

Keystone Project: Summary from Jan. 20, 2023

The third meeting of the Keystone Study Group* took place Friday, January 20, 2023 in Harrisburg. The Keystone Study Group (KSG) meets monthly to explore the possibilities of mutual or consolidated ministry among the four Conferences in Pennsylvania.

In the first session of the meeting, we started by identifying potential roadblocks/obstacles related to this work through several topics:

- **Justification for a Consolidation** – The “Why?” of what drives this spiritual work and helps create a stronger church/missional connection.
- **Governance** – How might we structure/govern our shared work/mission?
- **Staff** – What human resources would be needed to effectively resource our shared work/mission?
- **Money/Assets** – How could our collective assets empower and resource our shared work/mission?
- **Relationships** – How might we create covenantal transparency to strengthen our shared work/mission across a wider geography, and engage more deeply so every congregation feels connected and resourced?
- **Inclusion** – With our “big tent” and “always reforming” identity as the UCC and Pennsylvania congregations, how could we intentionally maintain and grow our connections across theological, social, and political perspectives so every congregation feels affirmed for who they are?

In the second session, we explored each of those 6 obstacles more intentionally. We also identified specific possibilities for **function** and **structure** to strengthen our missional connection. Focusing on 4 foundational principles we believe are essential building blocks for our possible shared ministry, we asked questions about:

- Spiritual and Theological Underpinnings of Our Work
- Concrete Practices of Evangelism, Outreach, and Relationship Building with Emphasis on Action
- Development of Church Leaders (Laity) to Support Worship and Celebration
- Spiritual and Theological Values Development as a Foundation for Our Collective Missional Purpose

Our discussion of these topics will continue and will guide our conversations toward the possibility of coming together in common support of mission and ministry as one (1) Pennsylvania conference. We continue to discern in our meetings (and in other small group clusters across the 4 conferences) how we can collectively function with power, rather than exist in “survival mode.” We envision a vibrant and vital, always reforming faith that embraces new tools for ministry so we might proclaim the love of the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We welcome and appreciate your continued prayers in this journey of exploration and faith, as this body of leaders from the 4 PA UCC Conferences study and dream together, guided by the Holy Spirit and our collective desire to see the “new thing” God is doing in our midst.

Respectfully submitted,

Keystone Project Communications Team

Communications Team

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*A study and discernment group of the 4 PA UCC Conferences – Penn West, Penn Central, Penn NE, and Pennsylvania SE