

# K. DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS REPORTS

## CREST TO COAST MISSIONAL DISTRICT

As I reflect on the past year of ministry in the Crest to Coast Missional District, pain and sorrow, collaboration and cooperation, and hope and creativity emerge as core themes.

### Pain and Sorrow

Pain and sorrow need little description in what has been a difficult year for all – increased political division and tension, the storming of the US Capitol, anti-Asian hate crimes rising, the continued death of Black people by police, economic struggle, increased isolation, the death (to date) of over 570,000 people from COVID-19 in our country, and general weariness from the unfolding of the pandemic.

1. Within the church, pastoral leaders are worn out and worn down by the heavy load of shifting to online ministry. Some even consider leaving ministry or need significant time away. Laity deeply desire to connect with one another and the traditions that have sustained them during difficult times. Through it all, pastors and laity have patiently and persistently turned to the good news of Jesus and our Wesleyan tradition to guide, buoy, ground, direct, and encourage our individual and corporate lives.



### Collaboration and Cooperation

Collaboration and cooperation have provided great opportunity for many of our district churches. The South Sound Co-operative (a network of seven churches) has collaborated for over a year on joint online worship, education, and spiritual formation. Seven churches in the Twin Harbors sub-district sent lay leadership to collaboration meetings to talk, dream and plan what cooperative ministry might mean for the survival of their churches and the growth of United Methodism in their region. Five churches in the Longview/ Kelso Sub-District have begun joint worship services to better resource the United Methodist churches in their region.

Sixteen Crest to Coast churches applied for and received Phase 1 Fund for Families grants. Combined, these churches received over \$17,000 to support those in their communities struggling from the impacts of COVID-19 through giving utility and rental support, food and gas gift cards, and more.

Throughout the year, there have been opportunities for clergy to check-in and support one another through regular Zoom meetings. A small clergy group met for anti-racism conversation using the 1619 podcast as a guide. The Pacific Northwest Conference partnered with the Alaska Conference to offer two online conference wide trainings for laity with workshops on administrative committee work, disaster relief planning, simple board governance, and building an inclusive church.

### Hope and Creativity

The pandemic forced clergy and churches to be creative and to act with hope. From weekly worship and bazaars to trunk n' treats and congregational care, churches stepped out of their comfort zones to rethink their usual ministry and engage in safe, creative ways that reached people beyond their usual sphere. During Charge Conferences, every church engaged in conversation about *Bishop Stanovsky's* call to dismantle racism which ended by asking churches to engage in an inventory of images in their church. This activity called for churches to examine the images in their physical and digital spaces for imagery that is culturally biased or exclusionary. Conversation at most charge conferences was thoughtful and engaged.

The willingness of clergy and churches to be creative and to begin anti-racism work is hopeful for the future of the church. As churches turn their attention to discussing what hybrid ministry will look like for their particular context, I hope that we carry forward the creative and bold lessons we have learned this past year so that we might shape a more just, peaceful and hope-filled future.

### Transitional Blessings

Finally, we ask special transitional blessings for Crest to Coast churches and clergy. Two churches, Hoquiam and Aberdeen United Methodist churches, will be moving into lay-led status. Five pastoral leaders are retiring or are already retired and stepping out of pastoral ministry: *Karla Fredericksen, Willem Romeijn, Eleazar Rivera-Garcia, Ron Myers*, and Kathryn Garnett. We celebrate with those who anticipate ordination this year: Pam Brokaw, Dione Corsilles, Alexa Eisenbarth, Amanda Nicol, and Sandy Ward. Like every year, some clergy will be leaving our district to serve in other districts and we will welcome new clergy into our district.

May the Risen Christ boldly lead us forward into a new year full of opportunity to deepen our love of God and more fully express our love for our neighbor through equity, justice and peace.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Kathleen Weber, Crest to Coast District Superintendent*

# INLAND MISSIONAL DISTRICT

I am completing my fifth and final year on the cabinet, and my third as dean as I transition to an extension ministry where I will be engaging individuals and groups as a leadership coach and as a consultant (working both inside and outside the church). I am grateful for these past five years in ministry with all of you, and I pray that you will forgive me for mistakes I have made. It has been an honor to serve in this capacity and I hope you all know how meaningful this ministry has been to me. The relationships we have established over these years give me much hope for the future of the church.

We are still in the midst of this new, peculiar and unfamiliar reality due to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic as well as our long overdue awareness of systems of inequity and racism. We have altered our patterns of gathering and now that has us wondering if we'll ever feel "normal" again. Will we know how to socialize and interact when gathering restrictions ease and we don't have to wear masks? Will we want to shake hands or hug others without thinking twice? We are in a liminal season.

The word 'liminal' comes from the Latin word 'limen', meaning threshold – any point or place of entering or beginning. A liminal space is the time between the 'what was' and the 'next.' It is a place of transition, a season of waiting, and not knowing. Liminal space is where all transformation takes place if we learn to wait and let it form us. And that is the challenge that continues to lie before us: Will we engage this liminal season faithfully as a path toward what God is calling us to DO and BE in the age to come? Will we strive to go back to the ways things were? Or will we rush into a new way of being without paying attention to how God is using this liminal season to change us?

As we strive to live into this new reality the Greater Northwest Cabinet has been engaged in deep work around growing in our intercultural competency and anti-racism work at each meeting, and we have also been doing a book study and engaged in discussion around the book, "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You Are Going: Leading in a Liminal Season." As I have reflected on our work, I have realized that we are all suffering. Everyone is doing the best they can, but we often react to one another in less than helpful ways. I have also realized that even as we bear this suffering, we don't have to do it alone. God and other companions are awaiting us on this journey.

As we continue this pandemic journey, I still wonder if we have sufficiently engaged these questions: Where do we go from here? Especially if we don't just go back to the patterns and habits we had before March 2020, what are the new directions God is calling us to pursue? What does it look like for us to work on creating God's realm here on earth just as it is in heaven? How can we all work for the common good?

Even though I will no longer be in this role, I still anticipate being of service in helping clergy, laypersons and local church leadership teams grapple with what it means to be faithful followers of Jesus and figure out how God is calling us to transform our world.



Will you please let me know how I can be of service?

### Other changes we have experienced this past year:

Just like in life, we have births, deaths, celebration and grief in our life together. We experienced new births and we grieved the deaths of so many. We experienced illnesses and surgeries and, in some cases, miraculous healing. I am grateful that you have allowed me to be in prayer with and for you all.

A huge loss for our district was the unexpected death of Pastor Kathy Kramer in early December 2020 from a recurrence of breast cancer. She had been appointed or assigned to Elmore UMC outside Potlatch, ID since 1986 and her life impacted so many. She was a dynamic and caring pastor and leader, and she will be dearly missed by us all.

Other appointment changes this year include *Rev. Roger Hudson* leaving Covenant UMC in Spokane for a year of Transitional Leave to discern a calling to extension ministry, and *Rev. Debbie Sperry* leaving Moscow: First UMC to serve Wenatchee: First UMC.

As we say goodbye and thank you to those faithful servants, we simultaneously welcome Pastor Catherine Lyle (effective in April, 2021) who will serve as pastor at Elmore UMC, *Rev. Megan Madsen* who joins us from the Church of the Nazarene and will serve Covenant UMC in Spokane as she seeks a transfer into The UMC, and *Rev. Kim Poole* who leaves the Methow Valley and will serve Moscow: First UMC. *Rev. Michelle Mitchell* also transitioned this spring from serving both Harrington UMC and Ritzville: Trinity UMC to return to serving Harrington alone, and we welcome *Rev. Ella DeDeaux* who will serve half-time in Ritzville.

I also pray you will welcome my successor, *Rev. Daniel Miranda* with open arms and open hearts. He and his spouse, *Rev. Sheila Miranda*, will be working to create new systems of supervision and support in both the Inland and Seven Rivers Missional Districts.

We always grieve the faithful completion of ministries, but at the time of this printing we didn't have clarity about the future of several congregations. Please see the description of these congregations elsewhere in this journal, as I don't believe I will have an opportunity to share in depth about their ministry at our virtual annual conference this year.

I will continue to pray for your communities, congregations and leaders regularly, and I would invite you to hold me, *Daniel* and *Sheila Miranda*, *Bishop Stanovsky* and the whole cabinet in your deepest thoughts and prayers as we hold all of you in ours.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Gregg Sealey, Inland District Superintendent*

## PUGET SOUND MISSIONAL DISTRICT

### A Year Like No Other

On March 13, 2020, *Bishop Stanovsky* directed all local churches and other ministries in the Greater NW Episcopal Area to refrain from doing in-person gatherings for a couple of weeks. It was intended to minimize the impact of COVID-19 among the most vulnerable members of our communities. But as the virus started to spread, stricter safety protocols were put in place and that included a directive for our church buildings to fully close and many have remained closed until now.

The buildings were closed but our congregations never stopped being churches in the communities they belong to. Many of our churches became beacons of hope for the many around them. In times of uncertainty and vulnerability, many of our pastors and local church leaders, reexamined their congregations' mission and ministry foci and started shifting their strategies for worship, pastoral care, and community engagements to meet the current needs of the people around them. It created opportunities for more collaboration and creative work among and between pastors and their congregants as well as with neighboring congregations and community organizations.



### District Gatherings

Like almost everyone during this pandemic time, district meetings and gatherings have all been virtual. For a few months at the start of the pandemic, the district was hosting two gatherings for local church lay leaders and one gathering for clergy every week. These were intended to keep people connected as well as to provide support to one another.

In the Fall, consultations with clergy and Staff/Pastor Relations Committees were all done via Zoom. Charge Conferences were also conducted virtually.

More recently, in partnership with the District Superintendents in PNW and Alaska, a couple District Lay Leaders Training were offered via Zoom.

### How the Pandemic has Changed Us

Truly it has been a year like no other and there is no going back to the way things were. Instead, we are now entering a new reality, a post COVID-19 times.

Experts are now telling us that with the current rate of the vaccinations, we will start seeing some of the more familiar rhythms of our lives returning by summertime, but I tell you, none of these familiar and recognizable activities will go unchanged and neither will we.

I don't believe we can ever fully turn the corner and leave this whole experience behind. This crisis has reshaped us and is continually changing us. Our experiences in the past year are stored up in our personal and collective memories, forever. The blessings and the bruises that came with this crisis are with us now whether we like it or not.

This pandemic has changed every aspect of our lives and we can't unchange it anymore.

Our families have been changed.

Our communities have been changed.

Our churches have been changed.

Our world has been changed.

Again, I am not sure we can ever go back to how things were and that is okay. As they say, let us not waste a good crisis. If we are open to learn the lessons and opportunities for change being presented to us now, we can be so much better when this crisis is finally over!

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. J. Mark Galang, Puget Sound District Superintendent*

## SEATAC MISSIONAL DISTRICT

2020-21 has been a year of adaptive change, forced upon our churches and people by the once-in-a-lifetime challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. With in-person worship and gatherings suspended so that our churches and people would “do no harm,” our churches went to a completely online ministry so that our people, buildings and ministry would not become a source of covid-spread. This situation presented all of our pastors and people, our churches and ministries, with unique challenges of how best to communicate the presence of God, create unity in their congregational community, serve the deep and growing needs of their neighborhood community, and care for the ordering and administration of their ministry, in ways that enabled our church ministries to continue to flourish.

But what I believe we discovered most fully, in the midst of this liminal season we are moving through, is that the pandemic has only surfaced the questions and concerns and challenges and problems that have been “hiding in plain sight” in the midst of our perceived successes and victories, as we came to discover that we have been shielding our eyes and avoiding these issues for so many years. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly and profoundly revealed these existential concerns, and asked us to wrestle with how we will understand and address these, for the future of our churches and our denomination.



In this year of unprecedented challenges in ministry, congregations have sought to be innovative and creative in bringing online worship, small groups and meeting times to their context and people; have engaged in ministries to their neighbors in need in new ways, having started on their own or worked in community partnerships to create food pantries and clothes closets, social service linkages, and providing sites at churches for car and tent camping for the unhoused. But it was clear as well that several of our congregations have struggled mightily to be a vital and vibrant ministry presence for their people and neighborhoods, that is meeting the needs and concerns of its people, its community, and its local and denominational responsibilities.

Through it all I am so grateful for the pastors who have gone well beyond the “extra mile” to continue to bring ministry in meaningful, fulfilling and spirit-filled ways, walking uncharted pathways and growing their ministry skills to meet the emerging needs and concerns; to staff members, lay leadership and church volunteers who have stepped up to “fill the gaps” in the new needs that have emerged in this challenging time; to faithful congregation members who have endured so many challenges to remain connected to the divine and to one another; to new people who have re-connected to the church of their memory over some miles, and new persons who have found our churches by happenstance, coincidence, family connections and other means, that have made a connection that has grown our fellowship, even as these persons may never enter the doors of our sanctuary.

As we now begin to move out from the pandemic and see that re-opening our buildings for face-to-face ministry is just upon the horizon, we realize that the complications of



moving into ministry in the pandemic times will be extended, amplified and intensified as we move out from the pandemic. As we walk this wilderness journey, we must see that we cannot go back to life and ministry as it was, as much as our hearts draw us into believing that there is abundant life there. Just as we had to unknow and unlearn things, paying attention to what God was doing in the present moment and learning all of the lessons it had to teach us, and surrender what we have known and yield ourselves to the mystery of the future, and of God in that future... we know that we will have to do these same things at an even greater level, to extend these learnings into a new level and phase of learning, as we move out of the pandemic and move into the new life that is before us as the church of this new age.

### 2020-21 Milestones, Celebrations and Remembrances

We give thanks to God for the ministry of Milton UMC who closed the doors of their ministry on January 31, 2021. In this, God has worked to create a new opportunity in ministry from this closure, as Good Seed UMC has moved into the Milton building, and has begun using the site for its online ministry, and will start its in-person ministry in a new home when the pandemic allows.

Rev. Yvonne Agduyeng, serving at Seattle First UMC, was recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry to be commissioned into Provisional Membership; and *Rev. Jesse Farias*, serving at Beacon UMC, was recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry to become a Member in Full Connection, coming by way of transfer from the Baptist Church.

We bless *Rev. Joanne Carlson Brown* and give thanks for her ministry, as she entered into the retired relationship on December 31, 2020. And we bless and give thanks for the ministry of Terri Stewart who chose to leave the denomination from January 31, 2021.

Two of our Clergy received their Doctor of Ministry degrees this year from Seattle University - School of Theology and Ministry: *Rev. Dr. Troy Carr* (Yesler Neighborhood Project) and *Rev. Dr. Steve Baber* (Bellevue: St. Peter's UMC).

At our Clergy Session 2021, we will receive by transfer from other United Methodist Annual Conferences – *Rev. Thomas Yang*, from the Northern Illinois Conference, who is serving in an extension ministry; and *Rev. Thomas Irby*, from the Alabama-West Florida Conference, who is serving at Mason UMC. And we will be receiving from the African Methodist Episcopal Church *Rev. Dr. Troy Carr*, who will transfer in from another Methodist denomination, and is serving at the Yesler Neighborhood Project.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Derek Nakano, SeaTac District Superintendent*



## SEVEN RIVERS MISSIONAL DISTRICT

I am always grateful for the many ways God's presence shows up in the midst of what seems a long and dark journey. It is premature to say we are nearing the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is hope in our small portion of the world that vaccinations will be the key to allow us to once again meet in person in our personal, social, civic and faith activities.

As I look back over this year, though, there are so many ways in which I have seen God and am grateful. Zoom and other forms of digital connection have been incredible blessings, allowing us to not only connect with one another, but continue to do a lot of the work of the church. I have done clergy consultations, church consultations, charge conferences, conference and district meetings, on-going open sessions to meet with the clergy and laity of the district, and of course, cabinet work – all through the internet and Zoom. Like the Holy Spirit, we cannot see how the connection happens, but we certainly experience it.

I have also experienced the many creative ways the local churches have continued to be the church in their communities, continuing to worship together (virtually in most cases), and continuing to support and walk with the many people that make up their congregations. It has not been easy, and there has been frustration, pain, loneliness, grief in ways we will be unpacking for years. Due to the sacrifice and diligence and hard adaptive work of the pastors and the congregations in maintaining safe practices, especially in the sacrifice of not meeting in person for worship, there have been relatively few COVID-related deaths amongst United Methodists in the PNW Conference. We are grateful, even as we grieve the deaths that have occurred, not only in our churches, but in our families, communities, the nation and the world.

I am also grateful that *Bishop Elaine Stanovsky* has led us in doing the difficult, elusive, desperately needed work of dismantling racism. Many congregations have taken up book studies, zoom discussions, personal accountability, and exploration of how we, as individuals and as the church, have been a part of an unjust, racist institution and society. We have barely scratched the surface, but I am encouraged by the signs of those willing to make this journey into a more just future.

Once again our district was ravaged by fire in Okanogan County. Many thanks to the PNW Disaster Response Coordinators Dana and Kathy Bryson (Kennewick 1st UMC) who have led us in faithful response. *Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos* (Director of Hispanic/Latinx Ministries) has been very instrumental in ensuring that the unreached Hispanic community (migrants and residents) impacted by the Brewster fire received assistance, primarily through the work of Okanogan UMC leaders Artemio Zapoteco and Guadalupe Mosqueda. Many churches throughout our district assisted in the response.



In our district this year, we have said good-bye to Pastors Eli and Sarahi Martinez and Pastors Alex and Sally Perez, as they felt God's call to step away from being pastors in The United Methodist Church. The Toppenish UMC vitality project, New Harvest Fellowship (led by Pastors Eli and Sarahi), was ended and the remaining members of the church voted to close. God's New Generation in Pasco, a new church project led by Pastors Alex and Sally, officially ended and severed its connection to the UMC, but the congregation and pastors continue to do good ministry in Pasco as an independent church. We pray that God will continue to bless them.

### Pastoral changes July 2021

Walla Walla: Pioneer – Senior Pastor *Rev. Juli Reinholz*, retiring; Associate pastor *Rev. Liv Gibbons* (MOD), moving to Eugene, OR to be near family. To be appointed as Senior pastor: *Rev. Paul Mitchell* (from Vashon UMC); Associate pastor: *Rev. Danielle Estelle Ramsay* (from Benton City UMC).

Richland: Central United Protestant – Senior Pastor *Rev. Kim Fields*, retiring, will be appointed to Woodinville UMC as interim. To be appointed as senior pastor will be *Rev. John Mars* (OR-ID).

Benton City UMC – *Rev. Danielle Estelle Ramsay* to be appointed to Walla Walla: Pioneer. Incoming pastor to be determined.

Ellensburg UMC – *Rev. Dr. Mark Wagner* to be appointed to Vashon UMC; *Rev. Austin Adkinson* will be appointed to Ellensburg.

Wenatchee First UMC – Senior pastor *Rev. John Coleman Campbell*, retiring; Associate pastor *Rev. Sheila Marie* to be appointed to Kingston: Redeemer UMC; Deacon *Rev. Denise McGuiness*, retiring. To be appointed to Wenatchee First as solo pastor will be *Rev. Debby Sperry* (Moscow First UMC)

Pateros UMC – *Dick Curtis*, retiring. Incoming pastor to be determined.

Methow Valley UMC – *Rev. Kim Poole* to be appointed to Moscow First UMC. Incoming pastor to be determined.

Finally, I am excited to welcome in *Rev. Daniel Miranda* as the new District Superintendent of both the Seven Rivers and the Inland Missional Districts. *Rev. Sheila Miranda* will be taking on a new position to help shape the districts into missional cohorts that can carry some of the work previously done by district superintendents and allow more agile missional, connectional and administrative work to be accomplished by the churches. It has been a great privilege to serve the Seven Rivers Missional District, with all of its faithful pastors and laity, these past two years. I look forward to joining my spouse, *Rev. John Coleman Campbell* (Wenatchee First UMC senior pastor) as we both retire at the end of June. It has been a wonderful and amazing 25 years of pastoral ministry for me, filled with incredible people and the ever present grace and power of God. I am grateful.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Joanne Coleman Campbell, Seven Rivers District Superintendent*