

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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United Church of Christ executive minister announces early retirement

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo will step down as church officer and leader of Justice and Witness Ministries in September 2015.

CLEVELAND (Jan. 15, 2015) – The Rev. Linda Jaramillo, a United Church of Christ officer and executive minister of Justice and Witness Ministries, has announced her decision to retire early. Jaramillo, who has served as executive minister for nearly a decade, plans to step down from her position on Sept. 30, 2015.

“I came to this call as someone who was originally drawn to the UCC more than 30 years ago when our core values were lived, but not as clearly articulated – continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives,” Jaramillo said. “My life has been deeply enriched by my church experiences that began as a laywoman in the pews. I have been powerfully moved by the passion, commitment, challenge, and differences of opinion related to the complex demands of social justice ministries in our beloved church that claims biblically-based, theologically-grounded prophetic witness at its very core.”

In July 2013, Jaramillo was re-elected to her third and final four-year term as an officer of the church and JWM executive. The UCC Board of Directors could fill Jaramillo’s vacancy by appointing an interim executive minister to serve out the remainder of her term, which ends Sept. 30, 2017. Jaramillo plans to return to her native city of Portland, Ore., after leaving the denomination's national offices, hoping to concentrate on supporting community dialogue between Latinos/Latinas and African Americans that she said shaped her relationships in that area for years.

“As an experienced Latina leader in the church, a woman of color, I want to focus the next phase of my career in support of an enthusiastic and brilliant cohort of diverse leaders, preachers, teachers, and prophets who demonstrate passion and commitment to this church we love,” Jaramillo said.

Jaramillo, fluent in both English and Spanish, is the first Latina to serve as an officer of the UCC. She has been active in various settings of the denomination, including the UCC's former Commission for Racial Justice and former Coordinating Center for Women. She worked with the UCC's Central Pacific

Conference, was a member of the former Executive Council, and has served as assistant moderator at General Synod.

Jaramillo received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Portland State University in 1990, and an M. Div. degree from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif., in 2005. She has more than 30 years of management experience working with state, county, and federal programs in Oregon, including Head Start, migrant services, child welfare, violence prevention, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, and adult community-based education.

"It is impossible to express in words how deeply grateful I am for the immeasurable blessing to serve God through our beloved United Church of Christ," Jaramillo said. "The torches of justice are burning."

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About the United Church of Christ:

The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination with nearly 1 million members and more than 5,100 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.

The UCC's motto ("That they may all be one") and tagline (God is still speaking,) supports the Church's long-standing commitment to social justice issues and its extravagant welcome to all, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey.