



August 13, 2023

Keystone Study Group—Summary of 7/14 Meeting

With the grace of God, we recognize that
Together We Are Stronger, The Keystone Conference.

The seventh meeting of the Keystone Working Group* took place Friday, July 14, 2023. Guided by the Spirit, we realized that our work has moved from being a “study group” to a “working group” as we build a vision of what a Keystone Conference can be. We have now identified essential functions of a Keystone Conference to support mission, ministry and authorized ministers in diverse settings.

These ministry functions are:

- Faith Formation - Mission - Generosity and Stewardship
- Search & Call - Communication -Digital Ministry/Technology
- Congregational Futures - Disaster Ministries - Ecumenism
- Leadership Training for Pastors/Lay Leaders - Spiritual Revival
- UCC Identity - Administrative/Legal/Fiscal Oversight

Together we created a vision for new and stronger ministry. We are now preparing how to engage leaders and congregations in our four conferences this Fall. We will share WHY we are proposing the new Conference and explore WHAT functions we believe will most enhance our churches’ mission and ministries. We want to know how “Together We are Stronger, the Keystone Conference” rests in our hearts. We also seek your thoughts about the proposed functions.

We invite everyone to visit the **Keystone Conference Project** website hosted by PSEC (<https://psec.org/keystone/>). You can read how this project came about, our study information and the summaries for each meeting.

We do not have answers for everything. Our work has focused on the WHY and WHAT. We have not yet detailed “HOW will this work?” And there are certainly “What about...” issues to consider. So we are counting on your questions and comments in our fall gatherings to strengthen the project. With the grace of God, we will discern next steps affirming, **“Together We Are Stronger, The Keystone Conference.”**

You are invited to connect with us by email:

Keystone.Conference.Project@gmail.com. You may also use the postal service and direct mailing the Keystone Working Group through your own area Conference Office.

Conversations in Fall 2023 and Winter/Spring 2024 will guide us to a “Mini Synod” of our four conferences, **June 6-9, 2024. Save the date** for this magnificent opportunity to share, learn and experience what God is doing in and through us all. Outstanding national and regional speakers and leaders will be with us. We will also provide for video sharing of this “unity conference.” At this gathering we will determine if we stand in agreement to move forward toward being a unified conference in our boundaries and structure. Our goal is to work toward a resolution for becoming ONE Keystone Conference at the Fall 2024 Conferences. We will share more soon.

We recognize through each phase of our work that God is still speaking. We rely on the grace of God in the next steps of our journey in the assurance that **“Together We Are Stronger! The Keystone Conference.”**

Sharing our progress in grace and hope,
KSG Communications Team

Steve Davis, St. John’s UCC, Fullerton (PNEC)

Heather Kurtz, Zion UCC, Arendtsville (PCC)

To be selected (PSEC)

Deb Long, First Trinity UCC, Youngwood (PWC)

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