

U.M. Daily

Thursday, June 13, 2024

40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference Morning Worship 8:30 am (PDT)

The worship theme for this morning's worship is "United Methodist Church and our Annual Conference!" The Harmony Worship Band began worship with the song, "*iFlourish*."

The Rev. Julie Elkins welcomed all this morning and expressed gratitude for the Harmony Worship Band. She invited everyone to "Get the Spirit moving" through song and dance. The Harmony Worship Band led us in song, dance and prayer with these musical offerings::

Rozey/Spiritual Beatz - "*iFlourish*"
Movie Agbani - *Flourish* (theme song)
Reckless Love
Firm Foundation (He Won't)
Build My Life
Glory to Glory

Morning Prayer

Morning prayer was offered by Norman and Patty Kelsy - North District Co-Lay Leaders.
"We desire to flourish!"

40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference Session 2 9:00 am (PDT)

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

Bishop Escobedo-Frank thanked the Harmony Worship Band and shared that although music wasn't listed in the order of Creation, it is there.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This morning, I thought about humble roots and thought, "How did I get here?" I come from humble roots and I recognized that God takes us in places we don't expect and in that, God keeps us in the humble place. I was thinking about the prayer offered in worship lifting up the ministry of

Thursdays in Black. In my previous role as a Social Worker, I walked alongside those who had been abused. There are things you can share with those who have been abused, and things you should not say. You can tell them to get ready to escape when they can. As a woman pastor, I walked into spaces where they did not feel safe before, but with my social work background they were able to feel it. Abuse happens everywhere, even in the church. Some people in this room may need a safe place, a safe harbor, loving advice and counsel. Please know that my office is open if you need to talk to someone. If I am not there, my assistant Margaret can find me. I want to offer that we can be one of the safe places.

Thank you for being here today, and for all that you bring with you to this time and place - your history, your love of the church, and what's happening in your churches and in your lives. Thank you for what you bring.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank led the body in prayer.

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 greeted the body, and reminded the body to take their phones out for voting. He also reminded all to check for the email from Jennifer Gaylord for today's sessions that includes VPOLL login information. He also reminded the body to place their phones on vibrate only.

A QR code for translation was displayed.

Rev. Yuh shared that there was an unfortunate accident that happened in the ballroom yesterday. He invited the in-person attendees to move through the ballroom carefully. We are keeping the lights on in the ballroom, even during worship for safety reasons. He also offered a reminder to care for the caretakers and the parents who are caring for their children.

Rev. Yuh offered thanks to all the volunteers and called our attention to the booths.

The Finance Room is in Parlor 131. For those who are parking, remember to get your parking validated. Rev. Yuh also reminded the body of the internet access network and password: 24ACSession.

Rev. Yuh invited the body to practice introducing themselves all at the same time as a reminder that when coming to the mics, state your name, your church and whether you are laity or clergy. Rev. Yuh also gave thanks for the translators, including our ASL translators. If you are having trouble hearing or seeing, Live Translation is available. A QR code was displayed for this service.

If anyone wishes to offer a motion or present an amendment to a motion, please come to the mic. After you have been acknowledged by the Bishop, please state your name, your church and if you are clergy or laity. If you are attending in person, you will be asked to fill out a form regarding your motion or amendment. If you are attending online, please visit the Cal-Pac website and go to the Legislation section for the form to fill out.

Rev. Yuh lifted up the importance of Thursdays in Black and offered this blessing: “As you do the work of love and grace, may we flourish together.”

Board of Ordained Ministry - Rev. Diane Rehfield, Board Chair

Rev. Rehfield welcomed Bishop Escobedo-Frank, Conference Lay Leader Mele Maka, and members and guests of the California-Pacific Annual Conference, both online and in-person.

Rev. Rehfield: This year has been an exciting one for the Board of Ordained Ministry. We have continued to refine the new process that was launched last year. Candidates and Board members alike feel that this is a much more collegial process, with more opportunity to get to know one another beyond the interview setting. We believe we are bringing to you well qualified pastors who will move the church forward in new ways.

We are also excited this year to be welcoming back one person whose orders were surrendered many years ago, but who is now entitled to have them back under the General Conference’s decision this year to reinstate those who had their orders removed or surrendered them due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or for celebrating a same gender wedding or union.

We suspect there may be others who are also entitled to be reinstated, and wish them to know that they can apply for this up until June 15th of next year.

In addition, we will be welcoming one person transferring under our new Safe Sanctuary policy, which expedites the transfer process for those who are transferring to our conference due to incompatibility in their conference or denomination with their own sexual orientation, gender identity, or stance on same sex weddings.

It has been my honor to serve as the interim chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry this past year. I am grateful to the Rev. Greg Batson, who will become the Board Chair beginning July 1, 2024.

I want to thank Cathy Wilson, who is celebrating 30 years under employment at this conference, 18 of which have been with the board of Ordained Ministry. We could not do our work without her.

And now, I would like to invite our registrar, the Rev. Sunyoung Lee, to lead us through our report. She has worked very hard on our clergy session and this plenary session, as well as on the service of ordination and commissioning. We are very grateful to her.

Introduction of Clergy Candidates - Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar

Rev. Sunyoung Lee greeted Bishop Escobedo-Frank, Conference Lay Leader Mele Maka, and members and guests of the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee: It is my privilege to present to you the 2024 Class for Provisional Membership and Membership in Full Connection. Let us welcome them as they make their way to the stage.

We will be calling the candidates one by one. They will come forward when they hear their name.

For Provisional Membership and Commissioning on the Deacon track, the Board presents:
Heather Marie KinKennon

For Provisional Membership and Commissioning on the Elder track, the Board presents:
Molly Elizabeth Lorden
Kimberly Christine Ports

For Ordination as Deacons in Full Connection, the Board presents:
Christy Ann Clark
Hyon Shim Hong
Margaret Mazvia Machinga
Kristin Marie Sutrave

For Ordination as Elders in Full Connection, the Board presents:
Michelle Rene Andrews
Jonathan David Gentry
Eric Masahiro Iki
Jae Hong Jeon
Eric Otto Schmidt
Kitione Holamemuli Tu'itupou
Hongyun Won

For Recognition of Orders in the United Methodist Church as an Elder in Full Connection, the Board presents:
Paul Edward Capetz
Alexandro Elandelino Vilches

Congratulations were extended through our applause.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee invited Bishop Escobedo-Frank to ask the general examinations to all the candidates, followed by the examination of deacons and elders, and historic questions to those candidates who will be ordained and/or admitted into full connection.

General Examination - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: My siblings in Christ, you have been allied to an ordained, commissioned, or recognized status in set apart ministry. The Church now confirms your calling.

As ordained or commissioned ministers, you are to be coworkers with all the people of God: With laity, bishops, elders, deacons, local pastors, provisional members, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, home missionaries, supply pastors, with all who serve God in the Church. Remember you are called to serve rather than to be served, to proclaim the faith of the church and no other, to look after the concerns of God above all. So we may know you believe yourselves to be called by God and that you profess the Christian faith, we ask you:

Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of ordained or licensed ministry?

Candidates: I do so believe, and confess.

Do you believe in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Candidates: I do so believe and confess.

Are you persuaded that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are unique and authoritative?

Candidate: I am so persuaded, by God's grace.

Will you be faithful in prayer, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and with the help of the Holy Spirit continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Will you do your best to pattern your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Will you, in the exercise of your ministry, lead the people of God to faith in Jesus Christ, to participate in the life and work of the community, and to seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church, accepting and upholding its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline, defending it against all doctrines contrary to God's Holy Word, and committing yourself to be accountable with those serving with you, and to the bishop and those who are appointed to supervise your ministry?

Candidates: I will, with the help of God.

Will you, for the sake of the church's life and mission, covenant to participate in the life of the order, into which you are ordained, commissioned or recognized?

Will you give yourself to God through the order in order to sustain and build each other up in prayer, study, worship and service under the rule of life set forth in the vows you take this day?

Candidate: I will, with the help of God.

May God who has given you the will to do these things, give you grace to perform them, that the work begun in you may be brought to perfection. Amen.

Examination of Deacons - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: A deacon is called to share in Christ's ministry of servanthood, to relate the life of the community to its service in the world, to lead others into Christian discipleship, to nurture disciples for witness and service, to lead in worship, to teach and proclaim God's Word, and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to interpret to the church the world's hurts and hopes, to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed, and to lead Christ's people in ministries of compassion and justice, liberation and reconciliation, especially in the face of hardship and personal sacrifice. This is the rule of life and work of a deacon.

Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of a deacon?

Candidates: I do so believe.

Examination of Elders - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: An elder is called to share in the ministry of Christ and of the whole church: to preach and teach the Word of God and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead the people of God in worship and prayer; to lead persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to exercise pastoral supervision, to order the life of the congregation and the connection, to counsel the troubled, and declare the forgiveness of sin; to lead the people of God in obedience to Christ's mission in the world; to seek justice, peace and freedom for all people; and to take a responsible place in the government of the church and in service in and to the community. This is the rule of life and work of an elder.

Do you believe that God has called you to the life and work of an elder?

Candidates: I do so believe.

Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Siblings in Christ, our Discipline instructs bishops to guide aspiring ministers through self-reflection and examinations. These weighty questions, all but one seeking an affirmative answer, reveal Wesley's understanding of pastoral ministry.

So I ask you: (Book of Discipline paragraph 336)

Have you faith in Christ?

Are you going forward to perfection?

Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?

Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?

Do you know the General Rules of our Church?

Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?

Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?

After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?

Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?

Will you support and maintain them?

Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?

Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?

Will you visit from house to house?

Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?

Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?

Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?

Will you observe the following directions?

Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.

Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered her congratulations.

Introduction of Transfers - Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar

Rev. Sunyoung Lee: In addition to those being commissioned, ordained or recognized, I present the clergy who have been received as a full member by transfer from other annual conferences.

The Transfer Candidates came forward.

Israel Isiderio Alvaran
Kristiane Lynn Smith

Introduction of Renstated Clergy - Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Registrar

Rev. Sunyoung Lee: Last but not least, I present the clergy who have been reinstated as a full member of this annual conference:

Deanna Smitha

Her reinstatement reflects our commitment to inclusivity and celebrating the diverse gifts of all who serve our faith.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: When I was in the General Conference, I checked my emails right after the vote regarding ordination, and hers was the first email I received stating, "I want to come back." That takes courage. I am grateful to the Board for their in-depth work to bring her back. I am grateful to Rev. Smitha for taking the long journey to teach us what it means to be present with each other and her mercy and forgiveness. We are hers and she is ours.

Connectional Ministries Programming - Erin Hawkins

ASL - Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes, Director of Justice and Compassion

Denyse Barnes introduced Rev. Dr. Sunny Ahn to lead the section on ASL inclusivity.

Rev. Dr. Sunny Ahn welcomed the body in word and in sign.

Rev. Dr. Sunny Ahn: I am Sunny Ahn, Asian-American, wearing black for Thursdays in Black. I am a clergy from Kona UMC in Hawaii, and my pronouns are She/Her. On behalf of my deaf and hard of hearing siblings, particularly in Hawaii and California, I am standing before you today with our team. By May 2024, about 15,857 people in Hawaii or 1.9% of the state's population are deaf. This is higher than the national average of 1 in 1,000 people being born deaf. Hawaii also has the highest rate of newborns with permanent hearing loss in the United States, with about 55 born each year with hearing loss. Hawaiian sign language is an indigenous language that has been used in Hawaii since the late 1800's. However, ASL is more common among the deaf population in Hawaii. Unfortunately, as of April 2024, only 31 ASL interpreters were credentialed by the Department of Disability and Communication Access Board. Two churches on the Oahu island, one Assembly of God church, and another non-denominational church in Honolulu, have a ministry for the deaf. In the UMC, Kona UMC is the only that offers some deaf-friendly ministry.

Let's talk about California. As of 2022, the National Deaf Center estimates that 1.7 percent of California's 25 to 65 year olds are deaf. This term includes people who identify as: deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, or deaf-disabled. The office of Deaf Access estimates that California has 3 million deaf or hard of hearing people. With more than 800,000 living in the greater Los Angeles area, this makes California the

state with the largest deaf population in the country. Yet, only seven churches in California offer a ministry for the deaf. Unfortunately, none of them are UMC.

We have work to do, don't we? Would you be willing to include our deaf and hard of hearing siblings in ministry in Cal Pac? Would you be willing to include them in God's ministry under your leadership, wherever you are? People need the Lord. May the Lord may move our hearts for our deaf and hard of hearing siblings and flourish together in ministry and life on this day and all the days to come.

All God's children say: Amen.

CFA Presentation - Rev. Molly Vetter & Christy Denner, CPA

Rev. Molly Vetter introduced herself to the body as a member of the council of Finance and Administration, and clergy from Westwood UMC.

Rev. Molly Vetter: I am here today on behalf of Howard Hudson, the chair of our CFA, who is in Australia. I have five things I wish to say, the last being an introduction that will continue the rest of our report.

First, you may remember after the General Conference from 2019, our Annual Conference CFA instituted an option for local churches to pay their general church apportionments through an alternative process. This was a way that we could continue to invest in our connectional life, but insulate our giving from continuing messages and practices that are harmful to LGBTQ+ siblings. At the General Conference this year, we changed our social principles, repealed all of the traditional plan, removed a funding ban that prevented general church funds being used to support the acceptance of homosexuality. We deleted the ban on gay and lesbian clergy and removed our ban on clergy officiating same-sex weddings. So, it is my joy to announce that we are discontinuing our alternative apportionment.

Second, I wish to acknowledge the 12 years of service of our conference treasurer, Archana Carey, who stepped down in April.

Third, I want to note that we have been learning from a leadership audit conducted with help from the General Counsel of Finance and Administration about our staffing, leadership, and administrative functions. We are committed to the work of reimagining the role of the treasurer in our conference office structure to more helpfully fit the present and future needs of the church.

This brings us to point four, which is that we do not have a budget to present right now. We are committed to working on an intentional process of preparing a budget for 2025, which will be presented at a special session of the Annual Conference. You'll remember that we did this last year in the Fall, when we had a special session for approving the budget and a few other matters. Bishop Dottie has indicated she will call this session for Saturday, October 5, 2024..

The fifth thing I wish to share is that we have some excellent help to get us to that point. I want to introduce our interim treasurer, Christy Drenner, CPA. Christy is an experienced CPA, who has spent more than 25 years working with nonprofit and religious organizations. Most recently, she served the North Texas Annual Conference as treasurer and Chief Benefits Officer. For the past three and a half years, she led that conference through challenging seasons – including COVID-19, extensive losses in the winter storm in February 2021, a settlement with the Boy Scouts of America, disaffiliation, and the work of unifying the Central Northwest Texas and North Texas conferences. She has served on the Westpath Conference

advisory board, and in April, was asked to serve on the General Agency and Episcopal Matters Agency. She brings rich experience and she is a delight to work with. Please help me welcome Miss Christy Drenner.

Christy Drenner greeted the body.

Christy Drenner: It is my joy to be serving with you during this season in the Cal Pac conference. I come before you as a proud UMC Clergy spouse who has served with my husband, Frank, for more than 25 years. Leading youth programs and mission trips, teaching vacation Bible school, launching women's ministries, and organizing local mission initiatives.

We have served many types of churches in urban areas, large suburban churches, and even three historic Methodist churches on the Bilston circuit in England for a year. The importance of the work at the local church level cannot be overestimated. It has been a gift to serve with passionate laity at every location. We have a few connections in the Cal Pac conference already: my husband and Rev. Dr. Tom Choi did their doctoral work at Wesley Theological Seminary in DC. Rev. Andy Mattick and I served together on the Freshman Leadership team of the Wesley Campus ministry at SMU in Dallas in 1995, way before the turn of the last century. I am a proud graduate of Lydia Patterson Institute, which was founded by a woman who was passionate about educating students to whom English is a second language.

To say the least, it has been an eventful road that finds me here today. As Bishop Dottie said this morning, "God keeps us in places where we don't expect to be and keeps us humble." Amen.

The most important lesson I have learned today is that United Methodists are called to learn and grow each day. A favorite scripture from that first year at SMU is Philippians 3:12-14.

During this interim season, I want you to know that I am passionate about the work of the ministry of Administration. While this is generally a less sought after ministry in the church, we know it is vitally important work. Our job is to financially equip you to do your ministry in the world. The only way we can accomplish this is to be fully transparent and open to your thoughts, questions and inquiries. I have spent a few days on site, learning about how the Cal Pac conference works, where I have seen the leadership team hard at work trying to finalize the budget. Since I was so new, and the conference has been without a treasurer for a couple of months, I asked if we could please postpone the approval of the budget until we really understood how 2023 ended. I am extremely grateful to Bishop Dottie and the other leaders for allowing extra time to prepare the budget.

Budget Timeline to the Special Annual Conference

June:

Hire temporary Controller/review year end financials

July:

New CFA members onboarding and new member training
Work with departments and committees on budget needs
Host focus groups and listening sessions

August:

Continue to refine the budget

September:

Finalize the budget on the 20th
Host information sessions

October 5, 2024: Special Called Session of Annual Conference

During this process, a great question was asked: “Aren’t we going to have to do this again after the Special Conference in October?” The answer is, “Yes.”

In the short time we have leading to October, we won’t have a chance to do a full-scale review of all missions and ministries to make sure they still align to the strategic priorities. Those conversations take time to be done well, but we will have a chance to do a deep-dive on what resources we currently have. We will be able to equip all of you with a very clear financial picture of the Annual Conference. We will ensure everyone understands what we are talking about and what key decisions need to be made. Our work is to build a bridge to create a strong foundation of understanding that will lead us into the future. For a finance team to be effective, it needs to communicate honestly where we are and what the implications are of the various decisions being considered for the future. We will build the bridge with a budget, considering three things to ensure financial sustainability: The local church, the clergy, and the Annual Conference. We also consider three inputs to build a sustainable budget: Revenue, Expenses, and Reserves.

In conclusion, this is a big task that has been set before us. I look forward to serving with all of you during this time of transition. If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. I know that God is at work in this conference and I look forward to the exciting days ahead where we can flourish together. This concludes my report. Thank you.

Tom Griffith, Point of Information: I support the Report and the process that Christy is sharing. Does the Book of Discipline require that after the General Conference, our first meeting must vote to accept our General Church apportionments which we pay into the General Church? Are we not required to approve this part of the Budget?

Rev. Molly Vetter: I do not have the answer to that question, but will research this issue and get back to the Bishop and the Annual Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for your question Tom. We will get back to you on that issue.

After the body enjoyed a five minute break, Rev. Bob Rhodes called the body to resume the work of the Conference.

Molly Vetter: In response to Tom’s question, it is my understanding that the Discipline requirement to accept this part of the budget is ours regarding the timing. We can do it today, or do it in October at our Special Called Conference.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Let us do this work in October at the Special Called Conference. We will answer this at our Special Session in October 2024.

Legislation - Rev. Lea Booth

RES 24-01 - Disabilities and the Ordination Process

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-01

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Sharon McCart, Laity, Irvine University UMC: I am the author of the Resolution passed at General Conference, and this Resolution (RES 24-01) is our affirmation for our follow through on the General Conference Resolution. This Resolution levels the field of ministry for those with disabilities. It provides reasonable accommodations such as the accommodates businesses must provide in the workplace. We wish to remove the things that cause harm.

Rev. Christy Ann Clark, Clergy, St. Mark UMC: I am legally blind and I am speaking in favor of this Resolution, and hope that we are faithful in upholding those with disabilities if it passes. There are obstacles to a visually impaired person getting through the process of ordination. Sometimes there are things that we cannot see. Cathy Wilson and Margaret Irwin have made it possible for me to access the needed information. However, there needs to be more intentionality in this. This will help the Conference communicate in different ways. There are no disabilities, but special abilities.

The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-02 - Resolution to Declare Gun Violence a Public Health Emergency

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-02

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Heather KinKennon, new clergy, Lancaster: I am speaking in favor of this Resolution. I am new clergy, but I'm also a sister of a gun violence victim. My sister, Wendy, was shot and killed in 1977. Since Columbine, there is a generation of children who do not know life without active shooter drills. They know they can die at school, dancing in a club, going to the store. People say guns kill people, not people kill people, but moral ambiguity stops when someone pulls the trigger. With other pandemics, we have come up with a number of solutions, not just one. Our response must be a multifaceted response. Let us reinstate the assault weapons ban and background checks and conflict resolution. Let us also be more proactive in addressing mental health issues.

Blake Vance, Laity, Hawaii, Online: I have an amendment.

[Due to technical issues, the body could not understand Mr. Vance's amendment.]

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Blake, we are having trouble hearing you. We ask that you put your amendment in writing. We will move onto the next Resolution and come back to this Resolution after we receive your amendment.

Mr. Vance emailed his amendment statement to Rev. Rhodes. Rev. Rhodes read Blake's statement to the body:

Rev. Bob Rhodes quoting Blake Vance: "Wherever 'guns' and 'firearms' are used, BB and pellet firearms be tempered. Here, some wordsmithing would be much appreciated. The rationale is as follows: 1) our Federal government includes BB and pellet guns under the definition of 'firearms.' Also, per another agency: Quote

'The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reports of about 4 deaths per year caused by BB guns or pellet rifles.' (<https://cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5-89.pdf>) Even one death is tragic, and I would pray that my proposed amendment would not increase loss of life. Statistically, by simply getting out of bed, we take on a certain amount of risk. 2) We learn in stages - addition before multiplication. Likewise, just as some of us learned to ride a bicycle first on one with training wheels or starting off with a tricycle, so can one learn the basic firearm handling skills with a BB or pellet gun. 3) the Resolution cited some suicide statistics - the person who chooses a BB or pellet gun would be hard pressed to succeed in that endeavor. Applying that similar thought process a criminal would hardly choose such a weapon. I would imagine they simply skip this step. Easing the ownership of a BB or pellet gun would actually further public health.

I hope that when our congregations engage this topic at our state, county or community level, we will consider these nuances with BB and pellet firearms. Mahalo!"

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Blake did not state this in an amendment form. I want to honor the process, and he is trying to make a motion. We are again going to come back to this and hopefully get it in the right order. We will be talking to Blake and will come back to this.

Jack Draper, Laity, St. Paul's UMC: I would need to make an amendment to the amendment to replace the word tempered...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: You are speaking to the amendment, but we don't have it yet. We are trying to get Blake's amendment, and then we will take your comment again. We will come back to this Resolution at a later point

RES 24-03 - Support of Tourism and Hospitality Workers
Rev. Booth moved RES 24-03

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions. The Resolution is before us.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RES 24-04 - Support of Living Wages and the Right to Organize
Rev. Booth moved RES 24-04
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Drew Patterson, Laity, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: I could not tell the difference between this Resolution and the previous Resolution. Is there any specific policy we are advocating for? Are we advocating for an increase in the minimum wage? What is it exactly that we want in this Resolution?

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: This Resolution is about a living wage for all people. The previous Resolution was created for people in the tourism industry. A living wage is everyone's right. Our Annual Conference is taking place in a non-union hotel; however, we would not be here if they did not pay a living wage to their staff. This Resolution is a more general Resolution in which it is affirmed that everyone has the right to a living wage.

Chris Rubens, Laity, Glendora UMC: The way I read this resolution is that it supports living wages and the right to organize, meaning they have a right to unionize. Is this for our pastors and clergy of different types or is it that we won't occupy a place that does not pay living wages or is not unionized?

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: This Resolution is for everyone who works, and everyone who works has the right for a living wage. This Resolution is not specifically for clergy.

The Resolution (RES 24-04) is before us.

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

RES 24-11 - Support for Worldwide Regionalization

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-11

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions. The Resolution is before us.

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

Connectional Ministries Programming - Erin Hawkins

Dr. Alyssa Fisher, Cal-Pac Director of Communications

Dr. Alyssa Fisher: I am here today to introduce our keynote speaker, Rev. Jenny Phillips, who is Director of Environmental Sustainability at Global Ministries. She pilots and integrates sustainability practices for agency operations and programs, including domestic and international disaster response, global health, and agriculture. She also works with faith communities on solar, energy efficiency, land use, waste management, and other programming. She is the co-convenor of the United Methodist Interagency Just and Equitable Net-Zero Coalition, and she serves on the boards of Creation Justice Ministries and Footprint Project. Jenny has a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and a BA in Communications from the University of Washington, and she is based in Decatur, Georgia.

Rev. Phillips's talk today is entitled, "We Can Do Something About This - Faith and Action For the Climate Crisis." Please help me welcome her to the stage.

We Can Do Something About This! - Rev. Jenny Phillips, Director of Environmental Sustainability
Global Ministries

Rev. Phillips: I am so happy to be here with you today. I want to bring greetings from Roland Fernandes, who is the General Secretary of Global Ministries and the Executive Director of UMCORE. I also want to note how happy I am to be in the home conference of my colleague, the Rev. Dr. Judy Chung, who is the Director of Missionary Services at Global Ministries.

I am so excited to be here. We are going to cover some amazing ground today. We are going to talk about the relationship between God, Creation, and us; we are going to talk about the deep spiritual roots of the environmental crisis; we are going to learn how climate change works and what's happening now; the grief many of us feel in the face of environmental collapse, and tools that the Church can use right now to help make a difference in the face of an overwhelming, beyond the human scale, crisis.

We are going to start with our Creation story. We know from the Bible about how this creation began: A formless void with wind sweeping over the water. It began with weather, and with water. God created a great

light in the sky, the Sun, which we take for granted. Then God created a dome, which I like to think is our atmosphere. God created vegetation, fruits, creatures, flora and fauna – and us, the humans. God has this abundant creation of which humans are a part, and He tells the humans to care for the Creation. United Methodist author Bill McKibben is known to say that when we think of the many things God has told us to do, we have already covered the part of establishing dominion over the Earth, and there are other things that we should now focus on. When the first humans ate from the tree that God forbade them to eat from, they crossed a boundary for how humans are to use creation.

This most ancient story about who we are is a story about exceeding the boundaries God has set for creation. It is a story about overconsumption. We consume that which we already have an abundance of, that which we do not need and that we are warned not to take. When we think about the climate crisis, which is rooted in a consumption crisis, I think it is important for people in faith to recognize that this is not a new problem. It is a spiritual problem about how the relationship that was broken between God and humans is a relationship between God, humans, and all of creation.

This is where we start. We over consume, and our modes of modern consumption happen to also be things that we do when we are trying to produce and consume the things that emit fossil fuels into the atmosphere. I want to tell you how climate change works: the more gas we fill the atmosphere with, the more heat energy gets trapped near the surface of the earth, and that impacts how our weather systems move. The ten hottest years on record have been the last ten years. The climate-oriented slides that I am showing you today are from the Climate Reality Project, a non-profit created by former Vice President Al Gore, who trained me to share about climate change. Each time I update the information of these slides, this information becomes more alarming, and I can see it worsening in real time.

It is easy to pretend that we are self-made; that those who have less deserve less because they did not work as hard, or that we deserve more because we work harder. That takes a lot of cognitive dissonance. I want you to know that the life I have enjoyed is built on the backs of Indigenous peoples who have stewarded the land and its resources for thousands of years, before colonizers stole and exploited it. It is built on the lives of African peoples who were enslaved and brought to the United States, who built infrastructure and engaged in agriculture, and did all of the labor required to make this country what it is now. It is built on the backs of South American peoples and Mexican peoples who grew and picked the healthy food that I have enjoyed for my whole life, and who were involved in the construction of every home I have ever lived in and were surely underpaid for all of it.

The life I have enjoyed is also thanks to the portable energy source that is fossil fuels. What a life I have had. What luxury I have had. I have had so many needs met thanks to the fossil fuel industry, and to all who have lived and died to build and maintain that infrastructure to get that energy to me. And on the backs of those who have died as a result of being impacted by the emissions that me and my family have generated over decades. I have to say this out loud. I have to say it all the time. I have to tell you I flew here to talk to you about all of this. It doesn't make sense unless somehow this manifests in more action, and that's my prayer today. But I also have to name that I made that choice and the choices I make every day, because if we can't tolerate the discomfort of naming it as a starting point, when and how are we going to get there?

In the Barbie movie, America Ferrera's character talks about the cognitive dissonance it takes to be a woman. It is similar, I think, to the cognitive dissonance of living in a world and participating without many options in an economy driven by the fossil fuel industry. If you thought about everything you do in a day that is powered by the fossil fuel industry, you kind of have to engage in some cognitive dissonance to get through

the day. Maybe we can be a people who can tolerate the discomfort of stepping out of that dissonance sometimes and telling the truth about it. Friends, it takes all of us. We all need to step in. There is no more waiting for more leadership-oriented people than we are to come along. We are the leaders. God is calling us.

Now I would like to talk about manifestations of feelings, often grief. I was tempted to do the stages of grief in a Barbie theme, but when I thought about it, I realized that was just a way to avoid my own grief. Now to get into the stages of grief, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross developed five stages, which weren't created around our response to the climate crisis, but I find that they resonate.

Denial is a protective response.

Anger comes out in multiple ways. We get angry and we point blame, because it's hard for us to wrap our heads around it.

Bargaining. This comes out in the ways that we invent new ways to be sustainable, and we hope that these acts will collectively reverse the damage we've done. Certainly, we do need to take action individually and collectively, but we tend to make these deals in our lives that we'll change our ways, but not too much.

Hopelessness, yes. That's all I'm going to say on that.

Acceptance. This is not the part where we give up. What I'm talking about is the open-eyed acceptance that this is happening, we will need to change, we are called to lead, we don't know what to do, but we're going to work on it together.

Making meaning is a sixth stage from David Kessler, who worked with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, about what it looks like to engage meaningfully with loss and grief.

I want those of you in-person to discuss with those close with you about a stage of grief that resonates with you at this time.

Now we are going to take a whirlwind tour of tools that are available for the Church right now to engage:

- The IEA has determined that we have all the technology we need to reduce emissions 50% by 2030.
- Global Ministries and 11 other agencies have committed to net-zero, as have the Council of Bishops and there was also legislation about this at the General Conference as well. Once the whole world does this, global emissions will stop increasing in as soon as three to five years.
- Solar energy
- Batteries, which through the Inflation Reduction Act, which gives you a direct payment for solar and batteries for your church or non-profit, are becoming cheaper.
- EV chargers, and now, electric vehicles that act as generators.
- Atmospheric water generators, which turn humidity and bad weather conditions into drinking water, which will reduce plastic water bottle use during disasters.
- Trailers, which allow us to put all of these tools on wheels and go where the need is.
- Smart thermostats that allow us to save electricity.
- Heat pumps

Next, we are going to look at the FEMA National Risk Index. This map calculates risk based on potential annual loss for natural disaster, social vulnerability, and community resilience. For us, it serves as a ministry map. This is where we see where there is risk, vulnerability, and need, and we can target our resources there to make sure that we can be a part of helping those communities. Here in Los Angeles, we have a lot of risk associated with natural disasters – earthquakes, fires, floods, landslides. The social vulnerability in Los Angeles County is very high, and the community resilience is low. I'm curious about the communities with more resilience: Who lives there, and what are your thoughts on why they are more resilient? What are the ministry opportunities in places where people are most vulnerable?

Looking at Hawaii, we see more vulnerability on the big island and less vulnerability on outer islands. There are also certain islands with higher resilience. Thinking about why that might be, I can't help but wonder if more investments have been made because of the higher rates of tourism in certain areas. I'm also hearing from some of you that it is because more people live on those islands. This is why we need discussion, and I want to encourage you all to use this map to look at where you are, neighboring areas, and to look at what is going on and think about planning.

Next, we have the Global Ministries Earthkeepers program, a training program for United Methodists who want to take action. The program allows you to take your ideas and put them into action. The next training will be October 3-6, 2024, in Saint Paul, Minnesota and Baltimore, Maryland. We also do online training, and for more information you can visit umcmmission.org/earthkeepers.

I'd like to mention the Justice and Compassion Ministries, directed by Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes. You are going to be seeing a Resolution, if you haven't already, to be good stewards of creation. There is also a Creation Care toolkit that is available on the Cal Pac Conference website now. Rev. Dr. Barnes has been investigating grants to install EV charging stations, particularly in rural and under-served urban areas. There is a deal with a solar company with good pricing for churches and members with incentives, and there will be some work involved in helping churches lessen their carbon footprint.

You all have some great ministry happening and I suspect they could use some more help. I have noticed that there is a particular power in a Creation Care ministry team that has a combination of people with passion and scientific knowledge, as well as social interest and engineering expertise. I also think it's great when you are planning your church Green Team if you have people from the Finance Committee, and someone from the Trustees, and people from the Justice and Mission areas. This stuff hits every part of our lives and every part of the Church, so we need people from every type of leadership setting to be part of the solution.

The last thing I will share is that God is not calling us back to the Garden. God is calling us to a new vision.

Revelation 22:1-2, "Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

This is a vision of integration of the natural world and the built environment. We do not have to tear it out, nor do we have to shut it down. We have to figure out how to build this integrated world where all are flourishing, and we are engaged in life, ministry, and community with one another. God bless you as you engage in this important work.

Retirement Videos - Media Team

Rev. Walter Dilg
Rev. John Fanestil

Instructions and Closing Prayer - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Franks

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We wish to thank our ASL interpreters for their service. As we go to lunch, I invite the Rev. Brian Parcel to give us an update on Glenda, the person who fell yesterday. He is her pastor.

Rev. Brian Parcel: I am the pastor at First Chula Vista and Glenda's pastor. She is in the hospital and is being picked up by family and going home today. When she fell yesterday, she dislocated her shoulder and broke a bone in her arm. She wished me, on her behalf, to thank the people who cared for her yesterday before the paramedics arrived. She also apologized for causing the session to go long! Glenda is a retired music educator and her faith is wrapped up in music. She said that during the intense pain she was experiencing, the only comfort she felt was when she heard the body singing. We will continue to pray for Glenda.

Rev. Parcel offered the blessing for lunch.

**40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Session 3
2:00 pm (PDT)**

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

We call to order the third session of this Annual Conference. Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered an opening prayer.

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, Assistant Conference Secretary

Remember to get your parking validated for those who are not staying at the hotel.

For voting - please use today's email from Jennifer on Thursday and click on the vPoll link.

There are quite a few languages available for those who wish to use the Translation services.

Turn to page 5 of the conference participants guide - it offers guidance for those coming to the microphones. State your name, slowly and clearly, clergy or laity, and what church you are from. It really helps the UM Daily!

A Flourishing Annual Conference - Erin Hawkins, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries and Dr. Alyssa Fisher, Director of Communications

Dr. Alyssa Fisher, Director of Communications, welcomed the body to the afternoon panel, which will discuss the role of the Annual Conference in ensuring a flourishing future. She then introduced the members of the panel:

Rev. George Hooper, Community UMC of Huntington Beach and member of the CFA

Christy Denner, CPA, Interim Treasurer

Erin Hawkins, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries

Rev. John Woodall, President and CEO of the California-Pacific United Methodist Foundation

Rev. Molly Vetter, Pastor of Westwood UMC, Conference Council on Finance & Administration

Dr. Fisher: I said this panel was about the role of the Annual Conference in ensuring a flourishing future. You may have realized by who is with me that we will mostly be talking about money today.

You heard in Christy's report and Molly's report about the process of building a bridge to the future of our finance operations, especially during a time of transition in our Conference. I thought that it may be helpful to start with what's happened over the past year. I would love to hear from George if he can share with us what's happened in the past year, what this transition means, and what has changed since the last Annual Conference to today.

Rev. Hooper: Actually, it will be a little further back than just one year. As most of you know, in previous years, we have been worried about finances, so we have created a budget process that is different from what you had talked about. We have created a budget process that started with a bottom line number, and then asked, "What are we going to do with that amount of money?" That's how we structured it. When we came to budget hearings two years ago, my friends on the Connectional table and the Resource EMT called me up because I'm on the CFA and said, "Aren't we supposed to be involved somehow other than just attending a meeting?" Then we got to the CFA meeting after the budget had been presented, and we literally had a 5-minute meeting to approve the budget.

There was no involvement and it certainly wasn't vision-based. It was bottom line, crisis-based. So when Bishop Dottie got to the budget hearing we were having and we were not prepared to have this conversation, we decided last year that we are not going to do it that way anymore. We are going to do vision-based budgeting, and we're going to start with the Ministry.

Erin, at last year's Annual Conference, you pulled together a wonderful way of helping us start the process of finding out who we are, what our vision is, who we want to be, and what we want to do, and using that as the starting point. But the problem wasn't just with that process that we had created. There were deeper, systemic issues within the Conference. When Bishop Dottie came here, it was clear, so she knew she had to bring in some folks to help.

She brought in a couple of folks from the General Council on Finance and Administration – when I say, "a couple of folks," I mean the person who is the CEO of the Denomination, the person who is the HR head of the Denomination. They came in to talk, listen, and interview staff and leaders, and they spent a lot of time looking at our process and system, and came back with preliminary responses. There were conversations that were held with the staff and leaders to say, "Okay, what is working and what's not?"

They took that information and processed it some more, then brought in the Chair of the CFA, Howard Hudson, and the Chair of the Staff Relations Committee, myself, because we are the non-staff people who would then be implementing the recommendations they made. So this past year, we have been working to implement the recommendations of the GCFA audit.

It's not window-dressing that we are talking about here. There were systemic issues and we have been making systemic changes. We arrive now at the point where even more broadly, as an Annual Conference, how we will do this.

Christy, you have gotten us to the point where, when you're talking about the bridge and building that budget, it aligns with our vision. So we need to take that step back and ask what our vision is and why we are here. That brings us to where we are at this moment.

Dr. Fisher: Thank you so much. So where are we now as an Annual Conference? For those of you on the stage, you work in various places of ministry, what do you see as the key realities that we must face as a Conference, and what do you see as the work of the ministries you lead in addressing these realities? I'm going to ask Erin to start first.

Ms. Hawkins: When I started here as your Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, we were in the midst of the pandemic. We were really in a time of trying to figure out how to support, equip, and encourage churches that were in the middle of trying to figure out how to navigate waters that we have never swum in before. So much of what we did was crisis mode, finding ways to enable ministries. Slowly, things began to change, we started worshiping again in-person, even though we knew that we were not the same coming back as we were when we left. The need to think about ministry in new ways was a reality for many of us.

The Connectional Ministries staff, which was still under realignment, were also in a process of discernment. The reality is that we are about a year into figuring out how to support local churches in doing the work of ministry in a way that is sustainable and forward-thinking. The reality is we have many churches that are finding their way and doing incredible things. Last night, for those who participated in the Dreaming Session, we heard wonderful stories of churches that are feeding hundreds and thousands of people, that are building resources and doing ministry for young people.

There are a lot of great things going on in our congregations, and there are a lot of congregations that are really just trying to hold on. They are hoping there is someone, somewhere, who can hear and feel their pain, and that they have a Conference that is willing to walk through them as they don't know what their future is.

There are some emergent realities around the ability to sustain ministry financially that are different from what we've experienced in the past. We in Connectional Ministries are figuring out how to navigate some of these administrative waters. We have to be strategic about offering the types of resources that actually meet the needs of where you are. We can only do that by being in more relationship with local churches. In addition to whatever work we do in local churches, we have covenanted to be more present.

We are all in the process of figuring things out, and figuring out what the future is asking of us. If we want to grow younger, we need to have new forms of ministry, new ways of reaching. The same model that will

work for one church will not work for another. We have to go and be present. We need to reimagine ministry altogether. We need to walk alongside local churches as a primary place where disciples are made.

Dr. Fisher: Thank you, Erin. Maybe Molly and George can speak about the realities you are facing as ministering to local churches.

Rev. Vetter: I was just thinking as you were talking, Erin, we need to do more work to get younger voices in leadership. I appreciate the way that you frame Connectional ministries, helping us see that it's more about the relationships and interrelationships. I value that the connection in our Annual Conference means that myself and my church in Westwood get to claim participation in what's happening in the churches in, for example, Jacumba and El Centro, where migrants coming across the border are being met with compassion and love. I value the reality that we're in actual communities and neighborhoods means that we're present and doing ministry that needs to happen in so many places. Innovation really happens at that local level.

During the pandemic, we were all trying at the same time to make that innovation and that change, and most of us were way outside of our depth with new technologies that were uncomfortable. I think that was an interesting test case of urgency, but that kind of innovation always starts from the local level because our ministries only have integrity when there are actual people meeting the actual needs of our neighbors. The Annual Conference's purpose is not so that some higher level of the Church looks good, but so that the Church is flourishing when it's happening in all of those places. That can't happen until it's in all of our local churches. Conference helps feed, support, sustain, encourage, commiserate with the places where that ministry is happening.

Rev. Hooper: I like to garden, and one of the things you recognize when you garden is that you are not just putting one plant in one place and expecting it to grow. You need to know what the environment is, you need to know what is meant to grow there. Not only that, you don't have just one plant. You create an ecosystem that is there because they feed off one another. We've been having conversations about what the Church has gone through at the General Conference – the congregation, I think, that we're serving, weren't just congregations who were saying no to leaving. I hear congregations saying yes to staying and yes to being Connectional. This wasn't just a debate we've been having about how we welcome people, but it was really about if we are a Connectional Church, or if we're trying to do it on our own. You see in our Conference a lot of congregations that are asking what their strengths are, and what they bring to the whole. We're creating ecosystems.

I'm going to call out Brian Tipton, who has been helping and coming in as our Connectional teaching pastor at Community UMC in Huntington Beach, which has a wonderful tradition of trying things out. We already have that practice of experimenting, which is what we're doing with Messy Church, and thinking of how we can apply what works on Saturday evening to Sunday morning. So we're looking with four congregations down in Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and Huntington Beach, to figure out how to create this ecosystem and how we can leverage what our resources are – including our property, as I'm sure we'll be talking about. We can't just keep doing what we've been doing forever and expect it to work in this day and age. How can we truly work together? How can we create this ecosystem so we can flourish in our garden?

I'm also supposed to talk about the fact that you and all of the congregations are the ones who are the Annual Conference. Sometimes, we think about leadership as being cut off and distant, but almost all of the folks who are on the staff of the Conference are connected with a worshipping community in some way. Everybody on CFA, for instance, is connected with a worshipping community in some way. So there are

places where we have that information come in together, and as Erin's talking about the Connectional Table, we're reimagining being that kind of place where this visioning can come together.

I am going to share with you that I was looking forward to this being my last Annual Conference after 20 years on and off of working with HR in some format – and God bless you, Jen Hanson, for putting up with me for 20 years. I got a phone call. I'm changing teams, going from CFA – and I know we're all on the same team – to being Chair of the Connectional Table. So thanks, Erin.

Dr. Fisher: Thank you so much. John, I would love to hear about how this echoes the themes that you've been seeing in the Foundation, and if there are other realities that we haven't brought up yet.

Rev. Woodall: I'd like to start by asking a question: How many of us here today were involved in a United Methodist Church in 1985? And how many of us here today were in Redlands in June of 1985? I know there's some of us here.

The reason I picked 1985 is that it was the first year of our California-Pacific Conference. That was the year some of us came into probationary membership – I remember that day quite well, 39 years ago. Also that year, if we were to look at statistics, we'd know that in this country, 57 cents of every philanthropic dollar given went to religion. That means it went to the local Church, to the Mosque, to the Synagogue. In 2022, which is around the most current data, 27 cents of every dollar of every philanthropic dollar given went to religion. And that, folks, is why we're under stress, and such stress when it comes to resourcing ministry. Many of you have heard me say before that the average of American giving over that period hasn't changed. Americans have continued to give at the same rate – it's just that they now choose to give to different places. What is so hard for us to understand as the beloved Community, is that our very own people are choosing to give other places than to our churches. Until we come to that realization, it's going to be difficult for us to flourish. I believe that we can flourish, and as I travel around the Annual Conference, I see places that are flourishing. I talk to pastors that are telling me that the giving in the past 2 years has been better than ever before. I know it can happen, but in order for it to happen, it's requiring us to take on a different modality of how we finance ministry.

One of the things I like to talk about of the work I do at the Foundation is that we need to let go of our attitudes about money, and we need to start thinking about money as just a neutral resource. We have added so much baggage to this concept of money over the years that there's a lot of reeducating we need to do with ourselves in regard to this if we're going to be able to get to that place of flourishing. One of the first things that we have to look at is that our job as leaders in the beloved Community is that we're going to have to do more work, first of all, at developing multiple revenue sources in order to fund ministry in the local Church. I just got data this week from the Lake Institute On Faith and Giving, and what startled me to see is that 77% of the households who give to religion give gifts of \$5,000 or less. That means if you have a \$100,000 budget at your church, and I know very few churches that can survive on that anymore, you have to have at least 20 households giving an average of \$5,000 to get there. When I look at statistics among so many of our churches, we've got some real challenges ahead of us. Households that give \$10,000 or more only account for 9% of the giving units in churches across the country.

Folks, I said it last year, and I'll say it again: If the only way we finance ministry is through the annual campaign, we are doomed. Creating a culture of generosity and stewardship is essential for year-round work. This is one of the things I'm excited to do with the Foundation. We can go out and train others on how to

create development teams in your congregations or in your district so that you have the same skills that every other non-profit organization out there has.

I'm excited to say that when I came here in 2019, we were managing \$53 million. We are now managing \$86 million for the Annual Conference, and we're thrilled to be doing that for you. The Foundation, since 2020, has given out \$900,000 in grants, ministry grants, and scholarships. The Foundation has existed for over 80 years to invest back into you and to enable ministry to happen. The beauty of being in this place that we're in now post-pandemic is that we're happy to come to you to help you have these conversations and do this resourcing. The resources are there for you to take advantage of. I'm optimistic and I am hopeful because I see where ministry is flourishing and where people find the resources to do this critically important work.

These are challenging times to finance ministry, but I honestly believe that where the Spirit is present, we can do it.

Christy Drenner: I was just going to say that I met with John the second day I was here and to have a resource like this in the Conference and not be fully utilizing it is sad. To be able to have a resource like this is amazing, and those of you who have spent thousands of dollars on outside consulting firms and capital campaigns know the value of this work. Piggybacking on the statistics that John was talking about, I took a look at the past five years of available statistics and it aligns pretty well with what John was saying. Across the Annual Conference, we've seen a 0% increase or decline in the giving over the last five years, and it's good that we're not dropping, but not good that we're not growing. These are on specific line items so it doesn't include capital gifts. The total amount of membership has gone down 13%, so we're receiving the same amount of money from 13% less of the population. And we all know, the last statistic I'm going to share is operating expenses, which is what the local church is spending on the budget, has increased by 19% over the last five years. So, a lot of the things that John highlighted – ways to find alternative revenue sources, being creative about how we do our capital campaigns or our normal stewardship campaigns – will be critical in this next season. One of the things I mentioned this morning is, what is the capacity of the local church for apportionments? Because just like the local church can't rely solely on donations, the Annual Conference cannot rely solely on apportionments moving forward as we try to build a sustainable budget.

Dr. Fisher: Thank you. We're trying to begin a dialogue about how we can work toward greater sustainability, equity, and transparency as we're aligning our ministry, our money, the local congregations, and our Conference. The only thing missing from the conversation is all of you, so we're going to display some questions for all of you to discuss amongst yourselves for the next seven minutes.

Discussion Questions

What realities are you dealing with in your church that are signs that change is needed?

What kind of things do you need in the Local Church to live into this new reality?

Where can we be in mission together because no one church could do it alone?

Dr. Fisher: I hope that you all had a fruitful discussion. We would love for you all to discuss the conversations you've been having with us, because we're looking forward to bringing you in on this conversation. I just have two more things that I'd like to share with you.

We would like you all to continue having these discussions in your local churches. In the coming weeks, we are going to be providing you all with resources to have this or a similar conversation at your local churches, led by a pastor or your congregational delegate to this Annual Conference.

Erin and Christy, is there anything else we can expect as we move toward this special-called session in October?

Christy Drenner: Just to follow up what Erin said, please expect to participate in this process. We want to make sure that voices are heard, priorities are understood, and that everyone feels they are a part of the process. Please turn in information early and often.

Rev. Hooper: Money is a resource. People are also a resource that we absolutely rely on. When you look at the Nominating report, we had a tough year. I see a lot of vacancies there. We're looking for you [the people] to stand up. Don't just wait for the phone to ring, or the email to come, but get involved. Lead. You're a city on a hill.

Rev. Vetter: A leadership-oriented Barbie.

Erin Hawkins: The last thing that I will say is that part of this work is to help us get clear about what the priorities and values are that will help us move ministry into the future. If we have a finite set of resources at this moment, understanding that we can do things to grow our pool of resources – including people – then what should we be investing in? We need to know what those priorities are, we need bold and provocative proposals about how we might direct or redirect our resources so we can flourish together in the future.

Dr. Fisher: Thank you so much to our panelists, and thank you all for participating today. We're going to take a short break to reset the stage.

Legislation - Rev. Lea Booth, Legislative Chair

RES 24-02 - Resolution to Declare Gun Violence a Public Health Emergency

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-02

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. Rhodes: We received an email from Blake in Hawaii and he informed us that he has withdrawn his amendment.

Felita Patterson, Laity, Los Altos UMC: I am speaking in favor. I am a retired school nurse, and a retired professor of epidemiology. When you hear about gun violence, most of the time we only hear about them on the news. We think of active shooters, but we don't think about children at school who commit suicide. When I was working in the school district, there were so many students who suicided because of grades, afraid of disappointing parents, they couldn't get into college, or their girlfriend or boyfriend broke up with them. There are many issues with violence and children. There were many nights when after I got home, I received a phone call from my director, who told me to meet at the school because a student committed suicide. In one week, we had three students suicide at the same school site. This is something that we need to consider.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-05 - Solidarity with Filipino People

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-05.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Sharon McCart, Deacon, University Methodist in Irvine, Laity, Chair of Disability Ministries: I speak in favor of this motion. Since 2017, I have made six trips to the Philippines and learned a lot about the human rights violations there. I stand in solidarity with the Filipino people. In the past few years, there have been well over 30,000 extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and last time I went, I was privileged to meet Rev. Glofie Baluntong, who has been red-tagged and placed under arrest for attempted murder on the same date and time she was conducting a funeral for a church member. She now lives in fear of her life and I would like to read something she said at an event I was at last fall. Rev. Glofie said, "I am afraid for my life, my family, my church members. I missed church service and ministerial and social work in the Province. I have many 'what ifs.' What if I just stopped serving, and just pray and worship? What if I just do what they tell me to do? What if I just keep quiet? How about those who cannot speak and stand for themselves? I can always opt to fear, to flee, to freeze. But the solidarity of church people, and the basic masses, and the continuing quest for peace based on justice will always be a strength – not to be passive and keep quiet, but to fight and live God's mandate." There are many people in the Philippines who have been unjustly charged and placed in prison for long periods of time without a hearing. I urge you all to support the people of the Philippines and support them in their time of need.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That is a speech in favor. Do we have any others who would like to speak to this? Seeing, none, please get ready to vote.

The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-06 - Trafficked Workers from the Philippines

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-06.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. Rick Uhls, Clergy, Shepherd of the Hills: The wifi signal at my table is intermittent and coming in and out and most of us haven't been able to vote because it doesn't refresh in time. Is there anything we can do about that or is it just my table that is a bit wonky?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are getting someone to look at that. I will also slow down my part so you can refresh. Please let me know if it is not working moving forward.

Rev. Sandie Richards, Clergy, Cal-Nevada, Lodi First: This is a very important and dear to my heart Resolution. It replaces one which has expired. This is about trafficked Filipino workers. Imagine if your government trafficked you but you had no choice because there wasn't any employment worthwhile in your own village or home. So what the Filipino people do is that they become overseas workers and they leave their families behind to be raised by relatives. And they go into sometimes dangerous work or construction work or all over the globe, nannies, housekeeping and all types of things. They are often exploited and left without resources to defend themselves. Sometimes they are redirected into other companies and their Visas and passports are taken. I'm in favor of this and should do all in our power to resist this exploitation and when anyone sees someone working hard in the fields or working hard taking care of someone's children, those people may have left their families behind to work for us. It's not just overseas. We are overseas from the Philippines and we have many people here doing that work. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That's a speech in favor.

Jack Draper, Oxnard, St. Paul's UMC: I have a question. The last phrase in the Resolution says "end remittances from overseas workers." My concern is that legitimate earnings are mainstays of many families in the Philippines or other countries, and I am concerned that we will be possibly jeopardizing sustaining income for legitimate work that is a living wage or whatever by having that phrase in there. So I am requesting an amendment to eliminate that phrase that says, "ending remittances of overseas workers," because it encompasses everything, legitimate work as well as trafficked work, and people rely on that from workers that are working legitimately and paying taxes. Are we throwing the baby out with the bathwater?

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank: Are you making an amendment?

Jack Draper: I suggest that the last phrase be deleted from the first part of the Resolution.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Can you tell us which part of that phrase you want to remove?

Jack Draper: The phrase "and working to end reliance on remittances from overseas workers." Line 4, page 73.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Okay. The amendment to the petition is before you. Is it understood? First, we need a second. I hear a second. Does anyone else want to speak to the amendment?

Rev. Sandie Richards, Clergy, Cal-Nevada, Lodi First: I speak against this amendment because it's not saying to end remittances, it's saying to end reliance on remittances. The nuance is that the Philippine government relies on these remittances and charges a huge amount of money to the people overseas. The Filipino people also rely on remittances because there are no decent jobs where people live. The patrimony of the Philippines by the way of their natural resources are being stolen and robbed just like we heard about in the climate presentation. There is plenty in the Philippines for people to stay home and work and have a good life. Because of exploitation and militarism and a host of other "isms," it is not possible. So we would like to end reliance on remittances, not remittances themselves. Thank you.

Rev. Adiel DePano, Clergy, Santa Ana UMC: I am struggling with the amendment, but I am speaking in agreement. There might be unintended consequences if we register our support for ending reliance on overseas remittances. This is one revenue stream that the Philippine government depends on. Of course there are abuses, I don't dispute that, but a lot of families do rely on members of the family that they pool their resources to send overseas to bring families above poverty level. I am worried about unintended consequences if we register our support for ending reliance on overseas remittances. I think this is the Philippine narrative for years to come until we develop the economic ability to support ourselves without our people going elsewhere to insure that their families feed children, educate them, and the family lives an economically sustainable life.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Rev. DePano, are you speaking for or against this amendment?

Rev. DePano: I think in favor.

Rev. Frank Wulf, clergy, Echo Park UMC: Our congregation consists of about one-third of the people who are from the Philippines. For the last seven years, I have housed a trafficked worker in my house. In the

Philippines, he was a structural engineer, college educated. But in order to support his family, he took a job which was supposed to be in a hotel in Florida, but ended up being imprisoned in a care center in Phoenix, Arizona. His passport was stolen from him, his wages were taken from him. He was able to send very little money back to the Philippines. The reason I want to speak against this amendment is because of the word “reliance.” There is no reason why Filipinos should have to come to the United States or anywhere else in order to support themselves. There is no reason why the government of the Philippines should need to depend on remittances in order to balance its budget. We need to work together as a church, as a society, to create a different kind of economic reality in the Philippines so the people who want to stay home with their families can stay home with their families. To earn a decent living in their own country. This is not calling for an end to remittances, but it is saying we need to work to that point where people don’t have to send remittances home for economic stability, for their family, their community, their nation. Thank you,

Mary Andrea Miller, Laity, Westwood UMC: I’m speaking against the amendment not because I don’t think the language should be edited, but because I don’t think removing the phrase in its entirety is the way we want to go. I was very confused by the word “reliance” because I wasn’t sure whose reliance was intended. From my understanding after the comments, I would suspect that we might be in favor of reducing or removing the Philippine government’s reliance on remittances, rather than individual families, but I’m not sure.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This is a speech against the amendment.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes, Clergy: Is this an appropriate time to speak to an amendment to the amendment? I’ve always wanted to say that. What I would like to propose is rather than striking out that language, we replace it with language which suggests that we work at developing systems and structures that end the Philippine government’s reliance on remittances.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Is there a second? There is a second. Would you like to speak to that?

Rev. Dr. Barnes: I think that allows the language to remain, which is the intent, but it also gives us a task to do, which is to help people develop those systems there and answer our call to help us as Jesus did in breaking down the systems that are creating harm and to build new ones.

Jack Draper: In view of Denyse’s suggestion, I would withdraw the original amendment in favor of that being the only amendment.

Bishop: I believe that Rev. Dr. Denyse was asking for an amendment by substitution, is that what you were asking for, Denyse? Or do you want us to go back?

Jack Draper: She was amending the amendment. I withdraw in favor of substituting Denyse Barnes’s proposed amendment and speak in favor of the Substitution Amendment.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Rev. Dr. Barnes, would you please speak to the amendment again and bring it up so we can put it before the body.

Rev. Dr. Barnes: We would replace the language with: “Work at creating new systems which aim at ending the Philippine Government's reliance on remittances.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Do we all understand what this substitution amendment is?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The substitution amendment is before us

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

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This has passed, and now we are on the Resolution that has been amended, RES 24-06. The Resolution is now before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Dick Crawford, online: [Unintelligible]

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are having trouble hearing you. Please try to speak one more time. [Pause] We are still having trouble hearing you. Please try saying it again one more time. Please speak slower.

Rev. Cathie Capp: He said that the amendment made by Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes solved the issue, so he no longer needs to speak.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are still on the main motion. Does anyone else wish to speak to it?

Eric Schmitt, Clergy, Placenta UMC: I speak in favor of this motion. Most of you probably don't know that my wife is Filipino. We have had a number of family members come to the United States to live and work. A number of them have been economically trafficked. In one instance, they received payment by check, and had to return the funding in cash. This was for a government sponsored program. It happens with our very own friends and family in this Conference. I speak strongly in favor of this amended motion.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: What is on your screen is wrong. We are voting on the amended motion. Please hold on a moment while we correct this.

Rev. Rhodes: We are having trouble with the wifi. If you have your own wifi connection, please feel free to use it. If you are having trouble, please let us know. If we want to be inclusive, we have to use the same system for our online and our in person attendees.

Bishop: The Resolution as amended is before us.

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

RES 24-07 - Philippines Peace Talks

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-07.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Sandie Richards, Clergy, Cal-Nevada Conference: The civil war has been going on for decades. It started in 1969, the Philippine government has been dragging its feet in a peace process that was started by the Royal Norwegian Government in 1992. When Sharon McCart, Deaconess, referred to someone being "red tagged," that means that you are accused of being a communist and part of the National People's Army, a combatant against the Philippine government. It is used as a ruse to imprison pastors, nuns, missionaries and a host of other innocent people. We want to pressure the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines to come together and finish the peace process. They developed several aspects they would like to address, one of them has been passed, but that was many years ago. Now they are

on the second one. We want to support the Methodist Bishops of the Philippines and the missionaries and the people of good will who would like to see this ending.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was a speech in favor.

Rev. Adiel DePano, Clergy, Santa Ana UMC: I speak in favor of this resolution. I'm about to turn 64, and throughout my life, there has been this insurgency that dates back to the occupation of the Philippines by the Japanese. It has become a conflict that has deep economical and political roots. Military means will not end this insurgency. I plead with our Conference family to support this and be on the right side of the issue. It is a moral issue. Arms, bullets and missiles will not end it. It must be a political solution with real economic forms that will address the root causes of poverty that so many of our people are entrenched in.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a speech in favor. The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-09 - Support of LGBTQIA+ People

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-09.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Tracy Kunnish, Laity, Artesia Cerritos UMC: I move to amend the Resolution at line 8: "Celebrating annual LGBTQIA+ Sunday ..." I would move that we insert the word "encouraged" into the language. The language would read, "Congregations are encouraged to celebrate LGBTQIA Sunday, etc." I feel that to mandate an annual celebration further alienates our siblings who are struggling over the decisions made at the General Conference. I support those decisions that were made, but it was evident by the panel that Rev. Dr. Barnes had yesterday that some of our siblings are struggling with this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have someone else who wishes to speak to this.

Katherine Henry, Laity, La Cañada UMC: I am speaking in favor of this Resolution, in part because of another resolution that we haven't looked at together but that I have read ...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Are you speaking in favor?

Katherine Henry: I am speaking in favor of the amendment. I'm speaking as an LGBTQ person who rejoiced at the General Conference. I appreciate adding the language of encouragement rather than the implied mandatory nature of the current language because, as we will look at another resolution about the Big Table in Cal Pac, it just doesn't make sense for every single congregation to host or celebrate LGBTQ Sunday. It may not be authentic in every ministry context.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was a speech in favor of the amendment. Microphone 2.

Drew Patterson, Laity, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: Reading from line 8: "Celebrating an annual LGBTQIA+ Sunday... educating our faith communities about the complex history of Methodist involvement in struggles to secure civil and human rights." To me, this doesn't seem specific...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Drew, I need to interrupt you for a moment. Are you speaking to the amendment?

Drew Patterson: Yes, I'm getting to it. I'm noting that the language doesn't make the day specific to only LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Perhaps we could, instead of saying "encouraged," we could just change the name of the day to something like "Inclusion Sunday" so that it more closely matches what its purpose is. That way, everyone would be able to practice it instead of just churches that wanted to, and just focus on different areas.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Drew, I'm trying to see where we are. I believe you just spoke against the amendment.

Drew Patterson: I guess so. In favor of a different one.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: So that's against the amendment. You can come back and make another one after this one is done. Microphone 3.

Leslie Case, Laity, Grace UMC, Long Beach: I suggest voting against the amendment because I don't think "celebrate" means we have to turn the whole service over to it. It means we have to acknowledge the day and I think that's a great starting point for educating and informing.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That is a speech against. We have two speeches in favor and two speeches against. Microphone 1.

Rev. Sunny Ahn, Clergy: I am speaking in favor of the amendment. As a person brought up in a Korean Church, an ethnic minority church, language matters. Adding the word "encouraging" gives room for people to pick and choose, instead of mandating that we have to celebrate. As we have heard many times from our ethnic minority clergy and laity in our midst, that some churches are struggling with the [General Conference] decision. In order to enlarge the table, and include all different opinions, I think that just adding the "encouraging" word in the statement, gives them a peaceful mind for them to be honored at the table. I would like to speak for the amendment.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: There are three in favor and two against the amendment to the Resolution. The Amendment to the Resolution is before us.

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

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Now we are going to go back to the motion as amended. Would anyone like to speak to this?

Lisa Scott, Laity, Glendora UMC: I have a question: On PR 77, line 19, "Include pronouns in all event registration documents, and place them on all name badges at these events." Is this referring strictly to Cal-Pac events or all events at all local churches? Which events are they talking about?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This is a question for Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: Thank you for the question. The intent is yes, for all events. Local church and Conference.

Bishop: Are we ready to vote? There are no more speakers. The amended Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-10 - Covenant to be Good Stewards of Creation

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-10.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions. The Resolution is before us.

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

REC 24-05 - Strategic Plan for Ministries with Hispanics - Capital Campaign

Rev. Booth moved REC 24-05

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Ana-Haydée Urda, Laity, Huntington Park UMC, Chair of the Conference Hispanic Committee: I come before you to request referral of this Recommendation back to the Committee. We made the mistake of not having a conversation with CFA about the capital campaign before bringing it back to the Annual Conference. We do not have a staff person to do the work that needs to be done. We want to take this Recommendation back, talk to the CFA, and come back to you at next year's Annual Conference with whatever decision we have then.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I believe this is a motion to refer. There is a second. Is there any discussion on this? The Motion to Refer this Recommendation is before us.

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

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Point of privilege. Thank you for the work you have put into this and thank you for your referral.

Point of Order: It appears to be a different number on the voting system.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: It has been noted and will be checked out.

Rev. Lea Booth: You voted on the correct number. It was a Recommendation, not a Resolution.

RULE 24-01 - Additional Nominations

Rev. Booth moved RULE 24-01

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions. The Rule is before us.

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

RULE 24-02 - Committee to Strengthen the Black Church (Rule c. Connectional Table (CT) Section 4(d)

Rev. Booth moved RULE 24-02.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: On line 22, page 80, where it says, "Church renewal, BMCR, and the Ebony Prophets," I would like to propose a change that says, "Church renewal, BMCR, Black Clergy Women, and the Ebony Prophets." Are you adding "Black Clergy Women? It was an oversight.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: So, "Black Clergy Women" is being added?

Rev. Dr. Barnes: Correct.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Is there a second?

Rev. Dr. Barnes: This was an oversight. It was always intended to be there and it was overlooked, unfortunately.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Microphone 2.

Drew Peterson: Hold on... If you do that, then the numbers won't add up. If you add the "Black Clergy Women," you will have 11 groups instead of 10. Are we proposing to change the 10 to 11 also?

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: I am more than happy with that change. Line 18 would reference 11. We would like to make an amendment to line 18, page 80, to change the number 10 to 11, and then on line 22, to add in "Black Clergy Women" after "BMCR" and before "the Ebony Prophets."

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Amendment to the Rule is before us.

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

Bishop: Now we move to the Motion as amended. The amended Rule is before us.

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

RULE 24-03 - Communications (Rule to be changed: VIII. Bodies Mandated by the BOD, E)

Rev. Booth moved RULE 24-03.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

There is an online question from Donna Peterson. We cannot hear her. It was for the previous legislation.

Jim Powell, Clergy, Newberry Park UMC: I was just on the Conference website looking for updates to legislation and it only scrolls down to the first paragraph. It could be that people cannot see all of it unless they look at the preliminary reports instead of the Conference website.

Rev. Rhodes: Let's look at it together. I pulled it up and I saw the whole Rule. I'll come down to you and you can show me what you're seeing.

The Rule is before us.

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

Jennifer Gutierrez, Clergy, appointed to CLUE: I wish a moment of privilege. Last year, I came before the Conference to speak about hotel contracts which came up, and we were staying in one of the hotels that was going to be struggling with their contract. Here is a brief update and celebration: We announced that there were 61 hotel contracts that were being renegotiated. All but 8 have been settled, which is a huge victory for those workers. We're talking about increased wages, pensions, healthcare, opportunities for growth and expansion to other hotels. It's an immediate \$5/hour increase for all of these workers, so it is a huge victory.

Thank you to all of you who have supported this. Thank you to those who showed up on the picket lines, and who wrote prayer cards. There are still 8 contracts to go, so we may be calling on you again. Thank you so much for your support.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for your work. I would also like to take a moment to say we invited him in, but he is dedicated to staying at the table he is monitoring outside, and that is Rev. Antonio Flores.

He is 95 years old, and is the oldest registered Elder to attend this Conference. He is monitoring the SIA Table - please go and greet him. Let him be overflowing with our love.

Terry Markovich, Laity, Hawaii: I would like to address our environment and say thank you to everyone who brought their own beverage cups and refills. We have to address the plastic solution. It takes each one of us to make this effort to reuse our beverage containers. When you buy things, try to avoid plastics. Plastics are part of the petroleum companies' efforts to make money. Since we are on an island, we are having problems with pollution. We encourage everyone to be more conscious of their purchase power.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for the reminder, especially as I have a plastic cup in front of me. I will try to do better. We are now going to go to retirement videos.

Retirement Videos - Media Team

Rev. John Farley

Rev. Patricia Farris

COSROW - Rev. Stephanie Rice

Greetings Bishop, Cabinet, and members and friends of the Annual Conference.

My name is Stephanie Rice. I am clergy currently serving as the Associate Pastor at Glendale First United Methodist Church. And I am here to present on behalf of your Cal-Pac Commission on the Status and Role of Women as one of the co-chairs.

I want to begin this presentation by talking a little bit about what CSRW is and how it came to be.

The history of CSRW actually begins in 1944 when Grace Bragg, the president of the Methodist Women's Division, released a report on the widespread discrimination of women in the *Discipline*, which the General Board of Global Ministries used to push for the full participation of women in the church. It took another 12 years after this report before women were granted full clergy rights by the Methodist General Conference in 1956. Women continued to advocate for themselves and seek to create an official commission that would work to ensure women were placed into church and denominational leadership, to advocate for clergywomen, and rooting out sexism in the church. It took almost 20 years before the Commission was officially established by the General Conference in 1972, and made permanent in 1976.

Since then, GCSRW, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, has continued its work in advocating for women in the church, educating the church on issues around gender, and challenging the church to continue to root out sexism and create equity in the UMC, all along the way facing obstacle after obstacle, while also finding allies and support.

Today, the *Book of Discipline* says, "The primary purpose of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women shall be to challenge the United Methodist Church, including its general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life."

And GCSRW states as part of the vision that “We value the full inclusion of women, especially those who are marginalized by society and by the church. We believe that we are called to be a prophetic voice for women, even as we work in a style that is collaborative and hospitable as we seek solutions.”

This year, with the support of our Bishop, Executive Director of Connectional Ministry Erin Hawkins, and Executive Director of Justice and Compassion Ministries, Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes, we are putting our Cal-Pac CSRW into full gear. Our current priorities are to request a salary study after July 1 to see the data on pay inequity among our clergy and then use that data to help create action items that can lead to systematic change. We are also working to disseminate and support Sexual Harassment Prevention training for all local churches and SPRCs to support both clergy and lay staff. We are here monitoring at this Annual Conference, which I will share more about on Saturday. And we are working to partner with other commissions and groups to make sure this work we do is intersectional.

In doing this work, we stand on the shoulders of all those who came before us to get us to this point. In Cal-Pac we know and have known many of those people who have been about this work. Recently, we lost one of those trailblazers, Rev. Nan Self.

I'd like to read a statement from Dawn Wiggins Hare, General Secretary of GCSRW:

“We remember the Rev. Nancy Grissom Self, who, along with Judith Leaming-Elmer, served as the first secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. It was during the General Conference in 1972 in Cleveland, Ohio, that GCSRW was organized. From its inception, the Commission aimed for a different style of leadership and decision-making, they intended to work by consensus and refusing to conform to church bureaucracy they opted for two equal staff heads to lead the Commission.

Self worked tirelessly to highlight the importance of acknowledging women as competent and serious leaders. She reiterated that women have a place at all levels of leadership within the church, advocating for equal pay and raising awareness about sexual misconduct within the church.

In 1974, they developed a regional training event co-sponsored with the Women's Division, led the first Consultation of Ordained Women, and published a curriculum on the changing lifestyles of women and men in the church.

Under Self's leadership, the Commission laid the groundwork for the 1992 petition urging the United Methodist Church to address sexual harassment. This petition called on the church to develop specific plans to eliminate sexual harassment throughout the denomination, committing to working with other church bodies to create educational resources and solution. The theme that year was “Common Threads: Our Pain, Our Faith, Our Vision,” these were regional training events designed to foster networking opportunities in preparation for General Conference.

Today, GCSRW stands on the shoulders of those who went before us, leading conversations and challenging the church for full equity in all ministry levels of the United Methodist Church. Thanks to Nancy Grissom Self and countless others, fifty years later we are humbled by our legacy.

Ever Forward on the Journey!
We proclaim that life is a journey, not a destination,
and that we live in the midst of promises fulfilled.

This awareness calls us to be accountable to the one who gives us life.

The promise reminds us that all we need to live is freely given to us.

This journey often takes us to the wilderness, where we receive manna and water and discover what it means to be the children of God.

It is a journey we never take alone, for we know that the one who made the promise will keep the faith.

Hallelujah! Amen!

(This was affirmed in the worship service of the consultation of clergywomen in Dallas, January 2, 1979.)

Rev. Self fulfilled her calling to ministry, serving as the first secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and an Ordained Elder in the California Pacific Annual Conference. We echo her sentiment: ‘I have lived some magic moments...’”

I had the privilege of getting to meet and speak with Rev. Self, as well as working for Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers, who also was part of creating and leading GCSRW.

I also come from, not just a long line of Methodist clergymen, but also a long line of Methodist women who were denied full participation in the church, who were denied recognition of their call to ministry, even almost 30 years after women could become ordained, and yet they continued to be in the church, to support the church, and to create a church where all people are not just included, but have their voices heard and are decision makers. I am blessed to be part of this lineage, to be part of this work in our conference, and to work with all those who are passionate about equity and inclusion.

The work that these people began is not done. There is still so much work to do and we cannot be complacent. As has been said several times already this Annual Conference, we are still working toward perfection. We have made great strides in equity and inclusion, but we are not done. So, thank you for your support of this work. If you are interested in being involved in CSRW or helping with any of the priorities I mentioned, please let me or our conference leadership know, or if you are looking for support or help in your church or your ministry that CSRW can be part of the work we are doing, please let us know.

Rev. Dr. Denyse is going to share more with us now on the General Conference action around sexual misconduct.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: Part of that work includes apologizing and repenting for behavior that has happened in the past and this is a statement that was read out at the General Conference regarding sexual misconduct. I wanted to be sure that you all got to hear it.

“Sexual misconduct is a current and real problem within the United Methodist Church. Today, we acknowledge there are people here who have been mistreated, abused, and assaulted by clergy and lay leaders in the Church.

We honor those who have shared their stories and those who have sat with their stories in silence. We commend the courage of all survivors of sexual misconduct to walk a path they did not choose.

Too often those who suffer from sexual misconduct are silenced, ignored, or not believed by the Church.

Sexual misconduct includes psychological, emotional, and spiritual abuse. This apology is a beginning point for confession and hope in prevention and response to sexual misconduct in the United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Church apologizes for the times we allowed our desire to protect the Church to outweigh our desire to care for victims and survivors of sexual misconduct. We have allowed polity and protection of the institutional Church to prevent us from holding persons accountable, thus perpetuating harm within our local churches and other ministry settings, and damaging the whole United Methodist Church.

We apologize for the times we have not listened to you, doubted your stories, ignored your wounds, and have not tended to your pain. We believe this has contributed to allowing an unsafe culture to exist.

An apology is worthless without a commitment to the challenging work which must follow. The United Methodist Church pledges to:

1. Apologize in every annual conference across the connection.
2. Educate Church leaders regarding sacred trust in ministerial relationships and power imbalance within those relationships.
3. Provide healing resources to all affected in accordance with paragraph 362. Complaint Procedures.
4. Develop a trauma-informed response to complaints of sexual misconduct.

This apology alone is insufficient for healing. The United Methodist Church accepts our responsibility and publicly states our commitment to carry out the steps named to do no more harm. May God's blessing and never-ending love guide our work and see it through."

Rev. Karin Ellis: My name is Karin Ellis, clergy, my pronouns are she and her, La Canada United Methodist Church, and I'm also the Co-Chair of the Cal-Pac Abolitionist Task Force. I've been asked to come here and speak about why we are wearing black today. Many of you are wearing black, and thank you! But how many of you know why you are wearing black? Yeah! Many of you do!

Thursdays in Black is a movement being led by the World Council of Churches.

In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. This violence is frequently hidden and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.

We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, are safe from rape and violence in homes, schools, work, streets - in all places in our societies.

The campaign is simple but profound. Wear black on Thursdays. Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you.

Often black has been used with negative racial connotations. In this campaign, black is used as a color of resistance and resilience.

I wish to introduce my new friend, Cynthia Sinclair, and invite her to talk about domestic violence.

Cynthia Sinclair: Aloha everyone. Thank you to Rev. Ellis for inviting me up here today. My name is Cynthia Sinclair. I am the Lay Leader for Kahaluu United Methodist Church in the Hawaii District. Kahaluu UMC Is proud to introduce the brand new Anti-Violence Help Card. When we are honest with

ourselves, we know that there are very many silent victims of violence sitting in our churches. This card is a safe, easy way to reach out to those folks and get them in touch with the help that they need. We ask that you place this card in a card holder in the Narthex, or wherever you put your flyers, and announcements. Place the card with the side asking, "Are you being hurt? Do you need help?" facing outwards. Then they can turn it over and find all the resources listed on the back. This is a standalone program, it doesn't require anything. It is an exercise in servant evangelism. You can announce it, or not, whichever is best for you. If you find that you need more cards, please reach out to us at our website and let us know and we will be glad to send you more. If we are all out of cards at our display table at Annual Conference, please sign the sheet on the table and provide us with your information. I want to say Mahalo in the biggest way possible and God bless you for your participation.

Here is some helpful information from the anti-violence help card:

Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC) 1-800-799-7233
National Hotlines 24/7:
Teen Line 866-331-9474 (call) 22522 (text)
LGBTQ+ 888-843-4564
Sex Assault/Incest 800-656-4673
Victimconnect.org

The email address for the Anti-Violence cards from Kahaluu UMC is: kahaluumc@gmail.com
Their website is: <http://www.kahaluumc.com/>

Should you wish to get the anti-violence help card, please send them an email using the above listed email.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: I seek your forgiveness because I haven't done something that you all have been asked to do when you come to the mic. My name is Bob Rhodes, my pronouns are he/him, Clergy from La Jolla UMC and your Conference Secretary. You've got to lead by example! Just a few announcements before we close out this session. For those of you who registered for the dinner, the Celebration of Ministry Dinner, it starts at 5:15 p.m. and it's in the City Ballroom over behind the hotel registration area. The Memorial Worship Service is back here in this ballroom at 7:00 p.m. When you leave this space, please take all of your belongings with you. Thank you.

Closing Prayer and Instructions - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

I asked Rev. Gary Williams to offer a closing prayer before going to our meal.

Rev. Gary Williams, clergy from St. Mark United Methodist Church in the heart of South Los Angeles.
Rev. Williams offered the closing Blessing and Prayer.