

Central Pacific Conference Annual Report 2021

The Central Pacific Conference (CPC) resurrected its Disaster Ministry Team (DMT) in September, 2020 in response to the devastating wildfires of Labor Day. Formed to quickly provide financial resources to congregations affected directly by the fires, the Team initially operated under the leadership of the Past Moderator, Linda Jaramillo.

At the end of 2020, the Conference Council officially appointed a Conference Disaster Coordinator, Kim Vogel, to lead the DMT. A monthly meeting schedule was set and two operating goals were identified: (1) Provide support for congregations and communities affected by the 2020 wildfires and (2) Provide resources to Conference congregations on disaster preparedness.

During 2021, the following steps were taken to meet the 2021 goals:

- Collections taken in 2020 by various congregations were used to create a Conference Wildfire Relief Fund.
- Medford UCC, in partnership with UNETE and Rogue Retreat, provided funding to seasonal workers most impacted by the southern Oregon fires.
- Ashland UCC, in partnership with UNETE and the Talent-Phoenix School District, donated funds to the Bear Creek Mobil Home Park Fund. The park lost 67 of 70 homes, displacing many individuals.
- The team sponsored a lunch discussion event on May 27, 2021 "Fire and Ice: What We've Learned." This presentation brought members of affected congregations together to discuss what they learned from both the 2020 wildfire and 2021 winter ice events and how churches can be more prepared for the unexpected.
- A grant was awarded to the Talent Urban Renewal Agency for \$11,000 from the Conference Wildfire Fund to provide electrical hookups and 2-3 months of electricity to new residents of a soon-to-be created temporary housing project in Talent. Over 700 homes of students in the Phoenix-Talent School District lost homes in the 2020 Alameda fires. Caren Caldwell, Medford UCC, wrote the successful grant application. The first residents moved into the project in October 2021. Caren was the first member of the DMT to actively join a LTRG.
- The DMT produced a localized version of "*Ready, Set, Go*" for CPC congregations.
- A virtual "Knowledge Workshop" on emergency preparedness was held on September 27, 2021 during the Conference Annual Meeting. Three members of the DMT, Caren Caldwell, Sherrie Collins, and Kim Vogel presented information based on the UCC *Preparedness Manual for Churches*.
- Lesli Rimaldi, UCC Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery, was the guest speaker at the October meeting of the Conference DMT. Information from this presentation was the basis for a discussion at the November meeting to set working goals for 2022.

Goals for 2022:

1. Continue to provide support and resources to Conference congregations on disaster preparedness.
2. Build capacity by increase participation by UCC members on Long Term Recovery Groups and by securing grant monies for recovery.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kim E. Vogel, CPC CDC