May 2019
Your People will be My People

Open and Affirming
PBS report on 3 O&A congregations

Into the Mystic: John Dorhauer
Spiritual Practice of Earth Care

Creation Justice Webinar recording
Katharine Hayoe: Climate Messengers

All-church Web and Social Media tool
West Region UCC b1 information

General Synod 32
Resolutions and Pronouncements

UCC Desk Calendar Order form
ships on May 20

- God-seeds
- Mission Priorities
  - Stewardship Matters
  - Youth Survey
  - "b1" app update
  - Seminars
  - Summer Americorp
  - Meeting with Congressional reps
  - MT Peace Action Tour
- Mimanagish fundraiser concert
- Prayers
- Calendar Items
- Social Media links
My first camp counselor was a college grad soon to enter medical school. That was when I was a 7th grader attending Pilgrim Lodge in Maine. (In the early 70's, 7th grade was the earliest grade accepted at the camp). I don't remember the counselor's name, but it is one of the dozens of names on the Pilgrim Lodge pennant that we all bought at the camp store to fly on our bedroom walls back home. Camp was the first place I ever felt accepted as a goofy kid with a weird accent. It was also the first time in my life when I couldn't believe how so very fast, too fast, that time flew by.

The passage from Ruth that I have been using as eNews themes for the past few months was true for me in the covenant community I found at camp. It was true at Pilgrim Lodge in the 1970's and was also true at Camp Mimanagish in the 2010's. My experience of this passage has made my life meaningful, and it is what Cheryl and I used for our marriage scripture.

Where you go, I will go.
Where you live, I will live.
Your people will be my people
and your God, my God.  Ruth 1:16

Covenants made at camp include promises flowing with Baptismal waters, and vows encircled by wedding rings, and assurances with moist eyes looking to the mountaintop as the words "dust to dust" have been spoken. And, too, there are the multitudinous promises made to self, friends, and God in the respite and resolve of being in a place of rest.

I get that it tears at our sense of stability when places change.

It is not easy to let go of places where we have found something sacred that has come true for us. When I went back to Shortlands Congregational Church in England, where I was baptized and received my first Bible, I found that the church had become "Bright Horizons" day-care center.
Cheryl and I were married in 1981, is now Crossroads Community Theater. At least the names of these places hint at some sacred purpose beyond what they used to be as church facilities.

Speaking personally, it is a blessing of sacred covenant that relationships are more significant than places. Cheryl is hoping, as some are, for a Camp Mimanagish future beyond 2019 for Conference folk. Relationships at home, in church, through the Conference, and with friends have been tested for many among us as we have struggled with Camp Mimanagish issues in recent years. May we always remember the companionship of relationship that can continue even when all else changes.

The Three Mission Priorities of the MT-NWy Conference UCC:

1. All congregations will be vital and viable

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”
--Micah 6: 8 [NRSV]

On Saturday May 4, twelve churches were represented at the bi-location Conference Stewardship Events. East and Central area churches gathered at Mayflower Congregational Church in Billings while West area churches gathered at Plymouth Congregational Church in Helena. Keynote speakers for the event were Rev. Susan Artt from the Rocky
the church, and what stewardship means in terms of care of creation.

Break-out sessions were led by Clergy Coaches around areas of Narrative Budgets, Creative Stewardship and Generational Giving. Each church that was represented worked together to create 3 Goals for Stewardship to take back to their churches. These goals will be the focus of continued work with the Stewardship Task Force. The opportunity to share what works for each church was given, and door prizes were awarded at both locations. The day wrapped up with a Zoom meeting between the two locations where a litany of stewardship and commitment was led by the participants.

A Stewardship Matters tab on the WEBSITE will archive materials and work of the churches around stewardship. The next Stewardship Event will be a Zoom meeting for all Conference churches on June 12 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will focus on the Narrative Budget, Stewardship Time Line, Generational Giving and a review of the 3 Goals set on Saturday. Churches need not have attended the May 4 gathering to participate in the Zoom meeting on June 12.

If your church would like to work with a Stewardship Coach through the Conference at no cost, please contact Stewardship Task Force Member Rev. Pamela Peterson at pastorpampeterson@gmail.com

Youth and Young Adult Hearing

As the Montana Northern Wyoming Conference UCC prepares to vote to divest of Camp Mimanagish, there have been a series of hearings to learn about the Board’s recommendations. We also need feedback and ideas from conference youth and campers, so we urge youth and young adults to complete a survey and to forward it to others. We are interested in hearing from youth roughly between grade 7 and age 25.

A letter from the Board is available on the Conference website (www.mnwcucc.org). The letter explains the Conference Board’s recommendation to relinquish Mimanagish.

A super opportunity for Youth and Young Adults to express their thoughts and be heard will be during a Youth Hearing on June 3, 2019. This hearing may also provide an opportunity to form a youth council.

Two Conference Seminar Days

A seminar on the “Marks” led by Rev. Elizabeth Dilley, M.E.S.A. Monday,
Learn about using the “Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry” as a spiritual guide and assessment tool for Lay Ministry and UCC Authorized Ministry.

A Boundary Training seminar led by Rev. Elizabeth Dilley, M.E.S.A. Team Leader

Tuesday, June 4, 2019 10 am – 4 pm, Pilgrim UCC, Bozeman

$15/individual or $35/church group lunch and materials included

Learn about using “A Sure Foundation” and the new ministerial code of ethics to keep good boundaries.

Each participant will receive “A Sure Foundation” and a copy of the new ministerial code.

Who should attend: Authorized ministers, lay leaders, Members in Discernment,
The "b1" cloud based phone and WEB application is soon ready to roll out. This has been a project of the West Region Conferences and Kombi software company. Check out "b1" features and support videos at www.b14ucc.com.

2. The Conference and Churches will be appropriately staffed and the staff will be justly compensated.

Camp Miimanagish has another intern for the summer, Meaza Petros, who is a participant in the summer Americorp/VISTA program. As a refugee from Eritrea, Meaza is now a U.S. citizen and student at Colby Sawyer College in New London, CT.

Meaza writes, "I want to volunteer because I want to be the help that I wish I had seen in Eritrea. The privilege I have gained in living in the United States I have always used to speak out against the injustice that my people face, and by turning to service work, I am living by the words of one of my favorite authors: "You begin saving the world by saving one person at a time; all else is grandiose romanticism and politics."

Meaza joins three UCC Global Ministries summer interns on counseling staff at Mimanagish this season: Olivia Contri, Dan Sardaro, and Soma Varga. (See the April 2019 eNews for their bio's.)
I recently attended an advocacy fly-in in Washington, DC (April 30-May 1). I met each of our three US Congressional members. I was able to advocate with the Congressional members about the food aid funding concerns of Church World Service and Bread for the World.

I was also able to talk with the Congress members about the Rocky Mountain College's Campus Ministry Program, First UCC Billings' Native American partnerships, and bring personal greetings from some of our Conference members.

Our Conference purposes and functions include: "To promote the work of the wider church through denominational and ecumenical relationships and ministries." I believe that a Conference Minister invitation to join in some national advocacy of our partners, such as Church World Service, is a privilege and honor for the Montana Northern Wyoming Conference.

The Bread for the World and Church World Service advocacy fly-in was funded by an anonymous Republican donor. The Trump Administration is proposing a 39% cut in USAID (food, humanitarian and disaster aid, democracy work). A similar proposed cut did not pass Congress last year, but Church World Service and Bread for the World did not want to risk the proposed cut being passed this year. It is really just faith-based organizations that care to advocate about this, because it is not the type of program in which people see a direct return to themselves. I had very good conversations with each of our three elected officials. They all said they did not care to see food aid used as a weapon. I was selected to participate because Sen. Daines is on the Senate Appropriation Committee, and so it is important to have someone from Montana participate, and because I am president-elect of Montana Association of Christians. --Marc Stewart

MONTANA PEACE ACTION TOUR May 29-June 2:

Kevin Martin, President of Peace Action -- the nation's largest peace, nuclear disarmament and justice action group with more than 200,000 supporters nationwide -- will be in Montana as part of a May 29-June 2 Montana Speaking Tour.
Butte: t.b.a. May 31
Helena: Plymouth UCC, 5 pm free supper, June 1
Missoula: Goodworks Ventures, 2 pm, June 2

There are over 200 people registered for camps and retreats at Mimanagish this summer. There are still camps open for registration. See the calendar and registration schedule at mimanagish.org

IN OUR PRAYERS

Our prayers of care and tenderness are with Danielle Rogers and her husband, Tom, as Danielle's mother, Denise Rogers, passed on May 13.

We offer prayers of joy at the May 5th installation of ~ Chris Cunningham & Friends ~
Benefit Concert for Camp Mimanagish on the Boulder River
doing (mostly) songs from the '70s!

Sunday, May 19th
4 pm - Silent Auction, Appetizers
5:30 pm - Fundraising Concert

Pilgrim Congregational Church 2118 S. 3rd Ave. Bozeman, MT (across from the Museum of the Rockies)
$10 - $20 suggested donations. All ages welcome. More info, call: 406/587-3690
May 17 Church and Ministry Commission, May 17, zoom, 3 pm
May 19 Mimanagish Concert Fundraiser, Pilgrim UCC Bozeman
May 21 Committee for Outdoor Ministries, May 21, zoom, 7 pm
June 1 Installation, Pastor Robert Shy, Bethlehem UCC Worden, 11 am
June 1 General Synod delegates and visitors orientation, zoom, 12 noon
June 2 Marc at Molt UCC
June 3 Seminar on Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry, Pilgrim UCC Bozeman
June 3 Church and Ministry Commission, Bozeman and zoom, 5 pm
June 3 Youth/Young Adult Hearing on Board Recommendations, zoom, 7 pm
June 4 Boundary Training Seminar, Pilgrim UCC Bozeman, 9 am - 4 pm
June 9 All-Conference Zoom Hearing on Board Recommendations, 12:30 pm
June 12 All-Church Stewardship Gathering, zoom, 7 pm
June 21 - 25 UCC General Synod in Milwaukee MT-NWy staying at Hilton Center
July 11 Conference Special Meeting to vote on Board of Directors recommendations regarding selling Camp Mimanagish
Aug 9-11 Conference Annual Meeting at Camp Mimanagish

Did You Know...
Mimanagish Matters is our new monthly eNews all about Mimanagish. Mimanagish Matters comes out during the third week of the month. Email the Conference office to subscribe.

Check out our CONFERENCE WEB SITE www.mnwcucc.org and our MIMANAGISH WEB SITE www.mimanagish.org

We are on Facebook. Stay in touch and get all of the latest news by liking our page. Click here!

And check out our Camp Mimanagish Facebook page. Click here!

"Another Voice" community television series features some of our Billings area clergy and Conference Minister Click here!