

All Peoples  
United Church of Christ  
**SOJOURNER NEWS**

A Central Oregon House Church

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## **RECONCILIATION BUILDS A BRIDGE BETWEEN UCC AND R-UMC**

Perhaps for the first time ever, a United Methodist congregation has not only voted to become a Reconciling United Methodist church welcoming LGBTQ members but they have reached out to reconcile with their pastor who “came out” 35 years ago.

When the Rev. Kevin A. Johnson declared his sexual orientation and was defrocked as the United Methodist minister serving the Kenosha, Wisconsin, UMC church, he spent the next 20 years in the “wilderness” working in the world of business. But, his spiritual calling to serve as a “man of the cloth” never ceased. Subsequently, he became a member of the Broadway Reconciling Methodist church in North Chicago.

For more information, visit :

<http://north-broadway.org/ministry/>

Soon, a vision took form between “Rev Kev” and his partner Mike Shear. It struck them as Biblical that they were called to start a church in the desert. And what desert could be more appropriate than the desert of Palm Springs in California where progressive LGBTQ folks were under served.

With sponsorship by Chicago’s Broadway United Methodist congregation Rev Kev and Mike founded the Bloom in the Desert Ministries around 2004 in Palm Springs. Worshiping first in homes and then in the Demuth Community Center off of Mesquite

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Avenue, the fledgling congregation grew, greeting worshipers with an expression of all-inclusive welcome every Sunday.

Several years ago, APUCCers Bill and Pris Hardin discovered the church while traveling as snowbirds. Soon, Judy Penny and husband Richard Lee, former UCCers, joined them at worship whenever they were in the area. Now, the Southwest Conference of the UCC happily includes the congregation in their membership. Bloom in the Desert Ministries identifies as a UCC *and* Reconciling Methodist church. They alternate singing from the New Century Hymnal one Sunday and the Methodist hymnal the next. The UCC warm and extravagant welcome continues.

Imagine the overflowing emotions when the Kenosha Reconciling United Methodist congregation extended an invitation to Rev Kev and Mike to return to their old congregation for a special service of reconciliation... to celebrate their new standing as a reconciling church.

The pair are returning to Kenosha this month for a grand reunion and service of reconciliation. ▲

## **A NEW UCC CONFERENCE EMERGES IN NEW ENGLAND**

For the first time since the formation of the “new” United Church of Christ in 1957, conference boundaries are changing. Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island leadership have voted to merge to form one new conference.

“This truly is our time,” Massachusetts Conference Board Chair Vard Johnson said. “We’re called to do this. The wind is at our back and we are in God’s hands.”

The size and density of UCC churches in these states are prompting the consolidation that promises greater familiarity and cooperation in the future. In the past, state/conference boundaries have served to isolate nearby congregations from each other.

While details of how the new conference will be governed are yet to emerge, planners point out that the early church in this historic region of Protestant churches also started out mainly on faith without much clarity of how governance would proceed.

A look at the archived data ([ucc.org](http://ucc.org)) for the 3 conferences involved shows the same

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downward trends reported across the entire UCC. Those facts stand to alert all UCC conferences that times are a'changing. It is ironic that the sizes of New England states and those of the Western states both have bearing on the effectiveness of our conferences. In the west, huge state sizes force division of states to form conferences while in the east, the opposite holds true. Nevertheless, expect change in our church's future. ▲

## **TWO THOUSAND INTERFAITH LEADERS OPPOSE CHANGES IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT**

*January 27, 2017*

*Written by Anthony Moujaes for UCC News*

Almost 100 United Church of Christ clergy, pastors and executives are among 2,000 interfaith leaders from across the country opposing President Donald Trump's plan to block refugees from entering the United States. Those religious leaders — which include 95 UCC national and conference leaders, as well as active and retired local church pastors — are asking for continued support of refugee resettlement as part of their faith call to welcome the stranger.

“The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of all nationalities and religions who face persecution on account of the reasons enumerated under U.S. law,” reads the letter, signed by UCC national officers the Rev. John C. Dorhauer and the Rev. James Moos.

Trump signed an executive order on Friday, Jan. 27, that puts a temporary halt on the nation's refugee resettlement program.

“We oppose any policy change that would prevent refugees from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, or individuals who practice Islam and other faiths from accessing the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this nation was built upon, contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and dishonor our shared humanity.”

UCC ministers have repeatedly spoken out this week to denounce Trump's executive orders on immigrant and refugee resettlement. ▲

## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

What a winter we have had in the Bend-Redmond-Prineville-Sisters-Terrebonne area! Spring, or at the least, more normal temperatures can't come soon enough for most of us. I hear that average high temperatures this time of year are in the low forties. When it does happen, it certainly feels good.

I understand that numbers actually coming to Jericho Table are down quite a bit. That should be understandable when I think that it has been difficult for David and me just to get out and go to town, and we own a reliable car and warm clothing. On Monday, January 23rd, only twenty-four came to Jericho Table to eat. The food does not go to waste. There are some "saints" who see that what is left is taken to the cold-night shelter.

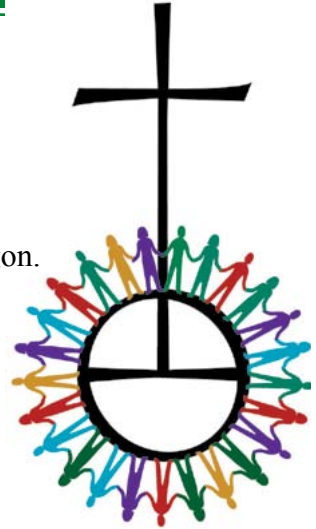
The front page of The Bend Bulletin on 25 January features two stories of homeless men who survive winter in tents or makeshift sheds. The story states there are more than 2,000 homeless people

living in Central Oregon. Please keep them in your prayers.

Jericho Road, a group that APUCC supports with donations and time, provides the homeless and poor in Redmond with more than food. The group helps provide blankets, clothing, and sleeping bags as well as that hot meal our group helps to serve on Mondays every other month.

Thank you to all from APUCC, and other congregations in the Redmond area, for your support of Jericho Road and Jericho Table. ▲

Nancy Cook,  
Moderator



## TWO THOUSAND INTERFAITH LEADERS OPPOSE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION CHANGES IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

*January 27, 2017*

*Written by Anthony Moujaes  
for UCC News national church website*

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*Right—Syrian  
refugees  
in Budapest,  
Hungary, 2015.  
How desperately  
they were  
seeking freedom.*



“We oppose any policy change that would prevent refugees from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, or individuals who practice Islam and other faiths from accessing the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this nation was built upon, contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and dishonor our shared humanity.”

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## WHAT VALUE... PROTESTS AND MARCHES?

As progressive Christians begin a period of greater struggle to live the framework of our faith—caring for the disadvantaged, freeing the captives, feeding the hungry and caring for the sick—there are sure to be many opportunities to join in protests and marches. Such actions are sure to build a feeling of solidarity and strength among the protesters. Furthermore, they offer the opportunity to identify like-minded souls participating in each cause.

At the same time, schools of thought emerge that question the long-term value of those feel-good moments. Academics such as Todd Gitlin, (*Occupy Nation: Letters to a Young Activist*) have probed the sociological value of historical protests and their aftermath. Agreement is coalescing that protest without an organizing structure to give form to the resulting energy are fruitless.

A favorite example of such an organizing framework is the Tea Party! Having fomented anger at big government, immigrants, women's issues and

“government handouts,” the Tea Party pitched a big tent under which disparate but compatible movements could come together. Instead of meandering off as separate interest groups and dissipating their new-found energy, the Tea Party offered an opportunity for such groups to meet, greet and unite behind similar if not common themes. Whether you approve of their ideology, the organizing framework energized and drew loyalty, forming an enduring whole that was greater than the several parts.

Given the power and enthusiasm evident in the recent women's marches around the nation and the world, it will be essential to seek and develop structures that embrace the disparate but related values of the marchers into a unifying whole... one that will prosper and nurture strong leadership.

Does progressive Christianity, by itself, have such power and appeal? We cannot know at this time but we can stay alert to joining forces with other groups with whom we can work. ▲

## CWS NEEDS US

An urgent call has gone out from our affiliate aide agency, Church World Service, for the replenishment of the Emergency Clean-up Kits that they distribute to victims of disasters like flood, tornado, earthquake, etc. The kits are 5-gallon buckets filled with cleaning supplies. Each kit costs about \$75 to assemble. The good news is, we have the finances to contribute some; the bad news is that the collection points for completed kits are all east of the Mississippi!

If we choose to help, financing kits that others back east assemble might be best.

For details, check out: [http://www.ucc.org/news\\_ucc\\_seeks\\_help\\_from\\_churches\\_to\\_replenish\\_cws\\_storm\\_supplies\\_01272017](http://www.ucc.org/news_ucc_seeks_help_from_churches_to_replenish_cws_storm_supplies_01272017) ▲



Left—  
*Wrangling  
Clean-up  
Kits for use  
by victims of  
natural or  
human-caused  
disasters.*

## MAPPING SUNDAY STUDY

**SESSIONS**—*Laurie Power and Nancy Cook*  
Here are the current ideas through May.

February 5: finish Brian McLaren’s *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?*

February 19–April 2, Lent, discuss spiritual practices we may have or want to know more about. On February 19, we will discuss prayer as a spiritual practice. On March 5, we will talk about “centering prayer” as a spiritual practice and try out some of the practice during our discussion. Discussions on March 19 and April 2, are open for suggestions and participants’ choice.

April 16–June 4: Read and discuss *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls.

*The Glass Castle* is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette’s brilliant and charismatic father captured his children’s imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive.

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Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want the responsibility of raising a family. The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered. *The Glass Castle* is truly astonishing—a memoir permeated by the intense love of a peculiar but loyal family.

**2005, 288 pages, nonfiction, \$3.47 (used AbeBooks)**

**Why we chose this title:** Both Laurie and Nancy were looking for something that was very readable and yet provided much for discussion. Lately much has been in the literature extolling the value of using fiction and/or memoir for enhancing empathy in people. Both have read *The Glass Castle*. It is an engaging, well-written story that is comparable to *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance published in 2016. While written more than ten years ago, *The Glass Castle* is timely. It is set in “Trump” country, and is a provocative and honest account of thriving in the face of dysfunction. ▲

## **REMEMBER THAT YOUR VOICE MATTERS**

*by Sandy Sorensen*

*Director, UCC Washington Office*

Although the advocacy landscape for the year ahead will hold challenges and uncertainties, there are things we can count on – our voice is as important as it ever was, and as difficult as the way forward may seem, we have the gifts and tools we need for the work. We are surrounded and uplifted by our courageous and prophetic UCC justice witness over the years, and by the great cloud of witnesses who have struggled before us. We are not alone – the transformative spirit of God moves in, through and among our community and communities.

In taking up the challenge to bring healing to a broken world, I think often of the teaching of Rabbi Tarfon, words that have helped sustain me when my spirit is weary: “It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task. Yet you are not free to desist from it.” And so it is, in such a time as this, as we follow the arc of the universe that bends toward justice. ▲

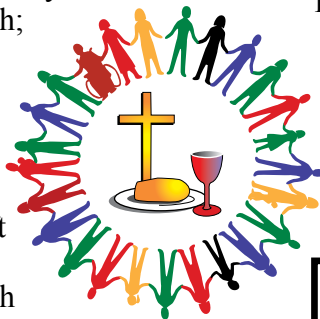


## FEBRUARY WORSHIP PLANS

All Peoples UCC meets to worship the first and third Sundays of each month at 11 a.m. Study and discussion group meet from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Refreshments begin at 9:45 a.m..

### FINDING ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL IN REDMOND

- **From the north**—From Hwy 97 reroute in Redmond, right on Larch; first left on Canal, right on Kingwood, 3rd right into parking lot.
- **From the south**—coming north on Redmond Hwy 97 reroute, exit left at Glacier, right on 5th all the way north through town to Kingwood, right on Kingwood, go 1.75 blocks, and turn left into the hospital parking lot.
- **From east or west** on Hwy 126, go north on 5th and follow south-side directions.
- **Finding the Juniper Room**—Enter at the main entrance or the next door on the left. Go left to the end of the hall; turn right and enter the first room on the left.



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Feb. 5th**—11 a.m. Worship—David Cook  
10 a.m. Discussing chapters 26-27 of Brian McLaren's *Why Did Jesus, Moses, Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road?* Laurie Power will lead.

**Feb. 19th**—11 a.m. Worship—Laurie Power  
10 a.m. Laurie will begin a series of Lenten reflections and discussions of spiritual practices starting with prayer.

“Dear God, I’m doing the best I can.”  
*A 9-year-old’s prayer*

### SOJOURNER NEWS

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PO Box 1287, Bend, OR 97709  
allpeoplesucc@gmail.com

Please join us every first and third Sunday for  
worship at 11 a.m.

For additional information and location/date  
of the next worship service, email the above.

Moderator: Nancy Cook: ncook963@gmail.com

Newsletter editor: Pris Hardin, prisbill@earthlink.net

Facebook: Sue Flory: facebook.com/allpeoplesucc

Webmaster: Nancy Cook: www.allpeoples-ucc.org