



June 10, 2018

Recap of PSEC 2018 Annual Meeting

June 1-3, 2018

If you were unable to attend the PSEC 2018 Annual Meeting held last weekend at West Chester University, then allow us to give you a brief recap. The theme for the weekend was “Reconciliation”! The scripture was Matthew 5:23-24:

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

Friday began with an all day workshop reconciling the historic church with where churches are today. This discussion addressed churches in decline and their ability to sustain fulltime pastors. Although some of the statistics were surprising and difficult to hear, it opened the door to conversations about a needed path towards discipleship. One participant stated: “This information was shared in a compelling, authentic and heart-felt way...difficult material well communicated.”

Friday evening we were blessed to have Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ join us for our opening worship service.



John compared the “bad news” about the decline of church to “dry bones” and explained how we, as the faithful, are called to prophesy to those who are struggling. We need to continue to share the gospel in all of the places where people are hurting and disconnected.

Saturday morning began with the business session. Reports were reviewed, new officers and General Synod Delegates for 2019 were elected, and In the State of the Conference address Conference Minister Rev. William Worley talked about the changes in the religious landscape and how that effects the Conference’s ability to minister to — and with — pastors and churches in the Conference. “The 2020 Vision Plan was not designated to cover this specific purpose but was designated to have an effect or help create a new system that

would be a more effective expression of Christian discipleship. One possibility is a merger. The Joint Conference Vision and Development Team representative also addressed the body during the business session, calling on the body to discuss the possibilities of merged resources. (For more information on a potential merger and the work of the JCVDT, visit psec.org/conference-merger.) Attendees broke into smaller groups to discuss how the Conference should support the Capital Campaign by the Pension Board to support their charitable arm: The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, which provides financial assistance to clergy and lay church workers through grants and resources. The body voted strongly in favor of asking the Budget and Finance Committee to move forward with this and report back at the Fall Meeting.

Participants were able to choose from several “Reconciliation” workshops; Disability, Immigration, Political, two different Racial, and GLBT. Positive reviews came from workshop participants.

Saturday evening Jeff Chu, author of “Does Jesus Really Love Me”, delivered our keynote address. Jeff did an excellent job of talking not only on his life experiences but merged his thoughts with our theme. He continually asked us “Who needs your grace?”



Sunday morning’s Worship had PNE Conference Minister, Rev. Dr.



Bonnie Bates deliver the sermon on reconciliation, the future and where a possible merger could lead us. She reminder us to keep our hearts and minds open as we continue with our merger discussions.

Through all of this valuable sharing, learning, and discerning, one of the most valuable outcomes of our gathering was the time spent together. Social times included a Friday evening ice cream social, jointly sponsored by [Lancaster Theological Seminary](#) and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference and a dessert reception on Saturday evening , sponsored by [LMK Insurance](#). One participant noted “From the speakers, workshops & discussions, it’s great to be among so many of the faithful!”

If you were unable to join us we hope you will mark the one day **Fall Meeting, November 10, 2018** on your calendar!

- Brea Rarick and Sue Creswell, PSEC Staff