

**PSEC Consistory Meeting  
St James UCC, Limerick  
November 16, 2019**

**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, Mr. Tim Kissling, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl, Mr. John Jones, Rev. Tony Villareal

**Conference Staff Present:** Rev. Sharon Morris

**Consistory Members Excused:** Rev. Mark Roberts, Mr. Lee Metzger

**Conference Staff Excused:** Rev. Cean James

Jennie Strauch called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM. She thanked Bill Middleton for the refreshments. Beth Lyon led a devotion and asked what it would look like if we invest our creativity and resources in each and every person's maturing in Christ.

As there were new people present, Jennie Strauch invited us to introduce ourselves. The minutes from the September 21 meeting were approved.

Jenny Smith reported that an October e-ballot was passed electing Rev. Tony Villareal as vice moderator.

Jennie Strauch asked for a vote and Rev. Kevin Fruchtl was approved as a member of the consistory representing Schuylkill Association.

There were no communications to share.

### **Reports**

Ray Edwards provided the Finance report. OCWM is \$16,000 ahead of budget with churches sending money in earlier. Expenses continue to be under budget. A motion to accept the treasurer's report passed. (Motion: John Jones; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tim Kissling)

Changes to the Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual were approved. (Motion: Tim Kissling, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bonnie Dalious) Changes to the manual specify that invoices are to be paid each week (with no day specified), to include contributions received in the daily receipts, to provide financial statements to the Conference Minister and Treasurer for review, and to revise retention periods so as to reflect the new document retention policy.

The new Discretionary Spending Policy identifies what is a legitimate use of discretionary spending. The policy provides questions to serve as a litmus test for staff and volunteers who make discretionary spending decisions. It was approved. (Motion: Beth Lyon; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Anne Cormier)

On their arrival, we greeted our Invited guests from the Pennsylvania Northeast Conference: Rev. Dr. Joanne Marchetto, Moderator, and Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister. Time was set aside to discuss the vision of each conference for the future and what shape any joint ministry would take moving forward. Notes on the conversation are provided in an addendum to these minutes.

Following our time together, the PSEC consistory discussed possible avenues of maintaining communication and being intentional in finding opportunities for joint ministry, and being collegial with our sisters and brothers in PNEC. It's happening around the edges with joint convocation, men's clergy retreat, and sharing search and call information. One possibility is holding a joint consistory meeting. We will revisit this at a later date.

The Personnel Committee's written report was received. Annual reviews of staff were completed.

Karl Jones' Disaster Coordinator written report was received. Consistory approved Karl's requests for travel costs for UCC DM gathering and for authorizing a relook at communication and COOP plans.

The Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development, Rev. Cean James' written report was received.

Associate Conference Minister of Search and Call, Sharon Morris' report was received. She reported that the new Joint MID Assessment team will meet for first time on November 26.

Conference Minister Bill Worley's report was received. He asked for prayers of healing for Sharon as she continues to have issues with her hip. We have surpassed our \$50,000 goal, exclusive of the \$30,000 Conference match, for the Generations of Service Campaign.

All reports were accepted.

The Consistory approved the housing allowances: \$30,000 for Rev. Worley and \$15,000 for Rev. Morris. (Motion: Tony Villareal; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tim Kissling)

The recipient of the offering at our upcoming Fall Meeting was initially identified as the Generations of Service Campaign, but having met that goal, the Consistory decided to change it to support sending our youth to the National Youth Event coming up in July 2020.

The Consistory approved Kyle Sakamoto as a youth representative to the consistory. (Motion: John Jones; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bill Middleton)

New Business to be discussed at a future meeting includes medical debt (the national UCC Justice and Local Church Ministries has launched an initiative to forgive medical

debt) and educational debt carried by young clergy (how we might facilitate bringing people together to help pay off debt).

Following the Lord's Prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Jenny Smith, Secretary

ADDENDUM to PSEC Consistory Meeting Minutes  
November 16, 2019

This addendum summarizes the discussion between the PSEC Consistory and representatives of the PNEC, Rev. Dr. Joanne Marchetto, Moderator, and Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister.

Bonnie Bates began by sharing the PNEC vision for the future, after announcing that they have just elected her as their settled conference minister. Her goals include trying to empower churches and pastors and connect our churches more. Following the vote regarding the proposed joint conference last year, the hardest part was that they heard "not yet" as "no." She noted that we currently enjoy joint ministry and shared educational opportunities, including ecumenical relations and disaster ministries, and asked what other areas we could explore. A key concern is how we rebuild trust through building relationships.

Bonnie said that PNEC understood that moving forward would take more than the vote, and that there were things that we still had questions about. We recognize that governance structure is very different. PNEC has had no associations for the past 25 years. PNEC has a board with limited responsibilities and everything else is done by ministry teams using a Governance in Ministry model. Further, she understood that PSEC needed to slow up, that they were not ready yet. This is partly an issue of time (really need 6 to 8 years) and partly communication to let people become more familiar with the idea. We were communicating the same thing very differently. We were trying to get things done in time for GS. We shared good ideas inside the JCVDT but did not have a communication plan. We also need to share data and facts. PNEC did a service of lament and healing after the vote.

PNEC has 130 churches versus PSEC has 160 churches; Bonnie wanted any joint conference to be equal sharing in governance. Also, she was not going to apply to be CM of the resulting unified conference.

The PSEC consistory thought it would have been helpful if staff was working together too. PNEC has fewer staff with different responsibilities than the PSEC staff model. "What is the why" is a very good question to ask ourselves. Economy of scale is less evident with PNEC spread out geographically. What if we were thinking too small; what about a Pennsylvania conference? What is the impact of doing it? This has been a lesson in going too quickly. It was observed that there are differences between various associations within PSEC.

We have to strengthen our collegial relationships person by person. One avenue is through shared educational events. Also, having our ONA churches working together will build trust. Perhaps we could become ONA conferences? Also, we could look at WISE for mental illness. Pulling people together with like theologies and approaches

to inclusion is one way to build relationships. Could we have a new joint team with a different purpose, looking for areas of collaborating, for example, PNEC congregational vitality team and PSEC mobile office exploration.

It was observed that 6 to 8 years is too long for some of our congregations; disruptive things are happening now. Do we need to be more intentional or continue to do things organically? For Bonnie, form follows function. The previous joint conference exploration took a great deal of time and energy. Is there a possible role for retirees? Bonnie indicated that there is Coaches training scheduled for January 30-31. Opportunities across conference and association borders to help struggling churches and for new ministry starts may include the PNEC congregational vitality team and PSEC congregational development ACM workshops. Do we want to do a joint staff retreat or plan shared governing body gatherings with specific topics?