

District Conference Program Committee Report

Committee Members:

Al Clark, Moderator, Chair
Cheryl Crane, Moderator-Elect
Robert Aguirre Karleen Daniels
Cady Laycook Karen Pierson
Annali Topf

Ex-Officio Members of the Committee:

Board Chair: Nelda Rhoades Clarke
District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson
District Youth Advisor: Rafael Aranda

Web-Registrar: Juliana Pitruzzello

District Conference 2020 was entirely online, and the Program Committee this year was never certain that the conference in 2021 could be face-to-face. Therefore, we decided early during our monthly meetings to make the conference hybrid, with the insight sessions entirely virtual, starting Sunday and ending Wednesday, so that Thursday could be for travel. Annali Topf, Karen Pierson, and Russ Matteson developed a superb group of sixteen insight sessions. Since we wanted to make the conference multicultural, we included both English- and Spanish-language insight sessions and worship messages. Since we wanted to share as much varied music as possible, we included musicians from several congregations, music inviting people back from breaks in the business sessions, and traditional music on Sunday morning. Robert Aguirre put together a fine musical offering with help from Cheryl Crane and other Program Committee members. Although Hillcrest would provide excellent large meeting space, the retirement community was not able to cater food or

allow many smaller rooms, so we decided to have exhibitors around the inside perimeter of the meeting hall and to bring lunches in boxes. This also will make everyone safer during Covid-19 as will the fact that Friday and Saturday dinners will be on everyone's own. Karleen Daniels worked on food arrangements as well as children's activities. The pandemic restrictions also dictated individually wrapped cold treats instead of scoops with toppings for the ice cream social, gifting the added advantage of being able to make them multicultural. To allow for a broad investigation of the conference theme, "Together," we reached out to four preachers for the two worships and to two teacher-pastors for the insight sessions. To allow more people to participate, we also elected to charge one fee per congregation, as piloted so successfully in 2020. Joe Vecchio and Juliana Pitruzzello worked hard to prepare registration materials, the business book, and Zoom. Finally, to offer everyone an enlightening communal discussion on "multi-cultural together," we arranged for participants to be able to engage in the conversation circles led by Darla Deardorff either face-to-face or virtually. Russ Matteson was key to arranging for these circles, and, indeed, to everything that Program Committee accomplished. Cady Laycock made sure that the committee kept track of its decisions with her wonderful notes as secretary. We tried to make the best of several difficult limitations, and we believe that we have created a conference that will take the best of both the virtual and face-to-face formats to allow more people to enjoy and learn from the conference.

Al Clark, Moderator