

THE TIDINGS

Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



Grieving Well

As much as I hate platitudes associated with grief, there is some merit in keeping it pithy. Grief has been one of the most powerful feelings of my life, hitting like waves, often unexpectedly, after I thought I was “done”. Come to find out we don't really finish grieving so much as adjust to the new reality, one without _____. All change is loss, which explains why we avoid change so effortlessly.

That being said, when we take that to heart, we realize on some level we are constantly grieving, in as much as we recognize that we (and everything else) are constantly changing. As humans, we like to imagine that the world is stable, that the biggest parts of our lives are secure, and that we can predict the future based on that stability. We find, however, that even the big things are always moving, they just seem slow, until a seismic shift reorients the entire landscape of our lives.

2025 may be a seismic shift for some, a slow burn for others, and will certainly be fraught with profound change for all, especially those in this church community. We must be prepared to grieve throughout. The 5 stages of grief are worth reviewing (good YouTube videos abound), and they point to the ultimate truth we aim for: acceptance. Accept what is, and accept that it has been blessed by what was. How must we orient ourselves in order to grow into the maturity that only grieving well can bring?

Over the next month, we will consider the process of grieving well, from personal, relational, and corporate/cultural loss, all rooted in an understanding of the role expectations play. We will look to stories in Scripture, the experiences of our community, and the wisdom of social scientists to help us in the maturation process. Beloveds, I remind you that nothing lasts, which we can choose to see as an affirmation of the special and sacred nature of right now. May our impermanence lead us to honor that which makes God accessible to us, right now.

In Peace and With Love,
Pastor Andrew



Church Events

Tuesdays Mike and Tobi's
Dance & Art & Jazz
Hang 4:15-6:15 PM

Wednesdays Choir Rehearsal
7:00 - 8:30

Jan. 4 - Games, Games,
Games 2:00

Jan. 5 - First Sunday Brunch
after worship

Jan. 21 - PFLAG Meeting 7:30

Jan. 27 - Cook with Chaz for
Westside Neighbors Shelter
3:00 Anita and Peggy's House

**Feb. 2 - Annual Meeting after
Worship**

Do Justice

Sermons & Scriptures

Jan. 5 - Expectations are Everything

Jan. 12 - My Grief is an Onion

Jan. 19 - What Happens to "We" Without
Them?

Jan. 26 - Who Are We Now? Surviving a
Loss of Shared Identity

**We provide nursery care Sunday mornings
during the church service!**

**TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY - If you would
like a ride to any church event listed please
contact Peggy Rich
joyinthemorning1130@gmail.com or call
(206)460-3021 and she will arrange your
transportation to and from these planned
events.**

Love Mercy

Walk Humbly

ADMIRAL'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

IS BIG NEWS IN THE CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER!

Admiral UCC ready to transform building, lives

The Rev. Andrew Conley-Holcom, pastor of Admiral UCC, reported that a congregational meeting in November voted to donate their land and bring affordable housing to their neighborhood in a new project with space for their church.



Andrew Conley-Holcom, pastor of Admiral UCC, is with two members, Anita Shafer and Peggy Rich at the PNC Annual Meeting 2024 in a discussion on small churches.

The congregation plans move out of their church building in early summer 2025 when the preschool year ends and that in demolition of the building in planned to start within a few months of moving out. The plan is for

Homestead Community Land Trust, a nonprofit organization that develops land and housing in trust, to complete the new building in 18 months.

During that time, Admiral will worship at St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church with low rent.

“We are on the vanguard of what more churches that grew in the baby boom era are experiencing as they can no longer maintain their buildings, but know their property, buildings and parking lots are valuable,” he said. “Some will sell, take the money and relocate. Others like us are staying to serve and become more engaged in the neighborhood.”

Andrew—who has served Admiral 10 years, his first church after graduating from Pacific School of Religion in 2014—sees this as an authentic moment for the church to live into the radical economic vision for the world, stepping out of capitalistic assumptions. He also sees churches picking up from the Poor People Campaign message that budgets and how organizations spend money are moral statements.

“The church should be about collective security,” he said. “This is the right time to be the church, to be a pastor and to have conversations.”

As churches pivot from their buildings, they are making decisions for the next 50 years, not to keep doing what they have been doing but allowing creative ministries to emerge.

“It is a time for the death and resurrection of baby boom churches,” he said, “as people inherit from the generation who built church buildings that no longer serve us. I’m excited. We can now more clearly think about our mission and use the wealth from our buildings.

Andrew grew up attending Wayside UCC in Federal Way. He earned a bachelor’s degree in 2005 in anthropology and a master’s degree in anthropology and genocide studies in 2010 from Western Washington University. He is chair of the PNC-UCC Dismantling Racism Task Force, which he says is a group getting together to continue the conversation started by PNC clergy of color at Annual Meeting in 2019. The Task Force was instrumental in developing the resolution for staff and board members to receive anti-racism training and is working to advance anti-racist growth across the conference.

“We are working with the Church Development Committee to plan a symposium for February to share the work that has been done with Church

Development Committee (CDC) anti-racism grants,” he said, before turning back to the housing that will replace the church.

Because Homestead is intentional about inclusion, Admiral UCC is discussing who they want to build community with, to make sure the project is inclusive and impacts generational wealth and generational equality so there is meaningful impact on poverty and racism, he said.

Andrew is aware of the anxiety some white people feel about addressing racism and doing it right. He believes it’s important for the denomination and conference to articulate clearly what anti-racism and solidarity mean.

“That’s also important in relationship to articulating and advancing our Christian values in our neighborhood—including through current programs such as an arts group and children’s activities.”



Mike Piraino helps Admiral develop affordable housing. Photo courtesy of Mike Piraino

Helping spearhead the building negotiations and details is Mike Piraino. He was drawn to Admiral in 2020, after 10 years as a member of Alki UCC, because the church was across the street from his home and he knew Andrew from Alki-Admiral combined church functions.

Mike, who graduated in 1989 from Purdue University in Indiana in aerospace engineering, came to Seattle in 1990 to work for Boeing. He graduated from Seattle University's Law School in 1995 and worked with a law firm serving Boeing on product liability.

He then moved into corporate finance and securities law and worked with and at technology companies for the last 30 years. Now he works remotely as chief operating officer for ORCA Computing, a United Kingdom-based quantum computing company.

He grew up Catholic and his wife was Lutheran, so they looked many years for a church before finding Alki. They joined Admiral during COVID, and were excited to learn the congregation was looking at providing affordable housing and options for the future of the church, said Mike, who had participated in a discernment process at Alki.

Admiral was looking at options for remaining viable as a church: sell the property and move; develop part of the land and use funds to renovate the aging building or partner with an organization to bring affordable housing to people in a new structure that included church space.

Admiral chose the third option after connecting with Homestead and learning it had a way to help make the project a reality.

The church decided to donate the land to Homestead to develop affordable housing, and the church would have space in the project.

"We will tear down our building, build affordable housing and be a resident in the project," Mike said.

Homestead secures funding so housing on the site is affordable for those earning less than 80 percent of the area median income.

"Our focus has been on being a neighborhood church as costs skyrocketed and pushed out many people," he said. "Our ministry is focused on social justice, and this project allows us to provide affordable housing in the neighborhood we have been part of for more than 120 years."

Part of the land was originally lands of the Coastal Salish or Duwamish Tribe.

“We researched titles to learn how church came to own the land and benefitted from exclusionary practices. We are on unceded ancestral land of Duwamish. The land was never really ours, so we needed to benefit those traditionally excluded,” Mike said.

He explained that the U.S. government never honored the treaty with the Duwamish, so the land the church sits on was never formally ceded to the U.S. Government, but it granted those lands to settlers anyway. The U.S. government granted land the church sits on to the family of a U.S. soldier who fought and died in the Seminole Wars in Florida, he said.

“The land grant includes my house,” Mike added.

Speculators acquired land from the family. Through that chain of title, the church came into possession of the land.

“It’s hard saying it is our asset,” Mike said. “We felt called to do something with the land that was thoughtful and inclusive. We had discussions with the Duwamish tribe.”

As Admiral’s pastor, Andrew engaged in dialogue with tribal members, who expressed appreciation for the choice, Mike said.

“We partnered with Homestead because they focus on home ownership. The affordable homes would be owned, creating generational wealth to bring families out of poverty,” he said. “It has impact on future generations. Homestead assures the housing remains affordable in perpetuity.

The 21-unit housing project will be 13 town houses and eight condos.

“Homestead helped us work closely with the neighborhood throughout the process, including inviting design inputs and keeping folks in the neighborhood informed on parking, safety and congestion,” he added.

“Homestead’s experience working with neighbors is important because we want to continue our ministry in the neighborhood,” Mike said. “We want to do it in a way that is perceived as positive, while bringing affordable housing and diversity to the neighborhood.

When Admiral started working with Homestead two years ago, the average price of a neighborhood home was \$939,000, and the average rent of one-bedroom was \$1,895 a month—affordable only to upper middle class.

In the 25 years Mike has lived there, the cost of living has increased dramatically, pricing many out.

“Addressing people unjustly excluded is a big deal for us as a church focused on social justice,” he said.

“We seek to live our beliefs and communicate to the community what we are about,” he said. “Our work to bring social justice is not just talk. The focus on tolerance, inclusiveness and social justice attracted me to the UCC.”

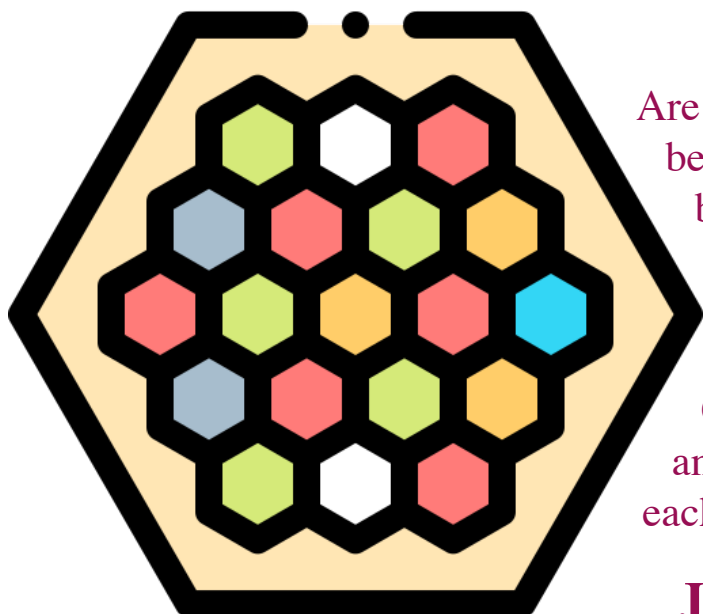
Homestead encouraged the church to go through a process to visualize its future and how it interfaces with the community, and then to decide what it needed physically as a church structure to do all of that.

Since signing an initial memorandum of understanding with Homestead in July 2023, Admiral teams and committees have worked with Homestead to negotiate and sign a formal purchase and sale agreement. They then worked on the project details and design with Homestead’s architects and advisors.

Mike said Admiral hopes construction will be completed in the first half of 2027.



CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS TEAM



GAMES, GAMES, GAMES

Are you an old-fashioned gamer? Expert or beginners are welcome. Hands on boardgames, traditional games, new games, card games, whatever type of game you like to play - this is your chance to show us what you've got! Come share a fun time with church friends and their friends on the first Saturday of each month!

Jan. 4, from 2:00 - 5:00 in the Fellowship Hall

MIKE AND TOBI'S DANCE & ART & JAZZ HANG

Tuesdays 4:15-6:15 PM

Get ready for a thrill! From 4:15 to 4:45 PM, we're kicking off our JAM 'N' ART session with a vibrant "SHAKE, DANCE & HEAL DANCE PARTY". It's the perfect way to let go of stress, release pent-up emotions, and energize your body! This is your chance to shake off any tension and ground yourself through the power of dance. Let's get moving and grooving!

4:30-6:15 PM Tobi Stone and Mike Henderson are joining jazz improv jam for all ages and interactive art, all happening in the Sanctuary. Jazz standards and rare swing tunes- easy sight reading, fun jamming! Beginners learn from advanced students, and advanced players get a chance to play with others. Mike brings opportunities to express yourself in painting, puppet and craft making. Call Tobi with questions at 206.412.0145 and contact Mike at 206.566.9822 for more info.

OUTREACH TEAM

HANDS-ON HELP FOR THE HUNGRY

People are hungry and cold every day right here in West Seattle. God's children. Every day. Every night. I know that; you do, too. Have you wished there were something you could do directly to help those neighbors, something that feels more personal than simply donating money to an organization? There is!

Admiral Church has been providing Westside Neighbors Shelter with dinner for 40-50 men and women experiencing homelessness and hunger every Monday night since mid-November. This effort is financed through the Admiral Church Outreach/Westside Neighbor Shelter Fund. One way you can help is by donating to that fund, either by check or on our website... AND a generous friend of Admiral will match every donation up to \$5,000!

Another way to help in this effort is to provide a meal: Shop, cook, package and deliver. So far, this Monday night culinary outreach has been done by Peggy Rich, Anita Shaffer and Chaz Scanlon, who love doing it but would like to give YOU a chance to share that warm feeling and responsibility as well. They're hoping to get a group of Admiral Church volunteers up to speed to provide one Monday night meal a month.

Most likely you haven't planned, shopped and cooked for 50 before, so this may sound a bit daunting. Not to worry! Chaz has done high-volume cooking and management for years and is a great teacher; pretty fun guy, too. You are invited to an introductory hands-on teaching session with Chaz, Peggy and Anita at their home near Lincoln Park on January 26, Sunday, 1:00-2:00 pm (planning and shopping at The Chef Store on 4th Ave S) and on January 27, Monday, 3:00-6:00 pm (prepping, cooking, packing up food and delivering to Westside Neighbors Shelter). No experience necessary, really! After a few coaching sessions, hopefully you'll be ready to form your own group and join the rotation.

Having done it for nearly two months now, I can promise you that, when you drive up to the shelter with hot, nutritious food and see for yourself God's hungry children waiting for you and the compassionate help you bring, it really does feel like you're living out Jesus' words: "For I was hungry and you gave me food. Truly, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me." Please join the Admiral Church feeding ministry for Westside Neighbors Shelter! Call or text Anita at (206) 300-6974 and sign up for the first teaching session on January 26 and 27! You'll be helping and having fun, too!

Anita Shaffer, Member of the Outreach Team

Do Justice

Love Mercy

Walk Humbly

PFLAG
MEETING JAN. 21 7:30-9:00



Please join us for our next PFLAG meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 17th @7:30 PM. For more than 50 years, PFLAG has been providing peer-to-peer support, publications, toolkits, and other resources to make sure that the family members of people who are LGBTQ+ get the support they need.

**Worship Service
every Sunday @ 10:30
www.admiralchurch.org**



***Admiral Congregational
United Church of Christ
4320 Southwest Hill St.
Seattle, WA 98116
(206) 932-2928
officemgr@admiralchurch.org***