

**United Church of Christ Congregational
Executive Board Meeting
March 17, 2024**

Jennifer Carrico, Moderator, called the meeting to order. Jennifer Carrico, Ben Crosby, Geoff O'Meara, Lou Larson, and Christi Thielman were in attendance.

Christi offered an opening prayer.

After the prayer, Jennifer tendered her resignation as Moderator effective immediately, surrendered her Moderator records and left the meeting. She assured the Board that she would continue to support the church.

Lou made and Ben seconded a motion to accept her resignation. The motion passed. The Board collectively thanked her for her service and work.

As Clerk, Lou asked who might step on as moderator for the balance of the meeting. Christi volunteered to step in.

Geoff expressed that Katie had asked him to serve as her "proxy" in her absence for the duration of the meeting. That was accepted without dissent.

Christi proposed corrections to both the January 28 Annual Meeting minutes and the March 3 minutes. It was agreed that corrections would be made and the minutes would come back to the Board for further review.

The Board reviewed its relationship with Jeremy. The Constitution & Bylaws specify a process for calling and/or dismissing a pastor. Jeremy was not called by the congregation which calls into question his place on the Executive Board. Since he was not called by the congregation it would not be necessary that he be dismissed by the congregation. The Letter of Understanding was between him and the Board so the issues at stake are between him and the Board.

The Board moved into Executive Session to discuss several personnel matters regarding Jeremy Bullen as Designated Pastor.

After considerable discussion and review of the facts, Christi made and Geoff seconded a motion to terminate Jeremy's employment effective immediately. The motion passed with 4 in favor and 1 opposed.

Christi called Jeremy and asked him to come to the church to meet with the Board. Jeremy declined.

Ben agreed to draft letters to Jeremy and the congregation to be approved by email prior to being sent. He also agreed to facilitate getting them mailed. (The letter to Jeremy was sent Certified Mail. The letters to the congregation were sent First Class Mail.)

Ben agreed to contact Rev. Phil Hodson, PNC-UCC Conference Minister and Morag Stewart, chairperson of the PNC-UCC East Side Committee on Ministry.

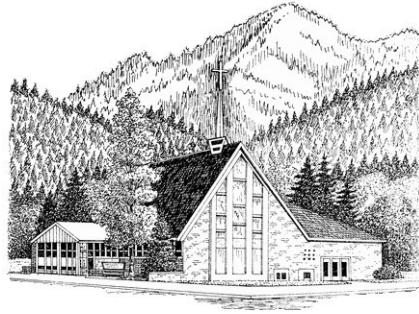
There was discussion about how to handle coverage for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. After a fair amount of discussion, Christi made a call to Alice Ling who agreed to provide pulpit supply for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday. (Alice has subsequently agreed to cover the entire month of April.)

Ben told the Board that given the circumstances, he was willing to serve out his term as Treasurer (ends January 2025) in the hope there can be a smooth transition by that time.

Christi offered an update on the dedication of the bench given in memory of her mother, Dorothy Thielman. The date is yet to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved by the Executive Board 04-14-2024



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
408 Cedar Street
Wallace, Idaho 83873**

17 March 2024

Jeremy Bullen
410 4th Street
Wallace, Idaho 83873

Mr. Bullen,

This letter will serve to inform you that at a duly called meeting of the Executive Board on Sunday, March 17, 2024, the Board members voted to terminate your Letter of Understanding dated November 5, 2023 and relieve you of all duties effective immediately. The Board is granting you 60 days of severance pay plus health insurance so your actual separation date will be May 16, 2024.

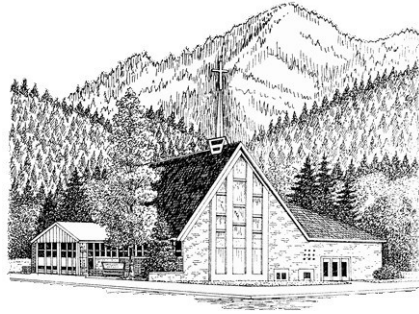
This action is taken because of your acknowledged refusal to honor Item 7 of the Letter of Understanding: "Jeremy agrees to pursue an active relationship with the Pacific Northwest Conference East Side Committee on Ministry with a path toward ordination and standing in the United Church of Christ".

In addition, we did not appreciate your attempts to reshape our Constitution and Bylaws to suit your personal needs/desires and we were offended by what we experienced as unprofessional behavior on your part on many occasions.

Please vacate the building by Friday, March 22, 2024 and leave your keys on the inner office desk. Also provide any digital account information including passwords and return the church phone number to us. You can work with Ben on the details if need be.

We thank you (and Katie) for your service to our church during the time you served us.

The Executive Board
Lou Larson, Clerk
Rev. Benjamin C.L. Crosby, Treasurer
Katie Bauer
Geoff O'Meara
Christi Thielman



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
408 Cedar Street
Wallace, Idaho 83873**

17 March 2024

Dear members and friends in Christ,

This is not an easy letter to write but as the Executive Board of our church, we have some very hard news to share. We met after church today and after long and careful conversation, voted to terminate our relationship with Jeremy Bullen effective immediately. We are extending a 60 day severance package to him. We took this action with tremendous sadness and while we weren't unanimous in making this decision, we are working diligently to pull together and move forward.

To ease your minds, we have already taken steps to assure that we continue with services, especially as we approach this Easter season. Our former pastor, Alice Ling, will be stepping in for the next few weeks while we establish a longer term plan. We will be meeting with the Rev. Phil Hodson, our UCC Conference Minister who will help us with that work.

Let us share a little bit of background/context for our action:

1. Alice retired in the Summer of 2022 after serving our church for approximately 8 years.
2. Jeremy made himself available to the church almost immediately.
3. We welcomed him as a supply preacher for a few weeks and then extended that arrangement for a few more weeks.
4. In October of 2022, we signed a one year Letter of Understanding for him to serve as our "Supply Pastor".
5. In November of 2023, we signed a second one year Letter of Understanding for him to serve as "Designated Pastor".
6. Both of those letters included clauses requiring Jeremy to "pursue an active relationship with the Pacific Northwest Conference East Side Committee on Ministry with a path toward ordination and standing in the United Church of Christ". That work progressed in the Fall of 2023 and into early 2024.
7. For reasons we do not fully understand, Jeremy presented a working paper that was decidedly anti-UCC as well as harshly critical of the Open and Affirming clause in our local church Constitution in mid-December.
8. His work with the Committee on Ministry deteriorated quickly and his relationship with our Board became extremely divisive.
9. On February 9 he proposed sweeping changes to our Constitution and Bylaws and called for our church to sever ties with the United Church of Christ.
10. In a series of communications and culminating at a Board meeting on March 3, Jeremy

clearly stated that he had “no desire to work in or with the United Church of Christ”.

11. As stated above, we met today to sever ties with him. Sadly, Jennifer Carrico stepped down as Moderator and resigned from the Board at the beginning of our meeting. We will miss her a lot!

We take full responsibility for having hired Jeremy as well as for the action we have taken today. Jeremy (and Katie) have done some great things during their time with us and we celebrate that.

We need to confess to some regrets that we have in retrospect. We never had any kind of formal interview with Jeremy. If we had, our eyes might have been opened and this timeline might have played out quite differently. We never established clear guidelines to define his scope of work. We let divisiveness creep into our work and were slow to take decisive action when it was called for. Those failures are clearly on us and we ask your forgiveness.

We will not be making any further formal statements about this matter but we will be available to sit and talk with all of you this coming Sunday. We’ll answer your questions as best as we are able within the confines of this being a legal personnel matter.

The Board has a lot of work to do both logistically and relationally and will undoubtedly have some recommendations for all of us to consider as we move forward. We ask for your prayers and we encourage you to stay tuned and stay engaged.

Faithfully,
The Executive Board
Lou Larson, Clerk
Rev. Benjamin C.L. Crosby, Treasurer
Katie Bauer
Geoff O’Meara
Christi Thielman