

2023 PNWAC

SPECIAL CALLED SESSION E-1

SPECIAL CALLED SESSION

May 7, 2023, 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time, Via Zoom

Broadcast from the Conference Center, Des Moines, WA

The call to meet was issued February 2, 2023, by Bishop *Cedrick D. Bridgforth*: In accordance with ¶603.5 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, I hereby call for a special session of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference on Sunday, May 7, 2023, beginning at 3 p.m. PT. The sole purpose of the Special Session is to affirm or not affirm the church conference actions of local churches that are choosing to ask to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church under the provisions of The Book of Discipline 2016, Paragraph 2553. The Board of Trustees will present negotiated settlements that cannot be amended. The members of Annual Conference will affirm or not affirm the agreements by a simple majority vote.

The meeting, via Zoom webinar opened at 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time, on May 7, 2023.

David Valera welcomed everyone and invited all to give a land acknowledgement, via Zoom chat, recognizing the first people to call home the land in which each of us was seated. A prayer followed.

Teri Tobey introduced the Zoom Webinar Functions. David Wood, of GNTV, gave voting instructions.

Worship was led by Fa'atafa Fulumu'a , from Ola Toe Fuataima UMC, AK. The reflection was based on 23rd Psalm and song #2080 All I Need Is You. Worship was pre-recorded.

Bishop Bridgforth called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda and the litany that would end the meeting.

Conference Secretary, *Shirley DeLarme* made the following opening motions: that the Program and Schedule provided in the materials delivered to participating members of this special session shall be the official program and schedule of the conference; and that as specified by the Bishop, the sole agenda is to affirm or not affirm the church conference actions of local churches that are choosing to ask to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church under the provisions of The Book of Discipline 2016, ¶2553; that the Registration Procedure for the Special Session be designated as the official roll call for the Special Session of the 149th Annual Session of the PNW Conference; that the bar be established as those who, according to their status within and relationship with the PNW Conference, have voting rights and are thus given passcode access to voting procedures provided by GNTV and conducted via Zoom Video Conferencing; additionally, that guests specifically designated by the Bishop shall have voice but no vote in the proceedings; and the adoption of the Rules for this Special Session, as posted on the Special Session Resource page on the conference website. With one action the motions were passed.

Conference Treasurer, Brant Henshaw, reviewed Judicial Council ruling 1420 and Book of Discipline ¶2553, which provide the process for disaffiliation and the sunset deadline of December 31, 2023. He reported that the Greater Northwest area conferences worked

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with aligned processes that include: district superintendent and congregation conversations; All Church Conferences to open the question; a discernment process that included a set of questions and a checklist for internal discernment and materials provided to the Conference; an estimate of the costs provided to local churches; documents provided to the conference regarding baptisms, marriages, etc.; a second All Church Conference regarding disaffiliation; disaffiliation agreements, drafted, signed, and delivered to the Conference office; the intention of the Conference Board of Trustees to sign those agreements after Special Called Session vote to move toward settlement and disaffiliation.

He additionally stated that affected clergy are being cared for and their status is being addressed before the end of May. The process for a Special Called Session in the fall will begin shortly.

Questions were asked and answered about unmet deadlines—further conversation and work; those who wish to remain United Methodist—transfer of membership to another congregation; blanks noted in some agreement—no obligations remain for that space; clergy responses—are managed at Clergy Session; caring for those grieving—is difficult at the moment as many are still making individual choices, but some of that work has been done during charge conferences; to explain the process to other congregations—a link to an explanatory document will be provided.

Conference Board of Trustees president *Patricia Simpson* reported that agreements have been made between the Conference Board of Trustees and the local churches, and that the resolution for each of the 13 churches is the same except for the name of the church. The full resolution was read only once, with the motion for ratification and approval for each of the 13 congregations being read and acted upon singly.

Be it resolved by the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Conference of the United Methodist Church

1. That the proposed disaffiliation Agreement between the PNW Annual Conference and a specific church (Church), regarding Church's disaffiliation from The United Methodist church be hereby ratified and approved.
2. That following the full execution of that Disaffiliation Agreement, the corporate officers of the PNW Annual Conference are hereby authorized to release the Trust Clause of The United Methodist Church, which currently applies to all real property and assets held by Church, and that said property and assets shall be retained by the congregation; PROVIDED that prior to the date of disaffiliation, Church shall full pay all monies due under the terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement, including any unpaid Connectional Mission Giving (apportionments) for the currentcalendar year prior to the date of disaffiliation; all unpaid Connectional Mission Giving for the calendar year of the date of disaffiliation; the church's pro-rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations as determined pursuant to the PNW Annual Conference Board of Trustees resolution for the May 7, 2023 special session; and any other debts, loans, and liabilities owed to the PNW Annual Conference, and PROVIDED further that the church shall also comply with all other remaining terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.

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3. That from and after the date of disaffiliation, Church, having voluntarily disaffiliated under ¶2553, shall have no connection or affiliation with The United Methodist Church and the PNW Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, or with any predecessor denomination or conference.
4. That copies of the official records and papers of Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the PNW Conference Archives. This should include a membership roster indicating which members are withdrawing from the UMC and which are remaining.
5. That we give thanks for this congregation and ask for God's blessing upon its continued ministry.

In response to questions, Brant Henshaw and *Patricia Simpson* stated that after all other conditions are met the congregation will receive title to their property. The Board of Trustees determined this to be the most workable solution to continue vital ministries in that location.

Bishop Bridgeforth stated that if a re-drawing of district lines is determined to be necessary, that work would take place at the end of the year.

Petitions were addressed singly, by district, the alphabetically within each district.

Inland District

Petition #1: resolution #1 of Anatone UMC: 258 yes (94.9%), 14 no (5.1%)

Petition #2: resolution #2 Cavendish UMC: 258 yes (93.5%), 18 no (6.5 %)

Petition #3: resolution #3 Colfax UMC: 250 yes (90.9%), 25 no (9.1%)

Petition #4: resolution #4 Colville UMC: 248 yes (91.5%), 23 no (8.5%)

Petition #5: resolution #5 LaCrosse UMC: 251 yes (93.0%), 19 no (7.0%)

Petition #6: resolution #6 Orofino Peck UMC: 248 yes (90.5%), 26 no (9.5%)

Petition #7: resolution #7 Reardan UMC: 247 yes (91.1%), 24 no (8.9%)

Petition #8: resolution #8 St John UMC, WA: 219 yes (79.3), 57 no (20.7%)

Puget Sound District

Petition #9: resolution #9 Silverdale UMC: #9: 210 yes (78.1 %), 59 no (21.9%)

Petition #10: resolution #10 Woodinville Community UMC: 151 yes (55.7%), no 120 (44.3%)

Seven Rivers District

Petition #11: resolution #11 Connell UMC: 222 yes (85.7%), 37 no (14.3%)

Petition #12: resolution #12 Oroville UMC: 221 yes (86.7%), 34 no (13.3%)

Petition #13: resolution #13 Pateros UMC: 220 yes (84.3%), 41 no (15.7%)

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With no further motions, District Superintendent *Derek Nakano* invited everyone to a time of silence, followed by the Lord's Prayer, and by the Litany of Ending & Beginning Anew.

Litany of Ending & Beginning Anew

Adaptation of "An Order for Disbanding a Congregation" (Book of Worship 650) to include a blessing for those taking leave of the UMC and for those who remain.

These congregations, [READ THE LIST] United Methodist Churches were organized as a part of Christ's holy Church and of The United Methodist Church.

Our connection was God's gift for a season.

We are thankful for the many ways these congregations have served the mission given to them by Jesus Christ. In this moment we name that each has accomplished its purpose.

We declare that these afore named are no longer United Methodist congregations.

Though the act of petitioning and voting solidifies a declaration in this realm, we are assured that God will have the final voice and vote on every matter under heaven.

We determined to act today, and we did so with heavy hearts, to honor the desires of those who petitioned to live out their faith and callings apart from the connection we once shared.

May we forgive the sins of others and repent of our own sins.

May we gift one another with honor owed every child of God.

May we praise God for grace and mercy that allows us to ask for such.

We know Christ's holy Church is of God,

And will be preserved to the end of time,

For the conduct of worship

And the due administration of God's Word and Sacraments,

the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline,

the edification of believers,

and the conversion of the world.

We remain part of Christ's ongoing Church,

and as we scatter into other congregations and denominations.

we shall still be one with Christ, one with each other,

and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

May the peace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit remain with each of us as we seek to be most humble in our declarations and more perfect in our witness as we go where God has called us to new endings and new beginnings. Amen.

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Conference Secretary *Shirley DeLarme* announced the minutes of this meeting would be published in the Pre-Conference Handbook to the regular 2023 PNW Annual Conference, and will include the litany. A motion to adjourn was supported by 98.4%.

Appreciations were expressed to many, both for the tasks completed and for the generous and grace-filled spirit in which this process was conducted.