

**PSEC Consistory Meeting  
St James UCC, Limerick  
January 18, 2020**

**Consistory Members Present:** Rev. Jenny Smith, Mr. Ray Edwards, Rev. Bill Middleton, Ms. Jennie Strauch, Rev. Bill Worley, Rev. Ann-Therese Ortiz, Rev. Bonnie Dalious, Rev. Anne Cormier, Rev. Beth Lyon (attending via ZOOM), Mr. Tim Kissling, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl, Mr. John Jones, Rev. Tony Villareal, Mr. Lee Metzger, Mr. Kyle Sakamoto, Rev. Mark Roberts

**Conference Staff Present:** Rev. Sharon Morris, Rev. Cean James

Jennie Strauch called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM. She thanked Lee Metzger for the refreshments. Cean James provided a devotion based on Amos 7:10 and Matthew 23:23 and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s prophetic witness.

As there was a new member present, Jennie Strauch invited us to introduce ourselves. The minutes from the November 16, 2019 meeting and the December 5, 2019 special ZOOM meeting were approved. (Motion: Anne Cormier, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tim Kissling)

There were no communications to share.

### **Reports**

Ray Edwards provided the Finance report. OCWM is behind, but approximately 20% of the money comes in during this time period.

Tammie has indicated she will be ready for the audit in March; there are new auditing rules in place which will involve additional work.

The Gift Acceptance Policy has been modified to include bitcoin and cryptocurrency. Consistory approved the changes. (Motion: Tim Kissling; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mark Roberts)

The treasurer's report was approved. (Motion: John Jones; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Lee Metzger)

Tony Villareal presented the Personnel Committee's report. He announced that Rev. Fran Merkel has resigned for personal reasons and he is seeking a replacement.

Karl Jones' Disaster Coordinator written report was received. Jenny made an announcement about the symposium coming up on March 10 with UCC Disaster Recovery Specialist Ken Skalitzky as one of the workshop leaders.

The Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development, Cean James, gave his report. He announced that two additional congregations have become engaged in the Natural Church Development process. The church planting effort is on hold for now. Cean would like churches considering closing and having their building used by another worshipping community to discuss the possibility of that congregation uniting with the UCC. Bonnie shared that there may be restrictions on what the congregation

is allowed to do with the proceeds from sale of a building. This is a topic we need to pursue at a later time.

Associate Conference Minister of Search and Call, Sharon Morris, gave her final report to the consistory. She expressed on how much she has enjoyed serving in this role but she no long feels up to the demands of the job. She is taking an interim ministry position at Calvary UCC in Barto.

Bill recognized Sharon's work with over 100 churches in search and call during her tenure with PSEC. She was presented with flowers and a gift basket and those present prayed over Sharon with a laying on of hands.

Conference Minister Bill Worley's report was received. He reflected on his experience at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, also known as the Lynching Museum. Following up on a photo from that museum, Ray suggested that we form an action team to "claim" the lynching that occurred in our conference (Coatesville). This could be an interdenominational effort. Anne, Ann-Therese and Cean will look into this.

Bill presented a proposed budget for the Interim Associate Conference Minister and settled ACM search processes. Ray indicated that there is money to support it. A motion was passed to approve the budget. (Motion: Lee Metzger; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tim Kissling)

A farewell celebration for Sharon is planned for February 23 at Sunnybrook in Sanatoga. Bill suggested requesting a love offering through a direct mailing to churches and pastors. The consistory approved this. (Motion: Tim Kissling; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Anne Cormier)

Bill reviewed the items for the Conferring Session at the Spring meeting, including his re-nomination as Conference Minister. The Personnel Committee will work with him on the process.

Volunteers were sought for the mobile office exploration team. John Jones and Ray Edwards agreed to serve. We will also seek two association members for the team.

PNEC and Penn Central have been in conversation with our conference about doing a joint board meeting on good governance procedures. It would likely be an overnight gathering in August. Hearing interest from consistory members, Bill said he would pursue further dialog on this idea.

Jennie reported that the new work groups for Addiction and Climate Change have met and are moving forward. We are looking at guidelines for them so they can expand their role with the weight of the Consistory behind them. Jenny and Ray agreed to work on draft guidelines.

All reports were accepted.

Bill left to bring the proposed candidate for the Interim ACM position, Rev. Susan Minasian, to our meeting while the consistory members discussed their expectations

for the interim. Conversation centered on having the person come in with fresh eyes and revision the position as well as establish a process for hiring the settled ACM. It was felt that the interim would be needed for 18-24 months, perhaps longer. Ray suggested setting up benchmarks for the interim so that our expectations are clear.

Following introductions, we asked Susan to talk about her views of the interim position. An interim provides an opportunity to rethink the position. She wants to have conversations with MIDs and congregations about what has been helpful and what has not. Context matters; there is not a cookie-cutter solution. How do you want to live out the gospel? What kinds of gifts and graces for ministry do the people of PSEC want? She also spoke about her mindfulness training, and her experiences starting a church and closing a church. Susan wants to collaborate to do the work in a fair, transparent and authentic way. She would like to work with a subgroup of consistory in setting goals.

A motion was passed to call Susan for the interim ACM position (Motion: Kevin Fruchtl; 2<sup>nd</sup>: John Jones) and a call agreement was signed.

Ray suggested that we might use a new ministry grant to address the medical debt crisis. \$30,000 is needed which is twice the amount for the current maximum new ministries grant. Mark indicated that we might combine it with an education and advocacy part.

Susan led us in a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Jenny Smith, Secretary