



# INLAND STREAM

INLAND WEST USA MISSION CENTER NEWS

Inland Stream Fall-Winter 2022

Volume 18 Number 2

## Some Thoughts from the Inland West Mission Center President John VanDerWalker

2022 has been yet another year of unusual events. The year began with the pure aggression of Russia against its neighbor Ukraine. As a community we have joined with others around the world in prayer and righteous indignation for the pain, suffering and death caused by this unprovoked aggression and violence. This war reminds us, as should all wars, of the unending need for a people in the world who proclaim peace and follow that proclamation with acts of peace.

There is a lot for us to be concerned about, but there is a lot to be encouraged with as well. This year we had a good camping season with two well attended reunions (Utah, Washington) and a congregational retreat in Montana. Mission center conference was well attended and those present were treated to a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit through fellowship, worship, food and Apostolic ministry.

I think our gathering ministry this year helped those who attended to reconnect not only with friends that were separated due to the pandemic, but also with the passion of being in community in Christ. The planning for the Samish Reunion (the one I was a little involved with) was eased by the willingness of folks to serve and stretch themselves for the wellbeing of all. Claude Duty gets the silver star for valor for his tenacious and unflinching dedication to the pots and pans in the kitchen at Samish. Lisa Stecher too, gets a silver star for the traveling she did to congregations during the winter and spring so that she could personally invite congregations to participate and volunteer for service responsibilities and, when she was no longer able to lead the effort, handed the MC staff a nearly filled roster of workers and volunteers along with a great deal of details that made the reunion special.



The Utah reunion was “Huge!” by today’s standards with half of attendees being youth and children. Leadership by Carla and her crew was outstanding and the highlight of the week was a choral rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody during the Variety show, (for some reason people were very careful not to call it a talent show). It was my pleasure to spend the week with teenagers who were seeking a closer walk with each other. One of the special times of the week for me was when the youth in my class took me on a hike through the campground and shared with me their history with the place. They shared secret places where they would hide from the grown-ups to play in their younger years. I was very touched to be invited into that sacred part of their stories.

As we move into the dark part of the year when the sun rises and sets further to the south every day, we

*(Continued on page 3) 2022 Thoughts*

## Heartfelt thanks for the generosity of the Inland West Mission Center

*Below is an adapted thank you that Denise White read to the Inland West Mission Center conference held in Spokane Valley Washington on September 24*

In September 2017, President Veazey's address, "A Time to Act!" he invited the church to active participation in the Bridge of Hope project, which would also incorporate the retirement responsibility. It was a challenge and call to respond.

At the 2019 World Conference the Presiding Bishopric charted the course for the church to raise \$120 Million by Dec. 31, 2023. The Council of Twelve worked with the Presiding Bishopric to match capacity with need and each Field took a portion of the goal. The goal for the North Central Field, which includes Inland West Mission Center is \$7 Million dollars. Robin and I carefully reviewed the context and capacity of each mission center in our field to match capacity with need. Each mission center in our field shares a portion of our field's BOH goal.

*At this point Denise asked the conference participants to stand*

- If you are part of one of the following congregations. Please stand and remain standing: Salt Lake City, Whitehall, Spokane Valley.
- If you have family members that attended or were associated with the Buhl, Idaho congregation, please stand.
- If you have family members that attended or were associated with the Coeur d' Alene, Idaho congregation, please stand.
- If you attended, supported, or worked at Camp Cascade in Idaho, please stand.
- If you have family members that attended or were associated with the Sagle, Idaho congregation, please stand.
- If you have attended any event within the Inland West Mission Center, please stand.

*With the entire congregation standing Denise then shared these words:*

Take a look around you and see those standing with you. They have also supported the Inland West Bridge of Hope Goal. Not only has Inland West Mission Center met their goal, but they have also exceeded it!!

On behalf of all the members of Community of Christ across the globe, Robin and I express our deep appreciation for your contribution to Bridge of Hope. Meeting these responsibilities and building our collective church endowments honors the past and creates a path to the future, for all of us today and tomorrow, for our children, and our children's children, for the lost and the found.

We are humbled by your response to the financial needs of our global church and for how you choose to live the principles of generosity, even in the face of the unprecedented challenges associated with a pandemic and changing times. We recognize that we stand on the shoulders and vision of all who have gone before. We stand beside you as we look to the future together, fully committed to the mission of Jesus Christ.

May God continue to bless and guide you as you respond to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and share the peace of Jesus Christ in all the places and spaces of your lives. Thank you!!!

*(Continued on page 3) Bridge of Hope*

*(Continued from page 2) Bridge of Hope*

*At this time in the meeting Denise invited us to celebrate our accomplishment and give ourselves a hand.*

*We have been blessed by the ministries of many appointees over the years in the areas that are the Inland West Mission Center. Some of those appointee families are still with us, some have passed on, support of the Bridge of Hope honors the sacrifices that those families made to serve God by serving the church, providing for them the income that was promised them as they left secular employment to join the ranks of church employees. Thank you for your continued support.*

*(Continued from page 1) 2022 Thoughts*

might look forward to winter with some melancholy or regret for not doing or being more during the fine weather of temperate months. We may, on the other hand, look to the winter as a time to slow down from the hectic pace of summer months (I sound like a beekeeper) and focus on some home time and work that has been neglected inside, maybe even some long overdue rest.

This beginning time of seasonal darkness coincides with Advent, a time that we travel through spiritual darkness looking forward to the light of Christ bursting forth at Christmas. There are many ways to observe Advent, one of the best is to go to church and listen to the Advent liturgy repeated in your home congregation. Another is to take up a spiritual practice and focus on the coming light.

As I consider the ancient image of Christ being the light of the world I am reminded of the new James Webb Space Telescope that is sending to us extraordinary images of galaxies billions of light years from us. The images are amazing and are composed by gathering—light. Just like a photograph with film, only so much more. This contraption of modern science can gather light we cannot see, that has been traveling through space for billions of years to land on its sensors and expose to us the grandeur of the universe. It is no wonder we associate light with wisdom, learning, and even creation and salvation, light reveals to us the unimaginable generosity and creativity of God. It is by light that we live, and it is in light that we can love as Christ has loved and become agents of change and redemption for a world that really is a mess.

This year has been a tough one with economic, climate, political and moral challenges, but our experiences of community in the small ways we have been able to experience them, have once again given us an example of the Kingdom of God and the light that shines in the midst of the darkness, and lo, the darkness could not overcome it. May you be blessed on your Advent journey this year and may the light of Christ shine brightly in and through you. Amen.

### Inland West Mission Center 2022 Calendar

- **Men's Coffee time: Saturdays - 7:30 a.m. Pacific / 8:30 am Mountain**
- **Women's Gathering: Meeting once a month on selected Saturday - 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain (watch NewsBrief to see dates of meeting)**
- **World Conference: April 22—28, 2023**
- **Red Cliffe Reunion: July 7—11, 2023, Huntsville, UT**
- **Spectacular, Independence/Graceland: July 12—22, 2023**
- **Samish Reunion (joining with BC Reunion): July 22—29, 2023**
- **Mission Center Conference: September 30—October 1, 2023, Boise, ID**

**More details about these events will be in future communications.**

## Cairns Along the Way

By Carla Long

At a recent church service, John VanDerWalker spoke of spiritual cairns that we meet along our way. Cairns are piles of rocks that people have built along paths or by water to symbolize burial, monuments, navigational aids, or just to say, "Hey! I was here!"

I have made a lot of spiritual cairns in my lifetime and the church has been a huge part of that.

When I was growing up, my biggest spiritual cairn came from church camps. They shaped me and molded me and moved me into the person that I am today. Those spiritual cairns pointed me to Graceland University and then into World Service Corps, where I volunteered for the church in the Philippines and in Australia for a year and half. The spiritual cairns that I built there were even bigger and more solid than they were before, as they pointed me toward realizing that I wanted to work for the church for the rest of my life. After coming home and starting my work for the church, I realized that there were times when those cairns were hard to see and hard to recognize, and there were times when I felt like I had traveled a long way without seeing one. There were lonely and difficult times on the journey, and even though I knew that God was traveling with me, God was sometimes hard to find. But then, another cairn would pop up and I would know my path once again.

After living and working in California, and then Europe, my cairn pointed me again out west, to the Inland West Mission Center. Even though Utah was a new and unknown world to me (in a lot of ways!), I felt at home in the greater Inland West Mission Center. I felt like people here understood my Kansas roots (which didn't happen so much in the Philippines, Australia, California or Europe!), and when I would let my "country" (i.e. when I talked about going deer hunting as a teen or how I have actually driven a tractor to school before) out, no one batted an eye. I appreciated this more than you know!

It was here that I was allowed to be a minister and nothing else. In California and Europe, I had many administrative duties, as well, and they took up most of my time, but here, the administrative duties (while still around, of course!) were less, so I was able to slow down and take my time with people. I was able to sit down and talk and listen and be enveloped by the spirit that comes when you take the time to recognize and know it. I could sit with the tears, the stories, and the laughter and not feel rushed to move forward. I could be with the sometimes slow pace of the spirit and be grateful for the time. I was grateful for the time. That is what I learned by being here in the Inland West.

I learned to slow down. I learned that the cairns will come, even if I'm not moving fast and looking for them, they still come. I learned that God is with me in the times that move so quickly, I'm not even sure what I'm doing, but even more so in the more quiet and gentle times.

And I have learned so much more from the wonderful people of the Inland West Mission Center, and those lessons will continue to carry me forward into my new role in the Presiding Bishopric. I am deeply appreciative of the love and support and care that you have shown me during my six years in the Inland West, for welcoming my family (which DOUBLED while we were here!) with open arms in every place we found ourselves, and finally for helping me move slowly through those cairns that God continues to put in my path, ever so gently guiding and pointing me in the direction where I'm called to go.

Your lessons will not soon be forgotten. I am grateful for you all.



# Supporting Our Children and Youth Through the YES Fund

Thank you for your generous contributions to the mission center's Youth Empowerment Support Fund (YES Fund). The YES Fund was established to help youth and children throughout the mission center to be able to attend camps/reunions/retreats, Spectacular, and other approved activities. YES Funds help by sharing the cost of a child's or youth's registration fees and travel expenses. For many years we have been able to cover all of the airfare for Inland West MC SPEC participants.

The balance in the YES Fund is as of November 30, 2022 is \$5,747.23.

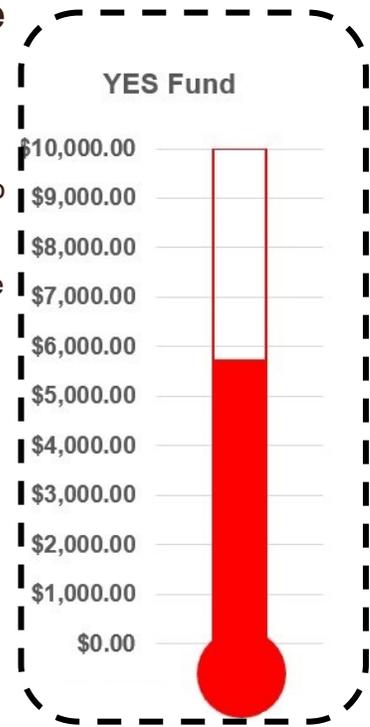
**Mission Center Fundraising Goal for 2023 is to increase the fund to \$10,000.00.**

Watch for updates in mission center communications as we meet our goal.

Ways you can give to the YES Fund:

- Make an Honor or Memorial Gift on behalf of a loved one.
- Have a congregational or group fundraiser.

Mark your checks for "YES Fund" and your Congregational Financial Officer (CFO) will forward the money to the Mission Center Office to administer. Thank you for your help in supporting our youth and children. Any questions please contact Sandy Decker at [sdecker@cofchrist-ivest.org](mailto:sdecker@cofchrist-ivest.org).



### Mission Center Conference 2022



# Spectacular 2022

SPEC was such a unique experience and I wouldn't trade going for the world. I had heard stories about it from the older youth in my congregation, out in good old Boise Idaho, and dreamed of my first year going. Those first few days really solidified it would be an experience I could never forget. Within those first few days, I met friends that I'm still in constant contact with, something I never would have thought would happen. I was given the chance to better understand the word "community". My definition of community quickly became "to experience life with those around you, no matter the differences". I grew up in a smaller, tight-knit congregation, and I was lucky enough to get to visit others every few years in nearby areas. But I could have never imagined just how large and diverse our community truly was. From neighboring states, to those who came from distant places such as Taiwan. Each with more personality and character than I had seen, even in my large high school. I grew deeper bonds with those I had known from prior meetings, such as CJ English, an absolute blessing to have been friends with since 2017. Irreplaceable bonds with new friends, much like Alyssa Somach, who I'm still exchanging silly photos with. Even someone I've practically "known" my whole life, I got to understand just how wonderful of a soul she was. This being Sandy Decker, an absolute joy, with so many valuable stories to learn and grow from. I got a much better understanding of people from SPEC, I don't think I could have ever fathomed such a warm welcoming environment existing before attending. From the three days spent getting to understand and know my delegation, to the week making new memories at Graceland with those from all over, I was given such a blessed opportunity to grow not only as a person, but a better companion to walk hand in hand with. I will forever be grateful for the opportunities I've been given from this church, but SPEC will always be an opportunity I will never be able to show my full appreciation for.



By Salem Silva



I had a blast at Spec, or at least, I did until I got sick. That being said, there were a few days that were nothing short of fantastic! I'm so excited to go back and see all the friends I made, and I can't wait to explore new activities. If I were to describe how I felt at Spec, I'd use the words *cared for*, *included*, *upheld*, and *belonging*. I feel Spec was well organized, and though I didn't get to fully experience it, it only makes me more eager to come back next year to reclaim the time I lost. Some of my favorite activities were the silent dance party, the band concert (the one the campers held), and the sportsmanship in all the games. Just writing about Spec makes me wish I could move time faster so I could once again go back and not only see my old friends, but make new ones as well!

By Zi Baxter



Decades ago, as I attended a few years of SPEC as a camper and a bonus one or two as an unofficial tag-along, I never imagined that I'd be returning someday with my own teenage son. For all of the things that have changed over the years, the spirit of SPEC remained in full form. I traveled from Utah with an amazing group of teens with a wide variety of interests, background, and identities. Each and every one of them was celebrated and embraced for the unique human that they are, and it was phenomenal to watch them each find their own flow.

It was beautiful to see so many kids and adults in our expanded delegation come from far and wide to build their own SPEC family. Whether it was cheering each other on at sports, doing team-building activities, or swaying back and forth to our karaoke stars, it was easy to spot our hot pink and tie-dyed adoring fans. I can't wait to share in the experience again next year, with familiar faces and future friends I haven't met yet!

By Kathleen Cadman



### ***From Around the Mission Center in 2022***

***Blessings:***

- Jeff Huber, Deer Lodge, MT
- Naomi Izaguirre, Hagerman, ID

***Baptism/Confirmations:***

- Stephen Barnes, Salt Lake City
- Alex Guerrero, Salt Lake City, UT
- Braiton Heimgartner, Lewis-Clark
- Heather Holland, Salt Lake City, UT
- Hazelee Hymas, Hagerman, ID
- Levi Hymas, Hagerman, ID
- Alexander Keeton, Pocatello, ID
- Grant Mangelson, Salt Lake City
- Mark Partaker, Pocatello, ID
- Evy Roland, Hagerman, ID
- Joanna Smith, Salt Lake City, UT
- Stephanie Smith, Pocatello, UT
- Michelle Wilde, Salt Lake City, UT

***Ordinations:***

- Chris Collins, Priest, Richland, WA
- Barbara Horner, Elder, Boise, ID

- Tyler Marz, Elder, Utah Mission Ministries
- Brianna Potts, Priest, Richland

***Deaths:***

- Dolores Barnes, New Plymouth, ID
- Jack Bezona, Lewis-Clark, WA
- Violet Clements, Helena, MT
- Mike Gunter, Sagle, ID
- Gary Perdue, Spokane Valley, WA (December, 2021)
- Jacqueline Phillips, Lewis-Clark, WA
- Wayne Premo, Billings, MT
- Joe Shockley, New Plymouth, ID
- Dan Volz, Whitehall, MT
- Emma Lou Weis, Richland, MT
- Yvonne Wilbur, Coeur d'Alene, ID (November, 2021)

If there are life events or transitions happening in your congregation please send them to Sandy Decker at [sdecker@cofchrist-iwest.org](mailto:sdecker@cofchrist-iwest.org).

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