



BEing  
WELL



2024

Pacific Northwest  
Annual Conference

Dist. Superintendent Reports

PRE-CONFERENCE HANDBOOK

## K. REPORTS OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

### CREST TO COAST MISSIONAL DISTRICT

As I reflect on the 2023–2024 appointment year and the ministry within the Crest to Coast Missional District, three themes emerge: M.I.L.E. Exploration, Collaboration, and Renewal.

#### M.I.L.E. Exploration

This has been aFor a year now, clergy and churches have been exploring ministry through the container of the M.I.L.E. (Ministry that Matters, Itineration and Location, Lay Ministry Enhancement, Eliminating Racism). Every church completed a M.I.L.E. assessment to help leadership start thinking about the impact that they want to have in their context and community. Some were more prepared to engage in this conversation than others, but every local church now has a baseline with which to keep themselves accountable to the work they want to do and the impact they want to have. Clergy began thinking about their ministry through the M.I.L.E. lens. Many churches studied the M.I.L.E. through sermon series. As is the case throughout the G.N.W. area, as a part of Ministry that Matters, many churches have started exploring the stewardship of their building and property on their own or with ecumenical partners. First United Methodist Church of Olympia looked to “inhabit their location” as a way to make itineration tangible to laity. Throughout the fall and winter, I preached on Lay Ministry Enhancement, encouraging all laity to do a spiritual gifts assessment and consider how God is calling them to participate in the life of their church and community. By far, Lay Ministry Enhancement has captured the excitement of most local churches. As a part of the Elimination of Racism work, the South Sound Co-operative is engaged in our G.N.W. area equity work. Once fully trained in late 2024, they will be a resource to the district in the very important work of changing systems and building equity. In January, it was a delight to host Bishop Cedrick at the Crest to Coast’s Day in the District event. It was the first all-district gathering since the COVID-19 pandemic. The energy was high as everyone reconnected with one another and had a chance to get to know Bishop Cedrick better.



#### Collaboration

As Crest to Coast Churches re-engaged visioning work, clergy and laity continued exploring potential collaborative opportunities with other United Methodist Churches, ecumenical partners, and community organizations. While the particular ministries are varied, the growing sense of collaboration is consistent. More churches are beginning to understand that we truly are better together. It is important to determine the “we” in each setting. In several areas of the District, I’ve invited groups of churches to explore collaboration using the book *An Effective Approach to Co-operative Parishes: A Congregational*

Guide to Discernment and Implementation by Ka L. Kotan and Jason C. Stanley as a jumping off point. So far, the Twin Harbors Sub-District (Elma, Satsop, Montesano, Central Park, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Ocean Shores, and Willapa), the Three Rivers Circuit (Castle Rock, Kelso, and Longview), and some of the Hub City Sub-District (Chehalis, Centralia, Rochester) have started using the resource to dig into God's vision for their church and community and collaborative opportunities. The Clark County Sub-district continues to develop deeper connectional ties locally, the South Sound Co-operative continues to explore its next level of connectionism, and Spanaway U.M.C. continues to build relationships with community partners to further its social ministry locally. I can't wait to see what emerges in the coming year!

### Renewal

Throughout the fall, I heard from churches and pastoral leaders that worship attendance started rising again, new members wanted to join the church, and ministry ideas were bubbling up in ministry teams. I've continued hearing about the emergence of renewal this spring. While we still work to find our new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a clear sense that energy is returning to our pastoral leaders, laity, and local churches. The same can be said of our District. Our District co-lay leaders started hosting a monthly check-in for local church lay leaders. Two district-wide book studies (one for pastoral leaders and one for laity) have engaged Valarie Kaur's *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*. The District's Learning Hub began as a monthly opportunity for the laity to come together for an hour of learning and sharing. Topics included engaging conflict in healthy ways, equity work in local churches, laity leading sermon time in creative ways, Ocean Park Camp updates, and so much more. It is hopeful to see signs of renewal after so many difficult pandemic related years.

### Transitional Blessings

Finally, we ask for special transitional blessings for Crest to Coast churches and clergy. Central Park United Methodist Church becomes a lay-led congregation in July. We celebrate with Kellen Corliss as he anticipates being ordained at Annual Conference. We send off Kendra Behn-Smith to an appointment in the Seven Rivers District and welcome Thomas Telfer and Stephen Dilworth to the Crest to Coast District. May God surround the churches and pastoral leaders moving through a time of transition.

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Kathleen Weber, Crest to Coast District Superintendent*

## INLAND AND SEVEN RIVERS MISSIONAL DISTRICTS

### The Work We Do Together

This year will bring the end of the third year that our two districts are together under one superintendent, and this has allowed us to see that the work of ministry can be accomplished and will continue into our fourth year and beyond. Cohort Pastors, who serve in ministry with their cohort churches and clergy, is one of the reasons these last three years have seemed, less difficult than I had expected.

Between Cohort Pastors, the work of Sheila Miranda (the Connectional Minister for our districts), District Lay Leaders, Billie Fitzsimmons and John Townsend, and our Administrative Assistant Laura Velonza meeting regularly, we are able to stay informed and consider where our gifts and energy are best needed. Several of our Cohorts also have lay leaders who help us engage in the work of ministry from different points of view. This team engages, supports, and allows us to carry out the missional work of our districts. This team in Seven Rivers and Inland makes the work we do together take place. Working with such generous and gifted colleagues and friends continues to be a great pleasure.



### We Are Working at Being Connectional

This year, there was more time for being together, having social gatherings, doing workshops, and feeling like a new normal was coming into being. My load not only feels lighter, but I am moving deeper into the missional strategist portion of superintendency.

When Bishop Cedrick introduced the M.I.L.E., it gave us direction toward a goal. I suspect we are still getting to know what that means for each of the churches in our districts. It gives us a common language even though we each find ways to interpret this ministry into our own contexts, needs, and resources that serve to make it real. Here is a quick recap from our conference webpage link to the Bishop's Blog.

**M:** Ministry that Matters. Is about how churches and ministry settings can go outside themselves to turn from the mirror and look out the window to be part of their communities.

**I:** Itineration and location. Bishop Bridgeforth asked people to think about how we might address inequities in the itineration system within The United Methodist Church to best suit the pastor, church, and the community they serve.

**L:** Lay Ministry Enhancement. Bishop Bridgeforth preached about the importance of lay ministry enhancement as the church changes shape. The laity is already a critical resource, but there is a need to equip and empower the laity to be a more active voice in the churches and communities we serve.

**E: Eliminating Racism.** Bishop Bridgeforth laid out plans for resources to be developed to engage churches and ministry settings in meaningful discussions and evaluate practices that lead to institutional racism and societal harm.

One of the things the M.I.L.E. has done for me is that it reminds me that our connectional system needs to connect with those outside our church. While being connected is essential, we cannot forget that our churches are surrounded by people who may not understand who we are.

### **We Are Busier**

While it is true that many are still tired, I am seeing a new energy and hope in several of our congregations. This year, in particular, we are both blessed and possibly overwhelmed because two opposite emotions can live in one space, with hosting our Annual Conference in Seven Rivers and Western Jurisdiction in Inland District.

### **The Work Is Never Done**

The world continues to change, and many of you have been wrestling with what that means for the local church. I continue to ask many of the same questions: What is God calling us to do now? What are we uniquely gifted at doing? To do what we are called to do, what do we need to stop doing? What are we doing that is not essential?

### **Thank You**

I want to graciously acknowledge the people who surround me with support and wisdom and fill the gaps when things become overwhelming: my partner on the east side, Sheila Miranda, serves as the Connectional Minister for our two districts. Laura Velonza, our Administrative Assistant. The Cohort Pastors, Cohort Lay Leaders, and District Lay Leaders. I am so grateful to you all. I also appreciate my D.S. colleagues, whom I leaned on in early 2024 when I was unexpectedly out of my office, recovering from surgery for over two months.

### **My Hope**

Wouldn't it be great if we leaned on the concept of looking out the window more often than we might look into the mirror? What might we notice that is new and delightful that might bear fruit for our local ministry and the Gospel?

What if we were to embrace walking the M.I.L.E., asking God to open our eyes to see the ministry needs we are equipped to take up? I pray that God will give us all more clarity and direction to complete the work we are each called to do.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Daniel Miranda, Seven Rivers and Inland District Superintendent*

## PUGET SOUND MISSIONAL DISTRICT

I am writing this report during the time of the General Conference 2020 (in 2024) and thus I keep hearing in my head the 3 main objectives that our delegation named as their priorities in coming to the Charlotte, NC. These are to REGIONALIZE THE CHURCH, to REVISE THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES and to REMOVE THE DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE FROM THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE. I was inspired by this to also divide this report in 3Rs namely: RESET, RESTART, REFOCUS.

### Reset

In the summer of 2023, we had 6 clergy gatherings throughout the district. They were just meant to create a space for clergy members of the district to gather, share a meal, get to know each other, and welcome new colleagues in the district. In a way, it was like a resetting of our hearts and minds as we entered a new appointment year together.

For the appointment year 2023-2024, here is a list of our siblings and colleagues who either received a new appointment (in or out of the district), moved to a life of retirement or ended their time of service as pastor/s in a local church setting:



### We Can Pivot and Adapt Quickly

- 1) Received a new appointment in the district
  - a. Grace Ncabani M'Mujuri (Allen)
  - b. Mark Johnson (Anacortes)
  - c. Susan Griggs (Bainbridge: Seabold)
  - d. Meredith Dodd (Kirkland: Lake Washington)
  - e. Cindy Roberts (Lynden)
  - f. Cathy Law (Mill Creek: Cedar Cross)
  - g. Greg Reffner (added Tracyton UMC)
- 2) Received a new appointment outside of the district
  - a. Kate Kilroy (Shoreline: Ronald)
  - b. Kim Poer (Vancouver: Salmon Creek)
  - c. Jenny Smith (Salem-Keizer: Open Door Churches)
- 3) Retired/ Ended Appointment
  - a. Rich Lang
  - b. Jim Clarke
  - c. Rich Feagin
  - d. Ann Jacob

In Fall 2023, our district hosted the Bishop and the GNW Cabinet in their annual Fall Retreat. We are grateful to Garden Street UMC for being our host church. The Bishop and the Cabinet also had a chance to cross the border, spend time visiting our siblings in Canada, and celebrate the great work that they are doing up there.

After the Cabinet Retreat, Bishop Cedrick returned to the district for the ‘Bishop’s Day in the District’ event. He spent a full day listening to our stories around the M.I.L.E. to get acquainted with the ministries in every local congregation. Many of us gathered in two locations for this event: the morning gathering was hosted by Redeemer UMC in Kingston, and the afternoon one was at Bothell UMC.

I guess part of the resetting that happened was the culmination of the disaffiliation process. By the end of 2023, two churches had disaffiliated from the UMC using paragraph 2553 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*. These are the formerly Woodinville Community and Silverdale UMCs.

### Restart

In the Fall of 2023, the District Leadership Team was reorganized/restarted, and the District Missional Clusters were also reconvened. The following are the members of this team and convenors of the missional clusters: Keith Skore, Amory Peck, Lynn Magnuson, Erin Tombaugh, Rev. Donna Pritchard, Rev. Christopher Gudger-Raines, Rev. Desi Larson, Rev. Brook McBride, Rev. Kathy Hartgraves, and Rev. Shirley DeLarme.

The leadership team has been discussing the possibility of restarting the ROOTS & WINGS (District Laity Training) and the CLERGY DAY APART (Clergy Retreat) in 2024.

Roots and Wings is currently scheduled to happen in 3 locations. Here’s the latest list of dates and locations:

- |    |                    |   |                           |
|----|--------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1) | August 17, 2024    | – | Stanwood UMC, Stanwood WA |
| 2) | September 14, 2024 | - | Trinity UMC, Sequim, WA   |
| 3) | October 12, 2024   | - | Faith UMC, Sammamish, WA  |

### Refocus

Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth’s sermon series during the Annual Conference has led to many conversations around key ministry areas where we can all (re)focus our attention. We have invited each church in the district to submit a snapshot of their ministries to keep the bishop’s call in front of us. The focus was on the “window work” each congregation was doing as we continued the journey together along the M.I.L.E. Here’s a link to this resource and guide: <https://tinyurl.com/mrhvws5u>

Let me express my deepest gratitude to the pastors, pastoral leaders, lay people, and the churches in the Puget Sound Missional District. Working alongside you all these past six years has been a great honor. I have been humbled by your great love and dedication to.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. J. Mark Galang, Puget Sound District Superintendent*

## SEATAC MISSIONAL DISTRICT

In this Conference year 2023-24, the SeaTac District sought to live into and be challenged individually and as a church by M.I.L.E. as articulated by Bishop Bridgeforth, who set forth a powerful call and vision for our Conference and Area.

### Some District highlights in alignment with M.I.L.E.

In August 2023, all churches were invited to participate in a District Day at Tacoma First/Common Good Tacoma as we explored ways to deepen our community engagement and develop partnerships with those with a shared mission and vision for our communities. In January 2024, we were delighted to welcome Bishop Cedrick to our District and offered presentations from many of our churches on how they are engaging M.I.L.E. in their ministries. In February 2024, our District and Blaine Memorial UMC co-hosted a workshop entitled “Creating a Safety and Security Ministry” to help our congregations prepare and be more focused and mindful of security issues on our campuses and our congregations. In May 2024, the District co-sponsored an event with The Well, a workshop led by Rev. Grey Maggiano, a Lutheran clergy person serving in the Baltimore area, to talk about his congregation’s process in addressing their legacy of racism and segregation, seeking to tell them hard truths in love so that actions on the present can serve a more just future. Also, our District Lay Leaders continue to meet monthly on Zoom calls and have begun to meet in person periodically under the leadership care and guidance of our interim Lay Leader, J.D. Drollinger. These gatherings offer support and an opportunity for resource sharing and engage current topics, concerns, and questions arising in our churches.



As we look to this new Conference year, we continue to plan workshops, gatherings, and opportunities for collaboration amongst our District churches and leadership. We have also begun working on plans for a Fall Retreat for our clergy. More information on these will be forthcoming.

### Some highlights from the District churches

We continue to engage with churches exploring property development, keeping with the M of MILE.... Haller Lake, Woodland Park, St. Peter’s, Tacoma: Mason, and Grace UMC are all in various stages of discussion around the vision, missional values, and objectives; Highline UMC received a 2 million dollar funding grant through Senator Patty Murray to explore the development of a shelter and crisis care center; and U Gathering UMC continues to search out options for a future home as their property development partner purchased the property outright rather than develop it as initially planned.

SeaTac churches continued to explore collaborative ministry possibilities in this Conference year: Bellevue: St. Peter’s and Bellevue First are not only sharing a pastor but also



exploring creative ministry opportunities for their congregations to come around together; University Gathering is coming into a new relationship that includes worshipping at Green Lake UMC while continuing to pursue a location for their ministry in the University District; across the District, clergy continue to create partnerships and colleague groups for themselves and their ministries, one example being Haller Lake, Ronald and Green Lake UMC's who held a collaborative Confirmation Class for their youth.

And we continue to be inspired and moved by the justice work happening at Riverton Park UMC, as Rev. Jan Bolerjack has provided courageous leadership by opening up space and services for asylum seekers who are trapped in a failed immigration system and left with scant possibilities for supporting themselves or finding suitable accommodations while they await a hearing to determine their status in the U.S. Deep gratitude for the significant numbers of our churches here and all around the Conference and Area who are donating money, material resources, and volunteering time to support these asylum seekers, and Rev. Jan and this important ministry of Riverton Park.

At this Annual Conference we offer our congratulations and give praise and thanksgiving to God for Ashley Skinner-Creek (Elder) and Gayle Tabor (Elder), who will be ordained and become members in full connection at this year's Annual Conference. And we offer congratulations and praise to God for Denise Ann Belista (Deacon), Kate Kilroy Crisci (Elder), Jackie Celin (Deacon) who will be commissioned and received as provisional members.

As I close, I wish to offer my deepest gratitude to those who have supported the work of our District in many important ways... J.D. Drollinger, our interim lay leader, who has stepped in to offer support but also to engage our lay leaders in challenging ways; Rev. Pat Simpson, who have been invaluable in her assistance to those congregations who are exploring property development; Jim Carroll, who has been leading our District Building and Location Committee, as they seek to provide guidance, support and resources to those who are exploring church property sales and development, and Rev. Laura Baumgartner and Rev. Kay Barckley, who have been co-chairing our District Committee on Ministry, as they support and guide those persons who are moving through the candidacy and credentialing process toward ordination, and those seeking to serve as local pastors and certified lay ministers in local church settings.

I continue to be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to serve our denomination, Conference and District in this role of Superintendent, as I continue to grow into the role that was truncated by the pandemic; and I continue to look forward with excitement and passion for the work we can do together for the glory of God!

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Derek Nakano, SeaTac District Superintendent*