We Entered Liminal Space

I am usually an optimist. Always seeking the good, the potential and the hopeful.

When the news of a global pandemic flooded the media during the first quarter of 2020, I thought we would only be in for a few weeks or maybe a month before returning to what our routines and lives have been before COVID-19.

Most of us were aware that humanity would have to go through some form of a pause or a temporary hold on our plans and dreams. But we also imagined it wouldn't be long before we were back to our usual life routines - work, school, travel, meetings, exploring and expecting what we have planned and worked so hard for. Yet even for an optimist like me, there have been many days that brought much darker clouds and longer nights. And as I try to find the light at the end of the tunnel, I had to ask myself, “Was I even looking in the right direction?”

As 2020 started, a looming change to United Methodism worldwide had us all sitting on the edges of our seats. The Church and its extended community braced for a much-anticipated split in the denomination between conservatives, centrists, and progressives.

Since 1972, numerous petitions and plans have been presented, debated, considered, and fought over at every General Conference. However, this time, one plan known as the Protocol seemed to have gathered the most agreement among progressives, conservatives, and centrists alike. Many United Methodists worldwide anticipated a split in the Church could finally take shape during the regular session of the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis.

For several decades now, the global connection of the United Methodist Church has been strained. Struggling primarily with issues (and many other topics) around the inclusion and ordination of our LGBTQ siblings, progressives, centrists, and conservatives anticipated that General Conference 2020 would finally allow the Church to separate and move us forward as a denomination or two, maybe even three. United Methodists braced for impact.

But God had other plans.

No one knew exactly how deeply humanity would be affected by the global pandemic brought by a virus variant known as COVID-19. The world took a whole new turn as booming and busy cities became empty and desolate in a brief period. Offices, businesses, universities, institutions of learning, brand new and long-time establishments were shut down almost immediately and indefinitely. Spaces that used to echo the laughter and activities of children and young people became silent like tombs. Airports, trains, bus stations and even freeways became abandoned, empty, and quiet. Tourism came to a standstill.
Our church buildings were ordered closed by the state and the leadership of the Church. Faith-based activities and gatherings ceased as many of us were afraid of either getting infected with the virus or being spreaders of the same. We learned about churches and faith communities who dared to gather and worship, only to find themselves later mourning the death and loss of members who these super-spreader events infected.

Some prominent church leaders, politicians and community leaders who discounted the virus became victims and eventually lost their lives.

For several months, the only noticeable local travel was the influx of very sick patients heading to hospitals fighting for their lives as this unknown virus brought death to tens of thousands globally, daily.

Every morning, I would hear of the ever-growing strain on health institutions and hospitals, first responders and medical professionals as they try their best to keep people alive and the virus at bay. Scientists and research facilities worked round the clock searching for an antidote, a vaccine that would save the rest of us from death. And yet, there were/are those who continue(d) to call the virus a hoax, a made-up scenario whose goal is to inject microchips into our human bodies. Microchips that would be used to track and control human behavior.

The November presidential election in the United States was a pivotal point in the United States of America and the global community.

If you read the preceding part of this report sixteen months ago, you would have thought I was writing a sci-fi thriller for Hollywood or television. And I wish it was all just fiction.

But the story was/is our reality for 2020 and beyond.

We Are Not The Same

Humanity has been changed by what has happened in the past 60+ months, and we cannot ignore that. There are profound emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual challenges that we have faced and continue to struggle with as individuals and collective communities. Internal struggles have affected us in ways that we do not yet know or fully understand. It’s a simple truth; there has been much damage and pain. We need God’s healing and grace.

The biggest crisis we face as a denomination is beyond a theological divide. The United Methodist Church needs to find its missional role in today’s multi-level crises. And as wounded healers, God continues to call us to be bearers of God’s light, hope and love. Not to restore what was, but to build and to plant.
Online We Go

Back in March 2020, I decided to actively “ground” myself in my local church (Faith Church Issaquah, WA), offering resources and experience to help produce Sunday worship and other activities online, as gatherings were banned. I imagined helping, volunteering for a month, maybe six weeks, tops.

Around 90% of our churches in the PNW Conference quickly went online in a matter of days. Either via social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube) or meeting/webinar online tools like Zoom. Smaller communities struggled with what to do, especially in locations where the internet is not a significant player in the daily lives of its community members. So, others took to phone trees and other applicable processes of reaching out to church members and their community.

As we all journeyed and dug deeper into the technical and creative demands of online worship, many of us discovered nuggets of learning that gave birth to new forms of connectional experiences. We learned how to worship, have bible studies, offer Sunday school, coffee hour and even webinars and online training. We found many ways to be the church.

Pastors and worship leaders quickly dove into learning how to record, edit, and distribute videos online or other forms of media. Clergy were pushed beyond their comfort zones, often sharing on social media, “Seminary did not prepare me for this.” Yet, churches and faith communities continued to live out their call.

And the online community grew! Worshipers soon began to get comfortable with pre-recorded and online worship. Parishioners appreciated the fact that they can worship with their local Church anywhere there is a decent internet signal. I found myself ‘attending’ at least half a dozen worship settings every Sunday without leaving the comfort of my home, nor needing to travel for hundreds of miles.

The area-wide leadership of the Greater Northwest took the initiative to model, provide training and directly assist local churches. A significant financial subsidy for all Greater Northwest Area local church Zoom accounts for part of 2020 and the whole of 2021 was provided utilizing financial resources of the regional media center.

One of the biggest decisions the PNW Connectional Table made during the early days of the pandemic was responding to the challenge of Bishop Elaine Stanovsky (May 2020), asking all members of the Greater Northwest to consider raising funds to help those who the pandemic has economically impacted. These folks lost their livelihood, their daily or weekly wages, access to food and shelter. Some needed fuel for their cars to access work or to find a job. To others, it’s as simple as needing access to a phone or the internet to
call loved ones or connect with distant communities. Homeschooling and working online meant homes needed access to good and stable internet, as libraries and community hot spots were closed indefinitely.

The following are excerpts from the press release (May 2020) as written by Patrick Scriven, PNW Director of Communications.

**Extending hope to those most vulnerable through the ‘Funds for Families’**

Connectional Table also approved the reallocation of up to $350,000 to meet Bishop Stanovsky’s call to support those most vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Through the Fund for Families, a local church, cluster/group of churches, or specialized ministry can apply for resources to support ongoing or new efforts for vulnerable populations.

Pacific Northwest’s fair share of contributions to the bishop’s Easter offering and “Pass the Stimulus On” appeal also fund this initiative. Churches are encouraged to match grant funds with local gifts and community partnerships.

It starts with a question, according to the Rev. David Valera. “What are the relationships with the community that the local Church has? From there, what is the next level or adaption that funding like this could assist with?”

In the Oregon-Idaho Conference, where this program has been piloted, it took the form of gift cards given out to low-income families through local schools. While gift cards (food/gas/phone) may make sense in some communities in the PNW, other forms of educational support (i.e., providing Wi-Fi connectivity, other supplies), existing ecumenical and community partnerships (food banks, clothing stores), and even supplies to produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) – like face masks for the community, are all possibilities.

“Funds will be distributed in two waves,” says Kristina Gonzalez, Director of Innovation for an Inclusive Church. “The first wave will be through existing community partnerships already vibrant and in place. These funds will be for immediate needs. The second wave will recognize that the financial impacts of COVID-19 are long-term. For this larger wave of support, congregations will be encouraged to think in new ways about their work in the community and to deepen or create new partnerships, all with the goal of preserving dignity and joining resilience.”

Local churches can contact their district superintendent for more information on how to be considered for this resourcing. The Greater Northwest Innovation Vitality Team will closely monitor this work across the area, intending to offer training that deepens and broadens community connections.

To fund this initiative, the OCM will leave unfilled several open staff positions with
CT approving additional funding from two “rainy day” funds built up over years of faithful connectional giving by local church members and wise financial stewardship.

One significant update to this report is the approval by the Fund for Families Committee to allocate $100,000 to be given as grants to local churches in the PNW for technology updates. Starting sometime early July of 2021, local churches can each be awarded between $500-1,000 as a one-time grant, depending on their technology upgrade plans and appropriate needs. This project is being aligned through the Office of Connectional Ministries and the Regional Media Center. More details on this in the days to come.

Responding to Natural Disasters (even when we are in a Disaster)

Whenever I hear the word disaster, the initial images that come to mind are those of a typhoon, an earthquake, wildfire, a volcano erupting, or a tsunami. Growing up in the Philippines, these were the common natural disasters that we experienced. Having moved to the Pacific Northwest, it’s interesting to find almost the same type of disasters as an ever-present threat. The United Methodist Church, through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and its Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) program, has become a significant presence in responding to these natural disasters, both here and abroad. However, the global pandemic brought a challenge we never faced before: the inability to deploy teams and respond to disasters as we have been trained and prepared.

Wildfires and floods caused by melting snow have been very difficult to respond to. The restrictions of organizing and deploying volunteer teams have made it almost impossible to provide the usual support our Early Response Teams have provided in the past.

And even as restrictions to travel and deployment slowly ease(d) up, it is still not certain how willing and able our volunteers could pick up from where they left off before the pandemic. The economic slowdown has also brought funding levels to an all-time low. Many non-profit partners have reported operating and surviving on reserve funds. Our own United Methodist Committee on Relief has indicated significant changes in practices and protocols to stretch out dwindling financial resources.

Yet despite these challenges, our Disaster Response Teams (Especially our ERT’s) continue to find innovative and creative ways to respond on behalf of the connection.

Shout out to our Disaster Response Area Coordinator, also part of the COVID-19 Response Team: Jim Truitt. Our PNW Conference Early Response Team leaders: Kathy and Dana Bryson and our WJ UMVIM Coordinator – Ronda Cordill. Many thanks for your leadership and dedication.
Human-Made Disaster: Racism, Anti-Black, Hatred towards AAPI Communities

Adding to the strain of the global pandemic is the prominent presence and continued rise of Racism and Anti-Black hate. The death of George Floyd triggered a worldwide awareness towards Black Lives Matter. In 2020, many took to the streets to protest the abuse and bias of Police towards black folks. With the urgency of videos captured by witnesses and from police body cams alike, these footages have sparked and fueled the anger of many communities, especially persons of color (POC). For many days and nights, we witnessed clashes and violence between militant groups. The rise of hate crimes and white supremacists continued to fuel the divide in society. And as a church, we were not immune to the very same issues that our communities faced.

Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky responded by challenging United Methodists in the Greater Northwest to self-reflect, study, pray and participate in area-wide efforts to eradicate racism and anti-black.

Through the GNW Innovation and Vitality team led by Kristina Gonzalez and Leroy Barber, they took on the responsibility to expand and encourage these conversations, starting with cabinet members, lay leaders, church members, pastors, church planters and innovators as well. The rise in violence against the Pacific Islander and Asian communities continues to deepen the wounds of hate and violence. There is urgency to our work as bridge builders. The Church must continue to learn from its own mistakes and biases to participate in a society that seeks to move towards justice, equality, and peace.

In one of the following reports, you will find that our connection with the Hispanic and Latino Ministries has had a significant forward movement with the recent addition of the Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos as Director of Hispanic Ministries. Rev. Santos brings a deep sense of understanding and connection with Hispanic and Latino immigrants and their communities. We are blessed to have him as part of our leadership in the Pacific Northwest Conference and beyond.

Annual Conference 2020 (Excerpts from an article written by Patrick Scriven)

The 147th session of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference was held remotely online on Sept. 17, 2020. Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky of the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area was the officiating bishop.

Initially, the three annual conferences that comprise the Greater Northwest Area planned to gather for a shared session in June of 2020 in Puyallup, Washington. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this anticipated gathering was delayed until 2021, with virtual sessions scheduled for each conference in September instead.
Trainings were held on multiple occasions over the week before the session to aid members unfamiliar with the online meeting and voting platforms being used. Open captioning, American Sign Language and Spanish language interpretation were also offered directly within the meeting platform to support the goal of full participation. Despite the changes in schedule and location, an area-wide worship team collaborated to produce worship elements for the session based upon a shared theme, “What does the Lord Require?” Standout pieces included an area-wide choir singing “What does the Lord Require of You?” and the traditional Charles Wesley hymn, “And Are We Yet Alive,” freshly arranged by PNW Elder Rev. Justin White.

Bishop Stanovsky released her Episcopal Address in three parts (I – II – III) in the weeks before the conference session. She called members to do no harm by holding firm to coronavirus safeguards, implored them to resist racism and undertake new measures to dismantle racism and invited them to reimagine United Methodism across the Church and more specifically within the Greater Northwest Area.

On that final topic, Bishop Stanovsky acknowledged that people across the area are of different minds when it comes to the subject of merging as one annual conference. Still, she said that it is time to have more serious conversations. “It’s never going to be the time to merge and I’m not going to solve that problem, but I am going to convene that conversation because I’m hearing that question out and about across the church.”

Throughout the day, members focused much of their time upon the “essential business” of the annual conference as determined by Bishop Stanovsky in consultation with conference leadership. This included approving existing Advance Specials, updates to minimum compensation and moving expenses for clergy in addition to annually received petitions relating to pensions, retirements, and disability benefits.

The conference also approved the closure of five local churches, with superintendents honoring the history and 565 years of Methodist ministry these faith communities represented. A related motion passed asking the Conference Board of Trustees to establish a policy around the usage of closed properties in ways consistent with the Social Principles and “conference values of inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people and dismantling white supremacy.”

The final resolution approved by members was the conference budget. Members approved a $4.6 million budget as recommended by the Conference Council of Finance and Administration. Despite relatively stable apportioned giving by local churches through the first half of 2020, the approved recommendation reflects a 10.02% annual decrease anticipating financial challenges posed by coronavirus-related closures and denominational conflict.
Received as an addendum to the finance report was a request for more transparency and accountability for the Innovation Vitality Team budget and work. The request and its questions were received just prior to the conference with over 100 member signatures. Finance and Administration Committee Chair Jan Kalshian promised that the questions raised would receive careful consideration with initial steps within 30 days.

During a report to the annual conference, members of the PNW Board of Ordained Ministry shared actions approved by the Clergy Session when it gathered in June. Members approved the retirement of seven elders, one associate member, and one local pastor. One person was recommended for commissioning in preparation for the order of elder and one into the order of deacon. Six individuals were recommended for full membership and ordination as elders, three into the order of deacon. Bishop Stanovsky previously announced that these commissionings and ordinations would occur during the annual conference session in June of 2021.

The Pacific Northwest Conference is scheduled to have an in-person ordination, late June of 2021. More information to come.

Conference members also received an address from the PNW Conference Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leader. They updated members on the efforts of the laity over the previous year. They shared a letter calling laity to the vital work of anti-racism recently released by the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders. Members also received a short report from their delegation to the General Conference delayed to 2021.

In a pre-recorded message, PNW Executive Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries, Alan Rogstad, and the directors of the four conference camps offered an update on how the ministries were adapting to coronavirus restrictions. The Northwest United Methodist Foundation staff also provided a recorded update providing assurance that managed funds were in good standing despite a chaotic year.

Members also received a visual presentation of the work of Early Response Teams and a compelling video message from Hispanic Ministries.

SeaTac Missional District Superintendent Derek Nakano shared with the body that most conference board and agency members had agreed to serve an additional year beyond the typical quadrennial terms.

- Membership stands at 36,620, down 1,123 from the previous year.
- Worship attendance stands at 15,465, down 952.
- Church school attendance stands at 4,538, up 88.
- Professions or reaffirmations of faith for 2019 at 621, down from 2018 by 68.
- Adults and young adults in small groups for 2019 at 14,804, down from 2018 by 689.
- Worshipers engaged in mission for 2019 were 10,288, up from 2018 by 309.
Transitions 2021
Clergy and Congregations

One of our tasks as the Office of Connectional Ministries is to support clergy, their families, and their congregations during (appointment) transitions. 2020 was most challenging as many clergy moving to new appointments found it difficult to a) have “a good goodbye” to their congregations and communities, and b) navigate through the many unknowns of physically and emotionally moving into a new parish and neighborhood.

Several of those who moved had families, which included young children. These children had to deal not only with the frustrations of ‘why’ they were moving, but also the restrictions of physical distancing from their neighbors and friends. Studies affirm the mental, physical, psychological, and spiritual pain that wore heavy on clergy families during this challenging season of moving to a new setting. May we continue to hold these families in prayer.

On a similar note, many congregations felt they, too, did not have a good process of saying goodbye to their pastors. District Superintendents had to develop new and creative measures in communicating and working with congregations during the season of pastoral change. Virtual meetings were a good alternative but could not replace the in-person fellowship we are used to.

For 2021, the Transitions Retreat offered to clergy has been redesigned from the ground up. The design team is focusing heavily on the relational-adaptive challenges that come with leaving a community and moving to a new parish. Continuing cohort gatherings and small group meetings have been designed to provide ongoing support for clergy as they navigate through this season of change.

District Superintendents will be working closely with congregations in determining the type of transition training/support each congregation will receive. For those who will be receiving cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments, specialized training through the office of Kristina Gonzalez will be provided as well.

This year’s design team comprises Karen Hernandez, Michael Avila, Kristina Gonzalez, Melissa Bortnick and David Valera. Tech team support is provided by Tyrone Olds.

Connecting Smaller Congregations

The average United Methodist Church size in the United States is dwindling.

Every year, statistics show us that most of our local churches and faith communities have a membership of less than 100. And the average Sunday worship attendance is less than 50.

Despite these declining numbers, there is a vital role and presence that churches play within their communities. From food pantries to disaster response “centers,” from vacation bible school activities to community worship events, many of our smaller local churches continue to provide a missional and spiritual presence.

But what about churches that have less than 30 in membership or 10 in average worship?
The Rev. Kathy Neary has been tasked to work directly with these local churches. Working closely with District Superintendents, Rev. Neary spends time with lay and clergy leaders of smaller congregations and helps develop conversations that potentially evolve into cooperative ideas that bring other congregations or the larger connection.

In some cases, the conversations lean towards a deeper understanding of a congregation’s call to ministry and discipleship during this season of their life cycle. Her report will give you an idea of the conversations taking place among these faith communities.

**Connectional Intelligence**

The third wave of intelligence after IQ and emotional intelligence.

A few years ago, I read a book that focused on Connectional Intelligence. I will be honest in saying that I was not too excited about another form of intelligence. But as I read and pondered on humanity’s most recent experience with the pandemic, I find myself nodding in agreement with most of what has been written. The following is an excerpt from an article written about the book.

Erica Dhawan, founder and CEO of Cotential, has written and spoken about “connectional intelligence,” which she and business strategist Saj-nicole Joni call the “third wave after IQ and emotional intelligence.” Dhawan and Joni define it as the ability “to drive innovation and breakthrough results by harnessing the power of relationships and networks.” Successful leaders cultivate it; big thinkers who produce the latest technology revel in it; people who aim to change the world—one small step or large-scale project at a time—know that lasting results are impossible without it.

Connectional intelligence recognizes that leaps in creativity and progress cannot be achieved in solitude. They require forming relationships, wielding influence well, and sharing a vision so compelling that others adopt it as their own. Connectional intelligence highlights an evolution that has been quietly taking place across workplaces all over the world, just like traditional intelligence is the old way of working.

It’s a whole new world in more ways than one; there’s less emphasis on conventional hierarchies, more on reshaping work environments and workdays for improved collaboration and the notion that someone, or anyone, is capable of complete control is just no longer realistic. More than any other generation, Millennials have a greater inclination toward connectional intelligence, and this is no surprise. They grew up steeped in an era of technological innovations that were not possible when Baby Boomers and Gen Xers were growing up. The reality is most millennial-led (Clergy and Lay) churches were able to pivot much more quickly to online worship than Boomers and Gen Xers.

Millennials have been raised in a world in which going offline became an option, not a need. They understand that connectivity is an ever-present reality on the job and off the
clock. They don’t resist that fact, but they use it to their advantage. But they also understand its pitfalls and know how to leverage its strengths ingeniously.

Just because our physical selves can work for hours on end doesn’t mean we should. Just because we can be constantly connected to our various gadgets doesn’t mean it’s a good idea. So, while technological advances allow us to be more connected than ever before, we can’t forget that “offline” connectivity and authentic moments of interacting with peers and members of our network can also form the basis of powerful relationships that drive change forward and in new, welcoming, and imaginative ways.

Dhawan writes: “In a world where connections are commonly defined as digital, social, and mobile, I think the conversation needs to shift back to how we use our human ingenuity. Instead of 10,000 LinkedIn connections, (or Facebook friends), we only need the right five or seven smart, passionate individuals to start.”

Let’s not forget Jesus. He started with 12 disciples…

*Rev. David Valera*

*Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, PNW Conference*
ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The conference year 2020 –2021 has been a quiet one for the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Church (PNWUMC) archives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic closures and restrictions, there has been little activity through the year. A few inquiries have been able to be researched. Archive material has been donated to and received by the archives through the mail. The commission has not met during the year.

Although we will not be meeting in-person for annual conference this year, the commission will still produce certificates honoring William B. Price, Thomas J. Eberle, Daniel R. Gerhard, Floyd E. Green, Jr., James D. Lewis, and Wayne S. Martin for the 50th anniversary of their ordination as Elder in The United Methodist Church; and Walter S. Baker, Jr., Vincent S. Hart, Jr., and Robert F. Kinch for the 60th anniversary of their ordination as Elder. These certificates will be mailed to them.

The official records and archives of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church are located at the conference office in Des Moines, Washington, at The Bridge United Methodist Church in Tacoma, Washington, and at Central United Protestant Church in Richland, Washington.

Rev. William M. Bryan, Jr.
Chair, PNWUMC Commission on Archives and History
CAMPING BOARD OF STEWARDS

Vision
Camping and Retreat Ministries in the PNW Conference will be at the forefront of renewing spiritual life and camps will become integral to the youth and family ministry of our churches.

The pandemic had a profound effect on camping and retreat ministries over this past year. Fellowship and gathering were a cornerstone of how we supported spiritual growth. While we have been unable to gather in traditional ways, we have explored how to use the resources of renewal, innovation, and generosity during this unprecedented time.

Renewal
With very few people coming to our camps in person, this has given the land time to rebuild and renew. We are seeing grass grow in new areas and have been able to tackle some much-needed maintenance that is challenging to do when buildings are in use. It has also been a time of reflection and renewal for our directors and the few staff that we have been able to keep on. The directors have gathered along with the Executive Director frequently using Zoom, which has forged greater bonds and sharing of resources in a way we plan to continue.

Innovation
Ocean Park was a resource to the county as a location for people in need of a quarantine site. While there wasn’t contact with the guests, the space was appreciated and essential to keep the community safe. Lazy F has made use of its new large buildings and ample outdoor space to offer childcare to school age children, which has been a blessing to the community amid the closure of most childcare options. With the ability to offer space to small groups, we have started offering our camp spaces to families. This summer we plan to offer smaller group experiences, family camps and day camps. Camp Indianola plans to expand into some outdoor camp options and Twinlow may be able to offer a more traditional camp experience with reduced capacity. We invite you to check out what is available and see how you can engage in camp in a new way this year.

• Lazy F - lazyfcamp.org
• Twinlow Camp - twinlow.org
• Ocean Park Camp - opretreat.org
• Camp Indianola - campindianola.org
Generosity
We have been overwhelmed with the generosity of many of our camp supporters. Through a combination of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) grants, reducing expenses to a bare minimum and the faithfulness and generosity of donors, we ended 2020 with a deficit in only one of our four camps (Camp Indianola).

Looking ahead
We continue to assess where we need to focus in order to keep our camps as viable ministry sites. Over the next few years, we plan to focus on some much-needed renovation for Camp Indianola and Ocean Park in order to keep these camps viable and able to meet the needs in their communities. Lazy F is enjoying the new dining hall and looking at the renovation of the old building. Twinlow has found someone who will donate their time and talents to remove the old Maple building, which is the next step in their strategic plan for renovating the camp.

Thank you to all of you who work and volunteer for our camps, including those who serve on CBS. Contact any of our four camps or visit our website www.pnwcamps.org to see how you can get involved. We thank you for your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service for camping and retreat ministries.

Sandi Miller
Chair of Camping Board of Steward
Amid these changing times, the Commission on Ethnic Ministries (COEM) seeks to rise to a level of adaptability and relevance. Below are the projects and events that the Commission has funded, hosted, and piloted during the challenging year of 2020.

**Emergency Assistance**
The Commission allocated a $10,000 emergency assistance fund to address the needs of communities of color on issues related to COVID-19. The fund was strategically created to be utilized intentionally and quickly to respond to requests from ethnic congregations reaching out to their communities with grocery gift cards and other necessary items. The fund was a precursor to the Fund for Families that was later developed to address both immediate and longer-term needs, such as utility and rental assistance.

**Ethnic Clergy Retreat**
During the first week of March, before the pandemic hit, the Commission gathered ethnic clergies from across the conference at Lazy F Camp. The two-day retreat was designed to share culture, fellowship and engage in an important conversation with the bishop. The gathering also became a space of preparation before retreaters launched into the complexity of the COVID-19 period.

**Christmas Institute**
This group of Filipino-American, Filipino-Canadian youth and young adult campers demonstrated once again their resilience and creativity during the pandemic. C.I. was conducted as an interactive and engaging 4-day online experience. The Commission was there once again to provide sufficient funding so their event would be successful.

**Fund for Families Webinars**
Through the leadership of the Innovation Vitality Team, COEM funded important webinars that oriented potential applicants to equity and community engagement as they planned projects that reach out to communities of color.

**Expanded COEM Members**
Invitations were extended to younger lay and clergy BIPOC voices to join the Commission. The combination of seasoned voices and new members served as an effective composition to foster innovation. The inclusion of younger BIPOC members is crucial to COEM’s shifting effort in creating spaces for developing young ethnic leaders.
Youth Innovation Project

The Commission piloted a new form of funding tied to leadership development and focused on young people of color. The Youth Innovation Project is a series of leadership events aimed at creating a space for collaborative learning and project development. In the end, the Commission hopes to fund new forms of ministries in the various local contexts developed and led by young leaders. To secure the effective operation of this plan, the Commission contracted with Pastor Yvonne Agduyeng as project manager.

*Rev. Ferdie Llenado*

*Chair PNW Commission on Ethnic Ministries*
GLOBAL MINISTRIES

The Conference Board of Global Ministries is a program committee, the Mission ‘arm’ of our conference. The Board consists of representatives from many areas of activity. Mission is what helps our churches to grow and reach out to others, often in coordination with the other conferences in our Greater NW Episcopal Area. We are the United Methodist Church in action! All programming and spending is done with the question: “How does this educate, enable, and empower the local church to be in mission?”

In the coming year, we will incorporate our work into two main areas: Disaster Response, which will include Connecting Neighbors, Emergency Response and UM Volunteers in Mission; and Mission Involvement, Leadership and Training, including the work of the Conference Mission Secretary, Hispanic Ministries, Global Mission Fellows, and our collaboration with UMW such as Mission u. In addition to the programming, our budget provides money from apportionments to support: Justice for our Neighbors, Tacoma Community House and Atlantic Street Center.

PNW Conference Disaster Response - Kathy and Dana Bryson

August/September 2020 Wildfire Relief and Recovery

Dana and Kathy have been actively engaged in relief and recovery efforts since the wildfires began mid-August followed by multiple fires erupting a few weeks later in Okanogan, Douglas, Ferry and Chelan Counties to the Northeast and the Whitman County fires in Malden, Pine City and Colfax.

- Immediately engaged with County Emergency managers and community response groups to support relief efforts
- Contacted and engaged with churches in threatened areas. Followed up with support.
- Coordinated ordering, shipment and distribution of UMCOR cleaning, hygiene and school kits to all affected counties.
- Applied and awarded two $10,000 UMCOR Solidarity grants for immediate relief in all fire-affected counties.
- Launched an “ash sifter pilot program” with Cheney and Kennewick First UMCs to build122 kits. Spokane Valley and Wenatchee First UMCs took the point on distribution.
- Became members of emerging long term recovery groups and unmet needs table meeting weekly to support immediate needs and long-term planning
- Applied for and awarded $10,000 AmeriCares grant to serve migrant population in Okanogan/Douglas/Chelan/Ferry counties with distribution in the form of gift cards being coordinated through Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos. Also awarded hygiene kits and 2,000 KN95 masks. To date, three community distribution events have been held at the Pateros and Okanogan UMCs.
• Applied for and awarded a $100,000 UMCOR Recovery grant to serve unmet needs through the Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group (OCLTRG) with an option to build upon this grant with additional funding requests to serve survivors through the Malden/Pine City “Pine Creek Community Restoration” long term recovery organization (PCCR LTRO).

• This same grant funded virtual UMCOR Disaster Case Management training for two OCLTRG and six PCCR LTRG people of which Kathy also participated.

• Working with Conference office in managing and distributing contributions from the “Wildfire Fund”

• Weekly participation will remain active through 2021 and beyond as Dana represents on the OCLTRG Unmet Need Table (UNT) and Kathy on the PCCR LTRO and UNT.

• Met multiple times a week, then weekly as members of the Bishop’s Wildfire Crisis Management Team to coordinate efforts, share information.

COVID-19 Response
Beginning mid-March when Washington State enacted COVID-19 restrictions supporting response efforts, Dana and Kathy have been actively engaged:

• On the bishop’s request, powered up the Connecting Neighbors program by offering virtual trainer support and writing immediate needs articles. At the same time provided Federal, State and local disaster response web-based resources for the GNW Episcopal website

• Developed “Reimagining Disaster Response” ERT re-opening guidelines for PNW mission work using the Bishop’s and Washington State criteria. These guidelines were adopted as GNW guidance to include OR-ID and Alaska as well as used as a basis for GNW UMVIM mission guidance.

• Met multiple times a week, then weekly providing advice to the Bishop’s COVID-Crisis Management Team.

• Dana created a “COVID-19 and GNW Episcopal Area Church Facilities Assessment” document and FAQ sheet. This led to developing a “Church Cleaning Support Line” staffed by ERT members that was active through the end of 2020.

Washington February 2020 Flood Response
• Ordered UMCOR cleaning kits –2 pallets (72 units) to Kennewick First UMC, one pallet (36 units) to Faith UMC Issaquah that arrived Feb 12 from UMCOR Depot West.

• Contacted Lynden, Issaquah, Auburn, Fairwood (Renton), Orting, Snohomish, Kamiah (ID), Pioneer, Walla Walla New Start pastors to check on churches. Coordinated with DS Mark Galang and Joanne Coleman Campbell, sent email to all DS offering support.
• Sent ERT representatives to Whatcom Co public meeting for flood response information. Also sent ERT representatives to Island Co family referred through WaVOAD for site assessment.

• Worked with Walla Walla American Red Cross to arrange for Multi-Agency Recovery Center (MARC) participation. Coordinated UMCOR “cleaning kit” delivery with Kennewick First and Rev Zachary Taylor for staging kits for distribution.

• Worked with Rev. Julie Reinholz to coordinate volunteers to distribute kits February 14, 15, 16 at American Red Cross (ARC)-organized Multi-Agency Response Center (MARC) in Walla Walla. 25 kits distributed, talked with 43 people. Also distributed mop kits on behalf of ARC. 20 UMC volunteers from Walla Walla and Kennewick churches staffed the ARC MARC for a total of 70 volunteer hours.

• Dana made a site visit March 1 to Walla Walla County to assess recovery status. He returned March 6 to participate in the County’s first community long term recovery group (LTRG) meeting.

• Kathy now representing the PNW UMC Disaster Response funding on the “Blue Mountain Region LTRG” weekly UNT meetings.

• Kathy also attended a four-week FEMA LTRG Zoom training series hosted by FEMA Region 10 with representation from both Washington and Oregon state, county and local agencies.

ERT Missions, Training

• Six PNW ERT members joined an OR-ID Conference-led fly-in ERT January 22-30 to Panama City, Florida to re-tarp homes damaged during last year’s Hurricane Michael. Their scope changed after arrival and they worked on a muck out then started re-build on an UMC church that will serve as the long-term recovery group headquarters, team housing for the next five years.

• Kathy continues to keep the ERTs informed with messages including online training opportunities, the “Reimagining Disaster Response” guideline and a focus towards future missions with enhanced safety and sanitation practices.

• Both Dana and Kathy taught the first, and very successful, virtual ERT Badge Renewal course on December 1 and 2 for 14 participants from the PNW and one from OR-ID.

WaVOAD Activities

• Kathy is actively engaged on the Leadership Board as the organization’s secretary. She was just nominated and approved as the 2021 Board Secretary.

• Kathy has been representing the WaVOAD for the Blue Mountain Region LTRG and the PCCR LTRO.

• Kathy involved both the OCLTRG and PCCR LTRO Executive Directors and/or Emergency Managers in multiple emergency meetings to help member organiz-
tions understand and engage with the relief efforts from both communities.

Western Jurisdiction Disaster Response Updates

- Dana and Kathy have been virtually meeting regularly with our WJ counterparts in planning for the 2020 Disaster Academy hosted by the California-Nevada Conference. It was just decided that the Disaster Academy would be postponed due to COVID-19 concerns. The California-Nevada C-DRC is looking into possible dates, probably pushing into 2021, for the facility that was reserved. In the meantime, the WJ C-DRC group is exploring possibilities for virtual trainings.

UMCOR

- Kathy participated in a four-week Connecting Neighbors pilot program around the concept of virtual training.
- Dana and Kathy participated in multiple nation-wide C-DRC conference calls for status on active disaster responses, trainings and, most recently, UMCOR staffing changes.
- The annual November C-DRC Disaster Academy was transformed into a virtual format in which both Dana and Kathy participated over a period of three weeks.
- Dana and Kathy assisted UMCOR ERT Coordinator Angela Overstreet with remote training concepts for use among all Conferences.

Trainings

- Participated in multiple Zoom and online trainings hosted by UMCOR, NVOAD, FEMA and CDC covering topics such as hurricane response in a COVID environment, donations management, case management, volunteer coordination. Attended the GNW “Stress, Loss and Grief” beta test and online sessions.

Saipan

- All FEMA-funded VALOR program Saipan missions, as of mid-March, were canceled and no future missions under this program are planned. Kathy and Dana were staged and ready to lead a mission in April. Kathy continued to provide support to the Cal-Pac C-DRC with close-out task

Miscellaneous

- Dana and Kathy were guest presenters at the Inland Northwest VOAD May 28 Zoom meeting in Spokane. They also virtually presented to the Lewiston/Clarkston UMC church members last Spring.
- The tool trailer owned by Winthrop UMC that was loaned to the 2014/15 Okanogan Co fire recovery has been donated to the PNW Conference’s tool trailer fleet. Dana is working with Rik on the title transfer. It will continue to be used by the OCLTRG for the 2020 wildfire recovery.
• Dana has been doing maintenance and repairs for the shower and tool trailers stored at the Benton County Fire District #4 station. He purchased storage systems and inventory this fall for the new rapid response trailer purchased with UMCOR funds.

• Dana designed and built several low cost portable hand wash stations. They are required for field work per our reopening plan.

• Preliminary planning for PNW regional storage of UMCOR cleaning/hygiene/school kits are underway after learning that the UMCOR Depot West was closing the end of 2020.

• Kathy supported the FEMA Region 10 Volunteer Agency Liaison with resources for the “Strategic Plan for VAL Support to State of Washington” document

Mission u 2020 - Carol Mariano, Dean

Mission u was not held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheduled studies were postponed to 2021. Even though the COVID-19 requirements are beginning to ease, we do not have the all-clear situation needed for large in-person meetings, and the National Division is preparing materials with the understanding that Mission u 2021 will be held by Zoom.

Our PNW Conference Cooperative Mission u is projecting meeting by Zoom July 29-31. The studies will be “Finding Peace in an Anxious World” and “Pushout: Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools”. The youth study will be “Becoming Peacemakers in a Culture of Violence” and the children’s study will be “Responding to Violence.”

Conference Mission Secretary Of Global Ministries - Marilyn Sanchez Reid

2020 was a difficult year for everyone, as COVID-19 is still in full swing. The Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church set up a schedule of virtual events to help us all connect and learn more about the missionaries during this time of pandemic. Their itineration in person was canceled but they are still at work. The transition from a full schedule of in-person itineration assignments to the #stillinmission virtual itineration series was a challenging yet fruitful endeavor. I helped as moderator and attended more than 27 virtual itineration zoom events.

Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to remain in place until very late of 2021 or early 2022 for many countries. Once again, we are presented with the challenge of assisting our missionaries and their supporting churches connect in meaningful ways virtually. At this point, all missionaries are scheduled to itinerate in 2021 and will do so virtually. This will be their only opportunity to itinerate for the next three years, so we need to make it the best we possibly can.
Whether you can help support through a “covenant relationship”, donations for their projects, your prayers and your help to support Christ’s work around the world. Thanks again for all you do to connect the church in mission! Global Ministries is grateful, and missionaries are grateful for what you do to make sure missionaries are supported at the highest level and have what they need to continue to serve and work in such a difficult time as this.

Hispanic Ministry Report - Lourdes Tifre, Committee Chair

This is a report highlighting some of the work of the Hispanic Ministries in the PNW during 2020. We started 2020 with great plans and challenges for the Hispanic Ministries, but everything came to a halt with the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a very challenging time but with it has provided many opportunities for outreach and service by the Hispanic communities in the Pacific Northwest.

Under the guidance of Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos, Director of Latinx Ministries, we were able to meet via Zoom twice a month in the beginning of the pandemic, in order to develop we started developing new strategies and process to keep serving and reaching out to the Hispanic communities in a safe environment, as the most critical needs were met. There were baptisms, confirmation classes, great attendances of children Sunday School.

Once we contacted families and individuals and found out their urgent needs, we were able to connect with various district superintendents, the PNWUMC and other organizations to secure important information and resources to distribute in different counties and communities. We distributed gift cards, provided some financial help to cover rent and utility bills for several families that participate in the ministry, groceries, baby items, and school supplies were distributed to families in great need. There were many families directly affected with COVID-19, and they received direct assistance, until they were able to provide for themselves.

During the wildfire season we had a great deal of families affected in King, Skagit, Okanogan and other counties, and once again, we were able to provide the needed assistance to more than 100 families, distributing household items, gift cards, school supplies, healthcare items and any other items of need. Pastoral care is very vital for our communities, people want to maintain their sense of cultural identity, by providing a safe place for them to share their stories and struggles as an immigrant community, gave us the privilege to get to know them in a very personal way. We were able to enrich our knowledge with different workshop and seminars and stayed informed of what is happening in the conference.

As we moved forward, we found ourselves assessing the need of the communities. One very sad fact that we learned is that not everyone has access to the latest technology, some of them do not have internet access or do not know how to navigate different applications or something as easy as an email, so we have to adapt to their needs accordingly.

We are working diligently to find the best ways to minister in a safe environment, the road ahead is a long one, but we can trust that God has it all under control.
The vision of Hispanic/ Latinx Ministry in the Pacific Northwest is to be a church called to be united and diverse in God’s love that changes lives and transforms communities.

Respect
We recognize the inherent value and dignity of all God’s creation and all people.

Love
Inspired by the compassion and grace of our God, we seek to joyfully embrace and serve with all people.

Mission
To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

During this difficult time of COVID-19 we want to give thanks to Bishop Elaine Stannovskys and the whole cabinet for helping us stay focused on the mission of the church as we reinvent the way to minister to our communities.

Summary of events/programs/projects
- 7 Rivers District strategic plan for H/L and Multicultural ministries.
- Sage District H/L strategic plan
- Translation services: Bishop office, Cascadia district, Sage district.
- Charge conference: By the DS invitation I led the Charge conference. Seattle: Dios Viviente, Everett: Palabra Viviente.
- Zoom webinar: Methodist quadrilateral, Three simple rules, Homiletics, Encounter with the Hispanic National Plan, and Small group webinar in conjunction with the Korean National Plan.
- Translation services for the Annual Conference.
- Bi-weekly meeting with the GNW Hispanic/Latinx Ministry.
- Providing support to Local churches and the Annual conference.
- Participation in MARCHA and West MARCHA events.
- Hispanic/Latinx Council Jurisdictional meetings.
- Participating in the cultural competencies workshop sponsored by the office of Kristina Gonzalez.
- Participating and promoting events with Faith Action Network.
- Participating in a Virtual border trip.
- Participating in the 7 Rivers and Inland clergy pastoral meeting.

Justice
We strive to live into the equality of God’s provision in a world where every need is met.

Community
We commit to live with our neighbors united in loyalty, family, solidarity, and inclusivity.
• Coordinating the response for the people affected by the Wildfires. Delivering supplies to those affected at Okanogan UMC.

• Recorded a video about the 2020 Census with Faith Action Network.

• Providing support and resources for Justice for our Neighbors.

• Providing support for Pastoral Cibernetica.

• Coordinated the production of the videos of the Hispanic/Latinx ministry for our Annual Conferences.

• Coordinated a meeting with Casa Hogar to share resources with the Hispanic/Latinx leaders.

• Coordinated a meeting with the National Plan and directors of connectional ministries PNW, OR/ID.

• Participated in BOM Academy from GBHEM.

• Coordinated the course of study for the PNW students.

• Participated in a webinar: Tithing in a pandemic.

• MARCHA 2020: Lamento en comunidad, Camino a la esperanza.

• Providing resources and leadership for the board of ordained ministries and participating in a meeting with Kristina Gonzalez and Geoff Helton.

Key Learnings and Aspirations for 2021-22

• The conference funds and the National Plan resources and funds we are receiving are crucial and important to continue strengthening the Latino Ministry in our Conference.

• We need to be better connected to every church planting in the Hispanic/Latinx community.

• We need to incorporate to our Ministry more Young and Young Adult Leaders.

• We need to be more proactive to discover new places and spaces for Hispanic/Latinx Ministries.

• We need more participation of our Hispanic/Latinx leaders in the conference level.

• We need to evaluate the criteria and the process to select and recruit Hispanic/Latinx Pastoral Leadership.

• We need to continue our efforts to integrate the Hispanic/Latinx Ministry from the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area.

Aspirations for 2021-22

• To Coordinate a Multicultural Webinar Event that will help English speaking congregations interested to begin ministries with Hispanic/Latinx in their communities.
• To organize and sponsor a virtual border trip educational experience

• To continue our conversations with our camping staff to sponsor: Spanglish Camp:
  This is an event from the California/Pacific Conference for young people ages 14 – 25 dedicated to the exploration and celebration of Hispanic/Latino Culture in the United States. This program takes place in a camp setting, participants fellowship through meals and gathering, learn through leadership workshops, compete in sport activities, and worship in a cross-cultural setting.

• To continue providing Leadership Formation Webinars every two months for our leaders and communities:

• To create an online platform to coach, mentor and translations services for our episcopal area.

I want to give thanks for all your support and dedication for our Hispanic/Latinx Ministry during this year. It has been a blessing time for me and my family as we continue providing leadership in this beloved Conference. I am happy looking at the future of our ministry together. Please if you have a good idea or program you want to share or if you need any resource for Hispanic/Latinx Ministry in your Community, please contact me at cesantos@pnwumc.org. I will be more than happy to work with you.

Muchas bendiciones!

_Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos_
_Director of Hispanic/Latinx Ministry, Pacific Northwest Conference_
Like many of you, reflecting on 2020, and the run up to the 2021 Annual Conferences, is a unique experience. In this instance, hindsight may not be 20/20. Nevertheless, like you, the Greater Northwest Area’s Innovation Vitality Team (IV Team) made adjustments and pivoted into the work at hand. If anything, the year+ long experience of the pandemic has forever changed the way the church interacts in and with its many mission fields.

One of our significant pivots during the pandemic was connected to the established recruitment pipeline, which in the past had begun with face-to-face engagement at conferences, trainings, and other gathered events. In order to continue to maintain our national reach, we shifted to online workshops that were led by national speakers and experts in their fields. Workshops featured, Alexia Salvatierra, Mark Charles, Soong-Chan Rah, Jonathan Brookes, and Melvin Bray. This strategy helped maintain connection points between the IV Team’s recruitment efforts and interest that continued to build across the nation.

Like so many of our local churches, the IV Team also pivoted its resourcing strategies online. During early 2020, the IV staff worked to develop the new IV Net, an area-wide intranet platform designed to support planters/innovators, district superintendents, and Cabinet members. The IV Net was rolled out in August 2020 as a central point of entry for peer learning, information on projects and support. The IV Team has continued monthly cohort gatherings on-line to support planters/innovators. These cohorts include the BIPOC cohort, designed to support planters/innovators of color, and the sustainability cohorts, which are designed to resource planters/innovators in the area of financial sustainability, social enterprise, and strategic planning.

As a team, we have developed and led a number of online webinars, focusing on anti-racism, anti-blackness, the IV Team change theory, intercultural competency, strategic planning, nonprofit development. Additionally, at the request of district superintendents, we have engaged local churches in a number of context-driven consultations and trainings around the work of inclusion, innovation, and multiplication.

In response to the pandemic, we built upon an Oregon-Idaho Conference crisis response initiative, which provided families with grocery gift cards, sparking a collaborative funding effort of more than $500,000. From the learnings of this effort, the IV Team developed the Fund for Families crisis response across the Pacific Northwest Conference that included both a crisis response in collaboration with the Commission on Ethnic Ministries, and a more contextual approach to the long-game support that we knew would emerge in late 2020 and early 2021.

The effort resulted in more than $450,000 being made available for support, and seeded new relationships on the ground between local churches and partners in their commu-
nities. The grant funds provided by the Pacific Northwest Conference were accessible by local churches who completed the required online webinars conducted by the IV Team — https://greaternw.org/equipping-leaders/.

Though the pandemic’s presence was felt at every corner, like yours, our work continued. After launching three new projects in the Pacific Northwest Conference on July 2020, we continued our collaboration with district superintendents to develop new opportunities for launch in 2021.

After months of development and assessment work, which included community assessment, planter/innovator assessment, and community development planning with some local churches, we were able to move forward with our district superintendents to recommend to the various funding bodies and cabinet new and vitality projects and new planters/innovators. The projects launched in 2020 and 2021 are as follows:

**New and Vitality Projects Commenced in 2020 and 2021:**

1. Acts On Stage (HUB) — SeaTac Missional District (PNW, 2020) — led by Pastor Michelle Lang-Raymond
2. South Park Neighborhood Church — SeaTac Missional District (PNW, 2020) — led by Pastor Coté Soerens
3. Yesler Neighborhood Project — SeaTac District (PNW, 2021) — led by Rev. Dr. Troy Lynn-Carr
4. Oak Grove UMC/Storyline Project — Columbia District (O-I, 2021) — led by Pastor Anna Hoesly
5. Vashon UMC Vitality Project — Puget Sound Missional District (PNW, 2021) — led by Rev. Dr. Mark Wagner

During 2020/2021 we ended a number of new or vitality projects across the area. We celebrate the work of these projects, the leadership teams, and the planters/innovators. Learnings from these efforts have informed current and emerging strategies toward future growth, financial sustainability, and community engagement.

**New and Vitality Projects Ended in 2020 and 2021:**

1. CrossPoint — Sage District (O-I, launched 2017) — led by Rev. Dana Hicks
2. Create Commons — SeaTac Missional District (PNW, launched 2017) — led by Rev. Nathan Hollifield
3. Pinoy Van-Port Ministries — Vancouver and Columbia Districts (PNW and O-I, launched 2017) — led by Pastor Lyn Rush
4. God’s New Generation (East Campuses) — Seven Rivers Missional District (PNW, launched 2014) — led by Alex and Sally Perez
5. God’s New Generation (West Campuses) — Seven Rivers Missional District (PNW, launched 2016) — led by Alex and Sally Perez
6. New Harvest Fellowship — Seven Rivers Missional District (PNW, launched 2015) — led by Eli and Sarahi Martinez


8. SPAAC Church — SeaTac Missional District (PNW, launched 2017) — led by Rev. Thomas Yang

9. Haven Fellowship — Seven Rivers Missional District (PNW, launched 2017) — led by Rev. Zach Taylor

Finally, we would like to report that the IV Team and a number of stakeholders pulled together by the bishop, spent a significant amount of time and energy over the previous six months to work on a detailed report in response to a letter (“Call for Budget Transparency and Accountability”) submitted to CF&A at the PNW Annual Conference Session of 2020. This written report offers significant details on how the IV Team does its work and how the monies of the Alaska, Oregon-Idaho, and PNW Conferences are being used to cultivate vitality, in addition to learnings over the last 4+ years.

For more details on the work of the IV Team, please reference this report, which was released to the annual conference members of Alaska, Oregon-Idaho, and PNW in March 2021.
BOARD OF LAITY

This has been a year of pandemic, closed churches and virtual gatherings only. Yet laity have been stepping up to both ministry and mission in greater numbers. While each congregation has been finding its own way to offer virtual worship, laity has been called on to help with that effort from technology, to music, to roles in the worship service.

• Many have helped keep the congregation connected through phone and internet check-ins and safe distance check-ups. Notice quickly spread to teams of responders when a congregant experienced difficulties while isolated.

• Free pantries have popped up in many congregations offering food and cooking supplies to neighbors in need.

• Many congregations have engaged in deep learning around racism and difference by conducting in-depth study and conversations about white privilege and understanding the culture through the eyes of another.

• Some have offered virtual services for children designed to stay connected with kids and provide a breather time for parents.

Our laity have managed to stay connected and engaged with one another in spite of not being able to gather together. I have heard many stories of how “we know each other better now, our virtual gatherings have given us time to really deepen relationships.” We are truly a connectional church.

On the district level, several district Lay Leaders have expanded the connection and learning to church lay leaders. The SeaTac District is gathering monthly via Zoom for networking and learning. Lay Leaders have the opportunity to share ideas and challenges and learn from one another as the isolation continues. Puget Sound District has brought together laity from several churches experiencing similar issues for conversation and support. While the pandemic has kept us apart, we have grown closer together in new ways.

The Greater Northwest and Mountain Sky episcopal areas have been partnering around lay ministry training. Now laity from Spokane or Yakima can access online training offered from United Methodist Churches in Missoula or Eugene. This significantly increases the learning opportunities for leadership development among laity.

Work continues within the Western Jurisdiction on shaping the church of the future. We have heard the words “there is no normal, and we can’t go back”. Laity have been invited and have participated in designing what this new church will become.

The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders have opened the program portion of their annual conference to lay leaders from around the world. Since travel and lodging are not an issue with virtual conferences, these events can be accessible to all our lay leaders.
While last year we held our first virtual Annual Conference, we will be doing that again this year. The Laity Session will be held on June 9th and open to both lay members and lay leaders. We will hear from the California/Nevada Lay Leader Micheal Pope as she addresses the theme Love Never Ends from the context of increased lay leadership in the church. It is time for us to step up, stand up and be engaged in shaping our church as we move ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Tam Davis  
Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Lay Leader

Angelina Goldwell  
Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Associate Lay Leader
Greetings from Cashmere, where the pear and cherry orchards are in full bloom, the sun is shining, COVID vaccines continue to roll out, and the stock market is strong. There is much for which we have to be thankful.

As of the end of March 2021, the Foundation is honored to steward more than $84 Million in assets belonging to United Methodist institutions across our episcopal area. We provide ongoing investment and planned giving services to nearly 200 churches, agencies, and camps. Our flagship Diversified Moderate Portfolio has had a one-year return of 31.35%. Our fossil-free Diversified Moderate Social Values Choice Portfolio has had a one-year return of 24.95%. In 2020 we also opened conservative and aggressive Social Values Choice blends, and our fossil-free portfolios now hold a combined $18.88 Million in assets. We are making loans and our Stock Gift Program continues to thrive.

So far, we have weathered the COVID-19 pandemic without any changes to our staffing, and we’ve adapted to work almost entirely online, which has allowed us to provide continuity of service to our customers through a tumultuous time. I am grateful every day to work with capable coworkers who care deeply about the ministries we support.

I am also grateful for the Foundation’s board of directors. The more we’ve leaned on their expertise and wisdom, the more they’ve risen to the challenge. In December we welcomed Reverends Erika Spaet, Peter Perry, and Pastor Buddy Gharring to the board. Erika serves at Bend UMC, Peter at Olympia First UMC and Buddy at Twin Falls UMC. In March we welcomed Cynthia MacLeod, a lay member of Fremont UMC in Portland and current Columbia District Lay Leader. This year Alayne Hudspeth retired from our board after serving for 22 years. Her legacy of wisdom, grace, and hospitality helped shape who we are, and we’ll always be grateful to her. We are genuinely blessed with wonderful people!

Strong relationships among our staff, our leadership, and especially, you, our partners in ministry, are at the heart of our work. As we move into an unknowable future, our connection with you remains a top priority. We are intent on continuing to provide services to all of our current customers, as well as any others who wish to work with us. Regardless of the global health landscape or changes to our denominational structure, our ability to serve you and our commitment to you will remain.

In faith and gratitude, we continue to steward God’s gifts to serve all God’s people. We are ready to support you in your ministry. For more information please visit our website at: www.nwumf.org.

Respectfully,

**Tom Wilson**

*Executive Director, Northwest United Methodist Foundation*
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
“Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world”

Mission Giving
Through Pledge to Mission and other channels of giving UMW supports international projects and partners that empower local women leaders and support economic development. In the United States 90 national mission institutions provide services that respond to the needs of local communities. In 2020, the conference raised $137,951.07 for Pledge to Mission. Conference UMW units raised additional funds for local projects and missions.

Mission Agencies
The Atlantic Street Center in Seattle and Tacoma Community House are the two national mission institutes in the Pacific Northwest. Both receive support from United Methodist Women throughout the conference.

The UMW Endowment Fund
Thanks to generous donors, by October 17, 2020, the fund had grown to $101,664.24 surpassing the goal of $100,000 and continues to be a “Legacy of Love.” Unrestricted earnings are for Mission Giving (25%) and leadership development (75%).

Meeting and Events
The Conference Executive Team meets four times annually for business and planning. In January we met by Zoom to eliminate winter travel over the passes and the next three times by Zoom due to COVID-19. Both national United Methodist Women and the PNW UMC Conference office provided support for Zoom events. The team continued to support an orphan at Jamaa Letu. COVID-19 forced the Western Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting to gather by Zoom and cancelled Mission u, a cooperative venture of UMW and the Conference Board of Global Ministries.

UMW Reading Program
United Methodist Women read books that inspire action in five categories (Education for Mission, Nurturing for Community, Leadership Development, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth). During Covid 19 readers gathered each week by Zoom to discuss books selected by conference officers.

The Conference UMW Annual Meeting
The annual meeting was held by Zoom on October 17. Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary of UMW, delivered a video greeting. The keynote speaker was Sung-Ok-Lee, Connectional Officer, National United Methodist Women. The conference presented the
2020 Racial Justice Award to Linda Hay for her programs involving Native Americans. During the Memorial Service UMW remembered the contributions of Noriko Lao, who died in September, for her ten years with the conference.

Legislative Advocacy and Social Action
Each year at the Annual Conference Meeting delegates vote for Social Action priorities. Again Climate Justice ranked first. UMW promoted action in Washington through Interfaith Advocacy Day in Olympia on February 6 and in Idaho through the Idaho Legislative Event in Boise on February 23-24. At both participants learned about important bills and had opportunities to talk with their senators and representatives.

From the President
I am proud of the talented and dedicated women in the conference who fulfill the Purpose and live the Vision of UMW. UMW is an inspiring opportunity.

Ja net’ W. Crouse
President, PNW United Methodist Women
The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCOYM) team is a group of youth and adult volunteers from across the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference, selected to be on this volunteer team. We represent youth on wider boards and committees of the Annual Conference, share information about district and conference youth events, and normally plan a conference-wide youth event called Convo.

In 2020, the CCOYM team met via Zoom during the COVID-19 outbreak. The team used this time to share concerns, offer digital fellowship ideas, and talk about life and faith. The youth on the team brainstormed games and activities that were engaging for youth on digital meetings they had thought of or experienced in other activities and shared those ideas with youth workers.

The team looks forward to the time when it will be safe to gather from across the Conference together in person again.

Teri Tobey
Program Associate for Young People’s Ministries, Pacific Northwest Conference
Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

I am grateful for my first opportunity to thank you for your moral, prayerful, and material support of the Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH). Like many institutions, this past year at BUSTH has been largely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, outrage over enduring racial injustices in our country, and concern over rising white supremacy in our nation. Our work at BUSTH is to prepare religious leaders to encounter and engage complex challenges such as these. A year like 2020 makes the School’s historic and ongoing commitments to social justice even more relevant. Below are some BUSTH highlights from 2020. We remain hopeful in our continued partnership with you in the work and witness of the School toward advancing social justice, fostering compassionate communities, and shaping wise leaders for a hurting world.

Breaking News

Virtual Learning: Our faculty, staff, and library successfully pivoted to fully remote learning in Spring 2020 upon the COVID-19 lock down, which continued through the summer terms. Fall 2020 offered a hybrid approach to learning, due to Boston University’s “Learn from Anywhere” initiative, which included a comprehensive on-campus testing program and strict COVID-19 precautions to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. Students were given the most flexibility, with allowances to learn in-person in socially distanced and masked classes or in the comfort of their own homes via Zoom. The redirection to online learning served as an opportunity for BUSTH faculty to develop new online pedagogical proficiency and positions the School for greater engagement with current conversations concerning best practices in distance, hybrid, and online learning options for students worldwide.

Students: We continue to increase and celebrate diversity in our student body, creating opportunities for in-depth exchanges and a rich virtual community life. Our Fall 2020 entering class was among our largest classes ever, with 128 new students enrolling in September, despite the fact that recruitment had to transition to be fully online.

Faculty: We celebrated dean emerita Mary Elizabeth Moore’s 12-year service to the School as she stepped down on December 31, 2020. The institution will be forever grateful for her historic tenure as its dean. The new dean G. Sujin Pak began her appointment on January 1, 2021. Dean Pak is known for her commitments to academic rigor, social justice, and United Methodism, which made her a wonderful fit for the deanship of BUSTH at this time. In the coming months, the School plans to appoint a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership.

Lilly Endowment Grant for Thriving Congregations Initiative: BUSTH was awarded a nearly $1 million, four-year grant to work with urban congregations responding to trau-
ma. The project will be focused on responding to congregants who are continually shaped by and reacting to compounding domestic and global traumatic events, such as systemic racism, gun violence, homelessness, or immigration stressors.

Scholarships: We continue to offer free tuition to UMC registered candidates for ordained ministry. Building student scholarships and housing opportunities remain key priorities. BUSTH also offers leadership fellowships to support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies: Raíces Latinas, Sacred Worth, Indigenous Studies, Korean Studies, Women in Leadership, and Black Church Studies.

Online Lifelong Learning: Through a generous grant from BU’s Digital Education Incubator, BUSTH began to offer online mini-courses, workshops, and reading groups for interested professional and spiritual enrichment of alumni and other religious leaders. Inaugural groups covered topics such as religious Afro-futurism, spirituality through the writings of Howard Thurman, and rituals and practices of grief in a time of pandemic. To learn about or participate in the next BUSTH Lifelong Learning offerings, visit bu.edu/sth/oll.

Theology and the Arts Initiatives: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our traditional exhibits moved to an online space. The art of John August Swanson is available at https://butheoartsgallery2020.wordpress.com/john-august-swanson-social-justice-artist.

Development: BUSTH’s “On a Mission” campaign surpassed all expectations when it concluded in September 2019, raising $29.4 million—well beyond the $15 million goal set in 2010. These funds reflect broad support from alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students, with a far-reaching impact on the School’s ability to pursue its mission. More than 2,800 donors, including 1,927 alumni (a 50% alumni participation rate), contributed to our campaign.

Partnering for Ministry and Transformation

Doctor of Ministry: The DMin in Transformational Leadership flourishes with lively student cohorts that are interfaith, broadly ecumenical, culturally diverse, and global. The model includes intensives, online courses, and faculty mentoring.

Ecumenical partnerships: We now have four denominational Communities of Learning: Wesleyan/Methodist, Episcopal/Anglican, United Church of Christ, and Unitarian Universalist.

Partnership with Hebrew College: Together we are able to enrich interreligious learning through joint courses and public events, and also co-sponsor The Journal of Interreligious Studies and the State of Formation for emerging leaders.

Chaplaincy education: BUSTH and the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab received a grant to support the joint project “Innovations in Chaplaincy Education,” which will seek to redesign courses on chaplaincy in higher education, and centralize education for chaplaincy curricula, including competencies needed for chaplains or other professionals in spiritual care.
Taking Action Globally and Locally

Campus action: Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing. BUSTH is the first certified Green School in BU and is active in the Green Seminary Initiative.

Internships in global service and peacemaking: Students participate in apprenticeship ministries across the world.

Commitment to Justice

Faculty, staff, and students are active in #BlackLivesMatter efforts to seek racial equality, and in collaborative services to support people suffering the consequences of immigration practices or disability inequities.

In Town Hall meetings, the community has deep conversations on issues that divide, seeking to develop capacities for relating across difference and to create a community based on the dignity of all. BUSTH celebrates transformational leaders of the United Methodist Church. Your legacy and witness and your partnership give us hope and courage for the future.

Blessings and gratitude,

G. Sujin Pak

Dean, Boston University School of Theology
Since our founding in 1914, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has educated more than 10,000 students, shaping thoughtful, principled, and courageous leaders dedicated to transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ. We continued our work even through this most difficult year, with the coronavirus continuing its march around the world, a reckoning for racial injustice rolling across our nation, and a toxic, divisive political atmosphere challenging our civic life. Perhaps there has been no better year than this to underscore the importance of faithful and creative leaders for the church’s ministries throughout the world—the type of leaders we form at Candler.

Though our mission remains unchanged, the pandemic has necessitated many changes in how we undertake that mission: We have shifted classes online, redesigned syllabi to support optimal online learning, developed new ways to worship and experience community together in the virtual sphere, and discerned which new habits and modalities have promise for enriching our work even after the pandemic ends. Through these efforts, we and our students have gained deep experience in being flexible, adaptable, and creative as we respond to the demands of ever-changing contexts—experience that not only serves us well now, but will continue to serve us and our ministries far into the future.

Candler is one of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, yet true to the Methodist tradition of ecumenical openness, we enthusiastically welcome students from 44 denominations, with 46% of MDiv students coming from the Wesleyan tradition. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 483 from 12 countries and 37 states, 44 percent persons of color (U.S.), and a median age of 27 among MDivs. This diversity is a rich blessing, and this year we created a new staff position of assistant director of student life for diversity, equity and inclusion to foster understanding and ensure we are responsive to the needs of our diverse student body.

We offer six single degrees (MDiv, MTS, MRL MRPL, ThM, DMin) and ten dual degrees. Our Doctor of Ministry degree is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry while completing their degrees. Our new Chaplaincy concentration is now among our most popular, and our Teaching Parish program enables students to serve as student pastors in local churches throughout the southeast, learning firsthand about shepherding a congregation; this year, there were 36 participants.

Alleviating student debt through generous financial aid remains among our top priorities. In 2019–2020, we awarded nearly $6.6 million in financial aid, with 100% of MDiv and 98% of all students receiving support. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, and master of religious leadership students who are enrolled part-time or more receive a
scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition for the length of their program.

The demands of the pandemic did not diminish Candler’s robust schedule of events. Candler’s Black Church Studies program celebrated its 30th anniversary with a yearlong slate of online lectures and panel discussions, now available at vimeo.com/candler. We also launched The Candler Foundry to make theological education accessible to all, through short and semester-length courses taught by Candler faculty, videos and discussion guides to spark conversation in groups or one-on-one, and Facebook Live panel discussions connecting theology with current issues in the world. View the latest offerings at candler-foundry.emory.edu.

Candler’s ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church’s ministries throughout the world depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu.

Jan Love
Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
Candler School of Theology, Emory University
As with most other schools in the northeast of the U.S., Drew University evacuated its campus in early spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Drew Theological School faculty and staff adapted to this challenge with resilience, compassion, and creativity. The Theological School faculty put their courses all online, led development workshops for faculty across the university, and, in order to accommodate our many international admits who would not be able to enter the United States for fall 2020, designed an asynchronous Master of Divinity program. As a result of this work, the Theological School welcomed 147 new students, its largest entering class in a decade, with an enrollment of 380 for the current academic year. Our chapel team has also led the way in creating online worship experiences that connect the Drew community now across the globe.

All degree programs at the Theological School include interdisciplinary courses that demand out-of-the-box thinking, apprenticeship training that addresses real-world issues, and modes of learning that promote adaptability and innovation. Our MDiv and MATM degrees include a required gateway year, vocational pathways, and experiential learning that develops and deepens adaptive leadership skills. The curriculum features a team-designed and taught interdisciplinary sequence of core courses reflecting the integration of the theological disciplines and practices characteristic of the life of faith.

The faculty have also articulated shared values that are infused across the teaching and learning at Drew: a commitment to anti-racism; gender and sexual-identity equality; eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and interfaith understanding and cooperation.

Drew cultivates pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, and thought leaders who go all over the world to take their place as the next generation of faith leaders and change agents.

Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre
Interim Dean, Drew Theological School
GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For 168 years Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has been in service to the Church and the Methodist connection through the formation of Christian leaders in ordained and lay ministries. A result of the union of three historic institutions (Garrett Biblical Institute, Evangelical Theological Seminary, and the Chicago Training School), Garrett-Evangelical is located at the heart of the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.

One of the official 13 seminaries of the United Methodist Church, Garrett-Evangelical is perennially listed as one of the Seminaries that Change the World and boasts one of the finest theological faculties in the world. With a global student body, that also represents every region of the United States, Garrett-Evangelical is proud of its diverse and vibrant community of learning and of its enduring commitment to training skilled, bold and articulate leaders who share the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Rooted in our Wesleyan, Methodist, and Evangelical United Brethren origins, today’s Garrett-Evangelical is also international and ecumenical in spirit and is committed to equipping students to proclaim the good news of the Gospel, to foster deep spirituality in the lives of the communities and persons they serve, to lead with cultural competence and commitment to racial equity and justice, and as agents of transformative change for the wellbeing of all persons and creation.

Garrett-Evangelical continues to offer a broad array of degree programs that equip students for leadership in congregations, healthcare settings, community organizing and public theology, counseling, and scholarship and teaching in the classic theological disciplines and practices. 57% of Garrett-Evangelical students pursue congregational leadership following graduation, and our pastoral care and counseling programs also increasingly attract a large portion of our student body.

This year Garrett-Evangelical also welcomed a new president. The Reverend Javier A. Viera, an elder in the New York Annual Conference, assumed the presidency on January 1, 2021 after having served six and half years as Dean of Drew University Theological School. Dr. Viera will also serve as professor of Education and Leadership. He succeeds Dr. Lallene Rector, who served as president for seven years, and after a year-long sabbatical she will return to her position on the seminary’s faculty as a professor of psychology and religion.

Garrett-Evangelical continues to serve the church through its centers and institutes which are focused on equipping leaders with the resources necessary to thrive in ministry and public leadership, and on influencing the moral, theological, and ethical conversations in the public square. This year we launched the Institute for Ecological Regeneration which seeks to help churches and local communities address the global climate crisis with theological and ethical integrity and creativity. It joins the Styberg Preaching Institute, the Center for the Black Church Experience, the Stead Center for Ethics and Values, the Ruben P. Job Institute for Spiritual Formation, the Hispanic-Latinx Center, and the Asian/Asian-American Ministry Center as vital hubs of spiritual innovation and theological renewal for the good of the Church and the world.
The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) announced its blueprint for the future, “Our Road Reimagined,” in 2020. The plan details the realignment of GBHEM’s culture and organizational structure to allow the agency to further its mission in a more effective, innovative and sustainable way. The creation of the plan was the result of a months-long process to survey and remodel the agency to set a course that is more collaborative, diverse and equitable at all levels.

While our approach is transforming, GBHEM’s mission is not. We remain committed to helping United Methodist lay and clergy leaders discover, claim and flourish in God’s call on their lives.

Over the last quadrennium, the world, The United Methodist Church and our constituents’ needs have changed considerably. To address those shifting needs, we are adapting culturally, strategically and operationally to successfully carry out our important mission and ministry well into the future. We are developing an innovation mindset we know will be important moving forward.

• Last fall, GBHEM began carefully redesigning our organization to transition to a more cross-functional culture with three primary areas of focus: Constituent Relations and Services; Product Innovation and Implementation; and Administrative Relations and Services. This structure is allowing us to be more effective, agile and sustainable.

• Further, these changes are aligning our Ordained Ministry and Higher Education teams strategically, creating more intentional collaborations, and building greater connections between the Church’s pastoral and academic ministries.

• The agency’s realignment also includes initiatives to reinvigorate our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and further strengthen our global focus. Our new structure opens the door for fresh opportunities, collaborations and partnerships and becoming more entrepreneurial and creative in our approach.

GBHEM looks confidently to the future. We are taking bold steps to remain good stewards and evolve in service to Christian leaders in a significant way throughout the Church, the Academy and the world.

Regardless of the shifts and changes we are all experiencing, the same spirit of service and leadership that first inspired John Wesley lives on in each of us. We have been called in new and transformative ways. GBHEM is excited to share more with you in the months ahead. We invite you to connect and collaborate.

_Rev. Greg Bergquist, General Secretary_
SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Saint Paul School of Theology, a seminary of the United Methodist Church, is committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. We are one institution, online and on-campus, in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This past year, we have all faced new challenges amid these unsettled times. Saint Paul School of Theology began the 2020-2021 academic year offering students an online option for all courses. With many students choosing to attend class solely online, our Student Council created a monthly “Chat & Chew” where students, faculty, and staff come together to eat lunch and talk about life, seminary, and ministry. In addition, Rev. Rod Newman, our Oklahoma Campus Chapel Coordinator, crafts a weekly Community Prayer to provide encouragement and faithfulness as the school seeks to provide spiritual formation in new ways.

Kansas Campus Chapel Coordinator Dr. Casey Sigmon took worship to new technological levels by introducing our weekly online worship service via Zoom, bringing our separate campus chapel services together for one service where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. Along with our featured alumni worship preachers, the community was blessed this fall by the presence of Musician in Residence Hannah Rand, from The Many, who led the music each week for worship. In Spring 2020, Odell Talley, Director of Music for Swope Parkway United and organist for Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist, served as Musician in Residence. For those who cannot join us live, chapel recordings are available on the Saint Paul YouTube channel.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue to contribute to the academy, church, and society. This year, we have added new adjunct professors, including Rev. Dr. Carol Cook-Moore and Rev. Dr. Tiffany Nagel Monroe both of the OKUMC, Rev. Dr. Robert Turner of Vernon Chapel AME, UMC Deaconess Cindy Johnson of Rio Grande Conference, Rev. Adam Hamilton and Debi Nixon both of Church of the Resurrection, Rev. Chebon Kernell of the UMC Native American Comprehensive Plan, and Rev. Dr. Shannon Fleck of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches.

The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology continue to maintain high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. Their many activities and publications over the past year are so numerous that space permits only the sharing of selected highlights.

1. Dr. Jim Brandt, Professor of Historical Theology, will publish “Schleiermacher’s Christian Ethics” in the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Schleiermacher, which will appear in 2022 from the Oxford University Press.

2. Dr. Nancy Howell, Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion and Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries, continues her service on the Executive Committee of the International Society for Science and Religion,
working on several committees advancing the aims of the Society.

3. Rev. Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, will see the publication of his book, Reading and Interpreting the Bible with Global South Christians: A 21st Century Model for Europe and North America Christendom, by Wipf and Stock Publishers this summer. He has also written four Commentaries on 2 Corinthians and Ephesians which appeared on WorkingPreacher.org in April.

4. Dr. Hal Knight, Donald and Pearl Wright Professor of Wesleyan Studies, continues his work as a contributing writer in The Missouri Methodist magazine.

5. Dr. Kristen E. Kvam, Professor of Theology, serves as co-chair for the American Academy of Religion’s Program Unit “Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions.” Over the last several months, she has conducted invited presentations to the Great Plains UMC Clergy and its Clergy Excellence in Liminal Time Conversations and the Fall Theological Conference of Central States Synod (ELCA) on October 14, 2020.

6. Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, continues to contribute regularly to WorkingPreacher.org and served as the keynote speaker at the Wesleyan Liturgical Society in Kansas City in March 2020. Her scholarly writing will appear in the Preaching the Manifold Grace, Vol. 2, edited by Ronald J. Allen and published by Wipf and Stock.

This year, we have faced several challenges that turned into opportunities for new recruiting spaces and partnerships to enhance students’ seminary experience. With the change from in-person to virtual events, Rev. Shannon Hancock, Director of Admissions and Communications, has expanded her reach to prospective students by participating as a virtual exhibitor at online conferences. Rev. Hancock engages with prospective students via apps such as Whova and HopIn to highlight Saint Paul’s unique course delivery system and formative community.

In February, Saint Paul held the 2021 Slater-Willson Lecture online featuring Rev. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre. His lecture, “Why Do They Come?” explored the political, economic, and social causes of our current immigration crisis. Before the lecture, Rev. Dr. De La Torre participated in a student-led forum, entering a conversation centering around the practical aspects of ministry and immigration. Later in April, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Hal Knight, hosted a lecture given by Dr. Sammy G. Alfaro, Associate Professor of Theology at Grand Canyon University and Pastor of Iglesia Nuevo Dia (New Day Church), on the “Pastoral Strategies for Ministering Among Latinx Immigrant Communities.” And for the first time, on May 22, Saint Paul held a virtual commencement celebration with videos, cap and gown photos, online congratulatory messages from friends and family, and a commencement address by Rev. Chebon Kernell. The class of 2021 had 22 graduates, including 16 Master of Divinity and 1 Doctor of Ministry graduates. Due to the pandemic, for safety concerns, Saint Paul has postponed our 60th Anniversary Celebration. However, we have rescheduled the event for Friday, October 22 and look forward to coming together as a community for a safe, in-person gathering.
For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 255 individual students, 40 of which were new students, with a total registration of 520 classes and offering a total of 51 courses. Due to Covid-19, the school quickly pivoted its course offerings and delivered lessons in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats. In Winter 2019, Saint Paul began a hybrid (online and on-campus) schedule for six courses. Although for 2021, this went fully online, plans to increase the number of hybrid course offerings are in development.

Saint Paul Board of Trustees added three new members to their ranks: Bishop James D. Tindall, Sr., Pastor Emeritus at Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ Kansas City; Ms. Sharon Cleaver, Senior Director of Marketing, Communications, and PR for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City; and Mr. Rogers Strickland, Founder/CEO of Strickland Construction.

Through a Board initiative related to diversity and inclusion, Saint Paul created a working group on Native American theology and ministries comprised of Native theologians and church leaders. Their efforts are focused on how the church and academy can work together toward healing generational trauma related to the spread of Christianity and the genocide of Indigenous North Americans.

As we have happily reported in past years, Saint Paul is financially sound and operates with a balanced budget. The changes made these last years have established a solid financial foundation for years of sustainability. We continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and emergency assistance to students. Our significant investments in technology have recently allowed our staff, faculty, and students to transition to a fully hybrid educational delivery model providing a safe learning environment during the pandemic. Our faculty was uniquely adept at managing technology in the classroom before the pandemic, making the transition to all online courses a smooth process.

With the Board’s assistance, led by Board Chair Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, the seminary focuses on its mission. Our trustees work to continuously enhance and evaluate the strategic plans in place to guide us into the future. Perhaps most importantly, we have learned much and grown closer as a community due to the pandemic.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking more to answer the call. We are a seminary that offers online and on-campus classes with a flexible schedule to help our students manage pastoral leadership demands in the 21st century. We are grateful for your support of our students and our seminary. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for healing in these unsettled times and for generations to come.

President Neil Blair

Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and students thank you for your prayers and support.
It appears God is doing some new things at United Theological Seminary, even in the midst of health, racial, and political crises.

God is doing a new thing financially. United continues to make progress toward its goal of becoming debt-free by the Seminary’s 150th anniversary on October 11, 2021. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of alumni/ae and donors, less than $1 million remains of the original $4 million mortgage debt. After the mortgage is paid in full, the Seminary plans to convert those mortgage payments into money for student scholarships.

God is doing a new thing in enrollment. Over the last five years, United’s Doctor of Ministry program has grown by 48%, from 170 students in the 2016-17 academic year to 251 in 2020-21. In Fall 2021, Dr. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, will become the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, upon the retirement of Dr. Harold Hudson who has been a vital leader at the Seminary for 17 years.

God is doing a new thing with partners in church renewal. In the 2020-21 academic year, United has partnered with Fresh Expressions US and the Mosaix Global Network to introduce two new Houses of Study. These houses oversee specialized tracks in the Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity programs. Rev. Dr. Michael Beckis director of the Fresh Expressions House of Studies, and Dr. Harry Liis director of the Mosaix House of Studies.

In collaboration with the Northwest Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, United also introduced Rooted/Enraizados, a certificate program for coaches and mentors of Hispanic/Latino church planters. In 2020-21, the program served students from more than five annual conferences.

God is doing a new thing with the establishment of The Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center. Beginning in 2021, the Innovation Center honors the ministry of Bishop Bruce Ough by providing a hub of learning for church leaders seeking the framework, support, and courage to introduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new and creative ways. Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey joins United as the inaugural director of the Innovation Center.

United’s prayer is that United Methodists will perceive the new things that God is doing in our communities, congregations, and ministries as we strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Grace and peace,

Dr. Kent Millard  
President, United Theological Seminary
For the world, 2020 was a year like no other. In the midst of a global pandemic, plus resurgent racism, mass unemployment, and politically challenging times in the US, Wesley remained committed to fostering wisdom and courage, preparing graduates to lead innovative ministries while remaining grounded in our biblical and theological traditions for the sake of God’s inbreaking kingdom. The mode of educational delivery changed overnight, as we became an all-online seminary on March 15, 2020 and have remained so to keep students, faculty, staff and all members of the Wesley community safe from COVID-19 exposure on campus. This is simply Wesley modelling what we teach our students: to be committed to our God-given mission while being innovative and responsive in the delivery of ministry. Here are some of the ways we are accomplishing that with our many partners in this mission, as we seek to faithfully minister to the world in the future.

Research projects support congregational community engagement and envision future ministry: Wesley is pleased to announce new opportunities for UMC congregations to explore, clarify, and pursue thriving in their communities. Through The Source Collaborative, Wesley will work with three cohorts of regional congregations in a two-year process of prayer, community engagement, congregational visioning, and coaching, with the goal of following Jesus in mission and ministry. Interested congregations can contact innovation@wesleyseminary.edu for more information. This work, funded by a $1 million Lilly Endowment, Inc, grant, raises Wesley’s role as a leading research and development seminary for the whole church and complements Wesley’s other Lilly Endowment-funded projects focused on congregational vitality.

The Religious Workforce Project is an expansive study of the current and future nature of religious work, particularly in local congregations, so as to understand what opportunities and constraints may exist in the future and to adapt resources and training accordingly. Through the Wesley Innovation Hub, the seminary has worked with 18 congregations in the greater Washington area to experiment with ministries with young adults outside the church. Together, these projects forge insight into future ministry and local church development, influencing the way students are trained in master’s, doctoral, and course of study education, but also informing workshops, podcasts, articles, and training for church leaders working in their communities across the country.

We invite you to discover the latest research and conversations generated by the Wesley community through our new web portal, #EngageInTheseTimes, at www.wesleyseminary.edu/#engage.

Using research and partnerships to reach and equip the next generation of ministers: Research shows that the primary way people learn about and begin to consider seminary options is through their pastor or an alumnus. Whether you feel called or you know someone who does, Wesley is ready to work with you as we make theological education more accessible and relevant to the realities of ministry today—for laity and clergy, for
those seeking a degree or certification or continuing education, and for ministry from within or beyond the church.

Wesley offers an 81-hour Master of Divinity, a 36-hour Master of Arts, and a 60-hour Master of Theological Studies, any of which can be focused around specializations in public theology, urban ministry, arts and theology, missional church, children and youth ministry and advocacy, or African American church leadership.

For full-time students, we offer a modern and affordable residential community in the nation’s capital. Our Community Engagement Fellows program prepares students to engage in entrepreneurial, community-based ministry. Generous stipends are available for each Fellow while they complete their MDiv degree. Our 3+3 Fast Track BA/MDiv program with Shenandoah University allows students to complete both degrees in six years, entering ministry more quickly and with less debt.

For people with work, ministry, and family commitments, Wesley’s Master of Divinity degree can now be completed via online, weekend, short-term intensive, and weeknight courses in 5 years. Check out upcoming flexible course offerings for Summer and Fall 2021 at www.wesleyseminary.edu/admissions/try-a-class-3.

Wesley works with each student to make seminary affordable. Thanks to the consistent support of graduates, congregations, and friends, Wesley provides more than $2 million annually in scholarships. In addition to our regular merit awards, ranging from 25% to 100% tuition with stipends, Wesley has released special additional scholarships: full-tuition scholarships for people recommended by Wesley alumni, campus ministers, or Christian camping or service ministries who feel called to leadership in the church as it is becoming; Next Call in Ministry scholarships for students who have worked in a non-ministry setting for at least 10 years; and Generación Latinx Scholarships for emerging Latinx/Hispanic leaders for ministries both within and beyond the church.

Take your ministry to the next level: In addition to full master’s degrees, Wesley offers graduate certificates for those preparing for specialized ministry! The new Certificate for Children and Youth Ministry and Advocacy (CYMA) is designed for people who work with and advocate for children and young people, whether in churches, schools, or non-profit organizations. The non-residential certificate can be completed in 12 to 15 months through online coursework and up to two residential sessions. For more information, visit www.wesleyseminary.edu/admissions/cyma-3. The Certificate in Faith and Public Life explores the foundations of public theology, religious freedom, and civil discourse through graduate courses. For more information, visit www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/public-life/

Wesley is a leader in Doctor of Ministry programs in specialized tracks that can include international study. Wesley is pleased to announce three new Doctor of Ministry tracks for 2022: Ministry in a Digital Age, a timely new track exploring the new opportunities and challenges of online ministry; Justice, Compassion, and Witness in a Turbulent World, hosted in Cambridge, England; and a program focused on Latinx ministry. As well, new 2022 cohorts for our popular DMin areas of focus will be offered for Military Chaplains and CPE chaplains, our international mission-focused Global Church Leader-
ship program, and Wesley’s premiere DMin program in innovative church administration “Church Leadership Excellence.” Find out more or apply at www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/.

Enrich your congregational outreach and explore new dimensions of ministry: The Lewis Center for Church Leadership continues to be on the leading edge of research for the local church. The Lewis Center’s Leading Ideas e-newsletter is the go-to source for over 20,000 people in ministry each week. Stay on top of their latest developments by subscribing to their podcast or newsletter at www.churchleadership.com. Also look for new practical online courses at www.lewisonlinelearning.org.