

October 2017

Our Ministry Priorities



responding to Hurricanes
[longterm support to Puerto Rico](#)

responding to what is sacred
[The New Sacred blog](#)

who we are
[2017 UCC Statistical Report](#)

responding with World Council of
Churches and National Council of
Churches to Las Vega shooting
["We Mourn" statement](#)

You have already been told
what is good,
what ADONAI demands of you --
no more than to
act justly,
love grace, and
walk in purity with your God.

- [God-seeds](#)
- [Mission Priorities Poster](#)
- [Mission Priorities: Vital and Viable Congregations](#)
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God-seeds, reflections from Marc Stewart

I will stand at my watch post to see what the LORD will say. Then the LORD answered and said, "Write the vision; make it plain as a runner may read it. For there is still a vision. Habakkuk 2:1-3

The hike to “four-mile” up the Boulder River forest road starts with a mile-long steep hill right out of Camp Mimangish. You really have to want to get to the “four-mile” destination to face that hill. It was well worth hiking, just for the scenery along the way: a couple ponds, a boulder field, and beautiful views of Mount Hawley.

Not everyone started eager to reach the destination: “it is too far” “I don’t like to hike” “my feet hurt just thinking about it” “I don’t have enough asthma medication.” With my deep appreciation for these complaints, I offered to be the counselor who accompanied the rear group of hikers.

The most vocal complainer almost didn’t make it the first few hundred yards, but half way up the hill, she moved on to the next group ahead, and eventually she made it to the very front group which was the first to reach “four-mile” destination. The slow group never quite made it to “four-mile.”

We stopped to take refuge under a tree during a torrential downpour, and then we sang and prayed that the thunder on the other side of mountains bypass us. The camp vehicles that had been parked at “four-mile” came to rescue us and take our drenched bodies back the Camp Mimanagish.

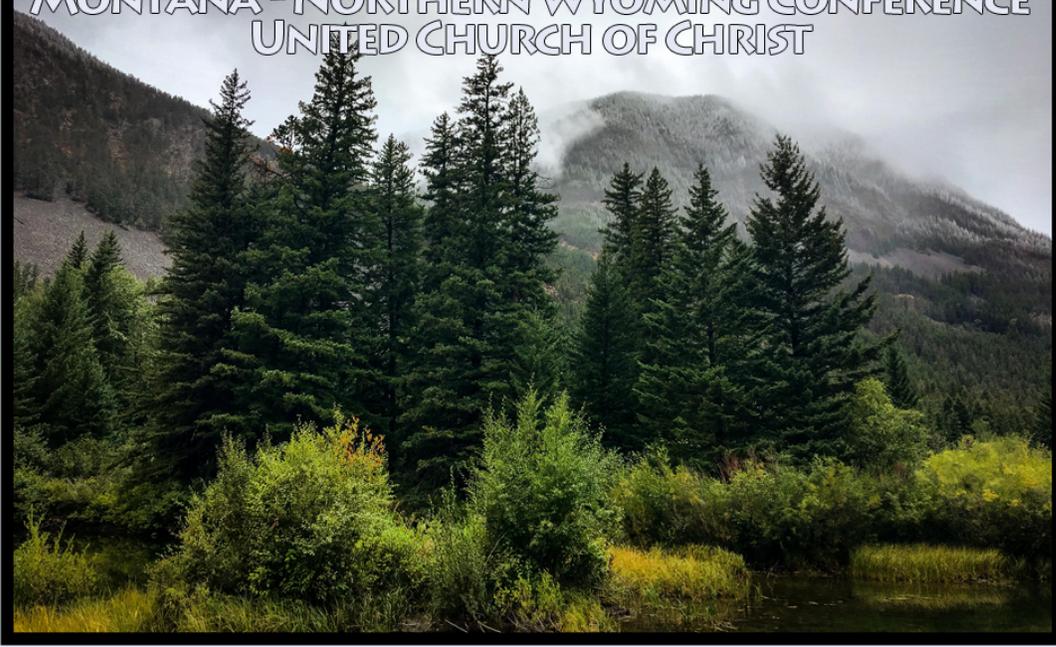
We got within a quarter-mile of our destination, but it turns out that was not the point of the hike. This was a hike of transformation: a camper who found confidence in herself to hike the whole way, the slow group finding comfort in song and prayer amid an afternoon summer storm. All could say, “God is good.”

Perhaps this is parable for our Conference life of our being in ministry together. The

Directors has been building their confidence and moving forward. We know this through the excellent staffing that has been hired in the past year. Also, at its recent Board of Directors meeting held at Camp Mimanagish, the Board named three mission priorities that define what we will do to “transform lives for the sake of the Gospel”:

1. Viable and vital congregations,
2. Transformational experiences, especially where we have not been present,
3. Appropriate staffing that is justly compensated.

Thank God for the vision that has been gifted to our Conference Board of Directors! There will be varying energies and interests in making our way to this destination, but it is the journey that matters. God, in faithful covenant relationship with the Montana – N.Wyoming Association and Conference, will assure that the journey is well worth it. So, too, we are in covenant as people on this journey who trust that we will get to where God means us to be. Again, thank God, that the faith discernment of our Board of Directors has provided a vision for the journey that is so clear and so possible for you to engage.



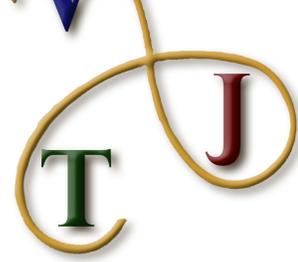
- MISSION PRIORITIES -

- #1: ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE CONFERENCE
WILL BE VITAL & VIABLE.
- #2: THE CONFERENCE WILL BE
APPROPRIATELY STAFFED
& THE STAFF WILL BE JUSTLY COMPENSATED.
- #3: THE CONFERENCE WILL OFFER
TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES
& HAVE AN ACTIVE PRESENCE
IN PLACES WHERE WE ARE NOT NOW PRESENT.

You can [download a high resolution copy](#) of this 16x20 poster for display at your church (costs under \$10 to print). Thanks to Roger Lynn for his photography and graphic design work in making this poster.

**All Congregations In The Conference Will Be
Vital and Viable**

from Roger Lynn, Pastor at Plymouth UCC in Helena



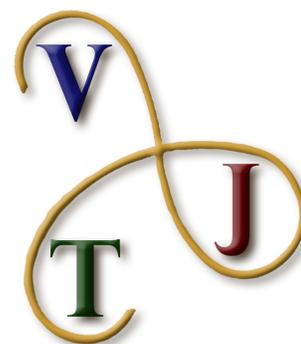
At our Conference Board Retreat which took place last month at Camp Mimanagish the energy in the room was almost tangible. The Rev. Dr. Felix C. Villanueva (Conference Minister for The United Church of Christ in Southern California and Nevada) led us through an exciting visioning process for our Conference. Out of that process we came up with three mission priorities which will guide our work together as we move into the future. Each of us self-selected into teams to work on those priorities, and I found myself working with others who were excited by the idea that “all congregations in the Conference will be vital and viable.” Just imagine what might begin to happen in and through our life together if this were true. And the beauty of this priority is that it is absolutely within our grasp to make it a reality. That’s because it is not a one-size-fits-all description. What it means to be “vital and viable” will be different for each of our congregations. And no matter what form that vitality and viability takes, it will be something to celebrate. It won’t happen overnight, but we are already on our way. Watch for more details in the months ahead. And be thinking about what it might mean for your particular congregation to be “vital and viable.” I suspect that in many ways it is already true.



Felix Villanueva coached our September Board of Director's Retreat

The Conference will offer transformative experiences and have an active presence in place where we are not now present.

*from Leslie Roche, chair person of
Committee for Outdoor Ministries*



The Board of Directors and some committee and task force members met at Camp Mimanagish for a leadership retreat with national representatives in September.

The Outdoor Ministries team present included Leslie Roche, chair, Josie Caton, Camp DIRECTOR, Chuck Aurand, and new members Hal Fossum and Pete McKinley.

We are ecstatic that great enthusiasm, energy, excitement, and possibilities have been recognized and shown around the conference, with many people coming forward with offers of assistance and ideas for/about Camp and moving forward into the future.

We acknowledged that we, as the Outdoor Ministries team, have a GREAT deal of work ahead of us, with immense positivity and delight, given the changes in the 2018 camp season offerings and needed upkeep and maintenance on site. With these changes, the

Mimanagish offers, and how that impacts our ability to attract outside groups to use the grounds and experience Mimanagish for what it TRULY is – a place of transformational experience.

We have begun in earnest to identify a Camp Advocate from each congregation in our conference, identify Friends of Mimanagish – those who have been to Camp before and have a special place in their hearts for this place of singing waters – to keep in touch with updates about what is happening at Camp and how they can help, if they so desire. All of these contacts, plus recent camp attendees and parents, if applicable, will be added to our contact list – this list will be kept up-to-date in the conference office. The 2018 Camp calendar is being hammered out now, with the intent to have that task completed by the time the Vision to Action Retreat is held on October 19-22 at Camp. The new camp schedule offers many different options for other groups to become involved and fall in love with Camp Mimanagish. Be watching for this calendar to make its appearance very soon!

And from our break-out group via Josie: The "transformative experiences" group has set our first action as getting invested and capable people to the Vision to Action retreat in October. While we were gathered in the chapel, many of us committed to inviting certain people who have something important to contribute. Several others of us verbally committed to talking with folks back in our home congregations or communities.

Our goal is for everyone who came to Camp this past weekend and who is committed to the success of Camp Mimanagish come back in October and bring two additional people who are also invested in the future success of Camp Mimanagish. This weekend will serve as a launchpad for the implementation of Mimanagish's Action Plan and as the first step in helping the conference reach places we aren't currently reaching with transformational experiences.

Our second goal is to get feedback on a survey about the direction of camp, and to engage people who can't come in October so that they can still be involved in the process. We are also asking you to invite people to take the survey.

Camp Mimanagish Vision to Action Retreat

October 19-22, 2017

You Are Needed. Come help direct the future of Mimanagish through this four-day intensive work retreat. With your collaboration, we will tackle:

*** Final synthesis of the Vision and Mission of Camp Mimanagish as a service of and for the Montana Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ**

* The flow of the schedule will accommodate the presence of those who come at various times. The Vision to Action Retreat will start Thursday at lunch and go through Sunday at 3 pm. At each meal we will welcome newcomers, say good bye to others, and generally bring people up to speed our progress and direction.

Members of the MNWCUCC Board of Directors, Committee on Outdoor Ministries, and Faith Formation Committee will be present. All are welcome. We are in particular need of experience:

passion for Mimanagish - fundraising - law - finance - event planning - marketing - facilities management - ecojustice / environmentalism - community organizing - social justice - strong university and college connections - medicine - advocacy - systems level thinking - rapid prototyping - science - psychology - sociology - Mimanagish history

Visioning Survey

We need to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to offer your thoughts on the future of Camp Mimanagish:

<http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/3784454/MNWCUCC-Mimanagish-Vision>

If you don't like using the internet, feel free to call Josie at [\(406\) 570-9922](tel:4065709922) (cell) or [\(406\) 932-6311](tel:4069326311) to complete this brief survey over the phone.

Fall Camp Opportunities

[Sign UP](#) Now For Camp Mimanagish!

October 19-21 [Conference Fall Youth Retreat](#)

October 19-22 [Visioning II](#)

October 21-22 [Camp Closing](#)

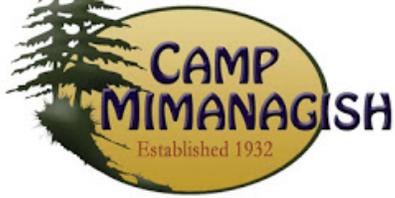
Transportation is available by making a reservation at ucc@mnwcucc.org before Wednesday, Oct 18

* transportation from Big Timber to Camp Mimanagish

Thursday October 19 at 11:00 am and at 4:30 pm

* transportation from Camp Mimanagish to Big Timber

Saturday October 21 2 pm and Sunday October 22 3 pm



**It Happened At
Church Camp!**

match a \$5000 gift it is making to Camp Mimagagish before the end of the year. Church moderator, Jerry Nye, sent a [letter to all](#) other church moderators and pastors.

Camp Mimanagish Merchandise Website



Check out our Camp Mimanagish branded merchandise store at:

<https://campmimanagish2017.itemorder.com/sale>

We have a variety of camp logo items available on our merchandise store for youth, adults and infants/toddlers. Stop by and see what is available only online and shipped directly to you. Look sharp in your royal blue camp clothing.

The merchandise store has been created to bring camp clothing to the conference year around, and open 24/7 for your official camp clothing needs. Each spring the available items will be updated to reflect the chosen gear and color for the upcoming season approved by the Outdoor Ministries committee.

- The theme is 'Come to the water' (Isaiah 55:1).
 - There will be workshops and breakout groups, as well as opportunities for service during the five days.
 - Each participating Conference will host a workshop of their own creation.
 - The early registration fee is \$475, and after the deadline becomes \$495.
 - Anticipated airfare is \$850.
 - Registration is not yet available; the Regional Event organizers hope to have this available online beginning in mid-October.
 - As a way of getting families to save for the event, we are suggesting that churches set up a "savings account" to which participants pay \$100 per month towards the costs of the youth event.
For those who begin doing this in October, the Conference will cover the \$100 for the month of December as a scholarship towards the expenses of the event.
We would ask church treasurers to set up a restricted account in order to collect and track their youth's monthly contributions. (A registration process will also be set up through the Conference. Information will be forthcoming by mid-October.)
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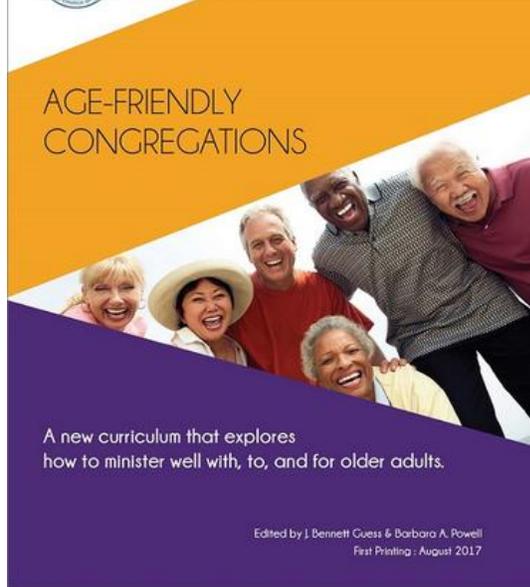


**Bluegrass Worship at
Columbus Community UCC**



At the Conference Annual Meeting in Helena in June, we discussed ways to connect the Churches in our Montana Northern Wyoming Conference UCC. We started the formation of Affinity Groups to begin this connection. Churches formed groups by area, size, interest. Our Molt Church along with the Absarokee UCC Church and the Columbus UCC Church formed an Affinity Group of small rural Churches in Stillwater County. We discussed working together on projects, providing shared programming for youth, and hoped for fellowship together. On September 24, Columbus Church held their second annual Bluegrass Worship. They invited area Churches to join them in worship and a potluck barbeque. Fifteen members of Molt Church travelled to Columbus for this event. A great time was had by all. The music worship was inspirational. We had a great time connecting with new friends and old. We hope that this will be the beginning of more events together for our small rural churches in Stillwater County. Thank you to Columbus for the invitation and thank you to those who participated from Molt. Praise God for our time together.

“As the United Church of Christ embarks upon its ‘3 Great Loves’ campaign to live into its vision of a just world for all, the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries’ ‘Age-Friendly Congregations’ resource could not have come along at a better time. This resource introduces congregations



local churches.”—the Rev. John C. Dorhauer, UCC General Minister and President

Today’s older adults deserve—and expect—more than the traditional church fare of potlucks and slide shows. *Age-Friendly Congregations*, produced by the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, helps churches strengthen ministry to their older members while benefiting the entire congregation.

Through sharing personal stories and insights, chapter authors J. Bennett Guess, Beth Long-Higgins, RoMa Johnson, and Jan Aerie explore the challenges and opportunities inherent in intentionally ministering to diverse ages. This resource will help you write, adopt and share an *Age-Friendly Congregations* “covenant”—unique and applicable to your culture and setting—that will guide you in becoming the age-friendly congregation you intend to be. *Age-Friendly Congregations* will become an indispensable tool in your church’s ministry.

Available from [UCC resources](#) in 2 formats:
Print: \$13.00 with free shipping. 72 pages.
Digital Download (PDF): \$6.00. Immediate access.

There is one copy available in the Conference Resource Center. Please call or email to request borrowing



Medicine Lake Union Congregational UCC Church Closing

The Union Congregational Church of Medicine Lake is celebrating 107 years. We invite you to our Service of CLosure on Sunday, October 8, 2017 at 2:00 pm.

If you are unable to attend, we welcome any comments to read at the Service.

Marc Stewart, UCC Conference Minister, and Tim Hutslar will be officiating the service with a lunch and social hour following.

Hope to see you!!

c/o Committee, 202 Iowa Ave., Medicine Lake, MT 29247



Prayers with Rev. Mickey Dooling and Betty, retired pastor (Butte UCC), as Mickey just received a terminal cancer diagnosis.

The next 30 days are a Season of Pollination in the UCC! Yes, that's right! This is your chance to *bee* the church! How might you do that? By encouraging your friends, colleagues, and church members to subscribe to a fabulous UCC e-newsletter called... The Pollinator. This newsletter has as its purpose the sharing of ideas and inspiration in caring for God's creation. To learn more about how you can help pollinate via clipboard evangelism at church, social media, and other ways, visit:http://www.ucc.org/pollinator_invitation_to_pollinate_another_way_to_bee_the_church



CONVERGENCE LEADERSHIP PROJECT

October 27-28 Symposium

Strengthening Spiritual Alignment: Making Public Worship Dangerous Again, with Brian McLaren and Jacqui Lewis

How can we maximize every minute of our time gathered in public worship? How can we stimulate curiosity, eliminate boredom, intensify focus, clarify message and purpose, invite commitment, replace wasted moments with worthwhile moments, and enrich the worship experience?

Location: First Congregational Church, La Grange, IL

Pre-event Cost: \$79

Symposium Cost: \$150

Pre-event + Symposium Cost: \$200

[registration information](#)

Explore ways to CREATE relationships & DEVELOP coalitions to channel love into justice, and strengthen communities in the mountains and on the prairies.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

COME BE INSPIRED.
LEARN ABOUT RURAL ISSUES & HOW TO BE A
SERVICE TO ALL COMMUNITIES

*"There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity
under the heavens:"*
Ecclesiastes 3

Come Hear and Learn from...

Keynote speaker, *Professor and Author, Shannon Jung*

Be part of the discussion with our panel members...

*Bishop Jessica Crist, Rev. Valerie Webster,
Rev. Steve Loy, Rev. Joel Westby, and Rev. Mike Mulberry*



Registration is Now Open

Please visit macmt.org to register or to learn more about MAC Connect!

First United Methodist Church
October 21, 2017
Billings, MT



Marc preaching at Sidney and Savage, October 8
Closing Worship for Medicine Lake UCC, October 8, 2 pm
Central area clergy meeting, 10 AM October 12, Billings office

Marc participating in "Coaching for Clergy" certification program, Oct 15 - 20 Claremont CA

Committee for Outdoor Ministries, Billings office, October 14

Faith Formation Committee zoom video meeting, 12 noon, October 18

[Fall Youth Camp, Oct 19-21](#)

[MAC Connect 2017, Billings, MT](#)

Marc preaching at Great Falls UCC, November 5
Church and Ministry Commission, November 10-11,
Billings office



Plymouth UCC in Helena made this bulletin board as reminder that October is Pastor Appreciation Month.

Congratulations to our Conference Moderator, Gus Byrom, who received a [Governor's commendation](#) this year for excellence. We, too, commend Gus for his excellent work with the Board of Directors and in helping develop our Camp Mimanagish 20-year site plan.



Butte UCC members pack lunch bags to hand out to homeless people in Butte each month. These include a special treat, Girl Scout cookies!

Rev. Timothy Seery serves communion at this ordination service, held at Great Falls United Church of Christ on September 17. Rev. Seery will serve as pastor at La Jolla UCC in La Jolla, CA.



Did You Know...

Our WEB page features newsletters for all churches that mail or email copies to the Conference office. Read the [news from other congregations!](#)

That we are on Facebook? Stay in touch and get all the latest news by liking our page.

[Click Here!](#)

That "Another Voice" community television series features some of our Billings area clergy and Conference Minister? [Click here!](#)