

PSEC Consistory Meeting
Via Zoom
September 19, 2020

Consistory Members Present: Mr. Ray Edwards, Rev. Bill Middleton, Rev. Bill Worley, Rev. Beth Lyon, Mr. John Jones, Rev. Tony Villareal, Rev. Ann-Therese Ortiz, Mr. Tim Kissling, Mr. Lee Metzger, Rev. Mark Roberts, Mr. Kyle Sakamoto, Rev. Jenny Smith, Mr. Charles Kuthuru, Rev. Anne Cormier

Conference Staff Present: Rev. Susan Minasian

Excused: Rev. Cean James, Rev. Bonnie Dalious, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl

Rev. Tony Villareal called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and welcomed our new vice moderator, Mr. Charles Kuthuru. Rev. Villareal led a devotion reflecting on Habukkuk 2:2-3.

The minutes from the July 18 meeting were approved. There were no communications to share.

Reports & Business

Rev. Tony Villareal noted that the Personnel Committee has not met, but he did share the feedback from the annual meeting with Rev. Worley.

Rev. Karl Jones' Disaster Coordinator written report was received. Rev. Jones requested that the offering (\$500) from the Spring meeting be used to fund the Keystone Disaster Spiritual Care Network. The recommendation received a second (Mr. Tim Kissling) and was approved by the Consistory. Additionally, Rev. Jones requested \$1,000 to fund the KDSCN for 2021. The request received a second (Mr. John Jones) and was approved by the Consistory. Rev. Jones also requested \$500 for the Disaster Ministry Team in the 2021 budget, a reduction from \$1,000 for this year.

Rev. Cean James report as ACM for Congregational Development was received.

Rev. Susan Minasian, Interim Associate Conference Minister of Search and Call, presented her report.

The Conference Minister's report was received. He is requesting a sabbatical from September to November 2021. A motion was made to accept the sabbatical (Motion: Rev. Anne Cormier; 2nd: Mr. Tim Kissling). The motion passed. The personnel committee will work with Rev. Worley to develop a sabbatical plan.

Rev. Worley shared that Saint Peters United Church of Christ in Frackville gave the Conference their church building. Unfortunately, the deed for the parsonage, which was previously sold, includes a portion of the church property so we cannot currently sell the church building.

A motion to accept the reports was passed. (Motion: Mr. Tim Kissling; 2nd: Mr. Charles Kuthuru)

Consistory members discussed the Spring meeting. While the lag time, particularly between votes, was a challenge, others expressed appreciation for the practice sessions and felt that, overall, it was handled well. Suggestions were made on how to fill the lag time. Attendance was good, perhaps a reflection of the ease in attending online, but the presence of lay people was still light.

The Consistory reviewed the concerns raised during the discussion regarding Rev. Worley's re-election. The challenges of addressing the needs of an entire conference were noted; Rev. Worley has identified the importance of being a pastor to the pastors of the conference. The importance of noting trends/themes was pointed out. We work very hard at transparency and want that to continue. The possibility of having an ombudsperson was also suggested. Rev. Worley asked for clear guidance and takeaways. It was suggested that he be attentive when confronted, preserve the dignity of the people involved and recognize the power differential in relationships. Rev. Villareal will ask the Personnel Committee to follow-up with the individual who expressed undefined concerns at the August Annual Meeting about Rev. Worley's leadership to learn what, if any, further action is necessary and will draft a statement on healthy communications and review it with the officers prior to sending it out to the conference.

The Addiction Task Force reported that they are reviewing the resources that they want to share with the Conference. The report was accepted. (Motion: Mr. Lee Metzger; 2nd: Mr. John Jones)

Rev. Villareal reminded the Consistory of our commitment to address medical debt; this initiative has been tabled due to the pandemic. It was noted that the issue is getting worse due to COVID 19. The Conference funds earmarked to initially purchase the debt (to be matched by local congregations and individuals) were to come from the "rainy day" fund which was used instead to send money to the local congregations. We will continue in a holding pattern on this initiative.

Mr. Ray Edwards presented the financial reports. OCWM is \$46,000 off of budget at this point in time. The balance sheet shows scatterings of savings across various items, some restricted, some not. There are no significant liabilities, provided we qualify for loan forgiveness under PPP. We are continuing to pay our budgeted OCWM commitment to the National Church. He suggested sending a reminder out about pledges for the Generations of Service campaign. The financial reports were accepted. (Motion: Mr. Lee Metzger; 2nd: Mr. Tim Kissling)

The 2021 spending plan is lower than what has been budgeted in the past, approximately \$50,000 less than 2020. It reflects an endowment draw of 3% and no salary increases for staff. This differs from the Personnel Committee's recommendation for 3% salary increases, approved by the Consistory in July. The intent would be to review our financial position in the spring of 2021 and implement increases at that time. The healthcare costs will be increasing 5%. The recommendation from the Budget and Finance Committee for a 0% salary increase was amended by Consistory to a 1.5% salary increase beginning in January, offset by a decrease in staff travel budget in the same amount (\$6,000). We will revisit the

feasibility of an additional 1.5% increase in the spring. (Motion: Rev. Anne Cormier; 2nd: Rev. Beth Lyon) The Consistory approved this amendment and the spending plan.

Rev. Ann-Therese Ortiz and other members of the Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative indicated that they have enough people to form subgroups with good energy. They are beginning work on educational material and also have a response team that can move into action if there are events within our conference boundary that require an immediate response. Rev. Jay Meier, drawing on her years of work with the historical society, furnished numerous news articles about KKK activities in the area.

The mobile office group has calculated the savings for conference staff working from home, which would more than offset any additional costs for moving to a mobile office platform. The landlord has agreed to work with us on requested changes to the facility that will reduce the space we lease. The Consistory approved this recommendation from the committee. (2nd: Mr. Lee Metzger)

Rev. Worley reported on the activities for filling the ACM of Search and Call position. He would like us to fill the position by next August.

Rev. Villareal asked for suggestions for the Nominating Committee chairperson. The Consistory approved the appointment of Mr. Bill Buskirk to the Endowment Committee and Ms. Dian Taylor-Pringle to the Personnel Committee.

The Fall meeting was to be held at New Goshenhoppen, but they are not ready to host an in-person meeting. The Consistory confirmed that we will meet online via Zoom on November 15. The offering will be used toward an anti-racism campaign to be identified by the Zachariah Walker Task Force.

Rev. Beth Lyon is retiring and will be stepping down as moderator of the Philadelphia Association, so she will be leaving Consistory and Ms. Beth Walker will be joining this body as the Philadelphia representative.

We discussed how to move forward with strategic planning for PSEC. The conference office will send out a poll to identify possible dates/times for this work.

The meeting was closed with prayer at 12:10 PM. The next Consistory meeting is November 21.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jenny Smith, Secretary