to people who came

“As word gets out, we’ll see who will come,” Davi said.

Previously about 30 came to the food pantry twice a

month on Tuesdays. Many of them were from the shelter Everett Gospel Mission ran in the church building. Those housed there have found housing or have slots in other shelter programs the mission runs.

Davi said church members feel excited about the new space because it is more welcoming to newcomers than a traditional church with a steeple.

“We are praying and dreaming about what’s next for us in community outreach and worship in our new spaces,” they said.

Members are gearing up for Everett Pride, seeing it as a way to spread word that Everett UCC is a welcoming congregation.

As they look ahead at their mission and life, members are working with graphic designer on new logo to design an image that readily shares who they are.

“For years we have been known as the rainbow church, so we want to incorporate rainbow colors as key to who we are,” Davi explained.

“We’re a welcoming place, rooted in community, a place with space to grow, and a place that serves the community. I think there are many folks in the community who could be fed by congregation like ours, but they do not know we exist,” Davi said.

“We are a welcoming scrappy band of faithful believers—excited about what we can do together. There are many LGBTQIA folks who do not connect with a church but want a connection with a Jesus following community where everyone is welcome,” Davi said, noting the congregation has been Open and Affirming since the late 1990s.

“I’m impressed with how loving and persistent church folks have been,” they said.

For information, call 425-252-7224 or email davi@everettucc.org.

Normandy Park embarks on Summer of Kindness

Normandy Park UCC in Seattle is joining the United States Kindness campaign of the Ohio nonprofit, Values-in-Action Foundation, and its initiative to celebrate America's 250th anniversary by doing 250 acts of kindness.

Amy Hitchens, pastor, read about it in the national UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter, said the church and members plan to do 250 acts of kindness.

“The goal is to reframe the narrative of the U.S. during its 250th anniversary to move beyond the government’s non-sense in a time marked crassness, crudeness and little civility,” she said. “I like the idea of promoting kindness, decency and goodness in the U.S. and being on the same page with others to promote kindness.”

The newsletter said “spiritual, mental and physical wellness are justice issues.”

Amy explained that kindness is a stronger, deeper value than just being nice.

Normandy Park UCC, a church of 75 members that draws 30 to 45 on Sunday mornings—in person and on Zoom. It was a church plant of Fauntleroy 65 years ago for people who bought homes south in Normandy Park. It included folks in Burien and Des Moines, and now also draws from Auburn, Kent, Federal Way and Port Townsend. On Zoom some come from other states.

The church has several plans for its kindness campaign.

- Amy will preach sermons on kindness through the summer. She will also invite people to share stories about when someone has been kind to them.

- One Sunday in June, they will use resources from the UCC Wellness Ministries and passed out “Make America Kind” buttons—two for each person who comes, so each has one to give to someone else.

- It plans a Father’s Day breakfast with conversations



Normandy Park announces participation in kindness campaign.

and activities on kindness.

- A retired elementary school librarian is creating a summer list and will share children’s books on kindness.

- Members will read and discuss the novel, *The Incredible Kindness of Paper*, and do activities related to origami.

“The campaign gives us a focus that amplifies our message of welcome and hospitality to our neighbors,” Amy said, adding that it’s easier for members to “evangelize kindness” to their neighbors. “While they may be uncomfortable talking about religion, they can give a kindness button and talk about kindness.

“We are infusing acts of kindness into all that we do as church together this summer. It is not that we are changing what we do, it’s that we are being more intentional in how we do it,” she said.

While they will develop some specific activities for the campaign, Amy said Normandy Park, like many, has kindness built into its church life.

- In early June, they had a booth at Pride in Burien.

- On fourth Tuesdays every other month, 10 members join three neighbor churches—Prince of Peace Lutheran, Grace Lutheran and Des Moines United Methodist—that to offer a community meal for 50 seniors on fixed incomes and folks in group homes. The other churches are do it monthly.

- Some members volunteer one night a month to prepare food bags for the food bank.

- For 25 years, others have volunteered bringing meals to a hospitality house related to a women’s shelter started by area churches and housed at a church in Burien. Normandy Park supports it financially and has a member on the board.

- The church has been involved until recently with Mary’s Place, which is undergoing renovations.

- Members also sew cloth bags and fill them with hygiene products—toothbrushes, deodorant, pads and more. They give them to school nurses at three high schools and a middle school to give to students.

- Normandy Park also joins the local CROP Walk.

- Amy meets with six Presbyterian, United Methodist, UCC, Unitarian and Jewish clergy to plan ecumenical events, such as a Thanksgiving service.

- Within the congregation, kindness also comes in the form of a spiritual formation class doing enneagram study and contemplative prayer, stewardship practices of recycling and composting, and holding a Bibles and Brews Bible study on Zoom.

- In 2025, Normandy Park became a Creation Justice Church. With a grant from King County, it is using part of its four acres of land to grow vegetables. One member is becoming

ing a master gardener.

- As a way to foster healing, it offered a Sound Bath on a recent Saturday morning. Sitting on yoga mats, 30 participants meditated and relaxed as they listened to tones of Tibetan singing bowls, crystal bowls, chimes and ocean sounds.

- Participating in the church’s choir, lay worship planning, card writing, pastoral care visits and a lunch bunch are also ways to spread kindness.

Given how easy it is to do acts of kindness, Amy invites other PNC churches to join Normandy Park.

“We can all do fun, simple things to be a positive force in our communities during the summer, into the fall and to the end of the year. Kindness is meant to be shared,” said Amy, who came to fill in at Normandy Park in July 2017 and was called as the settled minister in 2018.

She grew up Presbyterian near Normandy Park and graduated from Burien High School. Her mother, a nurse, lives in Des Moines. Amy’s grandparents were Presbyterian missionaries for 20 years, so she grew expecting to serve. By 19, she knew she wanted to serve God but did not expect to be ordained.

After graduating from Seattle Pacific University in 1996 in European studies and Spanish, she spent two years as a Presbyterian volunteer in mission with migrant workers in Forest Grove, Ore., where she attended a UCC church.

She went to Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley to prepare for nonprofit work. A PSR friend interested Amy in doing a year residency in clinical pastoral education (CPE). That sparked her interest in chaplaincy and path to be ordained in 2004 as a hospital chaplain before starting at Normandy Park.

For information, call 206-824-1770 and email amy@npucc.org.

Colfax pastor takes teams to Mexico, Costa Rica

Michael Birnbaum, pastor at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Colfax, will be leading a team from the church and community for a “It’s Time to Serve” Mexico Mission Trip.

This is the fourth year he has taken a group from Colfax on a mission trip.

In 2026, he plans to take a team from Nov. 15 to 21 to Baja, Mexico. Participants will fly to Phoenix and drive in vans to and from Puerto Penasco.

Michael said the mission trip includes adventure, fun and mission service. The mission service activities include helping with local church projects, children’s after-school outreach, light construction projects, meal programs, distributing supplies, doing English tutoring and, for those qualified, doing medical service activities in partnership with the local Ministry of Health.

The team will include nurses, doctors, dentists and health profession students.

The fun and adventure include fellowship with local people, shopping, day and half-day tourist trips, free time and cultural outings.

Five years ago, Michael, who has 25 years of experience in leading mission teams with Well Child International, began going to Colfax once or twice a month to do supply preaching.

Now, although he retired, he is doing all the pastoral work—funerals, weddings, pastoral care, adult classes and more—along with preaching three Sundays a month.

Michael grew up in a German Lutheran family in Corpus Christi, Texas, and began college at Texas Tech University but felt a call to ministry, so he finished his bachelor’s degree in the pre-seminary program the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church requires at Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Ind., earning. His degree in Greek, Hebrew and Latin in 1972.



EMTs check a baby while another participant builds a cooking shelter.

Photo courtesy of Mike Birnbaum

He took a job in a store for two years while his wife finished her undergraduate studies in Colorado before beginning seminary studies in St. Louis, Mo. He finished his master of divinity degree at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif in 1977.

For the next 40 years, Michael worked in and out of parish work, spending time missionary work in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Mexico, coordinating programs of the Lutheran church for health and ministry services from 1992 to 1998 with banana workers in Costa Rica.

He returned to Texas when his father was ill. He lived in Texas but served in Mexico from 2008 to 2012. Then he served an independent Lutheran church in Arizona before retiring.

“I also had the idea of doing mission experiences for universities, organizations and churches—international service-learning opportunities,” said Michael.

Since retiring, he has connected with Well Child International because of their focus on youth and families.

When visiting grandchildren in Eastern Washington, where he has a hunting ranch in Hunters, he reconnected with pastor friend serving a church in Lacrosse.

That friend connected him with Plymouth in Colfax for supply preaching, which grew after two years to being part-time pastor three years ago.

Michael connected with the Pacific NW Conference when he first came.

He has also preached at Chewelah, Colville and Guemes Island UCC churches.

Michael has continued here to lead mission trips, taking groups one year to Costa Rica and since then to Mexico, so he has invited folks from Colfax, as well as nursing students at Grand Canyon University in Arizona, where he served as adjunct faculty.

While he has ties in Nicaragua, he has not taken teams

there but has raised funds for orphanages in Nicaragua.

Michael also did mission work with the Lutheran Church at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Tanzania, where the German church has sent mission workers since the 1800s.

On the mission trips, which often have a construction project, participants have often found their one niche. One woman with sewing and quilting skills bought sewing kits for teen girls and taught them to sew and give a kit.

Another group brought sewing machines for sewing training.

Much of the work is in health care, so Michael is focusing on recruiting EMTs from Whitman County Ambulance Service and doctors, nurses and dentists Whitman County Medical Center. On a previous trip, a group of EMTs learned medical Spanish they can use when responding to accidents locally.

They do health ministry, visiting people in their homes and assessing their needs, as well as having the doctors, nurses and dentists to provide care in a clinic.

“We recruit people in the community as an outreach for the church to be visible in the community. People come back and continue to support the missions,” he said. “People gain an opportunity to serve the community, nation and world, to get their hands wet and dirty, and help people directly.”

Usually 10 to 15 go, including those from Grand Canyon University, because they travel in 15-passenger vans they pick up at the mission center in Phoenix. Participants cover their travel, lodging and food expenses through a trip fee.

For information, call 509-710-3285, email michael@wellchildinternational.org or visit wellchildinternational.org.

Westminster UCC confers 'pastor emerita' title

On Sunday, May 31, Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane honored its former pastor, Andy CastroLang, with the title "Pastor Emerita."

Andy served the church from 2002 to 2022.

With that title comes recognition of appreciation for her preaching, teaching, community and interfaith advocacy, pastoral care and conference leadership roles.

The title is also given in recognition that she no longer is pastor of the church, in keeping with the UCC professional clergy covenant to avoid any tension between a previous and current pastor.

In his sermon that day, Bob Feeny, who has been pastor in the four years since after overlapping several months with Andy, expressed what some concerns might be.

In looking back at a season in the life of the church, honoring a pastor as "pastor emerita" recognizes "20 years of exceptional service, so "there's something of a triangle between a congregation, their current pastor and their previous minister," he noted.

Knowing his predecessor means that he is not tempted as some may be to point blame related to any issues.

Bob is aware that in his four years, as it was for Andy in her 20 years, and as it is for church, over the years there have been different versions of themselves.

"We cannot survive in ministry without changing. Relationships change us. Curious people who care about each other tend to keep changing. I know you have changed, evolved and grown. It's the nature of systems, baked into God's plan for creation. The story keeps unfolding," Bob pointed out in his sermon.

What gave him pause in conversations leading to the de-



Retired pastor Andy CastroLang stands as she is recognized as pastor emerita of Westminster Congregational UCC in Spokane on May 31.

cision to honor Andy were the following questions:

- "Are we looking back to relive glory days?"
- "Are we doing this to protect us from changing?"
- "Are we looking at the past or imagining the next 20 years?"

Bob has been reassured when he meets for lunch with Andy that a congregation may feel "cranky" about changing, but "we all need to keep changing and evolving."

So he believes that what the church needs to recognize in its life is "the church's willingness to show up and change over and over," he said.

"Christ calls us to be transformed, and we keep answering that call," Bob said, seeing that honoring Andy is a time to recover "the historic memory of change" and to realize Westminster UCC always will be "a people in progress, so we honor our history by continuing to change and grow.

"Church works because some of us push, and some of us pull, and some of us keep our feet as firmly planted for as

long as we can," he concluded. "We know there are challenges today, there will be challenges ahead, and the answers are in this room because we stay in the room together.

"We keep our balance by holding onto, celebrating, learning from, being changed by each other as the terrain shifts around us."

Susan Chamberlin, a member of Chewelah UCC, brought words of greeting from the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC on behalf of the Committee on Ministry.

Westminster members Mary Rupert, Lorna Kropp, Doris Holdaway and Alan Borgens read the acclamation of honor.

Excerpts from the acclamation recognize Andy for her "spiciness and infectious energy," for her modeling welcome and inclusiveness, and for her warm, caring listening.

It also acclaimed her preaching for being based on biblical scholarship, bringing the scripture alive for today, for her joyful welcome at the communion table, for modernizing

the chancel by replacing choir pews and rails with open space, for leading the congregation to update its Mission and Belief statements and for creating covenants with people of color and on the environment.

Andy was serving the congregation when it celebrated 140 years, when it decided to stay in its historic downtown building and as it stabilized membership through the COVID pandemic.

In addition, she served the PNC-UCC in various capacities, including as moderator, supporting other Eastern Washington UCC pastors, engaging in the Spokane community through the Spokane Alliance, Planned Parenthood and on other social concerns.

She led the congregation through the process of becoming an Open and Affirming UCC church.

Moderator Rob Sauders and Susan presented a certificate, and Bob led a blessing and laying on of hands.

For information, call 508-624-1336 or visit westminster-ucc.org.

N-Sid-Sen has full season of UCC and other camps

The enthusiasm of campers and volunteers coming to N-Sid-Sen have not only been inspiring but have also been working branch by branch through the extensive cleanup needed since a Dec. 17 storm tore out 35 trees in a swath from the chapel on the beach through cabin 12. A logger cleared out the logs, leaving branches to pick up and take to a burn pile.

N-Sid-Sen has been full this spring with a Temple Beth Shalom camp, retreats and camps for quilters, a yoga group, three Montessori schools and Catholic youth.

One third grader in the Montessori camp likened the cleanup progress to the adage about how to eat an elephant. It's done one bite at a time.

Each of the groups holding retreats and camps during the spring have taken some time in their days to help carry branches to burn piles as a way to give back.

"We used to call our spring and fall volunteer camp weeks Work Camp. Now we call it 'Giving Back Camp,'" said Linda Crowe who has spent the last year as a volunteer camp manager with her husband, Randy, who was camp managing director from 1990 to 2012.

Giving back will be part of the activities of each camp as there are so many branches to pick up to clean up and for fire safety.

The lower hiking loop has been cleared of trees, but the higher hiking trail still needs work, which will happen at the Giving Back Camp in June 14 to 20.

While there was little or no damage to cabins, other than one dislodged from its foundation by root balls, there was damage in Stillwater Lodge. When the power was out, the sprinkler system activated, damaging the flooring.

Participants in the June and October Lady of the Lake



Randy and Linda Crowe look ahead to providing hospitality.

Dance camps, which have come respectively 40 and 45 years, have donated more than \$7,000 toward repairs beyond what was covered by insurance.

Along with grounds cleanup, Randy, Linda and volunteers have repainted and replaced the carpets in Spirit Lodge.

Some participants in the March Textile Camp made 10 quilt tops which will be finished by participants in that camp and a later Quilters Camp.

As one of the regular quilters, Ginny Denton of Colville First Congregational designed and created an artistic quilt that will hang in Spirit Lodge.

Randy said N-Sid-Sen has a full season with United Church of Christ summer camps—for elementary, middle and high schooler kids, for families and an intergenerational camp—from July 12 to Aug. 8 on the theme "In the Wilderness," and many weeks and weekends from June into the fall reserved.

Intermediate and Junior High camps will share the week of July 12 to 18. Mary

Lu Vait and her husband John Hubbe of Westminster UCC in Spokane will lead Intermediate Camp for fifth and sixth graders. Amara Oden, pastor of Suquamish UCC, will co-direct Junior High Camp with Leah Bilinski, pastor of Fauntleroy.

Senior High Camp will share the week of July 19 to 25 with You and Me camp July 19 to 22 and Kids Camp July 22 to 25. Aislyn Crane of Admiral UCC in Seattle will co-direct Senior High Camp with Bob Feeny, pastor of Westminster UCC. Becca Hughes and Debbie Peterson of Fauntleroy UCC in Seattle will lead You and Me Camp, just before Kids Camp, led by Kim Kotlan of Westminster UCC.

Leading Family Camp July 25 to Aug. 1 are Ryan Lambert, pastor of Kirkland UCC, and Emily Hanson of Fauntleroy UCC.

Camp Together Aug. 2 to 8 co-leaders are Linda and Randy of Westminster UCC, along with Dee Eisenhauer who just retired as pastor of Eagle Harbor UCC in Bainbridge Island.

Four of the five summer staff who will help with kitchen tasks, cleaning buildings and grounds maintenance are from PNC-UCC churches. Two will also be lifeguards, Marin Lambert of Kirkland UCC and Freddy Tanner, whose family has a cabin nearby and who was a lifeguard a previous summer.

The other staff are Terrance Bell-Towne from Chewelah UCC, Sonia Cassell of Bellevue First and Eva Bernard of Plymouth UCC in Seattle.

"Our programs happen because of incredible gifts of time, talent and money in the last 10 months," said Randy, telling of one man who visited to prepare for the dance camp in June. He found Randy at Spirit Lodge painting. When Randy told him the lodge needed a washer and dryer, he pledged to cover the cost.

Linda spoke of the importance of drawing people for the first time, along with the many long-term camp supporters who keep N-Sid-Sen cared for.

One woman from Colbert, who came to the Women's Retreat, commented: "I wonder why it has taken me so long to get here."

Another woman, who came from Seattle and went to N-Sid-Sen as a camper years ago, decided to send her children to Kids Camp and to come with them as a volunteer.

"We leave out brochures for our summer camps, knowing that those who come to other retreats will pick them up," said Linda. "We hope they will want to come back to the camps we offer."

The Pacific Northwest Conference continues its search for a new managing director to provide a ministry of hospitality for all who come to N-Sid-Sen on the east shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene.

For information, call 208-689-3489, email randy@n-sid-sen.org or visit n-sid-sen.org.

Pilgrim Firs opens doors for annual Pride Picnic

Director reconnects with past leaders

Mark Boyd, executive director of Outdoor Ministries for the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC, will lead the You and Me camp at Pilgrim Firs this summer with Kristen Miller and Lauren Stoneberg, who introduced him to camp.

"I'm especially excited to be sharing this time with Kristen and Lauren as they both introduced me to Junior High Youth years ago. Kristen was resourceful leaders. Lauren was a camper who never failed to impress," he said.

"These two were my introduction to Pilgrim Firs youth camp and that began my path that led to my current role as executive director for both our camps, N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs," Mark said.

"It will be great to be back in a more hands-on role as we share the message that God has for us as we venture into the 'In the Wilderness' curriculum this summer," said Mark, looking forward to seeing many conference children, youth and adults come to their "home on the lake."

You & Me Camp will be held July 5 to 8 at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard. It's for children entering grades one to four to attend with an adult guardian.

For information, visit [camp.pncucc.org/ucc-sum-](http://camp.pncucc.org/ucc-sum-mer-camp)



Group converses in Pilgrim Firs' Pride Garden.



Visitors to the Kitsap Pride Picnic at Pilgrim Firs enjoy a barbecue dinner.

Photos courtesy of Pilgrim Firs

mer-camp.

Camp Together will celebrate wonders

Mark also added a word to point to "Camp Together," an intergenerational event Aug. 2 to 8 at Camp N-Sid-Sen, The PNC outdoor ministry site in the mountains of northern Idaho on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

"We'll create a community and celebrate the wonders of God's glorious creation," Mark said. "Together we'll reflect on the wilderness of truly wild and unexplored places and situations to the wilderness of everyday life."

Camp Together this summer will provide activities, adventures and learning opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Those include stories, songs, campfires, crafts, learning about labyrinths, looking at stars through telescopes, games, hikes, water activities, quiet conversations, thoughtful reflections, play time and prayer time.

"It's directors, Randy and Linda Crowe, share a deep love for our outdoor ministry programs. They have been full-time volunteers at N-Sid-Sen this past year," he said, celebrating their gift to N-Sid-Sen.

In the Camp Together tradition of reading an epic story, they will explore how *The Silver Chair* by C.S. Lewis connects with wilderness experiences.

For information, visit

Pilgrim Firs hosts annual Pride Picnic beside Pride Garden

Zachary Norenberg, associate director of Pilgrim Firs Camp and Retreat Center on Lake Flora, was excited to share the beauty of Pilgrim Firs from noon to 4 p.m., Sunday, June 7, for the annual Picnic with Pride in partnership with Kitsap Pride.

"This is our gift to the

broader community: a free afternoon of food, music, laughter and belonging," he said.

There was live music, a barbecue lunch, lawn games, a tie-dye station, button making, rock painting and a "Build the Rainbow" scavenger hunt for all ages.

"As a PNCUCC camp, Pil-

grim Firs exists to be a place where everyone experiences welcome," said Zachary.

"Hosting this celebration is one of the most natural things we can do, opening our land and our table to the LG-BTQIA+ community and their friends and families as Pride Month begins," he added.

"This is one way we show up as the church in our local community," he added, inviting donations to Kitsap Pride for youth programming in Kitsap County.

For information, visit kitsapride.org/2026/05/picnic-with-pride-2026 or pilgrim-firs.org.

camp.pncucc.org/event/898

Board members say covenant is about relationships

Covenant in the Pacific Northwest Conference connects 76 churches in Washington, Alaska and North Idaho. Churches are invited to consult and collaborate with one another in a covenantal partnership.

Relationships among churches in the conference nurture each other and are empowered by resources and relationships through the conference with the national UCC, with global partners and ecumenically with churches around the world.

In that setting, Conference News editor Mary Stamp interviewed several members of the PNC Board of Directors about the impact of those relationships and resources on them and their ministries in the local and wider church settings.

They shared about the mutual empowerment they experience as they encounter ideas of how different churches are doing ministry where they are, about the exchange of resources and ideas from the global, national, regional and local churches.

Ron Patterson

Excited people excite other people

Ron Patterson, who is scribe, came to the PNC 10 years ago after retiring in Florida. He brings experience on the local, conference and national levels of the UCC, including attending every General Synod of the national UCC since 1977. He served churches in Ohio, New York and Florida, retiring from a 1,200-member UCC church in Naples, Fla. He served on the national board, executive council and was moderator in three conferences. I'm now on the nominating committee for the national board of the UCC.

I have seen a more positive spirit in the conference, beyond financially, for two years ago. I'm speaking of the spirit I have experienced at recent installations of new pastors and the active engagement of local churches and pastors. That spirit was demonstrated by the "Come and See" videos churches prepared for Annual Meeting. My fifth grade Sunday school class prepared the video for Fox Island UCC.

Our conference has many churches with exciting things happening. For me, the connection of churches is enhanced as clergy hold one another accountable and support one another emotionally, while striving for excellence in local churches that empower local leaders through mission. For example, my Sunday school class went to Tacoma to give lunches to detainees when they were released from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center. If a local church gets mission right everything else falls in place. Giving follows enthusiasm. People are excited when other people are excited and that happens as churches connect with each other.

Sandy Wisecarver

We can do more together

Sandy Wisecarver, pastor at Blaine UCC and moderator, came to the UCC 15 years ago from the United Methodist Church, finds that the ties between congregations, the conference and the national church strengthen her ministry:

We can do more together. If we join together across churches, we can reach more. We can support each other. When the elevator at our church in Blaine failed, we approached the conference which provided funds to help us repair it. In turn, our church believes in helping others beyond our local church, so we give to all five designated national UCC offerings.

When a No Hate Washington bill was proposed in the state, I learned about them at a board meeting. I shared the information with our church, and we joined in the advocacy to pass those bills in the state. I also appreciate the PNC email listserve as a resource. People around the conference post information on events, concerns and ideas. In addition, I look at Weekly Seeds on national UCC website for ideas for sermons for the week based on the lectionary.

In the Come and See videos for Annual Meeting, I learned what churches across the conference are doing. They are posted on our youtube page as a resource and continue to give us ideas on what we might and on different ways to be the church.

Amy Johnson

We are blessed by church relationships

Amy Johnson, a board member, serves as minister for sexuality, education and justice education for the Faithful Action Team of the UCC National Ministries: I've worked and volunteered in many settings of the church over the past several decades—from local church youth ministry, being in a Community of Practice, conference camp directing, regional and national youth events, being a member of the PNCUCC board and being on staff of the UCC National Ministries. Everywhere I serve, and in whatever way, I am blessed by the relationships I have with people within and among the church.

To me, being a follower of Jesus is to be in community with one another, and to stay in community over time—to say and listen to the hard things, to celebrate together, mourn together, eat together, sing together. In these ways, whether we are in a local church pew, an outdoor chapel at one of our camps, or in a sanctuary in Minneapolis with people of many faiths, we create and strengthen community. When we do that in one place, we carry it to other places and other people. Our community becomes larger and wider, and we get to see more and more of God's beloved kin-dom in the making.

Veradale UCC welcomes 2026 Peace Runners

Veradale UCC in Spokane Valley will welcome about 10 participants in the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run, for a dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, June 27, at 611 N. Progress Rd.

The runners will share their stories and tell about the global torch relay that offers everyday people a chance to express their longing for peace.

The Peace Run is a global relay run with runners carrying the Peace Torch and passing it from hand to hand, person to person, nation to nation.

Shari McEvoy, a participant in Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) and in the Eastside Gladiators, had met Salil Wilson, who has been participating in the Peace Run for 30 years, while both were biking on the Coeur d'Alene Trail near Harrison.

He was biking for peace and told her about the run.

Shari, a nurse and runner, contacted Gen Heywood, convener of FLLC and pastor of Veradale UCC, to see if there was a place to host them locally while they were passing through on their route from Seattle on June 23 to Sandpoint on June 28.

The Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run is a relay torch run done around the world. This year, participants left New York City on April 17 and plan to run through all 40 states as part of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

Gen contacted Salil and they arranged for the dinner. The runners will be staying with friends and family in the area.

"If people want to run with them, leaving at 6:30 a.m., Sunday, they are welcome to join them," said Gen.

The church will welcome the runners with the banners hanging outside the entry for June.



Torch bearer and runners join in the Oneness-Home Peace Run in Minneapolis.

Photo courtesy of peacerun.org



For June, Veradale UCC will be flying rainbow, multi-message, Black Lives Matter and 250th anniversary banners when it welcomes the 2026 United States Peace Runners in June 27 for a dinner.

Photo courtesy of Gen Heywood

Those banners celebrate 250 years of religious freedom in the U.S., and a multi-message banner saying "Love is love," "Science is real," "No human is illegal" and "Women's rights are human rights."

For June, Veradale UCC is celebrating June with a rainbow banner for Pride Month and a

Black Lives Matter banner for Juneteenth.

In 2023, three banners were torn down and taken.

"As a church, we are a welcoming and diverse place and value promoting peace," said Gen, who took the proposal of hosting the Peace Run to the church council, which ap-

proved.

Since its founding in 1987, the Peace Run has visited almost every—more than over nations and territories—around the world and touched the lives of millions of people.

More than 700,000 participants from school children to heads of state have run 395,000 miles run in 155 countries.

The 2026, the United States Peace Run is a five-month journey through all 50 states, celebrating the 250th anniversary of America's independence.

According to its website, "All those who hold aloft the Peace Torch and pass it on to friends and neighbors will spread the message of all that is good and beautiful in our country."

The climbing flame in the torch symbolizes the ever-rising spirit of America, embodying a brightness and enduring hope that traces back to our nation's origins. The Peace Run celebrates the shining promise of America's dream of a one-world.

The Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run is a global torch relay that offers everyone in the world a chance to express their longing for peace.

The Peace Run is a worldwide relay run. Runners carry a torch—the Peace Torch. The torch is passed from hand to hand, from person to person, as runners travel from nation to nation.

Running with the Peace Torch is designed to awaken the experience of peace as a tangible reality that is dynamic, fulfilling and achievable.

Gen said that the dinner will be a vegetarian meal prepared by Feast World Kitchen. She needs those who wish to come to rsvp, because she has to make an order to Feast.

For information and to make a reservation, call 509-926-7173