

# Official Call to the Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference

October 5-8, 2021

A Virtual Gathering



The Kansas-Oklahoma Conference will convene virtually for the Sixtieth Annual Meeting focused on the theme: **UNAFRAID**. It is a critical time in the life of the Conference, in our local churches, our communities and our world. Nothing is as it has always been; bold, courageous leadership is needed to speak for the most vulnerable; to look to the future with hope, to step outside the lines of the what others might deem acceptable. What does it mean to live our lives faithfully and unafraid? Unafraid to speak and to listen; unafraid to be different; unafraid to talk about the hard questions and to hear different opinions in our own congregations? What does being unafraid look like in our different settings? Let's explore these questions; Together and UNAFRAID.

*Meeting Dates: Convene Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>; Adjourn Friday evening October 8<sup>th</sup>*

The Planning Committee carefully read the feedback from 2020. While the virtual platform of last year was effective, many felt overwhelmed by both the number of days and the number of sessions. Combine those comments with the ZOOM weariness of the last 18 months and the Planning Committee has opted this year for a shorter more focused meeting beginning on Tuesday and ending on Friday evening. Fewer sessions and workshops. Congregations are invited to be united in worship on Sunday by using the sermon that will be provided by the Rev. Lorraine Cenicerros, the incoming Conference Minister of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference.

## Who Can “Attend” Annual Meeting? And How DO I REGISTER



Everyone can attend! This Annual Meeting again offers the opportunity for easy access to our KO members and friends to join from their home.

Registration is simple. There is only one thing to remember; EVERYONE MUST register. Your registration is the entry as a daily ZOOM link will be needed for access to the meeting.

### *Voting Delegates: Registration Amount is \$100.00*

#### 1) **Voting Delegates are:**

- **Lay delegates** selected by and representing each local church with standing in the KO Conference, each congregation has at least 2 lay delegates. Congregations with memberships of more than 200 have an additional lay delegate for each additional 200 members or fraction thereof.
- **ALL ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers** who have membership in the Conference,
- **The members of the Conference Council** and all such other persons as the Bylaws shall provide.

2) **Members of KO Congregations who Attend as VISITORS** :All KO members and friends are welcome and encouraged to join the program, hear the speakers and explore with us how together we lead, learn and live UNAFRAID as communities of faith and as faithful witnesses to the gospel. As visitors your *registration is covered by the registration paid by your authorized ministers and OCWM contributed by your congregation.* Registration is now open.

3) **PARTNERS and FRIENDS:** Visitors who are partners from the Wider UCC; ecumenical or community partners and may not be members of the UCC. *No charge for registration; We invite you to attend this year as the guest of the Conference.*

**ADD ON:** *If you wish to attend the in-person dinner on Friday evening, there is an \$30.00 charge for the meal. The program is also virtual and there is no additional charge for the program as it is part of the Annual Meeting.*

## **PROGRAM AND AGENDA**

*You can view the Agenda At A Glance on the [kocucc.org/annualmeeting](http://kocucc.org/annualmeeting) website, but here are the components of our time together:*

### **Morning Prayers, Worship**

Popular last year and repeated this year Annual Meeting will; begin each morning with prayers led by KO pastors. If you are not early risers, don't worry start your day when you can as the morning prayers can be accessed on Facebook and on the KO Annual Meeting website The evening sessions will end with evening prayer and a worship service on Thursday evening where pastors and churches celebrating significant ordination and church anniversaries will be recognized.

### **Pre-Annual Meeting Conversations -Tuesday Noon**

Before Annual Meeting actually convenes there are two opportunities:

- If you want a detailed conversation about the KO budget and finances, join the KO Treasure, Rich Bireta
- Learn more about Pacific School of Religion one of the UCC Seminaries

### **Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy**

Rev. Dr, David Vásquez-Levy is the President of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley California and Dr. Vásquez-Levy will be the keynote speaker for Annual Meeting and will lead us in exploring this theme. One might rightfully suggest that leading a church and leading and living in a community "unafraid" is very different in Berkeley California than it is Kansas and Oklahoma and Dr. Vásquez-Levy might not get that. Prior to becoming the President of PSR, Dr. Vásquez-Levy lived and served in Decorah, Iowa for 15 years so he very much "gets" serving and living in the midwest and especially in small rural communities where many of our churches are located. We look forward to welcoming Rev. Dr. Vásquez-Levy.

**Workshops: The theme will be explored in five workshops:**

***Unafraid to Lead: Conversations Primarily for Authorized Ministers:*** Let's face it; it's sometimes hard as authorized ministers to "step out" there when you know it's an unpopular place or subject in your community or with some members of your congregation. How, why and when do you discern God's call to lead unafraid? Led by *Rev. Dr. David Vasquez-Levy*

***Unafraid in Our Communities:*** What does it mean to live unafraid in our communities; unafraid to speak our own truth even when it is different from what others may think. Unafraid to stand with others even when that means we are in the minority? What holds us back from saying an unpopular word or taking an unpopular stand when we feel deep in our hearts that it is what our faith calls us to do? What makes us afraid and how do we move to being unafraid?

*Led by Jim French and Rev. Rachael Pryor*

***Unafraid to Ask for Help:*** More and more models are before us; it's okay to ask for help. Simone Biles was praised and demonized when she stepped aside because she wasn't healthy enough to participate in the Olympics. There are still too many messages that tell us it's not okay. What keeps us from reaching out to others, for support. the image of the self-sufficient pastor, the super woman, the strong man, ow do we all become unafraid to ask for help?

*Led by Rev. Sarah Lund, UCC Mental Health Network*

***Unafraid to Be Brave Churches:*** We welcome Rev. Elizabeth Hagen, author of *Brave Church*. Using her book as a starting place, *Brave Church: How You Can Have Tough Conversations with Your Congregation* - How many times have, you heard let's just agree to disagree? Just be quiet if you have a divisive opinion? Or, we just talk about that here... In times like this, God is calling the church to speak up, be brave and have tough conversations. Lives of the most vulnerable in our communities depend on our speaking up. Come explore the how to begin and lead difficult conversations with intentionality on topics such as racism, sexuality, mental illness, infertility, domestic violence and more. *To gain the most from this workshop, consider purchasing and reading Elizabeth's book, [elizabethhagan.com/bravechurch](http://elizabethhagan.com/bravechurch)*

***Unafraid as German Partners:*** Once again our German partnership gives us a unique opportunity think more globally about the church; perhaps the challenges we face as people of faith are not as unique as we think. *Led by Rev. Eleanor McCormick who will be in the States for this time*

**BUSINESS:** Formal business will be in two sessions. The first will be the basic organizing session when the Annual Meeting is first called to order just prior to the keynote presentation and the second will be Wednesday evening where new leadership for the Conference and the proposed budget for 2022 will be presented. **While voting delegates are encouraged to attend all sessions, that may not always be possible, but voting delegates should plan to attend the sessions where formal business will be considered, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.**

**FRIDAY EVENING:** The last evening of annual meeting will be a time to say goodbye to Conference Minister, Edith Guffey. A hybrid experience, vaccinated visitors and friends who wish to join for dinner are invited to register as for the 'add on' meal at the Wichita Marriott. All are invited to join for the program that is art of the annual meeting. Visitors may register and attend only the dinner and program. A limited number of rooms have been reserved fat the Marriott or those who wish to attend the dinner and meal only. Access the rooms here **[Book your group rate for KS/OK Conf United Church of Christ Board Meeting](#)** Register for the meal using the annual meeting registration site.

[Click here to purchase your tickets for annual meeting.](#)