

PSEC Spring Meeting

June 5 2021

Online via Whova platform

(NOTE: Meeting facilitators gathered in-person at the host church, St. Paul's Summer Hill in Auburn, Schuylkill County.)

Following an opening worship service, Conference Minister Rev. Bill Worley and Conference Moderator Rev. Tony Villareal introduced conference staff, association moderators, key committee chairs, consistory members, and the worship and technology teams for the conference meeting. They welcomed the 23 first-time attendees. Rev. Worley offered an opening prayer.

Ms. Beth Walker facilitated an interactive presentation on Doing Church During a Pandemic, sharing creative ways that our member churches have found to do worship and connect with others.

Rev. Villareal called the business meeting to order at 10:35 AM. He appointed Vice Moderator Mr. Charles Devasukumar Kuthuru as the head of credentials. Mr. Kuthuru reported that 155 delegates were needed for a quorum. There are 173 registered delegates (103 clergy attendees, 63 church attendees, 5 consistory lay members, 4 members-in-discernment, as well as 8 visitors) which constitutes a quorum.

The body voted by a show of hands to accept the standing rules. (Motion: Rev. Tyson Frey; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev. Ann Few)

The minutes from the PSEC Fall Meeting were accepted. (Motion: Rev. Bob Stewart; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev Steve Ohnsman)

### Reports

Rev. Villareal presented the nominating report, noting the open positions for secretary, treasurer, and youth consistory members as well as various openings on committees. Corrections to some committees were made, although it was noted that this body only votes on certain roles (dean of Church and Ministry Council, Consistory members) as others are appointed by the associations. There were no additional motions from the floor. A motion to accept the slate of nominees was passed by show of hands. (Motion: Ms. Debbie Derby; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev. Steve Hamilton)

As Mr. Ray Edwards not present, Ms. Tammie Wisniewski presented the Treasurer's report. After a slow start, giving is now on target with the budget. 52 churches were 5 for 5 in 2020. Once again, we received a clean audit report. Our endowments strong. The PPP loan was forgiven. A financial snapshot is available on the PSEC website following every consistory meeting.

Mr. Tim Kissling described the Stewardship Development Plan, an initiative the Consistory approved. There are three main aspects: communication between the PSEC and local churches, stewardship education, and building OCWM support within conference and to national. The Budget and Finance Committee will provide oversight. An outline of the steps for the initiative is available online.

Regarding the ACM Search and Call Committee, Vice Moderator Charles Devasukumar Kuthuru reported on the composition of the committee that has formed to conduct the search and call process. A profile was created and posted earlier this year.

Dr. Kathleen Jones reported for the Addiction & Recovery Task Force. A number of resources are available on the conference website for congregations. The team is trying to get life-saving Narcan in the hands of all pastors. A video addressing liability concerns - there are none in Pennsylvania - is available.

Reporting on the work of the Environmental Justice Team, Rev. Marian Shearer described the local church projects funded through matching grants from the team. The team is still looking for 50:50 churches doing environmental stewardship projects on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.

Rev. Karl Jones, who leads the Disaster Ministries Team, reported that the rebuild in Schuylkill County is completed. There have been a number of projects throughout the conference, including an ongoing rebuild project in the Eastwick neighborhood of Philadelphia that was damaged by flooding.

Speaking for the Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative, Rev. Anne Cormier showed a video with background on the lynching of Zachariah Walker on August 13, 1911 in Coatesville. She also shared the PSEC anti-racism statement that a number of individuals and churches in our conference have signed. The team sent out a press release and created a billboard on Route 422 in association with MLK Day. They are offering an online discussion group on the book *Four Hundred Souls*. The team has educational and liturgical materials available on the conference website.

A motion to accept the reports was passed by a show of hands. (Motion: Rev. Anne Cormier; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev. Terry MacNamara).

Rev. Bill Worley gave his State of Conference report. He lifted up the work of the churches during this pandemic, citing Revelation 2:19, "You are now doing more than you did at first." He thanked Rev. Susan Minasian for her work as Interim Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call.

Attendees were invited to post photos on the Whova meeting site during the lunch break.

Following the lunch break and workshops, the business meeting resumed with an overview of resolutions to be brought before the upcoming General Synod:

- Formal establishment of an alliance of associate conference ministers
- Act to change the cash bail bond system to eliminate racial and social injustices inherent in the present system
- Ban the practice of conversion therapy
- Commitment to gender safety and equity in ministry settings
- Encourage the end of 128 years of war between the USA and the Hawaiian kingdom
- Declaration for a just peace between Palestine and Israel
- Uphold the rights of nature (“Who Will Speak for the Trees?”)
- Call on the UCC to become a church of “contemplatives in action”
- Declare and respond to racism as a public health crisis
- Recognize the UN international decade for people of African descent
- Protect workers at churches and other religious institutions from discrimination

We were asked to hold the PSEC delegates to General Synod in prayer. Rev. Nichole Jackson invited participation in PSEC Strong, a multi-day walking and bicycle riding event along the Schuylkill River trail July 9 and 10, just prior to General Synod.

There was no old business carried over from the Fall meeting, nor was there any new business submitted. A motion to adjourn following the closing worship was carried by a show of hands. (Motion: Rev. Frances Chester; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green)

Clergy who passed in 2019 and 2020 were named and remembered. Pastor ordination anniversaries were also celebrated, ranging from 5 to 65 years. Closing worship included installation of officers and consistory members and, as with the opening worship, featured musical selections recorded by a number of different churches in the conference. God was praised and those who attended were blessed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Jenny Smith, Secretary