

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference

Fall Meeting

November 13, 2016

First UCC

Quakertown, PA

The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ gathered for its annual fall meeting. Following an opening worship service, the work of the conference began.

Welcome and Introductions

Rev. Barb Pence, the moderator, thanked the co-pastors of First UCC Quakertown for hosting the meeting, as well as those involved in planning the meeting and those attending. After introducing key participants, she called the meeting to order at approximately 3:15 PM.

Credentials Report

Jennie Strauch reported 198 delegates present, which constitutes a quorum.

Adoption of Standing Rules

A motion was made and carried to adopt the standing rules. (Motion: Ann Few, Friedens UCC, Sumnertown; 2nd: Sean Donlon, Emanuel, Bridesburg).

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from the Spring Meeting on June 11 were accepted. (Motion: Rev. Steve Ohnsman, Calvary UCC, Reading; 2nd: Rev. Darryl Cruz, Trinity UCC, Telford).

PSEC 2017 Budget

Tammie Wisniewski presented the budget and endowment reports, standing in for Rob Stilwell who is ill today. Key budget points include:

- Decline in income
- Endowment draw of 5% of 3-year average interest
- 2% payroll increase
- 9% benefits increase
- Salary for the new Associate Conference Minister position
- Decrease in youth expenses because they are not going to Florida this year
- General Synod expenses, with \$3,000 for youth to attend
- New website budgeted
- Includes money for 9 of the 17 initiatives in the 2020 vision
- \$1,200 sabbatical expense being put away each year
- \$1,000 to support Bethany Children's home
- Proposed income for OCWM is the same as for 2016; 10% will go to national.

In response to questions about the differing amounts being given to various non-profits, it was pointed out that this is pass-through money from local churches.

Following a 2nd by Rev. Darryl Cruz, the motion to approve the budget was carried.

General Synod 2017 Resolution

Rev. Worley provided background on a resolution for PSEC to sign on as one of the sponsors to a General Synod item for the 2-year provisional use of the revised Manual on Ministry. He was one of the 17 team members accepted for the Habakkuk group tasked with responding to the 2013 GS call for re-visioning the MOM and authorized ministry. The changing landscape of ministry (e.g., the increasing number of part-time positions, different types of people entering seminary, and increase in specialized ministry) prompted the revision.

Changes to the document, which is not yet complete, reduce the MOM from 10 sections and 339 pages to 3 sections and 102 pages. There is increased emphasis on the marks of ministry and covenantal language, while the forms of authorized ministry goes from three (commissioned, licensed, ordained) to one (ordained). Using the MOM on a trial basis for two-years would allow for exploration and transition during that period.

In the discussion following a motion to sponsor the resolution (Motion: Dr. Kris Hayden, St. Peter's UCC, Reading; 2nd: Rev. Anne Cormier, St. James, Limerick), Rev. Worley responded to a number of questions with further information:

- In addition to the Habakkuk members there are 25 readers commenting on draft.
- A feedback process will be created to report back to the body during the provisional time period.
- In the Reformed tradition, ordination is not just having title, it is being embodied in church itself and is a lifetime calling, not just assuming a position. Are we jeopardizing the theology of ordination by doing this? Habakkuk spent the first three meetings talking about nature of ordination and this will be at heart of discussion at GS.
- Having a unified track is very positive. Right now there are different rules about how someone is to be kept connected. It is important to have someone guiding the person. Because we are association driven and covenant based, how do we have authority "if someone goes off the rails?" What is not going to change is that the association is the place for authority for ministerial standing. There are 177 associations in the UCC which equals 177 understandings of what it means to be ordained.
- The idea of a 2year trial makes sense, but what happens to people already in the process? Will a church be able to call a licensed pastor during this 2-year period? The trial period begins the process of eliminating those two forms of authorized new ministry.
- Concern was voiced about voting without seeing the completed revision which will not be available until December. Some wanted to wait until the special

meeting in January to decide whether or not to recommend it. Alternate mechanisms can be used to get the resolution before GS. Other attendees felt the members working on the revision have good intentions and we need to trust that they are looking to the future.

The vote was called and a count resulted in 150 in favor, 40 opposed and 14 abstentions. This count exceeded the 198 delegates given in the credentials report, due to latecomers. A check with the parliamentarian indicated that the clear majority carries the motion regardless of the slight change in the number of delegates.

Association Merger

Three associations, East Berks, Heidelberg, and Reading, voted to merge and form the Covenant Association. Schuylkill Association will continue to operate independently. We pray for their faithful success.

ACM Congregational Development Position

Rev. Worley thanked Barbara Guido and the Personnel Committee for their work. They have handled Conference staff changes, revised job descriptions and created the position description and profile for the new Associate Conference Minister position. Applications for the position were received and interviews conducted. The special meeting on January 21 special meeting will be the opportunity to vote on the recommended candidate. It was suggested that there be an opportunity to get acquainted with the person; the candidate will be presented at Consistory, then introduced around the conference. This is a part-time position, so the person will likely be bi-vocational. There will need to be a quorum at the January 21st meeting to vote.

The theme for the Spring meeting in June at West Chester is "Be Transformed." Speakers include Rev. Molly Baskette, Rev. Traci Blackmon, Shane Clairborne, and Bishop Yvette Flunder. There will be a men's choir this year. Thanks were said to John Folk for leading the youth on a retreat.

The motion to adjourn the business meeting carried (Motion: Rev. Ann Few, Friedens, Sumneytown; 2nd: Rev. Jon Fogel, St. John's/Hain's, Wernersville) and closing worship was held with communion.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jenny Smith
Consistory Secretary