



August 22, 2022

TO: Churches, Delegates and Pastors of Southern California Nevada Conference  
FR: Pilgrim Pines Board of Directors/ Pilgrim Pines Transition Team  
RE: Pilgrim Pines Proposed Bylaws

Greetings and thank you for your continued support and prayers for the ministry of Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center. The information contained in this mailing is to prepare you for the special meeting of the Conference that is scheduled for **Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM**. **You will receive information on how to register for that meeting soon**. The meeting is being called to consider the restated bylaws for Pilgrim Pines. It seems unfair to ask that you consider these bylaws without providing background on WHY these changes are being proposed. You may know this history and if so, you may want to skip the background and go straight to the proposed bylaws. But if you don't; the background provided here may be helpful.

Also, if you want to discuss the bylaws and the transition underway at Pilgrim Pines BEFORE the special meeting, the Transition Team invites to join a ZOOM conversation on **Wednesday September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**. **Here is the ZOOM invitation to join that conversation**

**Join Zoom Meeting on Wednesday September 7th**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83786055095?pwd=M2xuKzQ0cWJRQ1dTOTBJMXQxT0ZXZz09>

Meeting ID: 837 8605 5095

Passcode: 495549 +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

### **Background Information**

To begin: A decision was made by the Pilgrim Pines Board of Directors (currently the same group as the Conference Board of Directors) to end the relationship with the company that has been managing Pilgrim Pines for the last 10 years. Ending the contract required a years notice; so United Church Conference and Retreats (UCCR) was informed in late 2021 of the intent to end the relationship effective December 31, 2022.

Many leaders committed to the ministry at Pilgrim Pines were already discussing a strategic plan and were convening to gather information from camps across the country. They conducted surveys, made calls to gather data about the mission, structure of governance, funding, relationship to Conferences, what was working, etc. This information proved helpful and informative in the work that followed.

The Pilgrim Pines Transition Team was formally convened in March of this year and was intentionally comprised of key leaders who have been involved at Pilgrim Pines for many years. Petra Malleis-Sternberg; Jude Johnson, Phil Jenkins and Rich Fluechtling (who probably knows more about the money at PP than anyone at this point). Edith Guffey was asked to serve as the staff to this Team. Every recommendation that you see or read about the transition has the total support of everyone on this team.

Since that time, work has been underway to

- Clarify the financial realities of Pilgrim Pines
- Recommend a governance model
- Recommend a management model

Much of the previous work done in strategic planning allowed the Transition Team to move quickly. And in April, a background paper was presented to the Board recommending a path forward for Pilgrim Pines addressing three primary concerns.

- **Governance Model** Pilgrim Pines is already a separate 501c3 but does not function as one. The recommendation is that Pilgrim Pines have a completely separate Board of Directors. Currently the same persons serve as the Board of Directors of the Conference and the Camp. Calls to other camps indicate that the vast majority have a separate Board and the information indicates that this is the best route. The Transition Team agrees. Asking the same people to provide oversight for the Conference AND Pilgrim Pines is an unfair expectation for volunteers; and does not allow for in-depth understanding and oversight of two radically different organizations.
- **Mission Partner:** A legally independent organization can still be a covenantal mission partner; the Conference has many of these. And such a partnership can be established with Pilgrim Pines. There are many ways to accomplish this and the bylaws , The PP Board could have seats that are appointed by the Conference, or the majority of Board members must be UCC. Property ownership is always a concern and safeguards can be included to protect the Conference should the camp close.
- **Pilgrim Pines should have a separate budget:** While theoretically the budgets are separate; a system has been created that intertwines Pilgrim Pines with the Conference and requires Pilgrim Pines to rely on the Conference for income (OCWM), come to the Conference for permission for fundraising; and if Pilgrim Pines runs a deficit there is the expectation that the Conference covers the deficit. The recommendation is that as a separate organization, Pilgrim Pines has the opportunity to **actually be and become** the organization it dreams of becoming. It can develop and manage its own budget, be responsible for income and expenses, make its own hiring and program decisions, manage facilities, market, and fundraise without having to ask permission. It is a separate organization free to grow and develop.
- **Funding:** Finally, moving in this direction will require an investment. Because Pilgrim Pines has never really operated as a separate 501 C 3; other than scholarship dollars, they do not have significant dollars of their own. There is income from reservations and use of the facility, but the Conference Board will need to authorize dollars to support the startup of this process. Staff will need to be hired this year so that on January 1, they will be ready to take over the processes that UCCR is currently managing. And yes, some of the costs will be covered by dollars previously being used to pay UCCR, but not all. It is not possible to project exactly what this cost will be as COVID has made projections unreliable as well as the history of the last 10 years with UCCR has been sporadic. So, startup dollars will be needed. These dollars are in addition to what is already in the budget that has been adopted for 2023. The commitment however should be

limited, and conversation has been for perhaps no more than two years with a set amount, not an open-ended unending amount which it has been in the past.

**That is the background.** What you will find in the proposed bylaws is language that:

- Redefines the composition of the Pilgrim Pines Board of Directors
- Continues Pilgrim Pines as a mission partner of the Southern California Nevada Conference/UCC
- Establishes the Role of an Executive Director of Pilgrim Pines
- Addresses concerns and questions about property ownership

We look forward to the opportunity to respond to any questions you have.

*Members of the Pilgrim Pines Transition Team:*

Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg; Jude Johnson, Phil Jenkins and Rich Fluechtling

Edith Guffey, Staff