

Pacific Northwest Conference Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, January 6, 2026

Board Members Present: Sandy Wisecarver, Moderator; Diana Kutas, Treasurer; Morag Stewart; Kendrick Richardson; Ron Patterson, Scribe; Leah Atkinson Bilinski; Amy Johnson; Demontrice Bigham.

Staff: Designated Conference Minister Phil Hodson; Conference Accountant, Andy Warren; Mark Boyd, Executive Director, PNC Outdoor Ministries.

Guest: The Rev. Diane Weible, National UCC, Conference Minister Search Coordinator.

Excused: Talaalemotu "Leilani" Alaelau; Dawn Koloi, Vice-Moderator; Edwin Galeai; Indigo Brown, Past-Moderator; Tevita_Fakasiieike; Ryan Lambert.

Sandy called us to order and Diana opened the meeting with a meditation based on a UCC devotional written by Talitha Arnold using Psalm 72, a prayer for a leader and for leadership. "Give the gift of wise rule", the Psalmist says. "Come down hard on cruel tyrants" the Psalmist prays. A leader must exercise power with gentleness and consideration. This psalm is a call for the people to pray for the leader.

It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2025 meeting. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the minutes of the Special meeting of December 5, 2025.

Our guest, The Rev. Diane Wieble, Conference Minister Search Coordinator for the United Church of Christ was introduced to review the search process as we begin the search for a settled Conference Minister.

After asking for questions we might have, she reviewed the process as it normally unfolds.

The first step: after examining our by-laws for particular guidance in the selection of a Search team. While by-laws sometimes stipulate numbers, a best practice is to select a committee of 5-7 individuals, representing the diversity of the Conference by age, ethnicity, gender, clergy-lay, male female, etc.

She recommends that no one from the Board be on the Search Committee. There should, though, be one person from the Board to serve as a liaison to the Board. It is important to keep the Search Committee separate from the Board.

The Search Committee works independently. She will train the Committee and discuss with them their two main tasks:

Creating a profile and learning how to read profiles.

The profile needs to be a representation of who we are today. Not who we hope to become. The goal is to be honest and transparent, to let the candidates see who we are.

The profile will include questions about who we want to become as a Conference.

The profile is important because potential candidates will see this first and can discover their interest in what we have presented. The profile opens the way for the work of the Spirit.

The profile also offers guidance to the Committee by focusing them on what they will be looking for in a potential candidate.

In preparing the profile, the Committee can farm out sections of the profile to those best equipped to provide the information needed. For example, Andy can provide the necessary figures for the profile.

She will provide the Committee with an outline of the information needed. This will also be provided to the Board, and the Board can help find the people to give information to those preparing the profile.

We need to design ways to receive the input of everyone in the Conference. Listening sessions that ask questions like: Who do we want to become? What do you want to see happening in the future?

Get as much feedback as possible. Leadership can do surveys or seek out key individuals for their responses. People can be called upon to offer input.

The Search Committee and Board can interpret the data. What does this say about how we are? We will distill this into a picture to attract possible candidates.

Work on the profile can begin before the search team is named.

Diane then posts the profile and the listing.

The Board must develop a job description, salary range, benefits description, starting date, etc. Do we want a resident CM? Are we open to a hybrid CM? The more information we have in the profile, the less information is necessary for the job description.

The position description can be one page of the profile.

She will reach out to potential candidates and collect profiles.

She then meets with the Search Committee and goes over how to read profiles and she will offer a snapshot of those who have applied.

The Search Committee must read profiles with open eyes. She will assist with reference checks and offer guidance on the interview process. This is when the work of discernment begins.

All first interviews are done by Zoom.

Then, when the field is narrowed to one or two candidates, if funds are available, the Search Committee will invite one or two for in-person second interviews.

The Search Committee will bring forward a candidate and present the reasons for their selection to the Board.

Our role as a governing Board is to review the work of the Search Committee and then follow our by-laws.

With help of the Search Committee we set up a candidate weekend including a special meeting of the Conference. This can consist of meetings with various leadership groups and members of the Conference.

The Conference votes, the call is extended, and we follow a plan of transition.

We as a Board will need to work with the candidate to help them through the transition period. She will help us design a timeline.

The UCC will provide mentoring help for the new CM and we might need to seek additional guidance for the individual based on their experience. We were urged to put some money in the budget to cover this.

She will be beside us in this entire process. She is available to us.

Diane invited questions:

How long does it take?

It depends upon how quickly the profile is created. Profile development is the key to the speed of a given search. She reminded us that there can be a number of delays. She believes it can be done in six months—but that is rare.

What about internal candidates?

If it is a current staff member, consider looking at this person first. Any other member of the Conference is treated the same as an external candidate. Gifts for leadership can appear in many forms and we are called to be open to the Spirit's movement.

What about salary?

Diane had given Andy the amount of \$125,000 as a possible base salary. There is a CARD (Center for Analytics, Research and Data) compensation report that compares CM salaries. She looked at other conferences of our size and came up with that figure. She will provide additional figures. This is Base: salary and housing. Benefits are on top of that figure.

Members of the Board suggested that a CM package should match guidelines established for our Conference clergy. It was noted that \$132,500 would be in line with the recommended salary for our larger congregations.

She stated that when we make decisions about compensation, we need to look at experience and set out a range.

She again noted the importance of the coaching the UCC provides and that we need to consider budgeting some compensation for this process. This will give the new CM the tools needed for success

What is the availability of candidates?

There are many uncertainties in the search process. There are good candidates and she reminded us that we need to trust the Holy Spirit. Often the right person comes along and the committee recognizes it. Open and honest conversation is necessary in a search committee.

She urged us to be as open and honest and transparent as possible with one another as a Board. She reminded us again, that she is available to help us.

Sandy thanked Diane who then left the meeting.

Financial Report

Andy reminded us to look at the reports he had posted on Basecamp. It is too early to report on December. He invited our attention to the proposed budgets, coming to us from the Stewardship Committee.

He began with Pilgrim Firs. He reviewed the proposed budget for the camp by noting changes and items which Mark and Andy had discussed. The budget projects that operating profit will be \$68,000. Good care by good people is reflected in this budget. It was moved, seconded, and passed to recommend this proposed budget to the Annual Meeting for their review and approval.

Andy then reviewed the proposed budget for N-Sid-Sen.

After pointing out several items in the proposed budget and reviewing some income and cost projections related to food costs and maintenance items, he noted that a \$12,000

deficit is projected for this year and a \$44,000 deficit is projected for next year. The efforts of Randy and Linda Crowe, amazing volunteers, have lessened these amounts. It was moved, seconded, passed to recommend to the Annual Meeting of the Conference the budget for N-Sid-Sen for their consideration and approval.

At Mark's suggestion the Board will send a letter of thanks to Randy and Linda Crowe for their amazing stewardship! Discussion concerning the efforts of staff and volunteers over the last months and the spectacular improvement of the outlook at N-Sid-Sen took place.

Conference Ministries Budget

Given the plans to hire a settled Conference Minister, Board members noted that some of the projections of expense might need to be modified. The budget as presented shows a projected surplus of \$25,000. But with a projected salary increase, moving expenses for a new CM and other expenses, this surplus may not be possible. Andy will review the figures and circulate a new budget for Board consideration and approval by electronic vote by next Monday which reflects a salary closer to the current Conference guidelines. When this vote is taken, if passed, the Conference Ministries budget will be forwarded to the Annual meeting for review and approval.

A discussion of the Unity Fund took place. The fund was created four years ago by the Conference at an annual meeting to support the anti-racism work of the Conference. \$170,000 has been invested in this effort to date. Andy noted that there is currently \$20,000 available in the Unity Fund. We agreed to draw funds for the Unity Fund from Conference revenue based on a percentage of the total OCWM raised from our congregations. This amount would decrease in the future as the work would be entrusted to local congregations.

Andy will be posting his reports and the proposed budget in a timely fashion to meet the deadlines for the Annual Meeting.

Andy raised the concern, that given the nature of the fiduciary responsibility of the Board, the continuing absence of some board members is a concern.

Phil noted that we need to continue to invite people to show up and to listen to one another and that our task as Board members is to be present for one another.

Andy called our attention to the 2027 Capital Budgets. It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the capital budgets for Pilgrim Firs (\$54,000) and N-Sid-Sen (\$45,000) and to recommend this for review and approval to the delegates to the Annual Meeting. Details are posted in Basecamp.

Camps Report

Mark noted that he had posted reports on Basecamp covering activities at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs and his efforts as the Executive Director for PNC Outdoor Ministries and Camps. Board members are invited to read these which contain detailed information about the vitality of our camps.

After Mark's recommendation, the Board reviewed and it was moved, seconded and passed to accept the bid of TC Septic of \$22,953 to replace the septic system at Cabin 5 at Pilgrim Firs. The funds will come from Pilgrim Firs reserves.

It was also moved, seconded, passed to accept the bid of Floor Coverings International of \$31,063 for N-Sid-Sen's Spirit Lodge Flooring project, which includes replacing flooring in Forester Lodge bathrooms and in the sink area. This work will be paid for by funds from the Broadview Church gift.

Mark commented on the importance of continuing to develop the donor base for our camps. An end of year letter made a big difference and going forward, asks will include handwritten letters.

Designated Conference Minister Report

Phil thanked the Board and shared information on his recent vacation. He reported on the event to be sponsored by CDC this Saturday at Fauntleroy UCC. He reviewed his priorities for the coming months and called our attention to a report he had posted in Basecamp. He urged us all to go to the Conference website to look at the videos posted there. He asked each of us to ask our congregations to prepare a brief video about what we are doing as a congregation. These can be simple. He asked us to help ask congregations to sponsor one youth to attend the Annual Meeting.

Liaison Reports

Leah reported on JWM. She has participated in two meetings to which only one person showed up. This is a difficult situation.

Morag reported that the Global Ministries partnership committee is seeking a new UCC co-chair due to a recent retirement.

By-Law Revision

Ron reported that Cameron is recovering from surgery and will soon be able to prepare an **12th edition** of the revised Constitution and By-laws. Morag and Ron reported on the three listening sessions.

After discussion, it was agreed to circulate another edition of the document and invite people to three additional listening sessions. Tuesday, January 20 @ 2:00 pm and 6:30 pm and Wednesday January 21 @ 6:30 pm. Ron and Morag volunteered and Leah agreed to cover the 21st. Ron will attempt to make some phone calls inviting people to attend and will attempt to circulate parts of the by-laws to particular people. Ron will also invite Cameron to attend.

Wedding Gift and Congratulations

On behalf of he and Martha, Andy thanked the Board for our wedding gift and we shared a moment of rejoicing!

Figtree Letter

A letter came from Mary Stamp, who for many years has been a key leader in the efforts for social justice in the Spokane area and a leader in our Conference. She was requesting a gift to support Figtree, a Spokane based advocacy publication, which also prepares a resource guide for social services in Eastern Washington and Idaho. It was moved, seconded, passed to give \$1,500 to support their work.

Broadview Funds Discussion

Given the unknowns involved in the CM search, it was agreed to hold the Broadview gift in reserve and delay any decision on how to hold or utilize this amazing legacy gift. Discussion ensued.

Visioning

We had a brief discussion on whether we need to hire a consultant to work with the Board. No decision was made, but several ideas were shared.

Nominations for Search Committee.

The Moderator shared a list of individuals nominated by Conference members to serve on the CM search committee. This list was generated by a nomination form which had been on a special part of the Conference website for the last month. The names were discussed and of the number, six were selected to be invited to serve. Board members were assigned to make initial contacts. After discussion, Kendrick will be asked to serve as the Board liaison to the Search Committee.

Phil closed a very long meeting with prayer.

Next meeting: February 3, 2026, 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Patterson, Scribe.

Addendum to these minutes:

As referenced above, the Moderator called for an electronic vote to approve recommending a revised Conference Ministries Budget to the Annual Meeting of the Conference. This revised budget reflects changes already discussed by the Board. It was moved, seconded, and passed with one dissenting vote to recommend the budget as revised to the Annual Meeting for their approval. The Moderator noted that we can still review these figures and adjust.

Added 1/23/26 Ron Patterson, Scribe