

2025 SECTION D DAILY PROCEEDINGS

SECTION D: DAILY PROCEEDINGS of the California-Pacific Annual Conference

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(1) U.M. DAILY

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

41st Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference

OPENING WORSHIP | JUNE 11, 2025, 1:30 PM (PDT)

The Cherish Band led a musical call to worship with “Love Train” by The O’Jays, featuring modified lyrics.

Rev. Jane Voigts led the Call to Worship and offered the Opening Prayer.

The Opening Hymn was *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* from the United Methodist Hymnal (#384).

John 13:31–35 was read in four languages:

- Spanish – Ana-Haydee Urda
- Korean – Ki Ho Kim
- Tongan – Siokivaha Fisi’ihoi
- Tagalog – Brenda DePano

The Cherish Band performed *I Need You to Survive* by Hezekiah Walker.

A message was delivered by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, who welcomed attendees and expressed gratitude to all who made the Conference possible.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank preached on the Conference theme, “Cherish,” describing it as “love on steroids.” Drawing from the book *On Love: 20 Lessons for the World We Seek*, she framed life as a love story and asked what kind of love story the Cal-Pac Conference was leaving behind. She described love as tender, determined, and inclusive—able to see and honor others even when it is difficult.

She recounted recent visits to churches affected by the January fires, protests in Los Angeles, and jacaranda trees as signs of beauty amid pain. Through the story of Andreas Morspol in Denmark, she illustrated healing and renewal through community. She shared personal experiences of mercy and failure, including forgetting to officiate a wedding for a young woman she had long mentored and the forgiveness she received in return.

She emphasized that love demands humility, forgiveness, and continuous growth, lamenting exclusionary forms of Christianity and affirming that “love includes.” She highlighted acts of generosity following the fires, including gifts from the Philippines, Ukraine, and U.S. churches. Paper hearts with donation details were distributed to symbolize the love poured into the Cal-Pac Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank concluded with the affirmation: *You are cherished. Amen*, and led the congregation in singing *Jesus Loves Me*.

Rev. Julie Elkins gave the Invitation to the Offering, which benefited the Los Angeles Fires Recovery Fund.

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The Liturgy of Communion was led by Bishop Escobedo-Frank, assisted by Rev. Elkins. The sung congregational response was Sanctus (*The Faith We Sing* #2257b), followed by the Lord's Prayer (*Worship & Song* #3071).

The Closing Hymn was *Siyahamba* (*The Faith We Sing* #2235b), and Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered the Blessing and Benediction.

The Cherish Band closed worship with *We Are Family* by Sister Sledge.

PLenary SESSION 1 | JUNE 11, 2025, 3:00 PM (PDT)

A **Cherish Video** introduced the session, reflecting on the Annual Conference's shift from the previous theme of "Flourish" to this year's call to "Cherish."

Call to Order – Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Opening Business – Rev. Bob Rhodes welcomed Bishop Escobedo-Frank and attendees, both online and in person. He reviewed voting procedures and led a sample vote. Rev. Won-Seok Yuh assisted attendees with MeetingPulse and Wi-Fi access.

Motion #1

Rev. Bob Rhodes moved to set the bar of the 41st Annual Session to include:

- Members of the Conference as specified by the Book of Discipline and Conference Rules
- Lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- The Bishop's Secretary
- Other persons designated by the Bishop and approved by the Conference
- Those authenticated and connected via MeetingPulse
- Those present in the broadcast location(s) or in the Crystal Ballroom of the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, California
- Staff and technical crew

The motion further directed the Registrar and designees to verify participant eligibility.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #1.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, and the motion was supported.

Motion #2

Rev. Rhodes moved that the Agenda in the Participant Guide be the official agenda of the 41st Annual Session, with the Agenda Chair and/or Conference Secretary authorized to make necessary adjustments in consultation with the Bishop.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, and the motion was supported.

Motion #3

Rev. Rhodes moved that the proceedings published in the UM Daily be the official minutes of the 41st Annual Session after correction, editing, and approval.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, and the motion was supported.

Motion #4

Rev. Rhodes moved that the registration forms and the Registrar's list of those who signed into the online platform(s) be used as the official roll call.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, and the motion was supported.

Motion #5

Rev. Rhodes moved that all resolutions not adopted by the end of the 41st Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference be referred to the appropriate entities.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, and the motion was supported.

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Updated Legislation

Rev. Bob Rhodes provided the following updates to legislation, noting that these items will be addressed in a later plenary session for action: REC 25-10 was updated on June 10; REC 25-11 is new and was published on June 9; RES 25-03 was published on June 10; RUL 25-05 was withdrawn; RUL 25-07 is new and was published on May 30; RUL 25-08 is new and was published on May 31.

Orders of the Day

Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair, presented the Orders of the Day and moved their adoption.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Parliamentarian Acknowledgment

Bishop Escobedo-Frank acknowledged that Rev. Lea Booth was serving as parliamentarian-in-training and gave thanks for Rev. Preston Price, serving behind the scenes.

Announcements – Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh, clergy from First UMC of Honolulu, offered announcements and welcomed members of the California-Pacific Conference. He invited participants to embody the spirit of cherishing one another and explained that staff and volunteers had been trained in boundary awareness. He reviewed procedures for speaking from the floor, including stating one's name, pronouns, clergy or lay status, church or ministry context, and purpose. He noted that motions and amendments must be submitted in writing, either in person or online through the MeetingPulse platform or QR codes provided at the microphones. Attendees were also directed to calpacumc.org/ac2025 for access to the participant guide, legislative materials, and schedule.

Additional information included Wi-Fi login details, translation availability, and instructions for using MeetingPulse features such as expression buttons, chat, and the support tab. In-person attendees received guidance on restroom locations, meal areas, parking, and booth displays. Rev. Yuh also shared protocols in response to potential ICE activity, noting the designation of private spaces and advising attendees to seek assistance from ushers or designated volunteers if needed. He concluded with words of encouragement and a blessing for the session.

Land Acknowledgment

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and Lay Leader Mele Maka offered a Land Acknowledgment honoring the Cahuilla people, on whose ancestral land the Conference was gathered. Ms. Maka shared the significance of recognizing Indigenous peoples, highlighting the Land Back Movement and its call for reparative justice, partnership, and access. Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered a prayer of confession and intercession, celebrating the wisdom of First Nations and lifting up the work of healing, equity, and relationship.

Rev. Gregory Douglass, pastor of Native American UMC in Anaheim, centered the body in prayer with the Native American flute, inviting all present into a shared moment of reverence and spiritual grounding.

Delegation Discussion

Rev. Allison Mark and Ms. Monalisa Tu'itahi led the Delegation Discussion, reporting on the work and witness of the delegation that was elected in 2018. Rev. Mark affectionately referred to the group as the "never-ending delegation," given their original election for the 2020 General Conference—an event delayed multiple times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other global disruptions. She acknowledged the transformation of the delegation over the intervening seven years, during which they participated in electing five bishops in the Western Jurisdiction, including Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth and Bishop Sandy Olewine. Rev. Mark expressed joy in now claiming Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank "by proximity and joy," as she continues in episcopal leadership within the California-Pacific Conference. She noted the significant life changes among the delegation's members—including ordinations, retirements, marriages, and even the passing of beloved colleagues such as Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo—underscoring how the delegation's journey has mirrored the broader Church's own seasons of transition and transformation.

Mr. Mark Stephenson offered humorous and heartfelt insight into the internal shifts necessitated by Bishop Bridgeforth's and Bishop Olewine's elections. He described how Rev. Mark stepped into the role of head clergy delegate, while others moved up or into new positions, likening the process to a "holy game of musical chairs, but with more paperwork." He highlighted the stability of lay delegates—particularly himself, Ms. Tu'itahi, and Ms. Mele Maka—as a grounding

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presence during a quadrennium marked by change. Mr. Stephenson affirmed that the delegation had grown into not just a legislative body, but a spiritual community and movement of faithful adaptation.

Rev. Molly Vetter, Pastor of Westwood UMC, offered a theological and historical reflection on the General Conference held earlier in 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina. She emphasized the spiritual significance of that gathering, noting that it marked the end of a 52-year period during which the United Methodist Church had included anti-LGBTQIA+ statements in its Book of Discipline. Rev. Vetter recounted how, over the decades, as the Holy Spirit continued to call and equip persons for ministry, institutional structures had attempted to resist that movement through restrictive legislation. She celebrated the recent success in removing those harmful statements, describing the work of the 2024 General Conference as part of a larger spiritual shift toward justice and inclusion. She then outlined four constitutional amendments requiring ratification by Annual Conferences:

1. *Regionalization (Ballot 1)*: Establishing regional conferences, including one for the United States, to enable contextually appropriate decision-making and reduce U.S.-centric governance.
2. *Inclusion (Ballot 2)*: Adding “gender” as a protected category to ensure no one is denied membership or leadership based on gender.
3. *Racial Justice (Ballot 3)*: Including an explicit constitutional statement against racism, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy.
4. *Educational Requirements (Ballot 4)*: Clarifying standards for who may vote for clergy delegates to General Conference, enhancing global alignment.

Rev. Vetter emphasized that these were not abstract legislative actions but real steps toward building a Church that is more just, inclusive, and faithful.

Ms. Tu’itahi spoke about how the delegation’s work intersects with the lived realities of justice struggles. She referenced recent headlines involving ICE detentions and military mobilizations, and noted that many Conference members would recognize familiar faces in those settings—including clergy and lay delegates standing in peaceful protest. She asserted that the Church’s legislative work is not separate from its social witness, and affirmed the delegation’s active role in standing for justice on multiple levels. Ms. Tu’itahi also noted recent leadership changes within the Justice and Compassion Essential Ministry Team (JC-EMT), including her own selection as Immigration Coordinator and Rev. Mark’s presidency of the General Board of Church and Society. Together, they committed to continuing this leadership in both legislative and community settings.

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor of Echo Park and La Plaza UMCs, reinforced the importance of these constitutional amendments by lifting up specific ways they speak to current justice needs. He named the Church’s call to stand with transgender immigrants, build immigrant accompaniment teams, and repent of white supremacy and Christian nationalism. He emphasized that regionalization enables the Church to decentralize power and create stronger global equity, while educational standards ensure effective, accountable clergy leadership. Rev. Wulf encouraged members to see the delegation not just as a reporting body but as a resource for local and conference-wide ministry, echoing the scriptural call to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”

Ms. Mele Maka offered a charge to engage: encouraging members to serve on conference task forces, support youth ministries and campus ministries, respond to disaster relief needs, and consider calls to lay and ordained leadership. She named opportunities for civil disobedience training, justice grants, and denominational service, affirming that the Church is not dying, but being reborn again and again through Spirit-led engagement.

Rev. Tom Choi, Hawaii District Superintendent, reminded the body that the time was drawing near for a new delegation to be elected for General Conference 2028, to be held in Minneapolis. He affirmed the leadership of the current delegation and invited prayers for the global Church amid the logistical and political complexities that will shape future gatherings.

Rev. Mark concluded the report with gratitude and encouragement. She thanked the Conference for entrusting the delegation with this sacred responsibility and urged all members to be “woke and ready to vote.” She extended an invitation for others to consider serving in the next delegation and closed with a benediction to “keep resisting, keep

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rejoicing, keep getting into good trouble,” as the work of the Church continues from the floor of the Conference to the streets of the world.

Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW)

Rev. Stephanie Rice, Pastor of Glendale First UMC, and Ms. Ellen Evans Agee, member of Westwood UMC, presented on behalf of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW). Rev. Rice introduced COSROW as the Conference-level counterpart to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of The United Methodist Church, focused on equity for all people—especially women and girls—through an intersectional lens. With renewed support from Conference leadership, COSROW had recently been revitalized within the California-Pacific Conference.

The central activity of COSROW during the Annual Conference Session was monitoring: volunteers observed and recorded demographic data each time someone spoke, in order to assess and improve inclusivity in Conference participation. Ms. Agee further highlighted COSROW’s emphasis on sexual ethics and leadership development, stating that their goal is to help clergy and lay members recognize the sacred worth and equal value of all individuals in the life of the Church. She urged members to support Ballot 2 of the proposed constitutional amendments, which would add “gender” and “ability” to the nondiscrimination clause in Paragraph 4 of the Book of Discipline. Members were invited to connect and participate in the ongoing work of inclusion, education, and justice.

Point of Personal Privilege

Pastor Yoshiya Kuramoto, Pastor of San Pedro UMC, offered a Point of Personal Privilege on behalf of the Holy Land Strategy Group. He referenced the day’s focus on justice and issued a call to action. He invited members to attend a film screening of *No Other Land* at 7:00 p.m. in the Esmeralda Room. Pastor Kuramoto also announced the beginning of a fasting campaign starting June 13, in solidarity with the Palestinian people facing hunger. Those wishing to participate were invited to visit the group’s booth for further conversation.

Cherish Chat: Community Health

Dr. Alyssa Fisher, Director of Communications, introduced the new “Cherish Chats” series as a way to highlight individuals, ministries, and communities within the California-Pacific Conference that embody the 2025 theme, *Cherish*. She welcomed Rachel Gipson, a licensed clinical social worker and active lay leader from Westwood UMC, to share on the topic of community health.

Ms. Gipson began by recalling her sense of wonder at the biological intricacies of life and described how she came to see the divine in the functioning of ribosomes—small cellular components that sustain life with remarkable precision. She extended this image to the Church, likening each person to a cell within the greater body, emphasizing both the complexity and fragility of communal life. She acknowledged that bodies—like communities—are imperfect, sometimes unwell, and in need of ongoing care.

She described four essential elements of what she termed a “community immune system”:

1. **Receive** – A healthy community must be able to detect harm and believe those who signal pain. She stressed that systemic issues like racism, sexism, and abuse cannot be addressed unless the community listens attentively and accepts the reality of harm, even when it is not universally experienced.
2. **Regulate and Role** – Individuals must practice self-awareness, recognizing their own limits and responsibilities. Ms. Gipson encouraged each person to discern their role within the community, noting that not every person is called to respond to every need, and that honoring boundaries is vital to sustaining long-term communal health.
3. **Respond** – She emphasized that responses must be intentional and guided by shared values, not reactivity. Using the example of autoimmune disorders, she warned that unchecked or misdirected responses can cause further harm. A healthy community response may be difficult and even painful, but it is part of the work of healing.
4. **Remember** – Drawing on both clinical and personal experience, Ms. Gipson urged the body to remember—not out of resentment, but to foster accountability, growth, and shared meaning. She described this act of memory as a theological discipline that allows communities to integrate pain into their collective story and be transformed by it.

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She concluded by affirming that in the choices made to receive, regulate, respond, and remember, God is present. Through these connections and commitments, the Church cherishes its members and moves together toward health.

Closing Announcements and Prayer

Rev. Bob Rhodes gave brief logistical announcements, followed by a closing prayer offered by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank. The bishop gave thanks for the work of the day, the presence of the Spirit, and the gift of shared meals and labor. She prayed for continued wisdom and awareness as the Annual Conference moved forward.

CLERGY EXECUTIVE SESSION | JUNE 11, 2025, 7:00 PM (PDT)

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered the opening prayer. Bishop Escobedo-Frank welcomed the clergy members and the Board of Ordained Ministry and called the Clergy Executive Session to order. She clarified who was entitled to be present: Elders and Deacons in Full Connection, Provisional and Associate Members, Licensed Local Pastors, and laity serving on the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rev. Tonya Harris was granted a moment of personal privilege. She offered words of farewell and deep gratitude to her clergy colleagues, sharing that she has been on medical leave and now resides in Texas. With tenderness and reflection, she recalled her 25 years in the California-Pacific Conference, thanking her colleagues for their love, understanding, and the shared labor of ministry. She closed by blessing the clergy session and assuring them of her prayers.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank responded with appreciation: “Thank you for your words, they have meaning for all of us. Know that our hearts are always with you.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced Rev. Greg Batson, Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, for the first item of business.

Rev. Greg Batson requested that certain laity who are vital to the work of the session be allowed to be present. These included laity assisting with media and technical systems, Margaret Irwin (Episcopal Office), Cathy Wilson (Associate Director of the Board of Ordained Ministry), and Manuel Vargas (Wespath).

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. The motion was supported.

Rev. Batson addressed the executive session, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry and for the collaboration of the Board’s clergy and lay members. He recognized Cathy Wilson, Associate Director of Lay and Clergy Credentialing and Development, for her over thirty years of dedicated service.

He described the Conference’s evolving processes for ordination, including deeper engagement with candidates through discernment events, site visits, and consistent team assignments. He noted increased focus on recruitment and vocational discernment, including support for District Committees and engagement with youth and young adults.

He reminded the session that the 2025 Disciplinary Questions had been distributed and that only certain items, specifically those marked with a “(V),” required votes in this session. He reiterated that voting rights in this session are reserved for Elders and Deacons in Full Connection and lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Provisional and Associate Members, Licensed Local Pastors, and clergy from other conferences do not vote, with limited exceptions as stated in ¶346.2.

He then invited updates from the appointive Cabinet.

Rev. Siosaia Tu’itahi, West District Superintendent, requested that the name of Philip Michael Valdes be removed from Question 17a.

Rev. Luis Garcia, South District Superintendent, requested that Licensed Local Pastor David Jaimes, who had been appointed to an extension ministry, be removed from Questions 15a and 16 and added to Question 17.

Rev. Batson reminded the gathering that editorial corrections not affecting action items, such as spelling or formatting, should be submitted via email to Cathy Wilson at cwilson@calpacumc.org.

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Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board Registrar, greeted the Bishop, clergy colleagues, and members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, expressing heartfelt appreciation for the Board's faithful and diligent service over the past year. She noted the Board's role in shepherding new members into the connection and framed the next portion of the session as the election of provisional and full members.

She directed attention to page 20 of the Disciplinary Questions, Item #7, which contains detailed information about the candidates. She then introduced the 2025 class of candidates for provisional membership and full connection, inviting them forward as their names were called.

For provisional membership and commissioning on the Deacon track, the Board presented:
Maria Perez Longley

For provisional membership and commissioning on the Elder track, the Board presented:
Brad Biggerstaff
Moon Young Kong
Josh Lopez-Reyes
Mark Amos Maddix
Royce Vincent Porter, Sr.

For ordination as ELDERS in Full Connection, the Board presented:
Dong Hee (Donnie) Bae
Ki-Hyun Cho
VJ Cruz Báez
Matthew Hambrick
Katherine Ann Hunter
Hyun Seob (Ralph) Kwon
Jonggoo Lee
Mary Ann Pickard
Joshua Edward Zulueta

For recognition of orders in The United Methodist Church as Members in Full Connection, the Board presented:
Sam Kil Joon Park (Elder)
Elizabeth Davidson (Deacon)
Jay Campbell (Elder)
Bomi Kim (Elder, Not Present)

For recognition of orders in The United Methodist Church as a Provisional Member, the Board presented:
Wesley Aaron Thompson (from The Church of the Nazarene)

The candidates were thanked and then invited to step outside the ballroom prior to the vote.

The Board moved to approve Maria Perez Longley for provisional membership and commissioning on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Bradley Biggerstaff for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Moon Young Kong for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

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The Board moved to approve Manuel (Josh) Joshua Lopez Reyes for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Mark Amos Maddix for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Royce Vincent Porter, Sr. for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Karl Stuckenberg offered a prayer for those received as provisional members.

Rev. Amy Aitken, Full Connection Registrar, presented each candidate for election to full conference membership and ordination. The gathering was reminded that the 2025 class of candidates requires a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.

The Board moved to approve Dong Hee (Donnie) Bae for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Ki-Hyun Cho for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve VJ Cruz Báez for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Matthew Hambrick for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Katherine Ann Hunter for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Hyun Seob (Ralph) Kwon for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Jonggoo Lee for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Mary Ann Pickard for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Joshua Edward Zulueta for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Sam Kil Joon Park for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

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Rev. Amy Aitken offered a prayer for those to be ordained.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board Registrar, returned to the platform and invited attention to the matter of clergy transfers into the Annual Conference. She noted that the transfer process includes a period of service, Bishop and Cabinet recommendations, and a review by the Board of Ordained Ministry. She highlighted the Annual Conference's Safe Harbor policy, which offers an expedited pathway for qualified clergy facing challenges related to human sexuality, supporting a welcoming and inclusive ministry environment.

She directed members to page 10 under Question 35 of the Disciplinary Questions for reference.

The following candidates for transfer into the California-Pacific Annual Conference were welcomed to the stage:

Jay Campbell, Elder, from the Virginia Annual Conference

Elizabeth Davidson, Deacon, from the Mississippi Annual Conference

Bomi Kim, Elder, from the North Georgia Annual Conference (not present)

Monalisa Tu'itahi, Vice-Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, joined Rev. Thai-Erwin on stage.

The Board moved to approve Jay Campbell for transfer as an Elder in Full Connection (§347.1, 416.5, 635.2n).

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Elizabeth Davidson for transfer as a Deacon in Full Connection (§347.1, 416.5, 635.2n).

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Bomi Kim for transfer as an Elder in Full Connection (§347.1, 416.5, 635.2n).

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Monalisa Tu'itahi offered a prayer for the candidates received through transfer.

Rev. Diane Rehfield, Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry Transfer Committee, presented the candidate for transfer from another Methodist denomination. She directed the clergy members to page 10, Disciplinary Question 36.

The Board moved to approve Wesley Aaron Thompson for transfer as a Provisional Elder under §347.2, Transfer from Other Methodist Denominations. (§347.2, 346.2)

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Diane Rehfield offered a prayer for the clergy being transferred into the Conference.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board Registrar, noted that under §326, the clergy session is required to hold an annual vote on the continued preparation for ordination of provisional members. She directed members to page 8 under Question 26 of the Disciplinary Questions.

The Board moved to approve the names listed under Disciplinary Question 26. (§326, 327v).

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board Registrar, continued the report of the Board of Ordained Ministry, reporting that the Board is required to provide a report on clergy under review, though no vote is required. She stated that one clergy member is under review in the South District and one in the West District.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank acknowledged the report and emphasized the Church's shared commitment to moral excellence in the lives of clergy. She affirmed the need for grace, forgiveness, and accountability within the Christian community, and attested to the integrity of the District Superintendents in their life and official administration.

Rev. Thai-Erwin thanked the bishop and proceeded to Question 14, pertaining to the Administrative Review Committee and the Committee on Investigation.

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She noted an update regarding the Committee on Investigation: under the 2020–2024 Book of Discipline, the committee may include one additional lay member and two alternate lay members, positions not reflected in the published materials. She invited Rev. Paige Eaves, Assistant to the Bishop, to name those candidates.

Rev. Eaves submitted the following names:

- Tyler Pottenger, layperson from Hawai'i, for the lay delegate position
- Suzanne Barron, lay member from the South District, for one of the alternate lay member positions

Rev. Eaves noted that the Conference would continue recruiting to complete the slate before the close of the Session.

The Board moved to approve the names listed under Disciplinary Question 14 to serve on the Administrative Review Committee and the Committee on Investigation, including the additional lay members named.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Moonyoung Lee, East District Superintendent, requested removal of Juancho Borja from Question 15.

Revs. Suzana Kim, Candidacy Registrar, and Brian Belting, Vocational Discernment Coordinator, were invited to lead the session through Disciplinary Question 15.

Rev. Suzana Kim presented the certified candidates for ordained ministry. She noted that while approval of these candidates rests with the district committees on ordained ministry, the Board wished to express collective support for them. She also acknowledged those whose candidacy had been discontinued, and affirmed the need for continued pastoral care as they discern next steps.

Rev. Brian Belting affirmed the Board's commitment to cultivating the next generation of pastoral leaders and encouraged clergy to refer persons who may have gifts for ministry to himself or to Cathy Wilson.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin introduced Disciplinary Question 16. She noted that this question lists those who have completed the studies for the license as a Local Pastor, are approved, but have not received an appointment. She stated that according to ¶315.6d, a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session is required for granting licensing for ministry.

The Board moved approval of Disciplinary Question 16 as printed.

Rev. Garth Gilliam, North District Superintendent, requested that Yeoung Keun Kim be moved to Question 17e because he is being appointed, having just been approved as a Licensed Local Pastor.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the motion as amended. It was supported.

Rev. Richard Bentley, Retired, raised a procedural question concerning whether a vote was required on Disciplinary Question 15d. Rev. Thai-Erwin confirmed that the vote had not yet been taken.

Rev. Thai-Erwin introduced Disciplinary Question 17, noting that it includes full- and part-time Licensed Local Pastors who are approved and appointed. She acknowledged that there were updates from Cabinet members and that the information was not proceeding in strict numerical order.

She directed attention to those Licensed Local Pastors being approved for the first time. According to ¶315.6d, a three-fourths majority vote is required for first-year licensing.

The Board moved to approve Faith Daniel, Jaime Torres, Dawn Christiansen, Paul Kaho, Yoshi Kuramoto, Todd Stall, and Ayodele Ode as first-year Licensed Local Pastors.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

For the remaining Licensed Local Pastors listed under Question 17, the Discipline requires a simple majority vote for continuance.

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The Board moved to approve the remaining names listed under Disciplinary Question 17.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve the names listed under Disciplinary Question 15d. (§319.2, majority)
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Pastor Vernon Kemp, Local Pastor Registrar and Chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors, was invited to lead the session in prayer for the Local Pastors.

Rev. Thai-Erwin introduced Disciplinary Question 22, noting that it lists clergy in good standing from other Christian denominations who are serving in the California-Pacific Annual Conference while retaining their denominational affiliation. She stated that §346.1 requires this list to be approved annually by the clergy session with a simple majority vote.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 22 as printed.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Tom Choi, Hawaii District Superintendent, offered a correction related to Question 20. He stated that Question 20 does not require a vote and that Yeoung Keun Kim should be listed only in Question 15.

Rev. Thai-Erwin encouraged members to direct any further corrections to Cathy Wilson.

Rev. Mark Ulrickson, Chair of the Conference Relations Committee, present the next section of the Board's report. Rev. Ulrickson directed the body to Question 42, noting it contains the names of clergy who served faithfully and have now entered the church triumphant. He read the names aloud and led the body in prayer. He then named additional persons who had recently been added to the list: Martha L. Kogle" (FD), John W. Mills, Jr. (HRE), Lisle Edwin Stewart (FE), Bruce Marvin Warner (FE), and Merle Vincent Bailey (HRE).

Turning to matters of leave, Rev. Ulrickson stated that all leaves of absence require a vote of the clergy members in full connection.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 44(a)(1), listing those going on voluntary personal leave for less than five years.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 44(a)(2), listing those going on voluntary personal leave for more than five years.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 46, listing those granted medical leave.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Ulrickson then turned to Disciplinary Questions 47 through 51, listing those entering the retired relationship with the Annual Conference after years of faithful service.

The following clergy were retiring as Elders:

Mary Birgelaitis, Kathryn Cooper-Ledesma, Wesley Elmore, Tonya Harris, William Johnson, Hoyong Kim, Cheol Kwak, Kyung Oh, Alan Padgett, Valerie Weiss, Seung-il Whang, and Kana Shimasaki.

Retiring as Local Pastors:

Olivia Latu, Yong Park, and Ching (Tom) Tseng.

The Board moved to approve the retirements under §358.2 of the 2020–2024 Book of Discipline.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Ulrickson led the body in a prayer for the retirees.

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Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin introduced Disciplinary Question 71(a), which lists clergy appointed to less than full-time service. She explained that ¶338.2 requires a two-thirds vote for those with seven or fewer years of less than full-time service.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 71(a) for clergy appointed for less than full-time service with seven or fewer years, as printed.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Thai-Erwin continued, stating that for clergy with eight or more years in less than full-time service, a three-fourths vote is required.

The Board moved to approve Disciplinary Question 71(a) for clergy appointed for less than full-time service with eight or more years, as printed.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Thai-Erwin noted that the remainder of the report includes additional appointments, contact information for the Orders Executive Committee, and the Board of Ordained Ministry's LGBTQIA+ Statement.

Rev. Ana Mulford shared that a Clergy Convocation will take place August 12–14, 2025. The guest speaker will be Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History.

Rev. Thai-Erwin then welcomed Rev. Bob Isip, Co-Chair of the Conference Archives and History Committee, who announced the names of clergy celebrating milestone ordination anniversaries. He expressed gratitude to Jennifer Gaylord for compiling the list, which included those celebrating 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th, 60th, 65th, and 70th anniversaries.

Rev. Thai-Erwin offered congratulations to all clergy celebrating milestones in their service.

Mr. Manuel Vargas, Client Relations Manager with Wespath, was invited to present on clergy pensions on behalf of the Conference Benefits Office. Mr. Vargas shared that he has served with Wespath for 32 years and works closely with the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

He provided an overview of the upcoming Compass retirement benefits program, which will begin on January 1, 2026. The program is an all-defined contribution plan and emphasizes the importance of personal clergy contributions to retirement security.

Key elements included:

- **Eligibility:** CRSP and Compass are required for full-time appointments. The Conference covers clergy in 50% appointments, (50%/75% appointments at the discretion of Annual Conference).
- **Compass Contributions:** Includes \$150/month automatic contributions, a 3% employer base, plus up to a 4% match—totaling between 9% and 11.5%.
- **Parsonage Value:** For Compass only, plan compensation will now use a deemed parsonage value of 35% of salary (minimum \$10,000; maximum tied to Bishop's salary), with no IRS impact.
- **Student Loans:** Qualified student loan payments count toward matching contributions, up to 4%, with self-certification via Benefits Access.
- **Personal Contributions and UMPIP Transfer:** Auto-enrollment rules apply based on current contribution levels; adjustments are allowed anytime.
- **LifeStage Services:** LifeStage Investment Management and LifeStage Retirement Income were introduced as tools to help clergy manage and optimize retirement savings, including investment rebalancing and income planning options. **LifeStage Services:** LifeStage Investment Management and Retirement Income help clergy manage investments and plan retirement income.

Mr. Vargas encouraged clergy to review their personal contributions, name beneficiaries, and explore the Compass webpage at wespath.org/r/compass for ongoing resources.

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Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board Registrar, concluded the report of the Board of Ordained Ministry to the clergy session, offering thanks to the Board for their preparation and to clergy colleagues for their presence.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered the Benediction.

(2) U.M. DAILY Thursday, June 12, 2025 41st Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference

WORSHIP LOVE FEAST | JUNE 12, 2025, 8:30 AM (PDT)

The Cherish Band played *Holy Spirit (Breathe on Me)* written by Rev. Bob Rhodes.

Here is a brief Love Feast history:

- Early Christianity: The Love Feast was practiced by early Christians as a shared meal emphasizing fellowship, unity and love. It often accompanied worship and remembrance of Christ but was distinct from the Eucharist.
- Moravian Church: The Moravians, a pre-Reformation Protestant group revived in the 18th century, reintroduced the Love Feast as a simple meal shared in Christian fellowship, focusing on love, gratitude and testimony.
- John Wesley: Wesley encountered the Moravian Love Feast in 1737 during his time in Savannah, Georgia. He was deeply moved by it and brought the practice into early Methodist gatherings.

Core Themes: Christian love and unity; gratitude and testimony, hospitality and simplicity; and fellowship without barriers of class, race or status.

The Cherish Band played *You are our God/Our God is an Awesome God*, words and music by Jaewoo Kim, Josh Davis, Carol Steddum, Paul Neely / Words and music by Rich Mullins.

Michael Mitchell, South District Lay Leader, read the from the Gospel of John 13:34-35

Sharing of Bread and Water: Groups served one another with these words: “May you be refreshed by God’s grace.”

Attendees were invited to enter into group discussion on this Reflection Question: “How is it with your soul?”

Rev. Julie Elkins led the Closing Prayer, Wesley’s Prayer:

Father of earth and heaven, thy hungry children feed. Thy grace be to our spirits given, that true immortal bread. Grant to us and all our race in Jesus Christ to prove the sweetness of thy pardoning grace, the manna of thy love. Amen.

The Cherish band played *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love* as the closing song.

PLENARY SESSION 2 | JUNE 12, 2025, 9:00 AM (PDT)

Call to Order – Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order. We usher the Holy Spirit into our hearts and lives as we prepare to do this work. Bishop Escobedo-Frank lifted up the Cherish Band and their gifts to this Annual Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced Retired Bishop Sally Dyck, who lives in Napa, California and served the North Central Jurisdiction. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that when she was a new bishop, Bishop Dyck was a sounding board for her, and she shared her wisdom freely. Once I let loose of all the things that were bothering me, and then I apologized for doing so. She said to not apologize, because everyone needs a space for that. She has been my space. Bishop Dyck will preside with Bishop Escobedo-Frank, which is a tradition in the United Methodist Church. It helps remind us that we are a connectional church.

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered an opening prayer.

Orders of the Day – Rev. Cathie Capp

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements – Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh greeted the body, and reminded the body of our good boundaries as we care and cherish each other at this Annual Conference.

All information for this Annual Conference can be found at: calpacumc.org/AC2025

We are using the MeetingPulse platform for much of the business of the Annual Conference. There are moderators who are available to help you if needed.

Translations: Wordly: attend.wordly.ai

Legislation Updates:

- REC 25-10 (updated 06/10/25)
- REC 25-11 (Published 06/09/25)
- REC 25-12 (Published 06/11/25)
- RES 25-03 (Published 06/10/25)
- RES 25-04 (Published 06/12/25)
- RES 25-05 (Published 06/12/25)

Rev. Yuh offered instructions for coming to the microphone, and a reminder to turn off your phones. He also shared “housekeeping” information.

Board of Ordained Ministry – Rev. Greg Batson, Chair

This year has been an exciting one for the Board of Ordained Ministry. We have continued to refine the new process that was launched last year. Candidates and board members alike feel that this is a much more collegial process, with more opportunity to get to know one another beyond the interview setting. We believe we are bringing to you well qualified pastors who will move the church forward in new ways.

This year’s class includes 6 Provisional Membership Clergy and 9 Full Membership Clergy, along with 1 recognition of ordination and full membership, 3 transfers received from other annual conferences of the United Methodist Church, and 1 transfer for another Methodist denomination.

It has been my honor to serve as the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry this past year. I am grateful for the work of the Board and the collaboration we have with the Bishop, the Cabinet, and DCOMs.

And now, I would like to invite our registrar, the Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, to lead us through the Introduction of this Clergy Class of 2025. She along with the Provisional Registrar, the Rev. Karl Stuckenberg, and the Full Connection Registrar, the Rev. Amy Aitken, and all of our Board of Ordination Committee Members have walked with each clergy candidate in their process with the Board this year.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Registrar: Good Morning everyone. It is with heartfelt appreciation that I present the work of our dedicated Board. Over the past year, they have served with unwavering diligence and faith, shepherding new members into our connection.

And it is my privilege to present to you the 2025 Class for Provisional Membership and Membership in Full Connection. Let us welcome them as they make their way to the stage.

We’ll be calling candidates one by one. Please come forward as you hear your name.

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For provisional membership and commissioning on the Deacon track, the Board presents:

- Maria Perez Longley

For provisional membership and commissioning on the Elder track, the Board presents:

- Brad Biggerstaff
- Moon Young Kong
- Josh Lopez-Reyes
- Mark Amos Maddix
- Royce Vincent Porter, Sr.

For ordination as Elders in Full Connection, the Board presents:

- Dong Hee (Donnie) Bae
- Ki-Hyun Cho
- VJ Cruz Báez
- Matthew Hambrick
- Katherine Ann Hunter
- Hyun Seob (Ralph) Kwon
- Jonggoo Lee
- Mary Ann Pickard
- Joshua Edward Zulueta
- Sam K. Park (transfer from Korean Presbyterian Church USA)

Friends, it is so wonderful to welcome this class of clergy and servant leaders - let us extend our congratulations!

At this time, I would like to invite Bishop Escobedo-Frank to ask the general examinations to all the candidates, followed by the examination of deacons and elders, and historic questions to those candidates who will be ordained and/or admitted into full connection.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: My siblings in Christ, you have been called to an ordained, commissioned, or recognized status in set apart ministry. The church now confirms your calling.

As ordained or commissioned ministers, you are to be coworkers with all the people of God: With laity, bishops, elders, deacons, local pastors, provisional members, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, home missionaries, supply pastors, with all who serve God in the Church.

Remember you are called to serve rather than to be served, to proclaim the faith of the church and no other, to look after the concerns of God above all. So we may know you believe yourselves to be called by God and that you profess the Christian faith, we ask you:

Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of ordained or licensed ministry?

Candidates: I do so believe, and confess.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Do you believe in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Candidates: I do so believe, and confess.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Are you persuaded that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are unique and authoritative?

Candidates: I am so persuaded, by God's grace.

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Will you be faithful in prayer, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and with the help of the Holy Spirit continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Will you do your best to pattern your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Will you, in the exercise of your ministry, lead the people of God to faith in Jesus Christ, to participate in the life and work of the community, and to seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Will you be loyal to The United Methodist Church, accepting and upholding its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline, defending it against all doctrines contrary to God's Holy Word, and committing yourself to be accountable with those serving with you, and to the bishop and those who are appointed to supervise your ministry?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Will you, for the sake of the church's life and mission, covenant to participate in the life of the order, into which you are ordained, commissioned, or recognized? Will you give yourself to God through the order in order to sustain and build each other up in prayer, study, worship and service under the rule of life set forth in the vows you take this day?

Candidates: I will with the help of God.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: May God, who has given you the will to do these things, give you grace to perform them, that the work begun in you may be brought to perfection.

Examination of Deacons

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: A deacon is called to share in Christ's ministry of servanthood, to relate the life of the community to its service in the world, to lead others into Christian discipleship, to nurture disciples for witness and service, to lead in worship, to teach and proclaim God's Word, and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to interpret to the church the world's hurts and hopes, to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed, and to lead Christ's people in ministries of compassion and justice, liberation and reconciliation, especially in the face of hardship and personal sacrifice. This is the rule of life and work of a deacon. Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of a deacon?

Candidate: I do so believe.

Examination of Elders

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: An elder is called to share in the ministry of Christ and of the whole church: to preach and teach the Word of God and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead the people of God in worship and prayer; to lead persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to exercise pastoral supervision, to order the life of the congregation and the connection, to counsel the troubled, and declare the forgiveness of sin; to lead the people of God in obedience to Christ's mission in the world; to seek justice, peace, and freedom for all people; and to take a responsible place in the government of the Church and in service in and to the community. This is the rule of life and work of an elder. Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of an elder?

Candidates: I do so believe.

Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection

Bishop Escobedo-Frank:

Siblings in Christ, our Discipline instructs bishops to guide aspiring ministers through self-reflection and examinations.

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These weighty questions, all but one seeking an affirmative answer, reveal Wesley's understanding of pastoral ministry. So I ask you: (*Book of Discipline*: ¶325)

- Have you faith in Christ?
- Are you going on to perfection?
- Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?
- Are you earnestly striving for perfection in love?
- Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?
- Do you know the General Rules of our Church?
- Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?
- Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?
- After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?
- Will you preach and maintain them?
- Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?
- Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
- Will you visit from house to house?
- Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?
- Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
- Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
- Will you observe the following directions?
 - Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.
 - Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Registrar:

In addition to those being commissioned, ordained, or recognized, I present the clergy who have been received as a full member by transfer from other annual conferences.

Will the transfer candidate please come up to the stage?

- Jay Campbell (Elder from Virginia)
- Elizabeth Davidson (Deacon from Mississippi)
- Bomi Kim (Elder from North Georgia- not present today)

And for recognition of orders in the United Methodist Church as a Provisional Member, the Board presents:

- Wesley Aaron Thompson (from The Church of the Nazarene)

Bishop Escobedo-Frank welcomed the candidates.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin: Bishop Escobedo-Frank and clergy and lay members of this annual conference, this concludes the Board's report. Thank you.

Episcopal Address – Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

I'm going to give you my Episcopal Address, or the State of the Church. Just a little topic. In order to figure out what the State of the Church is, first we have to look at the state of the world. When I was looking at the state of the world, I found a Ted Talk a friend sent me. It's called Monsters or Miracles by Angus Hervey. He is a solutions journalist, which means he's a believer in solutions. He always wants to report the answers to things, the stories of progress and what solutions make a difference in the world.

So this person, Angus Hervey, the communicator of hope, one day started to wonder if he was wrong. After all, when he looked around at things and started to open up his eyes and hear the messages that were coming, he realized there were messages everywhere of global collapse. So he quotes the Italian philosopher Antoino Gramsci, who was thrown into

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prison by Mussolini. Antonio Gramsci wrote, “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.”

Hervey said that Gramsci could be speaking to us today. He says that today there is a great unraveling underway. Hervey notes that we see the things of monsters in our current day context and he says (and I’m going to quote him mostly because he says it the best), “We are seeing the end of order based on rules. Power rules over principle. Aid budgets are obliterated, science under attack, Putin, Zelensky, Trump, Gaza, hospitals, hostages, Sudan, famine, DRC, rebels, Yemen, Venezuela, Turkey, Hungary, Taiwan, the United States of America. The contempt for the rule of law, the casual cruelty, the measles, all of the values that we assumed were universal: truth, decency, common sense, face not just reversal, but violent backlash.”

He continues on the digital platforms that were supposed to connect us now but do the opposite. “Algorithms breed paranoia, manufacturing division, drawing truth in deliberate falsehoods. He says that as we argue online, planetary crisis, fire storms in our city, plastic in our blood, the pollinators, the permafrost, the coral reefs, an ice-free Arctic within our lifetimes. The tipping point looks like Gramsci’s monsters are at the gates.” “This is the story of collapse,” he says. “It is on the front page of all the news sites.” And then Hervey goes on to say that this is only part of the story. That something is missing if we only look at the monsters. He reminds us that while there are monsters, there are also miracles. When he used the word “miracles,” my soul stood up and took notice.

He said some of the miracles are—well, he showed a nurse from Kenya whose name is Helen Arruya—and she tells of the death from severe forms of Malaria in children under 5 have decreased greatly. This is because of a vaccine that was newly rolled out about a year ago and is being utilized. She said, “The mere fact that we can now reduce those deaths, it’s really great for our community because no one should lose a child.” And then he goes on to say that over 5 million children in 17 countries have been vaccinated with the plan to reach 50 million.

Zambia, Sierra Leon and Columbia all ban child marriages. Indonesia launched a program to feed all 70 million of its school students. And did you know that Cambodia, once the world’s most mined country is on track to be landmine free within the next few years? In 2024, fewer people died from natural disasters than almost any year in history. The murder rate in the United States saw its biggest ever 12 month decline, beating the previous record which was set in 2023. And deforestation in the Amazon declined to its fourth lowest level on record, an achievement which gives me more hope, he says, for life on earth than all the rockets we sent to Mars.

Last year, he says, we installed enough solar panels and wind turbines to replace 6% of the world’s fossil fuel electricity. Then he says that emissions are declining in Europe and America, and have finally leveled off in China. Wind, water and sunshine will overtake coal this year as the world’s leading power supply. He said, “Did you know that the sea turtle population is increasing around the world? Or that overfishing is declining in the Mediterranean, or that last year, China finished encircling its largest desert with a giant belt of trees – its very own great green wall?? “And that this year, the United States created its largest conservation corridors stretching from Utah down to California?”

And so he asks us which of these stories is true? The stories of the monsters or the stories of the miracles? His answer is “both.” They are both true. So, I started thinking about the monsters and the miracles in our church. Some of the monsters in our church you, of course, know. Declining membership and attendance, the “greying” of the church – myself included, I’ve really gotten grey since I’ve been a Bishop. Actually, I just don’t put dye on anymore.

The voices that shout, “We are dying!” instead of “We have places of death.” The loss of revenue for ministry, declining number of pastors being raised up and attending seminary, having enough money to attend seminary, or to be trained for pastoral ministry. Inequity in pulpits, salaries and support for ethnic ministries. We have a need for bi-vocational pastors because we can’t afford them anymore. And the still open wound of disaffiliation. And the political divide in the pews, and to quote an old hymn, we are experiencing those fightings within and those fears without.

Church closures increase, others are hanging on to hospice care. Churches have lost their ability to offer sanctuary to the community and some of our very own churches have experienced their members choosing not to attend due to the current administration’s policies and practices. They fear that if they leave their homes and go to church, or school or the bank, that they too may be handcuffed and stolen away.

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And then this other monster among us is the rise of Christian Nationalism, which I mentioned yesterday which is counter to our Gospel. Christians acting unloving when it comes to those who need love's support including our queer siblings, our ethnic siblings, our immigrant siblings, our financially struggling siblings, our lonely siblings, our elderly siblings, our children. We have not acted with love and care with those Jesus commanded us to care for. Christian Nationalists have fallen prey to the idol of worshipping politicians and power, instead of worshipping God alone. And if you don't believe there is Christian Nationalists among us, go and read the comments on the United Methodist News when my statement for Los Angeles went out this past week. Don't read too far because it's really disheartening. But you will see it in our midst in the comments section. I want to just give you a word of advice: don't read the comment sections. You don't need to get into that. We have lost the reputation of a church being loving, moral standard bearer in the faith. Instead, the church is known for who she hates and what she stands against.

Dear California-Pacific leaders, clergy and laity, we've got a few scary monsters among us. But that's not the only story. We also have miracles. Miracles in the California-Pacific Conference. One of our miracles that we forget to observe, forget to live out, is the miracle of our Mission Statement. We are working to end spiritual and physical hunger by creating communities of spiritual and physical abundance and wholeness. We are addressing the causes of hunger in our local churches and working towards physical and spiritual plenty instead of poverty. We are transforming systemic inequity and discrimination into beloved communities of Christ. We are moving from conflict, both spiritual and physical to peace with justice. We are addressing climate change full-on by focusing on Earth care and living in harmony with the earth as God created it. We are eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition with a focus on every child, every person having a table set with healthy food and spiritual nourishment. This is the movement we are talking about when we say that we are about ending spiritual and physical hunger in the California-Pacific Conference.

This work, the fact that we are working on this together is one of the miracles among us. And we don't always recognize that miracle. Have you ever told a friend, "Hey, I'm working on ending spiritual and physical hunger?" No? I did once. When somebody asked a group of people I was in, "What big thing are you working on?" and that's what popped out. And his response was to sit up and take notice. I wanted to crawl under the table because it's a big, hairy deal to say all of that. But if you took the chance to tell someone how you are working on that, imagine how impressed they would be. Imagine that they might even want to join you in a small piece of that mission to change our world. Can we start talking about it? This is big work. Important work. Mission work. To show God's love in our world today. It's the work of the Gospel and it's the work of miracles.

There are other places I see miracles happening in our churches—as some of you know and some of you hate—that I drop into churches without warning because I want to worship with you and I don't want the fanfare, I just want to worship. And so, when I drop into churches over time, I've noticed things. In Rialto United Methodist Church, it's a congregation that lives with full diversity—you should see the diversity, it's so beautiful. They express themselves with extravagant, generous love for each other that was poured out to me and they do it without conflict. Can you say that about your church? They do it without conflict. They have chosen to live together.

Altadena and Community Church of the Palisades, two churches that gather together with a tenderness that comes from having lost so much and also a deep gratefulness that they can just be together. Lahaina, another strong and tender congregation that has endured great loss (due to fire) of their whole town, and when they gather together, they show such a great love for each other. They celebrate that they can see each other's faces and you can feel their love. They are working together to rebuild the church that they lost and to help the town rise up again.

Faith United Methodist—there's two of them in Los Angeles. I was headed towards one and I ended up at the other one, so that's how I found out there are two of them. Neither of them knew I was coming. One cares deeply for its ethnic traditions and history, celebrating its children and its elderly together, and the other gathers in the sweet confidence that they matter to each other and to God and to the connection.

Three churches in the Bishop area, small, rural, far, far away from everything else, doing the work to be the presence of God in an inclusive nature growing in numbers and in mission so much that they are running out of space. And while other churches around them are declining, they are growing because they are the alternative to their communities of inclusion and they have an earthworm farm.

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The Pasadena and South Pasadena churches which are close to my home, Scott, First, Dream Church and Renew. One holds a rich tradition in the Black community which should never be let go. One has been at the center in crisis moments caring for evacuees during the fires and walking alongside protests during the ICE presence last week and giving the message that God—and we—care. After worship last Sunday, First Pasadena flowed out into the streets to join the protestors who they could hear during their worship service. One has a vibrant Korean community, a growing presence with many children and they recently held a celebration for the fire and police departments who worked so hard to respond to the fires. I didn't know that they held that—I was just driving by and I saw all these fire trucks around the church and I thought, "Oh no - the church is on fire" so I asked a fire person who came out what was going on, and he responded, "Oh, the church is celebrating us for the work we did in the fires."

Another one in that group of churches is finding a new way to be a relevant church in a new day. They are using all the contemporary tools, like vibrant online ministry, beautiful music and transformation of an old, old building which looks like a mansion—I used to live next to it—into a place of gathering for those in South Pasadena with a heart for the community of that town. Alhambra First, a Chinese congregation who worships in the Mandarin language. Jim and I went and Jim pulled out his translator so that we could understand part of what the pastor was saying. It's an old building filled and full of people of all ages and especially young people. They are baptizing and teaching diligently as they are raising up disciples for Christ. They are working at it diligently and also on the same property is a smaller English speaking group that gathers in a loving community to celebrate and walk through life together.

Westwood, a healthy historic church that has figured out how to utilize its building to the fullest while worshiping in both traditional and modern ways to reach a wider group of people. Did you hear the word "healthy?" Los Feliz, a congregation that has not only survived the loss its members, I think they had 12 left after disaffiliation, but did a restart with a small and faithful remnant and now is growing quickly and returning to vibrancy and health and is proud to call themselves part of the community of the United Methodist Church. Bardsdale, a rural community that loves its Pastor Lupita so much that when she came with her wheelchair, they did all the work to make her parsonage and the pulpit accessible. I'd like to just throw this out because I don't know how to do it, but someday I would like for Cal-Pac to raise money to support Hispanic students going to seminary because we don't have many Hispanic students going to seminary because it costs too much, but if we did that in Lupita's honor. If any of you want to help me figure that out, please come my way. But they welcomed me in this rural community with a basket of vegetables and fruit from their own garden. They welcome all the people who come in, in all the ways that they can, staying true to the Gospel of love to the people who are around them. Amazing church.

Shepherd of the Hills in Monterey Park. A church that is strong for love for each other and their community, responding quickly to the shooting that happened in their neighborhood by joining the wider community by flooding out into the streets with the greater community and grieving, remembering and honoring those eleven souls who were lost at the dance studio during the Lunar New Year celebrations. Remember that? They were there. Magnolia Park, a church that is filled with a diverse group of Latinos, has a vibrant group of children and youth whom I was privileged to be able to pray for when I dropped into their service. They have an active group of adults that are holding fast to the ministry in their community. Their ministry includes caring for those among them who are most vulnerable during this time of hate mongering that is directed towards them.

San Diego First, led by three incredible women who lead the congregation with depth and transformative action while doing a weekly podcast that reaches beyond their walls. I listen to it. If you need some inspiration, it's a great podcast. Baldwin Park, a small faithful community that is faithful to its town, Baldwin Park, and to remaining present to help out any travelers who are passing their way. Sierra Madre, a small church that was not covered in the news when the fires hit their community. Many lost their homes or were evacuated for weeks. Yet, they gathered at the church because the church was right on the line between closed areas and open areas. Just across the street, the area was closed and you could not get access. But they gathered at the church that Sunday to provide each other support and strength as they endured their loss together.

Harris UMC, a stronghold for an inclusive mission and message of Christ in Oahu. Kailua, another vibrant and full community of Christ followers including people of all ages with a special spirit of togetherness and openness to change and hope for the world. Because it's Hawaii, they don't have to have windows—they just let the breeze come in. It was a beautiful service and they had a taco truck for us afterwards. Joyous View, gathering together diverse groups of people

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including Haitians, Latinos, and Anglos, each worshipping in their preferred language and culture—deep, deep, deep work offering welcome to all in the community.

Crossroads and Grace in Los Angeles - congregations grieving and supporting each other during the loss of our beloved Rev. Dr. Lydia Waters. Leaning on each other in difficult moments. Holman UMC, new life and stability and new hopes and dreams flowing into this historic Black church with deep roots in social justice movements of Los Angeles. Echo Park and La Plaza, two congregations sharing space because Echo Park lost their roof. Sharing space and holding ground for the historic Latino communities of our past, our present and our future. Holding ground.

That's just a few. There are so many more I could name, but I realize that you don't have that much time. Good things are happening in our churches. Good things, miracles are happening in our churches. You may not notice them because you attend there regularly, but I drop in unexpectedly when I worship with you and I see with new eyes to your context that God is doing miracles in our midst. God is working a new thing, God is showing up to love the world through your ministry. God is doing miracles in our churches. I see it and I am a believer of miracles.

Which do you believe? Are we facing monsters or are we experiencing miracles? When Hervey asks which one in these stories are true, monsters or miracles, of course his answer is "both." But then he says, "Which story will you be a part of?" Because we can accept that the world, the church are collapsing, while also choosing which side to work on. We can, in the end, be found either harvesting the monster—spreading fear and distrust—or, we can be sending water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, providing safety and freedom for the immigrant, and choosing to cherish those who believe differently than us by coming to the Communion Table together.

We can choose to love beyond what feels natural. Even to love others into a relationship where no harm is the rule we live by. We can choose to listen to the Gospel message before we listen to the cultural message or the Christian Nationalist's message of hate. We can choose to spread love abroad, which is what Wesley told us to do: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." John Wesley.

Have you ever noticed that our politicians like to quote parts of this quote all the time? That's great. This is our time. This is our day. This is our day to do miracles, to know the monsters but to do miracles. It's our time to be found, caught, and exposed for the miracle producing life you have lived. We need to focus on the miracles in order to address these monsters. Are you ready to do that? Come on, Church! Come on, California-Pacific Annual Conference! This is our day, our time, our moment to be miracle workers, monster slayers, rainmakers, light bearers, truth seekers, love givers, and cherish peddlers. Come on church! We've got some work to do, so let's start. Let's start with love. Let's start with cherish and extravagant, attentive love. And let's start by living out the words of Jesus, our Miracle Worker, when he says, "I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the work that I do. They will do even greater work than these because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)

Greater works to heal our world. Greater works to cherish our neighbors. Greater works to end spiritual and physical hunger. Greater works. Amen.

Bishop Sally Dyck led the body in prayer in preparation for the ratification work ahead.

Ratification of Constitutional Amendments Nos. 1-4 - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Bob Rhodes emphasized the importance of voting and shared some of the mechanics of voting, including who is able to vote and resources for those eligible to vote. He reminded the Body that the results of the vote will not be shared during this Annual Conference. The Council of Bishops will report the results. Brief summaries of the Constitutional Amendments will be provided. Constitutional Amendments cannot be changed as they are written and provided by the General Conference.

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh gave additional information to those who are having trouble accessing the MeetingPulse Platform. Due to internet challenges, Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank announced a five minute break.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called the body back to order, and Rev. Bob Rhodes again began the proceedings. Rev. Rhodes shared that Provisional Elders and Deacons, and Local pastors are not able to vote on Constitutional Amendments. He

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also shared that participants should not use any live-streaming during the Annual Conference. Rev. Rhodes called for a test vote.

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh: Rev. Yuh addressed those who were still not able to connect to the wifi.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We had more responses to the test vote than we have in the past, so I believe we can move forward.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank once again asked the body if there are those who still need one on one assistance. Two people needed help and assistance was provided.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: You will only have two options - yes or no. There will be no abstaining vote options.

Rev. Blair Trygstad-Stowe: Can those who are having trouble voting online use paper ballots?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We do not have a way to do paper voting equitably. We are going forward.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: do you think we can go ahead and vote?

The body responded in the affirmative.

Constitutional Amendment #1 - Worldwide Regionalization

Regionalization (Paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 33) Establishes regional preferences—including one for the United States—so that the church can make contextually appropriate decisions and reduce U.S.-centric government.

Rev. Rhodes moved Constitutional Amendment #1.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Richard Bentley: When we started, we were told it was much too complicated, that no one would ever vote to amend 44% of the constitution. I want to tell you what it really does. The way we work in different cultures to do the same thing is different. The greatest success happens when doing ministry understanding its ministry context. We have been trying to run a worldwide organization with one-size-fits all. Regionalization, fundamentally, would let each region contextualize what they are doing in the ways that make the most sense in that context so that we can work together on what really matters for mission, worldwide social justice, and to move our denomination forward. Thank you.

Jack Draper, St. Paul's UMC, Laity: I have a concern. I'm not sure if this is a speech against or for, but it looks like the General Conference could create regions within the United States, which is a concern. I think the Constitutional Amendment should have said a geographical division may not be made within a national boundary. So I just raise that as a concern. We would need to remain vigilant so that does not occur within the United States so that we have regions within the United States under this Constitutional Amendment. But given that vigilance probably will be employed and it's unlikely General Conference would do that, I think the Amendment is... I'm speaking in favor with the concern. Thank you.

The Constitutional Amendment #1 is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. The votes were recorded.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: The votes have come in. The results for these Constitutional Amendments will not be shared publicly.

Constitutional Amendment #2 - Gender and Ability Inclusion

Inclusion (Paragraph 4): Adds "ability" and "gender" to the list of protected categories so that no one can be denied membership or leadership in the Church based on ability or gender.

Rev. Rhodes moved Constitutional Amendment #2.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

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The Constitutional Amendment #2 is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank rescinded the call for the vote with technical issues beyond internet connectivity.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: This is about making sure that we all have the opportunity to vote. It is different from the Wi-Fi issue. It appears that our voting platform has crashed. It is inappropriate to continue voting at this point. Here is what will happen. I am inviting our new Legislation Chair, Jason Takagi to come forward and present the legislative Consent Calendar.

Legislation - Jason Takagi

Jason introduced himself as the new Legislation Chair. We are able now to present the Consent Calendar for the Legislative process.

Consent Calendar for Concurrence:

REC 25-01; REC 25-02; REC 25-03; REC 25-04; REC 25-05; REC 25-06; REC 25-08; REC 25-09; RES 25-01; RUL 25-01; RUL 25-02; RUL 25-03; RUL 25-04; RUL 25-07; RUL 25-08.

This Consent Calendar will come before the body to vote on this afternoon.

Retirement Video - Media Team

Celebrating the Ministry of Rev. Wesley Elmore, 30 Years

Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Leave - Rev. Cathie Capp

Greetings again, Cal-Pac! Two years ago at the Annual Conference, Bishop Escobedo-Frank encouraged clergy who qualify—and the congregations who support them—to consider taking renewal leaves so that they can be nourished and truly flourish.

I'm here to tell you: it *is* possible—and one of the most sustainable ways to cherish your clergy is through the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grant. Every year, Lilly awards nearly 200 grants, each up to \$60,000—up to \$20,000 to support the congregation during the pastor's absence. It's designed so the leave is a gift to the church *and* the pastor, not a burden.

This year, two Cal-Pac clergy received grants:

- Rev. Brent Ross is currently one month into his 3-month renewal.
- And I begin mine right after the Annual Conference ends on Saturday—hallelujah!

In the previous cycle, Rev. Angela Galanis Price and Rev. Janet McKeithen also received Lilly grants. Angela shared: “The grant allowed me to reconnect with my roots in Greece—visiting my parents’ villages, childhood home, and family burial sites. The food, stories, and walking were healing to my mind, body, and spirit.”

Janet reflected: “It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime gift. I took a slow road trip with my mom through gold rush country to Yosemite, honoring my Aunt Betty’s life. My mom has since passed, and I’m so grateful for that time. I also deepened my ministry by interviewing scholars of multiple belonging communities—an essential part of my pastoral identity.”

The next grant deadline is early March (for leaves in 2027), and we will host a Learning Lab in January to guide interested clergy through the application process.

Stay tuned! And please—encourage and support your clergy to take this beautiful step toward renewal.

Young Generation Task Force - Rev. Melinda Dodge

Rev. Dodge introduced the Task Force: Rev. Greg Batson, Rev. Blair Trygstad-Stowe, Caitlyn Anderson, Everest Harvey, and Mina Mahe (who is attending Mountain Sky’s Annual Conference). Rev. Dodge invited the body to review their full report in the Participant Guide. The report articulates in much more detail where we have been, where we are today, and how we anticipate going forward.

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Brief Synopsis: We have been focused on listening and learning from the local Church. We have conducted an online survey, conducted listening sessions and had a retreat this year.

Key takeaways: Rev. Blair Trygstad-Stowe, Claremont School of Theology: I was able to analyze the table data with the assistance of Jennifer Gaylord. I wanted to report these data reports from our 2023 tables to show the percentage of churches that are failing to report any small group activity for age level ministries

27% of our churches report they have no children ages 0-10 participating in small group ministries. 32% of churches report they have no youth ages 11-17 participating in small groups. 44% of our churches report they have no young adults ages 18-30 participating in small group ministries. 85% of our churches received no new members through confirmation.

Of clergy currently serving under appointment in the bounds of our Annual Conference, we only have one person under the age of 30. This does not mean that children and youth are not involved, it means we don't track age-level attendance. I think it is something we should pay attention to. It does not tell the whole story, but I hope it helps us draw attention to how we might better serve younger ministries and how we where we can resource these ministries as we continue to grow them.

Melissa Dodge: Using that data, some of our key takeaways are clear communication is essential, training and support in ministry for those serving younger generations, and we need to focus on prioritizing and resourcing the local church in their work. That includes resources to help shift mindsets of how current church leadership works so that welcoming spaces and effective ministries can be developed. We have to help those who are currently in leadership to walk with and to make the change to respond to the learnings and the longings of our younger generations. We also recommended a new staff position at the Annual Conference.

Hopes for our task force: We want to build the task force and increase the voices in the conversation. We need to continue the listening work. We hope to carve out a plan to revitalize our young generation ministries in our Conference. This is not a re-establishing of ministry that once was, but a reinventing and reformatting of young generation ministry. We hope to bring our anticipated plans to Conference and any necessary formal legislation that's needed, and to provide a strong financial plan with clear direction for staffing that we seek in order to then receive a formal endorsement of a long-term vision, strategy, and structure. We invite your questions, prayers, insight, and experience into this conversation.

There are three ways you can join and support the work. You are invited to ask us, to inform and to join.

1. Ask us! Ask questions of the task force (a QR code was provided). We will endeavor to answer your questions via email within a few days.
2. Inform us! Tell us where you see active and vital young generation ministries. Share with us about how the Conference can support younger generation ministry.
3. Join us! We are by no means a complete task force. Help us to connect with you, help us to welcome voices in, and to support the rebuilding of our younger generation ministry.

A QR code was supplied, and members were invited to join a conversation in the evening at the Cherish dinner. Conference members were also invited to the worship that our younger generations are leading.

One Matters Award - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and Rev. Motoe Yamada Foor

Rev. Motoe Yamada Foor: Good morning! It is my joy to be here with you. I serve as a Director of Adult Discipleship at Discipleship Ministries. I bring a warm greeting from the General Secretary at Discipleship Ministry. Our mission to challenge and support churches and leaders in the holy calling of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Please stop by our table and take some great resources for you.

It is my honor to partner with the California-Pacific Conference 2025 One Matters Discipleship Award. This award was created in 2015 to recognize and encourage churches to move from zero baptisms and zero professions of faith into a new season of fruitfulness. There is a power of transformation when a church moves from zero to one. It is more than a

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number, it is a story of God's grace at work. Each person truly matters. It is my honor to introduce Bishop Escobedo-Frank to present the award.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This year, the recipient of the One Matters Discipleship Award is Huntington Park First United Methodist Church in the West District. If you are from that church, please make your way to the front. With 11 professions of faith and 11 baptisms in 2024, the church is flourishing under the leadership of Rev. Alexandro Vilches. In the trials and struggles facing us, the Hispanic churches of the California-Pacific Conference continue making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Thank you for your faithfulness

Ana-Haydee Urda: It is a big surprise for me. I am not here representing my church. I was taken aback when I heard our name. We have been working with our children and youth ministry for the last three years very intentionally. We praise God. Thank you.

Rev. Alexandro Vilches: Thank you Bishop and thank you Annual Conference.

Voting Platform Update - Rev. Bob Rhodes

The voting platform support team is working very hard on solving the problem. The cloud service the platform uses has gone down. We understand what the issue is, and we will soon be able to get back to the good work of voting.

Retirement Video - Media Team

Celebrating the Ministry of Rev. Seung-Il Whang, 29 years.

Leadership and Discipleship Essential Ministry Team Report Video - Media Team

A video was presented by the Leadership & Discipleship Essential Ministry Team sharing their history and their work in the United Methodist Church.

Instructions - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Rhodes offered Information for lunch.

Closing Prayer - Rev. Gary Williams

PLENARY SESSION 3 | JUNE 12, 2025, 2:00 PM (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared some recent events happening in our Conference. Tujunga UMC's parking lot was being used by ICE as a staging place and they would not leave. In Downey, a female Hispanic pastor at a congregational church told ICE to leave and they pointed guns at her and told her that the church is not her property, it is theirs.

Senator Padilla was forcibly removed from a press conference.

Events like these are popping up in our Conference and I want you to be aware that not everything makes the news. It is important for us to know what is happening in churches and in neighborhoods. I have heard from you that there are other places where ICE is present. Action is our work, but it is based in prayer.

Monalisa Tu'itahi, Interim Cal-Pac Immigration Coordinator, offered the opening prayer.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

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Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

I have seen how you all love each other during the day. For those of you who could vote, say “Hallelujah!” For those who are still having trouble, say, “Lord have mercy!”

We still have some time and there is a lot in this plenary. When we tried to connect to the internet, it went down. MeetingPulse went down. In case you hadn't heard, Google went down today, worldwide. It wasn't our fault! As we will see on the screen, all the information and updates we have is at calpacumc.org/ac2025. Again, the network is steady. Network: AC2025. Passcode: 25ACSession.

Please take out your devices. If you are having to connect to MeetingPulse more than once, please close any open tabs you may have for MeetingPulse. Please turn off all Facebook, any streaming and live feeds. Worldly Translations. Website: attend.wordly.ai. They do not offer Tongan or Samoan. We will be going to legislation and the Constitutional Amendments. We want to make sure everyone's vote gets counted. More information is available at calpacumc.org/forms/ac2025secretarysubmissions.

A reminder of housekeeping items were shared. Tonight's events were shared. There are many vendor tables available for you to visit.

Cherish Chat: Love Our Neighbors (Immigration) - Monalisa Tu'itahi and Panel

A video was shared by the Media Team on the Immigration Task Force.

Oku ou kole keu hufanga `I he ngaahi tala fakatapu kotoa pe `oku tonu ke fai atu mei he tu`unga ni, ka e `ata ke fai `a e fatongia ko `eni. I start as I would in my native tongue by honoring God, the first people of this land, those among us and those whose spirit is among us, Bishop and lay leader and all of you, members of the body of Christ, and then asking for your permission to allow me to speak to you this morning. Cherish... what does it mean to be cherished in the context of the current immigration landscape?

My name is Monalisa Salakielu Tu'itahi. I am the daughter of Pepisi Hena and Siaosi Salakielu, both originally from the island kingdom of Tonga, but have made their final resting place in Laie on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. As such, I am a bona fide 1.5 immigrant, born in Tonga, but immigrated to Hawaii at the age of 8. I was a stranger in a strange land. Even with my family who had immigrated before me, I was a stranger.

As an immigrant, I am well aware of my place in society. I know that traditionally immigrants have taken their place in the margins, in the periphery, in the outskirts of society. I know all too well how it feels to be a stranger in a strange land, feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, overlooked, disregarded, of not being enough, even despised. But this is not about me...it is however about immigrants. And I start here, not to focus on myself, but to highlight that often, and most especially now, immigrants are far from being cherished, our immigration policy ensures that immigrants and migrants are despised, denied, disregarded, overlooked, even loathed.

You see, to cherish, is to protect, nurture, care, honor, respect, affirm, all with deep love and affection. To “cherish” immigrants, migrants, refugees and others is a tall order in any given time, but particularly in this season, when our immigration policy has given license and permission to deny, disregard, overlook, even despise and loathe. Again, what does cherish mean for you and I, as followers of Christ, as members of the Body of Christ, what does it mean in this season?

Throughout the Bible, God's people are called to love migrants. From Genesis to Revelation, we see that God desires that we help the most vulnerable in our midst, especially the sojourner. Leviticus issues a call to love the sojourners in our midst, treating them as if they were one of our citizens. (Leviticus 19:33-34) Hebrews tells us that in opening our homes to guests, we may be “entertaining angels without knowing it.” (Hebrews 13:2)

Jesus himself was a sojourner. Jesus begins his earthly life fleeing to Africa as a refugee in Egypt. (Matthew 2:13-18) Jesus says that to welcome the sojourner is to welcome him. (Matthew 26:35)

The United Methodist Church states that “at the center of Christian faithfulness to Scripture is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner. We call upon all United Methodist churches to welcome newly arriving

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migrants in their communities, to love them as we do ourselves, to treat them as one of our native-born, to see in them the presence of the incarnated Jesus, and to show hospitality to the migrants in our midst, believing that through their presence we are receiving the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (Book of Resolutions, 3281)

But what does all that mean for you and I who are sitting here trying to make sense of this seemingly insurmountable crisis that seems to be growing by the minute? Every day, there seems to be something new, and what we imagined was not possible given our Constitution and our propensity for order, is now permissible and even normalized.

Since being in this position, I have thought long and hard about how we participate in this work, and be true to our identity as followers of Christ. How do we not get overwhelmed by the constant onslaught of unjust immigration policies that are playing out in our country? How do we move toward cherishing each other, and even the “strangers” among us.

Well, I think that as a people of faith, we start by reexamining our very identity as United Methodists, and most importantly, as a child of God, called to love God and neighbor as ourselves, to cherish God and our neighbors.

And with that, I would like to offer a faith-full paradigm for navigating the current immigration landscape: To name it, Resistance, Accompaniment, Advocacy, and running through all of those three elements, Relationship.

You know what resistance is, but I am talking about resistance as set out in our baptismal vows. “Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? Acts of faith that oppose oppressive, unjust measures that discriminate, endanger, and demean our brothers and sisters.

Every act that says, “This is not right.” Every act that moves you to know more about what is going on, and then doing something about it. Every effort to Know Your Rights, to love, to care, to cherish, even when you are being told to hate, to mistrust, to despise. All of this is a form of resistance. It’s in our very DNA as a church, a people of faith. We do not have a choice; it is not extracurricular. If you are a follower of Christ, you breathe, you eat, you drink, and you resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

Resisting evil is the entire church’s task; it is not a task limited only for people of color, for immigrants like myself. Oh my goodness, it is disheartening to walk into a general church training event for immigration and for a moment it looks like a revival meeting of the Latin American Church or the Black and Brown church. The church has been through this path before, and the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. still ring true, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

But my heart is strangely warmed by people who are and have been doing this work among us:

Jeanne Roe Smith, is a friend, a mentor, an advocate, a sister, a family member to countless undocumented students who have braved the dark halls of institutions like UCLA, finding solace and refuge in Jeanne Roe Smith and the good people of 580 Café. 580 Café is an initiative of Wesley Foundation Serving UCLA. But it is more than just an initiative, a program, its very existence across the UCLA campus is an act of resistance. Every act of human kindness that lets every undocumented student know that he or is made in God’s image and worthy to be loved and cherished, is an act of resistance, particularly now, in the intersections of freedom of speech and immigration. Jeanne Roe Smith is a force to reckon with, as she stands up against the forces that seek to demean and deny her students.

Pastor Mateo Mamea is a shepherd, not just to the Community United Methodist Church of Borrego Springs, but to the migrants that pass through the Borrego Springs community. Situated about 40 miles from the US Mexico Border, Borrego Springs is a place where migrants pass through or attempt to pass. There they would look for a drink of water, a meal, a place to shower and get a change of clothes, and then maybe get bus fare that allows them to move on to their sponsors or to the next stops. There they see the face of God, through people like Pastor Mateo. The traffic is slowed down immensely, but Pastor Mateo’s work of resisting the system that criminalizes the people he shepherds, continues.

The second element for navigating the current landscape is Accompaniment. It is the ministry of being present. It is more than just writing statements. A few weeks ago, I was speaking to a young undocumented student, at the top of his class, who graduated from UCLA last year. He said to me, it’s okay to give us those red cards, but we know our rights.

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We want to know if you are standing with us. Is the church really there for us? As an attorney, I know a thing or two about Accompaniment.. I know what it means to sit there with my client in a courtroom, and know that they have no one else in their corner but me. And even when we have just been handed a denial or an order of removal, I sit there with them, body to body, crying or in silence. Solidarity is more than just writing a statement, giving money, it is body to body. It is an accompaniment.

It is also about listening, and often, not having the answer, but stepping into a place of vulnerability together with those who are impacted and whose lives, livelihood, family, and future are on the line.

Pastora Tona Rios, along with her husband Raphael Rios, know what it means to accompany migrants--to eat with them, cook with them, clean with them, work with them, even find them a place in their church campus to lay their heads down. The Rios responded to a need, and created the Baldwin Park United Methodist Church Welcome Center for Migrants, where they led the church in providing hospitality and resources to newly arrived individuals and families. The Welcome Center continues, though the traffic has stopped since the new administration, but the Rios continue their work of accompaniment to immigrants here and across the border where migrants remain in masses.

The right to seek asylum is a fundamental human right, but it no longer exists. And while United States leaders have touted the low numbers of crossings on the southern border, it has ultimately left tens of thousands of people stranded in Mexico with nowhere to go – even unaccompanied minors are stuck without a way to seek safety. The Rev. Dr. Joel Hortiales, a Global Ministries' missionary serving the border, as well as serving under appointment at Park Hill United Methodist Church in Chula Vista, sees this plight weekly, sometimes daily, as he makes his way across the border to sometimes bring some much needed resources, but at all times, to walk alongside those whose now trapped on the other side of the border, threatened with hunger, homelessness, and ever increasing danger.

The third element is Advocacy. The Holy Spirit is said to be our Advocate; one who stands in the gap for us, who intercedes for us, who fights for us. There are small acts that do not take away too much from us, but that can make a difference for someone who is impacted. Legislative actions are easily done, a phone call, a quick email, less than a minute response on an email, and it's done. Writing an op ed in your local papers. Even having conversation, moving the needles, in our churches, in our community, our school boards, our city hall meetings. There are people who are saying, "We are simply doing what is right. They broke the law, they need to be held responsible." But who created those laws? Who are the privileged who make the law, not caring about the impact those laws have on the underprivileged?

Josh Lopez-Reyes (he/el/ele) is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of EPIC. As a Mexican-American child of immigrants, his personal journey has profoundly shaped his commitment to immigrant communities. Witnessing his family members' struggles with detention and deportation fueled his determination to advocate for systemic change, particularly for immigrant youth and their families from a decolonizing approach.

Dori is a life-long United Methodist who views advocacy as her special calling. She has served as a Global Mission Volunteer working in migrant communities in New Mexico and Los Angeles, and is a passionate advocate and activist for justice, equity and inclusion. Her passion is reflected in her commitment to the the Justice and Compassion Ministry, but more than that, it is the act of showing up, of being present, sometimes, just a face in the crowd, but one who will not be silent.

And as I said, a superseding element that flows through all of this is Relationship and the importance of building and developing relationships in this season. Resistance, Accompaniment and Advocacy all take us out of our comfort zone, and we have to build relationships, partnership, allies, in order to carry out those acts. Accompaniment may mean meeting your immigrant neighbor, perhaps getting to know their story, so that you are aware of your surroundings and the possibility of ICE showing up, so that you are able to pick up their kids, if they are taken. Accompaniment may mean giving your immigrant neighbor or church member \$50 so they can get that headlight fixed so that the local police won't stop them, which might lead to an ICE encounter. Do we know an impacted person in our congregation? We must be able to stand in the gap for them. So that we are able to help them create a family safety plan, that includes a Caregiver Authorization Affidavit in case they are taken in and they have US children who need to be cared for. You see how all of this requires developing relationships.

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I am convinced that the silver lining, the grace inherently present in this dark season, is that if we are to survive, we must build relationships with our neighbors, our church members, our partners, our allies. We must get to know the people who are impacted, the “others” and the foreigners.

To end, if anything can get us out of this, it is the Church. We know from history that the church can be its most impactful during times of crisis. But I know it deep in my bones, as I experienced it as a young child full of fear and dread. It was a small country church in a little village on the Northern shore of the island of Oahu, where as an immigrant, I was cherished and loved into being who I am today. Kahuku United Methodist Church became home to me and a host of other immigrant children, some of whom are leading in this Conference today. At that time, the members were primarily descendants of earlier waves of immigrants from the Philippines, Portugal, Korea, Japan, and other Asian countries. They had come to work at the plantations—the sugar and pineapple plantations that formed the earlier economic structures of Hawaii as a young State of the Union. And here I am with my 6 other siblings, my mother, all of us, speaking no English, walking into a church filled with other immigrants, and they opened up their arms, hearts, homes, and lives and took us in. Ilokano speaking Filipinos, Nisei (2nd generation Japanese), many of whom had been in the internment camps in America, made sure that we were able to live not just on Sundays, but on Monday to Friday, giving us tips on education, budgets, etc. Such things as telling my father, “George it’s ok to insist that your children attend the Tongan speaking Sunday school classes, but you better make sure that they attend the youth group meetings with Pastor Sasaki and Deli so that they are able to navigate the world in English.” That was formidable. Ooh, and I cannot thank Pastor Roy enough, a Nisei, charismatic UMC pastor, and his Ilokano speaking wife who was also the school nurse at the High School...my spiritual parents, my own spiritual growth, nurtured by immigrants far from my native home, from the Philippines and Japan. People who themselves were formed by the human socio-political forces and crisis of the age, the forced economic migration, plantation fields, internment camps—those very crises formed formidable lives, gifts and graces that were then handed to me and my family as new immigrants into this community.

To me this is the answer to how we cherish the stranger among us, bringing the crisis down to the most personal level, and putting yourself in it. Allowing your everyday life, as a nurse, a teacher, a caretaker, a farmer, a mother, a father, and using those gifts and skills to make a difference in someone who is a migrant, in a stranger, and making that person a neighbor. There is no legal pathway for them. But a pathway defined by human dignity, and might I say, by our baptismal vows, Christian discipleship, which continues. Acts of resistance, accompaniment and advocacy. This massive system that pushes to deport, to deny, to despise is made up of people created in God’s image, mothers and fathers who don’t know if they will go home to their children tonight, little fearful girls like myself many years ago, little boys who may grow up without a father. This is where the church, where ordinary members can be a part of the solution, and enter into this staggering overwhelming crisis, with small acts of human kindness, to cherish, is to protect, nurture, care, honor, respect, affirm, and thereby practice our baptismal vows to be the church. May it be so.

We have a QR code and an action. It is a legislative action that has been put out by our General Board of Church and Society. It is the “Sensitive Location Act.” You are invited to call your Representatives and Senators to support the Sensitive Location Act, which is asking to return to a prior time, a time before this current Administration when ICE was not allowed in sensitive locations such as churches, hospitals and courts. It only takes a minute of your time and it will have a great impact for all of us.

We will now share a litany which has been created by the General Board of Church and Society. We will end with the Immigrant’s Creed.

The Annual Conference recited the Immigrant’s Creed together.

The Immigrant’s Creed

This creed professes the Christian faith through the experience of an immigrant.

I believe in Almighty God,
who guided the people in exile and in exodus,
the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon,
the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
a displaced Galilean,

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who was born away from his people and his home,
who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger,
and returning to his own country suffered the oppression
of the tyrant Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power,
who then was persecuted, beaten, and finally tortured,
accused and condemned to death unjustly.
But on the third day, this scorned Jesus rose from the dead,
not as a foreigner but to offer us citizenship in heaven.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us,
who speaks all languages, lives in all countries,
and reunites all races.
I believe that the church is the secure home
for the foreigner and for all believers who constitute it,
who speak the same language and have the same purpose.
I believe that the communion of the saints begins
when we accept the diversity of the saints.
I believe in the forgiveness of sin, which makes us all equal,
and in reconciliation, which identifies us more
than does race, language, or nationality.
I believe that in the resurrection
God will unite us as one people
in which all are distinct
and all are alike at the same time.
Beyond this world, I believe in life eternal
in which no one will be an immigrant
but all will be citizens of God's kingdom,
which will never end. Amen.

Before I take my seat, I wish to remind you that we have the Immigration Task Force table for resources. One of the Cherish workshops tomorrow evening will be on Immigration.

Point of Privilege - Pastor Yoshi Kuramoto (youngest clergy in the Cal-Pac Conference)

If you believe we should also be talking about Palestine, please stand with us. Siblings, the Holy Land strategy group invites you to join us to fast between June 13th and June 25th to fast on Fridays. They are being forced into a starvation project in Palestine. I believe it is important to name that at this very moment Christ is under the rubble and in the streets waiting for bread beside the hungry children in Gaza. I chose to be a UMC pastor, not because it is big, not because one day it would be nice to be called Reverend. I chose to be a pastor in this tradition because at a critical juncture of when the moral crisis emerged, I hoped and believed that we would be the ones at the forefront unapologetically speaking God's good truth about the sanctified dignity of human life.

There are youth in the room, I look like a youth too, but I'm not. And there will come a day when they ask themselves has the church equipped me spiritually, morally, theologically to bravely face the world's currents. And it is with firm conviction that we believe this IS the issue and the time that will give them the answer in the future. If we are more afraid of risking our positions and potentially offending others by the truth than we are by the bombs that destroy mosques, that destroy schools and hospitals in Gaza and amid modern day apartheid, our commitments to fighting racism do not extend beyond these borders, we will lose sight of the Gospel, and do not deserve to speak of God. Siblings, the hard truth is that this is our genocide. The legions of modern warfare are paid and supported by us. This is our version of Caesar's Rome and Jesus is on the other side of the colony. So our prayer is this: That the United Methodist Church in its moral clarity not only question, but challenge, the depraved conditions in Gaza and preach a word that stands for life. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank asked the Media Team to share the QR code to: Take Action: Protect Immigrant Families & Communities - Support the Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061)

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Wespath: Compass - Manuel Vargas, Wespath Liaison

I am a client relationship manager with Wespath. I have the privilege of working with you here. Wespath is an agency of the UMC and we are charged with administering the benefits for clergy and laity working for the church. A new retirement program, Compass, will begin in 2026.

Mr. Vargas shared a video that summarizes the new program. This program has a substantial matching component. If you are an active clergy person, this program does not impact the benefits you have already accrued. Change: financial pressures, it is important that we have a sustainable program for churches, current and future clergy. Churches will see a reduction in the cost associated with providing benefits to clergy. I will be here throughout the session, and you are welcome to stop by and ask any questions.

Video Presentation: Compass - Media Team

No Kings but Jesus Announcement - Rev. Jane Voigts

This is such a full time right now in so many ways. On Saturday, June 14th, we know that it is No Kings Day. You may be wondering what we are doing here at Annual Conference to be mindful of that, and to participate in a way that, especially as Christians, we feel called to do.

Conversations between the Cal-Pac Clergywomen started on Facebook about No Kings Day, so several of us said, "Yes, let's do something." We have created something that everyone is invited to participate in. This will be on Saturday, June 14th: No Kings But Jesus, 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., Prayer - Lament - Confession, in the Mountain View Room. We will begin the day with our cry, "No Kings But Jesus" and as our prophetic forebearers would do, with 30 minutes of repentance, prayer, ashing, and a symbolic tearing of garments. We feel this is a really profound way for us to get our heads, hearts and souls centered on what this day is about for those of us who are Christians who want to stand up for what we see happening, and want to do it in a peaceful way. We want to bring God into this in an integral way and we also want to spend some time acknowledging what part each one of us have played to bring us to where we are. It is so superficial when we are not claiming our piece of that and asking God for forgiveness for our piece of that as we move ahead. It will be a simple service and we would like you all to come. That is the first part of our day. No Kings But Jesus buttons will be available throughout the day.

Rev. Molly Vetter: At noon time, we will gather outside and have signs available that you can put in your car or in your suitcase. Instead of standing together on a street corner here in Indian Wells, we will carry the message that we have which is centered in the Gospel and carry it out to all the places we are located. This is a dispersed march. You can put the poster in your window on the drive or on the airplane and into all the places where we are and already rooted in a ministry that declares our belonging in beloved community. It turns out that some others have already thought of No Kings But Jesus, and they are doing it wrong. They think that No King But Jesus means that everyone should conform to an authority structure that supports an authoritarian government. However, our reading of the Gospel says that the Kingdom we belong to is a kin-dom of beloved community and is one that is always subverting the values of the world. We will conclude this announcement with a framing sentence that Jeannette wrote for us.

Rev. Jeannette Bragunier: We affirm that no person or power can replace the divine love that stands at the center of our faith. Rooted in this love, we reject authoritarianism and affirm our commitment to democracy, justice and compassion. Amen.

Ratification of Constitutional Amendments Nos. 2 - 4 - Rev. Bob Rhodes

We want to try again with our voting. Remember, we all have the same link, and the system is back up and running. Please don't stream video or music if you are in the room. We don't want to eat up our bandwidth. Please go to MeetingPulse. We will turn off extra tabs on MeetingPulse and will turn on the link for the Constitutional Amendments Vote. The following groups cannot vote on Constitutional Amendments: Local Pastors and Provisional Members of Clergy. If you still need help, please raise your hand.

Rev. Rhodes administered a test vote on MeetingPulse.

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Constitutional Amendment #2 - Gender and Ability Inclusion

Inclusion (Paragraph 4) Adds “ability” and “gender” to the list of protected categories so that no one can be denied membership or leadership in the Church based on gender or ability.

Rev. Rhodes moved Constitutional Amendment #2.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I am asking my fellow Bishop Sally Dyck to lead this vote because she has been working on this issue for some time. Bishop Dyck began by leading the body in prayer.

The Constitutional Amendment #2 is before us.

Bishop Dyck called for a vote. The votes were recorded.

Constitutional Amendment #3 - Racial Justice

Racial Justice (Article IV). Adds a forceful statement of the Church’s opposition to racism, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy. It names racial injustice as sin and calls the Church to active anti-racism.

Rev. Rhodes moved Constitutional Amendment #3.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

David Cutler, Laity, Santa Maria UMC: I would like to address the authors of this racial basis before us today. White supremacy. What were you smoking when you thought of this? Were some of the White supremacists from the retirees which we celebrated yesterday? Or from some of the past retirees that have long supported this church over the last 100 years? We are all aware in the recent years that church attendance has dropped. The church now has become split and more is in progress. At St. Andrew, I am on the welcoming committee for members and visitors. What do I say to these young families that come to seek Jesus Christ in their life? Do I tell them they are welcome unless they are White? You may split hairs and say we didn’t write it that way, or we didn’t mean it, but you know, what the reader hears and what the reader perceives is what matters. Colonialism, White privilege and White supremacy - yes, these things still exist, I admit. However, they are not the words of the Holy Spirit, and certainly do not belong in our church constitution. Brothers and sisters, let’s not make laws with hate words in them. Let us make laws with love and what we strive for. In John 13:34-35, I remind you of the words of Jesus: I am giving you a new commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you, and that you love one another also. By this you will know that you are my disciples, even as you will love one another.

I don’t want a church with a sign that says you are all welcome but you are White, you do not belong here. For this, I vote no.

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter, Clergy, Westwood UMC: Perhaps it might be helpful to also know that I am an Associate Professor of Theology & Race at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. I think perhaps the most simple way to put this, is that it is incumbent upon us all to understand the distinction between White people and White-ness, between White people and the logic of White supremacy and the logic of Colonialism, the logic of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous Races. If you read something that is about White supremacy and you feel convicted, then I want to invite you to turn inward and ask yourself why you feel that way. To tend that part of your soul, that part of your own particular spirit. The language that is being used is descriptive of the lived experience of all of us here. Regardless of what you want to believe, all of us here have been steeped in the logic of White supremacy and Colonialism. This is not anybody’s fault. It is the reality that we exist in. And so the choice we have now, is that are we going to acknowledge what is happening, are we going to actually open our eyes and our ears as we are commanded to, and pay attention to what we see, or are we going to turn away? My hope and my prayer is that we have the courage to hold ourselves accountable, to turn inward, to tend to those aggravated parts of us with compassionate care, so that it may direct us to do the work that God has called us to do and create a welcoming community. This is a speech in favor of passing the Amendment.

Emily Whitehorn Hollywood UMC (they/them): I would like to address three points on the speech against. The terms, “hate words” were mentioned and I’d like to address that these words are only hateful arguably towards those who hate.

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It is not only ignorant, but it is dangerous to not address White supremacy in our church. As an ex-Protestant, I was subjected to several, several experiences of racism as an Asian person, not as Black or Indigenous or anything like that. I know that my Black peers have experienced extreme racism as well. This was in a school. Now, it's not guaranteed to happen in a place like this, but by putting this kind of language into this legislation, we are not only protecting those who could be harmed, we are protecting everyone. We are preventing those who would harm from harming others. These words are not hateful unless you are White and hurting other people.

Jason Tucker (he/him), Laity, San Diego First: I serve on the Board of Directors for the General Commission on Religion & Race. I bring you greetings on behalf of that Board and that Agency. Our church was born in the midst of British Colonialism, White British Colonialism. It grew up in the United States in the time of slavery and gained its footing in the time of Jim Crow and discrimination. It should be no surprise to us that the roots of our church are intertwined and indoctrinated with discrimination, colonialism, White supremacy. This Amendment is an attempt for us to (1) acknowledge that and (2) to address that and continue to do the work that we are continuing to do for years and decades. As a member of the Board of Directors and General Commission on Religion and Race, I speak heavily in favor of this Resolution and Amendment.

Mary Elizabeth Moore (she/her), Deacon, Charge Conference is Claremont UMC: The realities of racism are tearing our world apart. It is tearing our Nation apart, tearing our families and sometimes our churches apart. The language for the Constitution that is proposed is modern language, yes, but all of our Constitution is in modern language that we can affirm and understand. Do we have a testimony of the Holy Spirit in Scripture - yes. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the people like tongues of fire and the people began speaking in different languages. And everyone could hear the language that others were speaking. They recognized one another in the speaking of their differences. The Holy Spirit is guiding us to welcome the marvelous diversity that is the United Methodist Church. And that is the Human Race.

Suanne Ware-Diaz (she/her), Laity, Native American UMC: I'm completely stepping away from everything everyone else has said. We have restrictions in the way that we label things, especially with English which is very noun and label heavy. A lot of nouns and labels we use, we use all over with everything. It is part of the institution, it is part of the foundation that we are standing on. Until we can come up with other labels, that's fine, but we need to step up and know and be honest about the truth of what our history is, because if we do not, we are condemned to continue to live with it. I stand before you as a miracle. I am a miracle because I shouldn't be here. My grandmother was a survivor of the Sand Creek Massacre and we know who led that massacre. I hear people get upset with the church - they have offended me, I'm going to leave, I'm upset. Well, if anyone could leave and be upset, it would be me. But we are a family and we take it with the good, bad and everything else. So, I understand where the gentleman came from in looking at the labels, but these are labels that are pretty recent. I'd hate to recite to you the labels that I have had to live with. So please understand that this is only a first step and it's the actions that will make the difference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: It is time to close the speeches.

The Constitutional Amendment #3 is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. The votes were recorded.

Constitution Amendment #4 - Educational Requirements for Clergy Members

Education Requirements for Clergy Members (Paragraph 34) This amendment sharpens our standards for who can vote for clergy delegates to General Conference.

Rev. Rhodes moved Constitutional Amendment #4.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Richard Bentley, Retired Clergy: There is somebody who has been trying to get your attention from the microphone online and has been texting me. They have been struggling with platform issues, so could you check to see if you have a microphone request from somebody who is not physically here.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: I'll check right now.

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James Dollins, Clergy, San Carlos UMC: I have a question. It sounds like there is importance and rationale behind this Resolution that it would be really helpful to hear a little bit more about why this is needed. If someone could just offer - it's a question about how could we understand the reason for this Resolution a little bit more deeply.

Richard Bentley, Retired Clergy 2nd Reserve Delegate to the General Conference, and working a lot on worldwide issues: The Master of Divinity Degree is a uniquely United States degree. Part of what is going on in this, is to try and have the Constitution reflect that the educational degrees which might be helpful in preparing for ministry may be different around the world. It is trying to move us into a more worldwide perspective on how we deal with clergy standards and ordination standards. I hope that answers your question.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Anna Cruz Camphouse is online and she would like to speak.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: While we are waiting for Anna Cruz Camphouse, for our online friends, if you wish to speak, use the Go To Mic tab in MeetingPulse and when you are invited to unmute yourself, you will respond with "Bishop, peace be with you."

Rev. Anna Crews Camphouse: I am full elder affiliated with the North District but currently serving four churches in the New York Annual Conference. When the first ballot was up, I never could get my [unintelligible] ... maybe one vote doesn't matter, but I would really like my voice to count, and so if there is some way you could do that [unintelligible].

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We hear that you need technical help, and we will have someone contact you right away. Thank you. We will wait a minute so that someone can help her.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This is an untimed vote. We are going to do "both/and" and will help online with our tech team as was requested and will continue with our vote.

The Constitutional Amendment #4 is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. The votes were recorded.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: You have completed your Constitutional Amendments.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: Friends, I hope this will help your confidence in this process that for all four of the Constitutional Amendments, the total number of votes have been right about the same.

I also want to remind you that we are not reporting these results. All of these results from all Annual Conferences, because this is an aggregate vote, will be sent to the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops will tabulate the full sense of whether or not any of these Amendments will be ratified and the Council of Bishops will release this information sometime in the Fall. Thank you friends for your good work.

Deaconess Video - Media Team

A video was shown sharing information about the ministry of the Order of the Deaconess, and its history.

Deaconess Commissioning: Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

The Deaconess Commissioning and Consecration Service began with singing the first verse of *Here I Am Lord*, from the United Methodist Hymnal, #593.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank: Consecration is to set apart as holy, to dedicate to a sacred purpose, to induct a person into a permanent office with a religious rite. Commissioning is an act of sending forth individuals to serve their commission in a specialized ministry. The act of commissioning is an outward and visible sign that Deaconesses and Home Missioners are being sent into the world on behalf of and under the authority of the church, as representatives of the church's love and concern. Today we have the sacred honor and purpose of doing both of these for our sister Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka. Friend in Christ, we rejoice that you responded to God's call to be a servant in ministry as a Deaconess of The United Methodist Church. In your ministry, you continue a tradition of service that is as vital today as it was in 1888 when the Office of Deaconess was first authorized in the Methodist tradition.

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The call of God is always profound, and our response can be no less extraordinary. In the varied ministries of love, justice and service to which the Holy Spirit is leading you, you will testify to the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus. Such a lifetime vocation confers a great privilege, and it also lays upon you a solemn responsibility.

Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka was presented to be consecrated as a Deaconess of the United Methodist Church by Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith. The candidate answered the traditional questions asked by Bishop Escobedo-Frank.

Bishop Sally Dyck: Friend in Christ, we rejoice that you have responded to God's calling to devote your life to servant ministry as a Deaconess. You will be a living example of salt and light, bringing the God flavors of love, justice and service, and shining the light of God's justice in the world. What you have pledged alone with God in consecrating your lives to this service, we ask you now to declare publicly.

The candidate answered the traditional questions asked by Bishop Sally Dyck, Bishop Escobedo-Frank and Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith.

Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith: The design of the Deaconess and Home Missioner Pin is based on the pin of the Wesley Diaconal of England. Let the wearing of this pin is a sign of commitment to serve neither for gratitude nor reward, but from gratitude and love.

The candidate was presented with the Deaconess pin.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank consecrated Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka and a Deaconess stole was placed on her. Bishop Escobedo-Frank prayed over her, and the congregation assured her of their support.

Rev. Sally Dyck invited all the Deaconesses and Home Missioners to stand as they are able. They were recognized by the body with applause.

Deaconess Okamoto-Tanaka was welcomed into the Order of Deaconess and Home Missionary.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I commission you to the appointed ministry of West Los Angeles as Director of Spiritual Engagement and Compassion Care on behalf of the United Methodist Church.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank once again led the congregation in prayer, and presented our new deaconess with these words: "To the church gathered here and around the world, I present our new deaconess, Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka, consecrated and commissioned to a lifetime of Christ-like service under the authority of the Church." Thanks be to God!

The Consecration and Commissioning closed with the singing of verse 3 of *Here I Am Lord* from the United Methodist Hymnal, #593.

Instructions and Closing Prayer - Rev. Bob Rhodes

I'm excited to come up here and not make you vote on something. At the close of this Plenary session, we have a little bit of time. The Cherish dinner begins at 5:00 p.m. in the Esmeralda Ballroom. The Celebration of Life Worship Service is at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. Rhodes shared a list of the activities scheduled for the evening.

Closing Prayer

Our closing prayer was offered by Honor Liebold from First United Methodist Church of San Diego, Cole D'Agostino from St. Marks United Methodist Church of San Diego, Emily and Connor Whitehorn from Hollywood United Methodist Church.

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CELEBRATION OF LIFE WORSHIP SERVICE | JUNE 12, 2025, 7:00 PM (PDT)

The service began with the Cherish Band playing, *Goodness of God*, written by CeCe Winans, and continued with the singing of I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry, from the Faith We Sing Hymnal, #2051.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

The congregation sang *Child of Blessing, Child of Promise* from the United Methodist Hymnal, #611.

Baptism of Ellory Blair Stowe

Bishop Escobedo-Frank baptized Ellory Blair Stowe, with the United Methodist Litany of Baptism including Renunciation of Sin and the Profession of Faith, the Thanksgiving Over Water, and Baptism with Laying On of Hands. Ellory Blair Stowe was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Escobedo-Frank, Ellory's parents and friends lay hands on Ellory, as Bishop Escobedo-Frank declared, "The Holy Spirit work with you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ."

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited the congregation to welcome Ellory Blair Stowe as their new sister in Christ, and to remember "that you are baptized and rejoice!"

Bishop Escobedo-Frank concluded Ellory's baptism with these words: "Beloved of God, cherished and chosen, you are part of the story— a story of faith, of family, of grace unfolding through every generation. May you walk with joy through all the seasons of your life, knowing the One who walks with you."

The congregation sang *I am a Child of God*, written by Mark Miller.

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 5:1-16, was shared.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced Bishop Sally Dyck, who shared the Message on the theme of Cherish. She closed her message with these words, "All of us are a child of God. And that is a miracle. Amen.

Rev. Moonyoung Lee shared the Acts of Remembrance: As we gather each year for Annual Conference sessions, we take the time to remember and honor those who have passed away. As the video is shown and each name is read, we invite you to stand if you are a family member, were blessed by their ministry, or if this person made a significant impact upon you during their ministry. As the name is read, a candle will be lit. The candles will float in water signifying the way in which Christ named them in their Baptism on earth and now are experiencing the gift of eternal life in their eternal dwelling place. To the families of those we remember: We welcome you and offer you our heartfelt condolences. As you leave the service this evening, please come and take a folded crane with a prayer written inside that is part of the picture in the front as a gift to remember your loved ones on this day."

In Memoriam Clergy

Rev. Djalma Araujo
Rev. David Burgeson
Rev. Dr. Daesun Chung
Rev. Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr.
Rev. Rosemary Davis
Rev. Dr. Hidemi Ito
Rev. Dr. Afrie Joye
Rev. Thomas Donghyung Kim
Rev. Martha Kogle
Rev. James Lawson, Jr.
Rev. Mary Alice McKinney
Rev. Carmen Pak
Rev. Juan Riingen
Rev. Donald Roe
Rev. Teresa Santillana

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Rev. Dr. Lisle Stewart
Rev. Gilbert Stones
Rev. Marvin Warner
Rev. Dr. Lydia Waters
Pastor Sidney Wilson

In Memoriam Spouses

Mrs. Jane Arrowsmith
Mrs. Virginia (Butler) Gollery
Mrs. Judith Howard
Mrs. Donna Johnson
Mrs. Meryl M. Johnson
Mrs. Kye Ja Kim
Mrs. Dorothy Lawson
Mrs. Chan Sook Lee
Mrs. Kay Lee
Mr. Bradley Mettam
Mrs. Pasepa Ngauamo
Mrs. Yoshiko Nishikawa
Mrs. Jean Price
Mrs. Eleanor Staup
Mrs. Margaret Strand
Mrs. Gaynl Trotter
Mrs. Eunice Tseng

In Memoriam Lay Staff

Gaundzale Dixon
Joyce Zirkle

The congregation sang *Hymn of Promise* from the United Methodist Hymnal, #707 and Rev. Julie Elkins led the congregation in a Prayer for the Saints and Faithfully Departed.

The service was closed with the singing of *For All the Saints* from the United Methodist Hymnal, #711. Bishop Sally Dyck offered the closing Blessing and the Cherish Band performed *For All the Saints/When the Saints Go Marching In*.

(3) U.M. DAILY Friday, June 13, 2025 41st Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference

WESLEYAN LOVE FEAST | JUNE 13, 2025, 8:30 AM (PDT)

The Focus Scripture is Romans 12:10: "Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor."

The Praise song is *Jesus In Me Loves the Jesus in You* from the Worship & Song hymnal, #3151.

A greeting was shared by Rev. Julie Elkins

The Tongan Sacred Song, Teu Hiki a Hoku Le'o, was shared by the Cherish Band. "Come into the Spirit of God, we know how you Cherish. There is no way we can repay You. All we have is this song of thanks."

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The Scripture reading was shared by Rev. Won-Seok Yuh, Romans 12:9-13: “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.”

Sharing of the Bread and Water

Crackers, our love feast bread, and water, were passed around the tables. People served each other with these words: “You are cherished by God and by this community.”

As we continue to cherish each other, the attendees were invited to be in dialogue with each other at their tables offering and responding to this question: “What does it mean to “cherish” someone in the way Jesus does?”

The closing prayer was offered by Rev. Julie Elkins. This is Wesley’s Prayer that he offered at the Love Feast, using his traditional words:

Father of earth and heaven, thy hungry children feed. Thy grace be to our spirits given, that true immortal bread. Grant to us and all our race in Jesus Christ to prove the sweetness of thy pardoning grace, the manna of thy love. Amen.

The Cherish Band led the congregation in the closing song, *Bind Us Together*, #2226 from the Faith We Sing hymnal.

PLENARY SESSION 4 | JUNE 13, 2025, 9:00 AM (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered the opening prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked for Erin Hawkins-Smith, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, to come forward with an announcement about our Conference Band.

Erin Hawkins-Smith, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries: Good morning Cal-Pac! I am Erin Hawkins-Smith, your Executive Director of Connectional Ministries. I want to take just a moment to introduce you to the wonderful band which has been leading us in worship since we’ve been here.

The Cherish Band came onto the stage.

Erin Hawkins-Smith: About a year ago, while I was on a Wesleyan Pilgrimage in England, touring various sites and following in the footsteps of John and Charles Wesley, I met this young man on the trip and we instantly bonded. He told me about his love for God and his interest in the Methodist Church, and his wanting to learn more, which was why he was on the trip. That person was Eric Lige. We didn’t know each other before then, but by the time the pilgrimage was over, we were besties. I said, “Eric, welcome home to the United Methodist Church!” We’ve been talking and planning and praying together, and Eric is finding his way in our system. I invited him to be a part of a team we curated for worship this week. He has done an amazing job!

He has offered wonderful leadership to this wonderful group of creative instrumentalists and vocalists, who are from some of our United Methodist churches, but also part of our extended Christian family because Eric brought friends with him. That just made our experience all the richer. Please give a hand to all the members of our band.

Ms. Hawkins-Smith introduced the band: David Kaplan on drums; Nathan Buck is the bassist; John Fluker, our pianist; Dean Ricker-Manning is the guitarist; Nesi Baker, vocalist; Lokelani Hungalu, vocalist; January Lim, who has been wonderful in leading us—January is leaving us today, so we wanted to make sure that we expressed our appreciation for January. Noel Spangrud, vocalist; Le’ota Tu’itahi; and Bri Uipi. Thank you all once again for everything you have done.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank thanked the band for the beautiful music they have brought to us.

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Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

The Orders of the Day have been put before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh greeted the body, and also apologized for reading the “wrong” translation of scripture during the morning worship.

As we continue to cherish each other, we know that the website went down yesterday. Throughout the day, some of you shared that you could not email. Google went down even before we began to vote. However, most of you got to vote, and we are grateful. All of you who got to vote today, say “Hallelujah!” For those who still need some help, say “Lord have mercy!” If you still need some help, go ahead and raise your hand – I’m running around making sure that we are all staying connected and have the opportunity to connect.

We are going to the website at all times, correct? We are going to calpacumc.org/ac2025. Again, the network is steady. Network: AC2025. Passcode: 25ACSession.

We still heard that some people cannot connect. I ask you to please turn off your wifi on the devices you are not voting with. You received an email from Jennifer Gaylord with all of your voting information.

In our voting platform, MeetingPulse, we encourage you to go to the mic online. Also, when you ask for help, our moderators are right there helping you. We are seeing lots of “prayer hands” when the Bishop preaches!

If you wish to turn off “expressions” in MeetingPulse, you can turn it off. Please turn off all Facebook, any streaming and live feeds. Wordly Translations are at: attend.wordly.ai They do not offer Tongan or Samoan. We will be voting on legislation and the Constitutional Amendments, and want to make sure that everyone’s vote is counted. More information is available at calpacumc.org/forms/ac2025secretarysubmissions.

We have a lot of legislation we will go over today. Great job for yesterday! We got through the Constitutional Amendments!

On the Cal-Pac Website, we have a new updated version of REC 25-10. It will not be voted on today, but please look at it for tomorrow.

RES 25-06 is newly published today.

We also have the Consent Calendar to go over today. It is in the participant guide, which can be found on the website, and it is on page 8. Please silence your phones.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Bishop Dyck is going to be leaving at the end of this session today. We wish to say thank you again to her for being with us at this time.

The body took a five minute break so the stage could be set.

Cherish Chat: Disaster Response - Krista Bilderbach and Panel

Krista Bilderbach: I welcome you all to this chat. I am a laity from Community UMC, Huntington Beach. We will begin with a video.

A video was shown about the recent fires and different peoples’ testimonies about these fires, along with the Cal-Pac response to this disaster.

Krista Bilderbach: Over the past few decades the Disaster Task Force (DTF) has responded to many disasters – some that have made the news and some that have not. We respond by helping with cleanup and repairs, handing out hygiene kits, handing out ash buckets, and other assistance at resource centers and individually. The DTF members also attend or

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monitor meetings in each of the counties that our Conference is in to understand what those response plans are and how we can help. Additionally, members have responded to dozens of events both locally and nationally when we are called by UMCOR as Emergency Response Team members. Today we are highlighting four of the largest events that we are responding to right now – the Los Angeles fires, the Lahaina fire, the Ventura mountain fire, and the San Diego flooding. To do that, we have a few people who are going to talk about their experiences. We have survivors from Lahaina, Pacific Palisades, and the Eaton fires, and a volunteer from a Ventura fire long-term recovery group. Please welcome Pastor John Crewe from Lahaina, Bryce Swanson from Pacific Palisades, Antonio Watson from Eaton, and Esther Benedict representing the Mountain fire. Each is going to tell you a little bit, then I'm going to try to quickly hit what the DTF has been doing in response.

Antonio Watson, Altadena UMC: Good morning, everyone. My name is Antonio Watson, and earlier this year, my family of five lost our home in the Eaton Fires. On the night of the fire, I stood on my roof with a hose in hand, trying desperately to hold back the flames. I remember the sky glowing orange, smoke thick in the air, and the sound of embers falling like ash from heaven. But no matter how hard I tried, the fire moved faster and stronger than anything I've ever seen. Within moments, everything was gone.

Our house—the place where we raised our children, celebrated birthdays, shared meals, and built memories—was reduced to rubble. As you can see from the photos, nothing was spared. Bedrooms, family photos, furniture, even the kids' toys—turned to ash and bent, mangled metal.

And yet, what hurt most wasn't just the loss of things. It was the moment we realized we prayed our last prayer in that house; we celebrated our last birthday in that house; my wife and I danced our last dance in that house. As I took my family to safety, we told our kids, this is our house, but it is not our home. That while their rooms, their backyard, toys, and bikes were all gone, God is real and God is keeping us.

In the six days that followed, we moved five times and found ourselves overwhelmed — displaced, uncertain, and emotionally drained. But what carried us through was the outpouring of support from friends, neighbors, and even strangers. Oddly, after more than two dozen meetings with contractors, architects, and the insurance company, an uncomfortable doubt began to set in. I know that sounds off for a Christian to express doubt, but it's ok for doubt to exist. If there was no doubt, then there would be no need for faith. As Christians, our faith is exercised in the very face of doubt. God is still real.

Inspired by our faith, and some spiritual advice from our Pastor, we filled six mason jars (one for each family member and my son's girlfriend) with the ashes and rubble from our burned house. We plan to prominently display those jars in our new home when it's built. We will give God the glory, this will be a testimony of God's faithfulness and His promises. He will never leave us nor forsake us, even unto the end of the World.

Thank you for inviting us, inviting me. Anything that I can do to answer or help with, please let me know. Thank you. God bless.

Krista Bilderbach: Thank you, Antonio. I am now going to ask Bryce Swanson to tell us about his response to the Palisades fire.

Bryce Swanson, Lay Leader, Community UMC of Pacific Palisades: Good morning. My name is Bryce and I am the lay leader at the Community UMC, CUMC of the Pacific Palisades – also affectionately known as “the church that built a town.” Of course, the church and most of the town are now gone. Just a few days after the fire we began to brainstorm on ways to support those most affected. Just a few weeks after the fire the Disaster Response Task Force parked their trailer on the street in front of our burned down church and dropped off palettes of donated supplies in our parking lot. Thus, the CAUMC UMCOR Local Assistance Center was born.

We opened the doors to the trailer and offered supplies to anyone in need, Methodists and non-Methodists alike. Without exception, those whom we helped were grateful and many were amazed that we were offering assistance to the community even though our church building was gone. They weren't only grateful for the supplies – after speaking with dozens and dozens of people, I got the impression that they were equally grateful for the opportunity to tell their stories. I know that we were grateful for the opportunity to listen. They spoke of the loss of their homes, cars, possessions,

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friends, and loved ones. It's important to remember that people died in the fire, including one of our beloved church members. Essentially they spoke of the loss of their community. They also spoke of the need of a person or persons they could trust to help them navigate the challenges of dealing with FEMA, the SPA, insurance companies, architects, contractors, and many others. They mostly spoke of the need to feel safe again.

We at CUMC are extremely fortunate to have found our person in interim, Rev. Catie Coots. Those of you who know Rev. Catie know that she is amazing – a force of nature, if you will. On Monday we will have a Charge Conference wherein we will approve her salary and benefits package, as she has agreed to be our pastor for the foreseeable future. We believe that Rev. Catie will bring stability to an unstable situation. Therefore, we ask that the Conference consider having Rev. Catie assigned to us for a minimum of two years. We know and love her, and she is the perfect person to lead us through these difficult times. But whatever your decision, we thank you for assigning Rev. Catie to us once again. I am confident that under Rev. Catie's leadership, and the continuing support of the Conference, amazing volunteers, and wonderful donors, we will rebuild our church, parsonage, and rental properties while also continuing to play our part in long-term disaster response support for the members of our church and community. I am also confident that decades from now, we will also be known as “the church that helped rebuild a community.” Thank you so much.

Krista Bilderbach: In response to these two fires, volunteers also participated at resource centers in both Pacific Palisades and Altadena, and distributed around \$100,000 in gift cards and \$50,000-75,000 in physical assets such as ash sifters, personal protective equipment, and various other items. Those were donated by you and from across the nation as noted by the Bishop. As you saw, we received other items that were distributed, and I cannot express how important Karl Ports was to those activities.

In addition, as the Bishop described, we received more than \$1.2 million plus whatever was received this week from this Annual Conference, and we thank you all for those responses. As of now, we have already distributed a little over \$500,000 to both of the churches and to survivors from those churches – to which I would like to thank Paige Eaves, Catie Coots, and Melissa McKinnon for all that they have done working with survivors and helping us with those funds. As we go forward and begin to transition to long-term recovery for the LA fires, we have received an UMCOR grant in excess of \$600,000. This is a one year grant to support five disaster case managers, which Esther will speak more about in a moment. We will hopefully be renewing that for another two years. As the saying goes, “Methodists are quietly the first in and the last out.”

Next, I want to move to the 2023 Lahaina fires, because they are in a different part of their recovery – they're in the long-term portion. Pastor John, would you like to share a little bit about that?

John Crewe, Clergy, Lahaina UMC: Yes, thank you. Aloha, mai kakou. As I was listening to Antonio share his experiences, you can imagine it brought back memories of the fire in Lahaina and what we went through. Our hearts went out to our siblings who went through the same thing. We were very moved by what was going on and the testimonies we were hearing.

On August 8, the Lahaina community will hold a memorial to mark two years since our devastating fires that impacted our area. And while I hoped that we would be farther along in the rebuilding process, it has taken a while. The logistics of sending supplies to a remote island in the middle of the Pacific is very great, so we saw a lot of local things going on. As soon as people found out about the fires in Maui, people were going to Costco, filling up their carts and setting up makeshift distribution centers in Lahaina, getting supplies there any way they could. People were able to get the supplies they needed. Then when it came down to clearing out the area and sifting through the process, in the first few months after the fires the delegation led by District Superintendent Choi, Reverend Won-Seok Yuh, Karl Ports, and Denyse Barnes – they came to listen to our stories, to film our stories so we could share what was going on and what people were going through. We received such an outpouring of love from all of you in the Cal-Pac Conference and people from all over the country that we had to set up a place to receive all of the donations. Reverend Kim from Ala Lani UMC and Tina Draper, her secretary, were routing all of the donations to us, and that gave us hope that we would be able to rebuild and also helped us through the long-term process. Bishop Escobedo-Frank also visited us in October, which was a very healing and uplifting experience for our church. District Superintendent Choi also came to visit – we have had so many people, our visitors found where we were. We are about four miles up the road now, sharing a church with Lahuioikalani Ka'ānapali Congregational Church, and we have had many visitors there.

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Shortly after the fire, Dara Grant and Reverend Kim Houff and family led the Hawaii Emergency Response Team helped us sift through the debris on the property to find the treasures that people had. Some of these treasures would really touch your heart – a clay piggy bank that the son of one of our members made when he was in elementary school. She was in tears when we recovered it and gave it to her, and it served as a miracle to remind us that God is still with us.

Now, almost two years later, we have persevered and grown together as a community, responding to the needs of our members while they move around from one place to another. The important thing that we are trying to do in our community as we rebuild is keeping people there. It is the people of Lahaina that make it special – it's a beautiful tourist spot, but it would not be what it is without the people, many generations of people native to the land. Our church was founded as a Japanese mission church for the workers in the fields, and over time our church demographics changed as we merged with the Filipino Methodist Church when the plantation shut down and tourism came. Demographics have changed again and now half of our congregation is Tongan, and we have a beautiful, multi-cultural church. We want to make sure they stay because they are Lahaina.

We are finally preparing to return to our property. We have hired a consultant to help us get our permits through. We have had an issue with water, but I have just found out that the water department is working with us to make sure we get through that hurdle so we can set up a temporary structure to worship in. We will be worshipping there hopefully by the end of the year. The parsonage survived the fire – Kevin Oliveti, who is here with me today, is working on replacing the windows of the parsonage, so we will be back there soon. We are collaborating with Krista and the Disaster Response Team as well as Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Recovery Group, which is the long-term disaster recovery group in Maui. They are excited because we have 3.2 acres of land on our property, and we would be able to house volunteers to help people rebuild. We figure it is going to be a 5-year process to rebuild peoples' homes. Many people do not have enough insurance to rebuild, so we need volunteers to help us put up drywall and do other important tasks. UMCOR will come out and those who have expressed interest in volunteering will have a place to stay, so we are looking forward to setting that up.

Our long-term plan as we rebuild our church is to build a hall where people can meet. We used to have a basement in our church where people would meet, and it's not an ideal place but it was still a place for the community. We want to have a place to meet, hold wedding ceremonies, celebrations, graduations, community meetings, and more on our church property because we are right in the middle of town. Additionally, we received a FEMA grant that will assist in building our church and pre-school. Along with our fellowship hall we would like to eventually be able to provide affordable housing. Like I said, we have a lot of land and a big need in Maui for housing because locals cannot afford to live there anymore.

Throughout this journey we have felt Christ's steadfast presence in our community and your continued support has reminded us of God's faithfulness. Thank you so much for helping us, giving us the confidence and the faith that we will be able to rebuild our church. It will be a blessing to the community as Lahaina rebuilds. Mahalo.

Krista Bilderbach: Thank you. In addition to working with Lahaina, we also sit on what is called an "Unmet Needs" Community. Unmet Needs will come forth, and that is another way that we help with those funds that are raised. They go both to Methodists and non-Methodists, and to those that come through disaster case management and work with various people.

In 2024 we had another fire, the Ventura Mountain fire, that destroyed a number of homes. In the immediate response, we did more distributions and ash-sifting, led by Don Howald. Now in the long-term, Esther Benedict is acting as a Volunteer Disaster Case Manager. We are hoping for another grant to help out Ventura and are still waiting on that news.

Esther, please tell us about your experiences.

Esther Benedict, Laity, Ventura First, Volunteer Disaster Case Manager: Last November, a fire broke out in remote areas of Eastern Ventura County. Because of the inaccessibility, it was very difficult to fight the fire. It burned range land, farms and houses in the hillsides above the City of Camarillo. Nearly 20,000 acres were burned, 182 homes were fully destroyed, and 10 were severely damaged. By comparison to other disasters it doesn't seem like much, but to the people who lost everything, it was devastating. One thing I frequently hear from our survivors is that they feel overlooked.

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Recovery and rebuilding after a disaster is complicated and overwhelming. As Disaster Case Managers, our job is to come alongside survivors and walk with them throughout their recovery. A Disaster Case Manager is a source of information, of resources, an empathetic listener, a coach, an advocate. Our aim is to empower the survivors in their own recovery. A slide show which showed the different phases of disaster and how these phases impact survivors was shared, which Ms. Benedict shared and explained.

The six phases are: Pre-Disaster Phase; Impact Phase; Heroic Phase; Honeymoon Phase; Disillusionment Phase; and Reconstruction: A New Beginning.

Long-term recovery is long - especially for wildfires. For the fortunate, recovery may come in two years, for others, recovery will take 3, 4, 5 or more years. And for some, sadly, never. It is important that we as a church continue to support and cherish disaster survivors throughout the entirety of their recovery.

More information was given about how to continue to help the survivors and gratitude was expressed to those who have been walking this journey with the survivors. An invitation was given to visit them at the Disaster/UMVIM table at Annual Conference,

Krista Bilderbach: One of the big pieces of how we do this is going from that early response into the long term. We are there in each of the stages of disaster recovery: Short-term (days); Intermediate (weeks-months); Long-term (months-years) and these stages do overlap.

Thank you were offered to all those who worked tirelessly in disaster recovery and the disaster recovery ministry. They were honored by great applause from the body of the Annual Conference. An invitation was given to any who would like to join in this work with the Disaster Response Task Force, please come see me at our table at Annual Conference.

Know that we will be walking with all of the survivors out there.

SAI/UMC Scholarships - Bob Arvizu

A video was shown on the Spanish American Institute, offering its history, catching up with a previous Scholarship Recipient, Siomara Salinas, from Nestor UMC. The 2025 Cesar Lizarraga Scholarship Recipients are: Aaron Suarez, Nursing Major, Mt. San Jacinto College, from Rialto UMC; Kassandra Suarez, Nursing Major, Arizona College of Nursing, from Rialto UMC; Alex Rodrigues, Computer Science Major, UC Santa Cruz, from Knollwood UMC.

Bob Arvizu: I'm happy to be here on behalf of the Spanish American Institute, which began as a trade school started by Methodist men. They were incorporated in 1909 and opened their doors in Gardena in 1913. In 1972, the school was closed. The property was sold for a large sum of money, and the State of California said that proceeds needed to continue to benefit Hispanic men and women. We give money to community colleges in Los Angeles, and this year we partnered with an organization in the United Methodist Church, and they are a part of the Urban Foundation, and called Kid City.

They are going to present their first SAI scholarships. Before I start, I want to show you our piggy banks – you can adopt a piggy this afternoon. You can feed it, and bring it back to your Annual Conference next year. The piggy bank adoption is our primary fundraiser for scholarships.

Anne Hawthorne, of Kid City was introduced. She awarded three scholarship recipients \$500 each: Idsel Gonzalez, Maria DeVarga, and EvonVallente. Ziamara Salinas was invited to come forward. She is a past scholarship recipient.

Ziamara Salinas: I am honored to be in a room full of people who are so devoted to God and to their communities. Thank you for everything you do. Ziamara shared that she recently graduated from UC Riverside, and is an immigrant who came to the United States when she was 18 to attend community college. She is also a first generation college student, and is very proud to be one. Ziamara shared her story about what the scholarship has meant to her, and also shared her struggles in trying to be a student during the pandemic. It was through the Spanglish Camp that her parents learned of the SAI scholarship program. She shared that if it hadn't been for the SAI scholarship, she probably would not have gone back to school and received her degree. She encourages everyone to keep supporting SAI so that other Latino

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students and people like me can continue to pursue our dreams, and to get an education so that we can take space and be in the place the Lord wants us to be through education.

Bob Arvizu: The 2025 SAI scholarship recipients were named: Aaron Suarez, Nursing Major, Mt. San Jacinto College, from Rialto UMC; Kassandra Suarez, Nursing Major, Arizona College of Nursing, from Rialto UMC; Alex Rodrigues, Computer Science Major, UC Santa Cruz, from Knollwood UMC.

Prayer Request - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Mr. Arvizu shared the grandfather of recipient Alex Rodrigues, was taken to hospital. Prayers were asked for Pete. Prayers were also requested for a laity member of the Annual Conference who has just been taken to the hospital.

CFA Presentation: Budget Presentation - Rev. Molly Vetter and Rev. George Hooper

Rev. Molly Vetter, Chair CFA: We offer our CFA report and information, and a presentation on the budget. We will report on what we have been doing, who we are and what we can be. I would like to life up a few people I cherish who have given faithfully of themselves to this Annual Conference:

I wish to acknowledge my predecessor Howard Hudson. He has been an active leader of the CFA for more than two decades. His support and encouragement has been a gift. I also want to acknowledge Jan Hanson, who has served on our Conference staff for more than two decades. She has given of herself with great love during her many years of service to this Conference. She retired this year.

I also want to acknowledge Joyce Zirkle, who for 24 years worked in the finance office. She was unfailingly able to greet everyone with care and love. She brought humanity and love to the administrative work of our Conference. She was a recipient of the Bishop's Award in 2019. We give thanks to God for the life of Joyce Zirkle.

We have reports to share with you about how we are ordering the life of our Conference. George Hooper, Jonathan Chute and I are aware that all three of us are White, Cis, straight clergy serving large congregations. We have an awareness that sometimes the administrative function of the church is one place that we are even slower to hand off power to others. We are committed to helping hand off our jobs to people who more fully represent the diversity of our Annual Conference.

Jonathan Chute, Chair of the Staff Relations Committee: I began a little less than a year ago and came into a situation where a consultation with resource people from GCFA had come to help with administrative and finance restructuring in an effort to create and develop greater transparency, accountability and an openness of communication with the Annual Conference. When I arrived, I found the reports and the conversations that had been on-going, which included extensive conversations with existing staff and looking around our connection to find ways that other Annual Conferences were organizing themselves around the same important concerns.

It became clear that the recommendations of the GCFA consultation were, in part, to simplify our structure. We had positions that were overlapping and duplicative. There was no one who had a clear picture at once. We had gone without a Comptroller for a number of years. We looked at simplifying the structure to have the Conference Treasurer position renamed the Chief Benefit and Finance Officer, congruent with other Annual Conferences. To have that position be the overseer of work happening with a team that includes a Comptroller, a Benefits Manager, and an Human Resources Manager. Coming into this position, we were in the process of developing job descriptions and consulting again with GCFA. The first person we were able to bring on board was Paula Boyd who is our Comptroller. We were delighted to move Wanda Berthea from a supportive position up to the Benefits Manager. We also have on board Rosanna Wallac, HR Manager. We are still searching for someone to join the team as CFBO. Christy Drenner has agreed to stay and be helpful to us as we work towards a transition.

We are so glad of the collaboration within the leadership team. It was like building a plane while it was in the air, but I think that we have come to a good, healthy and strong place.

Christy Drenner, Interim Conference Treasurer: Good morning Bishop and members of the Cal Pac Conference. I have truly enjoyed getting to work with all of you this past year. It has been a year of significant challenges, changes and most importantly growth. As I noted in my speech last year, we have taken on each day in the light of Philippians 3:14 –

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moving onward towards perfection each day. It is good to be a United Methodist and know that is what we are called to do! Not perfection but progress.

Over the past year, as Jonathan noted, we have restructured the staff, rebuilt the last several years of accounting entries and financial statements, prepared for two audits, rebuilt and converted the entire accounting structure. Any one of these tasks on top of the usual heavy load of Conference financials would be a lot but your leaders have been putting in the hard work to make a significant change in how we operate.

I want to especially thank three groups of people:

- Erin Hawkins-Smith, Molly Vetter, George Hooper, Jonathan Chute and Rod Sprott. Your work this past year has gone above and beyond anything you probably anticipated. Your faithful service, discernment and wisdom will benefit this conference for years to come. I am truly grateful.
- To the finance and HR staff – I appreciate your willingness to show up everyday with a joyful heart and willing spirit to help move our work forward. Your dedication and hard work has been a blessing.
- And finally, the rest of the Annual Conference staff for your patience as our team has been pulling the pieces together and creating new ways of doing business.

Now on to a brief recap of how we ended 2024. As you will note on page 67 of the Preliminary Report – the actuals for 2024 are listed next to the budget. We did end the year in a deficit of \$777,000.00. However, due to the faithful stewardship of our leaders – it could have been far worse. The total revenue for the year came in at \$7.3M which is significantly less than our total budget of \$10.7M last year. Careful stewardship and thoughtful spending prevented the Conference from going further into the red.

The apportionment revenue represents a 70% payout last year. We know that apportionment collections have been declining for the past several years. This was one of the factors that led to the creation of the Apportionment Formula Task Force.

I know you all attended our town hall meeting in May or watched it online but just in case you were otherwise engaged, we want to level set the conversation that we will be having during this presentation and the one to come this afternoon.

The Committee was formed in December with members from CFA and other outside interested parties. We met several times over the next few months to discuss what values our apportionment formula should represent. We offered a proposed rules change and presented it to the conference in multiple formats over the month of May.

There are two basic models for apportionment calculations:

- The decimal model is a top down model that stems from the needs of the Annual Conference budget and then through a series of complicated calculations that are hard for a local church to reproduce, an amount is assessed to the local church. Your church's apportionment calculation is related to not only YOUR local church realities but where you are in relationship to the whole.
- The percentage based model is a bottom up model that stems from the realities at the local church and informs the Annual Conference of the capacity for giving which then sets the budget. In our case, 10% of 52T or total revenue was the formula. Basing the calculation on revenue allows for a more direct reflection of the realities at the local church level than a calculation based on expenses. We know that most churches have fixed costs and are not easily able to adjust spending when revenue declines. Oftentimes, they are having to use reserves to make up the difference which are not a part of the proposed apportionment formula.

Both models rely on accurate statistical data.

The proposed calculation used the percentage based model. The Task Force was a proponent of this model for several reasons:

- It is simple – any church can calculate their own number based on their statistical data

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- It is easier to communicate – we all know how percentages work because we use them to tip our favorite service providers!
- As noted, it centered on local church realities
- It was consistent with how we practice giving in our local churches.

After evaluating the percentage based model or “revenue” model as some have coined the term, we noted that what a church considered revenue, for example how it relates to renting out its parsonage, varied from church to church.

In conclusion, CFA decided to withdraw the Rules change for this Annual Conference. We want to give the Conference a chance to continue to inform the process on where modifications might be needed, to provide education to our local churches this fall on how to consistently report revenue across the statistical categories for 2025, and to ensure that the values of Cal Pac are being incorporated into the model.

I think I can speak for everyone when I say we took great strides in moving forward with a new model, but realized we needed just a little bit more time.

I am going to pass it back to Molly to continue the conversation.

Rev. Molly Vetter, Chair CFA: Rev. Vetter shared that in CFA, talking about apportionments spends a lot of time in spreadsheets. We have slowly shifted the conversation into thinking about them as if they were a tax on us. I wish to remind the body that we contribute to the work of the church because giving is a joy and faithful giving, especially at a percentage of what we receive, is perceived as a spiritual practice that helps inform and shape us, not only as individuals but as members of communities.

In congregations, when we commit to connectional giving at the beginning, we are practicing that our belonging is not to individual congregations, but to a whole church. This matters. Rev. Vetter reminded the body that the “raining down of hearts” that Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared, helps us remember that we have been showered by love beyond us. We belong in a community that seeks our wellbeing and care, and that changes how we think about money, our giving, and our apportionments.

Rev. Vetter shared that people in her congregation have been reading the book, “The Land is Not Empty” by Sarah Augustine. The author is a leader in the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery and is helping us better understand and to work toward embodying the commitment towards decolonization and repair of relationships with Native American peoples. She invites us to think about repair as a richer conversation than reparations. If we think of reparations as an amount of money we can pay so that we can release ourselves from caring or unhook ourselves from guilt. Instead, she invites us to think about the ongoing work of repair, which is a contribution to the wellbeing of others. It’s an investment in our belonging together.

In a similar way, I think of our apportionment giving as an investment that says we matter to each other and the work that we share together as a Conference matters. The values of the Gospel shapes our budget. She invited George Hooper to come forward and talk about the budget setting process in our Conference.

George Hooper, Chair of the Connectional Table: Rev. Hooper shared that they have been reimagining the connectional table and decided that last year, it was part of doing our budget in a new way - based on our values and our priorities. We have been guided by the Bishop’s goals of sustainability, equity and transparency. The budget is a moral document as Rev. Vetter shared, The connectional table met with a broad spectrum of people in the Annual Conference in a variety of settings, asking these three questions: What realities are you dealing with in your local church that are signs that change is needed; what kinds of things do you need in the local church to live into this new reality; and where can we be in mission together as an Annual Conference, because no one church can do it alone. The answers guided them in the budget process and also informed the work of staff restructuring. On several occasions, they were able to address concerns immediately.

In September of 2024, Chairpersons of all Conference ministries were invited to participate in the first Ministry Leaders’ Summit for the 2024-2025 Annual Conference year. The purpose was to connect leaders for collaboration, vision casting and mutual learning. The attendees responded to the question, “What does Cal-Pac need or need to do to flourish?”

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Out of all the responses, Erin Hawkins-Smith and the Connectional Table affirmed seven themes - seven priorities for the Annual Conference:

- Community Collaboration and Connection - helping local churches to connect to movements and ministries outside of the four walls of the church
- Discipleship and Spirituality - reconnecting with our Wesleyan Spirituality and supporting intentional discipleship systems.
- Ethnic Ministries - supporting revitalization efforts in our churches of color.
- Healing Trauma - addressing the deep wounds of communities and peoples of this region.
- Next Generation Ministries - rebuilding our ministries with young people.
- Pruning - we must get serious about the things that we need to prune in our conference in order to focus time, attention and resources in our priorities.
- Shared Administrative Services - easing the administrative burden experienced by local churches by offering administrative support at the conference level.

Various Committees, Task Forces and EMT's have already begun to work in these areas. These priorities helped craft the budget. They also asked, "What can be supported and sustained through sources other than apportionments?"

This budget was designed with the work of CFA in mind - specifically their question of "What is the giving capacity of the local congregations." We did seek to hold the apportioned budget bottom line to no more than that allowed. This is a "broad strokes" budget, set to become effective January 1, 2026. The details, including additional savings, will be realized over the next months through the continued collaboration of Connectional Ministries and CFA at the Connectional Table.

I am so thankful for the CFA presenting the budget before our session, giving us time as a body to give careful consideration. At one of our times of presentation, one of you asked, "Can you give us examples of how this budget impacts ministry and helps the local church?"

I am going to ask Erin Hawkins-Smith to share some responses to that question with you.

Erin Hawkins-Smith, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries: By separating out the administrative expenses (salaries, postage, travel, etc.) into general line items in the Connectional Ministries budget, the Essential Ministry Teams budgets reflect programmatic investments aimed at supporting local churches. There you will see grant funds, training funds, and resourcing funds intended to help congregations to live and grow faithfully in ministry.

In addition to the funds that are reflected in the apportionment budget, various ministries within Connectional Ministries have access to restricted reserves and investment funds that are used to support the needs of local churches. We know that the EMT's are not equally funded. This is an area that we will be addressing in the coming year. The good news is that the Connectional Ministries Team has been working intentionally to be more collaborative, sharing resources between the ministries. The EMT's Chairs, which include Mary Elizabeth Moore, Leadership and Discipleship; Dorrie Fotsch who is leading the Justice and Compassion EMT; and Rev. Sione Finau, who is leading the New Ministries EMT, along with Larry Hygh who is chairing our Communications Commission, have been meeting together to coordinate ministry and find ways to support our collective work. This includes sharing funds with each other across EMT lines. And while Connectional Ministries will continue hard conversations, identifying places where pruning is necessary, these conversations will be inclusive and transparent. We are committed to leaving behind our past history of turf wars and decisions being made without the involvement of the ministries impacted.

REC 25-07- Budget with Narrative

Rev. Molly Vetter moved REC 25-07 which is our 2026 Budget.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. George Hooper, Chair of the Connectional Table: As we have shared with you, the CFA wants to turn the old model upside down. To start with you and end with all of us together.

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Rev. Molly Vetter, Chair of CFA: To be clear, for the 2026 apportionments, we will continue to use the grade-figure formula as it currently exists in our Rules, because we withdrew the proposed Rules Change for this year. However, we have offered you a Recommendation that we hope you will consider. We ask that you help us as we refine our proposed change as we get buy-in to this change to switch from the decimal model to a percentage model that starts with local church finances and assigns a percentage of that which becomes your apportionment. That percentage would be related to income. Those are the changes that we think make sense for clarity, simplicity and communication. We want to know what you think. What do you worry about in your local church as you think about this, and what hope do you see in it?

Time was given for the attendees of the Annual Conference to respond to these questions.

With help from the media team, the body was invited to respond to questions by responding through the voting platform and from table discussions. Here are the questions:

What are three things you worry about for your church regarding this tithe model for apportionments?

What are 3 things you hope for as an outcome of this change?

Thank you for doing this work. This is kicking off the work we will be doing, as we begin this year-long process. It is a gift to be in the work of resourcing and generously giving for the work of our beloved community together.

CST Moment – Rev. Steve Horswill-Johnston, Sr. Vice President

Rev. Horswill-Johnston shared the history of Claremont School of Theology, including its beginnings, different locations, and Claremont, California location. The school has been in a journey of transition for 140 years, but in the last two years, the Claremont School of Theology has seen its greatest transition. They are now located in the Westwood UMC campus - a place where they can finally breathe. Mr. Horswill-Johnston thanked the Cal-Pac Conference for their commitment to the Claremont School of Theology.

He also shared that in 1885, they started with 9 students, one of them a woman. Her name was Emily Bennett. She was the first woman in California to graduate with a degree in Theology, and she is with all of us today.

Legislation - Jason Takagi

Consent Calendar, RUL 25-06, RES 25-02, RUL 25-07- Budget with Narrative

Jason Takagi, Legislative Chair: The Consent Calendar was presented during yesterday's morning Plenary session, and includes items that received 80% or greater support for concurrence or non-concurrence in the Legislative Sections held last week. As a reminder, items that were not included in the Consent Calendar are items that were amended, regardless of percentages, items that did not reach an 80% threshold for either concurrence or non-concurrence, or items that were not assigned to a Legislative Section. With all of this in mind, Bishop Escobedo-Frank, I move the Consent Calendar for Concurrence.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. George Hooper, Clergy, Community UMC, Chair of the Connectional Table: I would ask that we remove RUL 25-02 for the purpose of perfecting an amendment.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: So your request requires a vote to remove RUL 25-02. This also requires only 50 to remove it. I would like to try to do this with a raising of hands. If not, we will move forward.

A question as to why RUL 25-02 should be removed was asked by a participant.

George Hooper: There are other changes that are being made in our structure, and one of those is to rename one of the EMTs, and so we are looking to put the correct name into that document in two places. As we were doing the Nominating Report, Nominating called me up and said, "George, you have not got just the Connectional Table, but also the Coordinating Council on there as an Executive Committee, and you haven't named anybody to be the Chair of the Coordinator Council and you don't name the Chair of the Connectional Table to be on that body." There is transparency and then there is being invisible to yourself. I'd like to think that I'm so selfless that that's the reason I

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didn't put the Chair of the Connectional Table on the Executive Committee, but the reality is that I had a brain fart. That's why. I just need to put myself on the Executive Committee.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The request to remove RUL 25-02 [Separate Connectional Table from EMTS] from the Consent Calendar is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote by hand. It was supported.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are back on the Consent Calendar and we have a question.

Rev. John Sione Finau, Clergy, Parker UMC, Hawaii: My registration name is Rev. John but among friends and family I go by Sione Finau, Pastor, Parker UMC in Hawaii, and Chair of the New Ministries EMT. I request to remove RUL 25-07 from the Consent Calendar. If approved, I would like to propose an amendment. I would like to propose a change under Elections and Terms of Office. The amendment is to change the number of members nominated by the Nominations Committee from 11 to 8. We simply miscalculated the number of people that the Nominations Committee would need to nominate the names.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are not voting to amend, we are just voting to remove RUL 25-07 from the Consent Calendar.

The request to remove RUL 25-07 from the Consent Calendar is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote by hand. It was supported.

Consent Calendar

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

The Consent Calendar, with RUL 25-02 and RUL 25-07 removed, is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RUL 25-07 - Jason Takagi, Legislative Chair

We have completed our Consent Calendar and will move to one of the items that was removed.

RUL 25-07 was addressed in Legislative Section Two, and received a vote of 83% for concurrence and was removed in order to amend the number of members that were nominated by the Nominating Committee.

Jason Takagi moved RUL 25-07.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. John Sione Finau, Clergy, Parker UMC, Hawaii, Chair of New Ministries EMT: I would like to amend the Rule Change Proposal for RUL 25-07 under 2(e) Elections and Terms of Office, the amendment is to change the number of members nominated by the Nominations Committee from 11 to 8. Once again, we simply miscalculated the number of people that the Nominations Committee would need to nominate so that we can do our faithful work for our Conference. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This needs a second.

A second was received. She called for discussion or questions.

Lisa Scott, Laity, Glendora UMC: I have a question. If you change the number to 8 in 2(e), can you please define how 2(d) is specified?

Rev. John Sione Finau, Clergy, Parker UMC, Hawaii, Chair of New Ministries EMT: In conversation among our EMTs, we forgot that the DPAS Chairs are not nominated, but named by each District. We also forgot to add that the Chair and Vice Chair or Secretary are people to be nominated. So we go from 11 to 8 that need to be nominated.

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Amendment to RUL 25-07 is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. The amendment was supported.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: RUL 25-07 as amended is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Jason Takagi, Legislative Chair: We have been asked to move RUL 25-02 to this afternoon's session. We will move to Legislative items that were presented to the Legislative Sections, but were not added to a Consent Calendar. The first of those is RUL 25-06 (Policy Change Background Checks in the Local Church), printed in the Preliminary Report on page 96. It received a vote of 88% for concurrence as amended. This was amended in order to have the Annual Conference to pay for the background checks.

RUL 25-06 – Jason Takagi

Jason Takagi moved RUL 25-06 as amended.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Point of Information - Paige Eaves, Clergy, Assistant to the Bishop: The creators of the Rule Change have no opposition to the amendment. We appreciate the opportunity to bring the entire Rule to the attention of the floor so that we can emphasize how important the content of it is. The purpose of the rule change is twofold: COSROW has introduced clergy boundary training which will be mandatory for all clergy every three years. The Bishop and the Cabinet support this and have great appreciation for COSROW's leadership in this. It adds to our background check options - it adds Safe Gatherings back in. Before, we had to do Safe Gatherings, then Ministry Safe, now there is an option. When I came into the HR office, I saw that we were not all in compliance and I also see that, in part, it is because Ministry Safe is harder to use than Safe Gatherings. If you find that your church is in non-compliance because you have limited administrative capacity, please go by the HR table and pick up the Safe Gatherings materials. You are already in the Safe Gatherings system. There is a sign-up link online on the Conference website and we can help you find that to get everyone in compliance quickly. The purpose of the rule change was to move the cycle from two years to three years because once we say we are going to do this, we say we will be in compliance. A three-year cycle will make it possible for us to all be in compliance. Finally, everything else was just an update to the Book of Discipline. There is a small financial implication, which is estimated at \$15,000 added to the budget based on the amendment.

Deanna Smitha, Retired Clergy: I had a situation recently where I lived outside of the Conference, so I had an opportunity in the Cal-Nevada Conference where I now reside to be able to pick up this training. I asked those in the Conference office whether it was required for Retired Clergy who are not currently serving. I ask for clarification.

Paige Eaves: If you are retired but not serving, you are not required,

Rich Bolin, Retired Clergy: The wording of the amendment, I am not sure if that is printed anywhere. What is the wording of the Amendment?

Point of Information: Richard Bentley, Retired Clergy: You can find it in the Preliminary Report, page 99 on lines 43-44. That's where the amendment happened: That it makes the annual conference responsible for paying for the cost, not the individual or the local church.

Rich Bolin, Retired Clergy: What Richard pointed out is the line that has been amended, so that line has been taken out, and we don't have in front of us what replaces it.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We need to answer these questions for you before we can vote. Let's remove this item for right now and we will come back to it later when you have all the information you need. Let's move on.

RES 25-02 - Psychological Assessments in the Primary Language of Candidates

Jason Takagi, Legislative Chair: Please turn your attention to RES 25-02. This was presented in the Preliminary Report on page 83. This item was addressed in Legislative Section Two. It received no recommendation.

Jason Takagi moved RES 25-02

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Jackeline Vives, Clergy, Norwalk UMC: I move that RES 25-02 be referred to the Board of Ordained Ministry in consultation with the Commission on Religion and Race, and the Connectional Ministry staff for further study and consideration during the coming year, and that the Board of Ordained Ministry be directed to bring a report of its work on this matter to the 2026 Annual Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: A motion has been made to refer. We need a second. We have received a second.

Greg Batson, Clergy, Santa Monica UMC, Chair of Board of Ordained Ministry: I appreciate all of the individuals who submitted this Resolution. It brings up an important issue that our candidates face when English is not their primary language, but also support on behalf of the Board of Ordained Ministry, this referral. We are required by the Book of Discipline to provide and administer psychological assessments for our candidates, and that's at a general church. And they have to be scientifically balanced, so it's beyond a matter of translation. We have work to do there at the General level and also at the Annual Conference level to make sure that we make it as easy as possible for our candidates to go through this process. So we are committed to this work. We are looking forward to working together as a Board and with members of the Commission on Religion and Race. I am speaking in favor of this referral.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Are you ready to vote on the motion to refer to the Board of Ordained Ministry? This will take a simple majority.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the Motion to Refer RES 25-02. It was supported.

Jason Takagi, Legislative Chair: Thank you for your faithful attention to the business of this Annual Conference. We will come back with more legislative items at our next plenary session.

Point of Personal Privilege

Judy Chung, Clergy, East District, serving at the General Board of Global Ministries: I stand before you as a proud member of Cal-Pac. I would like to present this award to the Bishop and all of you for your faithful and generous giving to the Advance to support all the missionaries serving around the world. I don't know how many years you have been receiving this award, I think it has been almost every year since I've been at the General Board of Global Ministries. This award is given to the California Pacific Annual Conference and Global Ministries celebrates your gift of \$417,236, and your support of 24 missionaries in 2024. Thank you for connecting the church in mission and helping to alleviate human suffering.

Instructions - Rev. Bob Rhodes

The Justice and Compassion group is meeting in Esmeralda, I-IV. Plenary 5 starts at 2:00 p.m. The Bishop Awards Dinner is tonight, and there are also Cherish workshops, which we will talk about at the end of the next plenary session.

Closing Prayer - Rev. John Sione Finau, Clergy, Parker UMC, Hawaii offered the closing prayer.

PLENARY SESSION 5 | JUNE 13, 2025, 2:00 PM (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

On my break, I got to see a little bit of what is happening in the world. And while I was watching some distressing news about places being bombed, I thought about Wesley's instruction to us: "I enter every day," often he was on horseback, "reading my scripture and the newspaper." I think that he was trying to say to us, what happens in the world is important for us to engage as much as we engage what happens in the scriptures. That those two things are with us all the time.

As we begin our session this afternoon, I would like to invite Everest Harvey from Westwood UMC to give us a prayer about what is happening in the world.

Opening Prayer – Everest Harvey

Everest Harvey: The prayer for peace came because as I was going out, I was met by a woman named Yara, who is at the Shepherd's Hill gift shop. She sells items that are made by Christian Palestinians, and she showed me a picture of what is

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happening to her parent's home where the bombs were going across. So we started talking. I bought something from her, because out of the proceeds, they are giving back to their community of Palestinian Christians in the area. She was talking about how hard it is right now to live there and thanking us for being a part of and listening to the cries all over the world. I bought a gift, and she didn't want me to buy it, she wanted to give it to me. I said, "No, I won't take it unless you let me buy it, so I bought it." It is an offering to them, and then she gave me another gift.

I want you to shower upon them with whatever funds you have. They are here not just because they have items to sell, but because they have lives to save. It has been a long-term tradition in the UMC that when we have an Annual Conference, to sing a song, *And Are We Yet Alive*, and my friend Preston keeps poking me, and asking, "When are we doing the song?" I love this song.

When I was studying about Francis Asbury, the priest who came to America and helped spread Methodism around the country on horseback, the reason they sang this song at the beginning of every annual conference was that the pastors on horseback had shorter lives than others. They travelled and stayed wherever they could; they slept in snow, in rain, in sleet, and their bodies took a lot of abuse. When they came to their Annual Conference, they wanted to know who was literally alive. This song had more meaning for me after Covid. After Covid, we asked the same thing: How many are still alive? And "Are We Yet Alive", is both about the physical presence that we have, the treasure that we have to share with each other, and how grateful we are to see each other's eyes and expressions and know that you are still alive. It also asks the question for the church. "Hey Church, are we still alive? Have we fallen asleep? Are we dead?" It's a great song.

The Cherish Band led the body in singing, *And Are We Yet Alive*, UMH 553.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called Session 5 to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Legislation Updates: RUL 25-02; RUL 25-06; RES 25-03; RES 25-04; RES 25-05

Rev. Yuh shared the workshops which were being offered on this day at the Annual Conference.

Rev. Yuh: After today's session, we will be blessed by the Tongan Voices.

Cal Pac Kids are raising money for the World Central Kitchen. We know about the struggles and the pain right now and the necessity of this work. They will be around during the break with donation boxes. As we continue all this work, there are tables outside of the Crystal Ballroom - please visit them.

Again, please silence your phones.

Video - Property Development - Media Team

A video was shown about local church property development.

Cherish Chat: Property Development - Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin

I have the privilege of serving as the Lead Pastor of Holman UMC, and I am also appointed to oversee the housing project at the First UMC in Inglewood.

A video was shown reflecting worship at Inglewood UMC - What's Going On?

Help us build affordable housing in Inglewood: inglewoodfirst.org/housing

Donate to our Affordable Housing effort @inglewoodfirst.org/housing. Thank you for your partnership in *What's Going On* in the World!

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Another video was shown: Spectrum News 1: Building a Home for Hope and Healing in the Heart of Inglewood - Yes in God's Backyard - YIGBY

The affordable housing development journey began with joining the fight for housing justice in Inglewood. The City of Inglewood's "resurgence" began when Madison Square Garden bought and renovated the Forum in 2012. This led to the Hollywood Park Racetrack being sold to the Los Angeles Rams in 2016. The return of professional sports to Inglewood escalated gentrification and displacement of residents in our city. Fall 2017, joined the community effort for rent control in Inglewood. Congregation and community members were being priced out of their homes. May 2018, the IFUMC church council voted to join the Uplift Inglewood Coalition and organize in the effort for rent stabilization in our city. The Coalition submitted 14,181 signatures to put rent control on the ballot in the City of Inglewood! On June 11, 2019, the Inglewood City Council passed a permanent rent stabilization ordinance, capping rent increases at 5% per year!

In July 2017, when Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin was appointed by the Bishop as pastor of the church, the church had five different pastors assigned to us within a 10 year period. In early March 2019, the church was informed that the charter school on-site had lost its charter and would cease operations in July 2019. This led to a \$240,000 decrease in annual church revenue. As the neighborhood fought housing insecurity, the church's existence as a house of worship was under threat.

Over the summer of 2019, church members worked hard to find new tenants and rallied to clean rooms and spaces throughout the Education Building, Wesley Hall and the Annex Building. In October 2019, a "Prayer Walk" was organized during a Sunday morning worship hour to cover the entire facility in prayer, rededicating each space to the glory of God and in service to God's people in the community.

As the church explored mission-driven income generating projects (charter schools, after-school programs, winter shelter for houseless persons), with guidance and support from District and Conference staff and community partners such as LA Voice, the Arroyo Group, the Mitchellville Real Estate Group, Making Housing and Community Happen and the BMB Company (developers) it was a discerned decision of the congregation to pursue an affordable housing development to meet the needs of both the congregation and the community.

Today, Inglewood First UMC continues to build lives through worship, study and service and is on track to build 60 units of affordable housing right here in the City of Inglewood! What a mighty God we serve! We envision this project to not only be a blessing to future residents, but to the community at-large as we build a home of hope and healing in the heart of Inglewood for generations to come.

The Affordable Housing Project Vision is for 60 Units of On-Site Affordable Housing to house local workers (SoFi Stadium) and houseless seniors. Vision is also to build a community hub next to the Sanctuary with space for: workforce development organizing, youth mentoring, pre-school music education, family & support Services, food distribution.

The church fostered institutional alignment with Inglewood City Planning, City Housing and Mayor's Office, State Assembly Representative and the State Treasurer's Office. In the church, there's alignment between the Church Council, West District UMC and Cal-Pac UMC. In addition, the church fostered community support through two (2) community town halls.

Inglewood First UMC Community Hub approved by California Debt Limit Allocation Committee for \$22 million in bond allocations and \$1.6 million in federal tax credits. The projected ground lease and groundbreaking is set for Fall/Winter 2025 with project completion in Winter 2027.

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The housing development process ultimately led the crowd for creative responses in program ministry. A brief timeline:

- March '19 - Charter School closed (\$20k a month);
- September '19 - Prayer Walk through church
- March '20 - COVID-19 Pandemic begins
- March '21 - Mental Health Series with Master of Social Work Students from Cal-State Long Beach MSW (and support from *Being the Church Long Beach*).
- October '21 - 31 Day Prayer Challenge - With housing related scripture and prayer prompts
- April '22 - 'What's Going On' Good Friday Worship
- Summer '23 - Summer of SoulCare (Painting, Yoga, Prayer)
- Jan '24 - Jazz+Justice & SoulCare Sundays launched.
- April '23 & '24 - Home is Sacred Lobby Day (Sacramento)

There are opportunities for property and program ministry beyond affordable housing for workers and seniors, including:

- Housing for Beloved Communities (transitional age foster youth, veterans, etc.)
- Solar Panels
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Community Gardens

Property development should not be approached from the perspective of saving the church financially, but to respond to God's grace to cherish God's people and flourish in ministry. Jesus says, "All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me and because of the good news will save them" (Mark 8:35, CEB).

Reflection Questions

- Where do the needs of your neighborhood and congregation intersect? Who do you cherish?
- How is God calling your congregation to link community action with discipleship?
- What is God calling you to do this week to love God and love your neighbor as yourself?

CFA Presentation: Apportionments (Rec 25-12) - Rev. Molly Vetter

Rev. Molly Vetter: Everyone loves a good conversation about apportionments! I am glad to come back to the conversation we started earlier about how the Conference is working on apportionments. To recap how we had proposed a rules change to this Annual Conference, and why we have withdrawn it because of concerns about the statistics in our records that we would base it on, and how the statistics then them being equitably impacting our churches between small churches and large churches, and across the ethnic diversity in our Conference. The proposal we had offered switched to using church income as congregations reported in statistics. This is a switch because it starts with church income reality, instead of using the expenses of the church. We want to bring equity among various sizes of congregations and in terms of income streams. We are curious to hear about what other things we should be paying attention to. There are things we need to give attention to in the proposal we hope to bring next year: equity among our racial and ethnic diversities, equity among the various sizes of congregations, and how we handle some of the significant differences in terms of income streams, especially things like local churches who rent out the parsonage to pay housing allowance that would have an impact on the total income generated.

We hope that later in this plenary you will adopt REC 25-12, and then from the conversations begun here and into the next year, we will be listening to conversations around questions and concerns from our churches and our leaders. We also anticipate doing intentional work to clarify and communicate about how we fill out Table III in our Income Statistics so that there is consistency among our congregations that our data will be accurate. When the statistics are collected in the early part of next year, we can use them to check how our proposed REC would impact the churches in our Conference. We anticipate being able to bring a new Rule to the Conference next year. In this, we want to find out

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what brings you hope and what you are worried about. Your worries and hopes can help shape the actual proposal we will bring to the Conference next year.

This morning, you started this conversation around your tables and sharing through Meeting Pulse. We want to give a little more time for these conversations now, again around tables and in Meeting Pulse. The link for Feedback: <http://www.calpacumc.org/titheapportionmentfeedback>

Time was taken for Holy Conferencing among the body, and to offer responses to the questions posed regarding apportionments through MeetingPulse.

Rev. George Hooper: We take your concerns seriously. Last night during the conversations about Constitutional Amendments, a comment was made that if you are uncomfortable, and that you are convicted, maybe the best place to start working that through is to look inward. My goodness, you people are great in looking inward. Some of the concerns which came up are: Will the change for this reduce the burden for small churches. Our concern is that we will not be able to sustain our apportionments due to declining membership and tithing. How will the configuration impact churches and the Cabinet's decisions regarding ordained clergy appointments vs. LLP and LMS appointments? Other concerns were shared with the body, including, "How do we clearly define income?"

Some churches expressed that there are a lot of churches living off of income that has been in reserve. I wonder how many of those churches, when they transfer that money over to be used, how many of them count that as income? We do, but do others? We have to look at what we count as income. It is important. Ret. Rev. Richard Bentley shared that we spend a whole lot of time focusing on Table 2 because we know apportionments are based on that. When it comes to Table 3, we shrug our shoulders.

Rev. Hooper continued to share more of the concerns and questions that they have received, and assured the body that these concerns are anonymous. Another concern was raised by a lay leader, "If we do this, will the Conference have enough funding to engage in vital ministry?"

Rev. Hooper also shared comments that came out of peoples' hopes for this new way of doing apportionments. A few of the comments were about a shared vision, provides inspiration to pay apportionments, a better understanding of how we live generously, an investment in ministry, and that we would have more realistic financial expectations

CFA is not just about numbers, it's about ministry.

Rev. Molly Vetter: Before you REC 25-12. On behalf of CFA, I would like to move REC 25-12.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions

The Recommendation is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Molly Vetter: Having just given affirmation to that Recommendation, I want you to know that CFA would be glad for additional and continued feedback. The fabulous Jennifer Gaylord has been helping us look carefully at statistics and will work with us on statistics this year. She has also set up an online form. The address is at calpacumc.org/titheapportionmentfeedback.

The form has space for you to add your concerns, things you are hopeful about and what resources would be helpful to inspire your congregation to successfully live into this?

Legislation (RUL 25-02; RUL 25-06; RES 25-03; RES 25-05 - Jason Takagi

We are back to some of our legislation that we have looked at previously. It was disputed in our Legislation Session and was pulled from the Consent Calendar to be amended.

RUL 25-02 - Connectional Table

Jason Takagi moved RUL 25-02 - Separate Connectional Table for EMTS

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

George Hooper, clergy: Chair of Connectional Table: I rise to propose an amendment to RUL 25-02. Here is the Amendment:

VII. A. 3. Connectional Table; Membership
PR-90, Lines 10-11
“New Ministries Congregational Vitality Essential Ministry Teams”

VII. B. 3. Coordinating Council; Membership
PR-91, Lines 4-5
“New Ministries Congregational Vitality Essential Ministry Teams”

VII. A. 3. Connectional Table; Membership
PR-90, Line 12

“and ...” add Council on Higher Education and Campus Ministries, and Camp and Retreat Ministries Council.

VII. B. 3. Coordinating Council; Membership
PR-91, Line 3, Insert before “-Conference Lay Leaders(s);”
“-Chairperson of the Connectional Table, who shall be the Chairperson of this body;”

Rationale: These changes reflect the name change to Congregational Vitality Essential Ministry team, found in Rules Item 25-07, broaden the representation of the body, and correct an error by omission of the Chairperson of the Connectional Table from the Coordinating Council.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The amendment is before you and it needs a second. You have received a second.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

The Amendment to REC 25-02 is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Jason Takagi moved Rule 25-02 as amended.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

The REC 25-02 as Amended is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RUL 25-06 - Policy Change: Background Checks in the Local Church

RUL 25-06 was amended in its Legislative Section: Under section E, strike “Each applicant is responsible for the cost of the background check. Employers may choose to reimburse these costs.” Under Section E, add “The Conference is responsible for the costs of the trainings and the background checks.”

Jason Takagi moved RUL 25-06 as Amended - Policy Change: Background Checks in the Local Church

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

RUL 25-06 as Amended is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RES 25-03 - Opposing Repression for Advocacy for Palestinian Rights

Jason Takagi: This was distributed to you and posted on the website on June 10, 2025.

Jason Takagi moved RES 25-03

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

Theresa Basile, Lay Member, West District: First I would like to tell you that two leaders of the Conference wanted to be included among the submitters of this Resolution, and we didn't get their names in one time: Molly Vetter and Monalisa Tu'itahi. This is a long Resolution, and I would like to put it in a nutshell. It is essentially a civil rights issue. It is about trying to silence ours and many other voices for justice. We have seen how the current Administration is attempting to dismantle democracy across the U.S.. We have seen it in the most frightening way in our own Conference, in Los Angeles, this past week. Another part of the plan for that is a written project to crush, to destroy, to dismantle, the movement for Palestinian rights in the U.S. The Administration is carrying that out in a frightening way across the country. Thousands of people, including our young people, are putting themselves at risk out of their compassion for the people of Palestine, and their dedication to justice. We know that when they, when we, stand against apartheid and against genocide, we are not engaging in any form of antisemitism, or support of terrorism. This is actually what we are called to do as the people of God. We invite you to stand with us now, those of us who submitted the Resolution and speak prophetically and do the truth telling that the Church is called to do, stand with those who are putting themselves at risk and stand with our right to free speech.

Drew Patterson, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: Really, I just have a question. It concerns the ... something they had a problem with was a definition. The IHRA definition of antisemitism - I'm going to quote it: antisemitism is a perception of Jews which may be expressed as hatred towards the Jews, rhetorical and physical manifestations of Anti-Semitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property towards Jewish community and institutions and the religious facilities. What is our problem with this definition exactly?

Theresa Basile, Lay Member, West District: The problem with the IHRA definition is that it includes examples to go along with it. It is actually a much longer document than the definition you quoted. And those examples include various ways of strongly criticizing Israel as possible examples of antisemitism. The IHRA definition is being used, over and over across the country as a tool of repression. It's being used around the world that way. One important thing to know is that the General Board of Global Ministries wrote to the United Nations, urging them to reject the IHRA definition. Because it is such a tool of repression, of free speech. We would actually be joining GBGM in that position in adopting this Resolution.

Drew Patterson, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: I did read the list of examples, maybe I wasn't looking at the same thing you were because I didn't see anything like that on the listing of examples. Can you quote what you are referring to?

Theresa Basile, Lay Member, West District: No, I can't off the top of my head. I can tell you that major Jewish organizations across the country, along with GBGM, and around the world, have seen vividly that this definition is being used powerfully, over and over again, as a tool to silence free speech. It isn't just a matter of the wording so much as how it is successfully being used right now and has been for some time now. The author of it is opposed to it being adopted as policy. The author of the definition, and as I say, Jewish organizations and human rights organizations have spoken out powerfully against the adoption of this definition as government policy.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Resolution is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RES 25-04 - Fossil Fuel Divestment

Jason Takagi moved RES 25-04

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

Drew Patterson, Shepherd of the Valley, Laity: So two of the sections were blank, the estimated cost and the one right next to that, the sources at that time. I assume this was a mistake - what should they say? Am I to assume it means that there is no impact?

Christian DeMent, Pastor of La Mesa First: I was the submitter of this legislation. Those were left blank, partially because I don't have an answer to those questions. I would need to research more, how much time that would take to do that. So I don't have that particular answer for you.

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Richard Bentley, Ret. Clergy: In all likelihood, if we diversify, if we divest, we might actually have higher returns and make more money. The standard stock funds that Wespath has right now are just running around zero. The social equity one, which has a stronger screen is at about 5%. So it's quite possible if we did this, we could be both more environmentally sound and have more money. It's not guaranteed - it's the stock market - but I want to be clear that a lot of socially responsible investing over the years has been investigated and the returns consistently are, and it tends to come out either even or better. We have not been harmed by failing to invest in tobacco over the years just to give another example.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Is that a speech for or against?

Richard Bentley, Ret. Clergy: Well, you could count it as a speech for an answer to the question of "how much would it cost us?" I was trying to help us understand the cost.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I will take it as a speech for.

Ellen Evans Agee, Laity, Westwood UMC: I'm also on the Board of the California Foundation and I wanted to share that we have a fund in the growth platform that is ready to go, ready for investments, without these investments.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Is that a point of information?

Ellen Evans Agee, Laity, Westwood UMC: Yes.

The Resolution is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RES 25-05 – Fossil Fuel Divestment Task Force

Rev. Bob Rhodes, Conference Secretary: RES 25-05 has been withdrawn.

Point of Personal Privilege

Rev. Greg Batson, Santa Monica First UMC, Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry: We began our plenary today by singing together that great Wesleyan hymn, "And Are We Yet Alive." It reminds us that every time we gather, we gather together not only ourselves but those who have come before us in this connection and all of those who are to come. During the Clergy Session, the Board of Ordained Ministry always lifts us those clergy who have died and finished their earthly labors in the past year. This year, we had a little bit of confusion regarding the people on that list. We remembered them last night at our Memorial Service. I want to take this moment to lift up these names of our clergy who have passed away in the past 12 months, to remember them in prayer and to give thanks for their lives:

Rev. Djalma Araujo
Rev. Merle Bailey
Rev. David Burgeson
Rev. Dr. Daesun Chung
Rev. Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr.
Rev. Rosemary Davis
Rev. Dr. Hidemi Ito
Rev. Dr. Afrie Joye
Rev. Thomas Donghyung Kim
Rev. Martha Kogle
Rev. Mary Alice McKinney
Rev. John Mills, Jr.
Rev. Carmen Pak
Rev. Juan Riingen
Rev. Donald Roe
Rev. Teresa Santillana
Rev. Dr. Lisle Stewart
Rev. Gilbert Stones

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Rev. Bruce Warner
Rev. Dr. Lydia Waters
Pastor Sidney Wilson

Rev. Batson led the body in prayer.

Cabinet Matters - Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Chair

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited the Cabinet to come forward.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: As they are coming up, I would like to name them for you: Rev. Moonyoung Lee, who has become the Dean in this past year and has done an amazing job to help us stay focused to do the work we have to do. I'm very grateful for her leadership and the way she walks alongside me and you in her Cabinet work. I also want to name Rev. Sia Tu'itahi who is walking with the West District, and we are grateful for his presence and his love in the West District. Rev. Moonyoung is also a District Superintendent in the East and treasures them as she cares for them. Rev. Tom Choi is the District Superintendent for the Hawaii District and he brings the spirit of Hawaii to us which we love. He also brings a lot of humor. Rev. Luis Garcia from the South District is another one of our new District Superintendents and has gone around the South District to find out where we are, to get to know the people and has some new creative ideas. Rev. Garth Gilliam, our District Superintendent of the North District and he has a heart for the people. I would also like to point out our Aide to the Bishop Paige Eaves, who helps me with doing the things that are very hard for Bishops to tend to. You may think that I have all the answers, but it is Paige who is walking alongside to make sure not only that we are heading in the right direction, but that all the little things get attended to. Also in our Cabinet is Erin Hawkins-Smith, who is the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries. She has been the main planner of this Annual Conference so I hope you take time to thank her for all her work to make this Annual Conference happen. We are grateful.

I want to share that I could not do this at all without the Cabinet. The work that they do often goes unseen, the complaints come to them first and then to me. They carry a burden that you won't know about unless you have served on the Cabinet. I hope that as you go about your days, that you pray for and lift up the Cabinet members who help us to be all things that we hope to be as we cherish God and each other together. Please thank them.

Rev. Moonyoung Lee: I have the honor and privilege to be the East DS and the Dean of Cabinet.

Rev. Lee shared a story about being attacked by a rooster when she was only five years old. While she did not have any physical scars, the experience left a lasting impact. She is afraid of birds. She shared that when Bishop Escobedo-Frank came to Hawaii, Rev. Lee had to tell her that she was afraid of birds. Her fear used to drive her friends crazy. They told her to just "snap out of it." About 25 years ago, a friend tried to cure her by sending a flock of crows her way and that somewhere on Facebook, there is a picture of her running through Central Park while screaming for her life.

She told of her confusion when the image of murmuration became a part of our Conference's vision to end spiritual and physical hunger. She understood the invitation to eradicate hunger, but murmuration and birds? Sometimes our fears don't make much sense. This year, she reflected on the Conference theme of "Cherish" and began to see murmuration differently. Not as something to keep at a difference, but as something beautiful. That shift helped to recognize that fear isn't just personal - sometimes fear is something that we carry collectively.

Our hearts are heavy over what is happening around the world. Uncertainty abounds. And yet in the midst of all of this, we hear the quiet call to cherish. We can't cherish from afar - it requires closeness, presence, attentiveness. Murmuration doesn't happen when birds are scattered, but only when they move in harmony with each other, closely attuned to each other's movement.

Cherished means moving with the Holy Spirit and with each other. It's not always loud, but it's there.

She stated that this year, the Cabinet has welcomed three members to our team. The members of the Cabinet are happy to report that they see signs of hope, signs of resilience, and of new life.

A video titled, "Flourishing Ministries Through Our Districts" was shown.

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Rev. Lee invited Rev. Paige Eaves and Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon to come forward.

Paige Eaves, Assistant to the Bishop: Rev. Eaves spoke of the coaching training the Conference provided to quite a few members of the Conference. While some continued on and went through the entire coaching process, others used the training in a more casual way, asking questions like, “What’s the next step you need to take today?” “What is the big story that God is unfolding in you?” “If you need help to succeed, who would you call today?”

Working in partnership with CST and the Cabinet, Rev. Eaves shared that they are reviving some of the coaching culture. We believe it can continue to help our churches, colleagues and congregants flourish with powerful questions.

A slide show titled, “Coaching for Small Groups” was shown that shared the goals of the Coaching Small Groups Initiative.

Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon: Rev. MacKinnon shared that the coaching training was revived into a program to help cherish and support the clergy and laity. The goals would be to deepen connection, reduce loneliness and gain a broader perspective. The trained coaches offer a new way to resource and support each other. Coaching groups will be developed, with two clergy coaches facilitating each group. These Coaching Groups will begin in July. Here are the upcoming Coaching Groups:

- New to the Conference: find support and care for navigating a new setting and locating resources.
- Ethnic Clergy Navigating the System: Build resourcefulness and resilience as an ethnic clergyperson in a challenging connectional system.
- Church in Turmoil: Find support and care for navigating a church in disarray and confusion.
- Make a Leap: Find support in moving to a larger church appointment or first solo appointment or a multi-site appointment.
- Helping a Church Close Gracefully: Find support for navigating care for legacy congregations.
- Building & Developing for the Future: Find support in planning for the future, including pastoral care around change, the nuts and bolts of development, and reality checks for a community contemplating using the property in a new way.
- Teaching and Leading Social Justice in the Local Church: Find support as you help a congregation engage in social justice work.
- Help Me Help My Church: Develop grace-filled lay leadership in your church. Lead and equip others to participate in productive meetings that are filled with joy, enrich your community relationships and share a vision of hope for the life of your church.
- Ayudame a ayudar a mi iglesia

Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Dean of Cabinet: As you know, life comes in seasons. This year two of our mission congregations have either recently concluded or will soon conclude their seasons of active ministry.

Riverside Tongan Fellowship has discontinued its ministry as of December 31, 2024.

Garden Grove Korean Mission will discontinue as of June 30, 2025.

No action is required by the body. The Cabinet acknowledges their faithful witness and the grace they brought to our shared ministry. We give thanks.

In addition, I bring before you and present REC 25-11 - Closure of Westmont United Methodist Church. This does require action from the Annual Conference.

Rev. Lee summarized this Recommendation and shared Westmont United Methodist Church’s history. It is located in the city of Pomona in the East District, and has faithfully served its community since 1884. For more than a decade, the Church has faced significant challenges and its membership declined to five members. On January 15, 2025, the church members voted to discontinue at their Church Charge Conference. Their members will transfer their membership to Montclair United Methodist Church in Pomona. In addition, a nesting congregation, Pomona Valley Chinese United

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Methodist Church currently worships on the Westmont campus. They are in the process of exploring the possible transfer of the property title. These conversations are ongoing and more time is needed before a final decision can be made. Therefore, the Appointive Cabinet recommends the formal closure of Westmont United Methodist Church effective June 30, 2025, while a report regarding the future disposition of the church property will be brought to you at next year's Annual Conference.

REC 25-11 - Closure of Westmont United Methodist Church

Rev. Lee moved REC 25-11.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for questions or discussion.

The Recommendation is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Point of Personal Privilege - Monalisa Tu'itahi

Doug Dickson, Clergy, Pastor of Northridge UMC: Monalisa has graciously invited me to come and share with you a way in which a lot of what we have seen over the television and many of our clergy colleagues and lay persons have been present for in Downtown Los Angeles this morning. It hit home to me in a new way.

This morning as I looked at my phone, I found a voicemail from one of my church members whose closest friend's brother had been detained by ICE. The request was made to connect with the family member, Anna, who had already talked with her family and had to raise the \$7,000.00 for a retainer for the attorney who would represent her brother. Given that the attorney was able to go to court and have the bond reduced to \$4,000.00, so now they were searching for \$4,000.00 amongst their family.

As you can imagine, this is not a family of great and unimaginable means. They were short and were asking our church what could we do to help? I told them that I needed some time to communicate with people. I actually ran into Joshua on the elevator and he said, "Meet me over at the Immigration Table, I'll be there all day." I went over there and I talked with people and we talked with Monalisa and we communicated with Jennifer Gutierrez at CLUE and they were able to help them. They were able to get them the opportunity to find the bond money to be able to get their brother out of detention so that he could keep his job.

For many of us, we don't necessarily run into this on a daily basis, we don't understand the cost it takes to retain an attorney to represent you so that you can actually get through the many people waiting for a bond to get the possibility to get released. We don't understand how much it costs to post bail, we don't understand what is at stake for so many people who are facing the loss of their livelihood. I am so thankful for this group of people, this cherished body called the California Pacific Annual Conference, for the local churches and for the people at CLUE. The reality is that what we do here makes a great difference in the lives of people, so many of whom are living in the midst of fear. A fear that is with them every day in this time and we can be a source of strength, peace, healing, and of freedom for so many. I know there will be an opportunity to make your way over the immigration table, and I encourage you ... I'll let Monalisa continue.

Monalisa Tu'itahi, United with Hope Church: We need relationships to get through this season. CLUE, Jennifer Gutierrez, who is one of our clergy members, they have started a bond fund which began on the 7th of June in response to raids in Los Angeles and to this date, have raised almost half a million dollars. We will have the link for that fund in our Pulse Meeting platform. You are invited to see how you can participate. Rev. Monalisa shared that they have a QR code at the Immigration Table which offers you an opportunity to give us your name and contact information to be a part of the Rapid Response Team of this Annual Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced Jason Moore of Midnight Oil Productions, who has been behind the scenes creating our graphics. Jason has a gift and a flair for creativity and he has been a person who has walked beside me throughout a lot of our ministry. I am really grateful. You can do so much more when you add the people of the arts to what you are doing. Thank you Jason. His company is called Midnight Oil Production. Please give Jason a round of applause.

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Retirement Video - Media Team

Instructions - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Rhodes shared announcements of events and happenings coming up later at the Annual Conference, including workshops.

Rev. Yuh provided information about the Lost and Found.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared some moments from the Baptism performed at the Annual Conference. She shared that the child was enthralled by the Baptismal water and how she practically dove into her baptism. She encouraged each one of us to dive into what God has placed before us.

Closing Prayer - Rev. Joy Yun

(4) U.M. DAILY Saturday, June 14, 2025 41st Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference

PRAISE AND WORSHIP | JUNE 14, 2025, 8:30 AM (PDT)

Welcome and Gathering - Rev. Julie Elkins

Rev. Elkins welcomed the body and thanked the body for participating, sharing her hope that everyone has felt the Spirit during worship. She then introduced the Cherish Band.

Congregational Song: Siyahamba, TFWS 2235b

Suanne Ware-Diaz read John 13:31-35, First Nations Version.

Rev. Julie Elkins: As a surprise, Rev. Julie Elkins shared that a Cherish Gospel Choir has been put together to go along with the Cherish Band. She invited the body to cherish them as they joined the band on stage.

The Cherish Gospel Choir and the Cherish Band sang *I am a Child of God, I Need You to Survive / Lean On Me* and *Eternal Word of God*.

The body was invited to turn to those around them and share a joy or concern that is in their heart. The groups shared briefly together a time of Prayerful Intercession.

Rev. Julie Elkins led the body in a general prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledging the miracles in our lives.

Worship closed with the songs, *Love Train* and *We Are Family / Love Train* performed by The Cherish Band & Conference Choir.

PLENARY SESSION 6 | JUNE 14, 2025, 9:00 AM (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: What a way to start Conference! I looked up today where this quote comes from, because I know that it comes from the Black Resistance Movement, but I found out that it was first coined by poet and activist Toi Dericotte. She says: Joy is an act of resistance.

When you have joy, it means you have not been conquered. Jesus is still our King, and that's why we are wearing our buttons and putting up our signs, spreading the message that the United Methodist Church is about peace. I want to thank our band for giving us the gift of joy as an act of resistance. Remember that when our souls get down as we see

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what's happening, broken hearts are beautiful, too. Remember that God is with us to help us resist all the evil and injustice that exists in our world today and every day that we live.

Thank you for all the prayers. I was going to say a prayer first but I think we've had enough prayer and song to fill our souls! So now I will call us to order and ask Cathie Capp to go over the orders of the day.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

The Orders of the Day have been put before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh shared about voting, where to find legislation, where to find translation services.

Rev. Yuh: We have two legislation issues to address today: REC 25-10 and RES 25-06. Please have them ready for your review. Please turn the volume down on your phones. Today is our last day of the Annual Conference, and I would like to remind the body that our check out time at the hotel is 11:00 a.m. Thank you to Jennifer Gaylord for sending out our reminders. On another note, we have evaluation forms, which are very important and we invite you to fill them out. You can find these at www.CalPacUMC.org/AC2025Evaluation.

It has been a privilege to share the announcements, Bishop Escobedo-Frank and Cal-Pac Annual Conference. Thank you.

Cherish Chat: Cherishing Our Staff - Jan Hanson

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited Jan Hanson to lead the Cherish Chat, which cherishes the staff of the Annual Conference.

Conference staff shared favorite moments and memories.

Video Presentation - Staff Appreciation - Celebrating Cal Pac Milestones

Jan Hanson: Good morning, friends. I am Jan Hanson, my pronouns are she/her. I am a "retired" Lay Conference staff member and a 42-year member at Aldersgate UMC in Tustin.

Cherishing our staff – what a wonderful way to conclude this powerful series of diverse topics that we have been informed about and challenged by during our time together this week.

Before I joined Cal-Pac, I worked in Human Resources for various hotel companies. My 25 years or so in that industry exposed me to a wide variety of people and circumstances. Since the hotels never closed, it was tempting to – and I often did, just ask my kids – work long hours in my office. No matter what hotel I worked in, the HR office was usually somewhere between the loading dock and the employee locker room. I don't remember there ever being a case where someone popped their head in the door and said, "I just clocked out. Can I help you with the filing?" And if they had, I would have said, "No thanks. You would need to clock back in and I wouldn't want you to go into overtime."

One of the first things I realized when I came to work for the Conference was that so much of the work and ministry in a religious organization like ours is done by volunteers. People who meet the definition that I have often shared in my workshops, that the volunteer status is determined by the intent of the individual, that it is for religious or humanitarian objectives, and that it is done with no contemplation of pay. I, myself, have been a volunteer at my church for years, coordinating our acolyte program, helping with work teams (in the distant past), serving on committees, singing in the choir, with no expectation of being paid for that service.

And yet, there are people for whom their ministry is also their livelihood. Our clergy fall into that category, of course. And so do those who aren't clergy, but who are indeed in ministry, with a paycheck. Our staff, the hardworking staff at our churches, our office administrators, our custodians, our youth directors, our music directors and musicians. The staff I would like to highlight today are the staff of the Conference. Folks like Cathy, Josh, and Jennifer, who you've just seen and honored. Those who sometimes aren't seen or recognized, but are definitely in ministry with you.

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But first, a step back to where the long story of my Cal-Pac career began.

When I first entered the building at 110 S. Euclid in April of 2003, I had recently left the hotel industry behind and thought this would be a temporary little consulting job to set up HR for the Annual Conference, without knowing exactly what “the Annual Conference” meant. Even though I had been a member of churches in the Conference off and on for most of my life before that, the term “Annual Conference” meant the meeting every year out in Redlands where a few people from our church were sent and where I—sometime in the golden age of the 60’s—had joined a stadium full of young people and dedicated my life to Christian service.

My goal was that after my consulting assignment for the Conference was over, I would move on to other consulting jobs at a variety of little companies, assisting them with their HR needs. I never imagined that 22 years later, I’d be finishing out my career in that very building.

Learning the language was one of the biggest challenges in the beginning. I remember standing at the counter outside Bishop Swenson’s office as I was meeting and talking to people on my first day. Cathy Wilson, who we honored a few minutes ago, was behind the Episcopal Office counter then, and she was telling me that most of her job had to do with *appointments*. I thought, “Wow, Bishop Swenson is a very busy person to have a staff person whose whole job is keeping track of her appointments. Was it haircuts, mani-pedis, yoga?”

I began to learn the language, of course. In fact, I discovered that the people I would come to know so well at the Conference Center were a multi-lingual bunch. Spanish, Korean, Tagalog, Japanese, Vietnamese, Tongan and many others reflecting the rich diversity of culture that was also reflected across the connection. But the staff I came to know were also multi-lingual in other ways: the languages of love, and of laughter, and music, and teamwork, and care for each other.

And then there was the language of the structure: the Journal, the Book of Discipline, the Preliminary Report. The acronyms: CFA, BOP that became BOPHB, CEC, and the ever-popular BOOM. The paragraphs and the rules. “Did she retire under paragraph 357.1.b or was it 357.1.c?”

My first introduction to the records in the Journal was the Section N salary and benefits section. There were eight districts at that time, and each administrative assistant kept records for their district, typing the information into the pages that were submitted. When Jennifer Gaylord came on the scene and showed us a different path, it was like a miracle had descended upon us.

Over the years, and through many technological changes, one thing has been constant: The desire of the staff at the Conference to serve and support our churches well; to enable their ministry. At times, the direct line may not be evident. How does having an accurate insurance invoice enable the church to carry out its mission?

The staff in the Conference Finance Office send an invoice to our churches every month for insurance and other contributions. The Conference pays the insurance carriers, and bills the churches for what they pay. Pretty boring, right? Not exactly an exciting ministry event.

Well, let’s look at one item that is on that monthly invoice: the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP is the acronym, for the record). This is the death and disability insurance for clergy. This program enables the pastor of the church to have a measure of security that if something should happen to them, their family will have financial resources available to help with the loss or the disability. Having a feeling of security about this part of their personal life can leave the pastor with one less thing to think about, and to free up their capacity for ministry with their congregation.

The staff in the Benefits and Finance area who enter the data into the system, enroll the clergy in the program and make sure these payments are made help to ensure this coverage and this peace of mind.

In the Connectional Ministries area, the staff work to support the events and activities that happen through the Conference. The activities and resources that enable the churches to enrich their programs, to try new things, to reach people they haven’t reached before. The staff in the District Offices are the conduits of information, both from the churches to the Conference and from the Conference to the churches. The Administrative Assistants in those offices keep

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the calendars for the Superintendents, and keep everyone informed and organized during Charge Conference season. In the Human Resources area, there will be continued support for the staff of the Annual Conference and a resource for churches as Rosana Wallace has joined the team as HR Manager.

And then there are the camps. When I first came to the Conference, fresh from the hotel industry, I felt at home with the camps. Although the settings were different and a bit more rustic than the Hilton I came from, the work as I saw it was similar. The camps provide hospitality...good food, a place to sleep, working toilets, space for visitors to have experiences and make memories. There was something the hotels didn't provide, though. They were, bottom line, places of business. The camps treat *their* space as holy ground, and the experiences that happen there are holy experiences. This is due to the dedication of directors like Josh at Lazy W, who you honored this morning, and Kenny Funk at Wrightwood, and Freedom Macias at Cedar Glen. The food service and maintenance staff, and those like Caitlyn and Marlene, who are in charge of developing programs that engage those who come to camp and carry something back with them that will stay with them forever.

The impact of camp is long-lasting. Hear this brief poem about my experience as a teenager:

Campfire

YWCA mountain camp, at fourteen I sit with
my friends on a log among many logs arranged in rows
on a downhill slope, campfire ring at the bottom.
Seventeen-year-old counselors in bubble haircuts
and jeans shorts stand shoulder to shoulder across the front
leading songs, guitars hanging from straps around their necks.
They play without looking down at their fingers on the strings.
If I had a Hammer, Where Have All the Flowers Gone?
Kum Ba Yah—when it was new. When we believed
we would always care when someone was crying.
My light blue sweatshirt carried the campfire's smoky aroma
home in my suitcase. My mother wanted to wash it. I said *not yet*.
I buried my face in the soft cotton, breathed in,
breathed out, breathed in again.
Someone's singing, Lord—

So many people have blessed me over my years with the Cal-Pac Annual Conference. Saints like Ken McMillan, the pastor who I partnered with in my work with the Board of Pensions. And Mrs. Saint, Patty McMillan who was always so supportive. All the leadership on the various boards I worked with: Ken Heflin, Barbara Roberts, Denise Freese, Bud Wrisley, Gary Ward, JP Harris, George Hooper, Lynn Reese, Randy Johnson, Frank Wulf...and I was just beginning to work with Rod Sprott and Jonathan Chute.

Our bishops, including Bishop Swenson, who was here at my beginning with the Conference, and Bishop Escobedo-Frank who is here as I move into my golden years.

And so many good people who have come through as colleagues. Gail Kendall, my carpool buddy for 10 years who made the three plus hours per day of driving from Orange County to Pasadena actually enjoyable and informational as we read the LA Times to each other in the car. It's a good thing we shared the same outlook on the world and politics.

There were those who we lost while they were serving on staff among us: Sylvia Miller and Susan Bonaparte. And there were those whose retirement was cut short: Frances Jones, and of course Joyce Zirkle, who we lost just this year. We mourn their loss and remember their service.

And then there's Wanda Bethea, my friend and colleague, whose kids and grandkids I've watched grow up and who has watched mine as well. Who has a heart for service that is hard to match. Who serves the homeless and cares for others on holidays when most people are tearing into their own gifts and eating their full meals around tables of people they love. Wanda is out serving others who may not have people around them to love.

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Well, I *think* I know what the Annual Conference means, but I'm *certain* about one thing: The gratitude I'm feeling for all that happened during the time I spent as part of the Conference staff. Gratitude to my husband, H, who shared his talents with us whenever we asked, and was understanding when my days were long. To my kids, who saw my career take on new life during the last quarter, and made the adjustment away from free hotel stays in my old industry to the perks of extra blessings in my new setting.

Most of all, I have the deepest gratitude to God, who saw fit to place me in the middle of a place that took the church I have been a part of my entire life, put it together with a career that seemed to be my calling, and said "this is where you belong."

Among people who cherish each other, especially in times of uncertainty and change. Among people who never lose sight of who they are and *whose* they are, as they come together to build something very, very special.

Thank you. Thank you, Cal-Pac. Thank you, Bishop.

Erin Hawkins-Smith: We have been so blessed by the ministry of Jan Hanson. There are three staff persons who have reached milestones in their work with the Conference this year. We usually honor them at our staff Christmas luncheon, but we didn't have the pins ready in time. We thought it might be good to cherish them here, at Annual Conference! Kenny Funk will be giving the pin to Josh, who we are celebrating 5 years on the staff.

I want to invite Jennifer Gaylord and Cathy Wilson, who are also reaching milestone years. Jennifer with 5 years – not counting the time she spent as a contract worker on the staff. Cathy is celebrating 30 years. Both of them are invaluable members of our team. I am grateful to call them colleagues and friends. We are so grateful for all that you do for us. We love you and want to thank you so much for your heartfelt service to the Annual Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you, staff, for all that you do. For the things mentioned and the things you do that no one knows – the extra things you do for everyone. Thank you.

I am now inviting Jason Takagi to move forward with our legislation.

RES 25-06 - Standing with the Immigrants

Jason Takagi, Legislation Chair, moved RES 25-06.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

The Resolution is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Retirement Video - Media Team

Rev. Kyung Hwan Oh

Nominations - Rev. Sunyoung Lee and Rev. Lynn Owan

Rev. Lynn Owan: Good morning, Bishop, members of the Cabinet, and members of the Annual Conference. I am a Lay servant from Ewa Beach UMC on the island of Oahu in the Hawai'i District. Reverend Sunyoung Lee and I have the privilege of serving as your co-chairs of the Conference Nominations Committee.

Before we discuss today's business, I want to take a moment to express our deep gratitude to several individuals who have been instrumental in our work this year. First, we express our heartfelt sympathy for the passing of Joyce Zirkle, who chaired this committee with diligence and dedication until she could no longer work. We must thank Michael Mitchell, who served as our Interim Chair and provided exceptional leadership during our transition as Reverend Sunyoung and I became co-chairs. We are also incredibly grateful for Jennifer Gaylord, who is a super woman! She works tirelessly and endlessly to keep our Nominations database current and accurate. Her meticulous attention to detail and dedication make our committee's work possible. Additionally, we want to acknowledge Erin Hawkins-Smith, our staff liaison, and District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Tom Choi, who is our Cabinet liaison and whose ongoing expertise helps us navigate the important work of Nominations.

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Rev. Sunyoung Lee: Good morning, Bishop Escobedo-Frank and members and guests of the Annual Conference. I am Sunyoung Lee, she/her, clergy, Riviera UMC.

After 13 years of being actively involved in the Ordinations service, I thought I would finally get to rest on the final day of Annual Conference. I have only myself to thank for this because I nominated myself to serve on the Nominations committee as I was going off of the Board of Ordained Ministry. So, thank you, Sunyoung!

Friends, we hope you had the opportunity to review the Nominations report: REC 25-10. As always, this is a living document with several vacancies left to fill. We need your partnership. The Conference Nominations Committee enhanced our process this year, refining how we discern among candidates, adding reference checks to ensure we're placing the right people in the right positions, and formally communicating with those who have been elected to serve. This enhanced approach allows us to better match gifts and calling with ministry opportunities.

So here is what we are asking: Help us identify people. People in your churches, in your districts, who would be great fits for Conference committees. Look for those with hearts for finance, trustees, administration, education, and so many more on which we serve together at the Conference level. If you are thinking that maybe you could contribute something, please rise to the occasion! Conference committees are aware that vital administration can happen on a much greater level. If you are interested in serving or if you know someone who should serve, please reach out to us at Nominations at www.CalPacUMC.org.

Bishop, on behalf of the Conference Nominations Committee, we move the adoption of the Nominations Report, REC 25-10.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Liz Roark, New Beginnings UMC, Jurisdiction Delegate: I want to say thank you for all your work, as a former chair of Nominations. You have done a wonderful job and I commend you for looking at the rules and sending them back to get them clarified. Thank you for doing this work. However, there are a few places you should be looking at, and I will be sending them to you. A couple of them are that we need to make sure there is more diversity in certain committees like Communications – they are all white females except for Larry Hygh. COSROW – men can be on COSROW, so men, please step up. Men are the one area that need to step up, so I ask you to step up, especially in our districts. We have wonderful lay leaders in our districts, but I believe 90% of them are women. So, men, I challenge you to step up and be leadership in our districts and at the Conference level. But thank you for your work.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I take that as an advisory commentary. Thank you.

Blair Trygstad-Stowe, Clergy, Hollywood UMC: Point of information for the body as the Young Gen taskforce has been working together, we are hoping to bring a new structure to our Young People's Ministries. But I want to pay attention to the Nominations report, particularly for our Youth Counsel. It is nearly empty. Often what happens in our body is that we nominate youth that we think are really cool, and we never follow up with them. So I am urging the body to prayerfully consider the youth that are in your churches, and to not just lift their names because you think they are amazing, but to bring their names to Nominations and to also commit to walking with them as they take on leadership in the Annual Conference. So as the YGM is discerning the new structure for our Young People's Ministries, those nomination committees that we have currently are the places we will go first to draw for our leadership. So please, please be in prayerful discernment and partnership with the young people in your midst and bring their names to us so that we can continue this work. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that point of information. Are there any other comments for Nominations? Seeing none, REC 25-10 is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Point of Personal Privilege

Dr. Adrienne Zackery, Crossroads UMC: I am here to announce the awardee recipient for the 2025 Mildred Hutchinson award, Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez, who is the Executive Director of CLUE. Jennifer is unable to be with us

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here at the Annual Conference today due to a prior engagement, so she will be presented with her award at the MFSA meeting on August 9th. The location of the meeting is TBA. Thank you.

Point of Personal Privilege

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have one more point of privilege, which is from Rev. Allison Mark. While they come forward I want to acknowledge that many others have requested points of personal privilege, but it is kind of late in the day. We are doing our best to just help us move into the Ordination service, but there are many ways to communicate all of the things that are going on. Use all of your communication tools to get the word out for what's happening in your areas. Thank you.

Rev. Mandy Sloan McDow: Good morning, everyone. I come to you as the very grateful and humble outgoing Chair of the Episcopacy Committee. It has been a wonderful experience to serve in this role. We had an opportunity both to bid Bishop Hagiya farewell in his retirement and to welcome Bishop Escobedo-Frank into her new tenure. Thank you for the opportunity to serve alongside you in care and support.

Today, on behalf of the Episcopacy Committee, we do have a handful of gifts to offer our Bishop. So, Bishop, from each of our five districts, Rev. Allison Mark has put together this wonderful basket of representative gifts. As we take our time and thank you for all that you do, it is my gift to share that Stacy Dickson will be our incoming Chair of the Episcopacy Committee. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you so much, everyone. I can smell the aroma of the coffee in the gift basket! Thank you, I do appreciate serving with you.

COSROW - Rev. Stephanie Rice

Our next order of business is from COSROW. Rev. Stephanie Rice, please come forward.

Rev. Stephanie Rice: Greetings Bishop Escobedo-Frank and members of the California-Pacific Annual Conference. It is good to be with you again this morning with our update on your Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women and our Monitoring work at this Conference so far. I am Rev. Stephanie Rice, she/her, clergy, currently serving at Glendale First UMC and am one of your co-chairs for our Conference COSROW.

Ellen Evans Agee: And I am Ellen Evans Agee, lay person at Westwood UMC. My pronouns are she/her.

First, we'd like to share the COSROW purpose, from the *Book of Discipline*: The primary purpose of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women shall be to challenge the United Methodist Church, including its general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life.

Now, for a summary of our data collected through yesterday in our Monitoring work. As a reminder, monitoring is a process of data collection and observation with the purpose of seeing where we are as a Conference in terms of our inclusiveness or exclusiveness of marginalized voices.

As the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women says about Monitoring, "In [this] reporting, we celebrate where we model beloved community, take note of where and how improvements may be made, and become more aware of our conduct toward one another."

Rev. Stephanie Rice: Every Conference has unique gifts and challenges and so there are a few different pieces of data we believe are most helpful for Cal-Pac. One is, of course, a gender breakdown of those speaking and being acknowledged during our plenary sessions. For now, since we are still waiting on data from our Commissioning and Ordination Service, we are just including data from the plenary sessions. For those sessions so far, of the people who spoke or were acknowledged during these sessions, 48% were women, 47% were men, and 5% were non-binary, or self-identified as outside the male-female binary in some way. This is pretty typical for our Conference and is certainly something to be celebrated. This year especially, we saw more people who identify as outside the gender binary speaking from the floor.

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The area where we continue to see a cause for concern is contributors speaking from the floor. This category includes unplanned or un-programmed speakers, usually during voting or moments of personal privilege. We do continue to see relative parity here in terms of gender, but when this group is broken down by race, we can clearly see that a significant majority of those who are speaking from the floor are white.

Ellen Evans Agee: We appreciate Rev. Molly Vetter pointing this out yesterday and recognize this in ourselves as well. We are two cisgender white women reporting to you this morning, and we encourage the Annual Conference and our own group to continue to find creative ways of being a beloved community together that help our leadership and those in positions of influence and decision-making better represent the people of the Annual Conference and the communities in which we serve.

After the completion of this Annual Conference we will finalize the data collected by all of our Monitors and will compile a report that we will send to the Bishop and Conference leadership. It will include our recommendations on how we can do some of that work. We are also working with our Director of Communications, Dr. Alyssa Fisher, to finalize a COSROW page on our Cal-Pac website and will include last year's report, as well as this year's once it is complete. In addition, the page will include many other resources for those looking for support or who want to be involved in this work.

Rev. Stephanie Rice: We'd like to thank this Annual Conference for approving Rules Change 25-06 yesterday, which mandates a Boundaries and Sexual Ethics training for all those serving under appointment. This rule change came about after several people from our Commission attended the Ministry Leaders Summit last year and participated in the Healing Trauma working group. We recognized that in order to heal trauma, we have to recognize when it has occurred and work to prevent it from happening in the future.

Our priority for the coming year is to create that training in partnership with clergy mental health professionals, making sure it is relevant and accessible. We will be in communication with our clergy and Lay Persons Assigned to hear from you on the boundary and self-care issues you face in your appointments to help target this training to current needs and to help open up these difficult conversations in a way that leads to that beloved community.

Ellen Evans Agee: We are also continuing to work to develop training for local churches and especially SPRCs or Staff Parish Relations Committees to help congregations understand the issues clergy and staff face in the church, especially clergy women and female staff, so that they can support and protect the whole church.

We encourage you to read our full COSROW report in the Preliminary Report, if you haven't already, and to reach out to us if you're interested in being part of this work. The sign-up sheet will be on the table until the end of the Annual Conference and we will be reaching out shortly to those who have signed up. We also encourage you to come talk to us if you are facing any issues in your church or work and feel like you need support. GCSRW has great people and resources that can help us help you.

Dr. Stephanie Rice: We are blessed with a great group of people who are committed to the mission and purpose of COSROW, and are incredibly excited about those of you who have added your names to the sign-up sheet at the COSROW table. Finally, we'd like to thank all those who've been doing this work over the last few years as we've worked hard to revitalize our conference COSROW, and for all those who've come before us to make it possible for us to stand before you today. Our work is not yet done. We have yet to reach perfection in love, and so we continue on to work for equity and justice in the Church, to do good, to truly do no harm, and to stay in love with God. Thank you.

Sessions Committee - Rev. Bob Rhodes, Sandee Furuta, Rev. Won-Seok Yuh
Presentation: How Annual Conference Dates & Locations Are Chosen

1. Opening Framing: Honoring the Question

- Many of us deeply care where and how we gather.
- The space where we worship, vote, connect, and share matters. And questions around why we meet when and where we do are valid—and faithful.

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- We're here today to share how those decisions are made, the values that guide us, and the input we've received from you—Members of the Annual Conference.

2. How the Process Works

- The Bishop sets the dates, which are nearly always the days leading up to Father's Day.
- These last several years, the Sessions Executive Team selects the location, working in partnership with a hotel/convention specialist who negotiates bids and availability.
- Each year, we provide:
 - Our general location preferences (often tied to one of our Cal-Pac districts)
 - Accessibility concerns
 - Union status or equitable pay commitments
 - Notes about cost burden and proximity to major airports
- The hotel partner returns several options, and several of our leaders from the Sessions team tours them, meets with staff, and weighs the available options.

Grounding in the Book of Discipline (§603): Many folks simplify the process by saying, "*The Bishop picks the dates, and the Conference picks the place.*" That's rooted in our polity.

- **§603.2:** The bishop appoints the time of the Annual Conference.
- **§603.3:** The Annual Conference—or a committee thereof—selects the location.

3. What We Heard from You

- Since 2022, we've gathered feedback through surveys with hundreds of responses.
- Across all years, nearly 60% of members have consistently expressed a clear preference for hotel or convention space (with or without proximity to a large church).

Key Themes from Written Responses:

- **Convenience:** Hotel sites reduce the need for travel between venues and allow for unified space.
- **Comfort:** Air conditioning, restrooms in rooms, and elevators all matter—especially for elders or those with disabilities.
- **Cost trade-offs:** While some official meals are more expensive, off-site options are often plentiful.
- **Community:** People notice and value seeing more members informally—"in the halls," at "the elevators," etc.
- **Worship concerns:** Some miss worshipping in a sanctuary. But others shared deeply that meaningful moments like baptisms and ordinations were no less sacred in ballrooms.
- **Nostalgia:** Many named long histories at Redlands, with some referring to it as sacred ground."

4. Why We're Not at Redlands Anymore

- After 2022, we heard clearly: "Let's explore all our options."
- That year, the Members of the Conference voted to empower the Sessions Committee to choose future locations.
- In the months that followed, Sandee attempted contact with the University of Redlands every month for a year, and weekly in the final month before our deadline.
- We received no response.
- Without a proposal or communication, we took that as a clear sign that they were no longer interested in hosting us.

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5. Hawai'i Considerations - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

- Every year, we try to support our Hawai'i District delegation:
 - We charter a shuttle from LAX.
 - We coordinate flights to align with group travel.
- While proximity to LAX is ideal, finding a location that meets **all criteria**—dates, union status, accessibility, cost, space—is extremely difficult.
- We've tried sites near Burbank Airport to reduce travel. Unfortunately, that location wasn't ultimately convenient either.

Rev. Rhodes: we would all love to go to Hawaii, but it is not good stewardship of our funds to send all of us to Hawaii

6. Addressing Recent Concerns with Compassion - Sandee Furuta

- In the lead-up to this year's session, we've heard and considered concerns including:
 - **Location:** This site isn't close to every church—but it is accessible by major freeways and coordinated air travel.
 - **Worship:** We don't have many large UMCs that can hold all our Members *and* are near a hotel/conference center.
 - **Labor and equity:** This year's hotel is not unionized—but we asked about pay and working conditions. We learned that wages are competitive and retention is high, suggesting fair and equitable treatment.
 - **Cost:** Official meal prices are high, but outside options abound, and not all meals must be purchased onsite.

7. Closing Values - Rev. Bob Rhodes

- There's no perfect location. But we do our best with the options available.
- Every decision is shaped by:
 - Stewardship of Conference funds and local church budgets
 - Accessibility
 - Connectional spirit
 - The sacredness of gathering together
- Your feedback continues to shape this process.
- And your trust helps us do this work faithfully.
- That's why we've expanded community offerings—like a pop-up choir, a film screening, an open-mic night, a trivia night, a labyrinth, a book club, yoga, a sound bath, and more.
- We want the Annual Conference to be a place of sacred encounter, not just voting and reports.

Rev. Rhodes: It is not only that we stand here and give you as much information as we can, is that we must hear you. There are some years when a lot of you respond to our evaluations, but there are some years where you don't. We are committed to hearing from you - we are here if you have any questions.

Laity at Mic 4: Thank you for this opportunity. I love our Annual Conference and I think it is a wonderful thing. However, as one of the lay persons assigned, I find that we don't have a voice. I would like you to think about next year giving us a possibility to vote or have an elder in the room with us, talking with us, nurturing us, and praying with us. Thank you.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: Thank you. I will turn to Mic 1 in a moment, but first we have an online comment from Noelle Nicolai, laity at Santa Clarita UMC.

Noelle Nicolai, laity, Santa Clarita UMC: Should we maybe consider changing the date or asking the Bishop to consider changing the dates in the future if it seems to be affecting pricing in so many ways.

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Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I am open to changing the dates. The first session I was here, I tried to change the dates but I received feedback from people saying that it won't work due to May being the month of graduations. There is no perfect time to meet, but if we find out that there is a better date that people can attend, I'm fine with changing the dates.

Suanne Ware-Diaz, laity, Native American UMC: Thank you for the work that you do. I know it is difficult. In this particular time we've had together, I have never felt more prepared for coming into a Conference session. All of the pre-Conference materials and the gatherings were very effective. We will never be perfect, but we strive for it.

We were given these lovely cards when we came in today, and the first thing it says is, "Your gifts, passion, and faith are a blessing to the Church." Each one of us, but there's so many other people, have that, too. My training, and I'm going to piggyback on what COSROW is doing as well, is a reflection that we look at ourselves. But I've been programmed to look at who's missing and should be here, and who is here and not being heard. That has to be looked at.

By the way, in the COSROW report, even though I've been up here, we are not even a category even though we are on Native American lands. What does that say? We have a lot to do. I am not saying this with a mean intention, I'm saying this because we need to learn together. We don't want to freeze people out because they have a different viewpoint, we want to engage. So I just want to say, so much of being in the General Conference's Jurisdictional Conferences over the years, so much of the ministry and so much of what happens is not in the voting sessions, but outside. And not having other people come from our churches to be here, other leaders who are not necessarily delegates, are not getting a lot of the feedback and interaction.

It's all about relationship-building. I know that my pastor had some feedback about different locations and venues that might be a bit more practical, if it's the date I know it's something we're working on, but thank you for being mindful. Continue to be mindful and I will continue to challenge us to keep looking at who's missing and how to really be in relationship a lot better. Thank you.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: I see three people who I am going to invite to speak at the microphones, then after that I am going to wrap us up. My friends, I would love this year to be the year we receive the most feedback on those evaluations. We want to hear from you.

Frank Wulf, clergy, Echo Park UMC and La Plaza UMC: I appreciate the work that ensures we go to a hotel that treats their employees well and pays a living wage. I want to call our attention to the people in our Conference who work with employees and organize with them. I want to call upon the body not just to talk to the management of hotels, but to also actively engage with folks in our Conference who work with Unions and who work on the streets, especially in hospitality unions as we make decisions moving forward. If you need to know who, talk to me and I will connect you. Thank you.

Gail Kendall, laity, Aldersgate UMC: Just a Point of Information for the body as we talk about our caregivers in the hotel today. I encountered one of our workers this morning and she shared with me that this hotel provides lunch for its employees. I thought it would be important to know that for this particular entity of this hotel, there are undocumented pieces of compensation for their employees.

Barb Eveland, laity: Bishop and Annual Conference, I have a suggestion. I came here after years of being away, and I was so excited for Open Mic Night, but 9 p.m. was a little too late. I was thinking that maybe there was a way to incorporate bringing food to a place and having an event so we can still physically make it through the week. Thank you.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: Thank you for sharing all that you share and how we can do this good work together. We will keep offering a hybrid option. Online folks, we experience a greater sense of community when you can participate in person. If being online is necessary, we want that to be available. If there is some way that we could help you participate in person, please let us know how we can help you.

Thank you for showing up. Thank you for asking questions. And thank you for walking this journey with us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you so much for all your good work. I will announce the date later on as we close up. I also just want to say that one of the things Rev. Rhodes mentioned is how far it is for those from Guam to come here. I

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want you to be recognized for the long journey you took to be among us. Rev. Rogelio Lim and his wife, please stand so we can recognize you. The rest of his family and laity from Guam, please all stand together. Thank you for coming a long way, it is so good to have you among us. Now I invite Erin Hawkins-Smith from Connectional Ministries to come forward.

Conference Wrap Up - Erin Hawkins-Smith, Exec. Dir of Connectional Ministries

Erin Hawkins-Smith thanked all those who have worked tirelessly to make the Annual Conference possible.

Activities

Rev. Jane Voigts
Rev. Andy Mattick
Rev. Karen Ristine
Pastor Lyda Eddington
Rev. Melinda Dodge
Patty DelliBovi
Rev. Dr. Judy Chung
Rev. Richard Bentley
Rev. Ken Suhr
Michael Pope

Communications

Dr. Alyssa Fisher
Diana Beas-Soto
Jason Moore
Stephen Hale

Media Team

AJ Prat
Anna Binney
Cameron Huskey
Cameron Rhodes
Dafry Nesamony
Dale McCart
Don Howald
Doug Lewis
Evan Matute
Gary Windergerst
Jennifer Demaree
Rev. John Demaree

Ushers

Lincoln Banner
Teresa Banner
Cecil Bucud-Arceo
Becky Choi
Judy Cramer
Pastor Monalisa Halapua
Dara Johnson
Lorraine Kadooka
Sunil Kathramalia

Lay Leader

Mele Maka

Childcare

Risa Vargas
Andrea De La Torre
Brenda Hernandez Perez
Azucena Montenegro
Pauline Tamale
Sarah Williams
Anna Funk
Selena Andrews
Xenia Andrews

Site Logistics

Sandee Furuta

Media Team

Karl Ports
Kathy Norris
Ken Ellis
Larry Hull
Rev. Lew Fry
Lietta Wagner
Mike Nelson
Neal Paton
Rebecca Mathews
Renata Hundley
Tom Hundley
Zach Rhodes

Ushers

DeMaris Koenig
Kyria Lim
Terria Markovich
Sheryl Meadows
Carol Murakami
Dafry Nesamony
Rachel Wintergerst
Kathy Kinley

Connectional Ministries Staff

Erin Hawkins-Smith
Cathy Wilson
Jennifer Gaylord
Kenny Funk
Rev. Ken Suhr
Dr. Alyssa Fisher
Rev. Karin Ellis
Krista Bilderbach
Monalisa Tu'itahi
Sandee Furuta
Nancy Perez-Barcelo

Musicians

Elizabeth Baker
Le'ota Tu'itahi
Nathan Buck
John Fluker
David Kaplan
Eric Lige
January Lim
Dean Ricker-Manning
Noel Spangrud
Brianna Uipi

Worship

Rev. Julie Elkins
Jeff Lashmet
Chris Lashmet
JoDee Rich

Treasurer's Office

Christy Drenner
Paula Boyd
Kathy Trcopan
Patricia Perez
Wanda Bethea
Rosana Wallace
Salend Krishna
Dereck Santos

Episcopal Office

Margaret Irwin
Roxana Hernandez

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Registration & Check-In

Jennifer Gaylord
Nancy Perez-Barcelo
Patricia Perez
Sonya Lee
Dany Caguin
Polly Sablan
Jan Newton
Emilie Penuelas
Sam Nason
Roxana Hernandez
Diana Beas Soto
Caydene Monk
Ellen Evans Agee
Kenny Funk
Rev. Marlene Urban-Funk
Chris Gaylord

Stage

Pastor Jennifer Rath-Scott
Linda Hunt
Linda Hall

Guest Bishops

Bishop Sally Dyck
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson
Bishop Franklin Brookhart

Secretary's Office

Rev. Bob Rhodes
Rev. Won-Seok Yuh
Rev. Cathie Capp
Rev. Lea Booth
Jason Takagi
JP Harris
Judy Lewis
Pastor Jennifer Rath-Scott
Rev. Josh Zulueta
Kristina Zulueta
Greg Estep
Bill Lazarte
Pastor Lyda Eddington
Keira Eddington

The Board of Ordained Ministry

Rev. Greg Batson, Chair
Cathy Wilson
Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin and Ordination
Team

Others

Rev. Lea Booth, Parliamentarian
Rev. Preston Price, Guest
Parliamentarian
Jason Moore, Midnight Oil
SuperCopy
DECCO Awards

Young People

Caitlyn Anderson
Gillian Mager
Alisa Wentzel
Rev. Blair Trygstad-Stowe
Ellie Chun
Joseph Chun
Christy Watkins
Jared Davis
Rev. Melinda Dodge
Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin

Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa

Clara and Maria, Events
Coordinators

All of the staff – housekeeping,
catering, valet, front desk, and
throughout the hotel

Closing Business - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Bob Rhodes thanked Bishop Escobedo-Frank and Erin Hawkins-Smith. He then addressed the body, acknowledging that there are still a lot of people who want to share points of personal privilege, and asked that those people speak to Dr. Alyssa Fisher, who can help share the messages that they would like to convey to the Conference

Rev. Rhodes asked that the body please remove all personal belongings from the room so it can be reset as efficiently as possible.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank thanked Erin Hawkins-Smith and the Cabinet for all of their hard work. She also thanked her table mates, Rev. Bob Rhodes, Rev. Cathie Capp, and Rev. Lea Booth, as well as Mele Maka, Roxana Hernandez, and Margaret Irwin for their support. A special thank you also went out to Bishop Escobedo-Frank's husband, Jim.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that the next Annual Conference will be held on the following dates: June 17-20, 2026.

Rev. Bob Rhodes moved to close the 41st session of the Cal-Pac Annual Conference as of the end of the Commissioning and Ordination Service.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

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COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION SERVICE | JUNE 14, 2025, 1:30 PM (PDT)

The musicians played as the people gathered.

Processional Hymn

Go Make of All Disciples

UMH #571

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered a word of greeting and the Opening Prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered the litany of the Recognition of Common Ministry and Reaffirmation of Baptism.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank presented the Persons to be Ordained, Commissioned or Recognized.

All laity recognized and offered support of the Candidates.

The Board of Ordained Ministry all stood and shared that they have examined the Candidates and support them in their calling and ministry.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board of Ordained Ministry, Registrar, presented this person for Commissioning as Deacon:
Maria Perez Longley

Deacons in Full Connection affirmed her with prayers and support.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board of Ordained Ministry, Registrar, presented these persons for Commissioning as Provisional Members preparing for Ordained Ministry as Elders: Brad Biggerstaff; Moon Young Kong; Josh Lopez-Reyes; Mark Amos Maddix; Royce Vincent Porter, Sr.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, Board of Ordained Ministry, Registrar, presented these persons for Ordination as Elders in Full Connection: Dong Hee (Donnie) Bae; Ki-Hyun Cho; VJ Cruz Baez; Matthew Hambrick; Katherine Ann Hunter; Hyun Seob (Ralph) Kwon; Jonggoo Lee; Mary Ann Pickard; Joshua Edward Zulueta.

Elders in Full Connection affirmed them with prayers and support.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked the congregation to declare their assent for the ordination and commissioning of the candidates. Bishop Escobedo-Frank then examined the candidates for commissioning and ordination.

Candidates left the stage.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced the guest Bishops, The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced the Guest Preacher, Rev. J. Andre Wilson.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson read Psalm 119:105-109, NRSV and Romans 8:28, KJV

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited and welcomed Rev. J. Andre Wilson of Altadena United Methodist Church to offer the Message.

Message

“Called: Containers of Love”

Rev. J. Andre Wilson

Response to the Word: Apostles Creed led by Bishop Brookhart

COMMISSIONING OF PROVISIONAL MEMBERS

The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson and Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank commissioned and offered prayer and a laying on of hands over the Candidates for Commissioning as Provisional Deacons and Elders.

Ordained clergy and the candidates' support persons prayed for and participated in the laying on of hands over the Candidates.

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LAYING ON OF HANDS AND PRAYERS FOR ELDERS

As the Candidates for Ordination as Elders stood, The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson and Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank examined them for Ordination as an Elder, then they prayed over them. Candidates for Ordination as an Elder were invited to kneel before the Bishops one at a time. Family members and friends were invited to stand where they were for silent prayer during the laying on of hands for Ordinands.

All three Bishops laid hands on the head of each Ordinand and prayed. The Ordinand then placed his/her hands on the Bible, while Bishop Escobedo-Frank charged them to take their authority as an Elder. Each person ordained then received a stole to represent the mantle they took up.

Candidates for Ordination as Elders: Dong Hee (Donnie) Bae; Ki-Hyun Cho; VJ Cruz Baez; Matthew Hambrick; Katherine Ann Hunter; Hyun Seob (Ralph) Kwon; Jonggoo Lee; Mary Ann Pickard; Joshua Edward Zulueta.

RECOGNITION OF ORDERS FROM OTHER CONFERENCES AND METHODIST DENOMINATIONS

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin recognized those clergy who have been received as a full member by transfer from other annual conferences: Jay Campbell (Elder from Virginia - not present today); Elizabeth Davidson (Deacon from Mississippi); Bomi Kim (Elder from North Georgia - not present today).

RECOGNITION OF ORDERS IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin recognized those clergy who have been received in the United Methodist Church: as a Provisional Member, Wesley Aaron Thompson (from The Church of the Nazarene); as a Member in Full Connection, Sam K. Park (from the Korean Presbyterian Church USA).

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered a prayer for these clergy persons.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited the body to the time of Thanksgiving and Communion. The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson and Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank officiated the Eucharist.

Conference Lay Leader Mele Maka led The Lord's Prayer

During the time of Holy Communion, the congregation sang One Bread, One Body (UMH 620) Take Our Bread (UMH 640) Let us Break Bread Together (UMH 618)

After receiving Communion, each commissioned or ordained candidate went to the Bishop to receive foot or hand washing.

The songs Jesu, Jesu (UMH 432), The Servant Song (TFWS 2222), Holy Spirit, Truth Divine (UMH 465) were sung.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered the Prayer after the Great Thanksgiving.

SENDING FORTH

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered the Dismissal with Blessing.

The closing hymn, "Lift High the Cross, UMH 159, was sung.