



2025

Annual Meeting Report Booklet

Pacific Northwest Conference
of the United Church of Christ

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Churches of Our Conference

Alaska

Anchorage	EFKAS First LMS Congregational Church Fa'avae Fou (New Foundation) Feagaiga Fou (New Testament) Christian Worship Center UCC	Rev. Iotamo Falealili Rev. Edwin Galeai Rev. Niutunu Faiupu Rev. Faatauvaava I. Alaelua
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Idaho

Lewiston Wallace	Congregational-Presbyterian Church United Church of Christ-Congregational	Rev. Adam Ogg In Transition
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Washington

Bainbridge Isl. Bellevue	Eagle Harbor Congregational First Congregational Church	Rev. Dr. Dee Eisenhower Rev. Lisa Horst Clark Rev. Stevi Hamill
Bellingham Blaine Carnation Chewelah Colfax Colville Dayton Eltopia Everett	First Congregational Church United Church of Christ (Cong.) Tolt Congregational UCC Chewelah United Church of Christ Affirmational UCC - Plymouth Cong. First Congregational Church First Congregational Church First Congregational Church Eltopia United Church of Christ Everett United Church of Christ Everett Marshallese UCC JRD	Rev. Sharon Benton Rev. Sandy Wisecarver Rev. Stephen Haddan In transition Rev. Michael Birnbaum In transition Rev. Deborah Tyler Rev. Esther Sanders In Transition Rev. Andy Zacherias
Federal Way Ferndale Forks Fox Island Guemes Island Kent	Wayside United Church of Christ The United Church First Congregational Church Fox Island United Church of Christ Guemes Isl. Community Church, UCC Samoan Congregational Church #6	Rev. Jennifer Bannerman, Designated Rev. Joel Aosved Rev. Warren Johnson In transition
Kirkland Lummi Island Mercer Island	Kirkland Congregational Church, UCC Lummi Island Congregational Congregational Church on Mercer Island (UCC)	Rev. Aunuua Vasega Rev. Talosaga Paten Rev. Ryan Lambert Rev. Jamie Kepros Rev. Jennifer Castle
Metaline Falls Monroe Olympia Olympia Pullman Renton Richland	Metaline Falls Congregational UCC First Congregational Church of Monroe Community for Interfaith Celebration The United Churches of Olympia Community Congregational UCC United Christian Church Shalom United Church of Christ Central United Protestant Church* Northwest United Protestant Church* Westside United Protestant Church* Zion Philadelphia Congregational UCC	Rev. Tara Leininger Rev. Jane Sorenson Rev. Corey Passons Rev. Lara Crutsinger-Perry Rev. Mike Bass Rev. Cynthia Meyer Rev. Stephen Gentle Rev. Kim Fields, Lead Pastor Rev. Miriam Gentle, Pastor Dr. Robert Paul, Sr. Pastor In Transition
Ritzville Sammamish Seattle	Spirit of Peace UCC Admiral Congregational Church (UCC) Ala Ile Ola Church #5 Alki United Church of Christ All Pilgrims Christian Church Bethany UCC Broadview Community UCC Columbia Lakewood Community Fauntleroy Church UCC	Rev. Jenn Hagedorn Rev. Andrew Conley-Holcom Rev. Fili Togi Rev. Emily Tanis-Likkel Rev. Greg Turk Rev. Angela Ying In Transition Rev. Eddie Gardner Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski

	First Samoan Cong. UCC (#1)	Rev. Karyn Frazier, Associate Pastor
	First Samoan Cong. Christian Church #1	Rev. Topelagi Siva
	Japanese Congregational Church	Rev. Etele Toilolo Ma'aele
	Keystone Congregational UCC	Rev. Tim Johnson
	Liberation UCC	Adina Meyer, Lay Minister
	Magnolia United Church of Christ	Rev. Jermell Witherspoon
		Rev. Marci Scott-Weis
		Rev. Michael Haven,
		Traveling Minister of the Arts
		Rev. Maureen McLain, Adult Education
		Rev. Carson Hawks,
		Interfaith Spiritual Director
	Normandy Park Cong. Church	Rev. Amy Hitchens
	Plymouth Church, UCC	Rev. Kelle Brown, Lead Pastor
		Rev. Kevin Bechtold, Minister of
		Children & Families
	Prospect United Church of Christ (Cong.)	Rev. Meighan Pritchard
	St. Paul's United Church of Christ	In Transition
	Samoan Cong. Christian Church (#2)	Rev. Kelekolio Kolo
	Samoan United Church of Christ (#4)	Rev. Nofoniga Moi
	Taiwanese Christian Church (UCC)	In Transition
	University Congregational UCC	Rev. Michael Ellick
		Rev. Steve Jerbi
Shoreline	Richmond Beach Congregational UCC	Rev. Jill Bierwirth, Interim
		Rev. Dan Stern, Spiritual Director
Spokane	Shalom United Church of Christ	Lay Leadership
	Westminster Congregational UCC	Rev. Robert Feeny
Spokane Valley	Veradale United Church of Christ (Cong.)	Rev. Genavieve Heywood
Suquamish	Suquamish United Church of Christ	Rev. Amara Oden
Tacoma	First Samoan Congregational Christian Church of Tacoma	Rev. Ulisese Sala
		In Transition
Tonasket	Tonasket Community Church, UCC	In Transition
University Place	United Church in University Place	Rev. Ann-Marie Illsley
Walla Walla	First Congregational Church	Rev. Dane Breslin
Wenatchee	Sunnyslope Church	Rev. David Schlicher
Woodinville	Northshore United Church of Christ	Rev. Paul Forman, Pastor Emeritus
		Rev. Stephen Best
Yakima	United Christian Church	

* Indicates an affiliated church.

Conference Transitions

Memorials

Lois Brown November 6, 1933 – May 21, 2024

Lois was born in Barnesville MN, Nov 6, 1933. Her family moved quite often, thus Lois attended 13 schools in 12 years. The family moved to the Philippines shortly after WWII where she attended high school. They were the first American family to arrive in the aftermath of that horrific war.

She married David Brown on Dec. 22, 1951. After their wedding, Lois worked at the radio station WNAX and Dave attended seminary at Yankton School of Theology. They moved to Wakonda, SD where Dave was ordained. Their 3 children were born during these years. The family moved to Berkle, CA, to Ree Heights, SD and then to Huron, SD. During those years Lois spent her time as mother, homemaker, student and “preacher’s wife”.

Lois graduated with honors from Huron College, SD in June of 1969 and began teaching. After 5 years, the family moved to Ortonville where Lois taught first grade for 5 years.

Dave and Lois moved to E Wenatchee in 1975 where she taught kindergarten and first grade classes at Lee and Kenroy schools. She also mentored a number of student teachers there. She and David both retired in 1996 (David was the conference minister of our conference from 1992-1996). After retirement they travelled extensively in their motor home throughout the US.

Lois had been active at Sunnyslope church where she served on many boards and committees and taught the children for many years. She was a hospice volunteer and a reader for visually handicapped persons with Samara’s Readers.

Survivors include her husband, David J Brown, of E Wenatchee; her children, Lynn Thomas of Ortonville, MN; Debbie and Samir Sleiman of E Wenatchee; and Mike and Lisa Brown of Spokane WA. In addition, she is survived by grandchildren James and John Thomas, Amanda, David, and Mathew Brown, and Sasha, Sonia Sleiman; and seven great grandchildren.

Mimi Lane September 26, 1943 – July 31, 2024

Rev. Mimi Lane, retired chaplain and minister, passed away peacefully Wednesday July 31, 2024, at her home in Tulalip, WA. A long-time member of Everett United Church of Christ, she was a beloved leader in the congregation and well-known in the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC. In addition to serving churches in upstate New York, Rev. Lane served as chaplain for hospitals and hospices in California and Washington state.

Rev. Lane began her clergy career in Pittsburgh, PA, completing her M.Div. at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. One of Rev. Lane’s favorite stories recalled the time her son, around five at the time, reverently pointed out the chair where “Mr. Rogers” sat at the seminary. From then on, this story was her favorite illustration of the experience of “awe.”

Mimi is survived by her wife Peggy Skill, who lovingly cared for Mimi during her illness; and her son Dann Lane, his wife Marcia and their sons, Eric and Ryan, all of Tacoma. She is also survived by three half-siblings, Valerie Camardo-Krupp, Amy Camardo Andersen, and Paul Camardo.

Stephen Eriksen July 9, 1958 – October 21, 2024

Steve was born in Olean, New York to the late Revs. Harry and Evelyn Eriksen. His intellectual and compassionate approach to ministry was rooted in his diverse theological training, graduating from Free Gospel Bible Institute and Open Bible College. He further pursued his studies at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio graduating with a Master

in Theological Studies. He completed his Master of Divinity at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana while pastoring his first church in the United Church of Christ. He was ordained on October 23, 1986.

Steve pastored in Greenville Creek United Church of Christ in Bradford Ohio, and St John's United Church of Christ in Bellevue, Kentucky. He went on to serve Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland for over 22 remarkable years, becoming a beloved spiritual leader and a cherished figure in both the church and broader community. His ministry was distinguished by an unwavering commitment to social justice, compassion, and interfaith outreach, fostering deep connections with people of diverse backgrounds, including the Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist communities.

Throughout his years at Shalom, Pastor Steve hosted events that shaped the heart of the congregation and community—from peace marches to interfaith potlucks. His vision and efforts also led to the expansion of Shalom's facilities, providing the congregation with new ways to serve the community and share in meaningful experiences.

Pastor Steve's sermons resonated with his commitment to justice and pastoral care, often reflecting the wisdom and insights of his church family. His intellectual and compassionate approach to ministry was rooted in his theological training, beginning with a master of divinity degree from Earlham School of Religion in 1988. Pursuing studies at United Seminary, he found alignment with the United Church of Christ's values, ultimately shaping his calling and long devotion to Shalom United Church of Christ.

Pastor Steve retired from active ministry on December 31, 2020, and was named Pastor Emeritus on December 4, 2022, a title that reflected the congregation's deep appreciation for his decades of guidance and care. He is survived by four sisters - Joy (Harris) Fry, Sharon (the late Rev. John) Geissler, Rebecca (Rev. Ralph) Heath, and Deborah Eriksen. He also leaves behind numerous nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

Rev. Robert Jackson April 28, 1940 - November 4, 2024

Rev. Jackson was ordained by the Presbytery of Wenatchee on November 3, 1968 and served and Presbyterian churches in Washington and Oregon. He graduated from Wenatchee High School in 1959, and the University of Washington in 1964 with a BA in Philosophy and a minor in Chemistry. His M.Div. was from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1968. In 1999, he was called to serve the UCC church in Peshastin. In retirement, he served The Pension Boards as an Annuitant Visitor He was a member at Sunnyslope Church of the Brethren in Wenatchee. He is survived by his wife, Edie.

Rev. Rod MacKenzie September 29, 1932 - January 18, 2025

Born in Santa Rosa California to an apple growing family, Rod MacKenzie graduated from UC Berkeley and the Pacific School of Religion. Rod served as a Campus Chaplain at Western Washington University and as a Pastoral Counselor working with individuals and small groups, leading seminars locally and throughout the state. He was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Bellingham, leading a Jesus Seminar for many years. He shared his passion for social justice in church and in the community, serving and helping found nonprofits to help those most in need.

Rod was a good friend to many, from the college friends he hiked the Sierras into his retirement years, to the Jewish friends who visited him regularly late in life. He was a multi-faceted person who could repair anything, from restoring his Model A Ford to maintaining beautiful apple trees in his yard. He always had something new going on. Proud of his Scottish heritage, Rod looked dashing in a kilt and participated on the Board of Highland Games.

He died peacefully, with his partner of 40 years, Ruth Flucke by his side. He is also survived by his 4 children.

Clergy New to Our Conference

Rev. Mike Bass is serving at Community Congregational Church in Pullman.

Rev. Faatauva'a (Va'a) Alaelua ordained on February 2, 2025 and is serving at the Christian Worship Center UCC in Anchorage, AK and at Providence Alaska Medical Center.

Rev. Iotamo Falealili was approved for dual standing. He is serving at the First LMS Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Anchorage, AK.

Rev. Valerie Garrick transferred to our conference.

Rev. Warren Johnson was ordained on September 20, 2024, and is serving at First Congregational Church in Forks.

Rev. Jay Kolo'i was approved for dual standing. He is serving at First Samoan Congregational Christian Church #2, Seattle.

Rev. Etele Toilolo Maaete was approved for dual standing. He is serving at First Samoan Congregational Christian Church #1, Seattle.

Rev. Nofoaigafitu Moi was approved for dual standing. He is serving at Samoan UCC #4, Seattle.

Rev. Talosaga Patea was approved for dual standing. He is serving at Samoan Congregational Church #6, in Kent.

Rev. Savali Talemotou's dual standing is pending approval by Committee on Ministry following an interview on March 26, 2025. He is serving at the First Samoan Congregational Christian Church #2, in Seattle.

Rev. Fili Togi's dual standing is pending approval by Committee on Ministry following an interview on March 26, 2025. He is serving the Ala I Le Ola Church #5 in Seattle.

Rev. Elder Siva Topelagi was approved for dual standing, pending approval of the Emanuel Church's standing in the PNC.

Rev. Aunuua Vasega was approved for dual standing. He is serving at Samoan Congregational Church #6, in Kent.

Specialized Ministers

Rev. Faatauva'a (Va'a) Alaelua works at Providence Alaska Medical Center, as well serving at the Christian Worship Center UCC in Anchorage, AK.

Rev. Trina Banks is a chaplain at Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, in covenant with United Christian Church in Renton.

Rev. Tara Barber, a member at Liberation UCC, currently works as the Minister of Ministerial Accountability at the national office.

Rev. Gregg Brekke is the Executive Director of the Associated Church Press in Bellingham, and a member of First Congregational Church in Bellingham.

Rev. Jennifer Butner is a member at University Congregational UCC.

Rev. Kevin Carr is a specialized minister serving Evergreen Health Care.

Rev. Susan Cutshall, a member of Wayside UCC, is a chaplain at Virginia Mason Franciscan Hospice and Palliative Care.

Rev. Bonnie Dalious, is a chaplain at Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage. She is a member of Fa'avae Fou in Anchorage.

Rev. Matt Emery is a specialized minister serving at Cloverdale United Church in Surrey BC, Canada and is a member of First Congregational UCC in Bellevue.

Rev. Candace Frawley is serving as a chaplain for PeaceHealth in Bellingham, in covenant with the United Church of Ferndale.

Rev. Elizabeth Gordon is a Clinical Spiritual Care Provider with University of Washington Medical Center. She is a member of Plymouth Congregational Church of Seattle.

Rev. Michael Haven is the Traveling Minister of the Arts, in covenant with Magnolia UCC.

Rev. Carson Hawkes is in covenant with Magnolia UCC.

Rev. Debra Jarvis is a chaplain at the UW Medical Center hospital. She is a member at University Congregational UCC.

Rev. Elyse Jauregui serves as Chaplain with Envision Hospice of Washington. She is a member at Eagle Harbor Congregational.

Rev. Beverly Jenden-Riedlinger is a member of The United Churches of Olympia.

Rev. Amy Johnson, a member at Wayside UCC, serves as Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice, at the national setting.

Rev. Jill Komura is a member at The United Churches of Olympia. She has a private practice of pastoral counseling and spiritual direction.

Rev. Penny Matthews, a member of Alki UCC, is a chaplain at Providence Hospice and Home Care of Snohomish County.

Rev. Maureen McLain is a member of Magnolia UCC in Seattle. She is as a covenanted minister with a primary focus on adult spiritual and faith formation

Rev. Sophie Morse is a member at Suquamish UCC. She has 5-way covenant, working as a Conflict Resolution Trainer, Facilitator, Consultant.

Rev. Lindalee Purdy is the Director of Spiritual Care at Horizon House. She is in covenant with All Pilgrims Christian Church.

Rev. Sam Rennebohn is a member of Prospect Congregational UCC and his ministry is serving as faculty of Swedish Family Medicine Residency.

Rev. Terry Rice is a chaplain at Walla Walla Community Hospice. He is a member of First Congregational Church in Walla Walla.

Rev. Jennifer Rupp is a hospice chaplain with CHI Franciscan Hospice and Palliative Care and a member of Fox Island UCC.

Rev. Esther Sanders serving as a hospice chaplain at PeaceHealth Southwest Hospice as well as pastor at Eltopia UCC.

Rev. Jeannette Solimine is a member at Community Congregational Church in Pullman.

Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear is a member at St. Paul's UCC in Seattle. She is serving as the Chief Relationship Officer at The Cornerstone Fund.

Rev. Amanda Sullivan-Kersey is a Health Services Manager at the Department of Corrections. She is a member of The United Churches of Olympia.

Rev. Bruce Wilson, a member of, and in covenant with University Congregational UCC, is a chaplain at Braxton Institute.

Rev. Tara Young-Brown is a member of Community for Interfaith Celebration in Olympia.

Licensed/Lay Ministers

Adina Meyer is serving at Keystone Church in Seattle as their transitional minister.

Members In Discernment

Micah Buff is a member of the United Churches of Olympia.

Cydne Cochran is a member of the United Church of Ferndale.

Elizabeth Maupin is a member of Spirit of Peace UCC and has been approved for ordination pending a call.

Adina Meyer is a member of Keystone Church, UCC.

Kenn Robinson is a member of United Church of Ferndale.

Dana Sprenkle is a member of Shalom UCC in Richland.

Reports from the Conference Staff

Rev. Phil Hodson, Designated Conference Minister

Administrative & Operational Engagement

One aspect of the Conference Minister's work is engaging with and overseeing senior staff—and this Conference has an incredible team! I am incredibly grateful to work with Andy Warren, Arlene Hobson, and Mark Boyd as we collaborate to serve the churches, clergy, and camps of the Pacific Northwest Conference. Each of these individuals brings the best of their gifts to our work together daily, and their integrity, wisdom, and institutional knowledge are invaluable!

At this Annual Meeting, we will celebrate Arlene Hobson's ministry as Conference Administrator since 1997. Arlene makes "all the things happen" in support of the staff, our committees, clergy, and congregations every day, and her institutional memory, good cheer, and great love for the work she does continue to be evident and greatly appreciated by all of us! Arlene will transition to a part-time role over the remainder of the year, transitioning toward a well-deserved retirement at the end of the year. In the future, the role of Administrator will be a shared position with the Central Pacific Conference, and more information will be available as we begin advertising and interviewing candidates.

We are transitioning from a physical Conference office at Broadview Community United Church of Christ in Seattle to an entirely digital and remote organization. One key aspect of this process has been developing a digital database system for clergy and congregational records. To complete the project, we worked with Home Team Consulting in Iowa, who have served other Conferences in this development work.

The Committees on Ministry have spent significant time and energy streamlining clergy files in anticipation of digitization. We are so grateful to each person who has given hours and hours of their time to ensure that all the files are well-organized, efficient, and ready to scan.

Over the summer, we will engage a scanning service to complete the process.

Board of Directors Development

The Conference Board of Directors has been hard at work this past year! We have worked together monthly to continue living into the goals set forth by the whole body. These encompass everything from oversight of our camps and fiduciary responsibility to taking the next steps into modeling what it means to become an anti-racist Conference. To that end, the Board has completed training in anti-racism and cultural awareness with the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. We are excited that this training opportunity will be made available to our clergy through the Committees on Ministry's work starting this year. We also hope to invite our congregations and their leadership to participate in the New York Conference program.

In the new year, the Board will continue meeting on the first Tuesday of the month, publish meeting minutes on the Conference website, and increase communication efforts through the weekly eNews, the Google Group, and the new website.

Additionally, we have worked to rewrite the Constitution and Bylaws of the Conference to establish through governance a structure that embodies the community God is calling us to be. The next faithful step will be to receive feedback and review from the General Counsel of the United Church of Christ. After this, we will release the new documents and engage, over the next year, in a series of town hall meetings across the Conference for feedback and information so that the new documents can be approved at Annual Meeting 2026.

While I am excited to welcome new members to the Board at the Annual Meeting this year, I am incredibly grateful to have worked with the current Board. I appreciate their candor, openness,

and the way they endeavor to listen to one another and find consensus. This, in large part, is attributable to the leadership of the Board these past two years — Indigo Brown and Rev. Esther Sanders have worked faithfully, collaboratively, and deliberately to move the Board forward in positive and up-building ways for the life of the Conference. I value them both as colleagues, genuinely appreciate their energy and the welcome they have shown me, and am excited to see what lies ahead on their journeys.

Imagining the Future at N-Sid-Sen

Since receiving the resignation of the Acting Managing Director at N-Sid-Sen, we have begun working with a host of volunteers to address safety concerns and improvement opportunities to prepare for the upcoming camp season. The Board laid out a brief letter on March 14 articulating the next steps we are taking to take care of this incredible site and look toward the future with hope.

Since the release of that letter, your Conference staff have worked with a group of volunteer leaders to identify specific items needing repair, determine costs, and coordinate a plan to address the items that are mission-critical for camp operations. We will coordinate with interested folks to arrange work weekends this spring as we prepare to open things up. We are discussing with a few key leaders about stepping in as caretakers in an Interim capacity as a team to get us through the summer months. We have arranged for Upper Crust, the food service company we utilized last year, to return for the summer so our camps and outside partner groups will be well-fed.

Finally, we are convening a working group that will consider long-term fundraising, stewardship, and growth opportunities over the next twelve months to create a plan for N-Sid-Sen's long-term viability. This plan will be presented to the Conference Board in enough time to be finalized and presented at the Annual Meeting 2026.

Visiting Our Congregations

Since February 2024, I have had the opportunity to worship with 38 of our congregations across every geographic region of the Conference. I am continuing to work ahead with scheduling additional visits and am committed to worshipping in person with 2 congregations each month going forward.

I've also been able to work with 4 congregations on a visioning workshop that lasts 4-6 hours on a Saturday. These provide opportunities for congregations and their leadership to consider their Purpose, Plan, and the Goals they hope to achieve in living into their Purpose and Plan through effective evangelism, discipleship, mission orientation, and congregational care. I look forward to additional workshop opportunities in the year ahead.

Search & Call assistance for our congregations is a key part of the Conference Minister's work. I provide orientation and ongoing guidance to local church search committees. I have found this especially useful while the national setting has been rolling out a new digital profile system for the local church to use going forward.

Weekly Zoom Office Hours & 1:1 Conversations

Every Wednesday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 AM, I hold an online office hour. There is no formal agenda for this space, and anyone attending is simply invited to bring their questions, thoughts, and experiences into conversation with everyone else present. This space has proved incredibly generative and a great space for sharing because each person brings their own perspective and experience to share, and questions can be answered communally.

I've also made time available each week for individuals, clergy, and laity to schedule a private, one-on-one Zoom conversation with me. These have allowed me to get to know many of our pastors and leaders in our congregations.

The [online scheduler](#) can be accessed through the weekly eNews and will soon be available through the new Conference website.

Mark Boyd, Managing Director Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center



It has been a very busy year at Pilgrim Firs. Your staff have been working hard and having fun.

In 2024-2025 we saw,
2800 folks came to camp.

For 70 different events.

From 48 different partner groups.

Including 23 PNCUCC events.

And 17 new or returning events.

New partner groups included:

Kitsap Volunteer Fire Fighters
Kitsap Dog Search Teams
Medicine Wheel Visioning

Returning Events included:

Our Whole Lives (OWL)
PNCUCC Jr-Sr High Midwinter

PNCUCC Churches New or Returning

Alki UCC

Spirit of Peace UCC

Walla Walla UCC (OWL)

Westminster UCC (OWL)

National UCC Outdoor Ministries Board of Directors

Of course, none of this could have been possible without the support from the conference and our churches. Thank you, thank you. Be sure to check out our new updated website for more opportunities. www.pilgrim-firs.org

Maintenance Projects and Improvements completed in 2024-2025

New path and Labyrinth Lighting

Updated Wardrobes in Huckleberry

South Lodge main room painted

New website www.pilgrim-firs.org

LED lighting in cabins and Madsen Lodge

Serenity Garden Pagoda

Water lines in greenhouse

Serenity Garden Swing

New golf carts

Who's Coming to Pilgrim Firs in 2024-2025?

1) You! Check out our events page to select the ways you want to come to camp.

2) The Return of PNCUCC Kid's Camp at Pilgrim Firs. June 14-16, 2024

<https://www.ultracamp.com/info/sessionDetail.aspx?idCamp=367&idSession=504439&campCode=nss>

3) A new Youth Camp, You and Me Camp at Pilgrim Firs June 14-16, 2024

<https://www.ultracamp.com/info/sessionDetail.aspx?idCamp=367&idSession=504440&campCode=nss>

4) Owl All Ages Training returns to Pilgrim Firs in November 2025. Keep an eye out for more information coming on this event.

2025-2026 projects

Labyrinth retaining wall
New Canoe Rack
Cabin Bathroom upgrades

Adding sand to swim beach
Drip irrigation to Huckleberry garden
As always trail maintenance



Come on Home to your Camp.

Reports from the Board of Directors

Rev. Esther Sanders, Vice Moderator

A Personal note from Your Vice Moderator:

We are the Conference. Remember the song “The church is not a building; the church is not a steeple; the church is not a resting place; the church is the people?” The song goes on with “I am the church; you are the church; we are the church together.”

In the many years I have served on the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, I have heard many compliments and complaints. Sometimes folks take ownership of the Conference in the compliments, yet often in the complaints there is a clear distancing, “The Conference did or decided thus and so…” or the same sentence is recited about “The Board.” While it is human nature to distance ourselves from those actions with which we might not agree or where we have exercised no autonomy, for “The Conference,” it can undermine the faith-filled work of those who are volunteers on committees and the Board.

Presently there are around one hundred individuals who are volunteering in official capacities at the Conference level and they were elected by “The Conference.” There is always room for more volunteers, those who are taking ownership of the Conference through a calling God put on our hearts.

Though not all are called to this work, there are many other ways to claim ownership of “Our Conference:” through prayers, through stewardship of time, talent or finances, and asking questions of committees, the Board and the Conference Minister when the Holy Spirit is compelling you to seek clarity or accountability. This is our Conference; we are the Conference together.

*Love,
Rev. Esther Sanders*

Your Board of Directors have been busy in the last year. Most prevalent were the themes of calling a Special Conference meeting to converse about and vote on our Designated Conference Minister, seek leadership and a plan for N-Sid-Sen Camp an Conference Center and establish a path for training for the Board, leadership and staff to participate in anti-racism training, which is one small step in our Conference’s goal toward anti-racism.

In addition to our typical agenda of approving minutes, hearing financial reports, and reports from both camp directors and our Designated Conference Minister, here are some other highlights of what your Board accomplished since last year’s annual meeting.

- In May 2024 we had a workshop with Heather Kimmel on good governance.
- June 2024: Approved camp guidelines offered up by the Outdoor Ministries Committee.
- July: Debriefed the Special Meeting of the Conference.
- August was a sabbath month; we did not meet.
- September: Discussion with Phil, Designated Conference Minister, about the health of the Conference and setting goals together.
- October (we met twice in October and not in November) Reviewed fiscal policies and clarified definitions for Board liaisons (those from the Board to committees) and committee liaisons (those from one committee to another committee). We then received the report of the audit being complete and set up a sub-group to take a close look at the Constitution and By-laws.
- December: Changing plans for Anti-racism training from People’s Institute (due to higher cost for group trainings than individual trainings) to contracting with New York Conference.
- January: Heard from Phil about the creation of a N-Sid-Sen Vitality Task Force.
- February: Accepted the report about the Outdoor Ministry Charter

- March: Met with two leaders from the Justice and Witness Ministry Committee and at a special called meeting we accepted the resignation of the Designated Camp Director at N-Sid-Sen.

Prayerfully submitted by Rev. Esther Sanders, Vice Moderator

Treasurer's Report

Diana Kelsey Kutas

After navigating through the COVID19 pandemic financial stress and challenges as well as several years of leadership transitions, in February 2024 we welcomed Phil Hodson as our Designated Conference Minister. With Phil's arrival I believe we have been able to take deep breaths and focus on our collective future in the conference, wrestling with our deficits and what that means for financial vitality.

Following are highlights of our current Fiscal Year 2025, which began June 1, 2024 and ends May 31, 2025. The upcoming Fiscal Year 2026 begins June 1, 2025. The forecasts given in this report are based on the conference February 2025 month-end financial reports.

Conference Ministries is forecast to have a FY2025 Operating Loss of approximately (\$25k) compared to the FY2025 Budgeted Loss of (\$52k), the smaller FY2024 loss of (\$9k) and the larger FY2023 loss of (\$93k).

- FY2025 Revenue: We are forecasting FY2025 revenue of \$519k versus the FY2025 Budgeted Revenue of \$486k, slightly higher than FY2024 revenue of \$502k, and similar to FY2023 revenue of \$507k. OCWM donations in FY2025 are forecast to be larger than budgeted and those received in FY2024 due to one-time gifts that will not be repeated in FY2026.
- FY2025 Expenses: We are forecasting FY2025 expenses of \$543k to be higher than budgeted expenses of \$539k, higher than FY2024 expenses of \$511k, and lower than FY2023 expenses of \$601k. The increase in FY2025 expenses is primarily due to having a full-time vs. half time conference minister and associated travel expenses.

Camp Pilgrim Firs is forecast to have a FY2025 Operating Profit of approximately \$78k compared to the FY2025 Budgeted Profit of \$48k but less than FY2024 profit of \$121k and significantly higher than the FY2023 loss of (\$23k).

- FY2025 Revenue: We are forecasting FY2025 revenue of \$846k versus the budgeted revenue of \$798k, slightly less than the FY2024 revenue of \$853k, and significantly higher than FY2023 revenue of \$619k.
- FY2025 Expenses: We are forecasting FY2025 expenses of \$768k to be higher than budgeted expenses of \$750k, higher than FY2024 expenses of \$732k and FY2023 expenses of \$642k. The increase in expenses is primarily due to staff compensation and direct costs.

Camp N-Sid-Sen is forecast to have a substantial FY2025 Operating Loss of (\$119k) and exceeding the FY2025 Budgeted Loss of (\$75k), substantially lower than FY2024 loss of (\$204k) and higher than the FY2023 loss of (\$48k).

- FY2025 Revenue: We are forecasting FY2025 revenue of \$396k versus the FY2025 budgeted revenue of \$452k, higher than FY2024 revenue of \$332k, and higher than FY2023 revenue of \$371k.

- FY2025 Expenses: We are forecasting FY2025 expenses of \$515k to be lower than budgeted expenses of \$527k, lower than FY2024 expenses of \$536k, and higher than FY2023 expenses of \$418k.
- Reserves to cover N-Sid-Sen losses will be allocated from reserve funds that are available to support operations and capital needs.

The operating environment at N-Sid-Sen continues to be very challenging including staff transitions, attracting outside groups, and significant repairs and maintenance. In conversation with the Board and Stewardship Committee Phil has organized the N-Sid-Sen Vitality Task Force to begin discerning a long-range plan for the camp.”

2024 Financial Review

In October 2024 we completed an independent financial review which was the first review of the conference accounting books and records in ten years. It is prudent management practice to periodically conduct reviews of this nature.

Battershell & Nichols was engaged to complete the review and they concluded there were no material modifications needed to the financial statements “in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

Per Battershell & Nichols, the review was based on “the statement of financial position as of May 31, 2024, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements. A review includes primarily applying analytical procedures to management’s financial data and making inquiries of entity management. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion regarding the financial statements as a whole.”

Battershell & Nichols found no deficiencies or issues in the Conference books and records.

Many thanks to Andy Warren, our conference accountant, for shepherding this very detailed financial review process.

We continue to be very appreciative of the OCWM giving of our Conference churches. Without your giving, operating the Conference successfully would not be possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Kelsey Kutas
Treasurer
Stewardship Ex-officio Member
Board Liaison to Outdoor Ministry Committee

Committee Reports

Church Development Committee

Rev. Emily Tanis-Likkell and Karen Nooney, co-chairs

“The Church Development Committee shall seek to initiate and/or support the formation of new church communities and the transformation of existing church communities....The committee’s primary duties are to consult, assist, and provide funding in partnership with those involved in church formation or transformation.”

Pacific Northwest Conference Bylaws

The Church Development Committee is made up of all new members other than the co-chairs, and so has spent much time in the last year with orientation to the committee, building relationships with one another, and clarifying the responsibilities and mission of our committee. We are looking for new members of the CDC, particularly from Eastern Washington.

Building Relationship with Congregations Seeking Affiliation and New Churches in Formation

The Pacific Northwest Conference has the tremendous opportunity of receiving churches seeking affiliation with the PNC-UCC as well as the formation of new congregations. We are working with several south Puget Sound area Samoan and Marshallese Congregations who have shown interest in affiliating with the PNCUCC. We are seeking to evolve church affiliation to become a more collaborative process with COM.

Churches received at Annual Meeting 2024 include First LMS (London Missionary Society) Christian Church of Anchorage, The Christian Worship Center, Seattle #1 Samoan Church in Seattle, and Seattle #6 Samoan Church in Kent. Building relationships with new affiliating congregations does not end once a congregation has been received. We seek to strengthen relationships with new churches after being welcomed in the conference.

CDC seeks to support Ministry Leaders in New Contexts. Last spring we began inviting those who are serving in non-traditional settings to create a cohort of ministry leaders, and that group continues to meet every other month on Zoom. We have launched a new process for individuals who are seeking financial and/or other support for new ministries, and are ready to engage with those who are in discernment for the next step to live out their call to a new thing that God is doing in our conference.

Supporting Congregation engaged in Anti-Racism and Community Engagement

The vitality of congregations in our conference is strengthened by the witness for justice, dismantling of racism, and building community collaboration. Anti-Racism and Community Engagement grants were offered to congregations for a variety of programs. We had sufficient funds to provide financial support for seed money to all congregations seeking assistance, as all were deemed to be requests consistent with the grant’s intention.

Strengthening PNC Congregations through Strengthen the Church Offering

Your donations to the UCC Strengthen the Church (STC) Special Mission Offering are used here in our conference to support the mission and programs of the Church Development Committee. Plan now to receive the Strengthen the Church Special Mission offering on Pentecost Sunday, June 8 or sometime in the Pentecost Season. Your gifts to Strengthen the Church make an impact in our congregations, conference, and communities. Thank you!

Committee on Ministry

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bauleke, Chair of COM-West

Dr. Morag Stewart, Chair of COM-East

“The Committee on Ministry (COM) has the role of support and accountability for those seeking or holding standing as ministers in the United Church of Christ. In this role, the overarching ministry of Committees on Ministry is the mindfulness of the Church’s well-being and the discernment of the movement of the Holy Spirit in authorizing ministers on behalf of the UCC” (Manual On Ministry p. 15).

The 2024-2025 year has been another productive year for COM. At the November meetings (East and West) COM members voted to accept all Boundary Awareness Training (BAT) offered by UCC conferences and/or associations. Note: current details of BAT options may be found under Resources on the PNC website. In addition, COM recommends that pastors take BAT courses that offer the opportunity for interaction with other clergy rather than self-study options. In support and compliance with the General Synod Resolution and the PNC’s Anti-Racism vote, at February COM meetings (East and West), COM members approved the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training for all clergy with standing in the PNC. The details are outlined in a separate document. During the year, COM reviewed and updated as necessary other documents outlining procedures.

We celebrated many milestones during the last year. Most notably the Ordination of Rev. Warren Johnson (First Congregational Church, Forks WA) and Rev. Faatauva (Va’a) Alaelua (Christian Worship Center UCC, Anchorage AK). Completing the requirements for dual standing, we recognize Rev. Iotamo Falealili (First LMS Samoan Congregation Christian Church UCC, Anchorage); Rev. Jay Koloi (First Samoan Congregational Christian Church #2, Seattle); Rev. Etele Toilolo Maaete (First Samoan Congregational Christian Church #1, Seattle); Rev. Nofoaigafitu Moi (Samoan UCC #4, Seattle), Rev. Talosaga Patea (Samoan Congregational Church #6, Seattle); Rev. Fili Togi (Ala I Le Ola Church #5, Seattle); Rev. Aunua Vasega (Samoan Congregational Church #6, Seattle), Rev. Savali Talemotu (First Samoan Church #2, Seattle); and Rev. Elder Siva Topelagi (Emanuelu Church, Algona).

Granted standing as a Lay Minister is Adina Meyer (Keystone Congregational Church, Seattle). Approved for Member In Discernment (MID) status were Faatauva (Va’a) Alaelua (Christian Worship Center UCC, Anchorage); Cydne Cochran (The United Church of Ferndale), and Adina Meyer (Keystone Congregational Church, Seattle). Installation celebrations were held at Dayton First Congregational Church for Rev. Deborah Tyler, Suquamish United Church of Christ for Amara Oden, Bellevue First Congregational Church for Stevie Hamill, and at Sunnyslope (Wenatchee) for Rev. Dane Breslin. We are excited that new pastors have joined us in the PNC. Rev. Mike Bass answered the Call from United Community Congregational UCC, Pullman. Completing Transfer of Standing were Jennifer Bannerman, Valerie Garrick, and Margo Richardson.

In addition to supporting those in local church ministries, COM supports specialized ministers. Some of those who are serving as Chaplains opt to pursue UCC Endorsement for Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) certification. Earning their Endorsement from the UCC are Rev. Bonnie Dalious and Rev. Va’a Alaelua, both employed at Providence Alaska Medical Center, Anchorage.

The standing classification of Exempt, introduced in the 2018 MOM, continues to cause confusion. Exempt Standing is granted by COM, when an authorized minister discerns an end of their public ministry. Exempt does not result in the removal of ordination or the earned title of Rev. It can also be reversed by COM, if someone with Exempt Standing desires to return to public ministry. We owe a debt of gratitude to those individuals who faithfully served the PNC UCC for many years prior to seeking Exempt status this year. They are Kendal Baker (Seattle); Cathi Cline (Olympia); Bob Jackson (Wenatchee); David Kratz (Seattle); Jana Born Larson (Mt. Vernon); Marcia McLaughlin (Lacey); Kathleen Morgan (Blaine); Beth Plumbo (Spokane); Rosemary Raynard (Everett); Roberta Rominger (Renton); and Cheryl Smith (Bellingham).

While we rightly celebrate life's milestones, we also celebrate the lives of those who have left us. Eastside-Committee on Ministry (E-COM) was shocked and saddened at the unexpected loss of member Bart Preecs after three years of serving on COM. Rev. Steve Eriksen served Shalom United Church of Christ (Richland) for 22 years before retiring. Unfortunately, his retirement was marred by health issues and he died in October 2024. After many years of active retirement and a life of service to the PNC UCC, Rev. Bob Jackson (Wenatchee) died in November 2024. A parish pastor before becoming both hospital and hospice chaplain, Rev. Mimi Lane faithfully served the church and this conference. She died after a long illness on July 31, 2024. Rev. Rod MacKenzie served as campus pastor at WWU, a pastoral counselor, he tirelessly worked for social justice throughout his 60 years of ministry, dying January 18, 2025 with his partner, Ruth Flucke, by his side.

To honor our call of support and accountability, COM engages in Situational Support Consultations. Consultations may be requested by a minister or a congregation when a situation of concern arises that impedes effective ministry. A Situational Support Consultation is a confidential collaboration rather than a disciplinary procedure. This year COM members and former members have taken Response Team training in preparation for a Fitness Review, should the need arise. A Fitness Review is a formal process used, when boundaries have been broken, to reassess a person's overall fitness for ministerial standing and to develop a growth plan, as needed.

The COM is continually seeking new ways to connect with ministers of our Conference. We offer Communities of Practice, confidential support groups for those in a variety of ministries and for MIDs. These are coordinated by Amy Hitchens. We are exploring Vocational Support Consultations, encouraged by our national setting. In these consultations, COM meets with each Authorized Minister individually every three or four years. The goal is to honor our covenant with each other and build relationships. These consultations have been well received in those UCC Conferences implementing them.

There are three scholarship funds available for financial support on an as-needed basis for clergy and MIDs. The Conference Minister administers the Clergy Education Fund to PNC clergy for required trainings to enhance their professional development. The COM administers the MID Fund for educational expenses. In the past year, the Conference received the Mayer Family Endowed Scholarship Fund from Seattle University. This scholarship fund supports PNC ministers pursuing graduate or doctoral studies in ministry and/or theology. Mayer Fund applications should be submitted to COM. These funds are administered by the Stewardship Committee.

Serving on COM can take you on unexpected journeys as you walk with those in ministry. It is an honor and a privilege to support the hard-working, dedicated ministers of the PNC. Thank you all for your service!



REQUIREMENT FOR MINISTERIAL STANDING, PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE UCC

In support of the General Synod Resolution and the PNC's Anti Racism Vote, the Committee on Ministry is including a **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training requirement for all Authorized and Lay Ministers** (parish, specialized, retired, dual standing, privilege of call) to maintain Standing in the PNC UCC. DEIB trainings are designed to help create an environment where "all" community members feel supported, able to grow, thrive and advance.

Training to meet this requirement must be completed by the end of 2026, with certificate of completion sent to the PNC office, to maintain Standing. Subsequent DEIB trainings are required every three years (as is Boundary Training). **The first DEIB training is required to be an anti racism training which may be taken with one of these three options:** (There is a preference for in person trainings.)

1. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism Community Organizing Workshop (via Zoom and in person, \$350, 3 days, <https://pinwseattle.org/#>)
2. New York Conference UCC Culturally Responsive Ministry Training Module 1: Culture and Race. (offered through the PNC via Zoom, approximately \$50 to \$80 depending on the number attending, 1 day, dates to be determined by the PNC Committee on Ministry).
3. Convergence: Anti Racism Training for Clergy & Leaders (via Zoom, \$75, self-paced, <https://convergencecolab.org/p/anti-racism-training>)

If one of these trainings has been taken in the past 24 months, a certificate confirming the training can be sent to the PNC office to receive credit for this requirement. Ministers may seek approval from their COM chair (East or West) for other trainings they believe satisfy this requirement.

Subsequent trainings may include other areas of intersectionality with anti-racism work, such as gender and sexuality, indigenous relations, physical and mental disabilities.

Background:

In 2017 the Thirty-First General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a Resolution calling upon all judicatory settings to include the study of cultural diversity and institutional racism for all persons in Authorized Ministry within the UCC.

In 2021 the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC voted to be an Anti-Racist Conference, in response to the PNC UCC's Board of Directors priority (June 16, 2020) of dismantling racism while expanding our understanding and awareness of the impact of racism and other intersectional oppressions such as classism, homophobia/homoantagonism, transphobia, and misogyny, using an anti-racist lens in our work.

The Mayer Scholarship Fund

The Don and Lynnea Mayer Endowed Scholarship Fund

Given by Seattle University to the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC 2024

The purpose of the Mayer Scholarship Fund is to provide scholarship support for Pacific Northwest Conference Authorized Ministers pursuing graduate or doctoral studies in theology and/or ministry.

Eligibility

All PNC Conference clergy with active standing, both specialized and local church pastors, are eligible to apply for scholarships under this policy, as the financial need for tuition arises. Those who have accountable reimbursement funds (study leave, continuing education, etc.) are encouraged to use these first, allowing the Mayer Scholarship to assist as many as possible.

Application Process

1. Clergy requests are submitted via email to their Committee on Ministry chair (East or West Side), detailing the education program they intend to undertake and the costs for registration and tuition.
2. Proof of enrollment must be provided to access the allocated funds. Proof of completion/participation must be submitted to the Committee on Ministry at the conclusion of each term (semester, quarter, or other).

Disbursement of Funds

1. Requests will be reviewed by the Chairs of the COM and recommended to the Stewardship Committee of the PNC.
2. The Stewardship Committee authorizes the disbursement of funds.
3. Individual scholarships will be limited to no more than \$1,000 per fiscal year (the amount depends on the number of scholarships requested). The total amount of awards granted to an individual is \$3,000.

Utilization of Funds

1. Funds provided under this policy are intended solely for the purpose of covering registration costs and tuition.
2. Any unused funds at the end of the fiscal year (June to May) will not roll over into the following year.

Compliance

Clergy are expected to adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy and provide documentation of participation and/or completion of the program funded by the Mayer Scholarship Fund.

March 2025

Pacific Northwest Conference Clergy Education Fund

Purpose:

The purpose of this Fund is to provide financial support on an as-needed basis to Conference clergy for annual training in areas of anti-racism, Boundary Training, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, or other requirements for maintaining standing in the Pacific Northwest Conference to enhance their professional development.

Funding Details:

Ongoing Training Opportunities: Clergy participating in Boundary Training or in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging training, or other trainings required by the Committee on Ministry, are eligible to receive an annual amount up to \$250.00 to support their ongoing education in these critical areas as needed.

Eligibility:

All Conference clergy with active standing, both specialized and local church, are eligible to apply for funding under this policy as the financial need arises. We encourage those who have accountable reimbursement funds (study leave, continuing education, etc.) to utilize those first to allow the funds to go as far as possible.

Application Process:

1. Clergy must submit a request via email to the Conference Minister, detailing the training program they intend to undertake and the associated costs.
1. Clergy must provide proof of enrollment in the specified training to access the allocated funds. Proof of completion/participation must be submitted to the Committee on Ministry at the conclusion of the training.

Utilization of Funds:

1. Funds provided under this policy are intended solely for the purpose of covering registration costs related to the required training programs.
2. Any unused funds at the end of the fiscal year will not roll over into the following year.

Compliance:

Clergy are expected to adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy and provide documentation of completion of the training programs funded through this initiative.

Review and Evaluation:

The effectiveness of this policy will be periodically reviewed to assess its impact on clergy development and organizational culture.

Communities of Practice (COP) scholarships are requested from the Communities of Practice Coordinator, this year (2025), Rev. Amy Hitchens. COPs are support groups organized by the Committee on Ministry, with trained facilitators, for parish, specialized, retired, or lay ministers, as well as Members in Discernment.

Global Ministries Committee

Cory Passons

(Interfaith Minister with [Community for Interfaith Celebration](#) and Director of Interfaith Relations with [Interfaith Works](#))

Global Ministries continues as a joint effort with our regional Disciples of Christ family.

In April of last year, we welcomed Xiomara Maldonado Lizardi, one of our mission co-workers to visit us, along with Pablo Moreno, from CEDECOL's Peace Committee (CEDECOL is the Evangelical Council of Churches in Colombia). Xiomara works with Justapaz, doing work with women's issues and internally displaced persons. Pablo Moreno works with the Peace Committee of CEDECOL as well as being a seminary professor in Cali. Pablo Moreno has a US visa; Xiomara Maldonado Lizardi is from Puerto Rico, and thus has a US passport. Both of these amazing people offered stories and information to congregations across Washington during their two weeks with us.

Following that visit GBM has upheld presence as monthly Zoom calls where information is shared about the work of these peace organizations in Colombia. In addition, there has been ongoing interest in a possible person-to-person visit of a delegation from our committee to Colombia, but this proposal has not been able to be considered as various leadership roles in the associated organizations (and in the GBM committees and offices) have delayed this proposal.

At this time, we are recruiting for people who are interested in this committee. We would welcome those with interest in peace work, bridge building between congregations, and a desire to know more about the relationship between our conference, the Global Ministries office, and the peace organizations doing their amazing work on the ground in Colombia. Please email coreypassons@gmail.com for more information and thank you!!!

Justice & Witness Ministries Committee

After considerable recruitment on the part of Michael Gordon, our liaison at the time from the Ministry Resources Committee, JWM began to meet with its first quorum in several years in the late summer of 2024.

We worked together to establish co-facilitators, monthly meeting schedule, decision making and communication protocols. We also entered into discussions with the Dismantling Racism Group regarding our future relationship, discussed hopes and goals, and in December and January came up with a new guiding document that included Mission, Values, and Goals.

Our next steps include continuing conversations with the Board of Directors on how our voice may be represented within Conference Leadership and to begin the vital work of resurrecting our role as a steward and connector of Ministry Networks within the Conference.

Ministry Resources Committee

Jenn Hagedorn, Chair

Relationality and abundance have been two of the guiding principles of MRC work this year. The Ministry Resources Committee (MRC) serves primarily as the nominating committee for conference committees and General Synod delegates. We see our role as a conduit of communication and invitation as we seek to connect with those interested in conference service. While the role imagined for this committee in the bylaws includes a broader scope, the current role matches the capacity of the committee.

There are so many ways that our work as a conference is strengthened through relationships with one another. The MRC still sends out conference-wide communications via the listserv, coordinates with the conference minister and committee chairs, and calls many clergy and leaders directly to seek nominees. We also continue to expand the ways that we reach out to individuals. This year we included a bulletin insert and PowerPoint slide for congregational use in the conference-wide email delivered through the listserv. We have also experimented with having a liaison from MRC to some of the conference committees, which has allowed for conversations with committees as part of their regularly scheduled meetings. We have been grateful for all those in leadership who have offered names for potential nomination and all those who have felt the call and reached out!

Grounding more deeply in an abundance has meant that the MRC is endeavoring to not just fill committees, but truly match gifts, talents, and interests with open roles. We believe this is important even when—and perhaps especially when—there are open spots on the slate. In a culture that says “more is better” we hope to embody the belief that God will give us all we need to do the work we are called to do. One of the significant changes in the conference landscape was the reconstitution of the Justice and Witness Ministry Committee, which began the 2024 program year with a full leadership slate. One of the places we have witnessed abundance is the number of people, and especially young people, who were interested in representing our conference at General Synod 2025.

To offer your time and energy to the broader church in a season of so much uncertainty and challenge is an act of hope. It is a joy to have a conversation with someone who is interested in conference service and help them find the best match. Thank you to all those who are participating in this embodied hope in 2025!

Personnel Committee

Wendy Blight, Co-Chair

The Personnel Committee had a productive year. Our group quickly coalesced into a team that held each other in mutual respect with a shared understanding of the importance of our work to the Conference. Committee members actively engaged in discussions around personnel topics and did the work outside of committee meetings to accomplish our goals. My sincere thanks to Rev. Ryan Lambert, Mar Robertson, Robbie Gilchrist, and Eleta Wright for their friendship and participation this year.

The committee had two overarching goals. The first was to be a supportive resource for the Designated Conference Minister (DCM). Our monthly meetings devoted a significant amount of time to hearing from the DCM. Our check-in questions covered both the current joys and challenges of the minister’s position and also the work performance of Conference staff and any issues that needed to be discussed. Our conversations were lively and generative.

The second goal of the committee is to review the Conference Personnel Manual on an annual basis and update policies when needed. Several sections of the manual were adjusted, often because of changes to state employment laws. The committee will submit a final draft of the manual to the Board of Directors for their approval later this spring.

The Personnel Committee is directed in the Bylaws of the Conference to conduct an annual review of the Conference Minister on behalf of the Board of Directors. In order to have the evaluation be more objective than it sometimes has been, the committee created, with input from the DCM, a list of goals and target completion dates for the upcoming fiscal year. These goals were affirmed by the Board of Directors in March 2025 and will be one of the major components used to evaluate the work of Rev. Phil Hodson for the next fiscal year. The evaluation results will be summarized and shared with the Board prior to the 2026 Annual Meeting when the Board is expected to make a recommendation to the Conference regarding Rev. Hodson’s call to the settled Conference Minister position.

It has been an honor to work on your behalf this year,
Wendy Blight, Personnel Chair

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is supposed to consist of at least 12 members and not more than 15 members, although this past year we had only 9 active members. It also is assisted and advised by the Conference Accountant and consists of two ex officio members, the Conference Treasurer and the Conference Vice Moderator.

The responsibilities of the committee are outlined in the Board of Directors approved Fiscal Policy Manual. These consist of the following:

With the assistance of the Conference Accountant prepare and recommend the annual Conference General Operating Fund Budget, the two Camp Operating Budgets and the two Camp Capital Fund budgets. After approval by the full committee these budgets are sent to the Board of Directors for their approval.

Assist the accountant in the management of the Conference Funds and Investments. The committee reviews the actual income and expenditures in all funds of the Conference monthly to insure conformance with established budget parameters. It also approves any unbudgeted expenditures including any unbudgeted capital expenditures.

The committee is also tasked with fund raising. This past year has been challenging, sporadic and insufficient. To achieve the budget fundraising targets in FY 2026 and to meet any kind of fiscal stability in our Conference, it is imperative that more Stewardship members are needed with fundraising abilities and background.

The committee is also responsible for raising and managing funds for the distribution of health insurance grants to retired clergy and their spouses/mates and to churches.

Also, this past year the committee has established an Endowed Scholarship fund to support students who are pursuing graduate or doctoral studies in theology and or ministry. The Stewardship Committee, using Committee on Ministry recommendations, will determine the amount of any scholarship funds granted from the fund.

Many thanks are given to all the members of the Stewardship Committee for their efforts this past year.

Other Reports

Pacific Northwest Conference News

Mary Stamp, Editor

For 2024-2025, PNC-UCC News has covered the life of the conference, its congregations and ministries of its committees. Articles are designed to strengthen awareness and relationships among the PNC congregations. Each issue includes communications from the conference staff and committees to keep people connected and informed about resources available. With staff turnover, we have kept people attuned to the new staff and the search process. We featured stories on our camps—telling of preparation for the summer season at N-Sid-Sen, the many groups using Pilgrim Firs, and experiences at specific camps. Global Ministries coverage included reports from PNC partners in Colombia, with the added feature of the presence of partners at Annual Meeting 2024.

Features on local churches included stories on Westminster UCC's study on the impact of colonization, Alki UCC's effort to embody their faith in community ministries, Admiral's commitment to replace its building with affordable housing, Pullman UCC's loose offerings and art panels, United Church of Olympia celebrating Break the Silence Sunday, Veradale UCC's solidarity with local schools, University Seattle's Sacred Earth Ministries, Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, Sunnyslope's interfaith action on justice in Wenatchee Valley and its church garden, Fox Island's pastor and community outreach and a profile on Faatauva'a (Va'a) Alaelua's ministry at Christian Worship Center in Anchorage. We cover the work of other PNC committees in News Briefs and features.

We publish PNC-UCC News online at www.pnucnews.org. Before each issue, we send out emails requesting ideas for articles. We connect with pastors, committees and conference staff. Before publishing we send out a copy of the proposed issue and articles for those interviewed to review and respond in about two days so we can put the copy online. Then we share the link by email to the PNC congregations, clergy and committees, through Facebook and the Google group email listserv. Our expectation is that those receiving the information will pass it on through their congregations.

Minutes of Annual Meeting 2024

Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2024 April 26-28, 2024
Plymouth Congregational UCC, Seattle WA

This year's annual meeting was opened by Moderator Indigo Brown on Friday, April 26 at 1:00 pm. This first plenary session took place before the official beginning of the meeting tomorrow.

We were welcomed by the Rev, Dr. Kelle Brown, Senior Pastor of Plymouth Congregational, UCC who offered an acknowledgement of the indigenous tribes of the Salish Sea on whose lands our meeting is gathered. She shared a powerful testimony to the laboring hands, both enslaved and free, who build the infrastructure that surrounds us in this city. She noted that our meeting theme: "Forward Together" and our logo, were inspired by the Poor People's Campaign. She invited us to join her in resisting oppression and seeking unity as we seek to help our nation become more just. She welcomed us to create spaces in the tapestry we will create today for belonging and for a shared commitment to human dignity.

Moderator Indigo Brown welcomed us to AM 2024. Board member, Danette Koloi, presented a beautiful Samoan weaving to Indigo. Indigo invited us to see ourselves as a church on a journey together toward hope and love. She introduced our theme, "Forward Together", based on the scripture II Corinthians 4:1-8, verses which speak of the challenges we face as followers of Christ. We know that God will see us through. We are called in all things to press on, supporting and encouraging one another. She briefly reviewed our communication guidelines and noted the presence of the Standing Rules in the advance material. These will be approved in our first business session. She reminded us that we are called to trust one another, behave with respect, and noted that we are all on the same team.

She pointed out the facilities in the building, including parking directions. Delegates were instructed to speak from a mike to be recognized and reminded us we are a hybrid community with many of our number joining online. Esther Sanders, our Vice-Moderator, will keep a list for those wishing take part in speak-outs. Indigo then gathered us in a spirit of prayer, seeking discernment on how best be the Church God intends us to be.

Speak-Out Time

James Frouther, Generosity officer for the UCC Western Region. He extended greetings on behalf of the national church. He thanked us for our OCWM gifts, gifts to the special offering and the other gifts members of the Conference have given. He briefly reviewed the things the UCC does.

Cameron Sharp, University Congregational UCC, Seattle, spoke on behalf of the Committee on Ministry. He invited our input to the COM. He then announced a new requirement for Ordained Ministerial Standing. In response to our vote to become an anti-racist Conference, COM has discerned the next step needs to be to require Anti-Racism training for all clergy. This will be gradually implemented. Details will be forthcoming by letter.

With a smile and a shared selfie, Moderator Indigo put our gathering on Instagram.

Co-Chairs of the Global Mission Committee, Cory Passons and Mary Olney-Lloyd were called on to introduce our special mission partners from Colombia: The Rev. Dr. Pablo Moreno from CEDECOL, the Peace Committee of the Evangelical Council of Churches in Colombia who is also a professor at the Baptist University and Seminary in Columbia and Xiomara Maldonado Lizardi, one of our mission co-workers, who works for Justapaz, doing work with woman's issues and internally displaced persons. Justapaz is a Christian Center for justice and peace and non-violent action; an organization of the Mennonite Christian Church of Columbia. Xiomara is commissioned by the DOC and the UCC for her work on our behalf.

Cory and Mary, as co-chairs of this joint Disciples of Christ and UCC committee reviewed some of PNC's past partnerships, including in South Korea and Germany. They noted that this current

partnership had begun in 2021 and had so far included regular dialogue, one virtual visit, planning around a pilgrimage to Columbia in the coming months, and the current visit. They reminded us that we are called to a ministry of accompaniment; seeking to build community and unity among all God's children. They then invited our guests from Columbia to speak about their work:

Dr. Moreno spoke about the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Columbia. It has been engaged in peace efforts to combat the violence in Columbia whose origin is in the unfair distribution of land in the country. The Peace Commission was born in the 1990's to accompany those displaced by violence. Various groups are brought together to work with congregations on the important work of peace and justice and humanitarian actions. Their four lines of activity include:

1. Reviewing history and memory of the conflict among people. The people need to be listened to.
2. Bible study and an agenda informed by the Bible—which liberates and sets free from the old boundaries which separated people.
3. The creation of a new environment for the displaced persons whose lives are so impacted by poverty, especially in Cartagena, where the Peace Commission sponsors a School for Peace. Many displaced people settle in Cartagena and are subject to physical violence; particularly women.
4. Creating a renewed peace environment for a new generation through teaching peace making and peace building practices.

He expressed thanks for the help of the DOC and the UCC. He reminded us that the work in Columbia is supported by other world partners, especially Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands. They work with over a hundred congregations in Columbia and train over 150 people per year in peace building. He offered his blessing on our gathering.

Ms. Lizardi shared that she was born in Puerto Rico. She reminded us that the UCC and the DOC currently work with over 250 faith-based organizations in partnerships that do not 'send' mission workers, but accompany our partner churches and organizations as they grow their ministries serving people. Justpaz is one such organization. Like most of these partnerships, they share financial and people resources. This type of ministry is not limited to pastors. The goal of the organization with which she works has two linked foci: following the way of Christ from an Anabaptist perspective and creating a peaceful society. Justpaz was founded in the 1990's and partner with many organizations in Columbia to help create just and sustainable lifestyles. They provide advocacy and support for those seeking peace. They operate in five main arenas:

1. Peace building and reconciliation. They work with local people to support dialogue among those opposed to one another. They seek a reconciled society by transforming conflict.
2. They teach the way of nonviolence and violence prevention.
3. They help young people avoid conscription by practicing active non-violence. They promote conscientious objection.
4. Historical advocacy—strengthening the construction of historical memory. Registering and remembering human rights violations. They foster communication on the way of peace. They support a radio station. This helps get the message through to those who need it.
5. They foster a woman's peace and environmental justice effort. They help woman understand that climate change and the irresponsible mining efforts foster political and military conflict. They help woman recognize that land use is often behind the fighting. They serve by empowering women to resist violence and oppression. She reminded us that Columbia is a patriarchal society and that woman are often abandoned by those killed or in the fight. We can hear more from our honored guests during the workshop time.

We scattered to attend the various workshops.

After a break, the Conference delegates, clergy, and visitors regathered in the sanctuary for the second plenary.

Indigo reminded us that we would be having speak-outs again and that we could sign up to take part.

Two Resolutions appeared in the advanced materials and Indigo called us to an open hearing on them. The proposers of the Resolutions presented.

Indigo called on the Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski of Fautleroy UCC, West Seattle, to present a **Resolution of Witness: “Advocating Against Regressive Tax Policy”**.

Leah began her presentation with an allegory to reminded us that while our congregations have been good at ‘downstream charity’ we have often fallen short when it comes to asking the deeper justice questions concerning inequalities in our society.

The resolution she presented is about the problem of regressive taxation in Washington State, which presently ranks 49th among the states in the fairness of our tax code.

Pastors often know nothing about economics. And while our people understand the injustices around them, they often believe that the church cannot become involved in advocacy. The truth is that we can become involved in issue-based advocacy for justice.

This resolution offers background and calls on our congregations and their people to become involved in helping Washington State build a fairer tax system and challenges some of the ballot initiatives appearing in this year’s election which serve to make our tax code even more unjust for the poor. This resolution calls on churches and members to vote our faith by challenging the regressive tax measures being proposed this year and renewing the Capital Gains tax measure which helped WA state go from 50th to 49th. Then Leah concluded that as people of faith, we are called to embrace a progressive tax system.

It was noted that the text, details, and sponsor list for this resolution can be found in the advanced materials.

Indigo asked for our questions and discussion ensued. Among the points made was a comment on the role of Faith Action Network in securing the Capital Gains tax change and a question about how we can get the word out to others about this important subject.

Leah recognized the co-signers.

Indigo invited the Rev. Andrew Conley-Holcom of Admiral Congregational UCC, West Seattle to present a resolution: “Adding Antiracism Continuing Education Requirement for Pacific Northwest Conference Staff and Board of Directors”.

This resolution appears in its totality in the advanced materials on the website of the Conference. Andrew went through the various parts of the resolution highlighting certain sections and stressing that it is a direct result of the path the Conference has been following for some time. He suggested that this resolution helps us reinforce our commitment to the work of antiracism. It was noted that the resolution specifies that no funds from the Unity Fund be utilized for the training.

This resolution were discussed and questions were asked and answered.

Indigo invited us to attend various Affinity Groups for the remainder of the afternoon. These were listed in the advanced materials.

Before the Break, the Vice Moderator, Esther Sanders, led a brief ‘Lectio Divino’ exercise around our theme passage: II Corinthians 4:8-10 (NIV.)

After sharing dinner, we reassembled for worship and an evening of recreation, including a Meet and Greet with ACM, Phil Hodson.

On Saturday Morning, April 27, 2024 at 9:00 am; Moderator, Indigo Brown called the 2024 meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference to order greeting those present and those online. She reminded us of our theme, “Forward Together”, based on II Corinthians 4:1-8, repeating the theme verses. She invited us to keep this truth in front of us, reminding us of our shared calling.

She reviewed the communications guidelines as printed in the advance materials. She shared some housekeeping details.

She reported that a quorum was present. (39 congregations, 139 delegates. 27 visitors). There were 40 online participants.

Ken Workman of the Duwamish tribe; a decedent (Fifth great grandson of Chief Seattle) offered a land acknowledgement sharing “a gift of words from those who lived here long ago”. In the words of Chief Seattle: the world is a small place, so the Duwamish welcomes the whole world. In 1851, Chief Seattle expressed that welcome to those who came ashore at Alkai Beach in West Seattle. He expressed that welcome on behalf of the other indigenous groups of the entire Pacific Northwest. Ken used the languages of the indigenous to welcome, affirm and thank.

The Moderator called on Leah Atkinson Bilinski, our process guide. Lea led us through the Standing Rules as presented in the annual meeting packet pointing out that we operate under a revised form of Robert’s rules—as stated in our Standing Rules in which we seek consensus. She reminded us to vote using our voting cards and that online votes will be tallied as well. Motions, when necessary, must be made and seconded before discussion. The mover may speak for two minutes. Discussion will be monitored. Questions at the center mike, affirmative speakers at the right-hand mike, those opposed to the left. We will make space for all to be heard. All can speak twice. Our Moderator will be flexible, seeking to discern fairness.

Our Moderator led us in a practice vote. We then reviewed how to vote online for those needing to do so.

We adopted the Standing Rules and Communication Guidelines by consensus.

We approved the proposed agenda for the meeting, by consensus.

The moderator proposed and granted Voice Without Vote to National UCC Staff in attendance and to Acting Conference Minister, Phil Hodson.

We approved the minutes from AM 2023, by consensus.

We shared Speak-outs:

Gary Jewell- Interim Pastor at Pullman UCC shared what his congregation is doing in this election season. They showed the film “God and Country”. They hope to write letters with an organization named Vote Forward. He urged us to reach out to other Christians; conservative or liberal. He advised inviting local pastors to preach on non-violence.

Gen Haywood from Veradale UCC, Spokane Valley, a convenor of Faith Leaders, expressed concern about the fears some have traveling in our Conference. She noted divisions between east and west. She invited us to stop and listen to one another. She commended the work of SCAR: Spokane Committee Against Racism.

Pam Peterson, Director of N-Sid-Sen, invited us to make the camp our place to create the unity of both East and West. She challenged us to help her get us to N-Sid-Sen. She invited us to zoom with her every Monday night.

Meghan Pritchard, Prospect UCC, Seattle reported on an Affinity Group on Environmental Justice. She invited us to contact her to be a part of this group.

Amy Hitchens from Normandy Park, UCC, Normandy Park commended our Communities of Practice groups. She noted that while groups are soon ending their year, she invited clergy to sign up for next year. This is a support program for all our clergy, with a variety of group functioning.

Vice Moderator, Esther Sanders introduced our ACM, the Rev. Phil Hodson. His written report appears in the advanced materials.

Phil greeted us as our ACM, expressing thanks for being with us. He has listened, visited, and worked with leaders all around the Conference. He has attended about nine zoom meetings per week with our committees. He has encountered passionate people doing God's work. We are doing good and faithful work. He celebrated our dedicated staff who serve us and our two camp facilities.

He named our openness to growth and listening as strengths of the Conference and expressed thanks for our leadership in digital matters, including our leadership during the recent pandemic.

We know who we are. We are open and affirming; becoming more anti-racist. These values are front and center. We are moving forward together.

Our good work is not linear—it happens in fits and starts. It is a non-synoptic progression with much still to do.

He celebrated conversations with numerous local church Search Committees who are considering new ways forward. He named our Board, who listen and make space and seeks progress via consensus.

He mentioned a serious situation in one of our churches who, after discussion and support, choose to remain in covenant with us.

He commended:

Our staff who have been focused on creating safe space at our camps.
The leaders who have crafted forward looking budgets.

The inclusive reality in the four new congregations we are receiving at this meeting.

The renewed effort underway to establish a new congregation.

The importance of covenant—and the rituals we share.

The reality that we are not the same church we were pre-Covid.

That we are, in fact, becoming something new.

That we are called to find ministry in all our settings.

That we are bound in covenant with shared ministry.

That in this season, we are called to go deeper with him, with the Board and with one another.

He suggested that in our efforts together, we remember these three questions:

1. What is our purpose?
2. What is our plan?
3. What are the tangible outcomes we hope for?

He concluded, inviting us to co-creation, moving forward together.

The Moderator called for a report from the Ministry Resources Committee.

On behalf of the committee, Dee Eisenhauer, Eagle Harbor Congregational Church, Bainbridge Island, presented the slate of nominees. She noted that some positions are still vacant and she invited us to consider serving and helping the committee find possible candidates from our congregations. This slate was revised during the time of the meeting and is reprinted from the PNCUCC website (as of May 13, 2024:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

New members:

Youth Rep: Talaalemoth "Leilani" Alaelua, Term: 2026-1

Returning for a new term:

Moderator: Indigo Brown, Term: 2025-2

Vice Moderator: Rev. Esther Sanders, Term: 2025-2 (*this is a one-year term renewable up to two terms*)

At Large Representative: Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski, Term: 2025-1

Scribe: Rev. Ron Patterson, Term: 2025-1 (*Term is two years, with an option to serve another two-year term*)

Treasurer: Diana Kutas, Term: 2027-2 (*this is a four-year term, with the option to serve one additional term*)

Young Adult Rep: Tevita Fakasiieiki, Term: 2026-2

NE Area Rep: Rev. Bob Feeny, Term: 2026-1

Continuing current term:

Personnel Chair: Wendy Blight, Term: 2025-2

Central West Area Rep: Danette Koloi, Term: 2025-1

NW Representative: Rev. Dr. Sandy Wisecarver, Term: 2025-1

SE Representative: Rev. Deborah Tyler, Term: 2026-1

SW Representative: Rev. Amy Johnson, Term: 2025-1

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY - EAST (Up to six members)

New committee members, Term: 2026-1

Rev. Ann-Marie Illsley

Rev. Fred Hutchinson

Returning for a new term:

Morag Stewart, Term: 2023-3 (extended one year)

Bart Preecs, Term: 2025-2

Rev. Russ Clark, Term: 2025-2

Susan Chamberlin, Term: 2025-2

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY - WEST (Up to 18 members)

New committee members, Term: 2026-1

Chair: Rev. Cindy Bauleke

Dr. Judy Thierry

Diane Kurzontkowski

Rev. Kevin Bechtold

Dee Eisenhauer

Continuing with new term:

Rev. Lara Crutsinger-Perry, Term: 2026-2

Charnley Marsden, Term: 2026-3

Rev. Marci Scott-Weis, Term: 2026-2

Kenn Robinson, Term: 2028-3

Continuing with current terms:

Rev. Jennifer Castle, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Karyn Frazier, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Edwin Galeai, Term 2025-1
Rev. Michael Haven: Term 2025-1
Rev. Cynthia Meyer, Term: 2025-1
Stanley Yang, Term: 2025-2
Judy West, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Bruce Wilson, Term: 2025-1
Janet Ott, Term: 2025-1
Dorothy Lester, Term: 2025-1

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: This very important committee is in need of several members.

New committee members, Term 2026-1:

Rev. Margo Richardson
Roselyne Savini Gatoloai
Rev. Valerie Garrick
Kaila Russell
Rev. Andy CastroLang
Rev. Bill Comfort
Fili Togi
Tai Korcia
Annua Vasega
Tulua Falealili
Lupe Mamae
Rev. Iotamu Falealeh

Returning committee members:

Rev. Emily Tanis-Likkel, Term 2025-1
Karen Nooney, Term: 2026-3

GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMITTEE:

Continuing with current term:

Chair: Rev. Mary Olney-Lloyd
Ruth Brandon, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Kenneth H. Coleman, Term: 2025-1
Elizabeth Maupin, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Corey Passons, Term: 2025-2
Rev. Dan Stern, Term: 2026-3

JUSTICE AND WITNESS MINISTRY COMMITTEE:

JWM plays an important role in our bylaws and in the life of the conference. We have a full committee this year, thanks to MRC

New Committee members, Term: 2026-1

Rev. Dane Breslin
Rev. Jennifer Butner
Rev. Cathi Cline
Kate Forrester
Rev. Valerie Garrick
David Guthrie
Leslie Harris Johnston
Tae Jones
Rev. Sophie Morse
Zoe Pfeifer
Elizabeth Maupin
Rev. Maureen McLain

Sami Alo
Demontrice Bigham
Rev. Stevi Hamill

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:
(Up to six members)

New Committee Members, Term: 2025-1
Eveta Wright
Mar Robertson

Returning Committee Members:
Chair; Wendy Blight, Term: 2025-2
Robbie Gilchrist, Term: 2025-1
Rev. Ryan Lambert, Term: 2026-2

STEWARDSHIP:

New Members; Term: 2026-1
Chris Otto
Claudia Farnsworth-Smith
Alex Foryott

Returning Members:
Martha Baldwin, Term: 2025-2
Tara Barber; Term: 2025-1
Ed Coleman, Term; 2025-1
Sarah Finney, Term 2025-2
Jonathon Kesler, Term: 2026-3
Thomas Miller, Chair, Term: 2025-2
Rev. Amara Oden, Term: 2025-1
Ex-officio: Diana Kutas, treasurer; Esther Sanders

2024 ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Returning members:
Ex-Officio: Indigo Brown, Moderator
Ex-Officio: Rev. Esther Sanders, Vice Moderator
Rev. Jennifer Butner
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Gordon
Rev. Tara Leininger
New: Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski

MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE
(Up to six members)

New members:
Al Bentley; Term; 2026-1
Michael Gordon; Term: 2026-1
Rev. Nofo Moi; Term: 2026-1

Returning Members:
Chair: Rev. Jenn Hagedorn, 2025-1
Rev. Stephen Haddan; Term: 2025-1
Rev. Sandy Wisecarver; Term: 2025-1

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

New Members; Term: 2026-1

Cora Trujillo
Janet Malley

Returning Members:

Shirley Asmussen, Term :2025-1
Rev. Linda Crow, Term; 2025-1
Cassandra Heide, Term: 2025-3
Eric Johnson, Term: 2025-3
Zoe Pfeifer, Term: 2025-1
Dana Sprenkle, Term: 2025-1

We have received this slate from a committee, no second needed. Discussion was called for, Andrew Conly Holcomb, Admiral UCC, West Seattle, asked that for those with titles, they be added. Esther Sanders, Eltopia UCC, Eltopia, correcting the slate, noted that the Rev. Debra Tyler is the Board's SE representative. She will be continuing on the Board.

The list continued to evolve, so the Moderator delayed voting until later in the meeting.

Break

We reassembled for a dynamic worship experience with music presented by members of the Christian Worship Center of Anchorage, AK. UCC General Minister and President, The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson preached a powerful sermon calling us to embrace and live a disrupting Gospel full of 'buts' which lead us to hope.

We shared prayers and the Sacrament of Communion surrounded by affirmation and song.

We broke for lunch.

Our Moderator called us back into session. After a few housekeeping announcements, the Moderator noted that her report and a report on the Board's work prepared by the Vice Moderator were in the advanced materials. She reminded us that the Board has placed a priority on trust building and increased communication.

Camp Reports

In presentations that featured highlights from their written reports in the advanced materials, Mark Boyd, Director of Pilgrim Firs and the Rev. Dr. Pam Peterson, Director of N-Sid-Sen, shared vignettes from the past year's activities at our camps. They shared pictures and stories about how our camps are utilized, how lives are changed and the importance of our camp's ministry to our Conference, the larger community, and the many groups who make our camps a home.

Details of upcoming programs, ongoing efforts to improve our camps and challenges facing our camps were also shared.

Following a brief break, the Moderator led off with the budget presentation.

Thanking the Conference Accounting Manager, Andy Warren and the members of the Stewardship Committee, Indigo noted that the Board had reviewed the budget as prepared and recommends the combined budget for approval. The budget as presented represents efforts of the Stewardship Committee, Staff, and the Board. It is an expression of our priorities as a Conference. Through the budget, we seek to foster healthy relationships between clergy, churches and members. She noted that a 4.4% COLA has been included for staff. This budget reflects our continuing effort toward becoming an Anti-racist Conference. She reminded us that the Cannon fund will be made available for ministers to receive anti-racism training. This is a budget that seeks to minimize the use of our undesignated reserve, balancing the needs of the Conference with the preservation of reserves.

The Moderator called on Assistant Treasurer, Wendy Blight, to review the budget in detail. Wendy spoke about two unique camp budgets, a capital expenditure budget for Pilgrim Firs, and a budget for Conference Ministry. The complete budget is in the advance material on the website. Andy will provide details as requested.

Wendy then detailed each part of the budget.

The Conference Ministry Budget. This budget shows a net deficit of \$50,000. Revenue is projected to be \$490,000. 80% of revenue comes from our local churches. Our giving has been decreasing over the years. This budget projects a decrease of \$25,000. We have reduced expenses but were still not able to get to a balanced budget. Some areas are not funded at the level we might have preferred. We have though funded a few new efforts. Individuals who have given gifts as Friends of the Conference, have helped.

Our annual draw on our invested funds is 4%--this income represents 8% of our revenue. We moved half of our invested funds to the Beyond Fossil Fuel fund with the United Church of Christ.

Our largest expense is for staff salary and benefits. We built in a COLA of 4.4%. We did not have salary and benefits for a full-time Conference minister for much of last year.

Our next largest expense is our commitment to the national United Church of Christ in OCWM dollars we pass along. Our national staff and the structure of the national church are partners in our ministry. What we give the Conference is divided between the Conference and the National church. This budget reflects the fact that we plan to send \$20,000 less in the coming year. 19% of OCWM income will be passed on to the National UCC.

The third largest expenditure is our effort to become an antiracist Conference. At the present time, a total of \$110,000 is available for this effort, with \$40,000 budgeted this year. These dollars are part of the Unity Fund.

The Board recommends a decrease in the funds sent to Faith Action Network and celebrates the fact that many individuals and congregations support this organization.

The Board is recommending shifting some of our limited funds to other priorities. This includes funding for some of our committees which are newly vitalized. Committee on Ministry is budgeted to receive \$5,000 and Justice and Witness Ministries, \$4,500.

Pilgrim Firs. This budget reflects an increase in revenue and usage at the camp. We are projecting a \$50,000 surplus. There is a **Capital Budget** based on current reserves which will fund needed repairs and improvements.

N-Sid-Sen. This budget reflects a \$75,000 loss for next year. We are working on a plan to increase income during the coming year which will, we hope, reverse this loss. We have hired a food service for the summer months. Losses will need to be covered from Conference reserves. Currently, there is no capital reserve fund for N-Sid-Sen.

We bring this budget to the Conference as a Board and Committees which have found new strength and vitality. We believe we have budgeted resources wisely and hope to hear your thoughts.

Following the presentation of the Budget, the Moderator called on Andy to recognize those congregations who were Five for Five Congregations and who have made special efforts to contribute to OCWM and the work of the Conference. He noted that \$538,000 had been given through our Five for Five Offerings. In addition, \$27,000 had been given in directed gifts to emergency relief.

Diana Kutas, (Spirit of Peace UCC, Sammamish) Conference Treasurer, moved the adoption of the budget.

The Moderator accepted the motion, noting that it did not need a second since it came from the Board. She asked for questions.

Sandy Weston, Shalom UCC, Richmond: She discussed the possibility of using income to balance expenses as a way of budgeting. She also suggested that we look at our two camps as a single unified operation when it comes to finances.

Betsy Runke, Everett UCC, Everett: Expressed concern about the size of the deficit and urged us to consider our long-term viability and urged the Conference to think outside of the box.

Andrew Conley-Holcomb, Admiral Congregational UCC, West Seattle: Spoke in support of the budget, despite a cut in the Unity Fund. He urged local congregations to support this fund. Local congregations engaged in the work of Anti-Racism can develop programs that might bring income. He noted that his local congregation has reduced its OCWM and that this is a systemic issue.

Andy Warren, our Accounting Manager, spoke about sustainability and shared how the current 4% draw will help us sustain our financial viability.

Andy CastroLang, Westminster UCC, Spokane, spoke about a “new way”. How do we pay for what we believe our priorities to be and how do we change the way we do things? God has a new way as we come together in covenant.

Karen Nooney, First Congregational Church, Colville. Offered support for Camp N-Sid-Sen. It needs our help to be successful.

Andrew Conley-Holcomb, Admiral Congregational UCC, West Seattle. Spoke about keeping our camps accessible for everyone. He called on us to be active in addressing accessibility.

Jenn Rupp, Fox Island UCC, Fox Island (on line). Spoke inviting us to think of our reserves as a blessing rather something about which to worry.

Henry Burwell, The United Church, Ferndale. Spoke of the impact of the Pandemic on our congregations and their finances.

The Moderator called for the vote. The body voted to approve the budget. (145 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions)

A short Break was called.

Speak Outs

Eric Johnson, Wayside UCC, Federal Way, Chair of the Outdoor Ministries Committee. Spoke of their committee’s support role for our camps and their directors. He reminded us of the important place our camps have in the life of our Conference and conjugations.

Becky Withington, Magnolia UCC, Seattle. Spoke about the importance of the Covenant we share and to affirm the Land Acknowledgement we heard. She personally feels that this is too often given only lip service. She invited us to “put our money where our mouth is” by supporting readrentduwamish.org, a way we can make reparations and provide funds to be used for the revitalization of the tribe and culture.

Amy Jonnson, Wayside UCC, Federal Way, UCC Minister for Sexuality and Justice. Spoke about shame and stigma are fatal for humans. The UCC has a comprehensive curriculum which dismantles shame about bodies and our sexuality.

Jess Ingman, Sunnyslope Church, Wenatchee. Spoke as a Faith Action Network organizer, working on legislative policy change in WA state. Several initiatives are on the ballot in Washington state. It is so important to show up for economic and climate justice.

Mary Stamp-UCC Conference News, Westminster, Spokane. Invited us to share our stories and pictures from this meeting on the PNC website.

Jennifer Bannerman, Wayside UCC Interim Pastor, Federal Way. She spoke of their new rainbow doors. They will be dedicating these new replacement doors, after vandals destroyed their last set. The new doors, a sign of inclusive hope, will be dedicated on June 2 at noon.

Ted Huffman (on line), First Congregational, Bellingham. He spoke about the receipt of a Lilly Grant given to Justice and Witness Ministries of the National UCC to access ministry to youth and children in the UCC. He reported that this grant will provide funding for local congregations. The grant is in the range of \$1.25 million.

Vice Moderator Esther Sanders, Eltopia UCC, Eltopia. Spoke about the task of revising our By-Laws and noted that the Board will be working on this in the coming year.

Moderator Indigo called us back into session, and invited Scribe, Ron Patterson to summarize the proposed resolutions.

Leah Atkinson Bilinski (Fauntleroy Church UCC, West Seattle) moved, and Megan Pritchard (Prospect UCC, Seattle) seconded the proposed resolution:

Resolution of Witness: Advocating Against Regressive Tax Policy

The proposed resolution passed 106 in favor, 0 against and no abstentions.

Be it resolved that the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ stands in opposition to all regressive tax structures in Washington, Idaho, Alaska and across our nation and calls upon our conference members and churches to vote our faith and be vocal in our communities and to our legislators when regressive tax structures participate in systemic oppression.

Furthermore, be it resolved that we see it as our moral and faithful duty to stand together in specific opposition to Washington's Initiative 2109 and efforts to avoid the implementation of graduated state or local income taxes (such as Washington's Initiative 2111 passed into law by the legislature on March 4, 2024). We believe that when graduated income taxes are implemented in conjunction with limits and reductions on other regressive taxes, we will take one of many important steps forward in unveiling the just world for which Jesus strived.

Funding No funding is being requested. Should funding become necessary or beneficial to efforts aligned to the resolution, the stewardship committee will be approached. We will seek to work mostly electronically, leaning on resources already available to us through our churches. **Implementation** We wish to first recognize that we are ALL, as the body of Christ, called to be the implementing body if we pass this resolution together. In service to this body, however, the signers of this resolution will submit suggestions of six individuals willing to serve on an implementation task force to the Ministry Resource Committee. Commitment to this specific task force will begin as soon as the team is formed and conclude at the end of 2024. After the November 5, 2024 election, heavier focus will be given to potential next steps and overlapping efforts where support can be increased (though these elements will be held throughout the task force's time as well). The roughly 7-month commitment of this task force is by design, meant to encourage participation from those seeking a concentrated commitment and definitive end date as they assess how the commitment might weave together with other present commitments. The shorter commitment is also meant to focus the team on engaging a catalyst role that might prompt increased knowledge, interest and action for ongoing efforts to fight repressive tax structure. The task force will provide a final report to the board and will debrief at a board meeting if requested.

Davi Weasley, First Congregational, Bellingham moved and Andrew Conley-Holcom, Admiral Congregational UCC, West Seattle seconded the proposed resolution:

Adding Antiracism Continuing Education Requirement for Pacific Northwest Conference Staff and Board of Directors

The proposed resolution passed 128 in favor, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the PNCUCC will require antiracism training for all Conference staff and board members, to be renewed every 3 years. Training will be provided by organizations vetted and approved by the Conference Board, in consultation with the leadership of the PNCUCC Antiracism Fund (Unity Fund), the COM, and the Dismantling Racism Ministry Team. All UCC clergy and local moderators are strongly encouraged to attend anti-racism training at their own initiative or to join the trainings offered to Conference staff and Board.

Be it further resolved that no funds from the Antiracism Fund (Unity Fund) be used to cover the cost of these trainings. Funding streams to support Board members' participation will be discerned in conversation with the Stewardship Committee of the PNCUCC and added to the annual budget.

The Moderator recognized members of the Ministry Resources Committee to add a few more names to the proposed slate of Officers, Board and Committee members. These names are included in the report recorded above.

The slate was moved by MRC Board liaison, Sandy Wisecarver, Blaine Congregational UCC, Blaine

The delegates voted to affirm the slate as presented. (117 in favor, none against and no abstentions)

Vice Moderator, Esther Sanders (Eltopia UCC, Eltopia) reported that the Board is proposing to extend Acting Conference Minister Phil Hodson contract and will recommend calling him to become our Designated Conference Minister. A contract and call agreement will be prepared and a Special On-line Conference Meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday June 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm. Details will be communicated to the Conference as they become available.

Moderator Indigo Brown offered expressions of thanks to all those who had worked so hard to make this meeting possible: To the planning committee; to the staff and pastors of our host congregation, to the many volunteers, especially to the Tech team and the custodians of Plymouth.

In response to a question concerning the definition of the word: Designated Conference Minister, the Moderator responded that the definition of the term will be clarified in the coming days as the Board reaches out to the Conference to prepare for our Special Meeting. A further question asked whether a Designated Conference Minister is eligible to be considered for the 'settled' position? Once again, this will be clarified in the days ahead as the Board prepares for the Special Meeting.

Tara Leininger, Metaline Falls Congregational UCC, Metaline Falls moved and Tara Barber, Liberation UCC, Seattle seconded that following worship Sunday, April 28, 2024, the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ be adjourned. Passed unanimously.

We then worshiped together with ACM Phil Hodson leading. The service included a memorial tribute and a service of installation for incoming Officers, Board and Committee members.

Respectfully submitted, Ron Patterson, Scribe

Minutes of the Special Meeting June 18, 2024

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ
Held via Zoom

This special meeting, having been duly called, was opened with words of welcome by Moderator Indigo Brown on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm. The body was asked whether it would agree to record the meeting and there was consensus to do so. Moderator Brown opened with prayer, sharing Howard Thurman’s powerful “Open Unto Me”.

With the able assistance of our technical team, Kyna Shilling, John Eisenhauer, and Jennifer Butner, delegates and visitors were helped with renaming, learning how to vote and other technical issues.

Moderator Brown declared the presence of a quorum. Delegates and visitors from 41 congregations had registered. (173 Registered, 14 guests).

She called the meeting order inviting those present who needed special accommodations to let those needs be known to the technical team via chat. Members of the Board and the technical team would be monitoring the chat function for questions and other concerns.

The Moderator granted voice without vote to members of the National UCC staff who were present.

The Moderator called on our Process Guide, Leah Atkinson Bilinski, a Board member, to review guidelines for communication and the Standing Rules which had been adopted at the Annual Meeting. She reminded us that we, as a gathered Conference and as individuals are bearers of the image of God. She noted that while we are not bound by Robert’s Rules of Order in a formal sense, our Moderator will have broad discretion as we seek consensus.

Leah reminded us to raise our ‘electronic’ hands to signal our desire to speak and to wait until we are recognized by the Moderator. Those speaking will be limited to one minute and may speak no more than twice unless recognized by the Moderator.

Leah then presented the motion from the Board of Directors:

Be it so moved that the Rev. Phil Hodson be called as the Designated Conference Minister (DCM) of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ through June 30, 2026, with eligibility and first right of refusal for the Settled Conference Minister candidate position should it be offered by the Board after evaluation

The Moderator received the Motion, which required no second because it came from the Board. She reminded us that she had sent the Google Group the motion and other items, including a letter from her, before this meeting. She then reviewed her communication, including a review of some of the definitions of the various forms of Conference Ministry and why the Board is recommending the hiring of a Designated Conference Minister.

She asked us to hold our questions for now.

Indigo introduced Phil, reminding us that we had received his bio with her invitation to a series of “Meet and Greet’s”. Phil came to us Feb 1, 2024, as Acting Conference Minister, arriving here after serving as the CM of the South Central Conference. Phil spoke briefly.

Indigo then reviewed the summary she had sent to the Google group about the Board’s process and spoke of the unsuccessful efforts of the Intentional Interim Search Committee. At the end of that search process, Phil was recommended by the national UCC to serve as our Acting Conference Minister, replacing the departing part-time Acting Conference Minister. Indigo reminded us that we are required by the National UCC to always have someone in the position of Conference leader.

Discussion ensued. Great questions were asked and answered, and a variety of serious issues, especially those concerning our ongoing commitment to being an anti-racist Conference, were raised. This was a lengthy exchange of ideas and each person desiring to speak was heard. Many asked questions or raised concerns in the chat as well. Board members joined Indigo in responding and Phil answered questions directed to him.

(Note from the Scribe: Since the meeting was recorded, and since a copy of the Chat was made, Board members and others can revisit the concerns raised, especially those about our commitment to anti-racism. One comment, received in the chat from the Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown, summarized much of what was said:

Though it is difficult to parse, we need to live into the nuance of this conversation. There is the clear affirmation of Phil as a person and his

ministry, AND the need for the conference to lay bare the process to pursue inclusion and justice in leadership as the order of the day. I pray we can hear both, knowing this these conversations are not competing as should not be dismissed or held as a frustration. -Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown, Plymouth UCC.

The Moderator recognized Jerry Rice, delegate, Plymouth UCC, Seattle, who made the following motion: **“Be it so moved that the Rev. Phil Hodson is to be called as the Intentional Interim Conference Minister (IICM) of the Pacific Northwest Conference of United Church of Christ for a year until a candidate is selected by the Search Committee for a settled Conference Minister position, approved by the board and voted upon by the Conference.”**

The Moderator called for a brief recess and with other Board members withdrew to a break-out room. Other members of the Board continued to receive and address questions. Ron Patterson, Scribe, led the body in a time of prayer and discernment.

After resuming the meeting, Moderator Indigo Brown, ruled the motion out of order and said that if the motion currently before the delegates was defeated, this motion could then be reintroduced.

The question was then called and delegates were invited to vote on the Board’s motion.

Be it so moved that the Rev. Phil Hodson be called as the Designated Conference Minister (DCM) of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ through June 30, 2026, with eligibility and first right of refusal for the Settled Conference Minister candidate position should it be offered by the Board after evaluation.

Vice Moderator, Esther Sanders, led us in prayer before we voted.

136 delegates voted. The Board motion passed with 129 votes in favor, 6 opposed and 1 abstention.

The Moderator expressed thanks to all who attended and asked Phil to respond.

Phil spoke words of appreciation, affirmation and blessing for the work ahead.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Patterson, Scribe