

PRESIDENT'S

Report

WATCHING AND WAITING

There is a story told about a boy who desperately wanted a watch for Christmas. This was no ordinary watch. It was one of those fancy, high-tech watches that had many features and functions. As Christmas approached, he begged and begged his parents every day to receive this gift for Christmas until finally they had heard about it so much that they said, "Johnny, please don't mention it again or you won't get it." Well, Johnny wasn't one to give up easily, so he began to devise another plan of action to highlight his desire for this watch. He knew that his dad occasionally asked each person in the family to share a favorite Bible verse during family worship, so he selected his Bible verse strategically. When the family gathered for worship, sure enough, his dad asked everyone to share their favorite verse. When he came to Johnny, the boy said, "Dad, I'm not sure I should share my favorite Bible verse with you." To which his dad replied, "Of course you should. Please tell me." So, Johnny said, "Are you sure, Dad?" "Yes", his dad replied, "I'm sure." So with a deadpan face Johnny said, "Ok. It's Mark 13:37 which says, 'What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

As we bring 2022 to a close, it strikes me that for a child, watching and waiting are very difficult things to do. How too for us! How hard it can be to wait on God! As we wait, it can seem that nothing is happening and that He never will answer us. But the Bible shares over and over again that when we place our trust in God and seek to know Him intimately every day, we no longer have to worry about delays or temporary problems. We know that He is with us, loves us, and watches over us. And we begin to have the patience to wait on Him. In fact, this kind of waiting demonstrates that we trust Him. Those who do not have an intimate relationship with God

can tend to be preoccupied and worried, filled with turmoil, anxiety, uncertainty, and doubt. The Bible says, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). God wants to have an intimate relationship with you. He wants you to have complete confidence in Him. We are not to panic but are to trust in Him. We are to remember that He loves and cares for us, and that He never leaves us. I want to encourage you to spend time in prayer with God. Read His Word. Listen to His voice and wait on Him. Trust Him to renew your strength and give you His peace.

That's why we are inviting everyone who wishes in the entire Upper Columbia Conference and beyond to join us for Vertical: 31 Days of Prayer for Renewal beginning January 1, 2023. We invite you to pray that God will pour out His Holy Spirit among us and give us a vision for how to reach men, women, boys, and girls for His kingdom – but this can only be fulfilled through renewed hearts.

Yes, watching and waiting are difficult. However, that's how we can experience renewal. So, as we begin 2023, it is my prayer that you will join us for Vertical: 31 Days of Prayer asking God to renew your heart! May God richly bless you and your family this Christmas, and as you turn the page of your calendar to January 1, 2023 please join us in waiting and watching for the greatest day of all — the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.



DAVID JAMIESON



ACTIONS TAKEN AT 12.1.22 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Administration update

- David Jamieson, president, presented a devotional about watching and waiting for the Second Coming of Christ.
- Jamieson reviewed the process for developing the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The top-line initiatives were discussed, along with updated core values and core actions. It was voted to adopt, in principle, the strategic plan as presented. The final document will be reviewed by the Executive Committee in the coming weeks.
- It was voted to elect Teddy Shupe, pastor of Spokane Valley Church, to fill the pastor vacancy on the Executive Committee.
- It was voted to recommend to the North Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee, Emeritus Ministerial Credentials for Steve Walikonis, effective January 1, 2023.
- Rodney Mills, vice president for administration, shared a conference membership report.
- Membership year-to-date stands at 26,962.
- Several baptisms have occurred over the past month at Richland Spanish Adventist Company, Spokane Spanish Adventist Company, and Walla Walla Good Neighbor Adventist Company.

Financial update

- Allee Currier, vice president for finance, presented an update on conference finances.
- The 2021 General Conference Auditing Service Report to Governance was presented to Executive Committee. The auditor concluded that the overall financial statements were fairly presented and the audit received a "green" light.

- The October year-to-date comparison for tithe has dropped 2.94% as compared to 2021, but is still at 106% of budget.
- As of September 30, 2022, total expenses are within budget.
- The parameters for the 2023 budget were presented. The final budget will be presented for approval at the February Executive Committee meeting.
- To meet the needs of the upcoming Washington Salary Threshold, cost of living adjustments are scheduled for pastors, effective January 1, 2023. Other adjustments have been made to wages and benefits to address this coming challenge. The total expected increase for employee costs for 2023 is \$1.6 million.
- It was voted to reduce the following budgeted pastoral staff positions, effective March 31, 2023: One FTE from the English churches in the Central Yakima Valley area and one FTE from the English churches in the Hermiston area.

Education update

- Brian Harris, UCC vice president for education, gave an update from the office of education.
- Enrollment has increased for the third consecutive year and now stands at 1,954 students. The largest segment of students are enrolled in second grade.
- The education department continues to move towards standards-based learning, with the intention of implementing this project in 2023.
- Other initiatives for the department include organizing a UCC workers retreat in 2024 that would bring educators, pastors, and office staff together to empower a collaborative culture.

INCOMING/TRANSFERRING PASTORS



**Jeremy
McCombs**
Pastor
Cheney/Fairfield/
Farmington

ACTIVE PASTORAL SEARCHES

- Chewelah/Deer Park
- Clarkston/Good News Fellowship
- College Place Associate
- Diamond Lake/Edgemere/Newport
- Grand Coulee/Orient/Republic
- New Movement – Pasco
- Osburn/Plummer/St. Maries
- Otis Orchards/Post Falls
- Pasco Riverview
- Spirit Lake/Spokane North View
- Touchet/Umapine/Walla Walla Northside
- Walla Walla University Associate
- Yakima New Faith/Three Angels Spanish

