

November 28, 2022

Greetings Colleagues and Friends,

I am currently serving as Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at University of the Pacific appointed by Bishop Sally Dyck. It is the only United Methodist affiliated university in our annual conference. It has been an honor to come on staff and serve along with my colleagues, who work to provide the best environment for our students. The Religious and Spiritual Life Department has twelve, student led, interfaith religious organizations that are recognized by the university. Our office supports, advocates for and empowers our student leaders and groups. While I am primarily focused on our undergraduate students, I work with communities on both our Sacramento and San Francisco campuses as well.

As a Student Life Leadership Team Staff we have read; *Relationship Rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College*. Throughout the book, I felt much of the data and research that was being offered by the authors were also simply good ministry practices. Leading with asking students, *How are things going?* in hopes of creating a culture of welcome and deep care. This culture of care and concern recognizes:

- We all come with unseen burdens
- We need to develop relationship rich experiences
- Important interactions for students need not be long term, they simply need to be impactful
- We must raise the question: who are we becoming for others, beyond ourselves, as students develop and as the questions:
- Who am I? Who am I becoming?

Mid/post pandemic, we recognize that our students, and young adults across the board feel anxious, overwhelmed, and not prepared to handle the challenges of the world. At the same time, they are deeply committed to social justice, care for the climate, and concern for their neighbors. As a whole, their values align with the social principles that we hold as United Methodists. We are in a unique position to live out our social principles in a way that could bridge our past to the next generation.

I am thankful to serve as an Elder in full connection in the California Nevada Annual Conference. I look forward to continuing to serve in my current role to see how I can be of service to this annual conference in any way God is calling.

Blessings,

Kim Montenegro