

Report from Annual Conference 2104

Jean Wheeler, Lay Delegate

The Pacific Northwest Annual Conference was held June 19-22, 2014 at the Washington State Fairgrounds formally known as the Western Washington Fairgrounds. One of the highlights for me was the opening worship service on Friday morning which honored the Japanese Americans of our conference, as well as all those who were incarcerated in the concentration camps. Many of the members of our conference participated in the service.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the incarceration of Japanese Americans with Executive Order 9066. This order rounded up all Japanese Americans west of the Cascade Mountains, people who lived anywhere along the Pacific Coast including California, parts of Oregon and also Arizona to be placed in concentration camps. Camp Harmony was the unofficial name of the Puyallup Assembly Center, which served as a temporary detention center before they were sent to either Minidoka in Idaho or Tule Lake in California; two of the ten concentration camps. Residents of Seattle, Fife, Auburn, Kent, Sumner, Milton and Edgewood were assigned to Camp Harmony. The Minidoka Swing Band from Portland, OR provided the music for the service. A poem "Camp Harmony, Puyallup Fairgrounds, Internment Camp May of 1942" was written by Suma Yagi and was read by her. She is a member of Blaine Memorial UMC and was incarcerated at Camp Harmony. Choichi Shimizu also of Blaine Memorial UMC and one of the internees, read a chapter from his book "Cho's Story: From the Eyes of A Nisei Son". (From the Opening Worship Service Program). Their presentations as well as the excellent display of pictures, papers and memorabilia was well received and very informative.

The business part of the conference included discussions on a smaller budget, more support for gun control, background checks for church workers and studying fossil fuel divestment. One of the reports from the Office of Connectional Ministries shows that as of the end of 2013 there are 16 new faith communities in the conference.

The Imagine No Malaria is a campaign that was launched in 2010 by the United Methodist Church that includes four focuses. They are prevention, education, communication and treatment. Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by a parasite. People who get malaria are very sick with high fevers, shaking chills and flu-like illness. Without treatment it is deadly. In 2010 when the campaign began, statistics show that a child died from malaria every 30 seconds. Today every 60 seconds a person dies of malaria. Prevention includes distributing insecticide treated nets and teaching families how to avoid malaria. The UMC has distributed over 2,000,000 nets. Each net cost about \$10.00. Education includes training a grass roots network of community health workers. Communication involves delivering messages about malaria and how to prevent it. We presently have over 300 health clinics in operation where diagnosis and treatment is provided.

How can we at Ocean Shores UMC be involved? By supporting the net program. I challenge each of you to donate to this program that has been proven effective in reducing the loss of life from Malaria. For more information or to donate, the web address is:

<http://imagine malaria.org/>.