

Board Minutes 09_01_26

Pacific Northwest Conference Board of Directors Minutes September 2, 2026

Board Members Present: Sandy Wisecarver, Moderator; Dawn Koloi, Vice-Moderator; Diana Kutas, Treasurer; Edwin Galeai; Morag Stewart; Ron Patterson, Scribe; Leah Atkinson Bilinski; Amy Johnson; Ryan Lambert; Tevita Fakasiieiki.

Staff: Acting Conference Minister, Lorraine Ciniceros; Andy Warren, Conference Accountant; Beth Astarte, Registrar.

Committee On Local Church: Roselynn Selix, chair; Lupe Mamae; Emily Tanis-Likkel; Margo Richardson; members. (The Board will hear a presentation from this committee concerning the desire of the Family of Christ Full Gospel Church, Tacoma WA to join the United Church of Christ.)

Guests: Cindy Bauleke, Chair, COM West; Tom Miller, Chair, Stewardship Committee.

Absent: Demontrice Bigham.

Excused: Melanie Childers; Mark Boyd, Executive Director, PNC Outdoor Ministries.

Sandy, our Moderator, called us to order and invited Lorraine, our ACM, to lead us in prayer. Lorraine asked us to center and let go of today and tomorrow. She reminded us that we are touched by the presence of God and that we are called to be leaders, conscious of God's presence. She reminded us to listen slowly, speak slowly, and seek understanding.

Board Growth/Reflection Time

As part of an ongoing Board exercise, Lorraine continued to introduce Peggy McIntosh's *Invisible Knapsack* (1989), as a framework for privilege awareness. White people do not know that they carry an invisible backpack of racist attitudes acquired in childhood.

6. I can turn on the TV or open the front page of the newspaper or use other media and see people of my race widely represented.

7. When I am told about our national heritage or about ‘civilization’, I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular material that testifies to the existence of their race.

Lorraine noted that persons of color understand this. She is attempting to help white members of the Board understand that these are characteristics of the dominant culture into which white people are born. People of color can assume none of these things. Discussion ensued as members of the Board considered these items.

Sandy called on COLC Chair, Roselynn Selix, who presented information concerning the Family of Christ Full Gospel Church of Tacoma, WA, that desires to join the United Church of Christ and unite in covenant with the Pacific Northwest Conference. Members of the Board had already reviewed documents provided by this congregation as part of their request. Roselynn described the nature of this congregation’s worship, their various ministries, and the excitement members of her committee had experienced during their visits. She introduced information about their pastor, the Rev. Enesi Vaetoe and the congregation’s desire to seek a wider fellowship. While this congregation’s first language and ethnicity is Samoan, they are members of neither of the Samoan groups currently in partnership with PNC. They have been in relationship with another UCC congregation during this process. COLC believes that this congregation will bring many gifts to the UCC and our Conference.

Sandy opened discussion by asking for questions. Cindy, chair of COM West, noted that this will not be a case of offering Pastor Vaetoe dual standing, but rather of inviting him to seek UCC standing directly because this has been an independent congregation. This is a much more involved process. This does not interfere with this congregation’s joining the UCC. Discussion continued.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed that the Board of Directors of the Pacific Northwest Conference (acting in its capacity as an Association of the United Church of Christ) enthusiastically affirms and supports the recommendation of COLC, that the Family of Christ, Full Gospel Church of

Tacoma, WA, become a member of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, pending the vote of a Conference Meeting.

After further discussion, it was moved, seconded and unanimously passed to call a special meeting of the Conference to welcome the Family of Christ, Full Gospel Church of Tacoma, WA, as soon as possible.

COLA members were dismissed from the meeting with thanks.

The Minutes of the August Board meeting were approved as corrected in the latest edition posted on Basecamp.

Annual Meeting 2027 Plans

Moderator Sandy called on Registrar, Beth Astarte, a member of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee to present a summary of the work to date of this committee. Their effort to respond to concerns raised by Conference members has led them to seek creative alternatives to a traditional annual meeting. They sought to design a more expansive experience that will allow more time for dialogue and healing, in addition to the business that needs to be completed.

We need time to listen to one another and come to know one another in deeper ways. We need to take the time to have difficult conversations about racism. There will be an opportunity to do boundary training. There will be time for celebration and worship.

Once again congregations will be encouraged to offer creative videos around the theme: “Love in Action”, I John 3:18. These videos will feature how each congregation embodies active love.

While people will be allowed to attend 100% virtually, people will be encouraged to attend in person. The price for in-person attendance and virtual attendance will be similar.

The meeting will begin Friday evening, April 23, 2027, with a dinner celebration at Seattle Samoan Congregation #2. Other congregations will be encouraged to

sponsor other parts of the meeting, including meals, snacks and other moments of hospitality. Learning, worship, and relationship building will characterize Saturday and Sunday. The meeting will extend through the following week virtually with hearings and workshops and conclude on Saturday, May 1, 2026 with a virtual two-hour business meeting. Registration deadlines will be tightened, with the first deadline being April 9, 2027.

The committee is seeking a facilitator to work with the group around racism issues, deepening trust, and relationships in the Conference.

Discussion ensued and several suggestions were proposed by Board members. There seemed to be a consensus that this attempt to hear those voices who felt too little time was available for relationship building or that there is a layer of pain and hurt among some Conference members is necessary. The committee was encouraged to publicize a clear schedule asap so people can make plans.

ACM Report

Lorraine's revised report is available on Basecamp, along with a proposed form for those seeking funds from the Unity Fund. This form will be reviewed at the October meeting.

Camp Report

Mark, who was not present, posted reports on Basecamp. Board members are urged to review these.

Board Retreat

The Fall retreat is scheduled for Friday, November 13-Saturday, November 14. Lorraine will confirm these dates with Mark.

The Spring retreat, scheduled for N-Sid-Sen, will need to be scheduled for after the Annual meeting. The date needs to be determined.

Search Committee Retreat

Lorraine will be staffing this retreat to be held September 24-25, 2026, in Yakima. All members of the committee can attend.

Financial Report

Andy reported that due to the date, figures for August are not available but will be posted on Basecamp for Board review. He welcomes questions.

Andy asked the Board to approve a delay of the Veradale Loan repayment for a year. They continue to work to make their church building more secure following damage done by vandals and the continuing threat of violence. They are recipients of a federal grant for this work. The grant has been extended. The Conference loan enables them to continue the work, then the grant pays for work completed. The loan amount was \$30,000 and the grant is \$150,000. It was moved, seconded, passed to extend the loan repayment for one year.

Andy reported that COLC had approved a grant of \$6,000 for a new church start proposed for Tacoma. Living Heart Church and its leader, Micah Buff, has been in dialogue with COLC. Andy brought a request from COLC that the Board underwrite a \$1,000 grant, which with the approved grant from COLC of \$5,000, would fund the remainder of the initial request, since COLC grants are \$5,000. After discussion, Andy will seek further information and bring this question back to the Board.

Lorraine is active in this effort and has helped Micah work on a larger grant from the UCC, which is currently pending. Ron asked about money that had been in our reserves from a UCC congregation in Tacoma which had closed many years ago. He remembered that these funds had been held for a possible new church start in Tacoma. Andy and Diana noted that these funds had been placed in a larger pool of money some years ago, for a similar general purpose.

Lorraine noted that as we continue to prepare for Andy's retirement, she will be opening the search for a replacement on September 15.

How do committees become standing committees? Leah will continue to work on this question and have a report at the October meeting.

Stewardship Committee

In preparation for their visit to the Board's October meeting, Tom Miller, chair of the Stewardship Committee, presented the concerns they hope to raise. He noted that the committee has received no direction from the Board in recent years. They are coming to express their concern that it has not been a two-way street.

They come seeking direction and support and focus, in the sincere desire to do the job the Conference needs them to do. Why do they need to raise money? How can they best support our goals and the needs of the Conference?

Tom also reported that the Stewardship committee is revising financial policies to reflect the new by-laws.

Sandy will open a discussion thread in Basecamp to seek ideas on this issue.

Disaster Response Coordinator

Edwin, who fills this role for Alaska, reported that at least two more Disaster Response Coordinators need to be identified for PNW. These people would be trained by the national UCC and become a source for information and help, both before and after a disaster. This needs to be advertised and that persons with a heart for this work be identified.

Annual Meeting Offering

Lorraine suggested that the offering at AM 27 be designated for the Conference 'Washington Wildfire Fund'. There was consensus on this.

Next Meeting, Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Sandy closed our meeting with a faith affirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Patterson, Scribe

Addendum: The Executive Committee of the Board met on Wednesday, September 2, 2026, and agreed to call a Special Meeting of the Conference on October 10, 2026 at 10:00 am, for the purpose of affirming and welcoming into the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Family of Christ Full Gospel Church of Tacoma, WA.

The Executive Committee also agreed to meet the week before each Board meeting.