

Pacific Northwest Conference Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 1, 2025

Board Members Present: Esther Sanders, Vice Moderator; Sandy Wisecarver; Amy Johnson; Leah Atkinson Bilinski; Wendy Blight; Diana Kutas, Treasurer; Deborah Tyler; Dawn Koloi; Ron Patterson, Scribe.

Staff: Designated Conference Minister Phil Hodson; Conference Accountant, Andy Warren; Mark Boyd, Camp Director, Pilgrim Firs.

Excused: Talaalemotu “Leilani” Alaelau; Tevita_Fakasiieike; Indigo Brown, Moderator

Esther called us to order in Indigo’s absence and opened our meeting by asking what we were looking forward to at the Annual meeting. Great ideas were shared about the importance of being together! Phil opened us with a prayer that reflected on ‘calling.’

We reviewed the Standing Rules and Communications guidelines for the coming Annual meeting and adopted them by consensus. We offer them to the delegates at the Annual meeting for their approval. Leah will again be our process guide for this meeting. After discussion, we agreed that Board members would help with meeting facilitation.

The minutes of March 4, 2025, and the special meeting of March 13, 2025, were approved with corrections, by consensus. (Corrections Noted: Warrior Pathh spelling and “Waggoner” fund spelling.)

Board Minute Distribution

After discussion, it was moved, seconded, passed: “that all Board minutes once approved be shared in the Conference weekly e-news and on the website as an effort toward transparency, improving communication, bettering conference relations and inviting the conference to hold the Board accountable for our work and decisions.”

Share in Tomorrow Endowment Fund Proposal

At the recommendation of the Stewardship Committee, Andy presented a revision in how the Share in Tomorrow Fund income is to be utilized. This fund, which is listed on line 345 of the financial report, records the quarterly dividends and the market valuation adjustments of the Share in Tomorrow Endowment Fund and the Share in Tomorrow Earnings Fund. The fund is invested in the United Church Funds and dividends are reinvested quarterly. This endowment was created by Conference fundraising. Earnings from the fund are distributed based on a 5% draw on the average earnings of the previous 20 quarters.

The Stewardship Committee proposes to the Board that the 5% draw will in the future be utilized as follows: 46 % to The Church Development Fund, 27% to N-Sid-Sen capital Improvements and 27% to Pilgrim Firs Capital improvements. It was moved, seconded, passed.

Financial Report

Andy presented a brief review of our financial situation from a chart posted earlier on Basecamp for Board review. Year to date actuals show that Conference Ministries has a deficit of \$1,577 against a projected deficit of \$31,043; Pilgrim Firs is showing a surplus of \$121,043 against a projected loss of \$17,388; and N-Sid-Sen a deficit of \$36,616 against a projected loss of \$57,583. His projections for FY 26 show a projected loss of \$58,589 for Conference ministries; a surplus of \$52, 203 for Pilgrim Firs and a projected loss at N-Sid-Sen of \$133,070. These are conservative estimates. Discussion ensued concerning the presentation of the budget at the annual meeting.

Camp Report

Mark filed a written report in Basecamp and invited the Board members to review it for fuller details on camp activities at **Pilgrim Firs**. Spring is bursting and things are going well. They are prepping for the post-Easter Clergy retreat. There will not be a clergy retreat at N-Sid-Sen this year.

N-Sid-Sen. Leah reported on a work party she led with Linda and Randy Crowe and Mary Lu and John Hubbe. A dozen participants were positive and upbeat and deeply involved in this intense weekend of work. Leah reminded us of the giftedness of our Conference and its many members. There will be another work camp, June 7-12. While work camp groups do not pay for their experience, costs are involved. There is a need to raise money to support these efforts. The Board expressed thanks on behalf of the Conference.

A retired clergy couple, Ben Crosby and Alice Ling, live five miles from the camp. Their activities and dedication were lifted and celebrated. Ben is very handy and has helped extensively on the property. In addition, he is working to improve our websites.

Mark is receiving and reviewing emails and phone calls for N-Sid-Sen.

Dawn asked about other dates for work camps. Mark responded that any group could call and come out to do work. An interested church or individual needs to offer some dates and camp staff will find a way to put them to work.

Designated Conference Minister Report

A lot is happening! Phil called our attention to his lengthy written report on basecamp including efforts on Search and Call, database development and the preservation of files, the new website, his efforts to prepare for the Annual Meeting, and a lengthy list of interactions with local congregations and meetings concerning our camps and the Conference.

He reminded us of our upcoming retreat at N-Sid-Sen (May 23-25) and our need to assist in planning this event. He reviewed some of the next steps possible now that the Board and staff have completed the anti-racism training. He presented ideas about how a legacy fund using anticipated funding might impact our Conference. We then had a lengthy discussion about the unfolding plan to share a staff member with the Central Pacific Conference. The Board and the Personnel Committee will be involved in the next steps in this process.

Discussion continued as questions were asked and answered about some of the particulars of the upcoming staff transition.

He celebrates the way individuals respond and while we have a shortage of people willing to serve on committees, he emphasized the importance of communicating what we are doing with others. He hopes the Board will continue its direct communication with him and help him to communicate fully with the Board.

We need to share what we are doing. After looking at his schedule we supported his need to take some time off after the Annual meeting. He invites us to keep communicating and be direct with him about what we need from him.

We celebrated Arlene's deep involvement with the Conference which began in 1997. She is a witness to so much in our life together and a faithful participant in every way. We will have a cake in her honor and invite the Conference to share in a card shower at the coming Annual meeting to celebrate her retirement. Diana volunteered to obtain blank cards and Board members were reminded to prepare special greetings!

Approval of Two new Churches

With great joy and thanksgiving to God we reviewed the information concerning two congregations hoping to join the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Emanuelu Congregational Christian Church of Algona, WA We reviewed their application which had been presented to the Board by Church Development. Their pastor had been granted dual standing. It was moved, seconded, passed with great joy!

Live in Salvation Church of Tacoma, WA We reviewed their application which had been presented by the Church Development Committee. Moved, Seconded, Passed with great joy!

Special thanks to Board member, Dawn Koloi, whose efforts have inspired these congregations and their leadership! These congregations will be welcomed during the Friday evening worship service at the Annual meeting.

The Annual Meeting agenda was reviewed. It was posted on Basecamp in the material for our meeting tonight.

Diana noted that the budget presentation will be done by Martha Baldwin with Andy assisting. Diana will celebrate the 5 for 5 churches.

The Rev. Faatauva'a (Va'a) Alaelua of the Christian Worship Center UCC in Anchorage, AK will be song leader and others from the Samoan congregations will lead worship during the Annual meeting.

Amy asked whether Board members should attend the workshops. We agreed to assign ourselves to various workshops.

Board members need to arrive before noon on Friday. Esther hopes we might come at 10 am.

Saturday afternoon there may be a discussion about a creative possibility Phil has in mind. What would happen if we had a multiple site Annual meeting? One east side—N-Sid-Sen, one west side—Pilgrim First and one Alaskan site? We would divide up the Board and link everyone electronically. Let's play with this idea. He hopes to create a planning committee around this idea.

Esther reviewed some of the logistical problems with Annual meeting planning and shared that it has not been an easy process.

Constitution and Bylaws. The Board is reviewing a draft of the new Constitution and Bylaws. We are early in this process and the Board is invited to note comments and questions they have by line number and place them in a string that Esther began in Basecamp.

Cameron Sharp is the primary drafter of both documents and Phil, Wendy, and Ron have been going back and forth as a subcommittee through many editions making minor revisions and clarifying comments (we are currently on Draft #7).

Deep gratitude to Cameron for his sensitive effort to write a coherent, timely and beautiful document that truly reflects who we are!

Wendy, Ron and Phil will review all the Board suggestions and comments and then assist Cameron as he prepares another edition for Board review. This is where we are at present.

In the coming weeks, the Board will design a review process that will present the proposed Constitution and by-laws to the entire Conference seeking their input. After

this process, which might be lengthy, we hope to present a final document for approval at the Annual meeting in 2026.

Future Board Meeting Schedule

After a lengthy discussion, we agreed to work on a schedule for the upcoming year after we welcome new Board members. We agreed to meet in May to review the annual meeting and prepare for the retreat. We then discussed going to quarterly meetings or other possibilities. Some expressed that communication is difficult and going to a quarterly meeting diminishes communication. Great ideas were shared but no consensus emerged.

Nominations

MRC is continuing to work. We have a few Board nominations. Morag Stewart for the Northeast Region and Edwin Galeai for the Northwest region. Sandy will be coming on as Moderator. The Vice Moderator is not confirmed yet.

After this lengthy meeting, Esther asked us for any debrief. We stressed the importance of timely communication. Would it be helpful to have a person looking for things that need to be communicated. We do need a basecamp expert to watch communication.

Annual Meeting Offering

We agreed to split the two offering taken between N-Sid-Sen and Mending Wings, a local effort in Yakima.

Next Meeting May 6, 2025 at 6:30 pm. Esther closed our meeting with a blessing!

Respectfully submitted, Ron Patterson Scribe.

Addenda To the Minutes: April 23, 2025

After discussion in base camp, the Board agreed by consensus to plan a multiple site Annual meeting for March 13-15, 2026. Moderator Indigo Brown suggested that we meet in three locations and virtually for a single meeting. This date reflects the availability of our two camps. The third location will be sought in Alaska. Members of the Board will be deployed to each location. This option will also be less costly and more inclusive. The Board's decision will be shared at the annual meeting.