



A United Church of Christ/
United Methodist Church
& a **LGBTQIA**
Welcoming Congregation

UCUP

January Newsletter

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.

Epiphany Celebration

Sunday, January 5th 11:30am

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a Soup Supper following worship,
singing a few more Christmas Carols, walking the Spiral,
and share in eating the King's Cake.

The Spiral Service, though not Celtic in origin, draws heavily upon the symbolism of the light and the cycle of the seasons which permeates the Spirituality of the Celtic Christians; a carry-over from the pagan Celts. In many cultures the spiral is a symbol of infinity, eternity, or God. Our Spiral service will remind us all that each one of us bears a light within – kindled by God and through Christ – to light our way through the physical darkness of winter and through the season of Epiphany. A labyrinth of evergreens will be laid out on the floor with stars scattered throughout the boughs. A white Christ candle is placed in the center. Each participant will make a journey into the middle where, one by one, we will light our own candle from the Christ candle, journey back out of the spiral to exchange our lit candle for a star in the spiral. The Star reminds us of the guiding light that led the Magi and Shepherds to the birthplace of the Christ Child. That light is still there to guide us in our own personal journey throughout Epiphany.

After the Spiral service, we will feast on a traditional King's Cake, with three hidden treasures and discover who the Wise Ones are for the next year.



ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 26 - 11:30am

UCUP Congregation - it's that time of year again when we get together to review 2019, vote for new officers and a 2020 budget. Please join us Sunday, January 26th, following our Sunday Worship Service. A light meal will be available. All are welcome, but only members may vote. Come share fellowship, food and our future.

We look forward to seeing you on the 26th.

The United Church Board

From Our President

Happy New Year!

I'm writing this sitting in Neva's mother's home on New Year's Eve, considering the end of the year (and racing to meet the newsletter deadline). As with most years, 2019 has been an eventful one. At UCUP, we completed a long-overdue audit of our finances, were able to outsource our bookkeeping to streamline that process, and held an Amazing Flea Market Fundraiser to help close the gap in our budget. We began hosting a Yoga Class taught by our very own Judy Thierry, and voted unanimously to become an immigrant & Refugee Welcoming Congregation. We welcomed Kelly Krisman as our new Office Administrator, appointed Vic Bode as our UMC Lay Leader to liaise with the UMC conference, and completed a thorough assessment of Pastor Cathy and of the congregation's satisfaction of the work of UCUP. (For the record, we're pretty satisfied with both, but SPR will share more about that). All of that among the continued work, service, study and worship of this amazing community of faith. We gained new friends and members, and lost beloved saints in our community. We grew the Sunday School program, and welcomed new children to UCUP. It has been an amazing, challenging, and tiring year.

And, of course, New Year's Eve leads us not only to consider the past year, but to look forward to the future. My term as President of the Congregation is coming to an end at our Annual Meeting on January 26. We have done some excellent things as a congregation during the 2 years of my term, and I am proud of those achievements and being able to provide some leadership through those changes and challenges. There are, however, more challenges that we face as we move into 2020 and beyond. We are likely again facing a situation of having to balance limited income resources with the goals and needs of our budget and mission. We will have to continue to discern if we need to find ways to increase our giving, or to refocus our priorities and our spending. Additionally, we will face the on-going turmoil in the worldwide United Methodist Church over full inclusion of our LGBTQIA siblings, and the possibility of a separation in the church in the coming years.

I am confident in our ability to navigate these upcoming challenges, but I also find myself with some regrets about things I did not emphasize enough in my term. I hope we can more directly address issues of accessibility in our facilities, and especially in the sanctuary. We are clearly, intentionally and aspirationally an inclusive community; this is a vital step we can take to further live that mission. On that same note, while we are an Open and Affirming/Reconciling Congregation, we miss the mark on being as open as we could be. We have discussed adding a Rainbow flag to our signage in the past, as our values and inclusivity are unfortunately not what most assume to be the norm from a Christian church. I do think that such a flag allows us to signal to those who pass our building that we are a place of love and inclusion, and to many of those who have been marginalized that we are a place of safety. I may be wrong in this, but I hope it is a discussion we can have moving forward.

United Church in University Place is an amazing community. We were founded 50 years ago this month in the belief that two separate faith communities with different traditions, identifications, governance systems and memberships could come together around shared values and mission to create community. Many things have changed in the past half-century, but enduring constants at UCUP continue to include our belief in and call to inclusive, welcoming, compassionate love for all, our striving for ever-increasing social justice, and our faith that positive change is possible and worth working for. Holding to those values, and our faith in them, I have no doubt we will continue to grow, and to be able to face the challenges of the future.

It has been an honor to serve you as President. Thank you for your support, engagement, challenging questions, listening ears, and a place to find a spiritual home for myself and my family. Thank you for being this wonderful community, this beacon in a dark time, this family. Have a blessed, challenging, joyous and peaceful New Year!

Sincerely,

Chris Berry
Outgoing President of the Congregation



From Pastor Cathy

I was contacted by my clergy colleague at Mason UMC right before Christmas asking if I would participate in a WatchNight service on New Year's Eve by offering the reflection. It was a service to prepare for changes in our legislation that would take place 1/1/20. This legislation, which passed by 53% at the UMC's General Conference 2/19 is now in effect. If obeyed, this legislation seeks to impose harsh penalties on those who stand with the LGBTQIA+ community, and drive LGBTQIA+ clergy out of the church. We stand at a historic moment in the United Methodist Church prior to General Conference to be held in Minneapolis in May 2020. Below are just a few of the requirements included in the Traditional Plan. Read further down for my reflection for the Watchnight Service held on New Year's Eve.

- Encouraging Annual Conferences, bishops, clergy, and congregations unwilling to live within the requirements to withdraw from The UMC and form their own self-governing Methodist church.
- Providing that annual conferences not enforcing the Discipline could no longer use the United Methodist name or logo and could not give or receive funds through the general church.
- Providing a new accountability process for bishops, whereby the Council of Bishops could place a bishop on involuntary leave or involuntary retirement for not enforcing this legislation.
- Expanding the definition of "self-avowed practicing homosexual" to include persons living in a same-sex marriage, union, or partnership.
- Requiring that bishops nominate as members of the conference board of ordained ministry ONLY persons willing to uphold and enforce the Discipline.
- Providing a mandatory minimum penalty for clergy performing same-sex wedding.
- Prohibiting bishops from dismissing a complaint unless it has no basis in law or fact.

Pastor Cathy's personal testimony and reflection offered at Mason UMC on December 31, 2019

The place we worship tonight on this eve of a new year is holy ground. It was made holy when God created it, and continued to be holy ground when indigenous people called the Puyallup tribe walked upon it - Puyallup means *generous and welcoming behavior to all people - including friends and strangers who enter our land*. We could use a bit more Puyallup in our lives, in our denomination, and in our nation. In this holy space at Mason UMC, I have witnessed countless holy moments with ordination ceremonies when AC was held in Tacoma at UPS. And this holy ground holds two of the most sacred and significant moments of my life - my ordination in 2005 and my wedding in 2014.

I was baptized, confirmed, and nurtured in my faith as beloved of God in the UMC. And it was in this denomination that I also received a call to ordained ministry at the very same time that I came to realize that my life companion would most likely be a woman. I questioned God, "How could you call me into a denomination that affirms my call to ministry and the gifts I have to offer, but will ask me to hide who I am and the most significant person in my life? They will ask me to live a divided life." It is one of the deepest ironies of my life that I pursued a call to ministry and continue to serve in a denomination whose Book of Discipline states that I am "*incompatible with Christian Scripture*".

I look back on my ordination photos with joy as well as profound regret. While I chose Angie, also UM clergy, to be one of two clergy who would stand with me in the chancel area as the Bishop ordained me here in this very space 15 years ago, I have no photos with Angie on my ordination day. It wasn't a conscious decision to have photos with almost everyone else in attendance that day except the most beloved person in my life. This regrettable omission sadly came from being cautioned to not be too public with our relationship, as if simply posing for a photo could potentially "out" us. But to give you some perspective, my ordination occurred the year after our conference put a lesbian pastor on trial for simply being in a relationship with someone she loved. At the trial of Rev. Karen Dammann, the pastor (Rev. Robert Walker) who confirmed me in 1980, was a witness.

A witness required assistance to take the stand; blind and retired, Dr. Robert Walker had chaired the Board of Ordained Ministries when Karen Dammann went through the process. The crowd murmured when Dr. Walker testified that his own ministry was “incompatible with Christian teachings” because he was blind. He referred to Leviticus 21 that decreed that a blind man should not be a priest (not allowed to approach God). It is good to laugh and have a moment of levity, but it was such a sad day of our history as a church that we would put someone on trial for choosing to be in loving relationship.

I was a page at 2004 General Conference in Pittsburgh one month following the trial when delegates attempted to ban PNW delegates from being seated on the plenary floor because they were from THE conference that acquitted Rev. Karen Dammann. At that time, I certainly had a healthy fear of being brought up on charges for simply choosing to be in a loving, God-blessed relationship as well as a healthy fear of potentially losing my ordination credentials, but I was even more conscious of heading into a new appointment that was already divided over the issue of homosexuality and I didn’t want MY LIFE to become a divisive issue when I needed to become a healing presence. And so we were careful about who we told. We would have been more open and told more of our friends except that it placed an unnecessary burden of responsibility on them to keep our “secret”. I didn’t tell my family. People in my church didn’t know about Angie. And very few friends knew - at least from us. I can’t speak to the specific harm it caused to not live the kind of authentic life I always preach about. Yet for 11 years I lived in hiding. It was soul-crushing and I contemplated leaving parish ministry frequently. Thankfully a lot has changed in the past 15-20 years - at least in the PNW and in my life.

In my third appointment, I finally summoned enough courage to live an undivided life, and asked the leadership of the church if they thought the people would accept me if they knew my life companion was a woman. Without hesitation, they said, “YES! This is not only about you. You are helping us to become the congregation that we already are but have not fully embraced.” In March 2014, with the support of the congregation I served, my District Superintendent, and my Bishop, I introduced my congregation to the person in my life who had been invisible to all the churches I had ever served. On the heels of that announcement we started to plan a wedding. September 2014, we were married right here at Mason UMC. Words cannot express the freedom I have continued to feel to be able to live an authentic, undivided life. And I now have the privilege to serve in a dually yoked congregation where I could walk in on Day 1 as my full, authentic self. Thanks be to God!



Two years later, right before the 2016 General Conference held in Portland, I was asked if I would sign my name to a letter from GLBTQIA+ clergy to delegates. *“While you have welcomed us as pastors, you have required that we not bring our full selves to ministry, that we hide from view our sexual orientations. While some of us have been lucky to serve in places where we could serve openly, there are others in places more hostile, who continue to serve faithfully even at tremendous cost to themselves, and the communities they serve, who do not receive the fullness of their pastor’s gifts because a core part must remain hidden.* Ultimately 111 of us placed ourselves in direct conflict with discriminatory practices by basically telling delegates: *You cannot legislate against God’s call.* While I did not feel I was taking a great personal risk at that time because of where I serve, others across the country were taking on much greater risk. 80% who signed the letter said they were coming out publicly to their bishops and DS’s and churches for the first time. I have recognized over the past years what a significant privilege it is to serve in my current appointment in the PNW in the Western Jurisdiction (WJ). Every one of my DS’s and my bishops in the past 10 years + have all been supportive.

What is telling is that over 50% of clergy who signed the letter were from the WJ, the geographical region with the fewest amount of members in the UMC by far. And the PNW had the largest number of signers with 23 of us signing on. You may think that we simply have more gay clergy in the PNW or the WJ per capita. I don't think that is the case. But it is a privilege we carry at such a time as this by living in this region. Did you know that the WJ has historically been a place of consistently advocating for full inclusion of all in the life of the church with historic first elections of bishops?

- The first Asian-American male bishop - Wilbur Choy (Chinese-American) in 1972
- The first African-American male bishop - Melvin G. Talbert in 1980
- The first African-American female bishop - Leontine T.C. Kelly in 1984
- The first Hispanic-American male bishop Elias Galvan in 1984
- The first Japanese-American bishop - Roy Sano in 1984
- The first Latina bishop - Minerva Carcaño in 2004
- The first openly GLBTQIA bishop with the election of Karen Oliveto in 2016

And it is the WJ delegates to General Conference and our 5 bishops who have declared that they will not abide by the discriminatory language of the Book of Discipline and will commit ecclesiastical disobedience. In addition, our bishops of the WJ have declared their churches a "safe harbor" for LGBTQ clergy. Their statement includes these words: *"We are haunted by the actions of the 2019 Special General Conference, which impose new and harmful definitions and restrictions on full participation of LGBTQIA+ persons in the Church and abandon robust engagement of scripture to narrow biblical literalism. We do not believe The UMC has the authority or the power to impose limits on the movement of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of God's beloved LGBTQIA+ children."* The Reconciling Ministries Network put out an email this morning including these words: We have hope that the recent uprising of United Methodists reclaiming their voice means palpable, tangible resistance and an end to codified discrimination in our Church. Communities and individuals are expressing courage and advocating for the Church they wish to see, living as though that future were already here. How we respond in this new decade of possibility indicates the kind of Church and world we believe is possible.

In spite of the divisions and pain caused over the years, God is with us and God is doing a new thing in the church. God will continue to call LGBTQIA+ people into ministry in the Church. And the church will be better for the gifts shared by LGBTQIA+ people.

May God go before us to prepare a place where all will find our place in Beloved Community.

The Faith Action Network and I would like to invite you to participate in Interfaith Action Day on Thursday, February 6, 2020. Please note the date in your calendar. It is always good to educate yourself more deeply in initiatives for peace, justice, and economic justice in ways that are effective. This day is one of the best ways to do this, in my opinion. The day in Olympia starts at 8:30 A.M., and if we have a strong crew, we will arrange for carpooling. Please let me know if you plan to attend. Also, contact me for more information if you want.

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
A Partnership for the Common Good

Submitted by Robert Brown

Interfaith Advocacy Days 2020



Bulbs and their outer papers nestled in for final planting of our over 400 daffodils. Visit and watch our church gardens.

A Joy-filled Advent & Christmas

Inspired by Isaac Watts' poem based on Psalm 98, we celebrated the 300th anniversary of "Joy to the World" during Advent and Christmas. Many people joined in the festivities posing for "JOY" stick photos where each person has to bring part of the joy to make it work. Cathi Cline artistically painted Advent themed rocks with the words HOPE, LOVE, JOY and PEACE to be hidden in the Advent Calendar box each week. The kids loved finding the rocks each Sunday in worship.



Each week, Neva Laurie-Berry adapted an Advent Wreath Drama written by Worship Design creator Marcia McFee, and Laura Giddings - "Hopeful Joy", Tanya Sorenson - "Loving Joy", Janet Wicks, "Joyful Unabashed Joy", Judy Thierry - "Peaceful Joy", and Angie Wolle - "Incarnate Joy/Christ Candle" brought our Advent Candle Wreath to life with their various interpretations of joy. I don't think we will ever forget Janet's flamboyant portrayal of Joy-in-your-face-unabashed-joy with her pink ensemble and tiara.



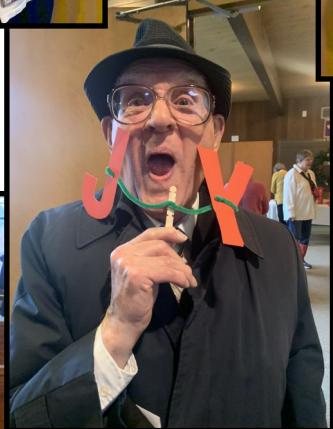
Our pipers, Seamus and Suzanne, celebrated their 20th anniversary of playing their pipes for our Celtic Christmas Eve service. We are thankful for their continued dedication to being with us on Christmas Eve. We had a mini-miracle on Christmas Eve. Prior to worship beginning, we did not have a baby to fill the role of the symbolic Christ Child. But then, not one, but two sets of parents showed up with their little ones. It turned out that both Robert & Kathi Brown's daughter, Alina and Janet & Ron Wicks' daughter, Adrienne were both in attendance with their families and their kids. Not only did Adrienne and Alina grow up at UCUP over 25 years ago, they graduated the same year from Curtis High School. What serendipity for them to be able to reconnect after all these years and to bring the next generation into our midst. It was definitely a holy moment as they paraded through the sanctuary during the "Hail Christ!" In Janet Wicks words: "I believe we could see the "light" of the Christ child in those two year old faces and a glow of serene happiness in the mothers smiles."



joy



JOY



JOY





Joys & Concerns

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! But first a quick look back at '19: Your Care and Concerns Committee was kept very busy greeting on Sunday morning, sending out birthday cards (hopefully you got yours) and keeping up with your joys and concerns. We rejoiced with the joining of new members, Laura Balcom, Leif and Amara Oden and Cheryl Stone...and Neva Laurie-Berry changing from affiliate to full membership...we are saddened with the death of 4 of our members, Helen Engle, Joan Martin, Billie Jo Morgan and Allen Munn. Rejoiced again with the 170+ that came to worship on Christmas.

As always we ask that you keep those unable to get to or just have a hard time getting to church, in your prayers: Doris Larsen, Michael Marcoe, Donna Shoe, Win Bjarke, Laura & Blanche Beesley, Deb Howard, Yvonne Begeman, Mollie Chaffee, Linda Vanderbilt, Randi Byrd and Michelle Wallace.

Win Bjarke has moved to Merrill Gardens in Renton to live closer to her son. We would like to have a little celebration with her sometime later in January or early February. If you're interested please let Pastor Cathy know.

BEST WISHES FOR '20 from your Care and Concerns Committee

January Birthdays

1 Jim Fohrman	16 Anthea Karanasos Hubank
2 Jon Foreman	21 Cierra Gillard
16 Randi Byrd	25 Joan Martin
16 Elizabeth Scherman	28 Michelle Wallace



**My Sister's Pantry
Item of the Month:
Chili**



Peace and Justice

Thank you to all who generously donated gifts for our Giving Tree. We collected more than 36 gifts for two Family Housing Network families. One very luck teenage boy received a guitar! We also gathered a nice assortment of jackets, socks, gloves, snacks and drinks for AID Northwest to be given to immigrants being released from the Tacoma detention facility.

The Peace and Justice working group welcomes new members! Our first meeting of 2020 is Wednesday, January 8 at 3:30 PM in the Orchard View Room. At present, all of our regular members are available at this time--please let me know if you'd like to join us but are not available weekdays. We are always open to new ideas and energy!

Contact Dorothy McCuistion at dorothymcc@nventure.com



Susan Kelly and Sophia standing with Dorothy McCuistion as we get gifts ready to take to FHN and Advocacy for Immigrants in Detention Northwest.



January

Every Sunday—10am Worship Service
**10:15am Elementary/Youth
 Sunday School**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 7:30—9pm Choir	3	4
5 Worship 10am Epiphany Spiral 11:30am	6	7 10am Congregational Care 1pm Alzheimer's	8 12pm Brown Baggers 3:30 Peace & Justice meeting	9 7:30—9pm Choir	10 5:30 Finance	11
12 Worship 10am	13 6:30pm Board Mtg	14	15 12pm Brown Baggers	16 7:30—9pm Choir	17	18
19 Worship 10am	20 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. Day	21	22 12pm Brown Baggers	23 7:30—9pm Choir	24	25
26 Worship 10am ANNUAL MEETING 11:30am	27	28 SPRC 6:30pm	29 12pm Brown Baggers	30 7:30—9pm Choir	31	

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
UNITED CHURCH IN UNIVERSITY PLACE
3912 GRANDVIEW DRIVE WEST
UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA. 98466

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Or where you are on life's journey, **you're**
Welcome here.

Newsletter

Vol. 38 No. 1
January 1, 2020

**United Church In
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Weekly

Sundays

10am Worship Service

10:15am Elementary/Youth
Sunday School

Wednesdays

Noon-2pm Brown Baggers
Luncheon & Bible Study Group

Thursdays

7:30pm-9pm Choir Practice
(Sept—May)

*We are United with God,
United to Love,
and United to Serve Others*

Monthly

1st Sunday of the month
Communion during worship

3rd Tuesday of the month
6:30-8pm Men's Group:
"Concerns in Our Hearts & Souls"

4th Sunday of the month
11:45am 4th Sunday Forum

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