

**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ
Consistory Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2022 via ZOOM**

Conference Vision— a unified body of Christ moving in one direction to effect for good and for God the lives of all people living in Southeast Pennsylvania.

Conference Mission— to strengthen local churches and pastors by making the five Associations of the Penn Southeast Conference agencies of connection and accountability.

Conference Goals— 2020 Vision Statement

Who is PSEC ?— PSEC is the link that connects our church’s various and diverse ministries both locally and globally. Together, we provide our local churches, pastors and congregations with the training and inspiration they need to carry out our church’s wider mission. We are stronger together; therefore, we embrace diversity, and above all, we spread God’s love!

1. The following members were in attendance: Rev. Bill Worley, President; Rev. Tony Villareal, Moderator; Mr. Charles Kuthuru, Vice Moderator; Robin Hightower, Secretary; Rev. Bob Fogal, Treasurer, Rev. Schwarz-Green, Rev. Cean James, Ms. Beth Walker, Mary Loiselle, Rev. Fran Merkel, Ms. Donna Fried, Mr. Tom Wright, Rev. Jeff Wargo, Rev. Ken McDowell, Rev. Alan Miles, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl, and Rev. Kevin McLemore.

2. Mr. Tom Wright gave the devotions at 9:10.

3. Moderator, Rev. Tony Villareal welcomed ACM Rev. Kevin McLemore. All introduced themselves in turn.

3. The Work of God’s People.

a. A motion was made by Rev. Fran Merkel and seconded by Ms. Donna Fried to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

b. Beth Walker moved to approve the January 15th minutes with changes. Mary Loiselle attended. Correct Kevin’s last name. Mr. Charles Kuthuru seconded the motion. The motion carried.

c. The Secretary had no communications to relay.

d. Reports.

1.) Treasurer. Rev. Fogal reviewed and explained the various budget and finance reports. There was discussion about the OCWM Pledge Calls. One-tenth of OCWM funds go to the UCC on a monthly basis. There is a total of 2.9 M invested.

Approximately seven churches have not made their OCWM pledges. There are no huge variations in the documents. Beth Walker moved to accept the Treasurer’s reports. Rev. Fran Merkel seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2.) Personnel Committee. No report.

3.) Disaster Ministry Coordinator Report. There are no questions about the report.

Donna Fried moved to accept the report. Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green seconded the motion. The motion carried.

4.) Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development Report. Rev.

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James is holding workshops via ZOOM. There are three planned for April and May. Many churches are working around the pandemic. Revs. Nichole and Zach Jackson have submitted their resignations. Tom Wright moved to accept the report. Rev. Kevin Fruchtl seconded the motion. The motion carried.

5.) Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call Report. Rev. Kevin McLemore presented the Churches in Transition Report. He is having difficulty finding enough interim pastors. He asked for prayers for the churches who will have empty pulpits. Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green moved to accept the report. Rev. Fran Merkel seconded. The motion carried.

6.) Conference Minister Report. Rev. Bill Worley relayed that people are burned out from COVID. He participated in a conversation with four conference ministers. A Lay Leadership Development Program is being considered.

a. Regarding St. Luke's UCC, the congregation wants to make distributions to charitable organizations such as Laurel House in the community. There was long discussion about this. A motion was made by Rev. Jeff Wargo to receive all of the funds from St. Luke's. The conference will keep \$100,000 and hold \$75,000 to try to meet their wishes. This motion was not seconded. Another motion was made to advise St. Luke's that based on the bylaws of our entities, we are legally required to accept all of the funds remaining. Our intent is to put up to \$100,000, subject to the Mitchell Endowment Fund commitment into the New Church Start Fund and to hold the remaining funds for distribution in such a way to honor the congregation's wishes pending further investigation. Rev. Wargo accepts this motion, and Rev. Fran Merkel seconded the motion. The motion carried. Rev. Fogal moved to accept the Conference Minister report, and Mr. Tom Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried.

4. Old Business

a. Compensation Guidelines Evaluation Taskforce. No report.

b. Strategic Planning Taskforce. No report.

c. Ad hoc committee to review the Constitution and Bylaws. The proposed amendments are in the document. Ms. Beth Walker reviewed the changes. See the highlights in the Constitution. Rev. Kevin Fruchtl and Ms. Walker moved to approve the recommended changes to the Bylaws. The motion carried. They will be sent out for the spring meeting.

d. Stewardship Task Force Report. A motion was made by _____, and seconded by Rev Fran Merkel to approve the as submitted. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

e. Medical Debt Purchase Program. The consistory addressed student loan debt as a way to recruit individuals to be pastors. It was decided to let medical debt rest and look more to student loans. Rev. Kevin McLemore and Ms. Beth Walker volunteered to do some initial work in consultation with Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green.

f. Update on new church start. Rev. Cean James reviewed what needs to be done in the beginning, and those requirements are taking place now. Financial controls need to be

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created so that funds can be received from the Conference.

5. New Business. Spring Meeting.

a. Vaccinations/Masks. Will they be required? The Conference will follow CDC and West Chester University guidelines. Masks will be available if needed.

b. Discounted registrations. There will be no discounted registrations.

c. Rev. Kevin Fruchtl and Rev. Fran Merkel made a motion to make a decision to explore streaming the meeting. The motion did not carry. The motion was amended to if the meeting is in person then there will be no streaming. The motion did not carry. The motion was amended again. If the meeting is held in person with the option of limited or partial streaming according to West Chester without voting capability. Ms. Beth Walker seconded this motion. There was one abstention. The motion carried. Ms. Walker moved that a fee up to \$25.00 be charged for those who attend via streaming. Rev. Wargo seconded the motion. The motion carried. Ms. Donna Fried moved to accept fees proposed by the planning committee. Rev. Fogal seconded the motion. The motion carried.

d. Business to be addressed.

1) Recognition of anniversaries.

2) Changes to the Constitution.

3) Reviewed draft agenda.

e. Consistory meetings will be in person at the PSEC Office beginning May 21. A Zoom meeting will be set up regardless. The meeting start time will be changed to 10:00.

f. Rev. Nicholas Pence has been appointed to be the chair of the Council of Ministers ..Ms. Walker and Rev. Fogal made the motion. The motion carried. It will be approved by vote at the Spring meeting.

7. Adjournment Rev. Schwarz-Green moved for adjournment. Rev. Fruchtl seconded the motion. Rev. McLemore offered a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 pm.

Robin A. Hightower
Secretary