

U.M. Daily

Friday, June 14, 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 "Our Churches and Communities - We Work and Live In." The Harmony Worship Band began worship with the song, "*I Thank God.*"

The Harmony Worship Band led us in movement, joy, thanksgiving, and musical praise with these songs:

Sandra McCracken, *Flourishing*

Ovie Agbani, *Flourish (Theme Song)*

Breathe

Reckless Love

Great Are You Lord

Morning Prayer

Morning prayer was offered by Hannah Jung, CST Seminary Student, noting the California-Pacific Annual Conference's commitment to make the world a better place for all people. The prayer was offered in Korean.

40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Session 4
9:00 am (PDT)

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

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered her thanks to the band for the ways they bring our bodies and souls closer to Christ.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I thought about how the word "flourish" is happening around us as I listen to the conversations happening around me. Last night, I listened to a conversation about whether the church should be about politics or religion. I'll tell you my thoughts about that later. Someone showed me a t-shirt they bought a long time ago that said "Flourish" on it, and I had an in-depth conversation with a young person about AI. I thought how wonderful it is that we can have all of these different things going on, and how it's evidence of us flourishing.

As we call this session to order, I just want you to notice the signs of flourishing around you, as we have these conversations of sharing and listening. I want to say a quick word of thanks to the Trustees before I bring Rev. Cathie Capp forward to talk about the Orders of the day.

[Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked the Trustees to stand. Applause was given.]

The reason I'm saying thank you is because you got me into a house and I am so appreciative. While I was getting ready for this Conference, I was also moving. I want to say thank you to Margaret and Roxanna. They have babysat me and Chica and made sure that we got from place to place and that there was food when I needed it. They are the people who pave the way and help me get there. Thank you to Jim, he finally arrived. My husband Jim arrived and is in the house. Today he is going to take over Chica's welfare and mine. We are glad that you are here. I also want to introduce to you Izzy - Israel Isiderio Alvaran. He has been with us online and heard everything we said about him while we were bringing him in. Izzy, welcome home.

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 thanked Jennifer Gaylord for highlighting where to vote in her email. Rev. Yuh asked that if the body is still having trouble voting that they please be patient, and thanked those who were able to disconnect from the Internet for doing so. He encouraged the body to ask and offer each other help as needed and reiterated the proper method of introducing oneself when speaking during legislation.

Connectional Ministries Programming - Erin Hawkins

Dr. Alyssa Fisher, Director of Communications, Laity, Murietta UMC: Our keynote speaker today is Dr. Frank Rogers, the Muriel Bernice Roberts Professor of Spiritual Formation & Narrative Pedagogy and the Co-Director of the Center for Engaged Compassion at the Claremont School of Theology. His research and teaching focus is on Spiritual Formation that is contemplative, creative, and socially liberated. A trained spiritual director and experienced retreat leader, Rogers has written on the interconnections between spirituality, social engagement, and compassion. He is the author of several books. Rogers lives in southern California with his wife, Dr. Elaine Doherty, with whom he shares three young adult sons: Justin, Michael, and Sammy.

Dr. Rogers's talk today is titled "Flourishing in the Midst of Trauma, Spiritual Resources for Healing and Recovery." Please help me welcome Dr. Rogers to the stage.

Dr. Frank Rogers: Flourishing in the Midst of Trauma, Spiritual Resources for Healing and Recovery.

Dr. Frank Rogers: Morning, y'all! It's nice to be with you. I don't know about you but I got tired listening to that bio! My goodness.

But thank you for that introduction. I am so grateful to Bishop Dottie for the invitation to be here today, and Erin Hawkins for the wonderful hospitality. It's great to be here with all of you, and it's recognizing that we're here to talk about something that's really challenging. Flourishing in the midst of trauma, spiritual resources for healing and recovery. It's inviting us to remember that we are living in traumatized and

traumatizing times right now. To be sure, trauma has been with us forever, but lately, we have certainly got greater awareness about the effects of trauma and what trauma does to our bodies, and ways it can be treated. The last 20-30 years has been an explosion of research about trauma. Bessel van der Kolk's landmark book "The Body Keeps the Score" is now 5 years running on the New York Times Best Seller list. We have an enormous number of resources available to us about trauma.

Of course, just having those resources doesn't mean that trauma has gone away. We are living in extraordinarily traumatic times. We all know this. Trauma is all around us, we are immersed in it. We are spiritual caregivers. People come to us with their trauma – everyone that we minister with, in our congregations and hospitals, prisons and communities, they know trauma in their bodies. They bring their spiritual yearnings, questions, desires. They are aching for communities and ways to help navigate the demands of trauma and its recovery. They come to us looking for spiritual resources.

This is decidedly personal for me, because I am one of those people. I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. This is a story that, up until this year, I have never shared with anyone publicly. This is part of the shame of an abuse survivor. We feel like our very bodies have been violated, that our very being is soiled. We keep these things locked away. When I started teaching at the Claremont School of Theology now 35 years ago, I polished this persona that looked like I was a launched young adult that was ready for a successful life in this world. No one knew that I was absolutely tortured inside. I had always struggled with depression, lulled myself to sleep imagining how I would be able to kill myself if I had the courage. But with the birth of my son, everything that I had locked away exploded in me. I was tormented by flashbacks and nightmares, with a homicidal rage in me. I was overwhelmed with the pain and grief, and violent self-loathing. I finally tried to kill myself and ended up stalled on the road of Mount Baldy up above Claremont School of Theology and ended up at a mental institution. The well-polished persona was coming unglued.

When I got into that mental institution, I was fit to be tied. I was a student of spiritual practices, I was doing everything I could to be able to navigate. I was a proponent of centering prayer and breathing exercises, but I was inundated by these passions and rages and despairs that no spiritual practice was able to handle. I was screaming and crying and trying to push all these things down because I was taught that this was an immature sign of faith, that the kinds of things I was feeling and thinking were sinful. I tried to push them away until I got into a mental institution, and then I did not care anymore. Those demons inside of me were ready to make some hay.

The absolute pivotal moment in my own spiritual journey happened when I was in this institution. Of all things, it happened during an art therapy session. I had a homicidal rage that could kill and they wanted me to draw my feelings. But one day, the therapist came in with a brick of clay, and she told us to massage the clay and let the clay speak what our souls wanted to express. I didn't think it would be helpful or healing to me. The clay was impermeable, I tried to massage it and it wouldn't work, so finally I picked it up and threw it down on the workbench. It thudded and dented on the corner, and because I got some reaction out of that, I did it again and again. It was like this hypnotical spell started to come over me, and as I hit the brick, the image of myself at four years old being assaulted emerged by the person who assaulted me. And that rage came uncorked. I took that brick and I kept slamming it against the workbench. I turned it into a weapon, and I started to pummel the person who assaulted me, but of course it wasn't working. I kept screaming, "Stop it, stop it!" as I threw the brick down until I was in a manic, euphoric rage, and four orderlies tackled me from behind. I fought them with everything I could, because in my mind, they were taking me away from saving this four-year-old boy. They dragged me across the hallway and threw me into the padded locked room.

I was untied. I had been trying to fight and suppress this rage, until I decided that I had every right to my rage. I started banging on the walls, screaming, shouting. And something happened while I was doing this, it was like this rage that was possessing me. This inner energy became its own psychic reality, and there was some me that could be strong and resilient, and could dance with this rage. It became a dance between me and the energy. I told the rage that it was here for a reason and to give me all it had. Suddenly, it was like the rage started to be heard, started to be honored, started to be validated, and it had its say. Then it began to relax. I collapsed onto the floor of this room, but I could still sense this energy there, but it was calm. I said, “Rage, why are you here?” And it says to me, “You have been treating me as your enemy, and I am not your enemy. I am fighting for your life. I am here as an ally.” I asked what it wanted me to know, and it responded, “It is all true. Everything you’ve been terrified of. It is true.”

All of a sudden, the image of that four-year-old boy emerged once more with this look of being absolutely assaulted and deadened in despair. My heart broke open for this boy. I wanted to hold him, and he just wanted to howl. Howl his fear, howl the assault, howl the violation. I just let this boy howl in my arms until his howling turned to sobbing, and the sobbing turned to whimpering. And then that boy, feeling safe for the first time, just went to sleep there on my chest.

It’s hard to find words for what this felt like. I was in an energized space, like I was back home in myself. I never knew that this version of myself existed within me – one that was grounded, aware, and present. One that could be infinitely compassionate towards the wounded ones. It was like I was holding and companioning these psychic energies within me from a place of grounded resilience and aligned compassion. The compassion that I felt suddenly morphed and became expansive. I had this sense that this me who was able to hold even the world’s brutality with compassion, was plugged into a cosmic, sacred compassion that permeates our entire planet. It cradles and heals every trauma that we experience. It was a moment of absolute spiritual alignment.

It was not a one-time fix. I got out of the hospital two or three days later and then was back in, still out of my mind. But it was the launching of a journey to find psychological and spiritual resources to navigate my experience. My latest book, *Cradled in the Arms of Compassion: A Spiritual Journey of Trauma and Recovery* tells the story of what I discovered along the way. I just want to offer a few observations of some of the spiritual resources that I discovered that help us flourish even in the midst of traumas that we experience.

The first thing that I realized was that trauma is a soul injury. James Garbarino describes trauma as a “reverse religious experience.” We think of a religious experience as being encountered with a transcendent reality that restores and enlivens us. Trauma is the reverse – an encounter with an overpowering transcendent form that debilitates and deadens us. It gives rise to a separation of our deepest sense of selves. It gives us an existential loneliness that we think no one else can understand. It injures our souls, so trauma recovery has to heal the soul injuries within us. For many of us, this becomes a crisis of Faith. I was taught that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. I turned to the God who was supposed to be the Divine Protector and asked Him why he was letting my assault happen. I asked what was wrong with me, why I wasn’t important enough to Him to save. That God wreaked havoc in me. The things that I was taught communicated to me not to question what was happening, that I was complicit because we are all evil. It is a theology that serves the perpetrators of abuse. It is not a theology that serves the survivors. That God needed to die in me, and it was a long night of spiritual anguish because that God was woven into my tissue, my default understanding. To be able to purge and release those false notions took enormous amounts of spiritual work.

What also is true is that is not the real God. The real God is a God of infinite compassion – a spiritual resource for us in trauma in ways that are profoundly reparative and restoring. My insight into this was from a Holocaust theologian, Melissa Raphael, who wrote a book called *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz*. She was dialoguing with all of these theologians who were trying to explain why God allowed Auschwitz to happen, that He could have done something but chose not to because He had bigger plans. Melissa Raphael said that those understandings of God resemble Hitler a lot more than it resembles any benevolent reality in our world. She said that God needs to die in our religious imagination. She also said there is another sacred presence that was present in Auschwitz: the female face of God, or Shekhina, the Divine reality that goes with God's people into exile and enters into the suffering with them; a companion. It doesn't have the power to stop bad things from happening, but it does have the presence of compassion that keeps our own spirit alive. The miracle of Auschwitz is that feminine Divine presence was being embodied in the women, who should have had their spirits destroyed, but instead found it within them to wash each other's faces, to massage each other's hands, to hold crying babies and tend to those who were dying. Even to adorn themselves in daily rituals of hygiene to claim their own dignity in the midst of forces that were trying to dehumanize them. That is a power that can restore the human spirit.

For me, that Divine reality was instrumental in healing and repairing the abuse. Like the ancient practice of healing memories, as I did in that padded room where I held the child in me and invited a Shekhina-like Divine presence to hold him as well. We do this in spiritual practice when we invite Jesus to be with us in places that are bleeding with trauma, where we come to discover that Jesus was an abuse survivor as well. Jesus was a trauma survivor, a person who lived in an oppressive regime and daily indignities. Called, "the Son of Mary" to imply he was born in illegitimate circumstances in a patriarchal society. Jesus lived with abuse. Imagine the religious experience that inaugurated his entire ministry when God tells Jesus that He is his father and claims him as His beloved son. The encounter with that compassionate, sacred reality is what restores our human spirit and puts back together foundations of faith and meaning that can see us through recovery of even severe trauma.

The second spiritual resource that I want to name is that each of us is made in the Image of God. Each of us has within us a self-essence that is where our greatest spiritual resources are found. I stumbled upon it in the padded room of an insane asylum – this capacity inside, for us to have grounded this resilience even in the midst of the traumas that we are experiencing. That essence, "the True Self," "the Immortal Diamond," dwells in every single human being unmarred no matter how much trauma they have experienced.

Damien, an inner-city school child in Toronto, was a handful. All of his teachers were struggling. He had tattoos and piercings in Junior High, he had aggression, he couldn't focus on anything, and he was one assault away from going to reform school. The reasons for his aggression were well-known to his teachers: His father murdered his mother in front of him when he was three years old. His mother was dead and his father was sent to prison, so Damien was passed from institution to institution, none of them with the resources to help him engage the trauma he was experiencing. Damien was in the junior high class where Ruth Gordon visited to talk about her non-profit organization, The Roots of Empathy. Ruth has an ingenious way of helping us access our own natural capacities for empathy. She would bring a young parent with a baby into a classroom and invite the children to engage with the baby. Damien wanted no part in it, so his teacher allowed him to sit by himself while the rest of the class engaged with the baby. When the baby eventually got tired and the mother told everyone that it was time to put the baby down for a nap, Damien suddenly came over and asked if he could be the one to do it. The teachers were wary, but the mother had an instinctive trust that let her allow Damien to cradle the baby. Soon, Damien rocked the baby to sleep on

his chest. Damien was amazed, and when the woman eventually left, Damien asked his teacher a question. He asked, “Do you think it’s possible to be a good dad, even when you’ve never been loved in your life?”

Damien, who had been beaten down by trauma, still had the pilot light of the Spirit deep in his soul. That self-essence is made in the Image of God. It is the source of resilience that we can endure in the midst of any challenge that faces us. It is the source of gentleness and compassion for the wounded ones within us. It’s a source of that deep call that can be grounded even in the midst of chaos around us. That spiritual essence within us is one of our greatest resources for healing and recovering from trauma.

The last thing I wish to suggest that is a spiritual resource is that we are also invited into a spiritual practice that can restore us even in the midst of the cacophonies that often plague us. I grew up in spiritual traditions that taught me emotions were sinful. I would engage in spiritual practice that would try to let negative emotions go and talk myself out of them, and those spiritual practices were like trying to push buoys under water. They never made those inner impulses and passions go away for very long. The reason they kept coming back is because they were there for a reason. They came from some place. Trauma, suffering, brought those into our lives and those emotions are a cry of the soul. The spiritual practice for me that was life-changing was a practice that fundamentally trusts what we feel in our bodies are cries of the soul that can be welcomed in radical hospitality. They can be befriended, they can be tended to, and the suffering within them can surface and be met with the kind of compassion we all ache to know.

These are spiritual resources that we have available to us. My invitation for us is that we become trauma-informed. Let us create trauma-informed communities in our congregations and our denominational houses, where we are aware of the impact of trauma and talk about trauma so people know they are safe to bring that trauma to us, and they will be companioned. There are wonderful resources available in how to help organizations become trauma-informed.

Secondly, let’s teach and preach trauma-sensitive theology. Irving Greenberg, another post-Holocaust Theologian said upon realizing that 1.5 million of those burned in the furnaces were children, “Let no statement ever be uttered, theological or otherwise, that is not credible in the face of burning children.” That should be our litmus test as well. The people in our communities have children that are burning within them from the wounds of trauma. Let’s be sure that we are teaching theologies that are credible and understanding of God. Let us all be trained and have resources who know how to be with someone in the midst of their trauma and know how to be a companion. When we offer that to the people in our communities, we will be aligned with that cosmic, sacred compassion that is sustaining this entire cosmos. That is when we are embodiments of that Shekhinah presence, of that presence of Jesus, who knows how to sit with those who suffer. And in our mere presence, offer a power of compassion that keeps the Spirit alive, even in the midst of the traumas that we are all enduring.

That’s all I got.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that. Dr. Rogers was one of my professors.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared about meeting Dr. Rogers and how much his presence and his work influenced her and so many others. She shared that Dr. Rogers has informed her soul.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I know it takes courage to tell that story, and I recommend Dr. Rogers’ book to you, his most recent book. But I also recommend what he asked us to do, which is to become informed, so

that we can be the spiritual leaders who lead us forward in a time of trauma in our society as well as the traumas in our churches, and the traumas you may be enduring as pastors. Thank you for being a resource for us and for teaching us and for being courageous. We appreciate you.

Dr. Rogers offered a prayer for those who are suffering.

“Connect with our breath, our primal grounding practice and allow our breath to bring us fully present into this prayerful moment. And then I invite us all to just bring into our imagination one person that we know who is carrying trauma. In our family, community, neighborhood, perhaps even ourselves. Breathing into the grounded awareness that here is a person who is carrying pain, navigating life in the best way they know how. Just behind that, as if you are gazing upon them on a movie screen, just observe that. Just allow our hearts to open to the deep struggle it takes just to navigate life for this person. Open to their wells of pain they may be carrying. Be open to the beauty of their true self that resides within them like a pilot light. And just breathe into a warm loving regard and extend compassion toward that person. Then ignite the sacred reality that you know, or the sacred reality they know to come and be with this person as well, enveloping them in compassionate care. Sense the deep compassion, the sacred feels towards this persona and breathe in that sacred compassion and breathe out sacred compassion to this person. May that sacred compassion bring this person solace, comfort, resilience and flourishing and may that sacred compassion continue to flow into all persons who suffer trauma, cradled with care and compassion, as we await the day we hope for when we are all fully whole, fully restored. Amen.

Rev. Rhodes: We are going to take a short break while we reset the stage.

[After the break]

Rev. Rhodes: It is good to acknowledge that many of us continue to experience quite a bit of emotion after what we have heard this morning, the prophetic words which have been spoken. If you are in need of care from someone who has been trained to offer this kind of care, Rachel Gibson, who is a member of this Annual Conference and a part of the General and Jurisdictional delegation is a licensed Marriage and Family therapist. She will be outside by the registration area. If you are in need of care, please seek out this care. It is important self care. his is self-care.

Tom Choi, Clergy, Hawaii District: I am asking a point of personal privilege. One of our pastors, Ana Hungalu, Hilo Church, has informed us that her husband, Saka, has been hospitalized and will be having surgery this afternoon for a serious intestinal obstruction. I'm asking for prayers. I've asked her brother, Pastor Onga Koli, soon going to be the solo full-time pastor at Trinity UMC, to lead us in prayer.

Pastor Onga Koli led us in prayer..

SAI/UMC Scholarships - Bob Arvizu (Live Presentation & Video Presentation)

I would like to thank the Bishop for allowing us to be here. The Spanish American Institute was started in 1909 by a Methodist church in Pasadena. Bob Arvizu shared some of the history of the Spanish American Institute, and shared about the scholarships they have provided for United Methodist Youth, which began in 2015. Since then, they have provided over \$44,000 in scholarships to over 35 recipients. At their booth in the conference hall, they have flyers for some of their fundraisers. One of the fundraisers is “Adopt a Piggy.” You are invited to adopt a “piggy” bank, name your piggy, and during the year, can “feed” your piggy by adding money to it. At next year’s Annual Conference, bring your piggy so the funds can be collected. A

piggy was given to Bishop Escobedo-Frank to adopt. The President of the Board was invited to come forward, Leah Gallardo Switzer.

Ms. Switzer shared more about their work, and introduced Miguel Guerrero, a scholarship recipient in 2018. Miguel is attending his first Annual Conference as the Lay Member for Van Nuys United Methodist Church and the church's Outreach Director, and will be accepting this year's scholarship certificate on behalf of the SAI scholarship winners: Victoria Rhodis from Van Nuys United Methodist Church and Cindry Vasquez Alfaro from New Beginnings in San Bernardino. Miguel thanked the Conference for their continuing support.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank thanked them for their report.

Video Presentation - Media Team

A video was shown sharing the history and highlighting the scholarship winners of the SAI scholarships.

Rev. Bob Rhodes: if you are having trouble voting, please let us know. We want to help make sure that your votes are counted. We are monitoring the system. Please let us know if you are having trouble.

Legislation - Rev. Lea Booth

REC 24-01 - Pensions 1: Health Care for Active Clergy & Families, Lay Employees

Rev. Booth moved REC 24-01

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Kevin Kane, Laity, Crescenta United Methodist Church: I come from an HR, benefits background from a previous ministry, and I did a little bit of reading, and the costs seem a lot more expensive than they should be, and I feel like there might be other options. From what we've seen, it doesn't show exactly what we are actually voting on, except that it's more beneficial to keep it the way it is. Is there a way for us to actually see the numbers, because once again, I've worked with other vendors and have seen other insurance programs and it just doesn't seem optimal.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that question. I invite Jan Hanson to respond.

Jan Hanson, Laity, HR Director and Conference Benefits Officer: This is informational in response to that question. For active clergy and church participants, the rates are readily available in the Pensions section. Currently the Plan that is sponsored by the Conference is a Kaiser plan and every year we go out to bid on the cost of that insurance and the plans that are available. The plan that has been in place for several years is a Kaiser plan. Next year, we will be working with another broker who will also help us find the most cost effective programs for our churches. That's where the rates are. The rules that are voted on by the Annual Conference are the ones which have to do with eligibility, but the cost of the plans are determined within the Board of Pensions with careful analysis of what is available to us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I invite you to go to Jan Hanson with any questions you may have. Thank you Jan for answering that question. Are there any other questions or comments? Seeing none, the Recommendation is before us.

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

A statement was made from the floor of the Conference that an entire table was not able to vote on the last recommendation.

Rev. Booth: If you are having problems at the moment of voting, please let us know by shouting out, or raising your hand so that we are aware that there is a problem. We can then pause the timer and reset. If you don't tell us, we don't know there is a problem.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked Rev. Won-Seok Yuh to troubleshoot for us with the table who is having trouble voting.

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh: Please do not reload or refresh the voting site when the Bishop says to vote. Do so beforehand. The system slows down when everyone refreshes at the same time. You are invited to refresh right now. We have a five second delay. If you are still having trouble after this, please come to us at the table in the ballroom. Please do not reload as you are voting. That will delay the voting system for you.

REC 24-02 - Pensions 3: Clergy Housing Allowance

Rev. Booth moved REC 24-02

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

The Recommendation is before us.

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

REC 24-03 - Pensions 4: Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program

Rev. Booth moved REC 24-03

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

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

REC 24-04 - Advance Specials

Rev. Booth moved REC 24-04

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. Tom Choi, Clergy, Hawaii District: On the list is Camp Mekokiko in Hawaii. At our recent District Conference, it was voted not to continue the Camp, so we request that it be removed from the Advance Specials.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a request to remove Camp Mekokiko. We take this as a correction.

Sunil Kathramala, in the process of becoming a licensed local pastor under Rev. Cathie Capp's mentorship: I strongly support this resolution because I feel it has the future of designated giving and also accountability, transparency, especially a wide range of projects. When I look at my calling, which is mostly with disability ministries, so what Sharon McCart is doing with the Disability Task Force and also there is a Philippines Advocacy Fund, and there are a lot of needs in health ministries and support of a lot of compassion and justice ministries.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. I take that as a speech in favor.

Rosalee Neiman, Laity, Pasadena First UMC: I'm offering a question for clarification. I am happy to have a long time relationship with Give Ye Them to Eat, GYTTE, so I sent them a message last night. I didn't see

their name on the list, they are an advance special, they receive money, and they have a website. Their missionaries and their staff person checked out last night, so that's just for clarification. Thank you very much.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That was a question, so I wonder if Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes is in the room.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes, Justice and Compassion: Thank you everyone. The only change made to the list last year and the year before is the addition of things. Since I have been doing this position and taking care of this list, I have not removed things. It hasn't been there for at least the last three years. I'm happy to add it. I did have a question this morning about account numbers for these and some of them don't have account numbers attached to them, so I need to do some investigative work once the Annual Conference is over.

Frank Wulf, Clergy, Echo Park UMC: This may just be editorial, but on line 24, Echo Park UMC Refugee Welcome Center is listed. The name has changed, it is now Echo Park UMC Immigration Center. Do I have to make an amendment, or is this just editorial?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: It is editorial, so just let Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes know.

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: Just an update that GYTTE is a GBGM Advance Special, not a Cal-Pac Advance Special, so it wouldn't be on this list. You have to go to the GBGM website or talk to the GBGM people.

Teri Markovich, Laity, Honoka'a UMC, Hawaii: I'm against removing Camp Mekokiko from the special consideration. It's in my neighborhood and it's a beautiful 40 acres and I was not aware of our Task Force, and I'm actually in that location. We had said that our District Office was trying to rent our buildings for \$100 a night at Camp Mekokiko and where else in Hawaii would you find accommodations for \$100 a night, but evidently there wasn't enough interest in that. We are very country, we are up country roads and I guess that's what the consideration was to let go of the Camp. But it is a beautiful Camp and it just needs some TLC and it was the pandemic that actually shut it down, so I just wanted to speak up that we do love our Camp and we'd like to find a way to have it be a place for youth and older people and another generation. Mahalo.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. I take that as a question, and I'll have District Superintendent Rev. Tom Choi respond.

Rev. Tom Choi: Thank you, Bishop. By the way, it's line 18 of the Advance Specials. I appreciate Teri's comments and her love for the Camp. If you want to come to me, I will offer a full explanation. The District Conference voted to sell the Camp, and so I'm not opposed to keeping it on the list, just understand that if you give money to Camp Mekokiko, it will not go for continuing the Camp, it would go for maintenance until the Camp is sold, so in good conscious, I think it should be removed but whatever the body wants to do.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I don't think this is for the body. I believe the decision has been made in your area. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Recommendation is before us.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

REC 24-06 - Equitable Compensation Minimum Salary Schedules
Rev. Booth moved REC 24-06
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.
The Resolution is before us.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Personal Privilege - Don Carlisle

Don Carlisle, laity, Redondo Beach First UMC: I bring you greetings from Bishop Rev. Dr. Cedrick Bridgeforth, and the reason I can do that is both Bishop Cedrick and I rode the AIDS LifeCycle last week. The AIDS LifeCycle is a 545 mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles. It is in support of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center in the effort to end AIDS once and for all. It's not over, you know. According to the last report I heard, there is at least one new case of AIDS diagnosed every 15 minutes. The people who are at risk are the ones who are disadvantaged. The medicines are very effective, but they are expensive. The monies raised will be used to ameliorate that. It is also the people at risk are children who have been kicked out of their homes and these organizations reach out to them. I encourage everybody to ride. I can do it at 72 years old and there are older people doing it. If you can't ride, find someone who is riding. Next year, the Rev. Andy Mattick will be riding, I will be riding and we hope that Dr. Larry Hygh will be riding. If you can, find someone to support! We hope that Dr. Larry Hygh will be riding.

Retirement Videos - Media Team

Rev. Brian Kent
Rev. Jin Mo Koo
Rev. Richard Malec

Instructions and Closing Prayer - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Franks

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I wish to say a few thank yous before I ask Rev. John to come up. We are also going to have a band from Spanglish Camp after the prayer to lead us out.

As I walked in this morning, I was feeling tired from two days of all this, and I asked God why do we all push so hard and for so long when we gather together, rather than take breaks and breathe so we can be refreshed and continue our work. I think we should pay attention to that next time. We have a refresher right now, because the work needed to be done today has finished early. Here is a refresher right now, because our work today has finished early.

I am asking John Farley to close us out and pray for our lunch, because he represents the Cabinet and he is retiring this year. Also because I want you to know something about our Cabinet that I've learned as I worked with them this year, but before I do that, I'd like the Cabinet to all to please stand.

[A round of applause was given for the Cabinet.]

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: What you see are the shining, beautiful faces, and what you don't see are the bruised souls and bodies that have endured a really tough year. It's been about more than just disaffiliations. Remember when your DS comes to you, that there is so much more going on behind the conversations that

they are having with you, that they are carrying a load that you can't even imagine until you get into that role. I never realized how much work went into being a DS until I became one myself. I hope that as you pray, your prayer uplift the Cabinet – the things you know about them as well as the things you don't. I hope you ask God to refresh and energize them as they lead us into a healthier space as a Conference.

Rev. John Farley has really walked alongside me and implemented some of the things I have asked for in such a graceful and efficient way, and sometimes put down his own desires to go to dinner with his wife to take care of something that was urgent. John, I appreciate all that you have done and we are going to miss you. Please lead us in prayer.

Rev. John Farley led the body in prayer.

40th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Session 5
2:00 pm (PDT)

The Spanglish Band opened Plenary 5 with song.

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

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

Housekeeping things: If you are having conversations that are not related to the business at hand, please enjoy your conversations outside of the ballroom. We recognize that we are having some challenges with the wifi. Please let us know if you need assistance. Thank you for your patience. Please don't refresh the browser too many times. The link for vPoll was in the email for Friday, today.

All information you need for the Annual Conference is on the callpacumc.org website. Please go to the Basics of Plenary Process for Cal-Pac and take a look at it. If you want information on how to do this work well, what are you interested in learning more about this year? QR code.

Connectional Ministries Video - Rev. Ken Suhr and Jason Moore, Midnight Oil Productions

The desire of the Connectional Ministries is to provide practical and helpful support and resources for the clergy and church leaders who are faithfully serving. That's why I want to introduce you to Jason Moore of Midnight Oil Productions. He will be providing some practical, hands-on workshops for us in August.

Jason: Thank you! I am super excited about these trainings! They are going to happen on August 6, 7 & 8, 2024.

- August 6 in the morning: Both/And Hospitality - how do we greet people and build relationships when they come to our physical space and how do we do that with people who worship with us online?

- August 6 in the evening - Using AI Tools in the Church
- August 7 - Creative Worship - we end this day by designing Creative Worship for the season of Lent together!
- August 8 - Church consultations for one hour & church cohorts with Jason Moore

Flourishing in the Local Church -

Rev. Ken Suhr, Director of Leadership & Congregational Vitality

Rev. Lydia Sohn, Walnut UMC

Rev. Jonathan Chute, Rolling Hills UMC

Burnetta Tate, Laguna Beach UMC

Jason Tucker, First UMC, San Diego

Rev. Suhr invited everyone to be a part of this panel, to reflect on these questions, that this may be a time of prayerful reflection for all. When we talk about flourishing, it's about all of us - we are all in this together. There needs to be a shift from "they" to "we." From "we" to "me." It's less about what "they" need to do to change, and more about what do "I" need to change in order to flourish. What can I do differently? John Wesley encouraged us to be rigorous with ourselves.

Rev. Suhr led the body in prayer.

He continued, "The first question we are going to dive into is, 'What does flourishing mean to you, and how do we know the Church is flourishing?'"

Rev. Jonathan Chute shared that we need to understand that vitality and health of a church is not a matter of size, but of posture. Posture can be found in churches large, medium and small, in churches that are more to the left or more to the right. The posture he is referring to is a posture of an outward direction and orientation. Of being interested in the community, not just interested in ourselves. Being interested in the community around and growing in the field where we have been planted. That's what it means to flourish.

Rev. Chute shared his experiences of pastoring a small church with an inward focus, and the challenges and successes he faced. They began to imagine how they could be helpful to the community around us. They wondered how they could serve the community. That began a turn-around. The foundations of the insights he discovered were found in scripture, in the Gospel of Mark. "Whoever shall seek to save their life will lose it ..." We must set aside our preoccupation with serving self and find our way to the other side of serving others.

Ms. Tate shared from her local church perspective. She shared that she views it as a journey, not a destination. Flourishing can sometimes be all about survival. She shared her love of the use of a tree - in survival times, all we have are the roots. But through all times, the tree is always there. Our spiritual strength is still growing deep in the ground. We continue to grow, winter or summer. Some days we survive - and some days we thrive. The times of our greatest growth are times of change. Change also means being a little bit uncomfortable.

She shared that she has had three women pastors, which was shocking to her ... and she loved it! Pastors manage all our hopes and dreams, all our highs and lows. Flourishing is not just being happy or an "end" state. It's the path you take from roots to the branches on top.

Rev. Sohn: Trees ground us. If we are bearing fruit, we are deepening relationships, healing, and having long conversations during coffee hour. You can feel there is life in a church, no matter its size. The roots go down into the earth and are strong. The roots of who you are, who the church is, without comparison, without wanting to be something we are not. Every tree grows differently, and every tree's roots look different.

We can't replicate successful programs - it does not serve us. Now we must use "I" thinking, what is the unique gift, spirit and identity in this church that I'm placed at? Live into that unique identity.

Rev. Suhr: The quality of our relationships determine the quality of our lives. This is true for the local church as well. He shared that he loves the image of the tree. What are the barriers to us flourishing?

Mr. Tucker: Sometimes our buildings are barriers for two reasons - the first is that we shackle ourselves inside. It is hard to visit people in prison and feed the hungry if we don't leave our doorstep. Second, we can be shackled by the physical space, our buildings can be barriers as well. How many of us have wonderful parking lots and huge fellowship halls? Who are the people who use them?

Now, we do need to be thinking about the maintenance of these buildings, but also, think about what is needed for the next generation. Think about additional income streams. Can we use our properties and assets to higher and better uses that could provide income streams and ministry potential? Sometimes our buildings can be our barriers.

Rev. Chute: A barrier can be turnover of key staff - some appointed, some lay persons who have served. It has given me an appreciation for how hard it is for congregations to experience the turnover of pastoral appointments. Just as you are getting used to them, you find out that they will be leaving. And then sometimes people stay longer than anyone wants. When we turn people over, that is exhausting to congregations and colleagues.

Rev. Sohn: The story we tell about ourselves. An idea that is being talked about a lot is that we are in decline and it is a bad thing and it's our fault. I don't think that is true. Every era the church has looked different and survives as a new creation. So we need to let go of the narrative that this new era is a bad thing. Our roots are what we can offer to the rest of the world. Our deep spirituality is one thing we can offer. We have seen and learned and know that the power of the Spirit is only magnified in the presence of the gathered body. Even if it's just two or three people. The Spirit happens in community. The community piece is what we need to own. Our spiritual life and the belief that the power of God is only magnified in the gathered body.

Rev. Suhr: At our pre-Conference gathering, we took a poll and asked, "How are you doing? From 1 to 5." Our poll was 3 - the majority of people said 3. What would your number be for yourself? Flourishing churches are filled with flourishing people. How can churches help people flourish?

Mr. Tucker: People flourish when they feel seen and safe. Those in majority White churches need to do a better job at making People of Color and the LGBTQIA+ community feel safe. Not just thinking about humans as an issue, but having real honest relationships. Seeing them and having a relationship with someone who is different than you. People will flourish if they feel safe. They will feel the spirit of God in our midst if we allow them to feel and be safe. We can do more.

Ms. Tate: One of the things we do is try to temper our responses to new people. Just say hi! When I offer a greeting to someone, and they offer one to me, it makes your day. When the bite-sized pieces go out, they return. If we can find a way to give little pieces - I'm not going to do VBS, but if you ask me to help set up or make posters, I will do it. That's my size. Little pieces so all people can help. Give us little pieces, and they come together to make big things.

Rev. Suhr: That's exactly how she ended up in front of everyone at the Annual Conference! Our Bishop mentioned shackles. I've been thinking about how many times we are shackled, not only from the outside, but how many times we shackle ourselves. Let go of the shackles. Let go of shackles and step into nourishing rhythms for a flourishing life. What are the habits, the rhythms of my life that lead to a flourishing life?

How many of you are routine people? Some things work and some don't. Developing a pattern of healthy habits, that is what the church can offer. We can find ways to be healthy in our souls and in our Spirit. The Number One thing the church can offer is to help each other do this.

These things are hard because there is healing that needs to happen and that's what we provide each other as the church. Love, honesty and encouragement. Move from people serving the church to the church serving the people and caring about whether or not they flourish. Grace, honesty and encouragement. We can do this for each other.

Please share with one other person:

Questions for Pair and Share Activity

What is one idea or activity that can help your church move toward flourishing in the coming days?

What is one idea or activity that can help you personally, move toward flourishing in the coming days?

Rev. Suhr: May these conversations continue. Let us thank our panelists for sharing today. I have invited Rev. Lydia to close us in prayer. Rev. Sohn led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited Rev. Booth to lead us in our Legislation.

Rev. Booth shared that we are making a change to our voting system. We are doing away with the timer. When the Bishop says we may vote, the vote will be broadcast, and then we can vote. As the votes taper off, I will relay that to the Bishop, and then we will be ready to take a tally of our votes.

Legislation - Rev. Lea Booth, Legislative Chair

RES 24-08 - Hispanic Ministries Sunday

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-08

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have a question online. Rev. Rhodes will read it to the body.

Rev. Rhodes: The question is from Susan Cargil: "Please ask the Spanish Ministries to check the correct the Sunday they wish to use. At the beginning, they mention a Sunday in September, while the final resolution

mentions a Sunday in October. Susan notes that this may be reversed as she can't see the Resolution while she types. She concludes, Please clarify which month for RES 24-08."

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This Resolution is before you, and we have a question already. Would someone like to address the question?

Jose Vindel, clergy: I think the Conference for Spanish Committee was looking for the month of September to be used for this offering. However, local churches can use any month. Is that correct Ana-Haydee? I think that's correct. I think we said either the second or the third Sunday in September.

Rev. Dr. Barnes: This Resolution replaces another Resolution that has since expired. So the mention of October is talking about the previous Resolution that has expired. This new Resolution is calling for the Sunday in September.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. "Therefore be it resolved," that is correct information. In September.

Hillary Chrisley, Clergy, Glendora UMC: Please let me see if I understand. It is my understanding that Hispanic Heritage Month spans two months, it is September to October, am I not correct? In the Federal sense. So if that's different for us as a worship community, I just need ... my understanding is that is a September to October ...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that question. Again, Rev. Jose Vindel, would you like to answer her question - or Rev. Dr. Barnes?

Ervin Aguilon, Local Pastor, North Hills Hispanic Mission: In the U.S., we celebrate September 15th to October 15th. That is the Spanish month.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: What I need to know for the body because they have asked, is to clarify what you mean. Rev. Jose Vindel would you come to the microphone?

Rev. Jose Vindel: As I said a few minutes ago, the Hispanic Conference Committee was suggesting that this would be the month of September for this offering. First we thought about October, but then we said let's do it in September, which is the Hispanic Heritage month, so we are looking for September.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The third Sunday in September?

Rev. Jose Vindel: We really didn't want to go for a specific Sunday, we just said during the month of September.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: But it is in the "Be it Further Resolved..."

Rev. Jose Vindel: Be it further resolved that the third Sunday in September, which is the first Sunday of Hispanic Heritage Month. Ummm ... okay. I apologize. It's right there. So ... third Sunday!

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Okay. So we are voting on this as the third Sunday in September as it is in the Resolution. Thank you. Does anyone else want to speak in favor or not?

Maria Longley, Lay Pastor Assigned to Winchester UMC: I'm just wondering, as September is Hunger Action Awareness Month nationally, if that might have any bearing, and if we might consider a more zeroed-in focus on hunger for the month of September, given that there are a couple of weeks of October to play with for this recognition.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: So ... this is a question? Is that what you want to do?

Maria Longley: Yes please.

Ana-Haydee Urda, Laity, Chair of the Conference Hispanic Committee: We chose the third Sunday in September. Again, if the churches want to use October, that is fine with us, as long as they do it once a year. So we choose the third Sunday in September, but the church can choose something else.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that clarification Ana-Haydee.

Lisa Scott, Laity, Glendora UMC: May I suggest a friendly amendment that the third Sunday in September is suggested, but churches may choose the Sunday during Hispanic Heritage month? But that is not how the Resolution is written and if we are voting on the Resolution as it is written, it is one Sunday and one Sunday only.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: There is no such thing as a friendly amendment in Roberts Rules which I'm learning about.

Lisa Scott: May I suggest an amendment?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. What is your amendment?

Lisa Scott: That it be written that the third Sunday in September is the suggested Sunday, but any Sunday during Spanish Heritage Month is of the church's choosing.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Okay. Is there a second? We have a second. You are saying to edit it to suggest the third Sunday of September or any other Sunday of Hispanic Heritage Month? Okay, is everyone clear? We are going to vote on an amendment. Does anyone want to speak for or against the amendment? Are we clear on the amendment? Alright, are you ready to vote?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: the amendment is before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: - I already asked for speeches, and nobody responded. We are in vote right now.

Rev. Lea Booth: Because I broadcast the question, and then I stopped it, I have to essentially copy and paste and then give it to you again.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: While we are waiting, I can't recognize you at this moment. I've already called for the vote. After that, I can recognize you. I believe the vote is up and running again.

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

Katherine Henry, Laity, La Canada UMC, North District: I was rising to speak against the Amendment, but I'm not sure that's in order now?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The Amendment has passed, so it cannot be spoken on.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions on the Resolution as amended.

Gary Schertz, laity, Santa Clarity UMC: I have a question - it looks like it says that the funds will be held in the account. Does that mean that the funds can be spent from the account or only held in the account?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Line 29? Ana-Haydee, would you like to address this or someone else to address it?

Ana-Haydee Urda, Laity, Chair of the Conference Hispanic Committee: Line 29? Okay. What we are saying with that is that the account that the Conference Hispanic Committee holds with the Foundation. That's where the money is going into as the Resolution stated. But the money will be going into the Foundation account that the Conference Hispanic Committee holds. That's what it means.

Alicia Torres, Barstow UMC: I'm speaking for this Resolution. As an Hispanic youth, I know this will help my community. I know this is needed and I'll be very grateful, like on my part, for Hispanic youth community if you support this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. Are there any other speeches, for or against? We are voting on the Resolution as amended.

The Resolution as amended is before us.

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

RES 24-12 - Ratification of Regionalization Constitutional Amendment in Central Conferences
Rev. Booth moved RES 24-12.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Izzy Alvaran, Clergy, Westwood UMC is my Charge Conference: I speak in favor of this Resolution by affirming the good work that your Conference - our Conference - has done in support of worldwide Regionalization. Since the beginning, I have had the privilege of convening the Christmas Covenant Team, of which two of our members here are a part of this team. Monalisa Tu'itahi, and also Rev. Bentley, who actually wrote the initial draft of the Christmas Covenant. You need to know that's what happened. I'm really grateful to Richard for doing that. You have supported the Christmas Covenant in the past, through your prayers and also through you gifts as a Conference. That's why I think we all should pass this at General Conference with a resounding numbers of over 2/3 vote - we got that there. But this Resolution is to continue that good work. We need to have this ratified in our Central Conferences and also around the world. You know what's happening in my Central Conference, my prior Annual Conference? There is a secessionist movement happening in my country. In the Philippines that seeks to thwart Regionalization. In Liberia for example, in Tanzania, there are efforts to thwart this by succession and so we more need education. This legislation is asking for new money, but boards and agencies and officers of the Conference to look within their budgets, what they could spare, to support education and outreach in the Central Conferences to pass Ratification of world wide Regionalization.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That is a speech in favor. Are there any other speeches for or against?

Richard Bentley, retired clergy, my charge conference is Chino UMC, also a member of the Conference Delegation: I want to help us understand why it's important to work in the Central Conferences. We are ratifying a Constitutional Amendments by what's called an aggregate vote. That means in our Annual Conference we will take a vote and pass resolution about working together to get a good vote for that next year, but every annual conference within the denomination will vote, all one hundred and thirty plus of them. More than half of those annual conferences that will vote are outside of the United States. We need to think worldwide. So this would allow us to work with a network of people that has been working together since the Christmas Covenant started to promote staying UMC, creating a denomination where there is space for all us, where we can contextualize and regionalize and do that. Izzy is very modest. There was substantial support in Africa, the Philippines and Europe. That's how we got a 78% yes vote for a constitutional amendment at General Conference. I want us to know and hear the network exists, but what they are struggling with is disinformation, chaos, confusion, occasional bishops that are not helpful, and folks who have risked being labeled as homosexual in Africa and the Philippines, which is not a fun thing to be labeled, to promote regionalization. One of the ways we can help is to see that there are the funding there for folks who are already taking risks to do this, to be able to effectively reach as many people as possible. The other thing that's going on with this is that groups that we are working with in the Central Conferences all have, are doing what is called "matching grants" which is folks in whatever episcopal area or annual conference ...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I'm sorry, your time has expired.

Jack Draper, St. Paul UMC, laity: I have a question. Does this have any application, I see the central conferences as the main focus, but does it have any application within our general conference to regionalize within our general conference?

Richard Bentley, Retired Clergy: Regionalization is within a region. There is not a provision for regionalization to happen within a region. Sub-regionalization, which I what I would call it, is not presently an option and would require additional Constitutional Amendments as I understand it.

The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-13 - Call to Address the Current War in the Holy Land

Rev. Booth moved RES 24-13.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Yoshi Kuramoto, Clergy, San Pedro UMC: I ask that we, particularly those located in the west or global north, whatever names we wish to use, take on the additional responsibility of studying the history of Palestine. Balfour, Knockva. It is quite safe to stand back and make points about all sides. But these safe attempts only negate history and muddy our analysis of what is truly happening. When we recognized the harms done to colonize Hawaii, learning about militarism in the Philippines, and stated the goals of ending hunger, I immediately thought about Gaza. If the church wishes to lead society as a moral voice, then we must commit to going one step further in speaking the truth now and not tomorrow. I do not wish for us to issue an apology 100 years from today in remorse that while genocide was happening, the church was neutral. Violence may be occurring on both sides, and we certainly do not celebrate that, but we must also

clearly state that the context and reasons for each side's violence greatly differ. With the backing of the United States as a superpower, one side aims to accomplish an expanding settler colonial project while the other only wishes to liberate themselves from bondage. One side occupies, the other is occupied. Have you ever seen Palestinian children growing

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I'm sorry, your time is up.

The Resolution is before us.

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

RES 24-14 -Visitor Registration Fees for Western Jurisdictional Conference
Rev. Booth moved RES 24-14.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Richard Bentley, Chino UMC, clergy retired: I spent a good part of my life going to General Conferences and Judicial Conferences as an observer where you pay your own airfare, you pay your own housing, you pay for everything. I'm not sure I would go to this Jurisdictional Conference which has a mandatory \$450 registration fee, although it does include meals, but this is for four days. I really hope that we could move the point of a registration fee of \$10, buy your own meals, I think it would be much more consistent with our values to get there. Just in our own annual conference, I know how many of us here talk about how expensive it is to be here and all of the different strategies I have heard, we do not have a registration fee. Thank you. We can choose how to do meals, housing, etc. But with the present policy of the Jurisdiction, a visitor must pay \$450. Actually, that's not true. After some of us began objecting, in June, you can attend for one day for \$150 including meals. And should you have financial difficulties, you could apply for a scholarship of up to \$300, although that has not yet been publicized. I would encourage us to instead work with the jurisdiction to figure out how to get to a \$10 registration fee.

Gaye Fisher, Laity, Community UMC, Huntington Beach: I'm for this because when I came home from General Conference the first thing I did was sign up to go to Western Jurisdictional Conference. And I looked at the fee, but I have to be there, so I paid it. It's not something that I'm proud of that I put it on a credit card, but I paid it. I haven't heard anything about a scholarship. I have sent an email, but no one has gotten back to me about a scholarship.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank - A speech in favor.

Liz Rourke, Western Jurisdiction: I'm in favor of this, but the reason for the fees is that the 2022 conference happened and the expenses came out of the 2024 budget of the jurisdiction. The trial of Carcano came out of that budget also. We are trying to have a budget so they have full funds to work with. That's the reason for the large amount of the fees. I agree they need to be smaller.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This is a speech in favor.

The Resolution is before us.

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

Personal Privilege - Rev. Mary Ann Pickard

Clergy, Lakewood First UMC: I wanted to take a moment to thank the Annual Conference for passing the past Legislation 24-13 for a call for a ceasefire in the Holy Land. We have seen an incredible loss of life in

the past nine months, and I hope that you all will join me in offering words of peace that I hope go from these walls all the way across the sea to the Holy Land.

Rev. Pickard offered a Prayer for Palestine written by a seminarian student from Union Theological Seminary.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for that prayer. Tom Griffith also asked for a point of personal privilege.

Rev. Tom Griffith: Point of Personal Privilege. I am happy we are doing regionalization in the Church. We have regionalizations that are still with us that go back 85 years with the setting up of the jurisdictional system. It was set up because the Southern jurisdictions did not want to have “Yankee Bishops,” they wanted one of their own. That’s the way we’ve had a system that’s been working, and now an agency in the General Conference wants us to have a set number of Bishops. In the process of doing any jurisdictions that have elections coming up, they will have those filled by two already-elected Bishops from a different jurisdiction in the South. I don’t think that’s very helpful for us. I’m not sure Bishops from the South would understand what it is like to have half of the congregations and their church speak and worship in a language other than English, as we do. I’m not sure they would understand or be ready to receive a quarter of their colleagues being openly gay and lesbian. I think we have a system that works and I encourage us to talk with our delegations and share our feelings. I’ll be happy to talk about it after as well, if anyone would like to talk about it.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. I would like to ask Richard Bentley to, on behalf of this last comment and the other legislation that we have approved, to say a prayer for regionalization.

Richard Bentley: I’m tempted to do my all-purpose prayer. Be ready folks.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That’s fine.

Richard Bentley: God be with us in this time. Amen.

Video Presentation - How is Your District Flourishing Throughout Cal-Pac? - Media Team

Cabinet Matters - Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon, North District D.S. & Media Team

Tom Choi, Superintendent, Hawaii District: Personal Privilege: Ana Hungalu shared that her husband, Saka, is out of surgery. It was successful. Thank you for your prayers.

REC 24-08 - Closure of Immanuel United Methodist Church, Saipan

Bishop Escobedo-Frank moved REC 24-08.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

The Recommendation is before us.

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

Rev. Choi led the body in prayer.

Rev. Sandy Olewine, District Superintendent South District

Rev. Olewine spoke to Recommendation 24-09, the Recommendation to close the charter of one of our churches in the South District, Winchester Community United Methodist Church.

REC 24-09 - Closure of Winchester Community United Methodist Church

Rev. Olewine moved REC 24-09.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

The Recommendation is before us.

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

Rev. Olewine led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced the members of the Cabinet. The Cabinet was applauded for their work.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered Rev. Farley, who is retiring, and gave a gift in honor of his service.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: John leads in a quiet way, making sure that the things the Bishop asks him to do actually get implemented. He is talking to me all the time. I appreciate the detailed work John has done on your behalf and on my behalf. I am so grateful for your development of this role. I don't think we have enough applause to send him off.

Rev. Farley stated that he wished he had his guitar with him. He recognised that we all are family. He shared how he started with this Conference and today, this is 78 years of a Farley being appointed in this conference. Rev. Farley has a long history of family in this Conference. He thanks everyone for their love and for loving him.

The next change is Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon, who is leaving the Cabinet to be appointed as the Change Manager in the North district. She knows the area well and it will be a good fit. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that Melissa is an implementer who catches the vision quickly and then makes sure it happens. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that there are many stories to tell about Rev. MacKinnon, because we don't always see the things she does behind the scenes. We are grateful for her joy and presence in the Cabinet and we will miss her.

Rev. MacKinnon shared that when she became a Methodist in her early 20's, she immediately found family. She shared her career through the people who nourished her along the way and helped her recognize those gifts, and that she has loved every minute of being a District Superintendent. She talked about facing challenges together, overcoming obstacles, and the great joy and laughter she has enjoyed doing ministry that changes the world, and that she is deeply thankful.

The next change is Rev. Sandy Olewine moving to the Assistant of the Bishop. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that she has every confidence in Rev. Olewine and is grateful to her.

The next change is Rev. Moonyoung Lee becoming the Dean of the Cabinet. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that Rev. Lee has the many gifts and wisdom to be the Dean of the Cabinet and expressed her gratitude for Rev. Lee's help.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank welcomed Rev. Garth and Rev. Luis to the Cabinet. The Bishop recognized their ability to respond to the Community and be in touch with what is happening on the ground. The Bishop expressed her gratitude to both of them and their work.

This concludes the Cabinet Report.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank led the body in prayer for the Cabinet.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Before we end, I'd like to introduce a few people. I've previously mentioned some of the folks who have been so helpful to me, but I also want to mention two Laity who have been strong leaders with me: Mele Maka, an out front leader with the laity and my partner in ministry. I am grateful for her heart and spirit and the way she is in touch with God and the love she sends my way. Thank you, Mele, for being my partner.

I have another partner, and so do you, behind the scenes, Lori Meaders, our Chancellor. My daughter told me recently that I should have gotten a law degree, which would have been awful, but I do have Lori by my side and that's good enough. She has helped us through many dangers and toils since I have been here. I am very grateful for you, Lori. Thank you so much.

The last person I want to recognize is another bishop in the house, Bishop Swenson. When I first became Bishop and walked up onto the stage, she welcomed me and made me more comfortable. She has given me all kinds of love and encouragement along the way. I really appreciate this. She loves everyone, she's met you all and knows your stories. Out of her heart flows a deep love and wisdom. She said yes to preaching for our Ordination service, so you will see her preaching again with us.

Thank you for being here today.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank invited Mele Maka to close us in prayer.

**Order of Worship – Opening Worship
Service by the Young People of Cal-Pac UMC
Thursday, June 14, 2024
7:00 PM**

FROM NOURISHING TO FLOURISHING!

Island Praise opened worship by singing *You Are Good (Israel Houghton)* and *Thrive (Casting Crowns)*

UWM Youth and Young Adult shared an a cappella Tongan Song.

Welcome & Greetings

Zacariah Scanian & Katherine Henry

Call to Worship

Hillsong Chapel

Let Us Pray

Prayer Adaptation by Mary Ann Pickard

Song: Heal the World

Island Praise Team

Hearing the Word of God
through Flourishing Scripture

Jerimiah 17:7-8
Psalm 92:10-14
Psalm 46:10
Isaiah 45:8

Flourishing Star

Young People Committee (YPC) Youth President Hunter Davis

Flourish

YPC Young Adult President Annie Le
YPC Vice President Scarlett Bone
YPC Media/Communications Coordinator Maikolo Brown
YPC Co-Secretary Ireland Bone
YPC Co-Secretary Kalesita Tuifua
YPC Youth Representative Linda Uluave Lavaka-Hi

Youth Leaders

Linhvu Nguyen (Good Shepherd UMC)
Kathy Askins (San Marcos UMC)
Monique Lilomaiva (Knollwood UMC)
Darrell Mark (Faith Torrance UMC)

I See Stars - Video

Service of Holy Baptism

Zoey Duarte-Wang
Chole Duarte-Wang

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Remember Your Baptism

Island Praise Team
Pastor Cho; Alicia Hortiales;
Leota Tu'itahi; Zac Scanian;
Bri Uipi; Val Hungalu

Dismissal with Blessing

Scripture

Numbers 6:24-26 (The Message)

Closing Song

God is For You

Island Praise Team
Pastor Cho; Carmen; Alicia

Worship Notes

Closing Song written by Chris Brown/Steven Furtick/Cody Carnes/Dari Brooke Jobe
The Blessing lyrics copyright Worship Together Music, Capitol Cmg Paragon; Kari Jobe Carnes Music,
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