

# U.M. Daily

## Wednesday, June 12, 2024

40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference  
Clergy Executive Session  
9:30 a.m. (PDT)

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank welcomed the Clergy members and the Board of Ordained Ministry and called the session to order. She clarified who was entitled to be present, which included Elders and Deacons in Full Connection, Provisional & Associate Members, Licensed Local Pastors, and laity serving on the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank led the body in prayer.

Diane Rehfield, the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, welcomed Bishop Escobedo-Frank to this Conference.

Diane Rehfield invited Rev. Lea Booth to lead the body in a practice session for voting.

Rev. Lea Booth gave instructions on how to vote on VPoll. A test vote was taken.

Diane Rehfield requested the presence of certain laity helpful to this session. They are the laity assisting with the media and technical systems, Jan Hanson, Director of Human Resources and Conference Benefits Officer from the Pensions Office, Margaret Irwin from the Episcopal Office, and Cathy Wilson, the Associate Director to the Board of Ordained Ministry. There were technical difficulties with the voting platform, so Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote by hand.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and the motion was supported.**

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called Jan Hanson, Director of Human Resources and Conference Benefits. Jan Hanson offered a presentation on clergy pension program updates. The new plan is called Compass Plan: Active Clergy - keep benefits earned previously under older plans: (Pre-82, MPP, CRSP): Retired Clergy - No impact, no change; Eligibility - Does not change. Same eligibility as current plan (CRSP)

Jan Hanson shared the benefits to the church and to the clergy with the more affordable Compass Plan. The current plan, CRSP, is mostly pension and small account based. The new plan is only account-based. There will be no funding obligations after clergy retires; allowing flexibility for heirs and beneficiaries.

The body then joined together in singing, "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me" from the Faith We Sing Hymnal, #2153. Michelle Park and James Dollins lead the singing.

Diane Rehfield gave the Report of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Ms. Rehfield thanked the members of the Board for all of their hard work, and offered a special thanks to Cathy Wilson in honor of her years of service and dedication. She also thanked Rev. Sunyoung Lee for her work this year, in addition to her writing the policies of the Board. With input from others, Rev. Lee has created two very special policies. One is a Safe Sanctuary policy which allows us to expedite the transfer of candidates from other conferences and sometimes from other denominations, who must leave their locations due to the stance on matters affected LGBTQIA persons.

The other is for the reinstatement of people who surrendered or lost their ordination credentials for either being a “self-avowed, practicing homosexual” as the Discipline formerly read, or for performing a same sex wedding. This is in keeping with the vote taken at General Conference. We will be welcoming one person in each of these categories this morning.

Ms. Rehfield also gave thanks for the people who filled leadership roles on this Board, some of whom will be presenting today, as we work our way through the Disciplinary Questions. The gathering was reminded that only Elders and Deacons in Full Connection and members of the Board of Ordained Ministry are allowed to vote on matters of commissioning, ordination, character, and conference relations of our clergy. Those appointed from other denominations under paragraph 346.2 of the Book of Discipline who have submitted the required documents may also vote except on specific matters of ordination. Ms. Rehfield invited the appointive Cabinet to share any updates to the Disciplinary Questions that they may have. Information was given regarding any editorial corrections, such as misspelling and other pertinent revisions that do not have any impact on action items to be emailed to Cathy Wilson at [cwilson@calpacumc.org](mailto:cwilson@calpacumc.org).

Rev. Sandy Olewine presented a change: 17(b) for part time local pastors - Joseph Samuela’s last renewal date should read June 10, 2024. Rev. Tom Choi presented a change: page 3-5, DQ 18 - please remove Kyu Woo Nam’s name from the list.

If there are any other editorial corrections, please send them to [cwilson@calpacumc.org](mailto:cwilson@calpacumc.org).

Ms. Rehfield shared her gratitude in being able to serve as the interim Chair of the BOM this year, and expressed her thanks to Rev. Greg Batson, who will become the Chair of the BOM on July 1, 2024.

Ms. Rehfield invited Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Board Registrar, to present the Report of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee presented the 2024 candidates for provisional membership and membership in Full Connection.

Those presented for commissioning on Deacon Track and Provisional Membership are:  
Heather Marine KinKennon

Those presented for commissioning on Elder Track and Provisional Membership are:  
Molly Elizabeth Lorden  
Kimberly Christine Ports

Those presented for Ordination as Deacons in full connection are:

Christy Ann Clark  
Hyon Shim Hong  
Margaret Mazvita Machinga  
Kristin Marine Sutrave

Those presented for Ordination as Elders in full connection are:

Michelle Rene Andrews  
Jonathan David Gentry  
Eric Masahiro Iki  
Jae Hong Jeon  
Eric Otto Schmidt  
Kitione Holameimuli Tu'itupou  
Hongyun Won

Those presented for Recognition of Orders in the United Methodist Church as an Elder in Full Connection are:

Paul Edward Capetz  
Alexandro Elandelino Vilches

The Rev. Karl Stuckenberg, Assistant Registrar for Provisional Membership introduced each candidate and presented their provisional membership for approval.

The Rev. Amy Aitken, Full Connection Registrar will introduce and present the candidates seeking ordination and/or full membership.

The gathering was reminded that the 2024 class of provisional members needed a 3/4th majority vote of the clergy session.

The Board moved to approve Heather Marie KinKennon for provisional membership and commissioning on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Molly Elizabeth Lorden for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Kimberly Christine Ports for provisional membership and commissioning on Elder track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

Rev. Karl Stuckenberg offered a prayer for those received as provisional members.

Rev. Amy Aitken, Full Connection Registrar, presented each candidate for election for full conference membership and ordination. The gathering was reminded that the 2024 class of provisional members need a 3/4th majority vote of the clergy session.

The Board moved to approve Christy Ann Clark for ordination on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Hyon Shim Hong for ordination on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Margaret Mazvita Machinga for ordination on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Kristin Marie Sutrave for ordination on Deacon track. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Michelle Rene Andrews for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Jonathan David Gentry for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Eric Masahiro Iki for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Jae Hong Jeon for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Eric Otto Schmidt for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Kitione Holameimuli Tu'itupou for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Hongyun Won for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Paul Edward Capetz for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

The Board moved to approve Alexandro Elandelino Vilches for ordination as an Elder in full connection. The candidate was introduced.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Aitken offered a prayer for those to be ordained.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar, introduced the transfer candidate into our annual conference from the Philippines Central Annual Conference, Israel Isiderio Alvaran, who joined the body online.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar, introduced the transfer candidate into our annual conference from the North Oklahoma Annual Conference, Kristiane Smith.

Rev. Monalisa Tu'itahi, vice-chair of the Board and coordinator of transfers into our annual conference, introduced the candidates for transfer and explained the process.

Under the Board's Safe Harbor Policy and paragraph 347.1, the Board moved to receive Israel Isiderio Alvaran as an Elder in full connection. The Book of Discipline requires a simple majority vote to approve the transfer.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Under paragraph 347.1, the Board moved to receive Kristiane Lynn Smith as an Elder in full connection. The Book of Discipline requires a simple majority vote to approve the transfer.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Tu'itahi offered a prayer for those transferring into the Conference.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar, shared that following this year's General Conference, she is excited to announce the opportunity to welcome back clergy whose ministries were previously interrupted due to matters of human sexuality.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee presented Deanna Wendy Smitha, who desires to rejoin our California Pacific Annual Conference Clergy.

The Board moved, under the Board's Reinstatement of Clergy Policy and paragraph 356, Readmission After Leaving the Ministerial Office, to approve Deanna Wendy Smitha to be reinstated as an Elder in Full Connection.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Bishop Escobedo-Frank welcomed Deanna Wendy Smitha and assisted in vesting her in her robe and yoke stole. Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered a prayer.

The body sang "Christ has Broken Down the Wall" from the Worship & Song hymnal, #3122.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar, stated that ¶326 requires the clergy session to vote annually on all provisional candidates who will continue their preparation for ordination. Their names are located on page 7 under Question 25. Instructions were given that these candidates need a simple majority vote.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Sunyoung Lee presented Question 13. ¶605.7 does not require a vote, but the Board will make a report on the number of clergy who are under review. There is one clergy under review in the West District.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee presented Question 14(a) regarding the Administrative Review Committee and 14(c) on the Committee on Investigation. Instructions were given that this requires a simple majority vote if there are any changes from the previous year.

Rev. Catie Coots came to the mic to make a correction to the Nominations Report. The Bishop was named as a member; however, she is not. Margaret Irwin was also listed as a member; she is not.

Rev. Catie Coots was invited forward to present the proposed changes to these sections.

Rev. Catie Coots presented the changes to Question 14(a):

Committee on Investigation: Catie Coots (20), Sunny Ahn (20), N. Adiel DePano (21)

Alternates: Jose Vindel (21); Alena Uhamaka (24); Christopher Carter (24)

The Board moves to accept the names in Disciplinary Question 14(a) to serve on the Administrative Review Committee (¶636, majority)

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Catie Coots presented the changes to Question 14(c):

Committee on Investigation: John Shaver (20); Brian Parcel (24); Patricia Farris (24); JT Kim (24); Robert Nishinaka (lay) (22); Tupou Seini Kelemen (lay) (23); Lynn Nguyen (lay) (24)

Alternates: Ken Walden (20); Louis Chase (24); Joel Hortiales (24); Jeanette Bragunier (24); Sharon Phelps (lay) (20); Laura Hernandez (lay) (24); Malcolm Kennedy (lay) (20); Paul Audley (lay) (20); Bob Gin (lay) (20)

The Board moved to accept the names in Disciplinary Question 14(c) as amended to serve on the Conference Committee on Investigation. (¶2703, majority)

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Catie Coots reminded those approved for the Conference Committee on Investigation that the Book of Discipline requires that they meet during this Annual Conference.

Rev. Elbert Kim, Candidacy Registrar and Rev. Darin Arnston, Vocational Discernment Coordinator, were invited forward.

Rev. Elbert Kim presented the certified candidates for ordained ministry listed under Question 15 on page 2, as well as those discontinued as certified candidates on page 2. The gathering was informed that this does not require a vote, but that these candidates would be affirmed.

Rev. Darin Arntson, the Vocational Discernment Coordinator, invited the gathering to encourage potential candidates for ministry and shared the importance of cultivating the next generation of pastoral leaders. If anyone in the body know someone who demonstrates potential for ministry, they are encouraged to reach out to Cathy Wilson with their information.

Rev. Arntson offered a prayer for all the candidates for ordained ministry.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee invited Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin, the Incoming Registrar of the Board, to lead the body through some of the Disciplinary Questions.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented Question 16 on page 3, the list of those who have completed the studies for the license as a local pastor, are approved, but have not yet received an appointment. According to ¶315.6d, a 3/4th majority vote of the clergy session is required for granting licensing for ministry. The Board moves approval of Disciplinary Question 16 as printed. (¶315.6d, 3/4th)

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented Question 17 on pages 3, 4 and 5, the lists of full and part-time Licensed Local Pastors approved and given appointments.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin called attention to the first-year Licensed Local Pastors. The Discipline requires a 3/4 majority vote to approve licensing for first-year local pastors: Mark Maddix, Teaira Parker, Yiting Wang, and Sor Chuan Ong

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented the remaining names listed in Question 17.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Pastor Vernon Kemp, Local Pastor Registrar and Chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members led the body in prayer.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented Question 21 on page 6, to review clergy in good standing from other Christian denominations serving in our Annual Conference while retaining their denominational affiliation. This requires a simple majority vote (¶346.2). The Board moved approval of Disciplinary Question 21 as printed.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin invited Rev. Mark Ulrickson, Chair of the Board's Conference Relations Committee to lead the body through the next several questions.

Rev. Mark Ulrickson presented Question 44 on pages 11 and 12, which lists the names of those who served in ministry and finished their labors and are now in the church triumphant.

Active Elders who finished their labors:

Daesun Chung

M. Guadalupe Alonso-Redondo

Retired Elders who finished their labors:

David O. Beadles  
Paul C. Chung  
Brent Criswell  
Robert Davis  
Carlton Dean Freudenberg  
Thomas Hill, III  
Youngshik Kim  
Jerry Larsen  
Merle D. Lehmen  
Joseph Nunziato  
Nancy Grissom Self  
Norman Douglas Self  
Douglas Williams.  
Sylvester Gillespie  
Emelito Hernandez  
Tofamoe'AloTupou  
James Lawson  
Teresa Savillo Santillana

One retired Deacon who finished her labors:

Judith Helton

One Local Pastor who finished his labors:

James Brooking

One retired Local Pastor who finished her labors:

Margaret Finnie

Rev. Mark Ulrickson offered a prayer for those who have finished their labors.

Rev. Mark Ulrickson presented Question 46(a)(1) and (3) lists of names of those going on voluntary leave for LESS than five years. (§353.2, majority)

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Mark Ulrickson presented Question 46(a)(2) and 46(a)(4) list names of those going on voluntary leave for MORE than 5 years. (§353.2, 2/3 majority)

Rev. Mark Ulrickson presented Question 48 on page 13, list of those granted medical leave. **Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Mark Ulrickson presented Questions 49-51 on retirement found on pages 13-18. Here is the list of clergy retiring this year:

Retiring as a Deacon: Mary Dennis; Robin Ann Rhodes

Retiring as Elders: Thomas Kendall, Sr.; Jin Moo Koo; John H. Farley; Wayne Walters; Karen Murata; Piula Elia Ala'ilima; Diane Carol Brady; Walter Dilg, Jr.; John Fanestil; Patricia Farris; Alma Johnson-

Hawkins; Glen Haworth; Brian Kent; Rick Malec; Myrian Monnet; Coung Manh Nguyen; Joy Price; Kathleen Puntar; Frank Schaefer; Matthew Sargeant; Deanna Wendy Smitha; Karen Thannheimer; Son-Pom Ye

Retiring as a Local Pastor: Betty King

The clergy session is required to vote on the retirements under ¶357.2, voluntary retirement. This requires a simple majority vote to pass.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Mark Ulrickson offered a prayer for the retirees.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented Question 67(a) on page 21, listing names of those who are appointed to less than full-time service. (¶¶338.2, 342.2, 1506, 2/3rd majority)

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote and it was supported.**

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin presented the rest of the Orders Report, which includes pertinent information such as the contact information of the Orders Executive Committee and the Board's statement onLGBTQIA+.

The Revs. Anna Lee Mulfold and Martha Morales were invited forward to present their annual reports.

Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin invited Rev. Bob Isip from the Conference Archives and History Committee to announce the names of those who have reached milestone anniversaries in ministry.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered a prayer for all those clergy who are no longer with us or were not able to attend.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee congratulated all the clergy celebrating milestones in their service.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee shared that her time on the Board of Ordained Ministry has come to an end after thirteen years, and she expressed her deepest gratitude.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee concluded the Board of Ordained Ministry's report to the Clergy Session.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank thanked the Board of Ordained Ministry for their hard work in the preparation of their report. Rev. Anna Mulford was invited forward to offer a prayer of grace to bless the food and fellowship as the Clergy Orders end and the body breaks for lunch.

**40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference**  
**Opening Worship**  
**1:00 pm (PDT)**

A video was shown reflecting the theme, Flourish. The anchor scripture for the Annual Conference is Psalm 92:12-15, which speaks of the Flourishing Tree. The Flourishing Tree is large and abundant, bearing much fruit. We focus on the beauty of flourishing.

The Acknowledgement of the Use of Tongva Land was offered by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and Mele Maka, Lay Leader to the Annual Conference. Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank offered an opening prayer, celebrating the history of First Nations Peoples and mourning the harm that has been done.

The Harmony Worship Band began by singing and playing *I Thank God*.

Rev. Andy Mattick offered the Opening Prayer, and Words of Forgiveness:

“God of Grace and Reconciliation, we know that when we offend another, we offend you. We have said unpleasant and hurtful things to our brothers and sisters when they failed to live up to our expectations. We see everything through the lens of our own beliefs, understandings, experiences, and not what others see or experience. Open our eyes and hearts, O God, to see beyond ourselves and those like us.

Help us to acknowledge our motivations that lie behind our actions or inactions. Help us to pray as often for forgiveness as we do for help. We have been constrained and held back by our actions and we have harmed people whom you love as much as you love us. Give us the strength to seek reconciliation with you and with another, so that we may flourish as we move towards your place of Shalom. Amen.”

The Harmony Worship Band shared the song, *Breathe*.

The Invitation to the Offering was given by Rev. Julie Elkins. The offering received will benefit Susanna Wesley Community Center.

A video was played highlighting the work of the Susanna Wesley Community Center.

The Harmony Worship Band played *Glory to God* during the Offering.

The Liturgy of Communion was given by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank. The Harmony Worship Band played *Great Are You Lord* during Communion.

Rev. Andy Mattick read Psalm 92:12-15.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank preached on the theme, “From To.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank began her homily by thanking the ASL interpreter. Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked the question, “Did you notice that we are going from something to something else? When I think about moving from one thing to another, I think about from being shackled to being set free. When I think about shackles, I think about what we know about shackles.” Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared the story of Daniel in

the Lion's Den, and how he imagines Daniel's feet being shackled, and how that must have felt. Daniel was unable to move, he was helpless.

The king who cared for Daniel prayed that Daniel would be rescued. In the morning, the King went to the lion's den and called out, "Daniel, did the Lord your God rescue you?" Daniel answered, "Yes, my king. God shut the lions' mouth."

We know about shackles from our own history. At our country's formation, we allowed the inhumane treatment of African people and brought them into slavery for economic gain. They were literally shackled in the ships - they were shackled as they were auctioned off.

And even today, persons of color are shackled with policies, barriers and violent treatment. Sometimes all of that seems invisible, unless you are the one being shackled. When I was a District Superintendent, I heard about "Fast Court" which was happening in my area. They were trying to get the migrants and immigrants moved through the court system in a "fast" manner. I wanted to see what was happening, so I went. I got there early. It was a hot sunny day. I was so hot, I saw a palm tree offering a thin slice of shade. So I stood there, waiting for the door to the court to open. Finally it opened. I was one of the few observers in the courtroom. There were 70 or more people in the courtroom. The judge read the names of the migrants, and said how he would process them. The judge asked them to stand up. I heard a sound, but I didn't know what it was. It sounded like something shaking, like a very low rumble. As the migrants stood up, I realized it was the sound of their shackled feet. To think that from the days of Daniel, to the days of slavery, to today, we have been shackled. We are still shackled in our current context as well. Have you been shackled by your past? By your expectations? By the things that pull you down?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that she is inspired by the song, "Shackled" by Mary Mary, and had that song played for the attendees to hear.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that after the General Conference in Charlotte, the United Methodist Church was changed. We have gone from something...to something else. A history of harm to a future of kindness and goodness. We have gone from the church building being the church to understanding that the people are the church. We have gone from thinking, "That's my pew to do we still need pews? From my church to our church, from disaffiliation to gathering together at the table, from policies of harm to neutral non-restrictive language, and from hate to love beyond measure. She shared that we have moved into a new place. She posed the question, "What do we do with this moment post-General Conference 2024, and how do we pray in this moment?" She proposed that we take this moment and flourish as we move into a new place.

We have been set free into a future that is different from any future we have lived before. She shared that she relies on scripture to discover what it means to flourish. In Psalm 92, the wood of the cedar trees was used to build temples and sacred places and royal palaces. Cedar was used for ships, and also had medicinal properties. Psalm 92 describes a lush cedar forest. The righteous will flourish like a palm tree. In order to flourish, we become like the palm and the cedar. Our flourishing happens in the house of God, the courts of God - in all the places God cares about. In old age they will produce fruit - like Abraham. If we want to be fruitful, we still find home. We give birth in our old age and we laugh about it like Sara.

If we flourish like the psalmist, we sing in times of anguish and in times of joy. We are faithful even to the cross. If we flourish like Peter, we move from denial to knowing that Jesus is the Christ. Like Paul, the scales

fall off our eyes and we can see again. Like Mary Magdalene, who taught the disciples about our Lord and Savior.

God is trying to create for us heaven on earth. God has a dream for us today. We need to understand that with freedom comes responsibility.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank suggested that we create a Christian community coming together to end physical and spiritual hunger. She shared that she is irritated when dreams don't come true because we don't do the work required to make them come true. She asked, "What if we do the work?" She said that the first thing we must do is to build relationships. To go deep, even if we get hurt in the process. Build a deep connection with God and with each other. Really connect with the people around us, seen and unseen. Tell everyone the stories of Jesus. These stories form our faith. These stories form us. Tell the stories of Jesus so that when people look at us, at our communities, they see how much we love each other. When we do this, we will end spiritual and physical hunger. It takes work, but it's our work to do. This work will transform our communities of faith.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that we also need to work on our spaces and places. Create a space where all people are welcome - a place where communities draw closer to each other. A community reflecting the warmth of love reflects the warm love of God. We are to create spaces of love and warmth. She asked, "What if we took our buildings and found creative ways to transform them into ministry for today?" We might need to change things. Change what worship looks like. Change the physical space - maybe even move a few pews. Everything that used to offer us comfort in our churches has been turned upside down. Perhaps we use our spaces to house people, to feed people, to open a space for those who cross borders? Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that it may mean that our sacredness becomes a bit profane in our eyes ... but not in the eyes of God. What would happen if we took seriously the feeding of children? What if every church planted a garden?

What if the church became the place where people knew they could be a part of that garden? Where is our garden planted? You don't need much land to plant a garden. What if we took it one step further and helped heal God's earth by planting an indigenous tree in our areas? The earth needs trees right now. How about we use the scriptures about caring for God's creation and actually do something about that care? How about we plant trees?

If we do all of these things, we will begin to flourish together. We will understand that God's presence is here to help us flourish with all that God has intended for us in the world. It's about love and care and connection. The hardest part is change, and now we have to do the work. We have been unshackled, able to move from being bound to being free, unchecked to set ourselves free from hunger, and to praise God.

The Bishop closed her message by sharing more of the song, *Shackled* by Mary Mary.

The Harmon Worship Band led the body in the closing song, *Flourish*.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank gave the Blessing and Benediction.

**40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference**  
**Session 1**  
**2:00 pm (PDT)**

**Call to Order** - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

**Opening Business** - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Rhodes welcomed the Bishop and the people of the Cal-Pac Conference, both online and in person. Rev. Rhodes offered instructions on the voting procedures and protocol.

Rev. Rhodes led the body in prayer.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank asked Rev. Rhodes to lead the community in the song, *Spirit of the Living God* and *Amazing Grace* due to an injury suffered by a member of the Annual Conference as the result of a fall during the plenary. Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank led us in prayer.

Rev. Rhodes led us through a sample voting session.

**Opening Motions** - Rev. Bob Rhodes

**Motion #1**

Rev. Rhodes moved to set the bar of the 40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference to be: Members of the Conference as specified by the Discipline and the Rules of the Conference as well as lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry; the Bishop's Secretary; and such other persons as specified by the Bishop and approved by the Conference; authenticated and connected through the Zoom Webinar and/or VPOLL platforms; present in our broadcast location(s); and/or present in the Academy Ballroom of the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #1.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

**Motion #2**

I move that the Agenda in the Participant Guide be the official agenda of this 40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference, and that the Agenda Chair and/or Conference Secretary be authorized to make necessary adjustments in consultation with the Bishop.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #2.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

**Motion #3**

I move that the proceedings published in the UM Daily be the official minutes of this 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference after they are corrected and approved.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #3.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

**Motion #4**

I move that the registration forms and the Registrar's list of those who have signed in to the online platform(s) shall be used as the official roll call of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #4.  
**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

#### **Motion #5**

I move that all resolutions not adopted by the end of this 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference be referred to the appropriate entities.

Rev. Rhodes moved to approve Motion #5.  
**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

#### **Orders of the Day** - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair

Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

**Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.**

#### **Announcements** - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh welcomed the people of the California-Pacific Conference. Rev. Yuh taught a Hawaiiin greeting to the body.

Safety issues were discussed, including exits from the building, location of restrooms, child care pickups. Registration instructions were given. Rev. Yuh shared the many ministry items and options available during the Annual Conference. The internet wifi access was offered, and assistance for any technical challenges.

Microphone procedures were discussed:

For on-line attendees, please enter the appropriate phrase: For, Against, Question, Amendment, Motion, Point of Order, Personal Privilege. This helps the moderators cue the process. When the Bishop recognizes you, please state:

1. Name
2. Church/Ministry/Office you are a part of
3. Clergy or laity
4. If you plan to share in a language other than English, please state that clearly so that the translation program may be accessed. It is not perfect, but we are working on it!

All information is made available at the California-Pacific websites: [calpacumc.org/ac2024](http://calpacumc.org/ac2024) and [calpacumc.org/secretary](http://calpacumc.org/secretary).

If you have an amendment or motion, in person or online, you need to put them in writing. To do so, [calpacumc.org/ac2024/legislation](http://calpacumc.org/ac2024/legislation).

Tomorrow we will honor “Thursdays in Black.” All are invited to wear black tomorrow.

#### **Flourishing After General Conference Panel Discussion**

The General Conference and Western Jurisdiction Delegates were called to the stage Rev. Alison Mark welcomed the body. Rev. Mark introduced the panel as the delayed 2024 Conference and Jurisdictional delegates. Rev, Mark stated that she is grateful to share leadership with Monalisa Tu’itahi as first elected lay delegate. We are grateful to our California-Pacific Conference family whose prayers carried us over the last five years. It has been a privilege to usher in a new dawn in the life of this denomination.

Monalisa Tu'itahi shared that Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth came out of this delegation. We have celebrated weddings, graduations, retirements, and disaffiliations. We mourn the loss of Rev. Lupita Alonso and have mourned the loss of family members. We met once a month for the entire time. This ebb and flow altered the makeup of this delegation.

Past and present delegates were asked to stand, to receive the Conferences' thanks.

Rev. Mark: Your entire delegation was hard at work. We are grateful for Frank Wulf as our chaplain and thanks to all our delegates who provided much needed work in presence and voice in all the different spaces where our small numbers of seated delegates could not be.

Monalisa Tu'itahi: Cal-Pac was in the house in Charlotte. Our Bishop led from the stage and around us and we supported her every step of the way. We thank Bishop Escobedo-Frank and Margaret Irwin, her assistant, for their work. We want to thank each of you who were there as pages, or observers, present and available for the work that needed to be done.

Rev. Mark: You are probably aware of the important decisions made at the General Conference. You can view our delegation report on the Conference website. We are grateful for the high level of engagement and share it with you as part of our narrative, and we celebrate the election of Luan-Vu Tran, as well as the election of Erin Hawkins as an alternate delegate. Both will be serving on our Judicial Council.

Monalisa Tu'itahi: We believe we have lived up to your charge. The Western Jurisdictional Conference will take place July 10-13 in Spokane, Washington. At this Conference, there are no plans for episcopal elections. We will spend time focusing on the work of the jurisdiction and how to live into our new reality. You can participate in person and online. Simply visit the Western Jurisdiction's website for more information. The Western Jurisdiction's nominations committee is waiting to hear from you and if you have an interest in serving.

Rev. Mark: The immediate future of our work is yet unclear. We will continue to share with you about the Regionalization Constitutional Amendment and will work closely with the Annual Conference. We will continue this work so that we are all ready to vote regarding Regionalization. We will end this presentation with these familiar words: "Be still and know that I am God."

**Video Presentaton** - A video of highlights of the General Conference 2024 was shown.

**Panel Discussion** - Rev. Denyse Barnes facilitated a panel, consisting of Rev. Eugene Hahn, Monalisa Tu'itahi, Debra Bass, and Pastor VJ Cruz.

Rev. Barnes shared that Important work was done at the General Conference, but there is more to do. Our panel conversation today will dig deeper into the idea of what being an inclusive church means. How did we get to this point? We have a history of including and excluding people in the church. What are your perspectives of People of Color and the LGBTQ community to make us an inclusive church?

Debra Bass - I carry with me an anniversary version of the Bible that Black Methodists for Church Renewal put out. Rev. James Lawson was there in 1964, when we were hopeful the Central Jurisdiction would end, and there would be full inclusion of Black people in the church. That happened in 1968 through strategies that were formed in 1964. Black Methodists for Church Renewal. Blacks were segregated. In 1968, the

Commission on Religion and Race was formed, and various Persons of Color were put in the various agencies. We have come a long way, but one of the aspirations was that with full inclusion, racism would end. We know that did not happen. That is an ongoing issue we are still struggling with today.

Monalisa Tu'itahi - The conversation about inclusiveness continues to be a counter-cultural conversation. The church 90% white. The church is a place where I feel comfortable. We are constantly working upstream where we are the marginalized, the "not here yet" or the new people ... and yet, that is the story of the Gospel. That is where we get our strength. That is why for me, even though I think inclusion is a constant story and it will be our narrative on this side of heaven, I will continue to be a part of that fight.

Rev. Eugene Hahn - Being inclusive is a good thing. People of Color and women being included. As a Person of Color, it is beneficial for me to serve English speaking people, which is a benefit of being an inclusive church. It depends on the issues - I am here to share that the Korean churches are struggling. The issues still linger around the church from the General Conference. For example the LGBTQIA+ issue is different from issues with People of Color and women. Sometimes we see we are making progress, but for other people, it is harmful to their culture. Speaking for Korean churches, going through these issues around being inclusive has caused struggle. But we are making progress. Somehow we have a painful process in split churches and somehow, we are getting over those issues. We can focus on the ministry and mission of the church from now on, so we are glad about that progress.

Rev. Barnes - It feels that the people who feel oppressed are the ones fighting for inclusion. This takes radical action. Now we are at the point of stating that all are welcome in our churches and in our clergy - does it feel for you that we are indeed a fully inclusive church?

Pastor VJ Cruz - We are here today. The fact that I am here as a quiet witness represents that the struggle has been worth it. I am part of the LGBT community and I'm Hispanic. I was a monitor with G-Core and while everyone was celebrating and rejoicing, I was thinking, "Now What?" We have received permission to be the church we are supposed to be, but now what?

The church has given me permission to be myself. What happens when that person goes into the world and finds out it is not true? What about a pastor whose congregation is divided? We have accomplished a lot and I have learned to love the church. Even within the struggle, we are aiming to accomplish justice and inclusion and equity for each person. It is emotional for me to be here - to be recognized as part of a community that has struggled and continues to struggle and there is a lot more work we need to do. We need education for our congregations and pastors.

Debra Bass - I think what we are working for is perfection. We are not there yet, and have a lot of work to do.

Monalist Tu'itahi - We cannot legislate our hearts - that requires "heart work." That is something to be done in these circles and in our local churches. That is how you live into what has been legislated. One that is clear to me is that the United Methodist polity is right and we got it more right this time. We have to live into that. We have not yet done that, but we are excited.

Rev. Barnes - It is a starting point for a long journey that we are taking personally and together. What are some of the next steps?

Rev. Eugene Hahn - Inclusive has a broad meaning. It is okay to be very different - we are different. We are very traditional. The General Conference decision was a hard struggle for Korean people and Korean churches. The beauty of inclusion is that we can share the table even though we are very different. People have a black and white mentality in the Korean church. There is no middle ground to the Bible. If you do not say fully "yes", it is no. It is the Korean way of thinking. Even though we are very different, we can still share the table in community and as the body of Christ. Inclusiveness has a long way to go, but it is okay to be different. We can still share a table, which is the beauty of the Gospel.

Monalist Tu'itahi - I read an article about how the nation is united in one thing: hate. One side hates the other, and the other side hates the other. Gandhi said that the enemy is fear, not hate. I walk with you Rev. Eugene, I am walking with the Pacific Islanders. They are struggling in the same way. They have been asked to stretch their heart and to see something much bigger than what they are used to. That is the next step. To go beyond that fear. I think it is fear that is holding us back.

Pastor VJ Cruz - We use the word "inclusion" a lot. But who is going to include whom and when and how? The word that came to me is "grace." When I get to know my siblings and when we listen to each other's stories, we can connect. We are all children of God. That is the point the church should find. I cannot love without getting your permission for me to share how I see things. In the same way, I need to listen when you are telling me your perspective. That requires grace and humility of heart.

Rev. Barnes - We have much to do for sure. I want to thank all of our panelists for being a part of this conversation and for what they have shared. On the screen, there are questions - please take a few minutes among yourselves to start these conversations today.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- What opportunity from the outcomes of the General Conference which present a church we are aspiring to be, "A church for all people," do we have now?
- What would make Cal-Pac different now as we start this journey of inclusion?
- What do you need from the Conference in order to embark on this journey?
- What does our destination look like?

You are invited to keep asking and working on these questions.

Rev. Rhodes invited the body to continue with the Agenda. We turn to our next moment of thoughtfulness and prayerfulness.

#### **Video Presentation - Hawaii Acts of Repentance**

##### **Hawaii Acts of Repentance**

Rev. Amy Wake from Trinity United Methodist in Pearl City, shared that she was born and raised in Hawaii, but that she is not ethnically Hawaiian. Being Hawaiian is different and rare. I cannot tell you how much it means to have the backing of the denomination as we do this work of repentance. Our Task Force and the General Commission on Race is to form a policy that is more than mere words. We have been, and will continue, to listen to their voices and issues. Hawaiians are 20% of population, but 40% of incarcerated people. Overcrowded prisons are overflowing with native Hawaiians. The native Hawaiian prisoners are relocated to Arizona, Texas and California and are cut off from family friends, culture and the land, in addition to all forms of support and rehabilitation. Native Hawaiians are more likely to get a prison sentence

and receive longer sentences. Native Hawaiians are over represented in poverty and homelessness. More than half of native Hawaiians leave the Island because they cannot afford to live in their homeland.

Even working two full time jobs is not enough to survive. Over 2,000 residents of Lahaina have left due to housing. The whole state has the fastest declining population in the country. Hawaii has become the playground of the wealthy. According to a 2023 survey, 1 in 3 households are food insecure and 6% of children have nothing to eat all day. We have work to do. Another concern among Hawaiians is the pollution and possible ruination of the land. The Navy has 70-year old fuel tanks which have spilled 19,377 gallons of jet fuel into water. Children and adults suffer illness and trauma from exposure. Many continue to notice fuel in the water even after tanks emptied.

Hawaii's vote for statehood in 1959 was initiated by the United Nations. When it came to Hawaii, the United States did not provide the United Nation's three required options on the ballot for statehood.

All of the United States citizens of Hawaii were allowed to vote on statehood even though Hawaiians made up less than 8% of the population. Hawaiians refused to become United States citizens out of protest. The US military was allowed to vote. The vast majority voting on the issue of statehood were not indigenous. The United Nations questioned the validity of that vote, which did not follow the rules of the United Nations. As a friend once said, "Repentance is sometimes hard." In order for Hawaiians to flourish, we need to address the real-life ramifications of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy, and the mindset that continues today.

The United Methodist Church's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We now realize that we cannot make people follow Jesus. We can only invite them. To "make" disciples implies force, power and control. We must be careful not to transform the world in our own image, but to advocate for the diversity that is God's image. Evangelism could once again be colonialism. When we take a vacation in Hawaii, do we stay in the tourist parts of the Island or do we look for interaction with local people?

When we create curriculum for VBS, do we use plastic leis and teach hula, or do we try to connect with indigenous peoples in our own lands to learn more? Do we tell people what they need to be liberated, or do we support self-determination?

Your Hawaii Repentance Task Force is hard at work. We are learning how the United Methodist Church can act and change in repentance for our role in the stealing of this nation. This is only the beginning of reconciliation and restoration. We must create God's beloved community for all.

Rev. Amy Wake introduced Collette Anderson, Lay Leader of Waimai United Methodist Church, and 100% Hawaiian Elder. She will give us a glimpse of life in Hawaii for Hawaiians.

Colette Anderson shared, "When I was born in 1935, my grandparents adopted me from my mother. I was raised by my grandparents in the first Hawaiian homestead built in 1931. The house is on a historical street because of its significance. We had a simple life. We had no running water, a sewer or electricity. My grandfather cooked on a fire outside for hot water.

I was told that I would inherit Lot 17. I was reminded that when I received the land, I also accepted the responsibility of the land as my gift. It is deeply meaningful to me to receive this land from my

grandparents. It is part of a new homestead lease that will be renewed so I can pass it on to my granddaughter.

Since the Lot is on the Historical registry, I can't make any changes to the outside of the home. We need a new roof, but do put a new roof on in the original style will cost over \$70,000.

Every Sunday, we traveled 27 miles to the church in Honolulu. The prayers and Bible readings were all done in the Hawaiian language. I was not allowed to learn it. My grandparents were determined that I speak only proper English. My grandparents taught me to respect the land, and that it is not ours. It is my job to use the land and care for it because it belongs to God. It is the same with water - it is given to us by God. I learned to respect my elders and traditions, but my grandparents did not allow questions.

I picked up the language and the culture, but they were never explained to me. We could not remove the black rocks from the oceans, mountains or roadside. These were important rules to follow, but I was taught not to ask why we didn't do these things.

My grandmother died when I was 8 years old. I entered a school for girls as a 9th grader. This was not a happy time. I learned American culture and habits. I was not allowed to dance Hula or to speak Hawaiian. I was never taught Hawaiian history.

That has changed today. I am grateful for the apology to native Hawaiians. I hope this apology will lead to unity, so we can live in peace and harmony like the old days in Hawaii where we respected each other and the land. Mahalo ke Akua. Thank you God for this time of sharing.

Rev. Rhodes shared that this is a beginning, but there is work to be done. During the sessions, our work will be to honor those who have brought us this far knowing we can stand on those shoulders moving forward.

#### **Video Presentation of Retirees**

Rev. Piula Ala'ilima

Rev. Mary Dennis

#### **Instructions and Closing Prayer** - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank was given permission to share by Glinda McKibbon, that Ms. McKibbon fell during the plenary, and thanks everyone for the prayers. She requested that the prayers keep coming as she has badly injured her arm in the fall.