

The
**CHURCH
COUNCIL
of
GREATER
SEATTLE**

*Grounded
in Faith.
Working
for Justice.*



2014 Annual Report

Renewal of the Spirit, Repairers of the World



Welcome to our Annual Report for 2014. From January's prayers for Christian unity to December's interfaith celebration. From Auburn to Mountlake Terrace, across King and South Snohomish County. We gathered, engaged and acted for the Beloved Community espoused by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we "slimmed down" our organizational budget, we have equally "ramped up" our capacity to foster networking among faith communities and to act as public witnesses to truths such as gun violence, endemic systems of racism, the persistence of poverty and inequality, and the need for reconciled relationships to counter the prevalence of militarism and war. To these ends, 2014 was both a "faith-full" year and a successful year.

At the heart of our year were new endeavors. The *Weaving Our Strengths* Conference tops the list. What better way to build up the church community than to share best practices and experiences with one another? We were gathered together and sent out to "repair the world." We held three conferences with our partners from the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University to develop hands-on efforts to end family homelessness. We organized not just to support a \$15 minimum wage in Seattle but to educate, to walk with workers, and to lift up banners to say that "Living Wage" ultimately is a moral commitment with origins in the social teachings of our churches. **And this is what makes us unique: together, we are a voice of faith that elevates the conversation, expands the capacity, extends the vision and embraces difference as vehicles toward the wholeness ("shalom") of the city (Jeremiah 29:7).**

We journey into 2015 with a balanced budget, a dedicated and talented Board of Directors and churches pursuing communion with one another and mission to a hurting yet beautiful world, with authenticity and intentionality. In the Spirit, we can trust that God is working through us and renewing us, for a "new thing" is being written into our hearts. I hope and pray that our experience together which you see in this report will inspire you and that you will join together in con-spiring such that we become a "Greater Church Council" for all eyes to behold. Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Ramos". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Ramos
Executive Director

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We thank you for your service to the Church Council of Greater Seattle and to the greater ecumenical community.

Staff Members in 2014

Michael Ramos, Executive Director

Emmanuel Mancilla, Justice Leadership Program Intern

Briana Frenchmore, Justice Leadership Program Intern

Vicki Farmer, Weaving Our Strengths Project Manager

Ann Erickson, Office Manager/Programming Associate

Janet Deters, Accountant, part-time

Char Davies, Chief Financial Officer, part-time

Beth Amsbary, Philanthropy Manager

Gathering Together

Joining together – in song, at table, through worship – these sinews of connection allow all our other good works to walk out into the world. We began 2014 in worship, joining the international event, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



One hundred people filled the pews of Christ Our Hope. We took in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, held them up in prayer, and committed to actions of hope. Thanks be to our event partners, Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry and the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Through the year, we shared many cups of coffee, meals, and moments of prayer with you. Hopes for neighborhood clusters, struggles of changing demographics, questions about homelessness programs, yearnings for racial justice. Gatherings intimate and large put flesh on the sinews of connection.

The Christmas Truce was extraordinary - both in 1914 and 2014 - and the Church Council was there every step of the way making it not only possible, but better. From logistics, to community connections, to staffing, the Church Council contributed the experience, perspective and shoe-leather that made the event a highlight of the season for the tremendously diverse inter-faith (and non-faith!) community of King County. - Christian Skoorsmith, Lead Organizer for the Christmas Truce

The year ended with a joyful noise, as 850 people packed into University Temple for a song-filled interfaith service celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the "Christmas Truce". During World War I's Christmas season, soldiers heard each other sing carols, left their fox holes, and joined together on the battleground to celebrate the season. The Community of Christ held the vision for 2014's celebration, which featured Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and secular humanist voices, knit together with song from the Seattle Labor Chorus, headlined by legendary folk musician John McCutcheon.



Your Church Council put our shoulder to the wheel to help produce a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of how a great host of peacemakers might once again rise up to sing away the drums of war.

Housing and Homelessness

No doubt about it, 2014 revealed how deeply troubled our region is when it comes to safe, dry, dependable homes for all God's children. Endangered shelters and encampments, rocketing rents, and more homeless people, even with the significant accomplishments of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County. Faith communities continue to step up to the need, with your Church Council at their side. When Seattle Mayor Ed Murray pulled together his

Emergency Task Force on Homelessness, he made sure to include churches, inviting Church Council Executive Director Michael Ramos to serve.

What faith communities are making a difference in homelessness? Three

conferences gathered faith communities of all religions to share their best practices. Co-hosted with our partners, the Faith and Family Homelessness Project of Seattle Universi-

ty's School of Theology and Ministry, these events addressed the whole continuum of care in addressing homelessness: encouraging faith communities to offer shelter and permanent housing, and also speaking to practical and policy alternatives that will prevent families from being on the street in the first place. Together, we raise a chorus of voices for today's crisis and tomorrow's solutions.



We supported Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Sammamish in hosting Tent City 4 and testified before the Sammamish City Council so that congregations could host there in the future.

It's great to see the Church Council out here, standing with us. Mary Doerr of Spirit of Peace United Church of Christ, Sammamish



Engage: Sharing Wisdom Old and New

In this time of so many tidal shifts – cultural, financial, environmental, and spiritual – our region is truly blessed with visionary leaders. We were honored to offer local congregations the chance to learn from invited guests and each other during 2014. Here are a few highlights:



Civil Dialogue. The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, one of the world's leading ecumenists, offered two trainings on civil dialogue. He sees compassionate listening as one of the primary gifts that faith communities might offer a divisive world. The Church Council also participated in tables for Jewish-Christian dialogue, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, and Racial Equity Dialogue. We look forward to more dialogue programming as an important aspect of our ongoing work.

Shared by the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, Ph.D. as part of his *Difficult Conversations* training at Trinity Parish (Episcopal): *The habits of civil discourse that religious communities encourage are the real gifts they give to American public life. In many ways, those habits of civil discourse are more important than any consensus we might hope to achieve on heretofore divisive issues. ... promoting conversation, not necessarily agreement, is religious communities' most important moral achievement.*
-James Calvin Davis, Presbyterian Teaching Elder from his book *In Defense of Civility*

What would make Seattle a more

compassionate city? In March of 2014, historian and best-selling author Karen Armstrong visited Seattle, headlining a Compassionate Seattle Conference that asked this question. Your Church Council was at the table, helping to frame the inquiry and the conversations, drawing together non-profits, indigenous leaders, and individuals of all faiths. Ancient teachings and current needs met in these powerful sessions.



Photo: Kristen Wendt

From Domination to Partnership. As a young man, the Rev. David Mesenbring worked in apartheid-era South Africa, alongside leaders of the non-violent African National Congress movement in their unlikely dream of overturning apartheid. David's workshop shared his practical experience on how to embark upon the transformational voyage from relationships of domination to ones of partnership. We were honored to produce David's session with sponsorship from the Diocese of Olympia (Episcopal Church).



Protecting the Salish Seas. Indigenous peoples of Cascadia are gathering, from British Columbia to the South Puget Sound. They sit in council for how to protect the waters known as the Salish Seas, waters central to their culture, history, and livelihood. Among the allies invited to the table is your Church Council of Greater Seattle. This invitation grew from our history. In 1987, a landmark apology was made to 26 Cascadian Tribes. Seven Christian Bishops asked forgiveness for Christianity's participation in the systemic undermining of the native culture. The Church Council led the movement that created that apology. Now, we are given the opportunity to live out a new way of being with the tribes, by accepting their gracious invitation to participate in protecting the Salish Seas.

Climate Justice and Race Workshop. The Church Council hosted a multi-sectoral 2-day workshop for 45 dedicated organizers on climate justice and race. New relationships were forged and participants were moved to bring a racial justice lens to the disproportional impacts of our environmental policies and practices.

A New Conference: *Weaving Our Strengths*



WEAVING
OUR *strengths*

They were waiting outside the doors early, despite October's chilly morning. 200 local Christians flocked into University Congregational United Church of Christ, ready to forge new and strengthened connections in a day of inspiration and enrichment. Local leaders of national stature from nine faith traditions presented workshops, led a networking collaboration café, and celebrated worship. From Intergenerational Conversations to Difficult Conversations, from Edible Churchyards to Songs that Build Community, congregations found a treasure trove of resources to do their work of healing

God's world. Between sessions, they visited a resource fair of 16 local organizations, or enjoyed handmade tamales, or celebrated local heroes – the 2014 Gertrude Apel Pioneering Spirit Honorees. The honored individual was Rev. Jan Bolerjack of Riverton Park United Methodist Church. The honored community was University Lutheran Church. *Weaving Our Strengths* flew over every benchmark of success, becoming a new flagship event for how the Church Council serves and supports the region's Christians.

Quick Stats:

200 people from 15 faith traditions
57 congregations
22 cities



Comments from participants:

This panel rocks. So much wisdom here.

Truly a triumph.

It was a great experience where I got to meet new friends and learn new sides of social justice.

Fantastic. Wonderful. Inspiring. Challenging.



More comments from participants:

Upbeat. Uplifting. Very Worthwhile.

Inspiring day!

A blessing.

Invigorated my local congregation's involvement as well as ecumenical efforts.

Thank you for providing this space for us all to come together and share in multiple ways.

Living Wage and Economic Justice

Across the country, eyes turned to our region during the \$15 minimum wage campaign. Faith communities were a vibrant part of the ground-breaking movement. Your Church Council's Living Wage Working Group laid the foundation for ongoing faith involvement, shepherded (in 2014) by our inventive, dedicated Justice Leadership Interns, Briana Frenchmore and Emmanuel Mancilla:

- “Living Wage for All” banners were blessed and raised by 14 congregations;
- A stirring statement of Living Wage Principles was adopted by congregations and a regional denomination (the

United Church of Christ);

- 10 educational forums and film showings we directly organized, reaching 19 congregations;
- A website of resources, livingwagejourney.org, where people of faith will find a great tool kit for ongoing engagement.

Our work continues. A living wage is more than an hourly rate of pay. It requires an ongoing commitment to affordable basic human necessities that strengthen households and families. and robust action to confront economic inequality. We will be there.



A Living Wage Banner raised above the entry to University Christian and University Baptist Churches.



Plymouth Church (UCC) played a key role in the Living Wage movement within the United Church of Christ denomination both locally and nationally!



St. Mary's Parish, a bilingual congregation, displayed banners in both English and Spanish.

By displaying these banners proudly on our houses of worship, our very buildings become a living voice, a voice that calls out to our neighborhoods saying to those who are struggling to make ends meet, you are not alone, that there are communities who care in word and deed. -The Rev. Brandon Duran, Plymouth Church, Seattle, blessing of the Living Wage banners

Youth Chaplaincy Coalition

2014 brought to the Youth Chaplaincy Coalition (YCC) a new era of dreaming big! YCC Chaplain Rev. Terri Stewart, realized that the Coalition and she could not serve all the youth affected by incarceration. She recognized that the Coalition's good work needed to be easily replicated for others to use. She dreamed of how to change the entire environment for youth affected by incarceration.

2014 Stats:

- 513 Youth Visits
- 150 Volunteers
- 5 Visitation Sites
- 8 Worship Services
- 2 Retreats

This led to a new program and a new imagining of an old program. The new program, Creating Healing Communities, allows communities, like churches, to imagine, together,

how their community can become a station of hope for people affected by incarceration. The Healing Communities program is a certified program run by the General Board of Church and Society in the United Methodist Church.

Reimagining an old program led to a new vision for the YCC's MAP (My Action Plan) program. For King County Juvenile Detention Center, the YCC is reimagining MAP as a weekend retreat across 12 hours. That means the entire program needs to be rewritten in a new and updated format. For Echo Glen on the East Side of Lake Washington, we imagined expanding MAP from a 5 week to a 16 week program with increased volunteer support. Both models could be replicated in sites across the U.S.

For 2015, we have robust goals of recruiting 30 new volunteers and having 120 youth go through the MAP program. Amen!

The Youth Chaplaincy Coalition is a task force of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. For more information about the Youth Chaplaincy Coalition, contact the Rev. Terri Stewart at YCC-Chaplain@thechurchcouncil.org or 425.531.1756. youthchaplaincycoalition.wordpress.com

Immigration Accompaniment and Advocacy



The year 2014 marked a turning point in the movement for immigrant rights in the United States. Not because Comprehensive Immigration Reform was passed, but because immigrants themselves said, “Basta! Enough!” to a system that has led to record



numbers of deportations and people in detention, separating families and keeping millions in the shadows. The renewed energy has come from those who have experienced detention or have

seen loved ones deported. The annual Mother’s Day Vigil at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, sponsored by the Washington New Sanctuary Movement in affiliation with the Church Council, featured these voices, as well as other people of faith from as far away as Oregon.



Executive Director Michael Ramos speaking to the media about the unaccompanied children from Central America.

The Church Council helped to lead communication among service providers as well as advocacy to protect unaccompanied children from Central America from inhumane

treatment and deportation to intolerable violence and poverty in their home countries. Over 100 organizations in a 36-hour period signed a letter that the Church Council

assisted in organizing to members of Congress calling for legal protections, services, and the keeping together of families, with special attention to children. Our faith meetings with Representative Adam Smith and Senator Patty Murray bolstered their resolve to encourage President Obama to follow through on his commitment to provide administrative relief (“deferred action”) for young people who have the dream of staying, going to school and getting a job in the United States and for the parents of citizen and legal resident children.



The Church Council organized a meeting with Congressman Adam Smith at the Hillman City Collaboratory, where Valley & Mountain worships, to discuss immigration reform.

Our Justice Leadership Program Intern, Emmanuel Mancilla, developed with Ms. Cote Soerens of Puentes Advocacy a first-time resource guide for services geared to the Latino community regardless of immigration status. The guide demonstrated that, for people of faith, God calls us to attend to all immigrants as all are beloved in God’s eyes. An online version of the guide is available at sinfronterasguide.org.



Gather. Engage. Act.

We gather, engage, and act in the public square to bring forth the common good. Beyond areas highlighted above, we also encouraged congregations and people of faith to take action in 2014 by:

Responding as Community. When events happen for which we cry “How long, O Lord?” we play an important role in gathering the community for vigils, marches, and remembrances. This past year we participated in, helped organize, and/or spread the word to gather community in response to the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; and the shootings at Seattle Pacific University and Marysville Pilchuck High School.

Reducing Gun Violence. As part of the Washington Alliance for Gun Responsibility, we played a vital role in co-planning marches and vigils, leading adult forums, and encouraging congregations and individuals to support Initiative 594 in an effort to reduce gun violence in Washington state.

Funding for Housing and Human Services. Through advocacy and our Action Alerts we encouraged funding for housing and human services at the city, county, and state levels.

2014 Contributions

We extend deep gratitude for the commitment of the partners whose financial and in-kind support makes our work possible.

Contributors to Core Operations: Gather, Engage, Act

Foundations

The John C. and Karyl K. Hughes Foundation
Seattle Foundation
Alfred & Tillie Shemanski Foundation

Faith Organizations

Community of Christ - Greater Pacific NW
Diocese of Olympia
Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches
Seattle University - School of Theology & Ministry
Sisters of Charity
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Admiral Congregational U.C.C.
Bellevue Christian Church
Church of the Ascension
Community of Christ - Greater Pacific NW
 Rainier Congregation
 Woodland Park Congregation
Eastside Friends Meeting
Fautleroy Church U.C.C.
First Lutheran Church Of West Seattle
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Keystone Congregational U.C.C.
Magnolia United Church Of Christ Congregational
Newport Presbyterian Church
Northshore United Church of Christ
Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church
Plymouth Congregational Church U.C.C.
Prospect Congregational United Church Of Christ
Queen Anne Christian Church
Queen Anne United Methodist Church
S K Y Center for Spiritual Living
Saint Mark's Cathedral
Sand Point Community Methodist Church
Seattle Mennonite Church
Sisters of Saint Dominic of Tacoma
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
St. Andrew Presbyterian
St. James Cathedral
St. James Presbyterian Church
St. John United Lutheran Church
St. Patrick Parish
St. Paul's U.C.C.
Trinity United Methodist Church
University Baptist Church
University Christian Church Disciples of Christ

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University Friends Meeting
University Lutheran Church
University Temple United Methodist Church
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Costco
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The Rev. J. Graley Taylor
Howard & Bernice Weckel,
 Parents of Laurie Weckel

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Marjorie Jones
Steven Jones



My life's work has been dedicated to trying to build a more just world with my fellow Christians and others committed to social justice. It simply makes sense to continue that work after I'm gone. That's why the Church Council of Greater Seattle is in my will.

- The Rev. David Bloom, former Associate Director,
Church Council of Greater Seattle

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2014 Contributors to Church Council Task Forces

Faith Organizations

Bear Creek Methodist Church
Diocese of Olympia
Inglewood Presbyterian
Pacific Northwest Annual Conference,
United Methodist Church
Seattle First Baptist Church
Women of Sand Point Community
United Methodist Church

Organizations

Microsoft Giving Campaign

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Our aim is to appropriately recognize each donor. Please let us know if your acknowledgement needs to be changed by contacting Beth Amsbary, Philanthropy Manager, at 206-525-1213 extension 103 or BAmsbary@thechurchcouncil.org.

2014 Financial Report

2014 represents our first full year of operations in a new business model, without direct service programs.

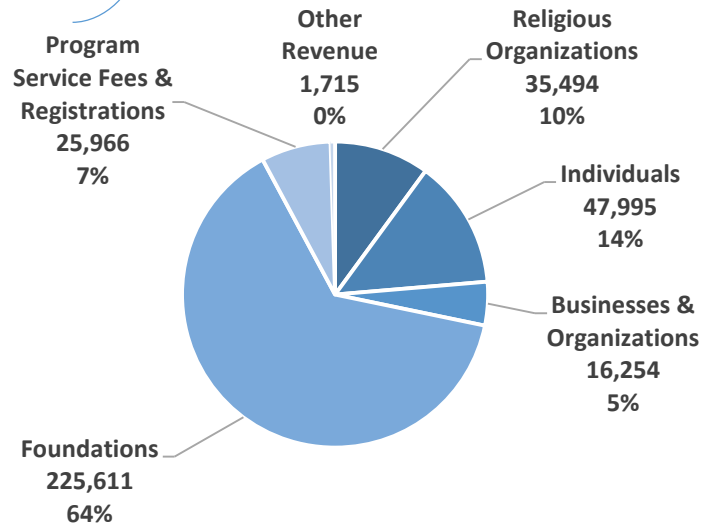
Revenue and Expense*

Public Support and Revenue

Religious Organizations	35,494
Individuals	47,995
Businesses & Organizations	16,254
Foundations	225,611
Program Service Fees & Registrations	25,966
Other Revenue	1,715
Total Public Support & Revenue	353,035

Included here is a new way we carry out our mission, the *Weaving Our Strengths* Conference.

Public Support and Revenue



Expense

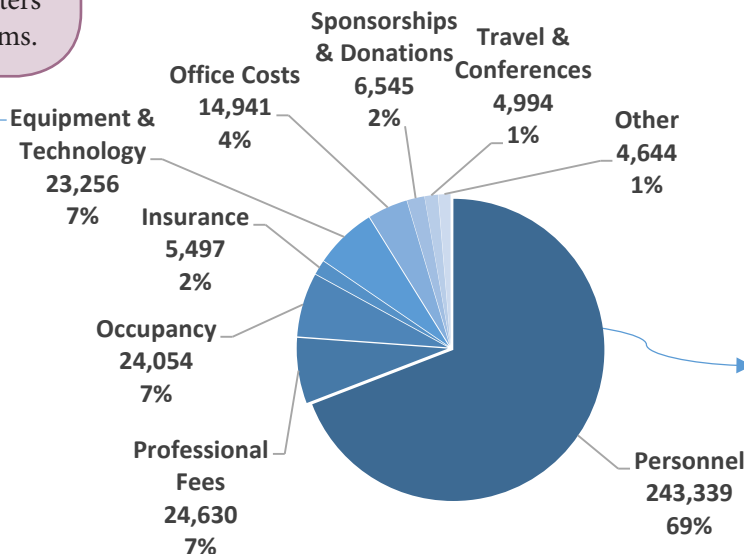
Personnel	243,339
Professional Fees	24,630
Occupancy	24,054
Insurance	5,497
Equipment & Technology	23,256
Office Costs	14,941
Sponsorships & Donations	6,545
Travel & Conferences	4,994
Other	4,644
Total Expense	351,900

Net 1,135

*Unaudited

Expense

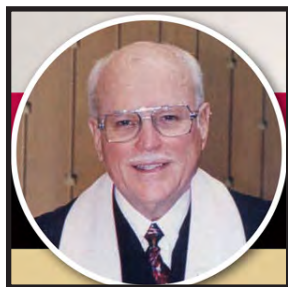
Purchase of a new server, 4 new computers and upgrading systems.



Our staff includes the equivalent of 4.2 full time positions. Much of our personnel expense is devoted to carrying out programs, and supporting our congregations and their members to gather, engage, and act for the common good.

Remembering. . .

Powerful witness. We celebrate the lives of **The Rev. J. Graley Taylor** and **Mike Yarrow**, two men of lively faith who tilled the garden of a more equitable world. Death took both Graley and Mike in June of 2014. Their legacies of inspired action include many contributions to the life of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. We join their families in missing them and uplifting their good fruits. Thank you Graley. Thank you Mike.



Graley came to his second vocation of film-making after years of service as a Presbyterian pastor. He was a pioneer of media as a way to tell stories of faith and mission, beginning in his congregations back in the 1950's then through invitations to dedicate himself to this new form of ministry. Graley

directed the ecumenical Religious Broadcasting Commission and later, the Academy of Religious Broadcasting, a task force of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. Through these groups, Graley produced award-winning TV documentaries and a weekly talk show that ran nine seasons. Holy Spirit drew Graley into ecumenism and inter-faith work, as he kept finding collaborators and subjects too powerful to resist.

He was especially proud of the documentary "Ground Zero at Bangor," which told the story of Jon Nelson, a Lutheran Pastor, whose faith called him to organize protests against the nuclear warheads housed at the Bangor Naval Base. The documentary featured many memorable characters in the Church Council's history, beginning with Nelson, chair of the Church Council's Peace Task Force and long-time board member. In a memorable scene, the bishops and denominational executives joined a blockade on the waters of Puget Sound, led by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen and Church Council Director the Rev. Dr. Bill Cate. Heady stories indeed. "I wish I had another ten years," Graley said in his final months, "I'd like to see how all this new media takes off and helps us to tell inspiring stories."



Mike was another man of two vocations. He was a much loved sociology professor, teaching at Ithaca College in upstate New York for 18 years. And, he was a life-long peace and justice organizer, inspired by his membership in the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers. After college, he completed alternative service to the draft with the American Friends Service Committee. In the summer of 1964

he registered voters in Mississippi with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Freedom Summer.

While his faithful acts for justice continued throughout his working years, we remember him best for what happened after retirement, when he and his wife Ruth moved to the Northwest, lured by their love of mountain backpacking. Mike's tireless, smiling presence inspired many a meeting for peace, living wage, and sustainability. He launched the Peace Activist Trainee program that has graduated over 90 high school students, through the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation. He served on the boards of the pro-soldier anti-war center Coffee Strong, and of the Abe Keller Peace Education Fund. And, for more than ten years, he served on the Church Council's Social Justice Committee as well as the Board of Directors. Whether organizing an action, asking just-the-right question, reminding us of core values, or cracking a well-timed joke, he brought out the best in all of us and made the world a better place.

Join with the Church Council in planting and tending the Beloved Community - moving our region toward adequate sustenance, vibrant respect, non-violent relations, and mutual caring for all.

Stay Informed with the Weekly Update and Action Alerts - The Weekly Update is our e-newsletter of social justice, ecumenical, and faith events of interest to the faith community in King and South Snohomish Counties. The Action Alert is our e-mail call to action. Sign up for the Weekly Update and/or the Action Alert at www.thechurchcouncil.org or email info@thechurchcouncil.org.

Help us Connect - Invite us to build a relationship with your community: to join you in worship, to learn about your priorities and resources for the broader community, to connect you with a speaker or workshop, and to promote your events.

Donate your Time - Seal an envelope or contribute to a committee. Volunteers are essential to our success.

Become a Stakeholder - Your financial contribution is key to building this community. Make a gift in tribute, remember this work in your will, include a matching gift, or offer a donation online. For more information, visit www.thechurchcouncil.org or contact Beth Amsbary at 206.525.1213, ext. 103 or BAmsbary@thechurchcouncil.org.



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