

The Church & Ministry Council Report
The Spring Meeting of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
June 4 and 5, 2021

The Church & Ministry Council exists to streamline processes shared across the 5 Associations of the PSEC to strengthen the church. Specific foci include clergy accountability and support and Member-in-Discernment (MID) training and support. The Council strives to strengthen the work of each Association through its Committee on Ministry (COM).

The Council is made up of two representatives of each COM, with an awareness of balance between clergy and lay; a Dean, and a Clerk. The Associate Conference Minister and Conference Minister are ex-officio, non-voting members. Teams and sub-committees of the Council are: Congregational Development, PSEC Ministerial Ethics with Fitness Review Response Teams, and the recently formed Joint Mid-Assessment Team (JMAT).

Each meeting begins with a centering devotion invoking God among us to guide our work, and we conclude with a brief prayer of thanks or a blessing.

Highlights of the Council's work since the Spring 2019 meeting include:

- Working with PHYSIS Associates to update psychological testing for MIDs.
- Reviewing Boundary and Diversity training opportunities, a requirement for Active Ministers' standing.
- Adopting the Lay Minister Covenant agreement.
- Streamlining letters sent by COMs to clergy to ensure requirements for standing are followed.
- Assisting the creation of JMAT, replacing the previous Ordination Review Team (ORT), to assess MIDs in their formation as ordained clergy.
- From JMAT chair Rev. Matt Hoover:
"JMAT has been working together for a little over a year now. Our work was made challenging, like many other things, by the learning to work during the pandemic. We have spent the last year working with MIDs and COMs to discern together a MID's call to ordained ministry in and on behalf of the UCC. We also work with MIDs as necessary to develop educational formation plans to help work towards ordained ministry. During the last year we have met with MIDs at all stages of their journey. We continue to be available as resource to COMs to work with MIDs. Currently, we are working with MIDs from 3 of the 5 COMs."
- Reviewing Interim Ministry Training opportunities

- Encouraging COMS to write letters to churches upon a pastoral resignation introducing the COM as a support and to explain the transition process.
- Meeting with all COM chairs to review purpose of Council and seek input on how to best support COMs.
- Adopting a separate Covenant Agreement to be signed at a pastor's Installation, apart from the Call Agreement, signed when pastors begin their call at a new church.
- Currently in process:
 - a review of the efficacy of the MID-Mentor relationship for forming candidates for ministry
 - forming a sub-committee to focus on the needs of our clergy approaching what we call in the secular world "retirement." For clergy, whose ordination is for a lifetime, navigating the move from full time Active Ministry requires attention to ongoing requirements to maintain standing while discerning next steps to other types of ministry.

Submitted by Rev. Frances Chester, Dean
 April 16, 2021

Members of Church & Ministry Council as of April 2021

Ms. Brea Rarick, Clerk
 Rev. Ann Bolek and Rev. Linda Koslowski (Covenant)
 Rev. Darryl Cruz and Rev. Addie Stong (N. Penn)
 Rev. Beth Lyon and Rev. Jack Price (Philadelphia);
 Rev. Darryl Kensinger and Ms. Jennie Strauch (Schuylkill)
 Rev. Austin Chinault and Rev. Jonathan Hauze (Ursinus)