



**SCNC ANNUAL
GATHERING 2026**

WE'RE THE ONES!

"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

Matthew 11:3 CEB



**Southern California Nevada
Conference UCC**

2026 Annual Gathering

BUSINESS

BOOK

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2026 ANNUAL GATHERING SCHEDULE

First Congregational Church of Los Angeles

We Are the Ones!

Friday, May 29

10:00 am Registration Opens

11:00 am – 11:45 am Pre-AG Workshops Block 1

A few opportunities to engage with one another before Annual Gathering officially begins

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch & Conversations

1:15 pm – 5:30 pm Pilgrim Pines Youth Programming

1:15 pm – 3:00 pm Opening Worship & Plenary I (online and onsite)

Worship Led by FCCLA – Rev. Michael Lehman preaching
SCNC Business Agenda

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Workshops Block 2A

Includes one online only workshop

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Workshops Block 2B

Includes one online only workshop

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Reception

Hosted by Pacific School of Religion

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Dinner & Evening Program

Music and SCNC Awards

8:30 pm – 10:00 pm Post-Dinner Entertainment

Bingo, karaoke, and mingling

Saturday, May 30

9:00 am – 10:00 am Sacred Encounters

Three options for morning grounding and reflection

10:00 am – 2:30 pm Pilgrim Pines Youth Programming

10:15 am – 11:15 am Workshops Block 3

11:30 am – 12:30 pm Lunch

12:45 pm – 2:30 pm Plenary II & Closing Worship (online and onsite)

SCNC Business Agenda

Worship (with Communion) Led by SCNC – Rev. Chrissy Siva Preaching



**SCNC ANNUAL
GATHERING 2026**

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND CONGREGATIONALIST POLITY

BRAD ELLIOTT STONE, Westwood Hills Congregational UCC
Parliamentarian, 2026 Annual Meeting

Parliamentary procedure, particularly as presented in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, is observed in order to ensure the democratic nature of (American) deliberative bodies. Given our congregational polity, it is of particular importance that

- all voting members have the right to vote their conscience .
- all members have the opportunity to state support or opposition to any given matter under deliberation.
- the will of the majority constitutes the will of the whole body while also respecting the dissenting minority.

Prior to Robert and other fans of government parliamentary procedure, the common deliberative method in congregational polity was *consensus*. This is still the issue that keeps people from usually being excited about parliamentary procedure.: the desire for consensus. When there is consensus, it is granted (no vote is even required). Yet, when there is no consensus, the consensus approach turns into a hostile (and hostage) situation, usually involving coercion or one side simply giving up. *Robert's* seeks to avoid such coercion, allowing everyone's voice to be heard and position known, even in losing.

Like good use of etiquette, proper use of parliamentary procedure would be invisible. When members of a deliberative body do not know the rules of parliamentary procedure, the ones who do sometimes use it as a weapon, which is completely contrary to the spirit of parliamentary procedure!

Robert conceived of his book on rules of order after a disastrous church meeting. *Robert's Rules* is written primarily for churches with congregational polity, and thus finds a nice role in our UCC heritage. Alas, Robert was not a Congregationalist; he was a Baptist (which also operate with congregational polity). His father was a Baptist minister (and the first President of Morehouse College!). Robert's career was as an Army engineer, retiring at the rank of General. Just as he created several water systems to make the Mississippi River easier to navigate in the early decades of the 20th century, *Robert's Rules of Order* help us navigate the difficult waters of deliberation as one body composed of different people and opinions.

Summaries of Our Governing Documents

BYLAWS are the organizational structure of a deliberative body. They describe membership of the body, officers (especially their responsibilities and powers), committees (including how such committees are constituted and the powers bestowed to those committees), and other vital elements of the deliberative body. For most groups, the Bylaws are also the Constitution of the organization. In our case, the Bylaws are constitutive, establishing the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, defining the Board of Directors, and outlining the tasks and powers of the Conference Minister in addition to the structure of the deliberative body.

Here is a summary of the Bylaws, with emphasis given to what is relevant for the Annual Meeting.

Art. I: Name declares the name of the Conference.

Art. II: Definition determines the geographical jurisdiction of the Conference.

Art. III: Purpose defines the purpose for having such a body as SCNCUCC.

Art. IV: Membership is about churches and ministers that are part of the SCNCUCC.

Art. V: Responsibility defines the responsibilities of the Conference (what members can expect the Conference to do or provide)

Art. VI: Rights and Responsibilities of the Local Church reasserts the congregational polity that emphasizes local church autonomy. The SCNCUCC cannot force anything on any of the local churches.

Art. VII: Annual and Special Conference Meetings describes the types of meetings that the Conference can have, with special focus on the Annual Meeting.

- (17) The Annual Meeting is held in May or June each year.
- (18) Special meetings can also be called with thirty days notice.
- (19) Quorum is seventy-five voting members.
- (20) Voting members are defined in the following way:
 - ◊ church delegates (# based on congregation size) from member churches
 - ◊ all ministers who have standing in the Conference
 - ◊ Conference officers
 - ◊ Board of Directors members
 - ◊ the moderators of all of the Associations within the Conference
 - ◊ delegates from the Conference to the General Synod
- (21) *Ecclesiastical Meetings* handle matters of ordination, local church standing, and other “Association” tasks in the absence of an Association meeting.
- (22) There are four standing committees established in the Bylaws:
 - ◊ The *Nominating Committee* presents a slate of officers, Board of Directors members, delegates to General Synod, and membership to all of the committees of the Conference.
 - ◊ The *Annual Meeting Planning Committee* prepares the program for the Annual Meeting and handles the preparations for the meeting and the relevant documents.
 - ◊ The *Resolutions Committee* is formed *ad hoc* as needed to vet resolution proposals for consideration by the Conference (more about this committee in the Standing Rules).
 - ◊ The *Covenanting Committee on Ministry* handles ordinations, discernment processes, etc. This committee is not directly connected to the Annual Meeting.

Art. VIII: Officers and Duties establishes the election, responsibilities, and powers of officers of the Conference.

- (23) There are six officers outlined in the Bylaws
 - Moderator
 - Vice-Moderator
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Chairperson of the Board of Directors
 - Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors
- (24) These officers are elected at the Annual Meeting.
 - The Nominating Committee presents a slate on Day 1, allowing at least twelve hours for consideration.
 - On Day 2, the slate is adopted (perhaps with modifications).
- (25) The terms of officers is described and term limits declared.
- (26) The duties of each officer is described.

Art. IX: Board of Directors establishes the membership, responsibilities, meetings, and

powers of the Board of Directors. This is the fiduciary body of the Conference (with the Annual Meeting being the gathering of the deliberative body). The Board of Directors is empowered to make some decisions, but all of their powers are determined by the deliberative body.

Art. X: Conference Minister and Staff establishes the position of Conference Minister, outlining responsibility, powers, and staffing (both Associate Conference Ministers and office staff).

Art. XI: Conference-Recognized Ministries allows the Conference to recognize and support particular ministries.

Art. XII: Delegates to General Synod determines the process of selecting and supporting representatives of the Conference to the General Synod.

Art. XIII: Rules of Order establishes the most current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* as the parliamentary authority when questions of parliamentary procedure are raised. The rules are immediately overridden by provisions of the Bylaws and Standing Rules.

Art. XIV: Amendments describe the procedure and 2/3 majority requirement for any modifications to the Bylaws. *By nature, Bylaws should not change too frequently.*

STANDING RULES serve as operational guidelines for the execution of responsibility and powers of committees and the deliberative body. In our case, the SCNCUCC Standing Rules exclusively clarify procedures related to the Annual Meeting. If the BYLAWS discuss the “what” of a deliberative body, the STANDING RULES focus on the “how,” describing particular conventions or standard interpretations of particular parliamentary terms.

Our Standing Rules document clarifies the following customs and procedures:

- The Annual Meeting is a hybrid meeting, allowing members to attend virtually. Such members count towards the establishment of quorum and have full voting rights. The Standing Rules outline a basic protocol for online decorum. [1-3]
- Our Standing Rules also clarify who constitutes a voting member for the sake of quorum and voting during Annual Meeting. It establishes the right to speak of non-voting members (“Voice without Vote”). [4-6]
- The Annual Meeting requires that voting members be registered and granted proper credentials. [7-9]
- The quorum for business at the Annual Meeting is reasserted. [10]
- The conventional process of handling motions is then discussed. [11-17]
 - Motions must be submitted in writing to the Moderator and the clerk (with online members using the chat function of the meeting room). Only voting members can make a motion. (11-12)
 - Discussion of a motion follows Robert’s Rules with the following time rules (15-17):
 - One may not speak more than twice on the same motion.
 - Speaking is limited to two minutes.
 - Additional time is granted in the case of ESL, ASL, translation, and accommodation of speakers with mobility or speech disabilities.
- The conventional process of handling resolutions is then discussed. (21-24)
 - (21) There are two types of resolutions:
 - Resolutions of Witness (requires 2/3 majority) ask the Conference to take an official stance concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter.
 - Prudential Resolutions (simple majority) are related to policy, institutes, procedures, programs, etc.

- (22) Requirements for submitting resolutions
- (23) Timeline for resolution submission
- (24) Format of resolutions
- The parliamentary authority of the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* is reasserted per the Bylaws.

Deliberative Moments of Our Agenda

Per the 2026 Annual Meeting agenda, there are several moments in which participation and deliberation occur.

DAY ONE

Approval of Agenda (rarely modified) [barring objection, approved by common consent]

Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting (move to approve, second)

Although Robert's does not require a vote after the motion has been made and seconded, it is quite common for deliberative bodies to vote (aye, nay, abstain) on the minutes, particularly if the published minutes need correction.

Speak Outs: During speak outs, you are allowed up to one minute to say whatever one wishes to the deliberative body. Some use this as an opportunity to announce events, initiatives, etc. or to introduce guests.

On Day One, there are three reports filed and received: (a) the Nominating Committee's slate of officers, committee membership, et al., to be prayerfully considered for at least twelve hours prior to a vote for ratification; (b) the Treasurer's Report, including a report of the present year's income/expenditures and a budget for the coming year. The budget is presented and is to be prayerfully considered for the vote for adoption on Day Two.; (c) the State of the Conference report from the Board of Directors and Conference Ministers.

Also of importance on Day One is a practice vote to orient online and in-person delegates in procedures of voting.

DAY TWO

Speak Outs (same as on Day One)

Approval of the Nominating Slate (moved and seconded by the Nominating Committee) [vote]

Approval of the 2027 Budget (moved and seconded by the Board of Directors) [vote]

Motion to Adjourn at a Later Time (move to adjourn after worship, second) [no vote]

**THE BYLAWS OF THE
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE of the
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

ARTICLE I: NAME

1. The name of this Conference is THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (hereinafter “Conference”).

ARTICLE II: DEFINITION

2. The Conference is a corporation composed of all Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within the area of the State of California south of the north boundaries of San Bernardino, Kern, and San Luis Obispo counties and within the State of Nevada in the County of Clark, and of all authorized ministers with full standing within the Associations of the Conference, or in the Conference itself. It succeeds and continues without break the ecclesiastical and legal identities of the Southern California Conference, Southern California and Southwest Conference, Congregational Conference of Southern California and the Southwest and the California Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

3. The purpose of the Conference is to embody a covenant of extravagant Christian love that empowers leaders, congregations and communities in pursuit of a just world. The Conference is guided by these Core Values:
 - a. We experience covenant through extravagant hospitality that connects us in interdependent, inclusive Christian community (Loving Community);
 - b. We empower educated, innovative and ethical lay and clergy leaders for ministry (Equipping Leaders);
 - c. We are mission centric and relational (Building the Future);
 - d. Our faith demands that we seek justice (Seeking Justice).

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

4. The membership of the Conference shall consist of those churches fulfilling the definition given in Article II and all authorized ministers who are members of an Association of the Conference, or of the Conference itself, acting as or for an Association.

ARTICLE V: RESPONSIBILITIES

5. The Conference shall seek to undergird the mission and ministry of the churches and ministers of which it is composed and of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. The Conference shall seek to empower Local Churches to engage in mission as a living reality.
6. The Conference shall seek to nurture the spiritual life, witness and well-being of Local Churches and ministers.

7. The Conference shall participate with Local Churches and ministers in the moral struggles of our time.
8. The Conference shall be an instrument of Christ's mission by building multicultural relationships, by ministering to communities of special needs and by nurturing new congregations.
9. The Conference shall develop, nurture, maintain and strengthen covenantal relationships and communication among the ministers, churches and associations, and with national instrumentalities and ecumenical and interfaith bodies.
10. The Conference shall identify, secure, care for and utilize resources for its mission.
11. The Conference shall afford all individuals an equal opportunity for employment and voluntary service. There shall be no discrimination by the Conference concerning any individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin or medical condition.
12. The Conference shall exercise the functions of an Association of the United Church of Christ when they are so delegated or where no Association exists.
13. The Conference shall maintain a depository for historical records and for such records as the Associations and individual churches may entrust to it.
14. The Conference shall report annually to the Association in which a Local Church holds standing regarding the ways in which that Local Church is fulfilling the responsibilities identified in Article VI.

ARTICLE VI: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

15. The Conference shall respect and recognize the rights of the Local Church as set forth in Article IV, paragraph 18, of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, which reads: "The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time, the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own Constitution and Bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit members in its own way and to provide for their own discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw, by its own decision, from the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or personal property owned by it."
16. Membership of a church in the Conference involves the following minimum rights and responsibilities:
 - a. Participation through delegates to the Annual Meeting and any special Conference meetings;

- b. Faithful participation in the common mission of the United Church of Christ through financial support of Our Church's Wider Mission;
- c. Support for the work of the Conference through annual per capita dues;
- d. Supply of information requested by the Conference;
- e. Recognition of the Conference as an instrumentality of all the churches in their common life and service;
- f. Use of the staff and facilities of the Conference in order to strengthen the life and work of the churches and the Conference; and
- g. Recognition that "Action by, or decisions or advice emanating from the General Synod, a Conference or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church", Article IV, paragraph 19 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ;

ARTICLE VII: ANNUAL AND SPECIAL CONFERENCE MEETINGS

- 17. **Annual Meeting:** For purposes of Conference-wide review and action, the conduct of business, election of officers and Board of Directors and for inspiration and fellowship, the membership of the Conference shall convene in an Annual Meeting in May or June of each year, or at such time as may be determined by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall determine the time and place of the meeting at least 180 days before the meeting.
- 18. **Special Meetings:** A special meeting may be called by the Board of Directors or by petition of two or more Associations or one tenth of the churches. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall be responsible to issue the call to the special meeting to convene within 60 days. Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least thirty days in advance, and shall specify the purpose and the place of the meeting.
- 19. **Quorum:** Seventy-five voting members, including representation from each Association, shall constitute a quorum at any Annual or Special meeting of the Conference. If a quorum is not attained, the terms of the Officers and Board of Directors shall continue until the next duly constituted meeting of the Conference.
- 20. **Representation at Annual Meeting or Special Meetings:**
 - a. Voting members at meetings of the Conference shall include delegates from member churches, all authorized ministers who are members of the Conference, all officers, all members of the Board of Directors, the Moderator of each Association and Conference delegates to General Synod.
 - b. Each member church shall be entitled to two (2) delegates, plus one (1) additional delegate for each one hundred members in excess of two hundred, provided that no church shall be entitled to more than five (5) delegates, in addition to any officers, members of the Board of Directors, an Association Moderator, or General Synod delegates who may be members of said church. Each member church may have one additional delegate if that delegate is under twenty-five (25) years of age. Delegates of a member church shall serve for a period of one year, beginning with the opening session following the election of the delegates.

- c. Registered non-delegate members of those churches fulfilling the definition given in Article II shall be granted the privilege of the floor, but without vote.
- d. The Conference may, by vote, extend to any guest the status of Honorary Member, with privilege of the floor, but without vote.

21. **Ecclesiastical Meetings:** Ecclesiastical Meetings are meetings convened to carry out responsibilities ordinarily assigned to an Association of the United Church of Christ, but which have been delegated to the Conference by one or more Associations. In these situations, the Conference is said to be acting as an Association and exercises the delegated ecclesial responsibility and authority accordingly. Ecclesiastical Meetings may include, but are not limited to, Ecclesiastical Councils, which are convened to examine candidates for Ordained Ministry or candidates seeking Privilege of Call in the United Church of Christ; meetings to confer Local Church Standing in the United Church of Christ for new church starts or existing congregations seeking affiliation with the Conference; or meetings to formally end Local Church Standing following Local Church support and accountability processes. Quorum for an Ecclesiastical Meeting shall consist of not fewer than twenty-five (25) members of the Conference, representing at least twelve (12) active churches within the Conference. Notice of Ecclesiastical Meetings shall be provided in accordance with the general provisions for Conference meetings. The procedures followed at Ecclesiastical Meetings shall be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, the Manual on Ministry, the Manual on Local Church, and polices adopted by the Conference Board of Directors.

22. Committees

- a. **Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven to ten (7-10) members: the immediate past Chairperson of the Board of Directors, the current Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors, and no less than five (5) and no more than eight (8) at-large members, elected by the Conference Annual Meeting. The immediate past-Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall be the Chair of the Nominating Committee, and may serve a consecutive term should the Chairperson of the Board be so elected. The current Vice-Chairperson of the Board shall be the Vice-Chair of the Nominating Committee. Should the Chairperson of the Board serve a second term and the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee choose not to do so, the current Vice-Chairperson of the Board shall chair the Nominating Committee, and the Board may appoint an additional at-large member. The at-large members shall serve for one year, and may serve up to three consecutive terms. The composition of the Committee shall reflect careful concern for the full diversity of the Conference. The Committee shall present a nomination slate, in writing, to the Conference Board of Directors no later than thirty days prior to the Annual Gathering. The slate shall be posted online no later than two weeks prior to the Annual Gathering. Such slate shall include nominations for Officers of the Conference, members of the Board of Directors, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Nominating Committee, General Synod delegates, the Covenanting Committee on Ministry and all Conference representatives. The Committee shall give careful concern in the nominating process to skills and spiritual maturity needed for this work, and shall seek skilled, faithful people from diverse perspectives, including perspectives informed by diversity of race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, geography, and disability. The Committee shall seek a balance of clergy and lay members.
- b. **Annual Meeting Planning Committee:** The Committee shall prepare and publish the program and agenda in advance of the Annual Meeting. It shall consist of the Moderator and

Vice Moderator of the Conference and six persons elected by the Conference for a term of three years, with two members elected each year. The Moderator shall act as Chairperson.

- c. **Resolutions Committee:** A Resolutions Committee may be appointed by the Board of Directors to receive and process any resolution or motion proposed to express the will of the Conference on a particular matter. This committee will operate according to provisions for its work contained in the Standing Rules for Conference Meetings then in effect. Any resolution that comes before the Annual Meeting with financial implications which are not included in the budget may be adopted with the provision that such resolution will be referred to the Board of Directors which will implement the resolution if the monies for implementation are available. The Board will work with the Conference Ministers for the identification of needed financial resources.
- d. **Covenanting Committee on Ministry:** The Covenanting Committee on Ministry (CCOM) is authorized to carry out the responsibilities of Committees on Ministry, as defined by the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and the current edition of the Manual on Ministry. The CCOM operates with authority delegated to it by participating Associations and by the Conference when it is acting as an Association. The CCOM serves as the body responsible for the oversight, support, and accountability of persons in discernment, authorized ministers, and Local Churches in covenant with the United Church of Christ, in accordance with denominational guidelines. The CCOM's duties include, but are not limited to, receiving and guiding Members in Discernment, granting and recognizing ministerial standing, conducting fitness reviews, and other ecclesiastical responsibilities as outlined in the Manual on Ministry and the Manual on Local Church. The CCOM shall consist of no fewer than eighteen (18) people and at maximum thirty-two (32) people. The structure of the CCOM, including the number of teams and arrangement, shall be determined jointly by the Board of Directors and the CCOM, in a manner that ensures the faithful execution of its responsibilities and reflects the needs of the Conference and participating Associations. Members of CCOM shall be nominated by the Nomination Team and elected to serve a three (3) year term, with maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.
- e. **Other Committees:** Other committees may be elected by the Conference or appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE: VIII: OFFICERS AND DUTIES

- 23. **Officers of the Conference:** The elected officers for the Conference shall consist of a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson for the Board of Directors, Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and such other officers as the Conference shall deem necessary.
- 24. **Election of Officers:** Election of officers shall take place at the Annual Meeting of the Conference, but in no instance shall the election be held less than twelve (12) hours after the receipt of the report of the Nominating Committee, unless there are no nominations from the floor of the meeting.
- 25. **Term of Office:** The term of office and term limits for elected officers of the Conference are as follows. The term of office for the Moderator shall be two (2) years, with maximum of one (1) consecutive term in the role. The term of office for the Vice-Moderator shall be two (2) years, with maximum of one (1) consecutive term in the role. It is the intention that the Vice-Moderator will succeed the Moderator. The term of office for the Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall

be one (1) year, with maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. The term of office for the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall be one year, with maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. The term of office for the Secretary shall be two (2) years, with a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. The term of office for the Treasurer shall be three (3) years with the maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. The term of office for the Assistant Treasurer shall be (1) year and shall start concurrent with the last year of the Treasurer's term of office. It is the intention that the Assistant Treasurer will succeed the Treasurer. The terms of office shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting at which the election has taken place.

26. Duties of Officers:

- a. The Moderator shall preside over the Annual Meeting and any special meetings of the Conference during his or her term of office and shall be Chairperson of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee. The Moderator, together with the Conference Minister and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, shall represent the Conference in its relations with congregations and other religious bodies.
- b. The Vice-Moderator shall exercise the functions of the Moderator when requested to do so by the Moderator, or in the absence of the Moderator.
- c. The Secretary shall keep official minutes for all meetings of the Board of Directors, of the Executive Committee, and the plenary sessions at Annual Gathering.
- d. The Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer shall receive and disburse all monies of the Conference as authorized by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all funds of the Conference and shall report to each Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall arrange for an annual audit. All persons handling funds shall be bonded.
- e. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall preside at meetings of the Board of Directors, shall be the President of the Corporation, and shall be an advisory member of all Conference structures.
- f. The Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall exercise the functions of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors when requested to do so by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, or in the absence or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27. Membership, Election and Appointment:

- a. The Board of Directors (herein after "the Board") shall consist of:
 - 1) The Moderator
 - 2) The Vice Moderator
 - 3) The Secretary
 - 4) The Treasurer
 - 5) Assistant Treasurer
 - 6) The Chairperson of the Board
 - 7) The Vice-Chairperson of the Board
 - 8) The Conference Minister
 - 9) Between twelve and sixteen at-large Members, nominated by the Nominating Committee, who serve terms of three years. Approximately one-third of the at- large membership shall be elected each year. Members may serve two consecutive terms. The at-large membership

of the Board shall reflect the diversity of the membership of the Conference. Nominations of the at-large members of the Board shall be solicited from the Local Churches and Associations of the Conference.

- b. The Board may, by majority vote, increase its membership by up to three additional members to meet specific needs or to increase the diversity of the Board. The term for such Board members shall be determined by the Board at the time of election and may be one, two or three years.
- c. Any Director who shall reside outside the geographical limits of the Conference, or who ceases to be a member of the United Church of Christ, or who shall have three consecutive unexcused absences from Board meetings, shall be deemed to terminate, thereby, membership on the Board.
- d. An Officer or Director may be removed for malfeasance, misfeasance or nonfeasance by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board.
- e. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson of the Board, Vice-Chairperson of the Board and the Conference Minister. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Board ad interim. The Executive Committee may exercise the authority of the Board except that they may not take action reserved exclusively for action by Members as set forth above, or actions dealing with: (1) Conference Minister salary, benefits or continued service, (2) approving or recommending to the Members the dissolution of the Conference, merger of the Conference with another entity, or the sale, pledge or transfer of substantially all of Conference assets, (3) the sale of real estate owned in whole or in part by the Conference, (4) electing, appointing, or removing any Directors or filling vacancies on the Board or any of its committees, or (5) adopting, amending, or repealing these Bylaws. The Executive Committee shall provide 72 hour notice of meetings except in those cases where it is necessary to proceed without notice to protect the interests of the Conference.

28. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:

- a. The Board shall have policy-making responsibility for the work of the Conference between meetings of the Conference. This shall include: fiduciary and legal matters; property oversight; personnel matters; strategic planning and evaluation; participation in the Conference Annual Meeting and establishing new churches. The Board shall oversee development of the budget, and submit the budget to the Annual Meeting for approval.
- b. The Board shall hold the Conference Minister accountable for the responsibilities described in Article X.
- c. The Board shall control and order the receipt, investment and expenditure of all funds of the Conference and disposition of all undesignated benevolences. It may accept gifts on behalf of the Conference and authorize the borrowing of money by the Conference. The Board shall designate officers or other persons who shall have power to sign receipts and checks or orders for withdrawals of funds from banks and savings institutions.
- d. The Board shall control and manage all the property of the Conference, and whenever they shall deem it for the best interests of the Conference may assign, buy, mortgage, lease, sell or convey any real or personal property. The deeds, conveyances, notes, mortgages, pledge

agreements; trust deeds, and any instruments required in such transactions shall be signed by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Board and by the Secretary, Treasurer, or Conference Minister.

- e. The Board shall make an annual report to the Conference.
- f. Vacancies occurring on the Board shall be filled by election by the Board. Vacancies on elected committees shall be filled by appointees of said bodies, subject to the approval of the Board. Persons so selected shall serve the unexpired term for which they were appointed.
- g. The Board shall appoint a Historian to keep a permanent written history of the Conference. This person shall collect and safely deposit records of the significant events and actions in the life and work of the Conference, Associations and member churches.

29. Meetings:

- a. The Board shall meet at least quarterly.
- b. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.
- c. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson of the Board or must be ordered by this person upon written request of the Conference Minister, Moderator, or any three Directors. At least five (5) days written notice must be given for any special meeting.
- d. Except when matters of personnel are under discussion, meetings of the Board shall be open.

30. Ministry Teams. The Board may organize itself into Ministry Teams as needed to carry out the management, missional and programmatic needs of the Conference.

ARTICLE X: THE CONFERENCE MINISTER AND STAFF

- 31. The Conference Minister shall be the spiritual leader and public voice of the Conference, administering all the work of the Conference in accordance with the policies established by the Conference Annual Meeting or the Board. The Conference Minister shall: organize, direct and coordinate the ministries and work of the Associate Conference Ministers and the administrative staff of the Conference; represent the Conference in denominational, ecumenical and interfaith gatherings unless otherwise specifically provided; counsel with ministers and churches; assist in pastoral placement; and make a report to each meeting of the Board.
- 32. 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.
- 33. The Board, in consultation with the Conference Minister, may employ or dismiss such Associate Conference Minister(s) as it may deem advisable to fulfill the mission of the Conference. Their

responsibilities shall be enumerated in job descriptions at the time of their employment, subject to revision, and their employment and compensation shall be subject to provisions of personnel policies adopted by the Board. They shall be supervised by and accountable to the Conference Minister.

34. All other staff members shall be employed and dismissed by the Conference Minister, subject to the provisions of personnel policies adopted by the Board.

ARTICLE XI: CONFERENCE-RECOGNIZED MINISTRIES

35. In consultation with specialized ministries or constituencies in the Conference, the Board may establish Conference-recognized ministries. In such instances, the mission statement and definition of participation will be adopted by the Board. Changes in mission and participation will also be approved by the Board.
36. Conference-recognized ministries will participate fully in ecclesiastical and organizational structures of the United Church of Christ at the congregational, association, conference, and national levels.

ARTICLE XII: DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL SYNOD AND REPRESENTATIVES TO DENOMINATIONAL, ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH BODIES

37. All delegates of this Conference to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ shall be elected by the Conference at its Annual meeting according to the Bylaws of the General Synod. Delegates shall serve a term of six (6) years, with maximum of one consecutive term in the role. Conference Delegates to the General Synod will be nominated in accordance with Article III Paragraph 189 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, which reads, in part: "Delegates and alternate delegates shall be chosen by each Conference from among its authorized ministers in full standing and with ordained ministerial partner standing and the members of its Local Churches. Conferences may initiate and consider nominations from the Associations. From each Conference, except in Conferences having three delegates, (a) lay persons shall constitute at least fifty percent of the delegates and (b) the delegation shall reflect the United Church of Christ's commitment to affirmative action; it shall be representative of racial and ethnic persons (Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders), women and youth and young adults (at least twenty percent of each delegation shall be under 30 years of age at the time of the commencing of their terms, and where possible, be represented equally by (1) youth, persons of high school age; and (2) young adults, persons graduated from high school or over 19 years of age."
38. The Conference shall elect delegates to ecumenical and interfaith bodies.

ARTICLE XIII: RULES OF ORDER:

39. The latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order is the standard for all parliamentary procedures not otherwise stated in these Bylaws or in the Standing Rules developed for specific Conference bodies.

ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENTS

40. The Bylaws may be amended at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, providing that all amendments have been:
- a. Initiated either by the Board of Directors or by a petition from ten (10) Local Churches, each of which has approved the proposal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of its congregation at a duly called congregational meeting, and
 - b. Presented at a previous Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of the Conference, or have been mailed, either electronically or by standard post, to each authorized minister and each Local Church with Standing in the Southern California Nevada Conference at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

Amendments to the bylaws approved by
the Annual Gathering, May 30, 2025.



Southern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ

ANNUAL GATHERING 2026 STANDING RULES

FORMAT

1. The 2026 Annual Gathering shall be conducted in hybrid mode, both in person and online using an electronic platform(s). The proceedings of the business meeting shall be recorded.

DECORUM

2. All participants are expected to be present or logged in and ready for the opening of the sessions.
3. Unless recognized by the Moderator, all participants online are to be muted.

VOTING MEMBERS

4. The Conference Bylaws (2025) Article VII 20 (a) specify: "Voting members at meetings of the Conference shall include delegates from member churches, all authorized ministers who are members of the Conference, all officers, all members of the Board of Directors, the Moderator of each Association and delegates of General Synod."
5. Article VII 20 (b) further states: "Each member church shall be entitled to two (2) delegates, plus one (1) additional delegate for each one hundred members in excess of two hundred, provided that no church shall be entitled to more than five (5) delegates, in addition to any officers and members of the Board of Directors or an Association Moderator who may be members of said church. Each member church may have one additional delegate if that delegate is under twenty-five (25) years of age."

VOICE WITHOUT VOTE

6. Any registered visitor who is a member of a congregation and any persons designated as special guests shall have voice without vote in all business meetings.

CREDENTIALS

7. For admission to the hybrid meeting, all participants will be required to be registered. Delegates must be registered as such to vote.

8. Credentials are not transferable.
9. Should a registered delegate be absent or unable to serve, an alternate from the same Church may assume the duties of delegate for the remainder of the meeting, following certification by the Registrar.

QUORUM

10. Article VII (19) of the bylaws defines a quorum: "Seventy-five voting members, including representation from each association, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting. If a quorum is not attained, the Officers' and Board of Directors' terms shall continue until the next duly constituted meeting of the Conference."

MOTIONS

11. All motions shall be submitted in writing to the Moderator and to the meeting clerk at the time they are made. Motions made virtually may be submitted using the "chat" function of the electronic platform in use during the meeting. Persons making motions in person will be instructed to use the designated microphones. Motion forms will be made available in the pre-meeting information.
12. Only delegates may make motions.

DISCUSSION

13. Both delegates and non-voting members shall be accorded the privilege of the floor. Precedence shall be accorded delegates.
14. To obtain the floor, the speaker shall follow the instructions provided by the Moderators in the plenary sessions, and having been recognized, address the Moderator, and state the speaker's name and Church.
15. No delegate may speak in debate more than twice on the same question nor longer than 2 minutes at any one point of recognition by the Moderator except by the consent of 2/3 of the voting delegates.
16. A non-delegate member or invited guest may speak to an item of business for no more than 2 minutes, providing no delegate is waiting to speak to the same item.
17. An extension of time may be granted by the Moderator to the following persons:
 - A. Speakers requiring translation into English from another language (time needed for the translation shall not be counted in the time allotment) and speakers who require sign language translation;

B. Speakers whose fluency in English is limited and for whom translation is not available;

C. Speakers with disabilities which affect mobility and/or speech.

18. An official timekeeper shall call time on debate.

RESOLUTIONS

19. A resolution is a Formal Motion intended to express the will of the Conference Annual Gathering on a particular matter and may direct the Conference officers, Board of Directors and staff to implement actions. A resolution may speak to the Associations and Local Churches of the Conference but does not speak for or direct the actions of any other setting of the Church.

20. The Moderator may call for a hearing with a neutral presiding officer within the duration of the Annual Gathering and prior to the consideration of a resolution by the plenary. At such hearings, comments representing multiple viewpoints will be encouraged.

21. Types of Resolution and Vote Requirements:

A. Resolutions of Witness: A Resolution of Witness is an expression of the Conference Annual Gathering concerning a moral, ethical or religious matter confronting the Church, the nation, or the world, adopted for the guidance of the Board of Directors and Conference minister(s); the consideration of local churches, associations and other bodies related to the Conference; and for a Christian witness to the world. It represents agreement by at least two thirds of the delegates voting that the view expressed is based on Christian conviction. The text of the proposed resolution should be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.

B. Prudential Resolutions: A Prudential Resolution establishes policy, institutes or revised structure or procedures, authorizes programs, approves directions or requests actions by majority vote.

22. Sources: A Resolution may be submitted by:

A. Annual Gathering delegate or delegate-elect with written concurrence of at least five other delegates or delegates-elect;

- B. A local church with the written concurrence of at least one other local church of the Southern California Nevada Conference.
 - C. An Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference.
 - D. The Conference Board of Directors.
 - E. Any affiliated ministry or covenant group as listed in the Conference directory.
23. Timeline for Submission of Resolutions:
- A. A copy of the Resolution must be received via email to the Conference office no later than May 1, 2026. The Conference office will make resolutions received by the May 1 deadline available to delegates electronically no later than May 15 by posting them on the Annual Gathering webpage.
 - B. The Board of Directors will review resolutions submitted by the May deadline and may ask the submitting body to make clarifying edits. The Board of Directors may choose to make recommendations for action to the Annual Gathering.
 - C. A Resolution that could not have been anticipated or submitted in conformance with the above deadline may be introduced at the Annual Gathering by a voting delegate at a designated point in the agenda during the Friday business session. The new business may be introduced by title only. The Resolution must be available in electronic form at the time the resolution is introduced and must meet the source requirements as stated in Rule 22.

24. Format: Resolutions shall include the following information:
- A. A brief title with information providing the sources of the Resolution, the date of submission and any other information pertinent to the Resolution. The title must accurately reflect the intent of the proposed motion.
 - B. A brief summary that accurately reflects the content of the Resolution.
 - C. The biblical, theological and ethical rationale and the expected outcome.
 - D. The text of the motion.
 - E. The statement, "The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available. There is no financial guarantee of any kind other than the annual budget."
 - F. The statement, "The Conference Minister, in consultation with the Board of Directors and appropriate Conference staff, will determine the implementing body or staff members. The implementing body or staff is responsible for developing the strategy and program designed to implement the Resolution."
25. Action on a Resolution during Annual Gathering: A brief time, not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes will be allotted for debate and vote on each resolution. Any resolution which does not meet the requirements set forth in the pre-Gathering communication will not be considered by the Meeting and will be referred to the Board of Directors.
26. Financial Implications: Conference Bylaw Article VII 22 (c) specifies: "Any resolution that comes before the Annual Meeting with financial implications which are not included in the budget may be adopted with the provision that such resolution will be referred to the Board of Directors which will implement the resolution if the monies for implementation are available. The Board will work with the Conference Minister(s) for the identification of needed financial resources."

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

27. The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order (Southern California Nevada Conference Bylaws XIII 38) shall, unless otherwise provided for, govern all proceedings of the Annual Gathering.

Approved by the Board of Directors April 2026



**SCNC ANNUAL
GATHERING 2026**

DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENTS

2026 ANNUAL GATHERING BUSINESS AGENDA

First Congregational Church of Los Angeles

We're the Ones!

Friday, May 29 | 1:15 pm – 3:00 pm

Opening Worship & Plenary I

(online and onsite)

1. Meeting called to order
2. Worship Led by FCCLA (Rev. Michael Lehman preaching)
3. Declaration of a Quorum and Approval of 2026 Agenda
4. Introduction of Parliamentarian
5. Welcome of Wider Church and Ecumenical Partners
6. Business and Voting
 - a. Explanation of Voting Process and Overview of Standing Rules
 - b. Vote to Approve the 2025 Annual Gathering Minutes
7. Nominating Committee Report
8. Speak Outs
9. Treasurer's Report
10. State of the Conference – Strategic Action Plan 2026-2028
11. What's Ahead & Prayerful Sending into Annual Gathering

Saturday, May 30 | 12:45 pm – 2:30 pm

Plenary II & Closing Worship

(online and onsite)

1. Blessing into the Business
2. Speak Outs
3. Recognition of 5 for 5 Churches
4. Words from Conference Minister
5. Review of Discussion and Voting Process
 - a. Vote to Approve Nominating Slate
 - b. Vote to Approve the 2027 Budget
6. Installation of Newly Elected Conference Leadership
7. Acknowledgements and Gratitude
8. Invitation for Feedback
9. Vote to Adjourn Annual Gathering at the Close of Worship
10. Worship (with Communion) Led by SCNC (Rev. Chrissy Siva preaching)
11. Adjourned



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our mission is to embody a covenant of extravagant Christian love
that empowers leaders, congregations, and communities in pursuit of a just world.
Loving Community Building the Future Seeking Justice Equipping Leaders

**Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ
Annual Gathering 2025: “Bold Church: Making a Way Together”
Hybrid Meeting (conducted in person at Claremont UCC and via Zoom)**

MINUTES

Friday, May 30, 2025

Ashley Hiestand, Conference Moderator, called the meeting to order with the opening of worship.

Welcome, Approval of Agenda, & Introductions

Ashley gave announcements and reported that our registrar, Ms. Virginia Arroyo, confirms a quorum with 149 delegates present in person and 16 online for a total of 165 delegates from 73 churches and the appropriate Associations are represented.

The agenda is approved as listed with no objections.

Parliamentarian Dr. Brad Stone was introduced and thanked for his participation in the meeting.

Heather Branton, Vice-Moderator, welcomed the following ecumenical partners and guests from the national setting of the UCC:

- Matthew Wagner, Vice President for Institutional Relationships with United Church Funds
- Rev. Richie Sanchez, Regional Minister and President of the Southwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Rev. Jack Veatch, Director of the Office of Church Relations at Chapman University’s Fish Interfaith Center
- Jess Kim, Managing Director for the Disciples Seminary Foundation
- Zach Wolgemuth and Melissa Reece with Church World Service

Keynote speakers were welcomed:

- Cole Arthur Riley, author, storyteller, and theologian.
- Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ
- Rev. Dr. David Vasquez-Levy, President of Pacific School of Religion

These ecumenical partners, guests, and speakers were granted voice without vote for the meeting with no objections.

The following mission partners and conference-connected ministries who provided exhibits at the meeting were welcomed:

- Inland Abundant Housing, Abundant Housing LA, and Housing California
- The Conference Accessibility Team
- Pilgrim Place
- Pilgrim Pines Camp
- Peppermint Ridge
- Octavia's Bookshelf
- Pacific School of Religion
- Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church

Approval of Minutes

The Standing Rules for Annual Gathering were reviewed, and the process for discussion and voting upon business items was introduced and explained (via voice vote for in person delegates and Zoom poll for online delegates).

Motion to approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual Gathering: Sarah Averette-Phillips

Motion was seconded by: Juan Sanchez

Vote: Approved

Motion to approve the amendments to the by-laws as submitted: Jude Johnson

Motion was seconded by: Don Schenk

Vote: Approved

Nominating Committee Report

The Rev. Sarah Averette-Phillips, chair of the nominating committee, presented the slate of nominees to be voted on tomorrow (attached below).

Treasurer's Report

Ken Roberts, Conference Treasurer, gave a summary of the 2024 budget report. He explained the proposed 2025 revised budget to be voted on tomorrow. The 2026 Budget was presented. (2025 revised budget and 2026 budget attached below)

State of the Conference

Rachael Pryor, Conference Minister, gave her report. Jude Johnson, Chair of the Board of Directors, gave their report.

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Keynote Presentation

Karen Georgia Thompson offered a keynote address.

Commissioning Synod Delegates

Ms. Cheryl Farrell offered a reflection, and Dave Pomeroy commissioned them.

Motion to approve the slate of nominated officers, board members, and committee members as presented (attached at end of minutes): Nominating Committee

No Second Needed (motion came from a committee)

Vote: Approved

Motion to approve the proposed 2025 Southern California Nevada Conference Budget Revisions (attached at end of minutes): SCNC Board of Directors

No Second Needed (motion came from a committee)

Vote: Approved (with one abstention)

Motion to approve the proposed 2026 Southern California Nevada Conference Budget (attached at end of minutes): SCNC Board of Directors

No Second Needed (motion came from a committee)

Vote: Approved

Installation of Newly Elected Conference Leaders

Rachael Pryor installed our newly elected conference leaders.

Next Annual Gathering: May 29-30, 2026 at First Congregational Church, Los Angeles

Motion to adjourn meeting: Rich Fluechtling

Second: Dave Pomeroy

Vote: Approved

Minutes submitted by,



Chrissy Siva, Secretary

Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ

Slate of Nominations: Annual Gathering 2025		
Board of Directors		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Holgie Choi (S) (P)	Dave Pomeroy (E) (P)	Rev. Ailao and Mrs. Doris Tofaeono (E) (P)
Rich Fluechtling (E) (L)**	Iona Dickinson (S) (P)	Amaiah Adamiak (E) (L)
Rosario Ibarra (C) (P)**	Janie Ito (C) (P)	Robert Gabon (C) (L)
Robin Heckendorf (C) (L)	Michael Schuenemeyer (E) (P)	Patricia Henderson (C) (L)
	Heather Branton (N) (P)*	
Officers		
Moderator Class of 2026 Ashley Hiestand (C) (P)	Chair Class of 2027 Tim Seery (S) (P)	
Vice-Moderator Class of 2026 (confidential until June Board meeting)	Vice-Chair Class of 2027 Wendy Holland (N) (P)	
Secretary Class of 2026 Chrissy Siva (E) (P)	Treasurer Class of 2027 Ken Roberts (C) (L)	
Annual Gathering Planning Team		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Sam Pullen (C)(P)	Aidan Mitchell (E) (L)	Douglas Greer (C) (L)
Kyle Tade (C)(P)	Patty Little (E) (L)	Wendell Miller (C) (P)
		Craig Tyrl (S) (L)
Nominating Committee (Chair: Jude Johnson/E/P)		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Mitchell Young (C) (P)	Petra Malleis-Sternberg (C) (P)	Jeremias Lagahit (C) (P)
Jennifer Strickland (E) (P)	Lee Yates (C) (P)	Bruce Ramet (S) (L)
Team 1: Team for Ministerial Formation and Authorization		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Chris Bobo (C) (L)	Audrey Turner (E) (P)	Jeanne Miller (N) (L)
Jim Euphrat (S) (L)	Chad Tanaka Pack (C) (P)	Jerod Yates (C) (P)
John Forrest Douglas (N) (P)	Sarah Averette-Phillips (E) (P)*	Andy Schwiebert (C) (P)
Lee Tanuvasa (C) (P)		
Team 2: Team for Ministerial Support and Oversight		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Kyle Sears (C) (P)	Dennis Alger (S) (P)	Nancy Bacon (N) (P)**
Don Shenk (C) (P)	Joe Dressler (S) (P)	Mark Weber (S) (P)**
Candance Reynolds (N) (L)	Tameka Love (E) (P)	Tracy Kariya (C) (P)

Team 3: Team for Local Church Support and Accountability		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Tino Cordova (E) (P)	Jason Sisk-Provencio (N) (P)	Sam Tialavea (E) (P)**
Leitu Teofilo (LMS) (S)	Randy Ward (S) (L)	Ken Wyant (S) (P)**
Keslinn Kohfeld-Stout (N)(C)*	Ernie Reyes (P) (E)	Michael Okamura (C) (L)
Team 4: Ethics Team		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Stephen Boyd (C) (P)	Ronda Holman (C) (L)	Ray Jordan (S) (P)
Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo (C) (P)	Yuki Schwartz (E) (P)	Katy Hyman (C) (P)
		Rita Monteiro (S) (L)
		Keith Osajima (E) (L)
General Synod Delegates		
Class of 2025	Class of 2028	Associate Delegates (2025)
Cheryl Farrell	Tameka Love	Tim Seery
Faren Eng (youth)	Craig Tyrl	Rachael Pryor
Jude Johnson	Anaya Turner (youth)	
Amiah Adamiak	Berneice Kelemete	Youth Chaperone (2025)
Heather Branton	Juan Sanchez	Aquarius Love
	Madison Shockley	
	Jim Burklo	
	Valerie Hubbard (youth)	
(L) Laity (P) Clergy (LMS) Lay Ministerial Standing	(C) Central Geographic Zone (E) Eastern Geographic Zone (N) Northern Geographic Zone (S) Southern Association	*Indicates a vacancy that is being filled **indicates serving a 2nd term

Annual Gathering 2026 Budget Report & Proposal

	January - December 2024		2025			2026
	Actual	Budget	Quarter 1 Actual	Budget	Revised Budget	Proposed Budget
Income						
OCWM Basic Support	\$329,245.24	\$400,000.00	\$80,676.70	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$425,000.00
OCWM Tithe to National (10% of SCNC receipts)	-\$32,924.52	-\$40,000.00	-\$8,067.68	-\$40,000.00	-\$40,000.00	-\$42,500.00
Per Capita OCWM	\$98,510.40	\$115,000.00	\$20,550.00	\$115,000.00	\$115,000.00	\$125,000.00
Annual Appeal	\$1,100.00	\$15,000.00		\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Other Contributions to Conference	\$17,953.48	\$5,000.00	\$5,326.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Strengthen The Church (Conference Portion)	\$9,052.58	\$8,000.00	\$152.50	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Total Contributions	\$422,937.18	\$503,000.00	\$98,637.52	\$504,000.00	\$504,000.00	\$536,500.00
Annual Gathering Income & Offerings	\$31,233.97	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00
Interest, Rental, Misc Income						
Rental Income (Chino)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Loan Interest (Mowery & Por Gracio)	\$49,567.36	\$71,000.00	\$11,327.10	\$50,000.00	\$15,000.00	
Mortgage Payoff Income					\$800,000.00	
Cornerstone Fund	\$176,930.95			\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
UCF "restricted" fund					\$75,000.00	
UCF Unrestricted Fund						\$100,000.00
Other Interest Income		\$13,000.00		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$201,289.17	\$1,000.00	\$113.75	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00
Total Misc Income	\$427,787.48	\$85,000.00	\$11,440.85	\$152,250.00	\$992,250.00	\$202,250.00
Total Income	\$881,958.63	\$613,000.00	\$110,078.37	\$683,250.00	\$1,523,250.00	\$765,750.00
Expense						
Human Resources						
Conference Ministry: All Ministry Staff	\$238,911.48	\$268,000.00	\$28,684.60	\$268,000.00		
Conference Minister salary basis					\$140,310.00	\$145,000.00
Parsonage value					-\$45,600.00	-\$46,000.00
Associate Conference Minister 1					\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00
Associate Conference Minister 2					\$75,000.00	\$120,000.00
Administrative salaries: all staff	\$124,627.49	\$103,000.00	\$22,704.04	\$103,000.00	\$103,000.00	\$110,000.00
All Benefits	\$128,535.87	\$76,292.00	\$28,933.36	\$132,811.50	\$198,275.50	\$227,752.00
Other Human Resources	\$9,922.52	\$17,000.00	\$849.04	\$22,000.00	\$19,000.00	\$19,000.00
Total Human Resources	\$501,997.36	\$464,292.00	\$81,171.04	\$525,811.50	\$609,985.50	\$695,752.00
Operations						
Contract Services	\$105,148.79	\$41,400.00	\$29,467.02	\$71,000.00	\$81,000.00	\$76,000.00
Programs & Meetings	\$100,400.36	\$73,800.00	\$41,044.05	\$109,800.00	\$122,800.00	\$65,800.00
Office	\$94,761.02	\$102,900.00	\$26,806.36	\$101,740.00	\$96,540.00	\$96,540.00
Ministry Staff Deployment	\$13,450.77	\$0.00	\$7,030.02	\$0.00	\$39,500.00	\$49,500.00
Relocation Expenses	\$9,680.60				\$10,000.00	
Program & Mission Expense	\$151,845.25	\$65,000.00	\$8,249.15	\$65,000.00	\$28,000.00	\$28,000.00
Property Expense	\$43,278.85	\$0.00	\$10,742.29	\$24,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$10,000.00
Total Operations	\$518,565.64	\$283,100.00	\$123,338.89	\$371,540.00	\$394,840.00	\$319,840.00
Total Expenses	\$1,020,563.00	\$747,392.00	\$204,509.93	\$897,351.50	\$1,004,825.50	\$1,021,592.00
(Total Income)	\$881,958.63	\$613,000.00	\$110,078.37	\$683,250.00	\$1,523,250.00	\$765,750.00
Net Operating Income	-\$138,604.37	-\$134,392.00	-\$94,431.56	-\$214,101.50	\$518,424.50	-\$255,842.00

Southern California Nevada Conference

Nominating Slate for 2026 Annual Gathering

Board of Directors

At-Large Members		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Dave Pomeroy (E) (P)	Robert Gabon (C) (L)	Holgie Choi (S) (P) *2nd term
Iona Dickinson (S) (P)	Amiah Adamiak (E) (L)	Robin Heckendorf (C) (L) *2nd term
Janie Ito (C) (P)	Patricia Henderson (C) (L)	Emily Deckenback (S) (L)
Michael Schuenemeyer (E) (P)	Ailao and Doris Toefano (E) (P&L)	Open (N or C) (P or L)
Heather Branton (N) (P)*		
Officers		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Chair Tim Seery (S) (P)	Moderator Mafutaga Tagalao-Tulifau (C) (L)	Secretary (E or S) (P)
Vice-Chair Wendy Holland (N) (P)	Vice-Moderator Juan Sanchez (C) (L)	
Treasurer Ken Roberts (E) (L)		

Annual Gathering Planning Team

Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
open (E) (L or P)	Craig Tyril (S) (L)	Josh Komo (S) (P)
Patty Little (E) (L)	Wendell Miller (C) (P)	Rachel Newbold (N) (L)
	open (C) (L)	

Nominating Committee

Chair: Jude Johnson (E) (P), Vice-Chair: Wendy Holland (N) (P)		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Petra Malleis-Sternberg (C) (P)	open (C) (L or P)	open (N) (L or P)
Lee Yates (P) (E)	Bruce Ramet (S) (L)	open (E) (L or P)

Covenanting Committees on Ministry

Team 1: Team for Ministerial Formation and Authorization		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Audrey Turner (E) (P)	Jeanne Miller (N) (L)	**Jim Euphrat (S) (L)
Sarah Averette-Phillips (E) (P)*	Jarod Yates (E) (P)	**John Forrest Douglas (N) (P)
	Andy Schwiebert (C) (P)	**Lee Tanuvasa (E) (P)
Team 2: Team for Ministerial Support and Oversight		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Dennis Alger (S) (P)	**Nancy Bacon (N) (P)	**Kyle Sears (C) (P)
Joe Dressler (S) (P)	Tracy Kariya (C) (P)	Scott Spence (C) (P)
	**Mark Weber (S) (P)	Open (E) (L)
Team 3: Team for Local Church Support and Accountability		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Jason Sisk-Provencio (N) (P)	Mike Okamura (C) (L)	**Tino Cordova (E) (P)
Randy Ward (S) (L)	Ken Wyant (S) (P)	**Leitu Teofilo (S) (L)
Ernie Reyes (E) (P)		**Keslinn Kohfeld-Stout (N) (P)
Team 4: Ethics Team		
Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Yuki Schwartz (E) (P)	Ray Jordan (S) (P) - Chair	**Stephen Boyd (C) (P)
Anne Crabbe (N) (L)	Keith Osajima (E) (L)	**Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo (E) (P)
	Katy Hyman (C) (P)	
	Rita Monteiro (S) (L)	

Abbreviations

(L) Laity	(C) Central Geographic Region	*Indicates a current vacancy that is being filled
(P) Clergy	(E) Eastern Geographic Region	**indicates serving a 2nd term
(LMS) Lay Ministerial Standing	(N) Northern Geographic Region	
	(S) Southern Association	

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE UCC
We Are the Ones! Annual Gathering 2026
Budget Presentation**

INTRODUCTION

Thanks for your ongoing support of the Conference's ministries. We hope this presentation demonstrates our continuing efforts to increase transparency in financial reporting. We appreciate your attention to this presentation and welcome your questions.

We are presenting the 2027 budget for your approval. This budget was prepared in early April 2026, eight months before the start of 2027. Our reporting year is from January to December.

PROCESS

Because the 2026 budget had been approved eight months before January 2026, **a revised budget was prepared for the Board of Directors' approval in early 2026.** The revision considered actual results for twelve months of 2025 and two months of 2026. Differences between the two versions of the 2026 budget are highlighted in "2026 Revised Budget" below.

The 2027 budget is mostly a continuation of the 2026 revised budget. Differences are highlighted in "2027 Budget" below. This budget presentation was prepared before actual results for the first quarter of 2026 were finalized. The 2027 budget does consider actual results from the first two months of 2026.

REPORTING FORMAT

The 2027 budget includes two new categories, which increase transparency and help to highlight the impact of our missional efforts.

- **Sources of Funds: Board-Designated Funding from Endowments and Other Sources.** In prior years, these amounts were not fully reflected in reports.
- **Uses of Funds: Grants and Support Funded by Endowments and Other Sources** includes local church grants and additional support to the national ministries of the UCC. In prior years, these amounts were shared as supplemental information.

Consistent with prior years, the 2027 budget does not include an estimate of investment gains or losses on our endowments held at United Church Funds. It does include an estimate of interest income from funds held at the Cornerstone Fund.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE
Statements of Activities (non-GAAP)
For the twelve months ending December 31

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET Revised	2027 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE 2026 v. 2027
SOURCES OF FUNDS				
Local Church Annual Giving	\$ 399,429	\$ 512,900	\$ 487,900	\$ (25,000)
Other Contributions	50,328	20,000	20,000	-
Programs and Missions	37,300	42,000	42,000	-
Interest and Other	176,090	102,250	102,250	-
Board-Designated Funding from Endowments and Other Sources	757,412	714,015	464,015	(250,000)
Total Sources of Funds	1,420,559	1,391,165	1,116,165	(275,000)
USES OF FUNDS				
Human Resources	471,427	667,758	796,913	129,155
Grants and Support Funded by Endowments and Other Sources	694,000	550,000	300,000	(250,000)
Programs and Other Missions	262,090	155,700	155,700	-
Office and Administration	182,568	210,100	218,008	7,908
Ministers Expenses	51,498	70,000	70,000	-
Property	64,139	14,000	14,000	-
Total Uses of Funds	1,725,723	1,667,558	1,554,621	(112,937)
Deficit	\$ (305,164)	\$ (276,393)	\$ (438,456)	\$ (162,063)

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUD Rev	2027 BUDGET
Deficit (Funded from Reserves)			
\$	\$ 305,164	\$ 276,393	\$ 438,456
as a % of Reserves	3.0%	2.7%	4.2%
	as of 12/31/25	as of 03/31/26	
Reserves			
Cornerstone	\$ 5,653,147	\$	5,623,387
United Church Funds	4,557,577		4,795,483
Total	\$ 10,210,724	\$	10,418,870
<i>For details about Deficit (Funded from Reserves), please see page 7.</i>			

2026 REVISED BUDGET

Because the 2027 budget is mostly a continuation of the 2026 revised budget, the following highlights differences between the two versions of the 2026 budget.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET			
		AG	Revised	Difference	*
SOURCES OF FUNDS					
Local Church Annual Giving	\$ 399,429	\$ 512,900	\$ 512,900	\$ -	
Other Contributions	50,328	20,000	20,000	-	
Programs and Missions	37,300	27,000	42,000	15,000	A
Interest and Other	176,090	102,250	102,250	-	
Board-Designated Funding from Endowments and Other Sources	757,412	-	714,015	714,015	B
Total Sources of Funds	1,420,559	662,150	1,391,165	729,015	
USES OF FUNDS					
Human Resources	471,427	695,752	667,758	(27,994)	C
Grants and Support Funded by Endowments and Other Sources	694,000	-	550,000	550,000	D
Programs and Other Missions	262,090	66,700	155,700	89,000	E
Office and Administration	182,568	199,040	210,100	11,060	F
Ministers Expenses	51,498	46,500	70,000	23,500	G
Property	64,139	10,000	14,000	4,000	H
Total Uses of Funds	1,725,723	1,017,992	1,667,558	649,566	
Deficit	\$ (305,164)	\$ (355,842)	\$ (276,393)	\$ 79,449	

- A** The revision includes \$15K for grants from the national setting related to Annual Gathering and the Clergy Retreat.
- B** As mentioned in “Reporting Format” above, this is a new category this year. This category is detailed in “2027 Budget” below.
- C** The revision is based on actual human resources expenses for the first two months of 2026.
- D** The other new category. Detailed in “2027 Budget” below.

2026 REVISED BUDGET (cont'd)

E The \$89K increase includes the following:

USES OF FUNDS	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET			
		AG	Revised	Difference	*
Programs and Other Missions					
Annual Gathering	\$ 64,643	\$ 28,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 2,000	
Regional Gatherings	8,648	-	6,000	6,000	
Clergy Development	94,565	-	50,000	50,000	E1
General Synod	38,841	20,000	20,000	-	
Council of Conference Ministers	11,707	14,700	14,700	-	
Local Justice Movements	10,000	1,000	15,000	14,000	E2
Mini-grants to Churches and Leaders	31,000	-	15,000	15,000	E3
Other Programs and Missions	2,688	3,000	5,000	2,000	
Total Programs and Oth Missions	\$ 262,090	\$ 66,700	\$ 155,700	\$ 89,000	E

E1 The May clergy retreat (\$20K), Communities of Practice (\$10K) and other clergy support (\$20K).

E2 Support for community organizers like CLUE, LA Voice and others

E3 Mini-grants to local churches, like a minister’s discretionary fund for congregations

F The \$11K increase includes a \$15K increase for the Board of Directors’ DEIB efforts, partially offset by a \$4K decrease in Office expenses.

G This category represents travel expenses for the conference ministry team. It does not include compensation-related expenses. The original budget had not fully considered three full-time staff.

H The revision reflects slight increases for maintenance and repairs and utilities related to the parsonage.

2027 BUDGET

The following highlights differences between the 2026 revised budget and the 2027 budget.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET Revised	2027 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE	
				2026 v. 2027	*
SOURCES OF FUNDS					
Local Church Annual Giving	\$ 399,429	\$ 512,900	\$ 487,900	\$ (25,000)	A
Other Contributions	50,328	20,000	20,000	-	
Programs and Missions	37,300	42,000	42,000	-	
Interest and Other	176,090	102,250	102,250	-	
Board-Designated Funding from Endowments and Other Sources	757,412	714,015	464,015	(250,000)	B
Total Sources of Funds	1,420,559	1,391,165	1,116,165	(275,000)	
USES OF FUNDS					
Human Resources	471,427	667,758	796,913	129,155	C
Grants and Support Funded by Endowments and Other Sources	694,000	550,000	300,000	(250,000)	D
Programs and Other Missions	262,090	155,700	155,700	-	
Office and Administration	182,568	210,100	218,008	7,908	E
Ministers Expenses	51,498	70,000	70,000	-	
Property	64,139	14,000	14,000	-	
Total Uses of Funds	1,725,723	1,667,558	1,554,621	(112,937)	
Deficit	\$ (305,164)	\$ (276,393)	\$ (438,456)	\$ (162,063)	

A The 2027 budget reflects a more conservative estimate for giving from local churches through Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM). OCWM represents local churches’ basic support of the Conference and the National Ministries of the UCC.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET Revised	2027 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE	
				2027 v. 2026	
SOURCES OF FUNDS					
Local Church Annual Giving					
OCWM	\$ 326,142	\$ 425,000	\$ 400,000	\$ (25,000)	
<i>Transfer to National (10%)</i>	(32,614)	(42,500)	(42,500)	-	
Per Capita	97,130	125,000	125,000	-	
<i>Transfer to Southern (3%)</i>	(1,882)	(3,600)	(3,600)	-	
Strengthen the Church (Conference)	10,653	9,000	9,000	-	
4 Special Offerings to National	131,848	132,000	132,000	-	
<i>Transfer to National (100%)</i>	(131,848)	(132,000)	(132,000)	-	
Net Local Church Annual Giving	\$ 399,429	\$ 512,900	\$ 487,900	\$ (25,000)	

2027 BUDGET (cont'd)

B The 2026 revised budget includes funding for a one-time \$250K loan to Abundant Peace UCC.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET Revised	2027 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE 2027 v. 2026
SOURCES OF FUNDS				
Board-Designated Funding from Endowments and Other Sources				
Grants to Local Churches	\$ 494,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ -
Support for Middle East	100,000	-	-	-
Additional Support to National	100,000	-	-	-
ACM BTF	43,412	164,015	164,015	-
Altadena UCC	-	50,000	50,000	-
Abundant Peace UCC	-	250,000	-	(250,000)
General Synod 2025 (accrued in 2024)	20,000	-	-	-
Total Funding from Endow and Other	\$ 757,412	\$ 714,015	\$ 464,015	\$ (250,000)

C The \$129K increase reflects compensation and benefits for an executive assistant (\$113K) and an estimated cost of living adjustments (COLA) for existing employees (\$16K). The COLA has been estimated at 3%.

D The 2026 revised budget includes a one-time \$250K loan to Abundant Peace UCC.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET Revised	2027 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE 2027 v. 2026
USES OF FUNDS				
Grants and Support Funded by Endowments				
Grants to Local Churches	\$ 494,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ -
Support for Middle East	100,000	-	-	-
Additional Support to National	100,000	-	-	-
Altadena UCC	-	50,000	50,000	-
Loan to Abundant Peace UCC	-	250,000	-	(250,000)
Total Grants and Support	\$ 694,000	\$ 550,000	\$ 300,000	\$ (250,000)

E The net increase of \$8K reflects additional accounting costs and increases in office rent and insurance, partially offset by a decrease in consulting for Board of Directors DEIB efforts.

2027 BUDGET (cont'd)

THE DEFICIT

The deficit is funded from the Conference's general reserves. In 2025, the draw from reserves was 3%. The 2027 budget includes an estimated draw of 4%.

The Board of Directors is grateful for local churches' ongoing support through OCWM, which helps reduce the Conference's deficit. Thank you!

The Cornerstone investments are 10-month and 36-month term notes with rates of return between 3.00% and 4.76%. The United Church Funds investments are managed funds in fixed income, equity, and alternative investments. The related investment returns vary by fund and period.

	2025 ACTUAL	2026 BUD Rev	2027 BUDGET
Deficit (Funded from Reserves)			
\$	\$ 305,164	\$ 355,842	\$ 438,456
as a % of Reserves	2.9%	3.3%	4.1%
	as of 12/31/25	as of 03/31/26	
Reserves			
Cornerstone	\$ 5,807,773	\$	5,879,014
United Church Funds	4,557,577		4,795,483
Total	\$ 10,365,350	\$	10,674,497

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

The following is a non-GAAP view of assets and liabilities as of March 31, 2026:

rounded to the thousands

ASSETS

Cash in bank accounts	\$ 129,000
Cornerstone Fund	5,879,000
United Church Funds	4,795,000
Loans receivable from local churches	290,000
Parsonage, net of accumulated depreciation	1,101,000
Total assets	<u>\$ 12,195,000</u>

LIABILITIES

Donations received for general wildfire relief yet to distributed	\$ 161,000
Donations received for Altadena UCC yet to be distributed	10,000
Credit card payables	13,000
Funds held on behalf of Western Regional Youth Event	3,000
Total liabilities	<u>\$ 186,000</u>

The above excludes:

- *the Right of Use Asset and Lease Liability related to the office lease*
- *the pending sale of the property of First Congregational Church of San Bernardino*



**SCNC ANNUAL
GATHERING 2026**

STATE OF THE CONFERENCE REPORTS

Board of Directors Chairperson's Report

When I arrived to this Conference nearly a decade ago as a first year pastor, I could never have imagined the adventure that was about to begin. It has been my great fortune to experience and serve in so many settings of our wider church. After spending six years in leadership with the Southern Association, I began my service at the Conference level and have been profoundly moved by the ways that our Conference does life-changing and life-saving ministry in one of the most densely populated and diverse regions of this country. Not only is our reach wide, we labor on the front-lines of just about every justice issue of our time: as a binational conference that sits adjacent to the busiest border crossing in the Western Hemisphere we are uniquely positioned to preach the inalienable truth that human-made borders are not of God and that no human is “illegal.” As a Conference situated in one of the highest cost of living regions in the nation we face daily the challenges of affordable housing and making ends meet as churches and individuals. As the most culturally diverse Conference in the United Church of Christ, we live into our guiding prayer, “that they may all be one” by creating a rich network of churches who worship in different languages, embracing different traditions—all of which is a source of our strength and witness. The theme of this Annual Gathering, “We Are the Ones” carries significant meaning. We are the ones who are called to bear witness to a Still Speaking God in this region of ours, we are the ones whose presence and ministry in our communities saves lives by building tables of radical inclusion—where we fly pride flags high—where we stand beside our trans and non-binary siblings in a world that is rapidly erasing queerness. We are the ones! And we invite all of Southern California and Clark County, Nevada to be the ones with us. To join us as we labor for the world that Jesus imagined.

At the Congregational Church of La Jolla, where I serve, I often talk about the communion table we gather around as if it is brunch table where an infinite number of chairs can be continuously pulled up ad infinitum. A table that is life-saving and life-giving. It might be hard sometimes to envision what a Conference Board of Directors does in a system such as ours where local church autonomy is central. However the way I think of the work of our Board is similar to how I think of my role as a local church pastor: to be a facilitator and advocate for the work of justice and ministry. We on the Board of Directors are your advocates and the work of our governance is to aid in the facilitation of the witness and ministry that you are doing throughout our region. We are advocates for your radically inclusive ministries and we seek to facilitate your construction of tables of grace throughout our communities where more and more seats can be continually added.

What exactly does this look like? With the onboarding of an entirely new staff we were uniquely positioned to engage in a period of significant strategic planning. With the leadership of Maya Dunne and Associates we were able to cast a long-term vision for our Conference that will help us live into our goals and mission. We supported and oversaw grant applications to seed new, innovative ministries in our local churches so that the legacies of now-closed congregations can continue to live on through the ministries of our many local churches. We responded boldly to the needs of our church in Altadena after the trauma and destruction of the Eton fire and have worked alongside that congregation to plant the seeds of something new and life-giving there. In response to the rise of fascism in our nation and in recognition of the critical work of the national setting of the United Church of Christ in doing work that we cannot from thousands of miles away, courageously voted to give \$100,000 to the national setting. As one of the strongest and largest Conferences in our denomination we take seriously our position within the wider church and steward that power responsibly. We were proud to partner with Abundant Peace UCC in Las Vegas and facilitate their move to a building where they can be a voice for justice and queer-inclusion in Clark County. We provided sponsorships to United Samoan Ministries and continued our support of LA Voice—all of this living into our mission of partnering alongside those who are building tables of inclusion throughout our region. There is so much more that I could share with you. But what I hope to leave you with is that you can be proud to know that your Conference Board of Directors is made up of deeply thoughtful question-askers, bold truth-tellers, and members who represent the diversity of our churches in all ways. This is key in our ability to govern wisely and equitably.

Lastly, I want to mention two people who make my work joy-filled: Rev. Rachael Pryor and Rev. Wendy Holland. Ours is a Conference Minister who understands the weighty assignment of shepherding one of the largest Conferences in the United Church of Christ and has leaned in to this assignment with boldness, never refusing to take a risk for the Gospel. And, Rev. Wendy Holland as my Vice Chair, is the colleague and friend I have always prayed for. I count her among the most faithful, spirit-led, and wise people I have come to know in my career. With them, the future of our Conference is in good hands.

This period of history demands boldness. Your Conference Board of Directors understands this. Your Conference Minister understands this. Your Conference Associate Conference Ministers understand this. Your Conference Board Chair and Vice Chair understand this. We are the ones. Now is our time. We covet your prayers as we join beside you to do this critical work.

With grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Seery". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Tim Seery
Chair, Southern California Nevada Conference Board of Directors

Conference Minister's Report May 2026

The Parable of the Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9) has been difficult for me to appreciate, perhaps because patience has always felt like more of an excuse than a virtue. Patience is the refrain of the “good” White clergy who wrote to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in jail to tell him it wasn’t the right time for equality. Patience is the clang of the locked gate incarcerating Japanese American citizens sentenced to wait out a war they had no part in. Patience is the deferred citizenship of American Samoans and Puerto Ricans, conveniently shelved in bureaucratic and judicial purgatory. Patience is the anti-union billionaire’s claim that the profits will trickle down eventually. Praise of patience is so often violence disguised as a compromise.

I like to be productive, and I like to see results. I like spreadsheets and systems, checklists and schedules. I prefer predictability; and it can be hard to resist feeling inadequate when I look at my inbox and my to-do list. I hear this sentiment echoed across our local churches and ministry settings: there is so much to be done, so many people seeking support and inspiration, so many tiny details to manage while we face a future that feels more uncertain than ever.

It is easy to dismiss the less-quantifiable measures of productivity. Relationships are built and strengthened, often in chance encounters or during unexpected crises. Courage is gathered not all at once, but in small increments – an accumulation of new learnings, new compassion, and new outrage at injustices that finally spill over our reserves of politeness and fear. Innovation yields transformation in the long term but is painfully slow at the beginning.

Perhaps the truth is not so much that patience is a virtue, but that impatience is a thief. In her newest book of meditations called *A Beautiful Year*, Diana Butler Bass reminds us that, in Luke’s telling, the Parable of the Fig Tree is Jesus’ response to the latest horrific news headlines of murder and catastrophe designed to subdue resistance in a time of Empire. “As humans are prone to do,” she writes, “people wanted to place blame.” We want to figure out what caused the problem and fix it. We’re quick to respond to political violence with more violence, or with a desire for revenge. I don’t just mean physical violence; I’m also talking about the violence we do in our hearts, and to our spirits, when we allow ourselves to turn inhumane but complex people into caricatures undeserving of compassion or grace.

Instead of revenge, Butler Bass writes, Jesus called for repentance. “Do not collaborate with Roman violence; repent of complicity with imperial justice, repent of blaming victims for their suffering, and repent of believing that the murderous power of the empire is the only power.” Instead, Jesus invokes the Law according to Leviticus: “When you enter the land and plant any fruit tree, you must consider its fruit off-limits. For three years it will be off-limits to you; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year, all of the tree’s fruit will be holy, a celebration for the Lord. In the fifth year you can eat the fruit. This is so as to increase its produce for you” (19:23-25, CEB).

Impatience will always long to sacrifice whatever appears to be unproductive, or unprofitable, to those in power. Impatience does not have time for what is holy – for sabbath. “But the faithful gardeners refused to wield the ax,” Butler Bass explains. They were motivated by the holiness of creation: “The land needed tending, patience, and care. Trees take time to grow and fruit. The goodness of the Law knows this.”

As we celebrate two years of ministry together, my prayer for myself, and for all of us together, is that we will remember that our work needs tending, patience, and care. We are not harvesting seasonal cash crops of wheat and beans that turn soil to sand. We are nurturing trees that feed generations. Two years is only the beginning. We have made a good start: studying and feeding the soil; understanding the rapidly changing conditions of the climate. We’ve responded with care and imagination to small setbacks and full-scale disasters. It might sometimes feel like we are not bearing fruit. The work is exhausting, and there’s not always enough shade to protect us from the burning glare of hostility and grief. But deep in the ground, our roots are healing. Our branches are growing stronger, our leaves unfurling.

May our patience be not wasteful, but watchful – not an inactive surrender to the status quo, but an attentive nurturing of a fruitful future. As we resist Empire together for another year, may we protect the tender hope that is emerging even in the places we dismissed as lifeless. Last year, my prayer for all of us across the Conference was that you could see yourselves the way I get to see you as I visit our ministry settings: the communities you impact; the lives you transform; the hearts you heal. Just when I think I’m too tired for another Sunday with a new church, I’m refueled by witnessing more of this faithful love in action. We are nurturing generosity and hopeful imagination. We are building the frame that will support new branches. Let us give our growth together another year, so that the plans and dreams we’ve planted can fully mature, and bear fruit in due season.

Action Plan and Beyond

The comprehensive Strategic Action Plan document that was created and affirmed by and with our Conference Board gives a full overview of the scope and depth of our current priorities, including a taste of what we've been up to over the past year. I'd like to highlight three primary areas of focus that are integrated throughout that plan.

Restaffing the Conference: in addition to calling two new Associate Conference Ministers with a new model of collaborative portfolios, we've also been assisted by new staff, or increased hours, in communications and finance. We've worked with consultants and we are preparing to hire an Executive Assistant and a Disaster Response Coordinator. An additional ACM is under consideration, but we are trying to resist the push for productivity by first building healthy staff relationships with care, and hiring for the most impactful support even if it doesn't follow traditional models. We lament what often feels like an unprofessional delay in communication and response times; and we ask for your continued grace as we strive to build systems to address root causes, instead of quickly hiring (or working longer hours) for temporary relief.

Refreshing our Governance Framework: a strategic plan gives our Board a set of measurable goals and outcomes aligned with our core values, so that Board members have a reasonable understanding of their roles and responsibilities. After functioning in "emergency mode" since 2020, this Board has supported a tremendous culture shift that is still underway. We are striving for prompt communication, more diverse representation, and clarity of policies (which often entails creating those policies from scratch). Please take an opportunity to thank our Board members when you meet them. This dynamic group of volunteers has turned what is often a mundane requirement into a rich and sacred space for generosity and imagination.

Experimenting With New Models for Gathering: as we shifted from four Associations to a model with one Association (Southern), three geographic regions (Northern, Eastern, Central), and a fuller expression of the Covenanting Committee on Ministry, we are still discerning how best to support opportunities for learning, collaboration, and fellowship among our congregations and ministry leaders (lay and authorized). Region-based meetings in the tradition of Association Meetings saw low to moderate participation – a symptom of the radical change happening throughout denominational structures. We know folks long to connect, but we're still experimenting with the most inviting approaches. We're open to ideas and grateful for partners in curiosity and creativity!

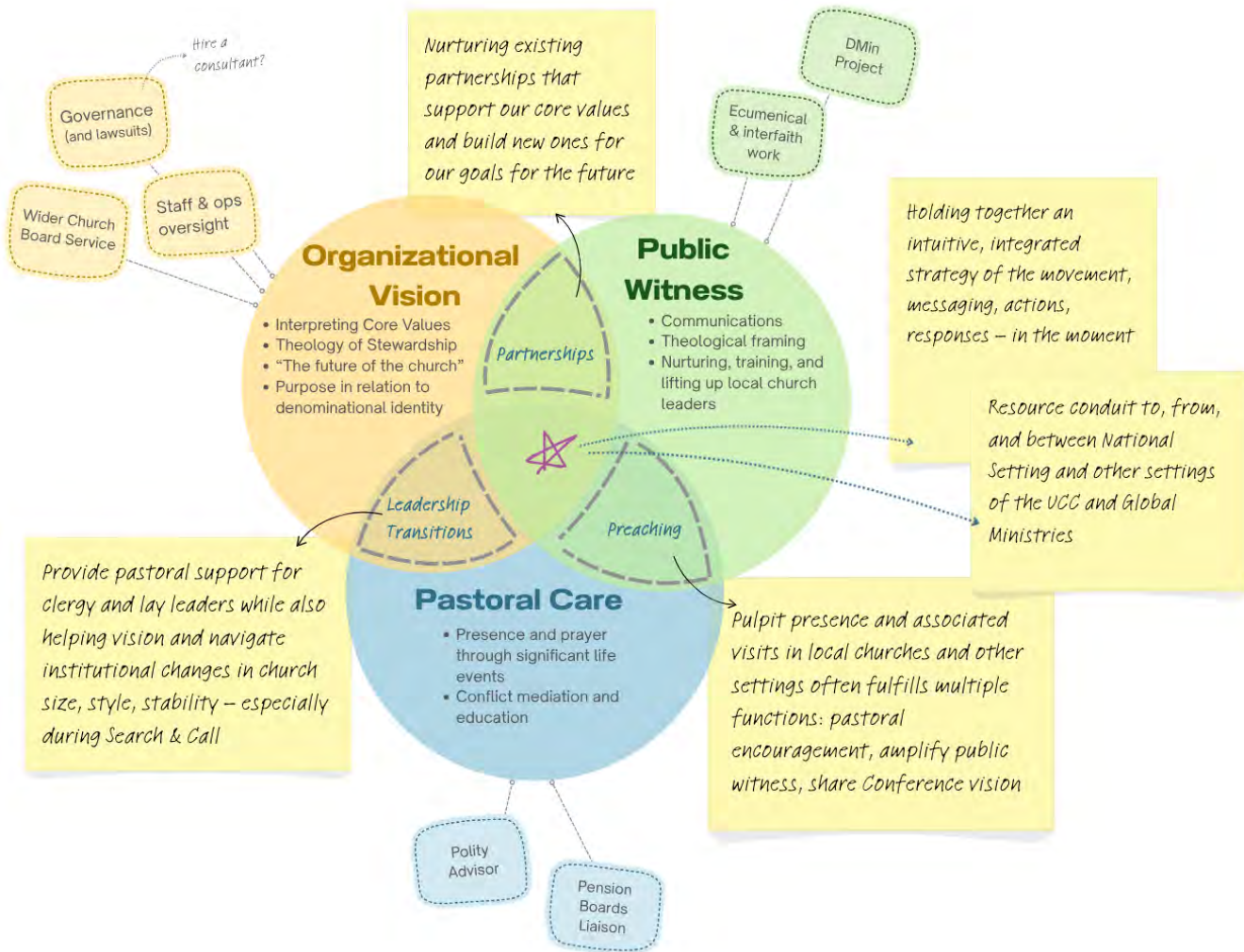
Faithful Wellness Through Focus and Humility

During one of our ministry staff work summits, Rev. Dr. Phiwa Langeni led us in an exercise designed to distill what is most essential to each of our roles – what each of us can do that no one else does. In order to protect our priorities, we have to eliminate or delegate tasks that are inessential or can be accomplished by others. This discipline takes not only forethought, but humility. Ministers are often called on to be generalists; and many of us have the habit of taking on responsibility for lapses or failures that we have no control over. With humility, we remember that we can't do everything; and that we might not always be the "best" person to do any particular thing. Instead, we focus on the heart of what we are called to do.

While a Conference Minister typically guides **Organizational Vision**, we're now shaping this vision by confronting difficult questions about the future of the Church and our denomination. Our financial circumstances have changed tremendously, and with this change we must expand our theology of stewardship. We can't answer these questions in isolation, so a great deal of my time and energy now is dedicated to building up partnerships and gathering information to help us answer these questions collaboratively – the only way I know to do this work faithfully. Collaboration builds on another kind of humility that echoes the UCC value of covenantal community: the idea that none of us can do this work apart from all of us.

These shifting realities also impact how we do **Pastoral Care**. In addition to supporting ministers, our Conference staff is more and more often called to be a source of pastoral support for congregations in transitions and settings who function without an authorized minister for months if not years. Digital resources and social media both help and hinder our ability to respond (and we recognize the same is true in local ministry settings). What it looks like to care for ourselves – to set boundaries, to take days off, to develop Pastoral Support Committees – is also part of this equation and a focus for our staff for the coming year. The phrase "Pastoral Care" might not show up in our Strategic Action Plan, but it is part of the foundation woven throughout all of our goals and outcomes.

I've been cautious to claim a role in **Public Witness** since coming to this Conference, because I want to be sure I'm amplifying existing movements, rather than creating something from scratch. But what I've found is that, while many of our churches and clergy are engaged in advocacy and outreach, we're still struggling to overcome the isolation that has impacted these movements, especially during and since Covid. The more I lend support and connective resources to ministries of witness for justice, the more these efforts have been affirmed by clergy and lay leaders in a wide variety of local church and specialized ministry settings.



A ministry of Public Witness is also a blessing to our Wider Church. In the crucible of our two states, we have unique opportunities for faith-rooted engagement around poverty and immigration, Queer rights and environmental justice, Christian Zionism and interfaith dialogue, housing and wealth distribution, and more. We have leaders who are gifted and experienced in this work. The mandate for this priority comes from our sacred texts (in particular Jesus' characterization of his own calling in Luke 4), but also from a culture where our churches are so often viewed as comfortable clubs that care little for the needs of the people outside their walls. Each of us might think, "That's not my church!" but Christians have a public image problem that's much bigger than the UCC. If we want to welcome more engagement, especially from younger generations, we have to show that we practice what we preach. We have to demonstrate relevance and not just pray about it. And we'll have to patiently design and implement new models for this work, together. We are called to resist the theft and impatience of each new era's Empire, and every new Caesar, with repentance and generosity.

Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack
Associate Conference Minister for Building the Future

The Role

In this newly created role, I support the Conference and local churches in matters of ministry and money—including stewardship, budgets, human resources, property, and legacy planning. As a former certified public accountant and an ordained minister, I'm grateful for this unique opportunity.

Local Churches

In eight months, I've visited 21 churches in person and guest-preached 9 times. In addition to worship, I consult with churches on issues related to finance and administration.

Top 5 Local Church Issues I hear:

- “We need help with stewardship and don't know where to start.”
- “We can't find someone to be our Treasurer.”
- “How does renting classrooms to a preschool affect our property tax exemption?”
- “I want to confirm that our musicians should be paid as employees, and not consultants.”
- “What are best practices for background checks related to youth ministries?”

Actually, the last one I don't hear often enough. If you are in California, hopefully you are aware of recent changes in requirements for background checks. If not, please email me.

I've helped a church plan its capital campaign. At another church, I helped facilitate a leadership team retreat. Sometimes my visits are related to social justice efforts. For example, a few weeks ago, I participated in a discussion at Pioneer Ocean View UCC about Japanese American Incarceration during World War II.

The Conference

Many of my efforts are behind-the-scenes. These tasks fall into a category we're calling “Getting Our House in Order,” which includes:

- Ensuring the Conference's **human resources** practices comply with labor laws—and sharing our learnings through an online resource library for local churches
- Developing equitable procedures for **grants from the Conference to local churches**
- Enhancing **financial reporting** for increased transparency and accountability
- Updating **board governance** practices, like our conflict-of-interest policy
- Onboarding **software for staff credit card reports**

To see other projects I'm working on, please scroll down to “On the Horizon.”

I also support two of our Covenanting Committee on Ministry Teams: Local Church Support and Accountability (Team 3), and Ministerial Ethics and Accountability (Team 4). *All our CCOM Teams are served by incredibly gifted ministers and lay leaders. If you see a CCOM Team Member at Annual Gathering, please thank them for their behind-the-scenes leadership!*

The Wider Church and Beyond

Rachael and I are deepening relationships with a variety of organizations inside and outside the UCC. We are dreaming boldly about our futures together. These ministry partners include: **United Church Funds, Pacific School of Religion, Disciples Seminary Foundation, the Insurance Board, and Retirement Housing Foundation.**

I connect with groups of colleagues for support, learning, and inspiration. These include:

- A community of practice for **Conference Fundraisers**. *There are six of us UCC conference staff with fundraising responsibilities.*
- A community of practice for **Associate Conference Ministers**. *We are 5 ministers in 5 time zones.*
- Classmates from Lake Institute's **Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising**. *I've completed the classwork and am working on the final project.*

And I recently started as Secretary for our regional group of PAAM (Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries in the UCC). At PAAM's National Convocation in late June, I'll be offering a workshop about the future of the Asian American Pacific Islander church.

On the Horizon

Here are some projects I'm working on:

- With United Church Funds, helping the Board of Directors develop an **Investments and Endowments Policy**
- With our Treasurer Ken Roberts, streamlining **financial reporting** for the Board of Directors
- Revising the Conference's **Child Protection Policy**
- With Church HR Network, updating the Conference's **Employee Handbook**
- Developing a **resource library for church leaders in finance and stewardship**. *A group of us gathered online in January. Thanks for your patience with me on next steps!*

If this report has sparked an interest to connect more deeply with the Conference, I'd love to hear from you. Please send an email to tanaka@scnuc.org. Or come say "hi" at Annual Gathering. Look forward to connecting!

Annual Report 2026

Rev. Dr. Phiwa Langeni

It's hard to believe it hasn't yet been a year since I began in my role as SCNC's Associate Conference Minister (ACM) for Equipping Leaders. I arrived half a week ahead of my official start date of June 1, 2025, the very same half week I was also completing my five-year tenure at the national setting of the UCC. I didn't want to miss the opportunity to join **you** during the action-packed Annual Gathering last year.

It was hectic for me in the most beautiful of ways. (But also, my apologies in advance for not remembering much more than faint memories of having been here.) What I didn't fully know yet was the scope of what "beginning" would mean:

- Joining a brand-new Conference Ministry Staff — Conference Minister Rev. Rachael Pryor recently crossing the two-year mark, me at one year, and fellow Associate Conference Minister Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack just a few short months shy of one year as well (with deep gratitude to Rev. Ellis Arnold, whose vast documentation continues to inform my onboarding process)
- Diving into my role from afar until my end-of-summer move to North County San Diego, midway providing on the ground support for SCNC delegates at the UCC's 35th General Synod
- Living into the realities of SCNC's evolving structure with the dissolution of all but one Association, complete with two rounds of experimental Regional Gatherings
- Getting to know hundreds of people – youth and adults, clergy and lay – and dozens of congregations, beautifully diverse in architecture, leadership, theology, and worship

And now here **we** are, gathering again to do the business of the Conference, worship together, stretch our imaginations, and enjoy each other's company. As one of the co-planners of this highly experimental Annual Gathering, hectic and beautiful ring true for this year too. Unlike the fogginess of last year, I arrive knowing more of your names, stories, and the texture of the work we share. **We have accomplished so much together!** By the numbers:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 8 Trainings and courses taken | 10 Workshops designed and/or led |
| 11 Regional Gatherings & Southern Association Meetings | 20 Covenanting Committee on Ministry Teams 1 & 2 meetings |
| 21 Wider church meetings & events | 23 Local Church events & worship |
| ∞ Countless miles driven, meals partaken, meetings convened, moments shared, stories told, losses grieved, joys celebrated | |

If I were to capture a snapshot of the multifaceted intersections of this moment – personal & vocational, SCNC mission & values, realities of the country & world – the essence of my convictions is **to cultivate a culture of covenant and wellness**. In my almost-year here, I've witnessed promising glimpses across the Conference that deepen my belief that SCNC is well positioned to actively participate in shaping the Church's next iteration, whatever it may be. Envisioning how that looks in my role for the year+ ahead:

Cultivate: Continuing to refresh our ministerial authorization processes to better support Members in Discernment (MIDs) and others in the various ways they enter and exit SCNC; widening CCOM training; strengthening our work as ONA staff liaison — work recognized this past year with the ONA Coalition's Sacred Flame Award, an honor I hold with both humility and fuel.

Culture: Weaving anti-oppression throughout our current and future practices among Staff, Board of Directors, and other SCNC leaders; establishing a communications ecosystem and ongoing research into the tools that allows us to better steward our time and talents; improving the flow of information, such as a more consistent newsletter and the newly introduced Clergy Corner for essential communications to all SCNC authorized ministers; refreshing our web presence as an essential tool to streamline our capacity to connect and resource those served by the Conference.

Covenant: Deepening relationships with the Still Speaking Writers Group and The Pilgrim Press; pursuing intentional partnership with The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM) — a relationship declared for over a decade and now, here in SCNC, finally being lived into with willing partners; and continuing church visits and SCNC-wide gatherings as the connective tissue of a healthy Conference.

Wellness: Striving to model our value of wellness through quarterly Ministry Staff retreats, bimonthly co-working days, and protecting the rhythms that make sustainable ministry possible, including my upcoming sabbatical this summer; continually reviewing requirements for authorized ministerial standing that will help SCNC better support our clergy and catch early signs of burnout or conflict before turning into crisis.

What a gift it has been to be in this work with you. We're a brand-new staff navigating genuinely complex terrain, so what we've built together **with you** is something I don't take lightly. The world is changing. The Church is changing. SCNC is changing. I believe, with every atom of my being, that we are among those being called to help shape a more just world. Indeed, **We're the Ones!**

strategic action plan

2026-2028

*“Look! I’m doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don’t you recognize it?
I’m making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness.”*

- Isaiah 43:19 CEB



**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
NEVADA CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

board approval april 11, 2026

acknowledgements

conference minister

Rachael Pryor

associate conference ministers

Chad Tanaka Pack

Phiwa Langeni

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Wendy Holland, Vice Chair

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who we are

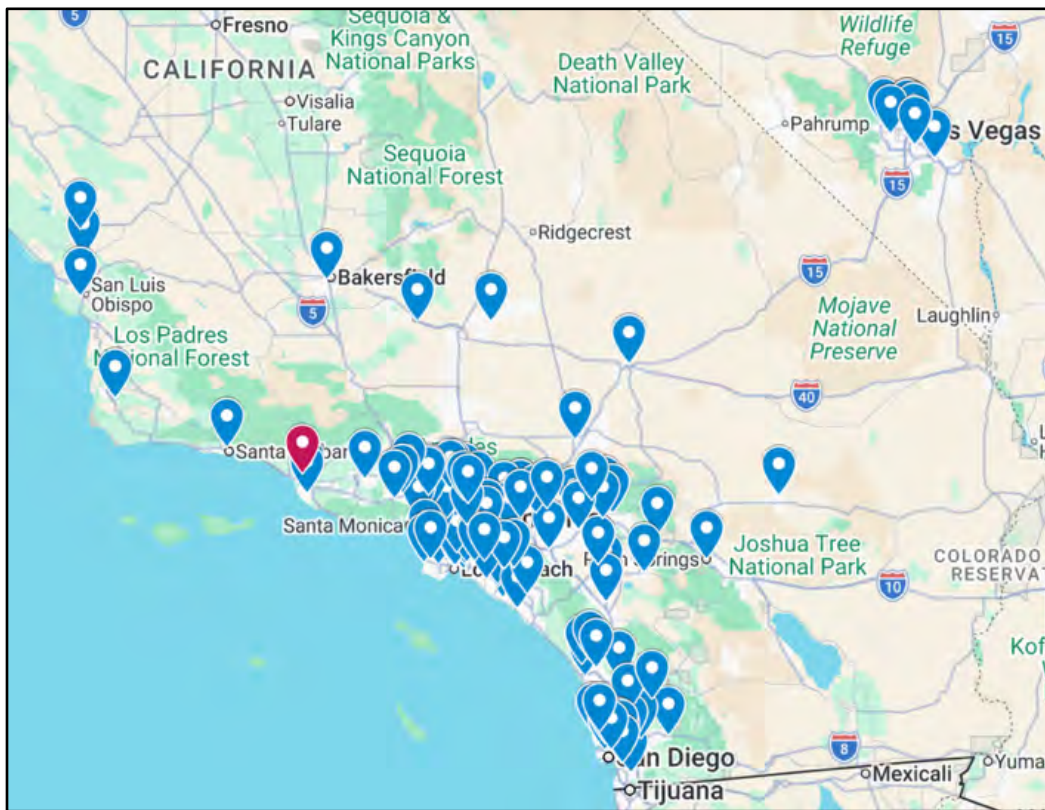
southern california nevada conference, united church of christ

Looking at the present day and recent history takes both courage and compassion. An estimated 4,000 Protestant churches closed in the last year in our nation. For us, this isn't just a statistic. We are not immune to the challenges already underway in American faith communities.

Courage is also required to imagine the future, not knowing what constraints will appear. Here, our compassion is transformed into creativity, through bold hope for what lies ahead.

This process has enlivened our dialogue. We are refreshed and committed in our support for a body of churches and ministries, who remain resolute in their commitment to a more just and loving world for all.

The Southern California Nevada Conference (SCNC) is a network of more than 120 congregations, and just one part of a larger denomination known as the United Church of Christ (UCC). Our local churches inhabit a large geographic region spanning from San Diego to Paso Robles, from Long Beach to Las Vegas, and each reflect unique challenges and opportunities.



As an example, worship services are conducted in a variety of styles and in more than seven languages. Beyond these diversities, we are an accessible and inclusive community, committed to celebrating the gifts of all people. We live in faithful covenant, a balance of local autonomy and

shared support and accountability. **We are inspired by the various expressions of our ministries, dedicated to promoting sound spirituality, peace, and social justice.**

mission

To embody a covenant of extravagant Christian love that empowers leaders, congregations and communities in pursuit of a just world.

our core values

- **Loving Community:** We experience covenant through extravagant hospitality that connects us in interdependent inclusive Christian community.
- **Equipping Leaders:** We empower educated, innovative and ethical lay & clergy leaders for ministry.
- **Building the Future:** We are mission centric and relational.
- **Seeking Justice:** Our faith demands that we seek justice.

introduction and process

a fresh start

In 2024, a new Conference Minister and a newly convened cohort of board members discerned initial directions for a way forward. This outlook was not a diminishment of the ministry and mission of previous decades, but an openness to innovation for what lies ahead. In a proposal that later culminated in the calling of two full-time Associate Conference Ministers, a working group of the Conference Board painted this picture of the future:

- A Conference unafraid to take risks and respond generously in the moment;
- Staffed to support radical institutional change; committed to equipping leaders and nurturing loving communities now rather than storing up resources for a distant future;
- Experimenting with leadership models that challenge us to seek justice in meaningful ways.

As we've continued along this journey into a strategic planning process, key elements in this vision would ultimately become our trail markers:

- *fearless but faithful risk-taking*
- *ability to pivot quickly*
- *bold and imaginative generosity*
- *honesty about the scope of change*

the process: a candid assessment

Throughout this process, we have been committed to honesty, and recognition of the challenges presented by the past and present.

The Board created an Action Plan Committee in May 2025 to oversee the process. After hiring strategic planning consultants, we organized in-depth interviews over the summer of 2025 with 14 stakeholders, representing a variety of perspectives. The make-up of the interviewees was diverse: newer and experienced pastors and lay leaders; Conference Moderators and Board chairs;

Nominating Committee and Covenanting Committee on Ministry (CCOM) members; partners with Pilgrim Pines and Open and Affirming coalition members. Participants came from all Associations and regions and brought a diversity of lived experiences with regard to race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, theological orientation, language, and ability. Some grew up in the UCC, and some are new to our tradition. These rich dialogues, conducted by staff, board and consultants, resulted in identifying key gaps, challenges and views of what might be envisioned for our future. Quotes from these dialogues are included in our Opportunities section.

board work

Working together as a Board of Directors, the SCNC facilitated an in-person retreat in September 2025 as a starting point for the trust and transparency necessary for us to thrive. As we navigated unforeseen natural and humanitarian disasters in addition to church crises, we noticed and named the trends in our intuitive responses:

- We reminded one another of the need for patience with a slow but thorough process of **healing and reimagining our institutional identity**.
- We came to terms with expecting to need ongoing resources for inevitable **crisis response**, while also **building capacity** for prevention and preparedness.
- We continued to be surprised by what we *did not* know, by assumptions about policies and procedures that were non-existent, or no longer applicable. We leaned into this experience to **deepen our organizational self-awareness** and to strip away even further the inherited norms and biases that no longer serve our mission and identity.
- We began developing attentiveness to, and methods for, **intentional and supportive onboarding** for both staff and volunteers.

a sacred co-creation

Without a doubt, the past eighteen months represent a process of consensus and discernment that brought us to a place none of us could have predicted. Instead of a traditional 5–10-year strategy, we've **identified an actionable set of immediate priorities for the next three years**. Instead of a comprehensive list of everything we hope to accomplish, we've intentionally planted some ideas that won't be ready to harvest right away. **We've prioritized relationships**.

We resisted the temptation to give in to urgency and insisted on taking the time to operate at a holy pace. A holy pace means room for more voices, and space for self-examination and institutional honesty that roots out bias. A holy pace allows us to experiment, to be curious, to stop fearing failure. When we move at a holy pace, we can breathe and rest. We can pause for moments of joy and celebration; and hold a margin for grief. There is room to imagine what could be instead of merely adapting to what has been. Perhaps the best example of this is our shift from the idea of writing a “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging” statement, to developing an action-oriented Covenant of Engagement for anti-bias practices. We've transformed and been transformed, from asking **who** we are as a Conference, to asking **how** we are meant to be a faithful Conference, together.

scnc key strategic action priorities for 2026-2028

Layered within all these priorities is a vision of a Conference that can:

- Identify and empower leaders: lay, clergy, board and committee members, current & future staff
- Promote healthy covenantal relationships with faithful and vital local churches
- Embrace generosity and growth as norms
- Elevate a Culture of Covenant and Wellness
- Inspire stronger communication and connection
- Progress equity and inclusion in organizational systems/practices
- Build sustainable operational policies
- Construct a framework for faithful stewardship of property

Below are our **five top priorities**, not in any order:

one: getting our house in order

Build operational policies, bringing our budget documents, financial records, employment practices, and databases up to date so they are well-organized, easy to access, and regularly reported to the Board of Directors.

- Fully review the 2025 budget and **simplify SCNC 2026 accounting**
- Present a **financial policy proposal** to the Conference in May 2026, with guidance from United Church Funds
- **Improve the SCNC grant process** and **provide operational and strategic church grants** with defined portfolio targets
- **Complete an audit** in late 2026/early 2027
- Bring our **Conference HR practices into compliance** and **build a portfolio of resources and templates for local churches** by early 2028

two: resourcing the church property revolution

Construct a framework for faithful stewardship of UCC property. Provide guidance and resources for local churches navigating opportunities and challenges for facilities or land.

- Build a **comprehensive inventory** of local church site conditions and mission portfolios by mid-2027
- **Identify up to ten churches facing an inflection point** in their vitality and **introduce support** through partners like Pacific School of Religion in 2026
- Accompany a **legacy discernment process** with at least five churches who are discerning a plan to complete their current ministry by late 2027

- **Continue exploring opportunities and curate expert resources to support affordable housing projects** in partnership with UCC financial ministries, and local churches
- Include detailed **commitments to property investment and redevelopment** as an explicit part of our **stewardship strategy** slated by mid-2026

three: renewing our covenants

Build covenantal relationships throughout the churches in the Conference, creating opportunities to grow, with a mutual understanding of what it means to be a member of the SCNC community.

- Complete a **comprehensive local church inventory** assessing vitality, leadership, and core characteristics by early 2027
- Conference Ministry Staff will **visit every local church** by end of 2027
- **Clarify expectations for covenantal relationship and accountability with local churches** (existing and new) through the *CCOM Team for Local Church Support and Accountability* in 2027
- Explore **new regional gatherings formats** replacing former Association meetings through two full cycles (Fall '25/Spring '26/Fall '26/Spring '27), evaluate and recommend a continuing strategy by late 2027
- **Establish an annual OCWM giving plan** (2026) and launch a **comprehensive Conference stewardship campaign** in 2027

four: equipping local church leaders

Increase leadership skills and improve supports/trainings to build a culture of wellness, inclusion and empowerment.

- Prioritize **Conference Staff wellness** through intentional practices and tools, modeling across the Conference, including regular staff retreats, coworking days, and shared calendar accountability for time off
- Provide **ongoing boundary training** for authorized ministers and lay leaders beginning at the 2026 Annual Gathering
- **Inaugurate anti-oppression cohorts** and **training** for clergy and lay Conference leaders beginning Fall 2026
- **Strengthen discernment resources** and **retreats** for Members in Discernment, their Advisors, and the *CCOM Team for Ministerial Formation*, with an initial gathering Fall 2026
- Coordinate **resources for Communities of Practice** (mid-2026), spiritual direction, and sabbatical planning

five: implementing faithful governance practices

- **Develop a board of equipped and empowered leaders**, ready to build equity in SCNC systems and practices, and engaged to serve the mission
- Complete **renewal of onboarding practices and policies** for the 2026 incoming cohort, including a board member skills inventory and conflict of interest statement

- Introduce **an anti-bias learning** commitment and a new **Covenant of Engagement** for board meetings with the next class of board and committee leaders
- Recruit **Pastoral Support Committees for Ministry Staff** and introduce a practice for annual co-evaluations by Fall 2026
- Develop **Board communication to the Conference** and for introducing Board Members to the Conference as effective ambassadors within 2026-2027
- A DEIB working group will develop an **inventory of anti-racist and anti-bias measures** for our institutional policies and practices
- Board **reviews performance** towards Strategic Action Plan semi-annually and recorrects

transforming challenges into opportunities: scnc as a model

unconventional young leadership

Our Conference Ministry Staff together form one of the youngest teams of any Conference in the United Church of Christ, drawing from unusually diverse fields of experience and earlier careers. As we embody and embrace our vocational, demographic, cultural, and spiritual differences, we operate more as a balanced leadership team than as a hierarchy. As we give shape to this relational model of leadership, we're looking both inward and outward. We hope our practices and learnings, offered transparently, will provide guidance for SCNC ministry settings experimenting with new formats for pastoral leadership. We also imagine our example will inspire other Conferences and settings of the wider church as our denomination navigates institutional transformation.

"Biggest risk is not being bold enough. Be prophetic!"

"Seek innovation, of what the next iteration of what church is going to be. We're going to die if we keep doing what we have been doing."

"Communities of practice are a positive development. Continue!"

"Have more conversations about how to lead from a spiritual theological perspective at a larger/workshop level and not just practical issues. "

"Be willing to not be scared of modernizing worship."

Stakeholder interviews

revolutionizing property as mission

It's no secret many of our local churches have become centers of property as mission, in the sense that the church exists primarily to manage and patch up massive facilities suffering from decades of deferred maintenance and expensive ongoing care. Thanks to unique attributes of legislation and property markets in our region, we have the potential to flip this relationship. Our properties can become resources for legacy giving that will revive and nurture non-traditional ministries and new church starts. We can embrace and invest in opportunities to create much needed affordable

housing and other sustainable community-serving frameworks. We can enter into a contextualized conversation about land stewardship and reparations across our diverse local communities. Property remains part of our mission as we discern faithful ways forward instead of clinging to outdated structures.

"The efforts could create models of shared resources, merged congregations, and community service hubs."

"It's important to seek a larger holistic definition of 'what's next' as a vibrant congregation, Conference."

"The entire Christian enterprise has been contracting for 60 years and mainline churches have been in denial."

"What are models of community? We need to explore stewardship of properties that are faith rooted."

"The Conference could provide more support, such as hiring consultants to coach churches or facilitate merger processes or property evaluation and offering resources to help churches explore creative solutions."

"Conduct a reality check on a valuable campus with less members."

Stakeholder interviews

challenges that generate innovation

Across denominations, we are experiencing a shift in the work of "middle judicatories" (Associations, Conferences, regions, synods) from resourcing spiritual and missional growth, to keeping up with the crises and demands of legal and procedural hazards. Many local churches have fewer members available to serve in leadership with an understanding and experience of governance practices. Insurance markets are increasingly unstable and our congregations feel overwhelmed by compliance requirements. California's progressive approach to non-profit policy, safety for minors, and protections for employees, means we are on the leading edge of adapting to a new regulatory environment. By learning together with ecumenical partners and the financial ministries of the UCC, we can join with other Conferences who are leading the way in simplifying guidance for church operations; in clarifying safe and healthy covenantal expectations for congregations; in equipping lay leaders and clergy for new directions; and in imagining models for church that go beyond property as identity.

"We need to help church bodies operationalize common questions like HR, property, and share knowledge." "Need to improve financial management."

"Need to be looking at innovation, experimentation."

"We need to get churches up to speed on laws that show compliance with state and federal law."

"Churches are not equipped to run boards. Many members have not served on church boards or any non-profit boards."

"How do we equip the people that we have in the church today and how do we provide support to churches who are already doing things?"

Stakeholder Interviews

renewed call for public witness: finding our unique voice

In the UCC, we tend to emphasize the importance of careful engagement with public witness respectful of our wide diversity of values and identities. However, a growing number of our local churches are expressing a sense of greater urgency around a clear and distinctive moral voice for justice and basic human rights at a time when democracy is in crisis, and when a distorted form of Christianity is being weaponized for intentional harm and exclusion of targeted communities. We're ready to risk discomfort and disagreement to provide bolder leadership for those who want to be engaged in advocacy with and from the margins, and we imagine this includes a balance of representational Conference Ministry staff engagement alongside resourcing grassroots activities in local churches.

"We need to have a public face and speak to all the issues we face, like inequality, education, immigration."

"Talk in public about religion, spirituality, social justice. Stepping into this."

"Is there a way to collect stories of where the Conference was in the work on social justice as inspiration? Coachella, WW II, first gay pastor from this Conference? Such as the story of the Hollywood church acting during and after internment to support a church with Japanese-American members?"

Stakeholder interviews

deib as a direction not an obstacle

In a White Majority Culture such as the one we experience in much of the SCNC, attentiveness to diversity is often viewed as a chore – something we must check off to get to the “real” work, or to stay out of trouble. We are still struggling to decenter Whiteness in our concept of DEIB as a peripheral project, when in fact, we have unique potential in this Conference to place it at the center of our identity. Our collective membership is more diverse than any other Conference in the UCC. We recognize our membership is rich with diverse member histories and experiences. This strength can be a source of guidance for our direction, rather than an obstacle to be overcome.

"Let's open up cultural traditions of the many cultural groups present in the Conference. This is a strength."

"Marginalized communities are watching to see how issues are ignored or addressed."

"What will be a meaningful experience two decades from now?"

Stakeholder interviews

diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging action

As a focus of the engagement of our consultants, we took the opportunity to infuse DEIB principles throughout the Priorities. At the same time, our Board leadership will be diving into practices this coming year, and from that experience other practices will be explored across the Conference. Here is one proposed example of that strategy:

creating a covenant of engagement

Supporting anti-bias practices in SCNC Board activities, primarily focusing on these **priority goals for 2026**:

- Create a written covenant for engagement in board meetings, as well as a broader board service. The covenant for engagement will address norms and commitments for board meeting participation with particular attention to recognizing, understanding, and responding to patterns of bias and oppression
- Identify/recruit and train “Board Covenant Chaplains” to hold space in our meetings, practicing our covenant in real time
- Train all board members in building an understanding of implicit bias

creating a future

Throughout the process of ministry staff and board chairs developing this plan with our strategic consultant, we noticed how much the past informs our member church and Conference practices. Some of these traditional practices no longer work well today. To be responsive to the needs of the future, we need to innovate and then re-establish new practices – and in fact, this is already happening organically across our local church and regional settings. A necessary difference in these new practices will be an ongoing, built-in expectation of flexibility, contextualization, and reevaluation. We’re moving away from the idea of a “finished product” and into the sacred reality of a perpetual “work in progress.”

Our progress with this strategic plan will be co-evaluated by Ministry Staff and the Board of Directors over a period of regular check-ins, including input from Pastoral Support Committees currently in formation. As a commitment to this Strategic Action Plan, the Board will be conducting a review of outcomes, updates, and goals every six months. Our next review will be **October 2026**, and will include participation from our strategic plan consultant. The Board Chair and Conference Minister will co-author reports of these results with our wider Conference membership, and offer opportunities for feedback.

Our “work in progress” lens means we are learning to expect surprises! Goals will change, and outcomes will expand or pivot to reflect actual needs. Accountability for our progress will come not from holding ourselves rigidly to a list of tasks, but from the starting point for this entire journey: faithful **relationships**, and humble **transparency** anchored by our faith in God’s guidance and wisdom.