

**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ
Consistory Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2023 Hybrid Meeting
PSEC Office and 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!

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The following members were in attendance: Rev. Bill Worley, Mr. Charles Kuthura, Mrs. Robin Hightower, Mr. Tom Wright, Ms. Donna Fried, Rev. Suzanne Schwarz Green, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl, Ms. Mary Loiselle, Rev. Alan Miles, Ms. Elizabeth Walker, Rev. Ken McDowell, Rev. Cean James, and Alisa Liselle.

Moderator Charles Kuthuru offered a Word of Prayer.

Opening devotions were provided by Rev. Kevin Fruchtl. The theme was that we are to be ambassadors of truth.

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Charles Kuthuru at 1008.

The agenda for the meeting was approved upon motion by Rev. Suzanne Schwartz Green and Ms. Donna Fried. No discussion. Motion carried. The agenda was approved.

The minutes of March 18, 2023 were approved upon motion by Ms. Mary Loiselle and Rev. Suzanne Schwartz Green. There was no discussion. The motion carried. The minutes were approved as presented.

Reports:

1. Treasurer. Rev. Bob Fogal led the consistory through the various reports to highlight items that seem to merit attention.
 - OCWM giving is about \$15,000 behind the budgeted projection for April YTD. This amount equals the "behind budget" amount for all income, suggesting that if OCWM giving had matched YTD projections, all income would be on budget.
 - Regardless of our conference OCWM giving, PSEC sends its promised contribution to the national setting each month. Our annual pledge is 10 percent of our anticipated OCWM giving to PSEC, or \$76,510, and we send one-twelfth of that pledge, \$6,375, each month.
 - Four funds on the balance sheet were highlighted.

- Line 10025 – Sale of Kensington Church: funds are held to pay for larger current expense items that had not been budgeted.
- Line 10059 – Disaster Response Ministries: an example of a donor restricted fund that must be spent for the purposes indicated by the donor.
- Line 67 – National Youth Event: an example of a consistory designated fund, which the consistory has the authority to designate for another purpose (in whole or in part) if it chooses to do so.
- Line 20010 – Accounts payable: Auditors indicated during their 2022 audit that, according to a new national standard, leased equipment must now be itemized as a liability in an organization's financial reports. This becomes an addition to our PSEC tracking.
- There are no significant issues in the operating statement. A couple highlights are. . .
 - Expense line 53520 – General Synod: There are no General Synod expenses budgeted for this year. PSEC costs will be covered by budgeted amounts set aside in previous years and a savings account designated for General Synod expenses.
 - Line 54034 – Home for the Aged: This is a pass-through account that receives contributions from an external trust for the benefit of Phoebe Ministries.
- The Endowment Committee is giving attention to what savings funds might be merged. Recently, the Reading Classis Fund (Schedule of Investments Line 24) was merged with general savings. The original purpose of that fund no longer pertains and can appropriately be translated into unrestricted use by the Conference.
- The market value of investments grew from \$2,438,444 on December 31, 2022 to \$2,603,433 on March 31, 2023.

It was requested that the Donor and Consistory monies be asterisked to help the Consistory members see the difference. Motion to approve the Treasurer's report by Ms. Donna Fried and Rev. Alan Miles. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

2. Generosity Team Report. Ms. Beth Walker moved to approve the report and Ms. Mary Loiselle seconded the motion. Rev. Bill Worley asked that Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach officer for the national United Church of Christ denomination be scheduled for the September meeting. He would join via Zoom. The purpose is for him to share where PSEC is overall in OCWM giving. Moderator Charles Kuthuru delegated making these arrangements to Rev. Worley. A motion to approve the report was made by Ms. Beth Walker and seconded by Mr. Tom Wright. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.
3. Disaster Ministry Coordinator Report. A motion to approve the report was made by Rev. Kevin Fruchtl and seconded by Mrs. Robin Hightower. Rev. Worley noted that three churches received grants to assemble CWS buckets and kits. There was no further discussion. A vote was taken and the motion carried.
4. Personnel Committee Report. No report. Have not met since last meeting.
5. Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development Report. Rev. Cean James highlighted the workshops he has done. The Spirit in the workshops was very strong. More churches are definitely thinking about the possibility of merging with other churches. Three or

four years ago, we couldn't even have this conversation. The motion to approve the report was made by Rev. Alan Miles and Ms. Donna Fried. There was no further discussion and the vote was taken. The motion carried.

A break was taken. The meeting reconvened at 1055.

6. Associate Conference Minister for Search & Call Report. Mr. Tom Wright made a motion to approve the report. Ms. Donna Fried seconded the motion. There was discussion regarding the number of churches with which Rev. McLemore is dealing. The number of churches actively searching has reduced. Churches in transition are still actively working. The motion carried.
7. Conference Minister Report. Rev. Worley highlighted that the Conference is prepared for annual meeting. Elana Larson, our regional Generosity Team member for the national UCC denomination will speak on Friday morning. The number of people who have registered is lower than in previous years but people are still asking to register. Moderator Kuthuru thanked the planning team on behalf of the Consistory. Ms. Liselle moved to approve the report; Rev. Bob Fogal seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

Old Business.

1. Lay Leadership Education Report. There was a lot of positive feedback from the three Consistory members who attended the Lay Leadership workshops. It was requested that they be recorded the next time it is held. Rev. Worley stated that the evaluation forms were highly favorable. The Lay Leadership Team is working on its next event. There was incredible engagement in "How the UCC Works." A lot of people didn't know our denomination. A lot of work needs to be done to connect local churches to the Conference. Rev. Bob Fogal recommended videos in 15 minute segments to present to small groups.
2. Keystone Project. The Pennsylvania Conference Ministers of the other three Pennsylvania conferences will be at our annual meeting. Rev. Worley will offer words about the Keystone Project. The delegates will be engaged in conversation and asked what in your faith life do you absolutely need and what are we not doing as a church? The Keystone Study Group is working on key functions of a conference in support of the local church. What is going to be radically changed, which will be relevant and helpful? How do we put the local church in the center of this? General Synod has to be involved, so the KSG needs to work in a timeline which makes sense. It is a very intentional, networking kind of effort to engage everyone. Mary: Staff familiarity and connection with other staff, like music directors. Sue and Brea get staff together who want to do so. Beth: Christian educators (Sunday School) included. What do we need to do? Chuck Maxfield-tyranny of professionalism.

New Business.

1. Process for new church joining a PSEC Association-Approval requested by Church & Ministry Council. Council approved the content of the document but wants approval by the Conference

to put it into motion. Discussion included praise for the document. It is recommended that the process for becoming an affiliated congregation include under the Affirming Covenant the section of the UCC Church Profile sections that relate to the Local Church's identity, vision and mission. A motion to approve the document pending inclusion of a church profile of identity was made by Rev. Bob Fogal and seconded by Ms. Beth Walker. There was no further discussion and the motion carried.

2. Adjournment. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Loiselle and seconded by Ms. Walker. The motion carried. Rev. Worley offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 AM.

Robin A. Hightower
Secretary