

K. Reports of District Superintendents

Crest to Coast Missional District

As I reflect on the 2022-2023 appointment year, I can distill the state of the Crest to Coast Missional District into three themes: Longing, Excitement, and Getting to Work.

Longing

Throughout the fall, as I listened to laity across the district, I continually heard the soul's desire for connection. This deep longing is connected to the grief and isolation that we experienced in the pandemic and the communal weariness of so much change. Even with the slow return to in-person worship and other targeted in-person events, laity and clergy yearned to talk, laugh, visit, and play without restraint. Over and over again, I found myself suggesting low stakes, high participation gatherings focused on congregation connection. These alone will not heal what has been lost or hurt during the pandemic, but it is a start.

The longing in the local church extended to the greater connection. Once again, we met for Annual Conference over zoom. While we are forever grateful for GNTV and the opportunities that virtual conferencing gives, laity and clergy had hoped to gather in person to attend to our regular business. And while the GNW area celebration of Bishop Elaine Stanovsky went well, it was difficult to not have one last in-person opportunity to say thank you. In the midst of the longing, excitement began to emerge in the district. What longing did you experience this past year and what longing do you hear in your community?



Excitement

As in-person ministry began to ramp back up this year, churches sought to find a new normal exploring ministry they wanted to resume and new ministry they wanted to start. The exploration brought much needed energy and excitement. By the spring, most churches had returned to a social time after worship, regular fundraisers, and even to beloved potlucks. The South Sound Co-operative had their first youth lock-in with more kids than expected. In the late fall, our district co-lay leaders Lyn Rush and Kelly Andrews, gathered local church lay leaders for a monthly opportunity to connect and hear what other churches are doing. Each month two or three lay leaders share an important ministry or creative change they began during the pandemic. It brought energy and excitement to laity who've want to know how others in the district are doing. Clergy gathered in-person in Wenatchee for the Gathering of the Orders and Fellowship which started re-connection amongst colleagues and welcoming not-so-new clergy.

Again, in the greater connection, excitement has swirled as churches get to know our new Bishop, Rev. Cedrick Bridgeforth, whether through zoom gatherings, the Ask Bishop

Cedrick video series, or special events. Our first in-person Annual Conference since the pandemic started will give everyone the opportunity to rekindle friendships and to get to know Bishop Bridgeforth better. What excites you about ministry opportunities in your community?

Getting to Work

As excitement slowly rose in churches throughout the year, laity and clergy together started getting to work in the ministry God entrusted to them. Collaborative configurations of churches have emerged in the Three Rivers Circuit (Castle Rock, Kelso, and Longview) and the Twin Harbors Sub-District (Elma, Satsop, Montesano, Central Park, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Oakville, Ocean Shores, and Willapa). Hybrid ministry is here to stay! The district participated in a GNW wide multi-district Reconciling Ministries Event that was simulcasted in 3 churches and held on zoom. Our Lay Led Congregations' "Teams of Three" met virtually multiple times to connect, conduct business, and to talk about what's on the horizon.

Many churches deepened their connection with the community. Spanaway UMC deepened their connection with their neighbor's experiencing homelessness by offering Safe Parking and cooperating with the city to start the county's Family Promise program. Randle UMC took on the challenge of finding a way to build relationships with people who used the food bank hosted in their building. They now provide healthy snacks, build community connections, and respond to other needs in their community. Shelton UMC started a monthly conversation about who God is calling them to partner with in their community which led leaders to meet with leaders and stakeholders in Shelton. This is just a taste of the work that laity and clergy doing as they seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities. Praise God for the movement of the Spirit and the work of the people! What work are you most passionate about right now?

Transitional Blessings

Finally, we ask for special transitional blessings for Crest to Coast churches and clergy. Ocean Park United Methodist Church will move into lay-led status, and Foothills United Methodist Church will come to faithful completion. We honor *Peter Perry* as he retires, the Sheers as they completed their leadership of Ocean Park Camp and Retreat Center, and Carrie Bland as she anticipates being commissioned. Like every year, some clergy will be leaving our district to serve in other districts, and we will welcome new clergy into our district. May God surround all these pastors and churches in this time of transition.

Beloved servants in the Crest to Coast District, it continues to be an honor to serve alongside you as we seek to work for the common good. May the Risen Christ boldly lead us forward into a new year full of opportunities to deepen our love of God and more fully express our love for our neighbor through equity, justice, and peace.

Respectfully submitted,

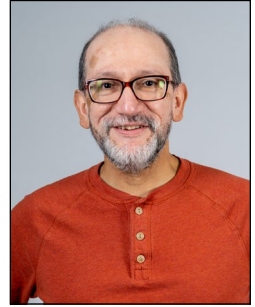
Rev. Kathleen Weber, Crest to Coast District Superintendent

Inland and Seven Rivers Missional Districts

The work we do together

It has been a joy to do the difficult work of being District Superintendent of two districts because of the teamwork that has been developed in our districts. Our nine Cohort Pastors do a great ministry interacting with their cohort churches and clergy. Cohort Pastors also interact with Sheila, the Connectional Minister for our districts, and with me on a regular basis formally at a monthly meeting and informally as issues arise in our various Cohorts. Our District Lay Leaders, Billie Fitzsimmons, and John Townsend are also part of this team as are several local church Lay Leaders from each cohort. This amazing team engages, supports, and leads to carry out the missional work of our districts. And, of course, we all are grateful for Laura, who manages our district office.

I mention all these people because the reality of most good work is that it is done with others. It has been a pleasure to work with such generous and gifted colleagues and friends.



We are working at being connectional

The truth is that the work has been difficult, especially the last few years with the limitations placed on us due to Covid. Now, life feels more normal and unrestricted, and yet the work has been complicated by the number of disaffiliations that needed tending. While on paper the disaffiliation work seemed simple and clear, the reality was that it was incredibly time-consuming work that made the regular Charge Conferences seem untenable at times. Amid that work, it was Cohort Pastors who helped conduct some of the Charge Conferences and lighten my load.

So much of our work here has been about figuring out how to live into our connectionalism. The limitations of Covid separated us from each other, both within our churches and from our sister churches, and now we are taking the opportunity to live better into our connection. We are talking more to each other and finding ways to gather, celebrate and share our gifts and graces. At a recent gathering, two clergy talked about shared resources, pulpits exchanges and cooperative worship for the season of Lent. They described it as, “practicing our connectionalism”.

We are tired

It may be rationalized that this good work that is taking place means all is well. In reality, many in the pulpit and in the pews are tired. Building or rebuilding connections, attempting new things, and being in larger gatherings all take a lot of energy. I just want to acknowledge that at least some of us are tired, and some are close to burnout. This simple fact has caused me to ask some of our clergy to consider taking all their vacation time and maybe even a few extra weeks, if possible, for renewal to mitigate clergy burnout or exiting ministry all together. I encourage us all to pray for one another, including our clergy in the various settings they serve.

Staying Wesleyan

One of the things I appreciate about being Methodist is our Wesleyan doctrine and history in which we are allowed and encouraged to journey in our faith in a manner that meets our needs. This acknowledges that we are not all in the same place doctrinally, spiritually, or theologically, but we are all part of the work God is doing within our larger family. We may not agree on some issues, we certainly will never agree on everything, but we are part of God's family. A friend recently reminded me that our Wesleyan underpinnings and our deep understanding of prevenient grace means that "we belong before we believe". I might add that we belong before we understand. We belong even when we grapple with deeply difficult issues and change our thinking. This wonderful Wesleyan understanding is such a great blessing and such a great struggle for us.

The work is never done

Most of us have heard someone say that change is the only constant in life. I have not disagreed with that statement, but it certainly feels like change has revved up these last few years. The questions I ask myself lately are: What's next? What do we keep? What needs to go away? What is essential?

It would be so simple if there was one simple answer for each of these questions. But once again, our Wesleyan understanding does not lead us to prescriptive, one size fits all answers. These questions of, what's next? What do we keep? What needs to go away? What is essential? must be answered for each of our settings and ministries. They can be good conversations to have with our church councils, our colleagues, our cohorts, and they are certainly good questions for our time of prayer also.

Thank you

In October 2022, Trinity East Wenatchee celebrated their last service after 67 years of ministry. We celebrate all the ministry, service, teaching, and grace that was offered all those years. We also honor all the hands and hearts who served in so many ways throughout the years.

As my second year of superintendency ends, I want to graciously acknowledge the people who surround me with support, wisdom, and fill the gaps when things become overwhelming: my partner on the east side, Sheila Miranda, who serves as the Connectional Minister for our two districts, Laura Velonza, our Administrative Assistant, the Cohort Pastors, Cohort Lay Leaders, and District Lay Leaders. I am so grateful to you all. I also appreciate my DS colleagues who aid when I am in need.

My Hope

My hope for this coming appointive year is that we will focus on ministry, asking all those questions about how we can best serve our congregants and our communities. We have spent too much time and energy focusing on our differences. I pray we will use our time wisely to focus on what keeps us together. I pray we that our love will be graceful and inclusive.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Daniel Miranda, Seven Rivers and Inland District Superintendent

Puget Sound Missional District

Yes, it is already my 5th year as your District Superintendent yet deep in my heart it feels like we are just starting. Yes, like we are beginning again. Probably, it feels like this because we are in a season of transition. This past year a lot of things have changed, and some are still changing.

New Bishop

A few months back we said goodbye to Bishop Elaine as we sent her off and wished her well to life in retirement. This is a life that she truly deserves after more than 40 years of active ministry among and with us. But that also meant that in that time, we welcomed our new episcopal leader, Bishop Cedrick Bridgforth. This change in the episcopal leadership of our annual conference is not a small thing. This is like beginning a new chapter of our life together as an Annual Conference. With the new energy, experience, leadership style and passion in ministry that Bishop Cedrick brings, it is exciting to wonder where God might be leading us next in our journey together.



New District Administrator

Bishop Elaine is not the only one who retired, recently we also bid farewell to Anna Conklin, who served the district well as our District Administrator until her retirement in early April. With Anna's retirement, we are now excited to welcome Erin Tombaugh as our new District Administrator.

New DCOM Chair

We are also grateful to the Rev. Mark Johnson for his service as our District Committee on Ordained Ministry Chair for a couple of years until he stepped down from this role in December 2022 for health reasons. In his place, the Rev. Justin White so graciously agreed to step in as our new DCOM Chair. Rev. Johnson remains a member of the committee.

New District Initiatives

1. Good Neighbor Experiment - is a year-long small group program designed for local churches who are looking for better ways to express their faith in their communities while living out the values of relationship, abundance, and joy. An initial cohort of 12 churches were invited to participate. In partnership with the BOCD, this program was offered free of charge to all churches who participated.
2. Hispanic Ministry in Skagit County - in July 2022, Rev. Zulma Tifre was appointed as the Associate pastor of the Hispanic/Latinx Ministry of Mt. Vernon First UMC. With some additional funding and support from BOCD and the IV Team, we hope to expand this ministry in the coming years by inviting neighboring churches to support a shared Hispanic/Latinx ministry in Skagit County.

3. Restructuring/Reorganizing of the District Leadership Team – it is my intention to reorganize the District Leadership Team. Between 2018-2019, 10 cohort groups were organized with the intention to provide support and sharing of resources among and between neighboring churches. The pandemic has put a pause on this work, and it is now my intention to restart and/or reorganize them beginning this appointment year. I am also grateful to our staff at the conference office, who never got tired of assisting our churches in the past year through consulting, training, and coaching. A big shout out to *David Valera* and his team, whom I know I can always rely upon and call whenever I receive questions or requests regarding technology-related issues from churches.

New Appointments

In 2022, we welcomed new clergy in the district as we also bid goodbye to some of our old friends. Here are lists of our siblings who either received a new appointment (in or out of the district), moved to a life of retirement or to a leave of absence:

- 1) Received a new appointment in the District
 - a) Carrie Bland (Fall City & Snoqualmie)
 - b) Desi Larson (Sequim: Trinity)
 - c) Donna Pritchard (Edmonds)
 - d) Ieisha Hawley (Arlington)
 - e) Kim Poer (Woodinville: Community)
 - f) Ric Shewell (Issaquah: Faith)
 - g) Yvonne Agduyeng (Redmond UMC)
 - h) Zulma Tifre (Mt Vernon First: Hispanic Ministry)
- 2) Received a new appointment outside of the District
 - a) Darryn Hewson (Bryn Mawr)
 - b) Rich Füss (Bellevue: First)
- 3) Leave of Absence
 - a) Elizabeth Ingram Schindler
 - b) Jenny Smith
 - c) Lara Bolger
- 4) Retired/ Ended Interim Appointment
 - a) Joanne Coleman Campbell
 - b) Kim Fields

As of the writing of this report, there are at least ten changes in appointments that we are anticipating to begin in July 2023 as well as a couple of churches that have requested to disaffiliate from the UMC using ¶2553 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*.

Let me end by expressing my deepest gratitude to the pastors, pastoral leaders, lay people of all the churches in the Puget Sound Missional District. It has been a great honor to work alongside you all for these past five years. I have been humbled by your great love and dedication to God, the church, and the communities you serve. It has been difficult at times, but it has always been a joy for me to watch how God's love and grace has been

embodied in all the ministries you do. Again, I look forward to working with all again in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. J. Mark Galang, Puget Sound District Superintendent

SEATAC MISSIONAL DISTRICT

In 2022-23 our SeaTac District churches began to emerge from the covid pandemic and shut-down, and found ourselves in a space where we were needing to “begin again”: learning to be “church” in a new way for a new context in ministry, one that we have never seen or experienced before: learning how to live in and be community after being on our own and feeling isolated while meeting on zoom; old issues and concerns that were put on hold began resurfacing and causing discomfort; programs and ministries that were paused are now seeking to come back in new forms, and completely new ministries are being borne for the new needs we are experiencing; our churches have experienced struggles in the stewardship giving of time, talents and treasures that are impacting day-to-day ministries; and we continue to face the reality of exhaustion of our clergy and committed laity who have been carrying their churches through the pandemic.



We continued to be limited in our ability to gather but were able to have a District Gathering at Kent UMC in July, to welcome new clergy and share in an “individually packaged” meal; and we did give options for zoom or in-person Charge Conference gatherings this fall. Our District Lay Leaders continued to offer monthly opportunities to gather on zoom, to share best practice successes and struggles in ministry, and asking others for feedback about concerns they were facing. And our District continues to seek out ways of supporting the development of lay leadership within and in our Conference and Area.

To that end, we are planning Pop Up Hybrid Workshops in 2023-24 with topics such as: Outreach Ministry/Reaching Young Adults; Congregational Care through Lay Visitation; Creation Care for Local Churches; Learning Labs with our Innovation Vitality projects; Community Engagement and Partnerships; New Concepts and Ideas for Online ministry; Creating an Engaged Reconciling Ministry; Fellowship and Resourcing for Youth/Young Adult Ministers, Leaders, and volunteers. And this year for our Fall Charge Conferences, we will “begin again” with the joint, collaborative Charge Conferences that we instituted in 2019 – but we unfortunately delayed by covid pandemic.

And we continue to find ways to welcome our new Bishop Cedrick D. Bridgforth and his spouse Christopher to the Greater Northwest area and the Pacific Northwest Conference. One of the things Bishop Cedrick is doing to get to know the people of our Area is by visiting each District and touring the area and visiting with clergy and laity. Because

our SeaTac District geography is friendly to this concept, it is our plan to have a gathering of clergy and laity for an in person gathering, so that you can get to know our new episcopal leader in a relaxed, casual and relational way.

Some noted milestones happening this year in our SeaTac District: Rev. Mia MiKyung Park (Blaine Memorial UMC) was approved for ordination and full membership in the Oregon-Idaho Conference and Rev. Dirk Wooten, (chaplain in extension ministry) was approved for ordination and full membership in our Pacific Northwest Conference; Mele Aho (extension ministry at Wesley Seminary), Lisa Ishihara (extension ministry at Seattle Pacific University School of Theology), and Ashley Skinner-Creek (extension ministry at Seattle Pacific University School of Theology) continue to move forward in their process as Provisional members and are preparing to apply for ordination and full connection next year; Vangie Rand (Centralia UMC) was approved for commissioning and provisional membership in our Pacific Northwest Conference; and Rev. Steve Baber (Bellevue: St. Peter's UMC) will be entering the retired relationship this year at Annual Conference.

Thank You! - I want to offer deep gratitude to these persons for the support of our District ministries in 2022-23: Jim Carroll (Renton UMC) and members of the District Building and Location; co-chairs Kay Barckley (Queen Anne UMC) and Laura Baumgartner (Haller Lake UMC), and the members of the District Committee on Ministry; Pat Simpson (retired Elder connected to Valley and Mountain) who has assisted in resourcing our churches that have been looking at land stewardship, the development of church properties to support the needs and concerns of our communities while creating a sustainable future for their ministries, as several of our churches have been engaging in a time of vision casting and feasibility study and assessment, to investigate the potential of this for their church. Also deep gratitude to J.D. Drollinger (Auburn First UMC) who has been supporting our Lay Leader gatherings in the absence of a District Lay Leader, and to Andy O'Donnell who has continued to be supportive even as he has moved on from District Lay Leader, to his position now as Associate Conference Lay Leader. We want to offer a special word of gratitude to Anna Conklin, our administrator in the District Service Center, who retired from her position after 17 years of service with us and as Office Manager in the OCM Department of the PNW Conference Office. We also want to welcome Erin Tombaugh, who is stepping into Anna's position in the District Service Center, with our SeaTac District and the Puget Sound District.

We look forward to the new things that God is doing as we re-discover what it means to be in ministry in this time and season of our lives. May God continue to bless our District, our Conference, and our Area, that we will experience renewal and vitality in all things.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Derek Nakano, SeaTac District Superintendent