

Annual Gathering: Know Your Leaders

MEET YOUR CONFERENCE OFFICERS



Rev. Andy Schwiebert (he/him) Moderator Andy is serving as the Moderator of SCNC this year and served as Vice-Moderator last year. He is a member at First Congregational Church of Pasadena, UCC where he served as Associate Pastor from 2009-2017. He is now in a 4-way covenant with Immanuel Presbyterian Church, a bilingual (Spanish/English) PCUSA congregation where he has served as Transitional Pastor since 2017. Andy has been supporting Immanuel’s leadership in discerning mission priorities—including the re-development of

significant portions of their property into affordable housing, among other initiatives—prior to calling their next settled pastor.

Andy previously was the Director of the Interfaith Council for Economics & Justice in San Jose, was a worker and community organizer with Justice for Janitors (SEIU), has led voter registration, worker solidarity and immigrant rights organizing efforts in Arizona and Northern California, served as Director of Recruitment at Claremont School of Theology and was a faith-rooted organizer with Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice in Los Angeles from 2016-2018. Originally from Arizona, Andy studied as an undergraduate at UC Berkeley before working for 3 years in Mexico and Colombia with the Latin-America-focused, peace and justice organization Witness for Peace. Andy completed his MDiv from Pacific School of Religion in 2007 and has been living and serving in SCNC since 2008, most recently residing in Torrance. He feels very fortunate both to be husband to Rev. Allison Mark (Pastor of Faith UMC in Torrance) and to be father to daughters Kaira (8) and Amara (6). Andy loves soccer!



Rev. Cynthia “Wally” Hoeger (she/her) Vice Moderator of the Conference In this role, she has served on the Conference Board of Directors and the Annual Gathering Planning Team. Wally grew up in this conference and has served three churches over her career including First Congregational Church of Los Angeles and Manhattan Beach Community Church. Her longevity and history has been a helpful resource during this time of transition. Wally has worked full-time in children’s and youth ministry for over 15 years and

currently serves at First Congregational Church of Long Beach as their Designated Associate Minister. She received her M.Div. from Claremont School of Theology and a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and Organizational Studies & Leadership from

Chapman University. Passionate about supporting and equipping parents to engage in faith practices at home, she lives in Long Beach with her wife Kelly, their baby Laurel, and a menagerie of cats, dogs, and chickens.



Rev. Sarah Averette-Phillips (she/her), Chair of the Southern California Nevada Conference Board of Directors. And absolutely loves serving as the pastor at Brea Congregational Church. She is also a member of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) a leadership development initiative of the Pension Board for young clergy. Sarah stepped into the role of Board Chair role at a challenging time and has provided leadership far beyond the call of duty. She will term out of as Board Chair at this Annual Gathering but states that she has

deeply appreciated her time working on the board and is optimistic that the SCNC has a bright future ahead.



Jude Johnson(he/they) Vice Chair is a Member of Pilgrim UCC in Carlsbad, California, and Member in Discernment. They recently completed a Chaplain Fellowship at VA Loma Linda, specializing in spiritual care for LGBTQ+ veterans and Holistic Mental Health. You may also know Jude from their work with Pilgrim Pines Camp in Yucaipa, California or from workshops facilitate lead for LGBTQ+ allies on gender identity and sexuality. Jude was a member of the Transition Team as Pilgrim Pines worked closely with the Conference and other

committed leaders of Pilgrim Pines to launch Pilgrim Pines into a truly independent entity and continuing mission partner.



Rev. Susie Bjork, (she/her) Secretary Board of Directors is the Associate Pastor of Bay Shore Community Congregational Church (UCC) in Long Beach. Her passion in ministry centers on faith development and education for all ages and she is inspired by the intersection between art and spirituality. Susie has been glad to serve on the conference Board of Directors for the past three years and as the conference Secretary.



Ken Roberts, (he/him) Treasurer A native Midwesterner, Ken moved from Indiana to California when he was 16; he says that when he discovered beaches, surfing and the ocean, he never looked back. He has been a member of Covina Community Church since 1985 and over the years has served as Chair of Trustees and Moderator and currently serves as the Vice Moderator and Treasurer. Professionally, Ken started his own company, WCD Alarms, installing security and fire alarms and still works although he notes he is

“sort of semi-retired.” In addition to serving as treasurer of the Conference, Ken also takes care of property maintenance at his local church. Prior to stepping in to the role of Conference Treasurer, Ken was already serving on the Conference, Building the Future Committee; that is charged with the oversight of the finance and property of the conference. Ken brings this specific knowledge of the Conference and his overall experience to the role of Conference Treasurer.



Rev. Kris Bergstrom (she/her) Acting Conference Minister Prior to her current call as Acting Conference Minister, Kris served as Associate Conference Minister and the chair of the Conference Ethics Team. Before joining the staff, she sat on the Conference Board of Directors. A second-career clergy person, Kris has 35 years of experience as an educator and educational administrator. She brings advanced training in dispute resolution, conflict mitigation, and mediation. Kris was the senior pastor of Church of the Foothills in Ventura from 2012-2018, during which time she chaired Northern

Association’s Church and Ministry Committee. Her unique skills and experiences continue to be a gift during this critical time in our shared life.