

PRESIDENT'S report

LEADING BY SERVING OTHERS

Serving One More can be accomplished through a variety of actions. For some this is physical service for someone in your local community, church, or neighborhood. For others, it is building long-term friendships with this same group. For still others, it is through quiet servant leadership that they Serve One More. Two such examples came to mind recently.

Tyler Kern serves as the chaplain for Shine 104.9 FM in Spokane. In this context, Tyler connects with friends in our community. He is building relationships and finding ways to serve. This has resulted in Home of Shalom, a worship experience for those in the community who have been wounded by their church. During their last worship event, more than 140 people from the community were present.

Tyler organizes regular opportunities for service that is uniting these new friends and changing neighborhoods. From serving at food pantries to cleaning up graffiti and trash in local parks to fellowshiping and praying with their transient neighbors, Tyler's group is making an impact both in downtown Spokane, but also in the hearts of those who choose and desire service.

Home of Shalom is also partnering with other organizations to address suicide prevention in our public schools. Tyler's servant leadership is helping others develop a relationship with Christ.

Another example, is Pastor Darayl Larsen. Darayl passed away August 26, 2025, at the age of 83, following a brief illness. He has served on our Executive Committee for the past several years, which is how I met him. He was very humble, and so I had no idea of his long history of leadership and service in the conference and around the world.

I also want to honor him for his many years of faithful and dedicated service as a pastor of seven different churches in UCC, and his work as an elder. In addition

to this, Pastor Darayl was a church and conference Pathfinder leader for more than 40 years, impacting the lives of young people for generations.

Throughout his life, Pastor Darayl was deeply committed to pastoral service, notably spending 13 years pastoring Moses Lake Adventist Church.

Before settling in the Northwest, he dedicated 13 years to church service in Colombia, South America, alongside his wife and family, serving God and his church in many different capacities. During this time, he spent three years in the Amazon jungle piloting a small boat along the Nechí River, where he and his wife, who is a registered nurse, provided health care to remote villages. He also learned basic dental care and extracted hundreds of teeth for villagers who had no access to dental or health care.

Upon returning to the United States and later residing in Moses Lake, he proudly served as a chaplain at Samaritan Healthcare and volunteered many hours helping young people through Pathfinders.

When Pastor Darayl was not busy at church or the hospital, he enjoyed leading mission trips, hiking and camping.

What a beautiful life well-lived! Pastor Darayl spent his life living out the motto of Upper Columbia Conference, to Serve One More. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with his wife Sandy and the Larsen family.

Christ has asked each of us to live in this manner — to love all, to reach out to those around us, and to serve all in servant leadership.

May we all be committed to serving one more and looking for ways to be a blessing to those around us.



DAVID JAMIESON

ONE MORE

Serve



ACTIONS TAKEN AT 9.25.25 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Administration update

- David Jamieson, UCC president, shared a devotional about the life of Darayl Larsen, a member of Executive Committee who passed away in August.
- A report was given regarding the Home of Shalom outreach project in Spokane and the Shine 104.9 FM chaplain.
- Jeff Wines, director of youth and young adult ministries and Camp MiVoden, gave a report about the recent successful summer at camp. A video was shown of an interview with a camper who decided to give her life to Christ at camp.
- Art Lenz, director of the information & technology services department, shared a department report. In addition to providing IT support to the office, the department also supports churches, schools, and various ministries across the conference. The department is currently working on developing efficiencies in payroll and human resources, in addition to improving productivity across the conference.
- Eric Brown, UCC vice president for administration, provided a report from the secretariat office. There have been nine pastoral placements in the field this year.
- Membership currently stands at 27,496. This is a .07% increase from the beginning of the year.
- The 10-year average of baptisms or professions of faith per year, per church was presented. Thirty-eight churches are averaging less than 1 per year, while 31 churches are averaging 5 or more per year.

Financial update

- Allee Currier, UCC vice president for finance, shared a financial report. God continues to bless Upper Columbia Conference with a tithe increase, compared to August year-to-date 2024.
- While tithe continues to be received at an increased rate, expenses and employment costs continue to rise at an unsustainable rate.
- Despite these increased costs, Upper Columbia Conference is currently operating at more than \$1.5 million below budget. This will help to address the 2025 year-end projected budget shortfall of more than \$3 million.
- Since 2015, tithe has grown by 25%. However,

due to WA Salary Threshold, some payroll costs have increased by 65%.

- It was voted to set aside employee retention credit funds for 1.5 years as a hedge against the risk of audit. A plan for these funds will be presented in the near future.
- Currier also presented an update on the College Place ABC. Several suggestions from the town hall meeting in College Place last May have been implemented. Food inventory has been added to the store and additional part-time staff have been recruited. While sales have increased, the ABC is still experiencing financial difficulties.

Education update

- Enrollment across the conference has seen a steady decline since the 2021 school year. Across the North Pacific Union, all conferences have experienced the same decline in the past 10 years. UCC enrollment is currently at 1,710.
- In August, UCC educators met at the conference office for in-service training. Presentations included how to address bullying, student behavior, and teacher well-being.
- Erin Tungsвик, vice principal for finance at Upper Columbia Academy, gave a report. Enrollment has declined since 2021 and currently stands at 225 students. Rising costs have caused significant budgetary challenges.

Other actions

- It was voted to appoint Pastor Stephen Carlile to fill the pastor member vacancy on the UCA Board for the term ending 2027.
- It was voted to transition Cle Elum to company status with the intent that they be restored to church status as soon as new health and mission focus can be demonstrated.
- It was voted to appoint Pastor Eric Sayler as ministerial director for Upper Columbia Conference.
- It was voted to approve an enabling action for the personnel committee to issue a call for the following pastoral positions:
 - Walla Walla University Church Associate Pastor
 - Walla Walla Eastgate Pastor

PASTORAL PLACEMENTS

- Yakima 35th Ave Mission Center
Training and Equipping Pastor
— Moises Ramirez

