

Channels.

A monthly publication of
The Office of Connectional Ministries,
The Pacific Northwest Conference
of The United Methodist Church

[51] FEBRUARY 2012



GLOBAL UMC
AIDS
FUND



CAMPUS
CONNECTION

MUSINGS



“That Used to be Us” “Why Bother?”

Solitude: A Radical Call

On the Shelf: “Out with the old, in with the new”

**Is sponsoring
Two Great Witness Weekend Events!
February 10-12**



Ritzville Team to Spokane Fowler UMC Silverdale Team to Woodinville UMC

Both events will begin on February 10th in the evening at Fowler UMC in Spokane and Woodinville Community UMC in Woodinville with worship. A testimony from the visiting team member will be followed by small group sharing. Very similar to a Lay Witness Mission, these Great Witness Weekends are focused on helping the sending and receiving congregations establish a supportive connection, a deepening of faith in Christ and new excitement and hope for the future.

The focus throughout the weekend will be on four major themes:

- Believing that God exists.
- Committing my life to Jesus Christ.
- Seeing life changes as a result of Jesus' work in my life.
- Surrendering all aspects of my life to Christ.

The small groups working with these themes will provide an opportunity for questions, faith-sharing and establishing new friendships.

Other Great Witness Weekends are in the planning stages. If you would like one in your church write to connect@wccministry.org

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www.pnwumc.org/channels



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**The Office of Connectional Ministries,
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The United Methodist Church**

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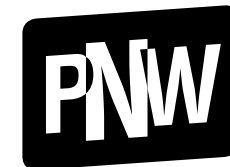
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extra
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lazy f camp
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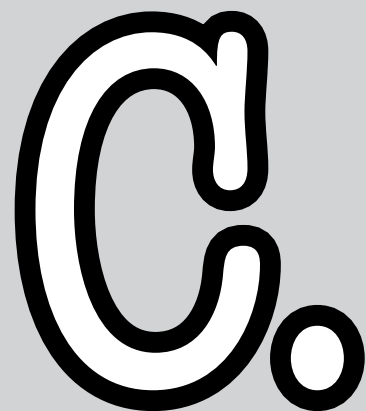
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What 'works' in your local church?

Channels wants to feature your local United Methodist church's story and how it is meeting the needs of its community.

If you would like to share, send your submission to channels@pnwumc.org!

Submissions are due **March 1** for the April edition.

Africa Theological Education Initiative Benefits Students

Read more about this story at bit.ly/africa-education-initiative



United Methodist Global AIDS Fund endorsed by 55 United Methodist Bishops

By 20/20: VISIONING AN AIDS-FREE WORLD

The "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World" initiative has been endorsed by 55 United Methodist Bishops as they lend their support, personally and financially. This effort by the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee seeks to mobilize the denomination to raise \$5 million for HIV and AIDS education, prevention, care, and treatment around the world.

Retired Bishop Fritz Mutti, Kansas City, Mo., notes that "United Methodist episcopal leaders believe that global health is integral to the mission of Christ's Church. They are committed to overcoming the stigma often associated with AIDS and fueled by some religious leaders."

Each bishop not only lent their name to the fund-raising project, but also shared their own financial resources. Gifts range from \$20 donations to \$20 a month until 2020. Some have joined the "2020" club pledging \$2,020.

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee recently recognized the top 11 giving Annual Conferences: Holston, Baltimore-Washington, Virginia, West Ohio, Louisiana, Kansas East, Central Texas, California-Pacific, Rocky Mountain, West Virginia, and Susquehanna. With the help of these and other conferences, plus many individuals, more than \$3 million has been raised and distributed to over 200 programs in 38 countries.

Donald E. Messer, chairperson of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee, Centennial, Colorado, thanked the bishops and hailed the leading conferences for their generosity. Messer reports that "Lives have been saved, orphans helped, infections prevented, and suffering eased. The healing ministry of Jesus Christ continues around the world."

Contributions are designated for the UMCOR Advance No. 982345 and gifts are given either through the local church or sent to UMCOR's office at P.O. Box 9068, New York, N.Y. 10087. When gifts are given through the local church, the annual conference may reserve 25% to use in AIDS ministry sponsored by the conference. The other 75% is administered by the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee. ©

The 20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World is coordinated by Ms. Rebecca Yount, Denver, Colo.

For more information and to see the complete list of Bishops and Conferences pledged see www.2020AIDSFreeWorld.org or e-mail 2020AIDS-FreeWorld@gmail.com.



One Great Hour of Sharing

By JOAN HACKETT

This is the third column of mission: Make a New Year's Resolution to become a 5 Column Church in 2012. OGHS is scheduled for Sunday, March 18, 2012 ...but gifts are accepted any time of the year.)

Purpose: Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination, and awareness of the hurts of the people of the world. One Great Hour of Sharing calls the Church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt. (Par. 263.2, The Book of Discipline 2008). Gifts provide refuge and relief to some of the world's most vulnerable people during times of distress.

History: In 1946, One Great Hour of Sharing began as a special effort of the Episcopal Church. In 1949, the observance became ecumenical. Originally, during one special worship hour on one date, people of faith contributed over and above their regular offerings. Today different denominations celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing on various dates, but the cooperative spirit remains.

Your generous contributions: To One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation of all of UMCOR's work by covering the costs of doing business. This means all gifts designated to specific programs can go 100% to those programs because UMCOR's basic expenses are covered. Any gifts that are over and above UMCOR's administrative costs go to where they are most needed. Often they support under-funded programs.

Receipts: How much was given to One Great Hour of Sharing in the last 4 years? In 2010, \$2,695,885 was remitted, in 2009, \$3,111,349 was remitted, in 2008, \$3,212,946 (an average of only 40.7 cents per U.S.) member was remitted and in 2007, \$3,372,268 was remitted.

Encourage your church to send an offering to the Conference Treasurer designated for One Great Hour of Sharing. ©

Joan Hackett serves as the conference secretary of Global Ministries.



The Wesley Foundation at Washington State University, specifically the Inspire! dinner and fellowship program, has been very good to me. The Interfaith House, a nondescript former sorority house turned coffeehouse/religious community center where we meet, is the closest thing I have to a home in Pullman.

Inspire! is a Christian-themed program held every Wednesday evening during the WSU school year. A joint program created by the UMC Wesley Foundation and St. James Episcopal Church, it is designed to give college students a place to put aside the worries of school and work for a little while to explore themselves and their relationship with God. Oh, and there is a free meal, singing and fun activities usually thrown in, too. Inspire! does not pass out flyers in the streets or buy flashy advertisement space to attract students. Inspire! relies upon an unofficial word-of-mouth campaign. Attendees are always encouraged to bring friends, but rarely are there organized attempts made to recruit new members.

What makes this word-of-mouth campaign so successful has a lot to do with the collective attitude that permeates a typical Inspire! program. Anyone who walks through that front door looking to attend his or her first Inspire! meal and program is instantly welcomed with open arms by everyone else who is already assembled. I can speak from firsthand experience about this warm reception newcomers receive.

I first attended Inspire! in August 2009 – the beginning of my sophomore year at WSU. I received a phone call the day of the program from a good friend of mine. He told me he was attending a weekly Christian program and wanted me to attend with him. I was dubious. My upbringing included very little spirituality; Christian or otherwise. But when he told me there would be free food, too, I was hooked. Free food is very important to the average college student.

Campus Connection

By DYLAN HOFF

When I walked through the front door of the Interfaith House that day, I did not realize I was stepping into a new phase in my life. I was immediately greeted warmly by people I had never seen before.

After eating my fill, singing songs I had never heard of before and participating in a weird Biblical version of "I'm On A Boat", I was not quite sure what I had signed myself up for, but I knew that I liked it. I promised to return again, although I was unsure how consistently I would visit.

I didn't miss an Inspire! program my entire sophomore year. I am in the middle of my senior year now and I still have barely missed any programs other than due to scheduling conflicts with work. I have never experienced anything quite like Inspire! before. You never quite know what you will get when you put 20+ college students in a room together, regardless of what sort of program you have planned – that spontaneity helps make Inspire! so wonderful.

Since that first day, Inspire! has become my rock at WSU. When everything else goes wrong in my life, I know there

is one thing to look forward to every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. I know I will always find people there whom I can identify with, who are willing to lend a sympathetic ear and a helping hand. Additionally, the program has led to a great spiritual awakening for myself. While doubt remains an integral part of who I am as a person, I now understand that doubt is a necessary part of faith. Inspire! is helping me shape a sense of faith I never had before, and I'm not the only one. Inspire! is helping many other wayward pilgrims besides myself.

It has by far been the greatest part of my college experience. I'll be forever thankful to all the people I've met at Inspire! – they will all hold a special part in my heart for the rest of my life. ©

Dylan Hoff is senior Journalism major at WSU and serves as a Peer Minister for the Wesley Foundation at WSU. You can contact him at: djudgehoff@msn.com.

Conversations about young people and ministry often revolve around the need to include more young people in church leadership. It's become a

crisis, in fact with the sobering numbers that our churches in the West are indeed shrinking and closing their doors. The culprit, many believe, is lack of young people. I've been fortunate to have had a very different leadership development experience growing up at Beacon UMC in southeast Seattle. As a senior in high school I was already given opportunities to help lead our young people. Progressing through college, these occasions to develop as a leader in the church increased through involvement in Wesley Club, the United Methodist Student Movement, Seattle District and our Pacific Northwest Conference. At the age of 32, I've had 15 solid years of church leadership.

Over the years, I, along with other leaders have had conversations about 'retiring' from our ministries but it wasn't until this December while leading at Christmas Institute [ci-pnw.org] that we talked about how and why this needed to happen. We had given over ten years to this ministry. We recruited and trained new leaders, we prayed for them and we worked alongside them. It was time for us to step aside to let these new leaders take their places. And if their leadership caused the camp [or organization] to move in a different direction, that's ok. We trust that the Spirit is moving in fresh ways even though we might not see every piece.

When I took a business class last Spring I learned to reappropriate the word 'sunset' for use in the context of ending a job or project. Strange use of the word, right? We have, however, seen enough images playing on old westerns that can conjure up warm, fuzzy nostalgic feelings of cowboys [or girls] riding off into the sunset. We get the idea that there is something rewarding when at the end of a long day or project, you're able to ride gracefully into the horizon.

Though there continues to be a dearth of young men and women in leadership, let's not forget about those who have had the opportunity to serve for many years thanks to the mentoring of those saints in their lives. As important as it is for churches to provide spaces for young people to step into leadership roles, it's just as important to teach our young people how to recognize when it's time to sunset and how to do it well. More often than not, we end a role or re-

MUSINGS & YOUNGER PERSPECTIVES

On sunseting and learning to let go

sun·set
n.
1. The event or time of the daily disappearance of the sun below the western horizon.
2. A decline or final phase: the sunset of an empire.

By **SOPHIA K.R. AGTARAP**
Photo by **JOAQUIM ALVES GASPAR/WIKIPEDIA**

sponsibility when we've just been stretched too thin; when we're burned out from all that comes with volunteer or part-time positions. Though grateful for the chance to serve and lead, we weren't taught balance of work, school and social lives.

In addition to the mentoring I've received, I would have loved to have been taught how to plan to end my tenure well. Now as an adult who is back in school, working and keeping her church leadership responsibilities to a minimum [because I'm starting to get this balance thing], I'm also realizing that it's ok to say "No, I will not continue serving in this role next year" without feeling guilty, knowing that the time I

have served has been well spent in service of the kingdom-building we are called to do.

For our younger leaders or those considering leadership in the church: take advantage of the opportunities you're given to serve, even if you feel it's the obligatory ask because of your age. Be open to the ways God is moving and instructing you through these roles.

And for our mentors and seasoned church leaders: teach us how to sunset so that we might depart from our leadership roles with grace and knowledge to take with us to our next endeavor feeling excited to explore the next thing that awaits. ©



ON THE SHELF By ELLEN JOHANSON

“Out with the old and in with the new” so the saying goes and that’s just what’s happening in the Regional Media Center. An assortment of really old resources that has piled up on the shelves (and in the garage) is on its way out to make room for some new items. Clearing away clutter and getting rid of outdated videos seems like a good thing to do as we roll into a new year. Here are some of the new resources just waiting to be checked out!

Ending Violence: Find Your Voice (D2024)

Teen dating violence is a significant problem in our society. As many as one in three teens experiences dating abuse, so education about healthy relationships is vitally important in our schools, churches and community groups. This interactive curriculum is designed to teach teens how to prevent and safely end abusive relationships, while creating a framework for building healthy relationships in the future. While it does not address religious issues, it is a flexible program that can be used in conjunction with other curricula that address dating violence from a religious perspective. The DVD includes a self-guided session for individual use and a group/classroom presentation. There are resources for parents, informational cards listing warning signs of abuse, cards for the “yes-no” game, and an educational guide.

re: form (D2013=)

Designed for middle and high school youth, this curricula provides appropriate activities and DVDs for study of the Bible. There is a “Traditions” version that covers Methodist theology and history, which is useful for Confirmation. DVD lessons are short, amusing and thought-provoking with content that will grasp and hold the attention of youth. Activities in the student workbook, called the “anti-workbook”, are fun and reinforce the lesson content. Topics covered on the two disks are divided into units covering Bible, Creed, Jesus, Discipleship, Tough Questions and Other Beliefs for a total of 40 lessons. It is recommended that each student have an anti-workbook. Kit includes a Leader Guide, Anti-Workbook, and DVDs. Re:form has been used successfully at Redmond UMC. Both Patrick Scriven and Irene DeMaris, have commented favorably on this curricula.



Soul Surfer Kit (D2025=)

This kit is designed to develop faithful disciples and to show how one teen girl responds to and overcomes personal disaster based on her Christian faith and support from her family, church and community. It is based on the true story of Bethany Hamilton, a teen who loved surfing and did so daily at her home in Hawaii. Bethany was destined for a professional surfing career when her dreams were cut short on October 31, 2003--the day she was attacked by a 14-foot tiger shark and lost her arm. Amazingly, she did not lose her champion spirit or her desire to surf. She made a remarkable recovery and continued to challenge herself to be a champion surfer going on to win titles and to proclaim her faith in Jesus Christ to the world. Here is the story of a talented young woman who refused to be discouraged or disabled by adversity and instead has given hope and inspiration to millions of people through her story. This kit uses authentic footage of Bethany and her family and clips from the motion picture (Soul Surfer, Tri-Star Films 2011) as well as incorporating a variety of other resources such as graphics, power point presentations, games, sermons, promotional flyers and bible studies to nurture Christians to grow in faith and to introduce others to the Christian faith. This can be used in a church-wide small group event, youth groups, bible studies, and family/personal devotions. Kit includes Soul Surfer Book, leader guide, study guide, and resource DVDs.



Gaspar is not affiliated with the PNWUMC or the United Methodist Church. To learn more about his photo, visit bit.ly/photo-sunset



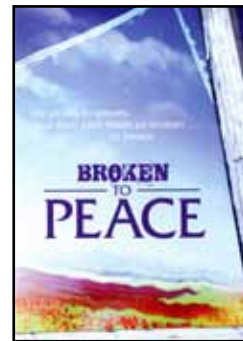
Insight: Twilight (D1084)

Insight: Twilight is part of a new series of DVDs by Steven Skelton exploring the connection between Christianity and culture through the prism of popular films. The three main questions asked in the Insight Series are what does the author say, what does the story say and what does the Bible say? Complete with quotes from the author, an overview of Christian and Mormon imagery and themes in the story and discussion questions, Insight equips youth and adult viewers to start conversations about cultural hot topics that may lead to deeper conversations about faith. It is important to note that this series has been developed without the endorsement or licensing of any authors or producers of the widely popular Twilight books and movies.



Connect With Your Neighbors (D1091)

This discipleship DVD produced by Wesley Theological Seminary's Lewis Center for Church Leadership contains three helpful presentations titled Discovering the People God has Given Us, The Theology of Welcome and Ways to Understand Your Neighbors Better. For each subject there is a PowerPoint, a narrated presentation recorded by a Lewis Center staff member and an outline of key points that can be printed for distribution. Additional resources on the CD-ROM include a needs-based community outreach plan, information on using social media to reach new people and information on your website as your church's welcome mat.



Broken To Peace (D1089)

Sometimes our burdens are so heavy, they break us. Sickness, financial struggles, grief, family crises, broken trust, loss, and death--the problems we may face in life can be overwhelming--yet many of us live out our problems in silence. The men and women in this video live their lives and faith "out loud" and in sharing their stories and pain they inspire, encourage, educate and help others. In falling to pieces, God takes their pain and leads them through darkness to peace, healing and wholeness. Personal stories include job loss, depression, addiction, cancer, death of a child, and abuse. The DVD includes the six video discussion starters, a promotional trailer video, a downloadable facilitator guide, and resources for Bible study, small groups, or adult Sunday School.



James: Mercy Triumphs (D4240)

Widely popular women's bible study leader, Beth Moore, has tackled the book of James in this study. Perhaps more than any other book in the Bible, the book of James encourages us to be consistent in our faith and our actions. It challenges us. It presents the biblical position of justice in ways that we cannot ignore. If our faith is not consistent with our actions in serving the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, then our faith is meaningless. Beth Moore is a vibrant teacher and in this interactive study that includes individual homework and eight weekly group sessions you will be inspired to put your faith into action in practical ways. Explore concepts such as joy, hardship, faith, wisdom, single-mindedness, humility, prayer, and the power of the tongue as you get to know both the man and the book we call James. @

As always I welcome your comments and suggestions of items to purchase. If you have questions or want to reserve a resource visit www.regionalmediacenter.org or call 1-800-755-7710.



BOOK REVIEW
"That Used to Be Us"
by Thomas L. Friedman
and Michael Mandelbaum

I have been a fan of Thomas L. Friedman ever since reading his major work, "The World is Flat." In his newest book, co-authored with Michael Mandelbaum — who provides the academic cachet of an expert in political science — my intellectual curiosity was continuously perked by the provocative ideas found on almost every page.

Friedman and Mandelbaum want our country to return to the original greatness that caused us to lead the world in the 1950's-1970's. They see the watershed event that ended our greatness, ironically, as one of the positive historical events for the United States: the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union as a world power. What happened in this loss of competition with the Soviet Union meant that we did not have an opponent to fear and compete with, and we became complacent. As Jim Collins points out so cogently in his book "How the Mighty Fall," hubris becomes our downfall, as we think we are so great, we don't have to work hard anymore, so we coast on past merits and settle into mediocrity.

This fall from greatness is reflected in all of the vital competitive statistics in comparison to the rest of the world. For example, as compared to other high school students in math, the U.S. currently ranks 31st out of 33 countries. In reading, we fare a little bit better: ranking right in the middle at 17th out of 33 countries. But in science we drop again to 23rd out of 33 countries. Which country ranks at the top of all of these categories? — Shanghai-China, currently the dominate economic power in the world.

Friedman and Mandelbaum offer a formula for our country to return to greatness. Their formula focuses on dealing with key elements in our country's structure for past greatness. They see four major challenges that we must address:

- How to adapt to globalization
- How to adjust to the information technology (IT) revolution
- How to cope with the larger soaring budget deficits of the U.S.
- How to manage a world of both rising energy consumption and rising climate threats.

There are many parallels between the issues that our country faces and the decline of the mainline church. The world has changed so much in terms of getting flatter and more competitive, and similar forces have been thrust upon the church in terms of relevance and cultural change. As we must take seriously the challenges that face our nation, so too, must we take a hard look at the changes needed in the life of our church, and have the courage and fortitude to make such necessary changes.

This is book that all citizens of our country need to read and take seriously. @

RECOMMENDATION: "Must Read" but be aware of the density and complexity of some of the concepts, and the book as a whole.

Early January, the Rev. Bill Green, Trinity UMC Sequim, called to ask me to do a workshop for Puget Sound District's yearly training event, "Roots and Wings." (Note: Roots and Wings will be Saturday, February 25, at Edmonds UMC.) He was asking specifically for a session on General Conference 2012. I always like talking about church matters, especially about General Conference, so I agreed. Immediately following our conversation I had to figure out just what I might share.

Pastor Bill also asked me to write up a short description of the workshop. The title came to me pretty quickly: "Why Bother? Why Our Local Churches Should Care About GC." The question in the title came to me without trouble, but coming up with the answer has been more of a challenge.

General Conference, the every-four-years (quadrennial) gathering of the worldwide United Methodist Church will meet next spring on April 24 through May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Florida. About 1,000 delegates – half clergy delegates and half lay – will meet for worship, celebration, and to do the important work of reviewing and establishing the rules and regulations that inform our lives as United Methodists. This time our clergy delegates will be the Revs. Craig Parrish and Gloria Kymn. The Rev. David Valera will serve as first clergy reserve. I along with Marie Kuch will be lay delegates. Peter Masundire will serve as our first lay reserve. (Note: we will have two fewer delegates seated on the floor this year. The shrinking number of United Methodists in our US churches and the rising numbers of members in our churches in the rest of the world are reflected in the numbers of delegates each Annual Conference is allotted.)

Those of us who are delegates probably have a num-



ber of ways we could answer the "Why Bother?" question for ourselves, personally. Our love for the United Methodist Church includes a passion for church policies and procedures and a high tolerance for church meetings. What others in the church might see as intolerable schedules and tedious discussion is exciting to us – the stuff from which the core of the UMC is nurtured and refined.

But, what of those thousands of United Methodists in the local churches around the country? What about those of you in the PNW who will not be attending? Why should you bother to pay attention to the preparation and then the unfolding of General Conference? When I speak to prospective members at my local church, I most often include the idea that "As a United Methodist you

are free to say 'I am a United Methodist and I believe...' However, whenever you say 'United Methodists believe ...' you must follow the guidelines of our Book of Discipline." That's one reason for paying attention – each four years the "voice" of the UMC is affirmed or refined.

Some of the issues discussed will affect the local churches directly. We'll consider new pension regulations and consider proposals for caring for the health and welfare of our pastors. Those proposals will touch the lives of those leading our own churches.

Other issues will address the structure of the general church. While that might seem at a distance, the decisions made will affect the programs and resources that, at their core, are resources for the local church.

The delegates haven't yet

received copies of the legislation that will be considered at General Conference, but we know that a number of social issues – immigration, health care, full inclusion in the church, and so on – will be debated and decided. Those decisions will not only inform the stand of the denomination, but will directly affect the lives and activities of our own congregations.

By the time I write my next column, the delegation should have received copies of the legislation. I'll let you know some highlights. It's definitely worth a bother! ☺

Amory Peck serves as the Conference Lay Leader for the PNWUMC. Respond to this article by visiting facebook.com/channels.pnwumc and leave a comment!



Solitude: A Radical Call to Re-Engage

NURTURING ELDERS AND OTHERS

by THE REV. PAUL GRAVES
[elderadvocates@nctv.com]

You don't need to be alone to feel lonely! On the other hand, you don't need to be with others to be in a healthy relationship! This reflection initially explores the oh-so-common human drive to escape our loneliness. But then it moves along to affirm that a deep search for solitude is a radical call to re-engage with people and the world in more significant ways.

Recently, I've been re-reading one of my favorite books on spirituality, "Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life", by Father Henri Nouwen. He begins with moving from loneliness to solitude; then moves from hostilities to hospitality, which leads to moving from illusion to prayer.

These movements build on each other, but they don't mark a single-line journey. The journey is inevitably filled with cul-de-sacs, detours, even roundabouts where we can find ourselves returning to old patterns and old fears.

"Conversion" (turning around) is a frequently used word by Father Nouwen. He speaks of converting loneliness into solitude, for example, as an action that requires a great deal of us. It involves a great many momentary turnings, some no doubt not even recognized by us.

In Wesleyan terms, these mini-conversions – turnings -- might be attributed to "prevenient grace", the grace that moves before us, preparing the way for us. I call this "hindsight grace" because we normally don't recognize its presence in our lives until we look back and discover we can put a few pieces of our inner puzzle into place.

Loneliness is a universal experience. But like everything that happens both to us and within us, we have choices as to how we respond to it. We can turn the radio or television on "just to have some noise around me." We can immerse ourselves in a whirlwind of social activities or social relationships.

Finding ways to avoid our loneliness is sometimes the most creative thing we do – not realizing that loneliness-avoiding creativity is born out of fear, not out of a desire to deal with our own

realities in more healing ways. (Self-confession is present in that sentence. Care to join me?)

My deep attraction to the truths about loneliness that Nouwen articulates so well is generated by my deep desire to balance my loneliness with the solitude that Nouwen also sought his entire adult life. He found that solitude was not a magic pill he could take once a day and have uninterrupted peace every day.

In fact, you might be surprised to learn, "solitude" is not an experience that drives us away from people and world problems. That is a stereotyped perception fueled by our imagined life of monks shut off from the world.

Solitude is actually a paradoxical call for us to retreat into the solitude of our hearts so we can first see the world from a deeper perspective, then respond to the world from a deeper immersion in the human capacity called "compassion."

The roots of loneliness are deep in our being, to be sure. That loneliness pushes us to do all kinds of superficial, often harmful, things to avoid the pain of our inner restlessness.

But I'm convinced the roots of solitude grow at an even deeper level of our lives. They grow closer to the tap root, the radix, of God's desire for us as human beings. Since 1994, I've called that tap root God's Radical Hospitality. Perhaps that is when I made another turn in the understanding and accepting of God's unconditional love for me, for us.

Thomas Merton is honored by Nouwen as a contemporary model of solitude. The paradox of solitude's call for us to be radically re-engaged with others is well put in this 1950 diary entry by Merton:

"It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am, the more affection I have for them. It is pure affection and filled with reverence for the solitude of others."

If you are curious about where loneliness and solitude can live in such a creative tension, I encourage you to find a copy of Nouwen's book of spiritual hope, "Reaching Out..." I believe it will challenge you to move forward on your own spiritual journey. It will also energize you to stay with it. ☺

The Rev. Paul Graves serves as the chair for the Conference Council on Older Adult Ministries.

CALENDAR

Note: Events on this calendar may have been added or removed from the time of publication.
 For an updated calendar, including local church events, visit www.pnwumc.org and click "Events" > "Calendar Layout".
 For questions or details about events on this calendar, e-mail channels@pnwumc.org.

FEBRUARY 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
					• Board of Higher Education and Ministry	• Tacoma District Leadership Training @ Olympia First UMC • General Conference Delegation @ PNWUMC
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	• Being in Ministry with Generation Y - Workshop • Evening Presentation & Conversation - Being in Ministry with Generation Y	• Extended Cabinet				• Seattle-Tacoma Leadership Training @ Puyallup UMC • Middle School/Jr. High Retreats @ Camp Indianola
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
• Middle School/Jr. High Retreats @ Camp Indianola	• Board of Congregational Development @ PNWUMC	• Cabinet	• Committee on Ethnic Ministries @ PNWUMC	• Camping Board of Stewards	• Relevance X	• Children's Ministry Worker Conference @ Auburn First UMC
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
• Western Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation @ Grand Sierra Resort • Relevance X	• Presidents' Day • Conference Office is CLOSED	• AC Worship Planning @ PNWUMC	• Ash Wednesday			• Vancouver District Leadership Training @ Montesano UMC, Ridgefield UMC
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
• Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation • Inland District Choir Festival	• Cabinet	• Extended Cabinet	• Leading Change & Managing Transitions @ Bothell UMC			

MARCH 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
• Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation						• Middle School/Jr. High Retreats @ Lazy F
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Middle School/Jr. High Retreats @ Lazy F	• Cabinet				• Connectional Table • Becoming a Justice Seeking Congregation	• C.C.O.Y.A.M. @ Ellensburg First UMC
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	• Board of Congregational Development	• Differences Make a Difference, Advanced Cultural Competency Training	• AC Worship Planning @ PNWUMC		• SUMYT @ Indianola	• Rocks & Ripples @ Simpson UMC • Rocks & Ripples @ Spokane Valley UMC
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
• SUMYT @ Indianola • Camping Board of Stewards		• Cabinet	• Extended Cabinet		• Evangelism Kick-Off @ Wesley UMC • Conference Council on Youth Ministries Meeting @ Puyallup UMC	• PNW Strategy Team @ PNWUMC • General Conference Delegation @ PNWUMC
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
• Conference Council on Youth Ministries Meeting @ Puyallup UMC					• Confirmation Camp @ Lazy F • CF&A @ PNWUMC	• Board of Church & Society @ Wesley Terrace