

Annual Gathering: Election of a Conference Minister

The election of a Conference Minister is governed by the Bylaws of the Southern California Nevada Conference in Article X Paragraph 31. It reads as follows:

- 31. The Conference Minister shall be elected by the Conference upon nomination by the Board** and shall be accountable to the Board on behalf of the Conference. The Conference Minister shall reside within the geographic boundaries of the Conference and shall maintain good standing in an Association of the Conference. **The Conference Minister shall serve for an indefinite period** which shall be terminated only by ninety (90) day notice, either by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board or by letter from the Conference Minister to the Chairperson of the Board. Notice of termination may be by less than 90 days if mutually agreeable to the Board and to the Conference Minister. In case of a vacancy in the office of Conference Minister, the Board shall have power to appoint an Interim Conference Minister.

On Saturday morning, the Board of Directors and the Search Committee will formally present **Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith** to the Annual Gathering for your consideration as the Settled Conference Minister of the Southern California Nevada Conference.

The Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith



The Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC) and currently serves on staff at the UCC National Offices as the Executive Associate in Wider Church Ministries. In this role, she assists with staff development, communication, operations, and overall strategy development, including fund development for the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.

Her previous leadership roles in the UCC include Conference Minister and President of UCC Penn Central Conference and senior pastoral leadership roles in churches in Harrisburg, PA, State College, PA, and Bloomington, IN. She was the first woman of color to serve in these various leadership roles.

While serving as Conference Minister, Dr. Dawkins-Smith worked with the Conference

Board to create a strategic (missional) plan that outlined several new initiatives including a proposal to realign the Associations to foster increased collaboration and cooperation, as well as the introduction of innovation grants which inspired congregations to engage new ways of doing ministry.

Dr. Dawkins-Smith believes that serving the community is best done in collaboration with others and by building a broad-reaching coalition. She embodied that belief in her leadership for an Anti-Bullying Initiative in the Harrisburg School District, in collaboration with 14 other community organizations. The initiative provided training for faculty and staff to create safe spaces in schools, especially for LGBTQIA students, and equipped parents to support their children when bullying happens.

As a second career clergy, prior to a vocation in ministry, Dr. Dawkins-Smith served in sales and marketing, management, and training roles across several industries (pharmaceutical, manufacturing, financial institutions, and non-profits).

Dr. Dawkins-Smith holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Cincinnati, and Master of Divinity ('07) and Doctor of Ministry ('16) degrees from Lancaster Theological Seminary.

She loves gardening, traveling, and spending time with her adult children. She also loves to foster spaces for thoughtful imagination and innovation.