

PSEC Spring Meeting
June 1, 2019
West Chester University

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Rev. Bill Worley, Conference Minister, welcomed attendees to the meeting then introduced individuals from the display tables: LMK Insurance, the UCC Insurance Board/Building & Loan Fund/Cornerstone Fund, Bethany Children's Home (sponsor of the coffee), Lancaster Theological Seminary, PSEC Disaster Ministries, and Phoebe Ministries. He also recognized the Conference Staff, including Rev. Marian Shearer who will be filling in while Associate Conference Minister Rev. Sharon Morris is on sabbatical, and the Dean and the Clerk of the Church and Ministry Council.

Rev. Carol Lycht, President of Lancaster Theological Seminary (sponsor of the ice cream social), spoke, asking prayers for their ministry.

Ms. Jennie Strauch, Conference Moderator, introduced the Association Moderators, then thanked Conference Consistory members, offering special appreciation for those who completed terms of service. She also introduced our members in discernment (MIDs).

PSEC UCC Disaster Coordinator Rev. Karl Jones was recognized as volunteer of the year by National VOAD. Thanks were given to the Conference Planning Team, particularly the chair, Rev. JoEllen Mauger.

CALL TO ORDER

Rev. Bill Worley offered an opening prayer after which Ms. Jennie Strauch called the meeting to order. She identified Mr. David Balmer Esq., as the Parliamentarian.

Rev. Sharrell Shippen provided the credential report. 159 voting delegates are needed for a quorum. There were 194 registered attendees including 107 clergy, 81 church delegates, 2 consistory lay members, 2 lay moderators, 2 MIDs, and 12 visitors, which constitutes a quorum.

A motion to accept the rules was passed. (Motion: Ms. Kay Hoffman; 2nd: Rev. Nick Pence)

There were no corrections to minutes for the Fall meeting, which were approved. (Motion Rev. Ann Few; 2nd: Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green)

REPORTS

Nominating Committee - Rev. Angelee Benner-Smith presented the report. She thanked those willing to volunteer to serve on committees and identified open positions. Ms. Jennie Strauch called for any nominations from floor; there were none.

A second was made to accept the Nominations Committee report and slate of officers. (2nd: Ms. Tammie Wisniewski)

General Synod 2019 - Rev. Bill Worley reported that delegates have attended two orientation sessions. Twenty resolutions have been submitted. Delegates will speak from their own position on these and a couple of nominations. Rev. Worley offered a prayer for the delegates.

Treasurers Report - Mr. Ray Edwards was happy to report that 2018 OCWM giving exceeded the budget amount. Pass-through monies totaling over \$234K were given to various organizations demonstrates the generosity of PSEC congregations. Special offerings serve to connect local congregations to the wider church.

The auditor's report was "clean." We need to change some procedures to meet new requirements. Mr. Edwards thanked our bookkeeper Ms. Tammie Wisniewski for her work.

The treasurer's report was accepted (2nd: Rev. John Hogue)

A motion to accept the auditor's report passed. (Motion: Rev. Frances Merkel; 2nd: Rev. Erick Kern)

Sixty-one churches were recognized as Five for Five churches.

Anniversary Pastor Celebration - Rev. Bill Worley read the names of pastors who passed away this year. Rev. Sharon Morris recognized pastors having five-year milestone anniversaries, celebrating from five years up to seventy years of ministry. The service was closed service with a responsive prayer.

A motion to adjourn for lunch was passed. (Motion: Ms. Denise Staffen; 2nd: Rev. Erick Kern) Following speak-outs and lunch, the business meeting was reconvened.

Additional reports were received from the Conference Moderator, Conference Minister, Associate Conference Minister, Church and Ministry Team, Disaster Ministry Team, Personnel Committee, Ecumenical Ministry Team, and Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society. All reports were accepted to be filed.

State of the Conference Report - Rev. Bill Worley offered words of gratitude to Rev. Russ Mitman, the previous conference minister; the Conference staff who work together to serve local churches; Ms. Jennie Strauch, the conference moderator; and the Annual Meeting Planning Team.

Rev. Worley stated it is time for us to leave our churches and go out where the people are. It is always good to have a song to sing when we are on the road again, as well as food for the journey, both food to sustain and to share. He cited Rev. Cean James' statement not be tortoises but pilgrims, to be about how the journey changes us, and shared the road to Emmaus scripture.

Rev. Worley shared that this year we hosted our first member in discernment academy. We need to change the way we identify, train and support new pastors. He also indicated that ours is the only conference that has a clergymen's retreat.

There are challenges on the road we travel together. The road is being shaped by forces outside our churches such as the Me Too movement and the Catholic clergy abuse scandal. Taking responsibility for the people charged with caring for our members, we in the PSEC UCC do have a set of expectations and standards. We need to have clarity about expectations and accountability in terms of meeting attendance, OCWM contributions, and how we are to live together. If we are not constantly paying attention to the work we need to be doing, it will land in other people's lives in unhealthy ways. We need to take care of ourselves to be healthy and well enough.

Places of worship are being victimized by violence. How do we help our congregations stay safe? Active shooter training has been offered. We need plan for how to handle a natural disaster as well.

There is a failure of pastors to have difficult conversations with individuals in the congregation who are posing challenges to office administrative staff. It is our job to create a safe space. First, we have to be brave and create the safe space for the scared ones. We need to hold the conversations that America is not having.

Economic forces beyond our control are leading to closing of churches, about one every six months in our conference. The assets of the local congregations were amassed over time by people who wanted the good news to be spread, which remains our mission right now. We can fund new ministries in our region.

The road we travel is being forged by partnerships. Our churches need to work together, with UCC partners and other traditions. We need to end this silo approach and get out of our UCC boxes to become allies instead of competitors.

Rev. Worley feels blessed to be the conference minister of the PSEC, the finest of the 38 conferences of the UCC.

OLD BUSINESS

Pension Board Campaign - Mr. Tim Kissling provided an update. He thanked Ms. Tammie Wisniewski and Ms. Sue Creswell for their assistance with the campaign. Last year the conference accepted a resolution to raise \$50k over a five-year period to help Pension Board Generations of Service campaign. We said we would utilize matching funds from the endowment funds. Mr. Kissling reported that we sent \$28,990 to the Pension Board in April. We have had 55 congregations contribute \$41,551 to date. In the last week over \$7K came in.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business. Among 5 resolutions at GS on care of earth and climate change. Calvary Church in Reading is one of the co-endorsers of a resolution. Encouraged those present to do what they can to address climate change.

Installation of Officers

Rev. Frances Chester made a motion to adjourn following the installation of conference consistory members. Rev. Ann Few seconded the motion, which was subsequently voted and passed. The conference officers and consistory members were installed.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jenny Smith, Secretary