

# K. REPORTS OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

## CREST TO COAST MISSIONAL DISTRICT

How things change in the course of a year! While we spent much of the last half of 2019 focused on the upcoming General Conference and how the outcomes might impact and shape our churches and our conference, we spent much of the first half of 2020 responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. General Conference still lies ahead but our attention has appropriately shifted to adapting and responding to the pandemic as well as police brutality and the racial inequities in our country and communities.

During the first seven months of the appointment year, we accomplished many of our normal ministry activities. We kicked off our sub-district organization with unique fall gatherings and sub-district charge conferences. Many clergy and churches in the district continued to explore what cooperative or collaborative ministry might look like in their area. We held a successful and invigorating district training with the Greater Northwest Area's Innovation and Vitality Team. We gathered Certified Lay Ministers, Certified Lay Speakers and laity curious about those programs for a day of community building and training.

Then everything changed as the COVID-19 pandemic and more stories of police brutality emerged. Suddenly clergy and churches shifted their work again and again and again to respond to the unfolding science, emerging understanding of the pandemic, groundswell of support for Black Lives Matter and guidance from the Bishop. Pastoral leaders and worship teams did remarkable work shifting worship to online forums (Facebook Live, Zoom, YouTube and other platforms) or engaging in email and mailing worship for areas where technology is more challenging. Churches increased their congregational care activity, found creative ways to adapt ministry safely, began more earnest conversations around racial justice and reached out to support those in need in their communities. Fourteen churches in the district received conference Fund for Families matching grants to garner the energy and resources in their churches and communities to offer tangible help to those most impacted by the pandemic. We know this time has forever changed our communities and our churches.

In the midst of everything we have done, we must acknowledge three significant changes in our district at the close of the appointment year. After nine months of discernment prayer and conversation, Puyallup and Summit United Methodist Churches voted to merge into one church (which will remain named Puyallup UMC). As of June 30, 2020, South Bend United Methodist Church came to its faithful completion after 145 years of ministry. And after three years of justice focused ministry, the Pinoy Van-Port New Church Start came to its faithful completion. These endings include new beginnings and I ask God's blessing on the ministry and leaders of these four communities of faith.

May God continue to comfort our broken hearts and disrupt our complacency so we might become a clearer reflection of the Body of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

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

## INLAND MISSION DISTRICT

I am completing my fourth year on the cabinet, and my second as the “dean of the cabinet” (meaning I am the old man around here). I am grateful for the ways you have responded to my leadership as I strive to support you all in your various ministries around the area, as well as for your forgiveness for any and all of the mistakes I make.

This appointment year was a year unlike any other, and I have the distinct sense that we will not (indeed we MUST not) go back to the way things were. Our eyes have been opened by intertwined global pandemics. The novel coronavirus pandemic as well as the exposure of systems of inequity and racism have altered our patterns of gathering and leave us feeling like the ground underneath us continues to shake with aftershocks. Even as I say that, I am aware that my statement comes from a very white perspective. I realize that the scourge of anti-Blackness that our nation still struggles with is not a new reality.

Then because of the virus spreading worldwide, our Greater Northwest Area-wide Annual Conference was rescheduled, and General Conference 2020 was postponed until August/September of 2021. Thus, even our denominational angst was pushed to the back burner and resolution will have to wait.

So, where do we go from here? Especially if we don’t just go back to the patterns and habits we had before March 2020, what are the new directions God is calling us to pursue? What does it look like for us to work on creating God’s realm here on earth just as it is in heaven? How can we work for the common good? I am convinced we need to redouble our efforts and we (especially us white folks) need to build endurance to have deep and ongoing conversations around racial reconciliation that will lead us toward the healing, health and wholeness that God desires for us. Yes, we will continue some of our institutional practices (like clusters of charge conferences), but let’s not take our eyes off the ultimate prize. For an extended period of time I expect that our rhythms of gathering will be interrupted. And yet we will continue strive to faithfully follow John Wesley’s Three Simple Rules: Do no harm, do all the good we can, and attend faithfully to the rituals that help us stay in love with God.

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

We said goodbye to pastors appointed in Bonners Ferry, ID (*Ken Hagler* is moving

to Anchorage, AK), Kendrick, ID (*Chuck Cram* is retiring to Colorado), Colfax and St. John (*Jacob Kanake* and his family are moving to Lynden as his wife, Grace received an appointment there), and Spokane: Highland Park (*Brenda Tudor* completed her 10 month intentional interim appointment). As we say goodbye and thank you to those faithful servants, we welcome Lee Books back to the district to serve Bonners Ferry as a Certified Lay Minister, we acknowledge that *Katy Shedlock* will take on the additional responsibility of leading Highland Park UMC (in addition to continuing her work with the new church start – Creator’s Table in the West Central neighborhood of Spokane), and Ed McBride (a former district lay leader) will now be the lay person assigned to serve Colfax UMC.

We also grieved the faithful completion of ministry in three congregations this past year (Mead United Methodist Church, Rosalia United Methodist Church, and Wallace-Burke United Methodist Church). Please see the descriptions elsewhere in this journal, as I didn’t have an opportunity to share about these churches at Annual Conference this year.

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Gregg Sealey, Inland Missional District Superintendent*

## PUGET SOUND MISSIONAL DISTRICT

As I enter my third year of service in this role, I continue to give thanks to God for our all our pastors and local congregations. This is especially true as I am given the privilege to witness everyone’s commitment and dedication in making sure we continue to keep the ministries of the church going in the middle of a pandemic. As I think more about it, I realize that we are actually living in midst of a twin pandemic: COVID-19 and Racism. Both are killing our vulnerable siblings. Both need to end. Both demand our collective work and care, but one forces us to close our buildings and not meet in person for some time while the other one invites to be out on the streets now, joining our siblings in the fight to dismantle racism in this country. Oh, saying that “we live in a time of uncertainty,” I think is a bit of an understatement.

I feel that we all live in a whole new world that is being formed before our very eyes. We don’t know what it will look like and when it is done. Despite this uncertainty, we do know is that God is still at work in our midst and will remain at work even after all these things have passed. So, I invite you to continue to trust that God is with us even when we can’t fully understand what is happening. Let us trust in God’s leading even when we don’t see the path ahead. Let us continue to put our faith in God’s love and wisdom as we take those next steps moving forward.

Now, I am also happy to say that each and every community of faith in the district has responded so very well in these hard and difficult times. Churches are continu-

ing to find real and tangible ways to love one another and support their neighbors. Buildings may have been closed for a few months now, but churches remain open and our people are engaging their neighbors, most particularly those directly affected by these pandemics. As a district, we have responded to numerous requests from local congregations, partnering with them in responding to meet these immediate needs of their neighbors through the *Fund for Families* fundraising effort of the Annual Conference.

Governor Inslee's "Stay at Home" order challenged us to meet more regularly via Zoom and remain connected even when we are not allowed to be together in person. A big shout out to our District Lay Leader, Keith Skore, for tirelessly hosting and leading gatherings of local church lay leaders twice a week for the past few months. The clergy in the district were also given an opportunity to gather and support one another every Thursday, again through Zoom. All of these gatherings were designed to connect pastors, lay leaders and churches to one another. The hope is for the pastors and churches to understand that they are not alone, and that we are all in this together.

I also would like you to know that after we concluded the Annual Conference session last year, our church in Belfair, North Mason United Methodist Church, decided to faithfully complete its ministry. At the next Annual Conference Session (most probably in 2021), we may be given an opportunity to celebrate all that God has done to and through the mission and ministries of this church in the Belfair area. I invite you all to pray for all our siblings who have been part of this congregation.

As is always the case during this time of the year, we welcome new clergy in the district as we also bid goodbye to our old friends. Here are lists of our siblings who have gone through (or are still going through) a time of transition either in receiving a new appointment this year (in or out of the district) or are moving to a (blissful) life of retirement:

1. Received a new appointment in the District
  - a. *Al Aosved* (Gig Harbor)
  - b. *Brad Beeman* (Sequim: Trinity)
  - c. *Cecilia Comer* (Arlington)
  - d. *Drew Frisbie* (Bay View and Sedro-Woolley: Central)
  - e. *Grace Ncabani* (Lynden)
  - f. *Greg Reffner* (Brownsville)
  - g. *Jenny Smith* (Edmonds)
  - h. *Jim Davis* (Kingston: Redeemer)
  - i. *Justin White* (Stanwood)
  - j. *Mary Boyd* (Marysville)
2. Received a new appointment outside of the District
  - a. *Casey Banks* (Newberg: First)
  - b. *Conrado Gonzaga* (Moses Lake)
3. Retired
  - a. *Bill Green*

- b. *Dan Sailer*
- c. *Deena Jones*
- d. *Jerry Poole*

Let me end with these wise words for the Holy Scriptures:

“So, let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.”

– Galatians 6:9-10, *The Message*

Respectfully submitted,

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

## SEATAC MISSIONAL DISTRICT

As I reflect on my first year of my new role of Superintendent ... what a crazy ride it has been! ... yet even more, how faithful God has been in the midst of multiple pandemics – covid-19, George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement, the dysfunction of government and leadership, and their impact on our churches and community life.

In the first 8 months of this role, I made it through Charge Conference Season with Joint Cluster Conferences, meeting lay people from all over the District, getting to know churches and clergy better, and getting a sense of vision for our work together. I also got a fuller sense of the Superintending role with the District. And then as we moved into the new year and turned toward the spring, the whole things was turned upside down as COVID-19 hit, and we – all of us! – came to see that all that we had known about the call and vocation of ministry, all the skills that we had been taught and that had served us well in our ministry careers, and all that we understood about formation, nurturing and strengthening of Christian community was caught in a gale-force winds swirling all around. The shutdown effectively brought to a grinding halt our plans and visions – as a District, as local churches and community-based ministries – and challenged us to consider how we would continue to strive forward toward our mission, with our most effective forms of ministry severely hamstrung.

In the District, we worked together with our Bishop who led us into *Reimagining* our Future, with each church creating specific phased plans for re-opening our buildings for ministry engagement; we sought to manage the isolation of the clergy with a weekly Zoom Support and Fellowship Group, and for our Church Lay Leaders, a Zoom Lay Leaders Gathering. Both gatherings served also as a place where questions and concerns could be raised and processed as we all struggled with the changing face of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our churches and our people.

Yet one thing which this year has affirmed in me; I have such deep admiration and gratitude for our SeaTac District clergy, lay leadership and our churches! I've been moved by all of the ways that they have met these challenging circumstances with patience and grace, a spirit of curiosity and a learning aptitude, and a willingness to walk the hard road of creativity and innovation, seeking to keep the spirit active and alive and engaged with our people, our churches and our neighborhoods and communities. It has not been easy, and in many ways we have been forced onto this road feeling unprepared and unable to get our bearings. And yet we have trudged onward one step at a time. As well, a word of deep gratitude, for those who have supported the District and its work this year – Administrator, Anna Conklin; and Lay Leader, Andy O'Donnell – who have walked this same road with us seeking to advance our common work and life in the District together.

In the midst of all of this, in the Conference Year 2019-20, there were many milestone markers and celebrations to lift up.

We celebrated the completed merger between Renton First UMC and Kennydale UMC, becoming now Renton United Methodist Church; University Temple UMC completed their renovation and financing plans for the partnership with American Campus Community, which will bring the demolishing of their historic church building and sanctuary, and will result in a wilderness journey that will lead to a new church home built in conjunction with student housing; and Trinity UMC has moved into the former Crown Hill UMC building, and is in the process of extensive renovation to meet the needs of their ministry.

We celebrate with God's faithful servants, clergy who have entered into the retired relationship at the Clergy Session on June 10, 2020.

- Jale Tuirotuma – we give thanks for his 20 years of faithful, servant leadership of the Shoreline Fijian Fellowship
- *Pat Simpson* – we give thanks for the fulness and impact of her 40 years of ministry, which has encompassed local church, community-based ministries, district and conference leadership, and always with a heart for justice ministries and radical inclusivity.

We celebrate with those who were received into provision and full membership of the Conference at the June 10 clergy session.

- Sonja Davis (PD)
- *Mark Hearn* (FD)
- *Jeney Park-Hearn* (FD)
- *Dione Corsilles* (FE)
- *Daniel Miranda* (transfer from another denomination - FE)

We also welcome new pastors who have come into the District to serve our churches:

- *Wongee Job*, serving Bellevue: Aldersgate
- *Paul Ortiz*, serving Seattle: University Temple UMC
- Yvonne Agduyeng, serving as Associate Pastor of Seattle: First UMC
- Mia Park, as Associate Pastor of Seattle: Blaine Memorial UMC

One of the exciting and inspiring aspect of our District this upcoming year are three new Innovation Vitality/Board of Congregational Development Projects that are planting new expressions of community-based ministries:

- Maria-Jose “Cote” Soerens – assigned as planter/innovator of the new South Park Neighborhood Church.
- Michelle Lang-Raymond – assigned as innovator/developer of a multi-cultural performing arts hub called Acts on Stage, in the Seattle/White Center Area.
- *Troy Lynn Carr* – appointed to lay the groundwork and build relationships for a new expression of Methodism in the Black community in the newly re-developing Yesler Neighborhood.

Through it all, I want to thank you for your grace and patience with me, as I have not only had to learn the traditional role and tasks of superintending, but also had to learn a newly emerging role and task of superintending in this upside down season of multiple pandemics. As we move into the new Conference year together, and as we continue to respond to the uncertainty of these pandemics, I pray that we would hold fast to our faith in the face of the inevitability of change that is before us, that we would discover that the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped if we are willing to search for and live into new ways of experiencing and sharing its power and promise. May God continue to provide, and may we respond by sharing this provision today and always.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Derek Nakano, SeaTac Missional District Superintendent*

## SEVEN RIVERS DISTRICT

This has been a challenging year to enter into as the new District Superintendent and Missional Strategist of Seven Rivers District. It started out fairly normal for a first year DS – individual church conferences so that I would have a chance to visit each church, be introduced to the congregations, and become better acquainted with the ordained, licensed and lay pastors that serve the 37 churches of the district. I had some goals in mind beyond that – to continue the work former DS *Mary Hwylke* had begun on creating missional circuits, to create a strong district leadership team that built on these circuits, to help my churches navigate the upheaval occurring in anticipation of General Conference 2020 in May, and to pay particular attention toward strengthening the Okanogan County churches. I anticipated beginning work on these goals starting January 2020, following the very busy church conference season.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. I remain in awe of the creativity, endurance, compassion, and adaptability of my clergy and church leaders as they have found ways to continue to be the church for both the congregations and the communities in which they serve. Almost all have become versatile in using Zoom for connections; many have learned how to stream their worship services online; all have stepped up their outreach to the more isolated members through

phone calls, visits “through the windows” of homes and convalescent centers, cards and emails and have found that they are actually reaching more people than before the virus hit us. Outreach into the community has been varied, and frequently included partnerships with non-profits, schools and government agencies in their area: neighborhood food pantry carts outside their churches or traditional food pantries being opened on a regular basis and being operated according to new safety standards; making and purchasing masks to distribute to those in need; meals prepared for pickup; coordinating (under new COVID-related restrictions) and funding rebuilds where disaster has hit; drop off grocery shopping; financial relief for utilities and rent; grocery gift cards; transportation assistance for medical visits; and the list goes on.

On a district level during this COVID season, I hold weekly Zoom meetings (in conjunction with DS *Gregg Sealey* and the Inland District) for clergy and bi-weekly Zoom meetings with lay leadership. These have been very helpful for those who participate (generally from Seven Rivers – 15 to 20 clergy and 5-15 laity). I resurrected the District Facebook page to provide the latest information; distributed some Fund for Families COVID-19 relief grants and gift cards to churches working in their communities; appointed three new pastors (Royal City UMC, Moses Lake UMC, and associate for Pioneer UMC); and am in continuous email, phone, and text connection with my clergy and laity. As focus has increased on the racist nature of our country, I have started a district book study on “White Fragility” (via Zoom) and encouraged the churches to be engaged in anti-racist work.

I am extremely grateful for the administrative support provided by the new Seven Rivers and Inland Administrative Assistant, Laura Velonza. As we settle into the long haul of COVID life, I hope to return my attention to some of my previous goals and settle into my second year of superintendency.

Respectfully submitted,

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