

# PA UCC Spring Meeting 2024

June 7-9th

## Delegate Book



### Event Sponsors:



## ***Welcome to the Spring Meeting of all four Pennsylvania Conferences!***

Whether you are a delegate or a visitor, we are very happy you are joining with your siblings in the Body of Christ – from the east, west, north, and south (and a few from Maryland and NJ!). We have come together for a time of worship, fellowship, reflection, and discussion. This Delegate Book has the critical information you need for the meeting including important contact information, Meeting Agenda, Keystone Background, and the Documents we will discuss during the plenary sessions.

There are several important things to note about our meeting time.

1. You will have the opportunity to join with other delegates and visitors for the plenary sessions on Friday and Saturday afternoons. These sessions will be when we discuss (as a large group) the Keystone Project. You will have the chance to ask questions and make comments. You will also have the chance to write out questions that we will collect and answer later if you prefer.
2. Each Conference has its own individual Conference meeting on Saturday morning. Your Conference sets the agenda, but each will include a time of discussion about the Keystone Project. This will be another opportunity for you to share questions, reflections, and feedback.
3. Our Saturday plenary session is devoted to a detailed review of finances and staffing to consider what a new structure might look like and how it might work. We will also review the Motion, which, if adopted by all four Conferences in November, would move to the UCC General Synod in July 2025. ***This is a very important document for you to read.*** You will find it after the Agenda and Keystone Background Summary in this booklet.
4. The other documents in the booklet provide vital and in-depth background information on the Keystone Project and we hope you will make time to read them. They speak to our theological perspectives, what our process was, what our various options were, what our strategic differentiators are in comparison to other UCC Conferences, the “Key Functions of a Conference” listing, summaries of our sub-groups, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

We look forward to all your questions and reflections, along with worship, workshops, fellowship, and welcoming our General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson! Dive into our time together and have fun!

*Any questions about the Keystone Project can be sent to:*

[Keystone.conference.project@gmail.com](mailto:Keystone.conference.project@gmail.com)

And remember, mark your calendar for **Saturday morning November 9, 2024**, when each Conference will meet to vote on the Motion that will go to Synod!

## **Table of Contents:**

### **Agenda for the Meeting**

### **Summary of Keystone Project: *How did we get here?***

### **Important Documents:**

- **Motion** of the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (referred to as “the motion”)
- **Case Statement** – “That They May All Be One”
- **Basis of Union**
- **Process Overview**
- **PA Maps**
- **Keystone Project Options Document**
- **Keystone Conference Differentiation** – “How We Will Be Stronger Together”
- **Essential Functions Summary**
- **Sub-Group Charters**  
Approval Process / Finance / Governance / Legal / Staffing
- **Draft Constitution and Bylaws**
- **Financials**  
Draft Budget / Consolidated Endowments / OCWM Projections
- **Draft Staffing Model**  
Original Staffing Proposals / Circular Staffing / Dynamic Staff /  
Updated Staffing Proposal
- **Staff Retention Statement**
- **FAQs**

\*\*NOTE - Individuals with a blue name tag are members of the Keystone Study Group.  
Individuals with a yellow name tag are members of their Conference Board.

## Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

Time	Activity	Location
8:30 am – 2:00 pm	Registration Open	Registration Area
9:15 am – 12:00 pm	4 Conference Board Meeting	Rm. 206
10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Training	
	Boundary Training	Rm. 107
	Transition to Retirement	Rm. 105
	Aging Gracefully...How to Plan and What to Expect	Rm. 106
	Stronger Together: Strategic Partners in Ministry	Rm. 207
12:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Bookstore Opens	Rm. 104
	Prayer Room Opens	Courtyard Lounge
	Vendors Open	Halls
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch	Deans/Senate Suites
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	Welcome / Opening Worship / Mission Moments	President Hall
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Plenary # 1: Formation of the Keystone Conference	President Hall
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Workshops	
	AI for Ministry: Practical and Ethical Tools	Rm. 109
	Becoming a Kinder Church	Rm. 207
	Disaster Ministry in a Keystone Conference	Rm. 105
	Facing White Christian Nationalism	Rm. 107
	Getting Started in Grassroots Organizing	Rm. 206
	End-of-Life Choices through the <i>Five Wishes</i> Process	Rm. 205
	Struggling with the Spirit, Struggling with the Call	Rm. 108
	Poetry as a Spiritual Practice	Rm. 208
	Values-Aligned Investing to Sustain Ministry and Mission	Rm. 112
	Using Music to Imaginatively Acknowledge Issues of Justice	Rm. 106
	Retirees Conversation with the Conference Ministers	Rm. 204
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	UCC Financial Ministries Welcome / Dinner	President Hall
7:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal	President Hall
8:00 pm	Fun and Fellowship	Deans/ Senate Suites

### Event Sponsors:



## Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

Time	Activity	Location
8:00 am – 1:00 pm	Registration	Registration Area
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Drum Circle Practice	Rm. 109
8:00 am – 9:30 am	Continental Breakfast	
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	Vendors Open	Vendor Halls
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	Bookstore Open	Rm. 104
9:00 am – closing	Prayer Room Open	Courtyard Lounge
9:00 am – 11:45 am	Separate Conference Meetings	
	PCC	President Hall 3 & 4
	PSEC	President Hall 1 & 2
	<i>Cont. Breakfast/Snacks for PCC</i>	<i>and PSEC outside President Hall</i>
	PNEC	Room 207
	PWC	Room 208
	<i>Cont. Breakfast/Snacks for PNEC</i>	<i>and PWC outside Rooms 207/208</i>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch	Deans/Senate Suites
1:00 – 3:00 pm	Plenary # 2	President Hall
	Review proposed language for resolution	
3:15 – 4:30 pm	Affinity Groups	Check registration for room locations
3:15 – 4:30 pm	Workshops:	
	Claimonomics: Maximizing Financial Performance for Churches	Rm. 106
	Being Church in Today's Evolving World	Rm. 107
	Do you know where your money is sleeping at night?	Rm. 109
4:30 – 6:00 pm	Reception w/ Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson	Deans/Senate Suites/Terrace
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Penn West Meeting	Rm. 206
6:30 – 8:00 pm	Dinner on your own	
8:00 – 9:00 pm	Keystone Group Question & Answer	Rm. 208
8:00 – 10:00 pm	Fun & Fellowship	Deans/Senate Suites/Terrace

## Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

9:00 – 10:00 am	Morning Snack for Breakfast	President Hall 4
	<b><i>Ticket required for breakfast</i></b>	
9:30 am	Choir members to report to organize	President Hall
10:00 – 11:30 am	Morning Worship	President Hall
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Pick up boxed lunch if ordered	Outside President Hall
	<b><i>Ticket required for box lunch</i></b>	

## **Keystone Project Background: *How Did We Get Here?***

In January 2022, the Conference Ministers of the four Pennsylvania Conferences gathered to discuss the urgency of issues confronting all settings of the UCC amid the divisions and hostilities of the day wondering how to answer Jesus' prayer, 'that they may all be one' (John 17:21). We resonated with the spiritual hunger of church people and pastors and a desire to support the local church. We dreamed about new ways to embody gospel hope with the strength and giftedness of our clergy, congregations, leaders, and Conference staff.

We are not the church that we were when the denomination was formed in 1957 and our current contexts of ministry are different. The pandemic exacerbated the challenges we face. We share a responsibility to provide support and nourishment to local churches and associations. We are hard pressed to find and develop effective and faithful leaders for congregations. And we cannot escape the very real financial challenges that impact the future of our ministries.

These challenges effect every setting of the church. Our response to them is strongest when we respond in unison. The "Keystone Study Group," a group of representatives from all four PA Conferences, was brought together to expand the conversation beyond the Conference Ministers, to explore these and other issues, and to consider how we might respond to them as one.

The first Keystone Study meeting took place October 15, 2022. The Group engaged in community building, learned of some of the statistical results of a February 2022 clergy survey, formed a group covenant, and named expectations and possible next steps. At the November 2022 meeting, the Study Group offered hopes, dreams and blocking forces to the possibility of a merged Conference, created a plan of action for future meetings, and began thinking about the form and function of a new Conference.

The Study Group has met almost every month through 2024. They explored merger as well as other possible ministry sharing options and concluded that one merged conference is the best path. They learned much, experimented with ideas, experienced disappointment, persevered, and worked diligently with great faith and hope. They claimed that "Together we are Stronger" and now believe it more than ever. We hope you will experience it too during our time together in State College!

### Keystone Working Group Members:

PCC: DiAnn Baxley, Nora Foust, Mike Gibbs, Dwight Hein, Carolyn Herman, Heather Kurtz

PNEC: Becky Beckwith, Steve Davis, James Gottwald, Kris Snyder

PSEC: Melissa Burkhart, Cean James, Ken McDowell, Kevin McLemore, Bob Fogel, Charles Kuthuru

PWC: Wendy Bigelow, Tom Croner, Dave Mearns, Deb Long, Liddy Barlow

**MOTION OF PENN WEST, PENN CENTRAL, PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST, AND  
PENN NORTHEAST CONFERENCES TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences of the United Church of Christ (“movants”) recommend the General Synod of the United Church of Christ grant standing to a new Conference, the Keystone Conference, with boundaries covering the geographical area as movants’ boundaries, and terminate movants’ standing as Conferences of the United Church of Christ, effective January 1, 2026.

**BACKGROUND**

As followers of Jesus, *“Together We Are Stronger”* is the “why” of the proposed Keystone Conference. Our mission is to equip our associations to provide better spiritual, educational, programmatic, and financial support for our congregations. Our work is grounded in Ephesians 4:11-13: *“The gifts (Jesus) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”*

The Holy Spirit is moving in innovative and transformative ways and we are called as God’s people to respond to the new thing that God is doing with conviction, compassion, and clarity. We are resolved to faithfully trust in the collective wisdom and leadership to reimagine the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences as one body known as the Keystone Conference.

These current times require fresh expressions of faith, rituals, discipleship and leadership. We hold in artistic tension the traditions that have formed deeply ingrained identities and practices with the creative power of the Divine who is “making all things new.”

We believe we are a people who are bound together by biblical covenants and guided by Jesus’ fundamental commandment to love one another. By that love, we work together to serve God and our neighbors with compassion, to encourage and inspire one another with hope, and to make bold and courageous choices.

In January 2022, the Conference Ministers of the four Pennsylvania Conferences gathered to discuss the urgency of issues confronting all settings of the UCC. Our four Conferences share challenges, and we responded to them in partnership with each other by establishing first a

“Keystone Study Group,” then a “Keystone Working Group,” which spent many hours together discerning our call to unity.

We met with an eye toward confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world, and listening with a deep sense of our responsibility to answer Jesus’ prayer, “that they may all be one.” We identified the spiritual hunger of our church people and pastors and the call to support and develop the local church. We dreamed about new ways to serve Jesus and our churches by drawing on the strength and giftedness of our clergy, congregations, leaders, and Conference staff.

We recognize that we are not the church that we were when the denomination was formed in 1957 and our current contexts of ministry are different. The pandemic exacerbated the challenges we face. We acknowledge our responsibility to provide support and nourishment to the local church. We recognize our duty to work in partnership with all settings of the church to find and develop the leadership needs of our congregations. We acknowledge the very real financial challenges that impact the future of all our ministries.

After over a year of meeting to discern God’s call for our conferences, we believe that **“Together, We Are Stronger.”** Also, we believe that if we are to encourage and transform the church we know, we must transform ourselves and the denominational structures and expectations we have of them and each other. We believe there are compelling reasons to move toward the creation of a unified Conference. Doing so might allow us to:

- o Respond with dynamic faithfulness to a fluid world with the timeless truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and move forward into the future with confidence and vision.
- o Embrace our understanding of discipleship and act like the Body of Christ, humanity’s best witness to the interdependent unity of all living things.
- o Provide stronger collective support for local churches; strengthen outreach and mission so our passions can meet the world’s deepest needs to reshape our communities with the love and care of Jesus Christ.
- o Serve as a model for our congregations needing to take bold action to adapt themselves and strengthen the mission and ministry of the UCC in our Conference.
- o Equip associations to promote justice, racial reconciliation, and spiritual revival in all its forms.
- o Increase our participation and positive influence in the wider UCC community.
- o Create conversations and initiate new strategies for the sharing and implementation of “best practices”.
- o Blend together what each conference does well, building on our individual and corporate strengths.

We believe it is time for us to be open to God’s work in the four “Penn” conferences of the United Church of Christ – Penn West, Penn Central, Penn Northeast, and Pennsylvania Southeast



- and to join together to form a new Conference of the United Church of Christ, named the Keystone Conference.

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19 (NIV).

## **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**Whereas** our four Conferences together discerned that we: *Affirm* devotion to our Creator God, to Jesus Christ our savior, teacher, and friend, and to the Holy Spirit who binds us together in one body and lights the way into the future; *Recognize* that division and change surround and strain the Christian church, challenging faithful people of good will to create novel communities of faith, action, and love for a new age; *Believe* a Conference must model unity and healing in response to theological and ideological shifts in the Body of Christ as a whole and in the United Church of Christ in particular; *Serve, Nurture, and Empower* authorized ministers and all settings of the church within its boundaries; and *Desire* to live into Jesus’ hope for his followers “that they all may be one” [John 17], reflecting the desire for unity in our predecessor denominations and in the entire United Church of Christ; and

**Whereas** the proposed Keystone Conference as a Conference of the United Church of Christ aspires to be one body, affirming its commitment to unity centered in Christ Jesus, working diligently to maintain a large tent wherein its members may experience authentic welcome, mercy, empowerment, and hope, striving to share renewed life, fellowship, witness, and gospel proclamation together; and

**Whereas** we have collectively discerned that the ministry and mission of our associations will be stronger in one unified conference;

**Therefore, be it resolved that** the Thirty-Fifth General Synod does hereby recognize the Keystone Conference, created with geographic boundaries encompassing those previously of the Penn West, Penn Central, Penn Northeast, and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences, effective January 1, 2026; and

**Be it further resolved that** the Thirty-Fifth General Synod grants the new Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ standing as a Conference of the United Church of Christ, including all the powers, privileges, and responsibilities of a Conference of the United Church of Christ; and

**Be it finally resolved that** the Thirty-Fifth General Synod does hereby approve the termination of the standing of the Penn West, Penn Central, Penn Northeast, and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences with the General Synod, effective January 1, 2026.

# “That They May All Be One”

An Invitation to Conference Unity

*11 The gifts (Jesus) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”*

Ephesians 4:11-13a (NRSV)

**The Mission: “to provide better spiritual, educational, programmatic and financial support to our congregations.”**

We are in the midst of the next re-formation of the Christian faith. The Holy Spirit is moving in innovative and re-visioned forms of Christian community. That is profoundly exciting for some, painful for others and confusing for most. New occasions that teach new duties require fresh expressions of faith, rituals, discipleship and leadership that can hold in artistic tension the traditions that have formed deeply ingrained identities and practices with the creative power of the Divine who is “making all things new.”

Change is the inevitable result. And that hinges on the capacity for spiritual renewal and adaptation to ministry challenges unique to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some of our congregations and their leaders have risen to those challenges and become lively places of transformation. Some are able to maintain their current ministry. Other congregations are wondering about their survival while many congregations have made the painful decision to close. All four Pennsylvania Conferences have declined by a third of the churches who were part of the 1957 UCC merger. More than half of all PA churches call part-time ministers. By 2030, one-fourth of our pastors will have retired from any form of active ministry.

As local churches contend with these changes, the support for the Wider Church has declined precipitously and the resources and assistance once heavily relied upon are no longer available. The ways we have conferenced together in the past must give way to these new realities. We need different models and modes of connecting that will enable us to partner with God and each other so that healthy, faithful, effective congregations, clergy, and lay leaders can discern and act on God’s mission and vision.

We are a people who are bound together by biblical covenants and guided by Jesus’ fundamental commandment to love one another. By that love we work together to serve God and our neighbors with compassion, to encourage and inspire one another with hope and to make bold and courageous choices.

We are aware that among some of our congregations the level of unity in our “United Church” and the depth of love commended by our Lord is at best loose. Our value and practice of autonomy is held above the ties that bind us and we mimic cultural and political divisions rather than gospel unity. We are convinced that a reclamation of our commitment to covenantal connections and embracing new relationships is an act of faith that will increase our capacity to encourage, inspire, support and care for one another in ministries of mutual accountability to realize Jesus’ prayer “that they may all be one.”

If we are to encourage and transform the church we know, we must transform ourselves and the denominational structures and expectations we have of them and each other. We believe there are compelling reasons to move toward the creation of a unified Conference. This might allow us to:

- Promote spiritual revival and inclusivity in all its forms.

- Provide stronger collective support for local churches; strengthen outreach and mission so our passions can meet the world's deepest needs to reshape our communities with the love and care of Jesus Christ.
- Blend what each conference does well, building on our individual and corporate strengths.
- Create conversations and initiate new strategies for the sharing and implementation of best practices.
- Increase our "Large Tent" presence in the wider UCC community.
- Serve as a model for our congregations needing to take bold action to adapt themselves and strengthen the mission and ministry of the UCC in Pennsylvania.
- Respond with dynamic faithfulness to a fluid world with the timeless truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and move forward into the future with confidence and vision.
- Embrace discipleship and live as the Body of Christ, in our witness to the interdependent unity of all Creation.

It is time to embrace a new covenant to further the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ in Pennsylvania. We believe it is time for a change.

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# The Basis of Union for The Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ

January 19, 2024

## Introduction

The United Church of Christ is a bold experiment in Christian unity. The risk inherent in the merger that created the new denomination was balanced by the certainty of the Holy Spirit's movement through it. To maintain that balance, the leaders from the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian churches drafted a *Basis of Union* that clarified shared values and convictions and served as the theological framework the two denominations used to become one.

While the finished creation of the UCC did not happen for another 10 years, the Basis of Union guided and grounded the process. This was important for people inside and outside the merger process who wondered how the two could dissolve into unity and how the new body would stand solidly in theology and practice.

By using the UCC's Basis of Union as a template, the four Pennsylvania Conferences offer our own Basis of Union document to do the same-- stand solid in theology and practice.

## Preamble

We the Penn West, Pennsylvania Southeast, Penn Northeast, and Penn Central Conferences of the United Church of Christ,

Moved by the conviction that *Together We are Stronger*; do

**Affirm** devotion to our Creator God, to Jesus Christ our savior, teacher, and friend, and to the Holy Spirit who binds us together in one body and lights the way into the future;

**Recognize** that division and change surround and strain the Christian church, challenging faithful people of good will to create novel communities of faith, action, and love for a new age;

**Believe** a Conference must model unity and healing in response to theological and ideological shifts in the Body of Christ as a whole and in the United Church of Christ in particular; as well as to serve, nurture, and empower authorized ministers and all settings of the church within its boundaries; and

**Desire** to live into Jesus' hope for his followers "that they all may be one" [John 17], reflecting the desire for unity in our predecessor denominations and in the entire United Church of Christ.

Thus, we do now declare ourselves to be one body, affirming our commitment to unity centered in Christ Jesus, and promising to work diligently to maintain a large tent<sup>1</sup> wherein our members may experience authentic welcome, mercy, empowerment, and hope. We set forth these articles of agreement as the basis of our renewed life, fellowship, witness, and gospel proclamation:

## **I. Name**

The name of the Conference formed from the four Pennsylvania Conferences shall be The Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The name expresses a fact: Pennsylvania came to be called the “Keystone state” for its critical role in the formation of the infant United States. The churches of the Pennsylvania region likewise played a keystone role in the formation of the United Church of Christ, bringing in the largest number of churches with a particular devotion to Reformed theology and practice.

## **II. Faith**

Our comfort in life and death is our relationship with God through Christ, which sets us free for a new life of inclusion in God’s kingdom. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth we know liberation from sin and find healing in body, mind, and spirit. The good news we share speaks of both the closeness and transcendence of our God, known through Jesus, who draws us into a holy embrace for the wellness of our souls. The faith that unites us also transforms us so we may witness with our words and demonstrate with our actions the call to proclaim liberation to the oppressed, feed the hungry, tend the sick, visit those in prison, and diligently practice forgiveness and reconciliation. The Christian Way is built on Jesus Christ who is the head of the church and our teacher of how to live lives of compassion, justice, mercy, and love.

## **III. Church**

Our Conference identity is rooted in the history and experience of the United Church of Christ, a church of “people who share one diverse household of faith that makes [us]... a humble microcosm of the church throughout the world.”<sup>ii</sup> (BOW, p.6) The UCC was born from a desire to demonstrate unity and a faith that working together would advance justice and peace. In similar fashion, The Keystone Conference aspires to act in parallel with the original UCC Basis of Union (1947) by proclaiming that the church is established by the Holy Spirit for calling persons to repentance and faith, celebrating the sacraments of table and font, living in covenant reciprocity, joining with the Holy Spirit in worship, witnessing to the saving grace of God in Christ, upbuilding disciples, and for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ through our words and deeds. In solidarity with Jesus Christ and one another we “labor for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace,”<sup>iii</sup> and the realization of human unity as we move toward God’s future with joy and hope.

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<sup>i</sup> A “Big Tent” or “Large Tent” is a phrase used in religious and civic life to describe the broad spectrum of beliefs and practices of an organization’s members. The contrast is a group with a determined ideology to which members are expected to adhere.

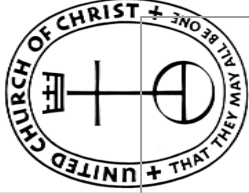
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We affirm the phrase “Large Tent” when describing the Keystone Conference. This is who we are as part of the United Church of Christ, founded during the ecumenical movement to model the dream born at Pentecost of people of many backgrounds and perspectives living together as one in Christ. The Keystone Conference promotes Unity in Christ and welcomes all who seek to be disciples of Jesus; who create and live in radically inclusive, countercultural, Christian communities. To that end, we commit to love one another, even and especially in the places where we have the sharpest disagreements. We affirm the dignity of every person and make space for each one to encounter the restorative, redemptive life in the resurrected Christ.

<sup>ii</sup> *United Church of Christ Book of Worship*, p.6

<sup>iii</sup> *UCC Basis of Union* (1947)

# Keystone Project: Process Overview Rev. 5



**Implement**  
July 2025-January 2027

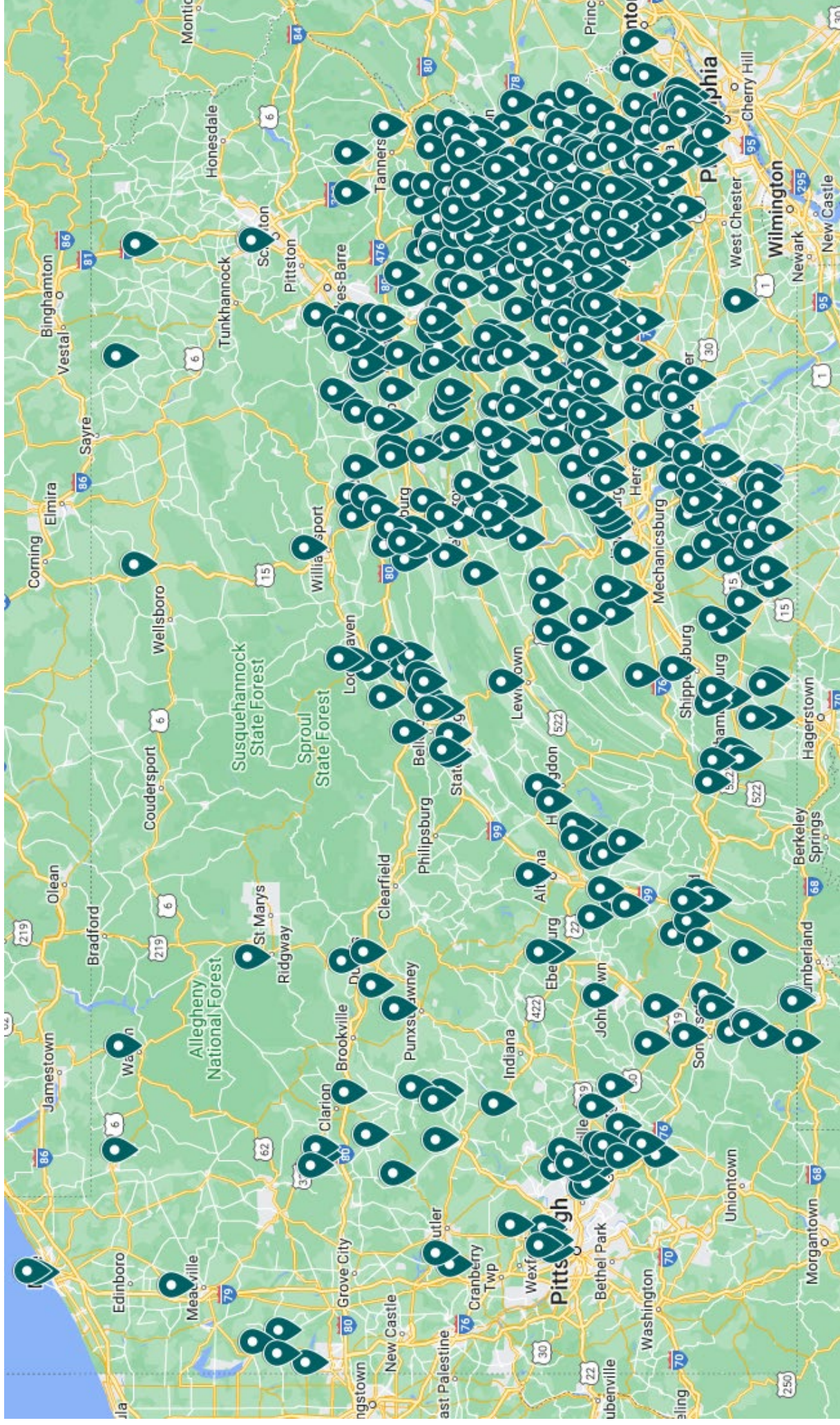
**Implementation entities - TBD**

- Begin full implementation
- Fully implement 5 Working Groups' Plans**
- Monitor & communicate progress to schedule & CR/MMB
- Report out on success metrics – on-going
- Communication & Engagement with all parties impacted

**IMPLEMENTATION**

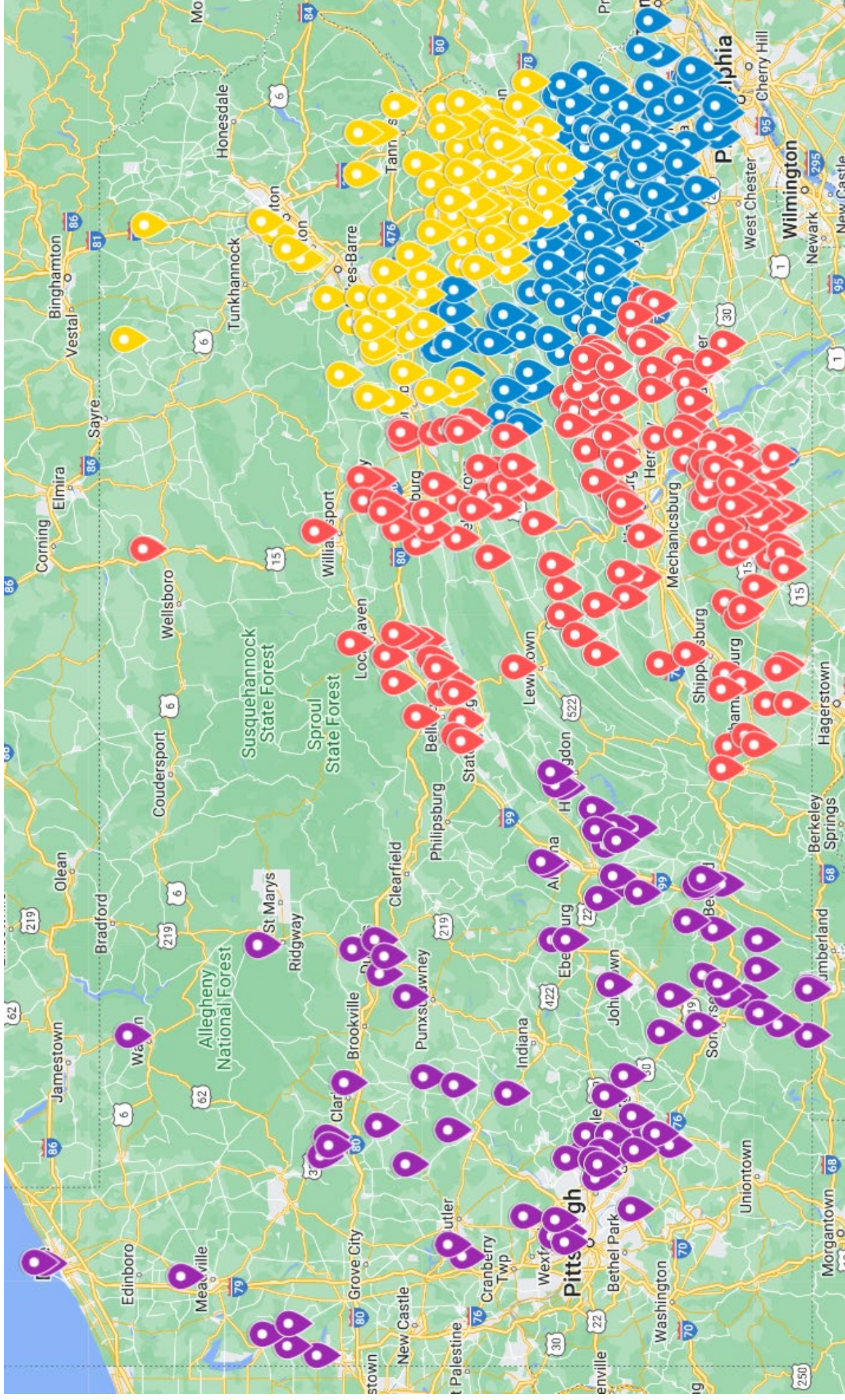
**Rev. 4 - 12/13/23, current update red font & since 2 added; Rev-5 – 5/8/24 to revise June 7-9 mtg dates**

# Map of churches in four Conferences





# Color-coded map of churches in four Conferences





# Keystone Project Options Document

## **Step 1: The Opportunity At Hand**

*“That They May All Be One”*

**An Invitation to Conference Unity**

*[drafted by Rev. Bill Worley, Case Statement, 1/27/23]*

*11 The gifts (Jesus) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”*

Ephesians 4:11-13a (NRSV)

**The Mission: “The Conference will provide better programmatic, spiritual, educational, and financial support to our congregations and will empower our Associations to do the same.”**

We are on the cusp of the next re-formation of the Christian faith. The Holy Spirit is moving in innovative and re-visioned forms of Christian community. New occasions that teach new duties require fresh expressions of faith formation, discipleship and leadership that are able to hold in artistic tension the traditions that have shaped our past with the creative power of the Divine who is “making all things new.”

These changes hinge on a capacity for spiritual renewal and adaptation to ministry challenges unique to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some of our congregations and their leaders have risen to those challenges and become lively places of transformation. Some are only able to maintain their current ministry. Other congregations are wondering about their survival while many congregations have made the painful decision to close. All four Pennsylvania Conferences have declined by a third of the churches who were part of the 1957 UCC merger. More than half of all PA churches have moved to part-time ministry.

As local churches contend with these changes, the support for the Wider Church has declined precipitously. The ways we have conferenced together in the past must give way to these new realities and to different methods of connecting that will enable us to partner with God, each other and the Wider Church so that healthy, faithful, effective congregations, clergy, and lay leaders can discern and act on God’s mission and vision for transformed lives and communities.

We are a people who are bound together by biblical covenants and guided by Jesus’ fundamental commandment to love one another. By that love we work together to serve God and our neighbors with compassion, to encourage and inspire one another with hope and to make bold and courageous choices.

We are aware that among some of our congregations the level of unity in our “United Church” and the depth of love commanded by our Lord is at best loose. Our value and practice of autonomy is held above the ties that bind us and we mimic global divisions rather than gospel unity. We are convinced that a reclamation of our commitment to covenantal connections and embracing new relationships is an act of faith that will increase our capacity to encourage, inspire, support and care for one another in ministries of mutual accountability to realize Jesus’ prayer “that they may all be one.”

If we are to encourage and transform the church we know, we must transform our denominational structures and the expectations we have of them and of ourselves. We believe there are compelling reasons to move toward the creation of a unified Conference. This might allow us to:

- Respond with dynamic faithfulness to a fluid world with the timeless truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and move forward into the future with confidence and vision.
- Embrace our understanding of discipleship and act like the Body of Christ, humanity's best witness to the interdependent unity of all living things.
- Provide stronger collective support for local churches; strengthen outreach and mission so our passions can meet the world's deepest needs to reshape our communities with the love and care of Jesus Christ.
- Promote spiritual revival and inclusivity in all its forms.
- Blend what each conference does well, building on our individual and corporate strengths.
- Create conversations and initiate new strategies for the sharing and implementation of "best practices".
- Increase our influence in the wider UCC community.
- Serve as a model for our congregations needing to take bold action to adapt themselves and strengthen the mission and ministry of the UCC in Pennsylvania.

It is time to embrace a new covenant to further the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ in Pennsylvania. We believe it is time for a change.

**Step 2: Identify the alternative options considered.**

The 7/11/23 Revision of "options evaluated" captured our 4CM/AWM 7/10/23 meeting refinements of the 5/12/23 KSG work and is integrated below as follows:

*Question: What other options for shared ministry/organization did we consider?*

To evaluate the options, we started with the question, "What is critical in the life of the church now that these options do not meet?"

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Remain as we are and make no changes</i>	Feels easy to do. Each conference makes its own decisions over time.	Does not respond to church membership and financial decline; limits the sharing of expertise and resources.	
<b>2a</b>	<i>Remain 4 conferences and share more via digital means</i>	Easy to remain as four; can do many aspects of ministry via digital means, especially education and programing	Not able to utilize all resources of all 4 conferences to serve churches better; the expertise/gifts of each conference are only shared in limited ways. Does not help conferences in vulnerable financial positions	Assumes full digital access

2b	<i>Remain 4 conferences and share staff across all 4 conferences (not all positions)</i>	Create shared positions for specific work, e.g., stewardship; conferences bear only part of the cost	Work overload if using current staff; performance evaluation and supervision would be difficult with shared positions;	This structure would be confusing and difficult to manage. Especially if we have several shared staff.
2c	<i>Remain 4 individual conferences with boards. Create one staff for all 4 conferences, plus an Executive board with reps from each conference.</i>	Staff team would be responsive to any needs across all 4 conferences when they arise, deployed as needed; individual conferences do not give up their own structure, boards, or associations.	Managing 4 conferences that remain separate entities would be difficult.	This is the structure adopted by Tri-Conference in 2016. There is an overarching corporation (TCM) that is separately incorporated (works like a personnel committee). Executive Conf Minister is Conf minister for each conference and CEO for the corporation.
3	<i>Create two Conferences first, then move toward a unified conference</i>	Less complicated to create; makes entire process of merging more palatable (slower); begins to consolidate resources, staff, and expertise.	Duplicative work; does not provide breadth of resources or expertise needed; pragmatism says it is easier to go to all four conferences uniting now rather than later	Likely this would entail PSEC & PNEC merging, and PCC & PW merging
4	<i>Pay Consultants to do the usual work of Conference staff</i>	Churches can determine who they want for their own projects (e.g. search and call)	Consultants do not know the settings as well as Conference staff would; unable to maintain consistency of process across Conferences; not all churches able to pay; could be relationally damaging	This would likely be highly complex (confusing?) if implemented. Conference would still do minimal oversight.
5	<i>Merge all Four Conferences (Keystone)</i>	Consolidates all resources, expertise, staff, programming, finances, and mission work;	Cumbersome task; raises questions about role of associations; staffing might be difficult; potential loss of connectivity	

		responds quickly to reality of church decline		
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**Step 3A: Establish evaluation criteria and weighted value [% of 100]**

Evaluation criteria and relative importance [KWG weighted value] submitted at the 9/22/23 - KWG mtg.

1. Models our UCC biblical covenants and call to unity
2. Able to fulfill/achieve Key Functions
3. Feasibility to staff effectively & efficiently
4. Financially feasible
5. Serves local churches better
6. Streamlines processes in the face of church decline
7. Cost/[ministry-mission benefit] ≤ 1.0

Evaluation Criteria	Weight - % of 100
1] Models our UCC biblical covenants and call to unity	171/15 = <b>11.4</b>
2] Able to fulfill/achieve Key Functions	299/15 = <b>19.93</b>
3] Feasibility to staff effectively & efficiently	277/15 = <b>18.47</b>
4] Financially feasible	210/15 = <b>14</b>
5] Serves local churches better	250/15 = <b>16.67</b>
6] Streamlines processes in the face of church decline	180/15 = <b>12</b>
7] Cost/[ministry-mission benefit] ≤ 1.0	113/15 = <b>7.53</b>
Must add up to = 100	<b>100</b>

**Step 3B: Ranking methodology:** Rank each Option against each evaluation criteria assigning a number of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 with 1 [not able to achieve at all] to 5 [able to achieve all] - using the table below do the math - **Options ranked vs. Evaluation Criteria; KWG Ranking input submitted at the 9/22/23 KWG mtg.**

Evaluation Criteria	Option Ranking against Evaluation Criteria <i>1 to 5 with 1=not able to achieve at all; 5=able to fully achieve</i>							Eval. Criteria Weight	Option Ranking x's Eval. Criteria Weight = [OR x's ECW] =						
	1	2a	2b	2c	3	4	5	Weight	1	2a	2b	2c	3	4	5
1] Models our UCC biblical covenants and call to unity	2.2 7	2.4 7	2.9 3	2.6	3	1.6	4.7 3	11.4	25.8 8	28.1 6	34.4	29.6 4	34.2	18.2 4	53.9 2
2] Able to fulfill/achieve Key Functions	2.5 3	2.7 3	2.7 3	2.5 3	3	1.9 3	4.2 7	19.93	50.4 2	54.4 1	54.4 1	50.4 2	59.7 9	38.4 6	85.1
3] Feasibility to staff effectively & efficiently	2	2.3 3	2.9 3	2.6	2.9 3	2	4.3 3	18.47	36.9 4	43.0 4	54.1 2	48.0 2	54.1 2	36.9 4	79.9 8
4] Financially feasible	1.9 3	2.2 7	2.6 7	2.3 3	2.6	1.8 7	3.8 7	14	27.0 2	31.7 8	37.3 8	32.6 2	36.4	26.1 8	54.1 8
5] Serves local churches better	2.4 7	2.3 3	2.7 3	2.4	2.8	1.6 7	4	16.67	41.1 7	38.8 4	45.5 1	40.0 1	46.6 8	27.8 4	66.6 8
6] Streamlines processes in the face of church decline	1.7 3	2.2 7	2.7 3	2.5 3	2.5 3	2.0 7	4.2	12	20.7 6	27.2 4	32.7 6	30.3 6	30.3 6	24.8 4	50.4
7] Cost/[ministry-mission benefit] ≤ 1.0	2	2.3 3	2.4 7	2.4	2.2	1.8 7	3.9 3	7.53	15.0 6	17.5 4	18.6	18.0 7	16.5 7	14.0 8	29.5 9
Add [OR x's ECW] columns for total score; highest # = best option								100	217. 25	241. 01	277. 18	249. 14	278. 12	186. 58	419. 85

Option 5 (full merger of all four conferences) receives the highest score by far.

# Keystone Conference Differentiation: How will we be Stronger Together?

## Keystone Working Group

Spring 2024

**Our engagement with the local church:** *The Keystone Conference will better resource our local clergy and churches through consolidated and enhanced educational/program offerings, opportunities for regional gatherings, online prayer services, a wider array of grant applications, streamlined resources from the National and Conference Settings and by encouraging and empowering our Associations.*

Our local churches need resources, leadership, and support. We will provide these more effectively and efficiently if we have access to all our combined resources and expertise. The empowerment of our Associations will be a critical part of that movement.

**Our engagement within the UCC:** *Keystone seeks to model a large tent church. We strive to live into a flexible, dynamic union that is unafraid to lean into the tensions among us and in our communities while trusting that our common love of Jesus Christ provides us a central point of connection and the hope and possibility of unity.*

The UCC was founded during the ecumenical movement to reflect the dream born at Pentecost of people of many backgrounds and perspectives understanding one another and living together as one body in Christ. Keystone holds within it the full spectrum of UCC churches, from rural to urban, conservative to progressive, small to large, and everything in-between. Affirming this broad spectrum is not always easy. Living into it as one body requires both humility and a commitment to deep listening centered on our love of Jesus and his church.

As stated in our Basis for Union, “We commit to love one another, even and especially in the places where we have the sharpest disagreements. We affirm the dignity of every person and will make space for each one to encounter restorative, redemptive life in the resurrected Christ.” This stance is imperative as a model of a different or “third way” of being the church in today’s polarized world.

This commitment will be demonstrated through our search and call and authorization processes as well as through clergy and community programming that invites a wide range of perspectives, topics, leaders, and theological positions.

**Our engagement within Pennsylvania:** *Acting as one voice increases our influence on state policy decisions from food security to gun safety to protection of civil rights and reparations.*

Our churches were here in the earliest days of William Penn’s “holy experiment.” Clergy and laypeople have been involved since then in Pennsylvania governmental service, civil service, community leadership, military service, charity, advocacy, and other work. Keystone seeks to encourage and promote active engagement among our churches in community, state, and national issues of the day. Our special interest and advocacy groups will be strengthened and empowered by the combination of human and financial resources.



## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 1) Faith Formation for All Ages

**Psalm 32:8:** *"I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."*

Faith Formation is one of the prime reasons our churches exist. Faith formation begins at birth and extends to the grave and beyond. It involves programs and meaningful encounters which help to deepen one's faith, understand God's unfailing love and prepares our members to share the good news beyond the church walls. Christian identity becomes rooted in the day-to-day religious practices of individuals and family units and their exposure to religious opportunities such as Sunday or Church School Programs, Bible Study Classes, Confirmation Preparation Classes, Outdoor Programming, and a variety of age-specific and intergenerational activities which build knowledge of and engagement in the Christian Faith.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Theological grounding or support for ministries across generations**
- 2) **Biblically informed and engaged disciples**
- 3) **Disciples whose lives bear witness to the fruits of the Spirit**

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Increase in volunteerism [quantitative]**
- 2) **More involved as disciples in various settings [qualitative]**
- 3) **Deeper connection and wider engagement of people of all ages across the Keystone Conference [State]**
- 4) **Increasing trend of 2%/yr involved/engaged disciples in various educational, mission, outreach settings**

### 2) Generosity & Stewardship Ministries

**2 Corinthians 9.11:** *You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.*

The essential functions of financial ministry are to expand the spirit and attitude of generosity, increase financial literacy, provide transparent management of all funds, and leverage their use for mission accomplishment. A conference provides education for stewardship development, fundraising best practices, and budget planning and management. It administers endowment funds and maximizes potential investment income in accordance with a donor's intent. A conference directs grant programs aimed at supporting specific ministries or projects. It serves as a local church model for financial policies, procedures, and internal controls that safeguard all assets, and ensures transparency with clear and consistent reporting that complies with applicable laws and regulations.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Increased financial literacy**
- 2) **A culture of abundance**
- 3) **Expanded attitude of generosity**
- 4) **Appropriate management of \$ at local settings.**  
(Largely done by Continuing Education. Touch on OCWM, budget literacy, endowments, investments, grant policies, gift acceptance policies, fund-raising, etc.)

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Churches able to talk more openly about money**
- 2) **Increased trend in giving of x%/yr at all settings**
- 3) **Wide access to information about on-line giving**
- 4) **Access to resources regarding alternative sources of financial support**

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 3) Oversight/Authorization/Support

**1 Timothy 4:15-16:** *Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Preserve in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

Authorization/Oversight/Support includes tasks related to preparation, formation, and standing for those seeking and holding ministerial authorization in the United Church of Christ. The UCC Constitution assigns this work to an association's Committee on Ministry (or a conference acting as Associations). Initial authorization decisions include assessment of competency across the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers in the UCC and validation of authorizable calls. Oversight includes monitoring clergy status necessary to maintain standing including ethical behaviors in line with the Ministerial Code, annual information reviews, situational support consultations, continuing education, and fitness reviews. Oversight of churches may include practices recommended by the forthcoming Manual on Church and its adoption.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Consistent, objective expectations of authorized ministers and Committees on Ministry**
- 2) **COM members approach their work with expertise and intentionality**
- 3) **Consistency of competence and excellence of authorized ministers**
- 4) **Support of authorized ministers**
- 5) **Established clearinghouse for resources and coursework**
- 6) **Comprehensive Boundary Training and excellence in pastoral ethics**
- 7) **Comprehensive support for Committees on Ministry**
- 8) **Culture of Call nurtured and promoted**

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Authorization process values excellence and competency**
- 2) **One process for authorization following the Manual on Ministry**
- 3) **Consistent oversight of Continuing Education across whole Conference**

### 4) Search and Call

**Acts 13:2-3:** *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands upon them and sent them off.*

Search and Call includes processes which involve transitions among churches and authorized ministers. These processes include but are not limited to: assisting authorized ministers and churches with profile completion, sharing clergy profiles with congregations as requested, sharing church profiles with interested authorized ministers, conference to conference reference checks for final vetting, finding and negotiating contacts with interim pastors, and assistance with and review of call agreements.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Adequate staff to support churches in transition with the process of finding new leadership**
- 2) **Consolidated and streamlined resources and support documents for ministry settings in transition**

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Dedicated and knowledgeable staff who can recognize and encourage truth-telling in church and individual profiles**
- 2) **Consolidated and streamlined processes for UCC and non-UCC candidates**
- 3) **Better connectivity between church and conference measured in presence of staff, participation of congregational members and spirit of hope & possibility**
- 4) **Create new models for staffing churches [other than, in addition to, lay ministry training/authorization], new models for being the church**
- 5) **Increase in candidates applying for PA churches**
- 6) **Broad recruitment and development of interim ministers**

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 5) Digital Ministry/Technology

**Romans 10: 14-15:** *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

Digital media is a critical ministry platform for communication, engagement, and outreach. Through websites, social media channels, online streaming, and video presentations geographic distances are bridged. Digital media facilitates the sharing of worship services and educational events, enables individuals to connect with the best spiritual and ministry practices and it provides a space for meaningful conversations, the exploration of faith, and social activism. Use of these tools will engage, inspire, and connect diverse congregations and clergy and inviting them to be part of a vibrant and inclusive community of faith.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Dedicated staff person for this function**
- 2) **One administrative database**
- 3) **Evangelism present in discussions, actions, and education (story-telling)**
- 4) **Effective digital meetings, worship events, and church technology training across the Conference.**
- 5) **Broader connections across the diversity of the Conference for educational and programmatic support.**
- 6) **Access points in conjunction with federal & state programs and grants for finding internet access**
- 7) **Centralized digital library for podcasts, sermons, music, conference records**
- 8) **Churches with updated digital ministry/technology**

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Consolidation and streamlining all digital media**
- 2) **By 2030 fully digitized conference and congregational records and files**

### 6) Communication

**Matthew 7:24-25:** *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.*

An essential function of conferences is communication. The challenges and opportunities of sending and receiving messages, as well as providing occasions for feedback to demonstrate understanding, are among the most significant aspects of ministry. Communication in conferences frequently occurs on a large scale to promote sharing of resources and to build connections across broad constituencies. E-newsletters and other mass communication forms are examples of the media used to send messages widely within the conference and beyond. Lower-level methods of communication occur with groups within the Conference such as communications with groups of pastors, local churches, ministry teams and committees, etc. and provides opportunities for them to engage in mission and ministry.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Regular, consistent communications regarding Conference news, activities, programs, etc. across all platforms.**
- 2) **Communications are faith-filled and forward-looking.**
- 3) **Consistent branding across all communication sites including social media platforms.**
- 4) **Successful feedback loops to ensure inclusion in reception of messaging.**
- 5) **Central platform for information, continuing education opportunities, events, etc.**

What might "better" or "new" look like compared to now?

- 1) **Dedicated staff expertise**
- 2) **Streamlining and consistency**

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 7) Congregational Futures

**Acts 2:42:** *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

Local congregations are the central setting of the United Church of Christ and as such require support, assistance, and guidance from the conference. In some cases, associations or other regional bodies may have oversight of some functions, but ultimately the conference is often the “bridge” between and among local congregations, associations, and the national setting of the church. Conference staff assist congregations which are going through times of transition. A key function of a conference is to provide and oversee the deployment of resources to support the local congregations.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Effective congregational self-assessment**
- 2) **Sufficient resources to congregations seeking to determine their future legacy or assistance for thriving (including: revitalizing, closure/legacy, sharing ministries, conflict management, systemic issues, etc.)**
- 3) **Facilitate creation of a ‘plan of action’ with congregations to move them forward**
- 4) **Entrepreneurial ideas for funding ministry/staffing**
- 5) **Education and commitment to sacred partnerships between and among congregations, associations, and the Conference**
- 6) **Compassionate exit path for those who do not want to remain/be in covenant with the UCC**
- 7) **Welcome plan for those who wish to affiliate with the UCC**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Expansion of resources for local congregations**
- 2) **Innovative processes for birthing new faith communities and ecumenical opportunities**
- 3) **Clarity regarding realistic expectations for the future**
- 4) **Expectation of a congregational-cultural shift toward thriving and spiritual growth**

### 8) Disaster Ministries

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9:** *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*

Disaster Ministries provides spiritual care, material resources, and collaboration between and among local churches, ecumenical partners, and other organizations to provide immediate relief and long-term recovery assistance to human-made and natural disaster-impacted communities. It can include one or more types of response: emergency response to provide quick reaction to a victim’s needs; long-term recovery to rebuild and restore homes and livelihoods; preparedness and education to equip individuals and communities with the knowledge and resources to better prepare for and respond to future disasters; and advocacy work that seeks to address systemic issues that exacerbate the impact of disasters on marginalized communities.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Respond to disaster-impacted communities in a timely and effective manner.**
- 2) **Maintain effective partnerships with PEMA and PA VOAD.**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

1. **Disaster Response Coordinator position who can facilitate easier and stronger relations with ecumenical partners.**
2. **Removes current conference boundaries to allow for single geographical response.**

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 9) Leadership: Training Pastors/lay leaders

**Deuteronomy 1.13:** *Choose for each of your tribes individuals who are wise, discerning, and reputable, and I will make them your leaders.*

Leadership is a key component of every essential conference function. Faithful and effective ministry requires faithful and effective leaders who follow the example of Jesus Christ. All settings of ministry rely on the collaborative efforts of spiritually grounded, mature lay and pastoral leaders who are trained, equipped, and inspired for their particular service. The conference is a partner in the call process and helps train competent and qualified leaders who possess the broad range of gifts and skills required of pastoral leaders (as identified by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministers). The conference offers ongoing training to local church pastors who recruit, train, support, and celebrate lay leaders of all ages and abilities for faithful and effective ministry with the local and wider church. The conference offers ongoing opportunities for leaders to reflect on their practice of essential leadership characteristics and skills including but not limited to spiritual vitality, vision casting, honesty with self/others, integrity, appropriate risk-taking, healthy exercise of power and authority, self-awareness and differentiation, and lifelong learning.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

**Identify and nurture collaborative and empowered leaders who can provide forward-focused, strategic direction for their setting.**

- 1) **Facilitate the development of healthy, self-differentiated leaders leading to better- and well-functioning systems.**
- 2) **Leaders who are hopeful, spiritually grounded, and forward-thinking who foster the health and mission of their settings.**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Keystone leadership development will allow for greater breadth and depth in developing leaders.**
- 2) **Very intentional focus on developing leaders as one comprehensive Conference program.**
- 3) **Keystone can provide far-reaching partnerships with seminaries and other leadership programs to engage with historic, new, and creative leadership models.**

### 10) Mission

**Acts 4:33-34:** *With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.*

“Mission” describes the ways in which the church reaches out to show God’s love in the world. From social justice and advocacy initiatives, to local, national, and global ministry partnerships, missional outreach is essential to ministry in all settings of the church. Conferences have opportunities to support local churches in their missional efforts as they reach out to their communities and to the world. Programs supporting mission in conferences include but are not limited to justice and witness teams (racial justice, LGBTQIA+ justice, climate justice, mental health justice, etc.), local and global ministry initiatives (global mission partnerships, etc.), and even mission grants (these may also be considered a financial ministry).

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Articulated mission focus at every setting**
- 2) **Multiple ways to engage with larger community provided by every setting**
- 3) **Respect and affirmation for mission choices across all geographical ministry settings**
- 4) **Churches engage with other churches who share similar mission**
- 5) **Conference wide advocacy at state level**
- 6) **Intentional implementation of Synod action steps**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **increase by 2%/yr. # of hours of disciple engagement in “hands-on” mission, social justice advocacy programs**
- 2) **increasing trend of 2%/yr. in financial support of mission/social justice advocacy giving**

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

### 11) Ecumenism

**Matthew 5:16:** *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Conference functions include connecting with partners and colleagues in other denominations for engagement in common goals including placement of authorized ministers, joint actions for justice, addressing community needs, providing collegial support to authorized ministers and congregations, offering programmatic and training resources, and seeking unity through the UCC commitment to be a United and Uniting church.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Create intentional relations with our Formula of Agreement siblings around programs and partnerships.**
- 2) **Clarify our own UCC identity around our own ministerial practices and doctrine.**
- 3) **Participation in regular meetings of judicatory partners. (modeled on PNE)**
- 4) **Shared information and resources regarding search and call. (clergy shortage crisis)**
- 5) **Active participation in regional or statewide ecumenical organizations and events.**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Intentional broadening of connections between us and ecumenical partners.**
- 2) **Streamlined connection between partners and us. Ecumenical partners to connect with us**

### 12) Spiritual Revival

**Galatians 5: 22-25:** *...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ<sup>24</sup> have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.*

A vital function of a Conference is to attend to the spiritual well-being of its churches and pastors and to cultivate the gifts of the Spirit (Galatians 5) which leads to deeper discipleship. Spiritual revival in Conferences may be nurtured in numerous ways including hosting events with uplifting worship and inspirational programming; cultivating faith-forming activities with churches and faith leaders; intentionally focusing on Biblical/spiritual reflections in Conference communications; and rooting Conference ministries and missions in spiritual practices. As a church called by God to proclaim and work for the realm of God in this world, this function is essential for Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Communication of Conference events and programs in a timely manner.**
- 2) **Access to large scale worship events by authorized ministers and laity (e.g., ordination vows renewal).**
- 3) **Regular biblical/theological reflections in Conference communications.**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Intentional focus on discipleship**
- 2) **Large events with strong, diverse leadership**

### 13) UCC Identity

**John 17:20-23:** *The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one.*

The Conference exists as a bridge between the UCC national setting and local churches and authorized ministers. This bridgework includes upholding the UCC identity and values as they are lived out in various settings of the Conference and sharing updates, initiatives, and resources from the UCC national setting. It also includes serving on national boards and committees and encouraging others to do so, preparing Conference delegates for General Synod, mediating the implementation of Synod resolutions as needed, and serving as a resource regarding UCC history, theology, and polity. The conference work in building UCC identity awareness is balanced with unique congregational, association and area mission councils. It is the conference’s responsibility to keep relevant and at the forefront the ongoing interpretation of the UCC polity of speaking among and between settings.

## Essential Functions Identified by the Keystone Working Group Handout

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **Familiarity and congruence among associations and congregations in adopting The Marks of Effective Authorized Ministers and forthcoming Manual on Church.**
- 2) **Greater congregational clarity around UCC Essentials (e.g., “Foundational Theological Claims” document from UCC Historical Council).**
- 3) **Growth in development of UCC identity among all settings and authorized ministers.**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Greater numbers can articulate UCC identity and values.**
- 2) **Availability of UCC History, Theology, and polity classes open to wide variety of lay leaders and authorized ministers.**

### 14) Administrative, Legal and Fiscal Oversight

**Matthew 20:26:** *It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.*

As with all non-profit entities, the conferences of the United Church of Christ have legal responsibility for assuring the governance and fiscal management of the conference. This may include but is not limited to adhering to Constitution and Bylaws requirements, providing guidance for the development of Vision, Mission and Goals, overseeing programs and program evaluations of the conference, managing legal requirements and filings, providing fiscal oversight of income, expenses, and adherence to budgetary requirements, and resource administration for human, property, and financial assets. All legal, property, administrative, and fiscal requirements prescribed by law are overseen by the Conference and the Conference Minister as President of the non-profit corporation.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

- 1) **All legal/moral/ethical expectations upheld in all Conference functions.**
- 2) **Office or position of Conference Legal Counsel established.**
- 3) **Fiscally responsible management of Conference assets.**
- 4) **Best business practices balanced with faithful management.**
- 5) **Effective oversight of human resources. (staff and volunteer)**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

- 1) **Combined financial investments to leverage the goals and objectives of our ministries**
- 2) **Streamlined and effective staff and volunteer personnel policies**

### 15) Pastoral Care

**Galatians 6:2** *Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Mirroring the deep compassion of Jesus, the Conference provides contact, reference, and presence for clergy and congregations as they face health concerns, loss and grief, ministry transitions, legal issues, and other personal/corporate challenges. The Conference embraces God’s desire for healing and may, at times, financially support those requiring direct assistance.

What are the essential outcomes for this function?

1. **Direct contact within 48 hours of receiving pastoral concern.**
2. **Trained regional chaplains to serve across Conference.**
3. **Confidentiality in all contacts.**
4. **Timely communication to wider Conference of clergy deaths or significant health issues (assuming permission).**

What might “better” or “new” look like compared to now?

1. **Staff position to oversee and coordinate pastoral care and regional chaplains.**
2. **Single location to collect all pastoral care information to share digitally across entire Conference.**

Keystone – Working Sub-team Charter Template

KEYSTONE PROJECT: Working Sub-Team Charter Document	
Working Sub-Team Name: <i>Approval process</i>	
Working Sub-Team members: <i>David Ackerman (PW), Shannon Garrett-Doege (PW), Phil Landers (PC), Alice Rauch (PC), Cean James (PSE), Liz Brunton (PSE), Gregory Edwards (PNE), Becky Beckwith (PNE), Lorin Cope (advisor to National Setting)</i>	
CM Chairperson: <i>David Ackerman</i>	
Scope of work: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Clarify process and timeline for approval of resolution at GS35 in 2025.</i></li> <li><i>2. Draft resolution; present initial draft to KWG in March 2024.</i></li> <li><i>3. Work with KWG to edit resolution in April/May 2024.</i></li> <li><i>4. Work with all four Conference leaders/Boards to ensure that resolution is presented at Conference Annual Meetings in June.</i></li> <li><i>5. Work with Conference leaders/KWG leaders to establish special fall Conference Meetings (called in accordance with each Conference’s Bylaws) to vote on resolution.</i></li> <li><i>6. If vote is successful, ensure that resolution is delivered to the GS35 Committee on Disposition.</i></li> </ol>	
Specific Deliverables & Due Dates	
Deliverable	Date Due & to whom
<i>1. Informing group on process/timeline for approval of resolution at GS35.</i>	<i>End of 2023; to KWG.</i>
<i>2. Resolution draft.</i>	<i>March 2024; to KWG.</i>
<i>3. Work on draft edits.</i>	<i>April/May 2024; to KWG.</i>
<i>4. Work with Conference leaders/Boards to ensure that resolution is presented at Annual Meetings.</i>	<i>June 2024; to all four Conferences.</i>
<i>5. Work with Conference leaders to establish special fall Conference Meetings to vote on resolution.</i>	<i>November 9, 2024, 10 AM; all four Conferences.</i>
<i>6. If vote is successful, ensure that resolution is delivered to GS35 Committee on Disposition.</i>	<i>November 2024.</i>
Schedule Start/Completion Date: Start in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. of 2023/Complete by April 2024	



# Keystone – Working Sub-team Charter

## KEYSTONE PROJECT: Working Sub-Team Charter Document

**Working Sub-Team Name: FINANCE**

**Working Sub-Team members:**

1. (PSEC) Rev. Bill Worley-- [worley@psec.org](mailto:worley@psec.org), Tammie Wisnieski-- [tammie@psec.org](mailto:tammie@psec.org);
2. (PNEC) Barbara Jennings – [barbaraj@pnec.org](mailto:barbaraj@pnec.org), Martin Nuscher – [pastor@indianland.org](mailto:pastor@indianland.org);
3. (PWC) Deb Long-- [deblong672@gmail.com](mailto:deblong672@gmail.com), Nancy Harclerode-- [harcle@centurylink.net](mailto:harcle@centurylink.net).
4. (PCC) Carrie Call-- [ccall@pccucc.org](mailto:ccall@pccucc.org)

**CM Chairperson:** Rev. Bill Worley

**Scope of work:**

1. Calendar Year beginning January 1 2025
2. Create a current [2024] “consolidated baseline” operating budget utilizing input from the 4CM’s
3. Create a draft budget for a merged Pennsylvania Conference. This will require knowing:
  - a. Staff configuration--
  - b. Office location / approx. cost--
  - c. Number of Annual Meetings
4. Create a comparative analysis of #1 & 2 above with narrative explanation of the differences and reasons for them
5. Create a consolidated Endowment report showing restricted and unrestricted funds and potential funds available for operating expenses.
6. Make recommendations regarding consolidating endowments and investments funds (consolidate, leave funds as they are, some combination of both, other). Identify legal requirements for the same.
7. Create draft templates of:
  - a. Finance Procedures Document
  - b. Endowment Policy
  - c. Gift Acceptance Policy
8. Project 10-year income and expense trends for a merged Conference based on previous 10 year performance

### Specific Deliverables & Due Dates

Deliverable	Date Due & to whom
Baseline 2023 Consolidated Budget	February 15, 2024 to 4CMs/AWM
Baseline 2025 Consolidated Draft Budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March 15, 2024 to 4CMs/AWM</li> <li>2. Reviewed at 2024 June Conference Meeting by Conference delegates.</li> <li>3. Adopted at 2025 Fall Conference Meeting by Conference delegates.</li> </ol>

## Keystone – Working Sub-team Charter

2026 Transition Budget (includes all current staff members)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. April 1, 2025 to 4CMs/AWM</li> <li>2. June 2025 Conference Meeting</li> <li>3. Adoption at Fall 2025 Keystone Meeting (along with Constitution and Bylaws)</li> </ol>
2027 fully staffed “final state” Budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. August 1, 2026 to the Keystone Board</li> <li>2. Keystone Conference Adoption Fall Meeting 2026</li> </ol>
Comparative analysis of current “baseline budget” to fully staffed “final state budget”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. April 1, 2024 to 4CMs/AWM</li> <li>2. June 2024 Conference Meeting</li> </ol>
Unrestricted / Restricted Endowment Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. April 1, 2024 to 4CMs/AWM</li> <li>2. June 2024 Conference Meeting</li> </ol>
Policy Documents	December 31, 2024 4CMs/AWM February 1, 2025 Unified Board
Legal Requirements	February 1, 2025 Unified Board
<b>Schedule Start/Completion Date:</b> Start in the 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. of 2024/Complete by March 2025	

**KEYSTONE PROJECT: Working Sub-Team Charter Document**

**Working Sub-Team Name: Governance**

**Working Sub-Team members:**

Liddy Barlow, Dani Neff, Sue Fritz, Laddie Ohl, James Gottwald, Kris Snyder, Nancy Krody

**CM Chairperson: Bonnie Bates**

**Scope of work:** well defined and tight

1. Determine the Governance Model we will be using - Completed
2. Develop a draft constitution and bylaws for the new Keystone Conference
  - a. Identify the priority governance functions for the Conference Board - Completed
  - b. Include definitions of oversight functions of the new conference board - Completed
  - c. Assess the skills and capabilities needed for governance elected individuals (board and committee members) – Completed
  - d. Determine the nomination process for the Conference Board – Completed
    - i. Include election processes to assure geographic representation
      1. Move toward regional rather than association-based nominations and representation
      2. Assure some continuity by allowing some Board members from the original conferences to continue serving
  - e. Determine the transition plan for outgoing and incoming boards -
  - f. Determine the process for calling a CM and RCMs who are ordained staff members and assure its inclusion in the Constitution and Bylaws Work begun
    - i. Assure the search process is completely described and set a date for recruitment and implementation of the call process
  - g. Clarify the governance functions and the ministry functions and how oversight will be accomplished - Completed
    - i. Include election and oversight of COMs – work begun
3. Assure alignment with the UCC national constitution for purposes of our covenantal partnership with all settings of the UCC - completed

**Specific Deliverables & Due Dates**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Date Due &amp; to whom</b>
Prepare sub-team for the work	Completed
Determine the model for the constitution and bylaws	Completed
Determine the priority governance functions	Completed
Work on document drafts	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2023-February 2024 ongoing
Create a detailed governance transition plan	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2023- February 2024 delayed until June
Assure alignment with the UCC national constitution and bylaws	January 2024 aligned in its draft form
Work with Conference Leaders to ascertain alignment with the oversight, COM, and governance functions of the constitution and bylaws	February 2024 June 2024
Prepare and share the utilization of current board members into the new Conference Board	February 2024 June 2024

Updated Draft by BB – 2-22-2024

Present draft document to the KWG	February 2024 April 30, 2024
Make additional revisions to the constitution and bylaws based on feedback from Conference leaders and KWG	March 2024 April 30, 2024
Present final draft of the Constitution and Bylaws	April 2024
<b>Schedule Start/Completion Date:</b>	Start in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. of 2023/Complete by May 2024

Updated Draft by BB – 2-22-2024

<b>KEYSTONE PROJECT: Working Sub-Team Charter Document</b>	
<b>Working Sub-Team Name: Legal</b>	
<b>Working Sub-Team members:</b> Beth Walker ( <a href="mailto:bethwalker@gmail.com">bethwalker@gmail.com</a> ); Amelia Price ( <a href="mailto:aashivers@gmail.com">aashivers@gmail.com</a> ); George Kepple ( <a href="mailto:gkepple@pts.edu">gkepple@pts.edu</a> ); Larry Pickens ( <a href="mailto:larrypickens223@yahoo.com">larrypickens223@yahoo.com</a> ); Tom Croner ( <a href="mailto:tomcroner@yahoo.com">tomcroner@yahoo.com</a> ), Susan Emmons ( <a href="mailto:susanemmonseseq@comcast.net">susanemmonseseq@comcast.net</a> )	
<b>CM Chairperson:</b> Carrie Call	
<b>Scope of work:</b> This team will research and review all necessary legal procedures and prepare all legal documents required to create the nonprofit business entity known as the Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review required legal procedures for registration of a merged business entity in PA including Title 15 of PA Statutes, Chapter 3 (entity transactions), Subparagraph C (merger). Review general steps required by PA for registering an entity. Review required information for articles of incorporation of a nonprofit in PA (15 Pa.C.S.). (2024)</li> <li>2. Compile description of legal requirements and process into one accessible document for KWG members with review by CMs in advance.. (2024)</li> <li>3. Consult with Heather Kimmel regarding appropriate legal alignment with national setting. (2024)</li> <li>4. Collect the new Constitution and Bylaws from the Governance Sub-team. Collect copies of their Articles of Incorporation from each Conference. (2024)</li> <li>5. Procure legal review of all items for submission. (2025)</li> <li>6. Submit the Name Reservation, Statement of Merger, and Articles of Incorporation to the PA Business Filing Service. (2025)</li> <li>7. Digitally register the complete merged entity through the Business Filing Services of the Department of State. (2025)</li> </ol>	
<b>Specific Deliverables &amp; Due Dates</b>	
<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Date Due &amp; to whom</b>
Meet with Subcommittee, review process, set timeline	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2023
Review relevant PA law and create timeline through 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2025	April 2024, to KWG
Consolidate all information into accessible document for sharing	April 2024, to KWG
Inform Conferences at summer meeting of legal requirements and our legal process timeline	June 2024, to members
Suspend sub-teamwork until 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2025	
<b>Schedule Start/Completion Date:</b> Start in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. of 2023/Complete by April 2024	

**Keystone –Staffing Sub-team Charter – 10/11/2023**

<b>KEYSTONE PROJECT: Working Sub-Team Charter Document</b>	
<b>Working Sub-Team Name:</b>	<b>STAFFING</b>
<b>Working Sub-Team members:</b>	Bonnie, Carrie, Bill, David
<b>CM Chairperson:</b>	Bonnie
<b>Scope of work:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource load the Keystone Key Functions [4CM's/AWM] - done</li> <li>• Draft an initial proposed Keystone org chart [4CM's/AWM?] - done</li> <li>• Develop a Staffing transition plan [timeline/schedule, etc.] to transition from the current CM leadership/functioning staffs to future Keystone CM leadership/functioning staff, including but not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop a Staff Communication Process and Plan</li> <li>○ Develop staffing transition timeline/schedule/plan – including open, honest and timely communication with current staff and those they serve</li> <li>○ Prepare &amp; offer staff “job guarantee option” during transition to March 1, 2026</li> <li>○ 4CM's provide visible leadership through the transition</li> <li>○ 4CM's lead current Conferences and staffs until they, the 4Cm's, jointly hand-off leadership to the new KCM</li> <li>○ 4CM's resign effective with new KCM being on board</li> <li>○ Arrange for some CM to KCM overlap and consulting support</li> <li>○ Other transition items - TBD</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Propose a geographic staffing footprint model, both physical and digital June 2024</li> <li>• Draft job descriptions for future Keystone CM and Staff positions, identifying essential qualifications, experience, skill sets, ordination or not, character traits, competencies, outcomes/results required, performance expectations, success metrics, etc.</li> <li>• Identify and complete other STAFFING scope and deliverables - TBD</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Deliverables &amp; Due Dates</b>	
<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Date Due &amp; to whom</b>
4CM's/AWM Resource load future Keystone staffing model	To Finance Sub-team by 1/15/2024
4CM's/AWM Draft an initial proposed Keystone staff structure/org chart	By 1/15/2024 completed
Develop a Staffing transition plan	By 3/1/2024 completed retention document
Communicate with staff about the plan, being clear that the staff about options for application and “job guarantee options”	By 2/1/2024 completed
Draft job descriptions for future Keystone CM and Staff positions	By 7/30/2024
Propose a geographic staffing footprint model, both physical and digital	TBD but prior to 9/30/2024
Other deliverables to be defined	TBD but prior to 9/30/2024
<b>Schedule Start/Completion Date:</b>	Start in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. of 2023/Complete by Sept. 2024

Drafted 4/30/2024 by BB

**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE KEYSTONE CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

101. The name of this corporation shall be KEYSTONE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSES**

201. The purposes of this organization shall be:

- a. To exercise the functions of a Conference of the United Church of Christ;
- b. To support the ministry and mission of associations within the Conference.
- c. To maintain relations with other Christian fellowships and ecumenical bodies within the boundaries of the Conference to the end that mutual understanding and cooperation shall be advanced;
- d. In general, to exercise all and every power for which nonprofit corporation organized under the Nonprofit Corporation Law of Pennsylvania and IRS rules and guidelines, can be authorized to exercise; provided, however, that no substantial part of its activities shall include attempting to politically influence legislation.

**ARTICLE III – AFFILIATIONS**

301. This Conference shall have that relation to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ as is described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ that relate to Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

**ARTICLE IV – VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

401. The Voting membership of the Conference shall be the authorized ministers holding standing in the Associations of the Conference and lay delegates selected by and representing the Local Churches of the Conference and such other persons as the By-Laws shall provide. The control of the Conference shall reside in its voting members and shall be exercised directly at any annual meeting or other meetings of the Conference or through and by a Conference Board elected by the Conference.

## ARTICLE V – DIRECTORS

501. There shall be a Conference Board, which shall administer the business and affairs of the Conference. Members of the Conference Board shall be elected at an annual meeting of the Conference and shall have such powers and duties as are usual and customary to a Board of Directors under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania and as provided in the By-Laws of the Conference.
502. The Conference Board shall elect from its members an Executive Committee which shall possess and exercise such powers and functions of the Conference Board as the Board shall delegate to it.
503. The By-Laws shall specify the number of delegates and shall provide for a method of election, term of office, meetings, powers and duties of the Conference Board, its Executive Committee, and other committees.

## ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

601. The Conference Minister shall be the President, the chief executive and administrative officer, and the spiritual leader of the conference. The settled Conference Minister shall be a member of a Local Church of the United Church of Christ within the Keystone Conference. Additionally, a Moderator, Assistant Moderator, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, shall be elected by the Conference at a Conference Meeting. The power and authority of the officers of the Conference shall be set forth in the By-Laws.

## ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

701. The Conference shall hold an annual meeting and such other meetings as shall be necessary, at such time and place and upon such notice as shall be provided in the By-Laws.
702. Procedures for conducting Conference Meetings shall follow the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

## ARTICLE VIII – UCC COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

801. The Conference, Associations, and the Local Churches are in covenant with each other and with the national setting of the United Church of Christ, supporting and nurturing the furtherance of the Gospel.
802. Nothing in the Constitution or By-Laws of the Conference shall destroy or limit the right of any covenantal partner. Each has the responsibility to respect and consider the decisions made by other covenantal partners.



## ARTICLE IX – INTERPRETATION

901. The Constitution of the Keystone Conference is intended to be in agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of the national setting of the United Church of Christ.

## ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

1001. The Keystone Conference Constitution and Bylaws shall be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, a quorum being present, at a duly called meeting of the Conference, provided that such an amendment has been:

- a. Recommended by the Conference Board or submitted by a group of not less than 5% of the duly authorized Conference delegates.
- b. Distributed to members of the Conference not less than 60 days prior to the meeting at which the action on the proposed amendments is to be taken.

This Constitution and Bylaws shall be in force and effect immediately upon their adoption.

## BY-LAWS KEYSTONE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

100. These By-Laws further define the Constitution of the Keystone Conference.

### ARTICLE 1 – MEMBERSHIP

101. This Conference shall be composed (1) of all Local Churches that have standing in the United Church of Christ, and that are located in those geographical areas determined by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ; and (2) of all authorized ministers who have standing in Associations of the Conference. The Conference shall keep an accurate list of all the ministers and Local Churches within the Conference
102. This Conference, with the approval of the Conference Board, under such provisions as the Board shall deem wise, shall continue in fellowship or establish fellowship with a Local Church which is not part of the United Church of Christ. The names and statistics of such Local Churches shall be kept separately; their numbers shall not be counted in determining the number of delegates which this Conference is entitled to send to General Synod; nor shall a member of such a congregation be a delegate to General Synod. No direct or indirect participation by any such congregation in the work of the Conference shall be construed as making it a part of the United Church of Christ.
103. An ordained minister of another denomination, serving as pastor of a congregation or in a specialized ministry setting in this conference shall apply to the Committee on Ministry for dual standing in Associations of the Conference for the duration of that ministry, with all the rights and privileges of such membership.

### ARTICLE II – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

201. In the interest of the Local Churches, this Conference shall discharge those duties and provide those services which will strengthen the witness of the United Church of Christ, such as:
  - a. Furthering the life, mission, witness, worship, and fellowship of the member Associations and Local Churches.
  - b. Extending the mission, witness, and outreach of the United Church of Christ in the Conference.
  - c. Serving as a liaison with Associations, Local Churches, and the General Synod.
  - d. Assisting the Associations, Local Churches and ministers in developing their own programs.
  - e. Rendering counsel to Associations, Local Churches, and ministers in situations calling for help beyond their own resources.

- f. Rendering advisory service to Associations, Local Churches, and ministers with reference to pastoral placement.
- g. Sponsoring continuing education for ministers; and conducting conferences, retreats, clinics and workshops in areas of religious life and service.
- h. Maintaining relationships for mission, witness, and outreach with other religious bodies to the end that mutual understanding, cooperation, and fellowship shall be advanced.

### ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

- 301. The officers of the Conference shall be a Conference Minister, a Moderator, an Assistant Moderator, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Conference, from time to time, shall determine.
- 302. The Conference Minister shall be the chief executive and administrative officer and spiritual leader of this Conference. They shall be an authorized minister with standing in the United Church of Christ. The Conference Minister shall have general supervision of all phases of the Conference program; shall offer counsel to Local Churches and ministers; shall represent the Conference at meetings of the Local Churches and at Wider Church, community, interfaith and ecumenical gatherings and bodies. They shall be an ex officio member of the Conference Board and the Executive Committee, without vote. The Conference Minister shall give guidance to the Conference Board and be subject to its direction and decisions. The Conference Minister will advise the Commission on Ministry and support the work of the Association Committees on Ministry and its chairs. The Conference Minister supervises staff and Ministry Team Coordinators. The Conference Minister shall be president of the corporation and as such shall perform all legal functions assigned by the Conference Board and authorized by them. They shall perform such duties as are assigned by the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
- 303. If the position of Conference Minister becomes vacant, the Conference Board forms a small search committee to recommend an Interim or Designated Conference Minister to provide leadership to the Conference. The Board shall approve and contract with the Interim or Designated Conference Minister. The Interim or Designated Conference Minister shall perform all the functions and responsibilities of the Conference Minister position.
- 304. The Conference Board will have the authority to form a search committee for the calling of a Conference Minister following the guidelines and recommendations of the national setting of the United Church of Christ.
- 305. When the search for the Conference Minister has been completed, the Conference Board shall present to the Conference, at an Annual or Special Meeting, the name of a candidate for such office. The Conference shall determine whether it wishes to call the person so recommended. The Conference Board shall determine the salary and conditions of employment. These shall be set forth in a call agreement. The service of the Conference Minister shall be terminated upon 60 days' notice, or a timeframe negotiated with the

- Conference Minister and the Conference Board, either by the Conference Minister or by (2/3) two-thirds of the members of the Conference Board.
306. The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term. The Moderator shall have had previous Conference Board experience or have served as the Assistant Moderator of the Conference Board. The Moderator shall preside at Annual and Special meetings of the Conference and shall be the chairperson of the Conference Board and the Executive Committee. They shall represent the Conference at meetings of the Local Churches or other bodies, as requested by the Conference Minister. The Moderator shall be the first Vice-President of the Corporation.
307. The Assistant Moderator shall be elected for a two-year term. The Assistant Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in their absence or when requested to do so. They shall be the second Vice-President of the Corporation.
308. The Secretary shall be elected for a two-year term and may be reelected for a second term, serving no more than 4 consecutive years. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of Annual and Special Meetings of the Conference and of the Conference Board and the Executive Committee. They shall sign legal papers as Secretary of the Corporation, as directed and authorized by the Conference Board and shall carry on such correspondence as is pertinent to the office.
309. The Treasurer shall be elected for a two-year term and may be reelected for a second term, serving no more than 4 consecutive years. The Treasurer shall be the Treasurer of the Corporation and shall hold and disburse the funds of the Conference subject to the direction of the Conference Board or its designee. They shall be responsible for keeping accurate accounts of all monies, funds and properties committed to their care and shall make regular financial reports to the Conference Board and to the Annual Meeting of the Conference. The Treasurer shall be bonded as the Conference Board provides.
310. The Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected at the Conference Annual Meeting. If an officer's position becomes vacant, a replacement shall be appointed by the Conference Board to fill the vacancy until the next Conference Annual Meeting.
311. After a lapse of one year, a person may be re-elected to the Board or as an officer of the Conference.
312. The terms of office of all elected officers shall begin following the Annual Meeting at which they are elected and shall terminate at the close of the Annual Meeting at which their successors are elected. Those filling an unexpired term may be elected to their own terms per these bylaws.
313. If any elected officer moves from the Conference area or ceases to be a member of a congregation holding full membership in the Conference, their tenure of office shall cease.

#### ARTICLE IV – CONFERENCE BOARD

401. The Conference Board shall consist of 16 persons including the four officers. Each year elections will be held to fill any vacancies. The Conference Board shall include an equal number of lay members and authorized ministers. A Conference Board member who has completed a two-year term shall be eligible for re-election for one additional term. If a Conference Board member serves for two terms, they may be elected as an officer.
- a. The Conference shall elect two youth/young adult (14-18) representatives of the Conference Board with voice but no vote. The youth/young adult representatives will be in addition to the regularly elected members of the Board.
402. The Conference Board shall be the governing board of the Conference and shall do all things needed to develop and further its program and work, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the will of the Conference expressed at Annual or Special Meetings, consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
403. The corporate powers of the Conference shall be vested in the Conference Board who shall have and exercise the general control and management of its property, funds, and affairs, subject to its charter, the provisions of this Constitution and the laws of the state. The Conference Board shall, by a majority vote of the Board, incur indebtedness and assign, buy, sell, lease, convey, or mortgage any real or personal property. The Conference Board shall designate the officers or other persons who shall have power to sign receipts, checks, and other instruments for the withdrawal of funds from banks or savings institutions.
404. The Conference Board shall meet at least quarterly, at such time and place as it shall determine.
405. Between meetings of the Conference Board, its functions shall be carried on by an Executive Committee consisting of the officers plus three other members of the Board, appointed by the Conference Board. This Committee shall meet, as needed, between meetings of the Board.
406. Special meetings of the Conference Board or the Executive Committee shall be called by the Conference Minister, the Moderator, or upon written request by three members of the Board.
407. Notices of all meetings of the Board shall be distributed to all Board members at least 14 days prior to the meeting, unless this requirement is waived by two-thirds of the Board members present and voting.
408. A quorum of the Conference Board shall consist of a majority of the elected members.
409. The term of office of board members, other than the Conference Minister whose term is defined by their call agreement, shall begin following the Annual Meeting at which they are elected and shall terminate at the close of the meeting at which their successors are elected.
410. If any board member moves from the Conference or ceases to be a member of a congregation which holds membership in the Conference, their membership on the Conference Board shall cease.

411. If any member of the Conference Board resigns or is unable or ineligible to serve, the Conference Board shall elect a person to fill the remainder of the term.
412. Elected members of the Conference Board may be removed from their position by 2/3 vote of the Conference Board if they do not meet the requirements of their position description. In the case of the Conference Minister, the call agreement shall be followed.

#### ARTICLE V – Priority Governance Functions

The priority governance functions for the Conference Board shall be:

501. Develop the core values that will drive and support the ongoing work of the Conference.
502. Create a Vision and Mission with input from teams and committees; clearly articulate the vision and mission at regular intervals, using all means possible, to churches, clergy, and laity.
503. Develop major strategic goals and strategies; delegating the work of successfully achieving goals and strategies to staff (paid or volunteer). Empower the Conference Minister to ensure the attainment of the strategic goals and strategies.
504. Articulate the work of the Conference, connecting the work of the Conference to its stakeholders (clergy, laity, Local Churches, Associations, donors, volunteers).
505. Develop policies to guide the work of the Conference, Associations, Local Churches and constituents.
506. At prescribed intervals, monitor the success and failures of policies and modify as necessary.
507. Assure the safety and security of all Conference money and property.
508. Monitor the programming which supports the spiritual health of all Conference authorized ministers assuring that practices and programs of enrichment, training, counsel, and support are provided.
509. Take and retain minutes of all meetings. Publish a Conference Board summary document to communicate them to constituents.
510. At regular intervals, reassess the values, mission, and goals and strategies of the Conference to identify that they remain effective, transformative, and are aligned with the UCC national objectives.

#### ARTICLE VI – BOARD COMMITTEES, TEAMS, AND TASK FORCES

601. The Conference Board shall have the authority to establish committees, teams, and task forces to assist it in carrying on its mission.
602. The Conference Minister and Moderator shall be ex officio members of all committees, teams and task forces without vote. Their attendance at committees, teams, and task force meetings is not required.
603. The Conference Board recognizes Standing Committees, Teams, and Task Forces.

Standing Committees are authorized by the Conference Board and are ongoing.

Standing Committee detailed responsibilities can be found in the Keystone Conference Way of Work. The structure and responsibilities of the Standing Committees are authorized by the Conference Board.

Standing Committees include but are not limited to:

Conference Commission on Ministry – shall be comprised of the chairs or other appointed representatives of the Committees on Ministry

Staff and Personnel – elected for up to two consecutive 2-year terms.

Nominating – elected for up to two consecutive 2-year terms.

Budget and Finance – chaired by the Conference Treasurer and appointed by the Conference Board

Teams are authorized by the Conference Board and are ongoing.

Task Forces are ad hoc and short term. Staff, the Conference Board, Standing Committees or Teams can create Task Forces. Task Forces exist for a specific purpose and are not ongoing. The organizing group selects Task Force members.

#### 604. Terms of Office:

Standing Committee members serve for a two-year term. A member shall be re-elected upon expiration of their term. Terms of office begin immediately following election at the Annual Meeting of Conference. If there is a resignation from a committee, the Nominating Committee, with approval by the Board, will appoint a replacement. Standing Committee Members, with the exception of the Commission on Ministry, shall serve for two terms, and after that there must be a lapse of one year before they can serve again.

Team members are appointed and authorized based on their individual skills and abilities. Teams should strive for diversity and effective representation of the conference. Team members agree to serve an annual commitment which is renewable based on the needs of the conference and the individual. No term limits are established.

## ARTICLE VII – STAFF

701. The Conference Minister shall have the authority, subject to approval by the Conference Board, and in consultation with the Staff and Personnel Committee, to organize a search for, offer a call to, and terminate the employment of all authorized staff members, consistent with pertinent personnel policies and job positions established by the Conference Board. The Conference Minister, in consultation with the Staff and Personnel Committee, shall have the authority to organize a search for, offer employment to, and terminate the employment of all administrative staff members, consistent with pertinent personnel policies established by the Conference Board.
702. The Conference Minister, in consultation with the Staff and Personnel Committee shall supervise all program and administrative staff members, consistent with pertinent personnel policies and job descriptions.

#### ARTICLE VIII - FINANCES

801. The Conference shall be supported by voluntary contributions of the Local Churches and individuals. The Conference Board shall establish an appropriate goal-setting process for Our Church's Wider Mission and shall implement that process annually with Local Churches. This goal will reflect each congregation's share of support for the Conference and worldwide program of mission.
802. The Conference Board determines on an annual basis its retention percentage of OCWM monies and its donation to the national setting of the UCC.
803. The Conference shall conduct such special appeals for funds as it shall determine, and which shall be recommended by the Conference Board.
804. The Conference Board shall prepare a proposed Conference budget which shall be submitted to the Conference. At its Annual Meeting the Conference shall adopt a budget for the following year.
805. The budget and financial records of the Conference shall be kept on the basis of the calendar year.
806. Books and accounts of the Conference shall be reviewed annually by a certified public accountant selected by the Conference Board. An audit by a certified public accountant will be scheduled every three–five years.
807. Investments of Conference endowment and capital funds shall be done by the Conference Investment Committee, or other designated committee, in accordance with the policies of the Conference. Investment of all other Conference funds shall be done by the Conference Treasurer, in consultation with the Investment Committee and Conference Board as necessary.

#### ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS

901. The Annual and special meetings of the Conference shall be held at such times and places as the Conference Board shall determine. Special meetings shall be called by the



Conference Board.

902. The Conference Board shall appoint such committees as are required to carry on the meeting.
903. Notice of the Annual and Special Meetings shall be distributed to all authorized ministers holding standing in the Conference and to an appropriate lay officer of each member congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Notice shall be given by the Secretary, as directed by the Conference Board.
904. At all Conference Meetings, in addition to its ministers, each Local Church with up to 100 members shall be entitled to be represented by two lay delegates. Each Local Church with between 101-300 members shall be entitled to three lay delegates. Each Local Church with 301-500 members shall be entitled to four lay delegates and each Local Church with more than 500 members shall be entitled to be represented by five lay delegates. Membership is based on the Yearbook most recently published prior to the date of the call of the meeting. All Local Churches are entitled to an additional lay delegate if one is a youth/young adult (14-18 years). Each Local Church should choose alternate delegates who shall serve in case its delegates are unable to attend. Visitors are welcome. The members of the Conference Board shall be members ex officio of the Conference with vote.
905. At any meeting of the Conference representation of 40% of the Local Churches entitled to have representation at the Conference Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

If there is the lack of a quorum, members present at any scheduled meeting of the Conference shall hear and receive reports without taking actions thereon and shall adjourn the meeting to such a time and place as a majority of those who are present and entitled to vote shall determine.

In cases where there is a lack of a quorum, the Conference Board shall approve those actions which are required for conference functions.

#### ARTICLE X – RELATION TO GENERAL SYNOD

1001. The Conference shall be related to the General Synod as provided in the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
1002. The Conference shall elect delegates and alternate delegates to the General Synod as required by the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ. They shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at an Annual Meeting.

## ARTICLE XI – COMMITTEES ON MINISTRY

1101. The Standing of authorized ministers and Local Churches is held in the Associations of the Keystone Conference. The Conference, through the Committee on Ministry, receives ministers and Local Churches into the United Church of Christ. The Committees on Ministry grant, assess, and remove ministerial and congregational standing.
1102. In all cases the Committees on Ministry function within the policies of the Conference, the Manual on Ministry, and the Manual on Local Church, as developed by the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

## ARTICLE XII – DISSOLUTION

1201. Upon dissolution of the Keystone Conference, unless it forms a new Conference within the United Church of Christ, its assets and all property and interest, including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio, a tax exempt organization pursuant to Internal Revenue Code section 501 © (3) or its successor(s). In no event shall any of the above-described property be distributed to individual members of any organizations without tax exempt status.

Latest changes made and approved at:

## 2026 Keystone Budget Summary

	<b>Minimum*</b>	<b>Maximum**</b>
Estimated Income	2,019,942	2,019,942
OCWM (individual & congregation, Endowment / Investment Income)		
Estimated Expenses (not an inclusive list of all expenses/ministry items)		
1. Mission	316,750	322,250
Contributions to mission partners		
OCWM to National UCC,		
Wider Church Events including General Synod		
2. Program	186,500	189,500
Congregational Development		
Ecumenical Ministries		
Justice and witness		
Leadership Development		
Search and Call		
3. Office	277,000	279,000
Communication		
Financial Services		
IT Support/equipment		
Office space		
4. Staff	1,018,638	1,221,298
Development		
Salary/benefits		
Travel		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,798,888</b>	<b>2,012,048</b>
Income less Expenses	\$221,054	\$7,894

\* (Minimum Budget-- Plan B UCCPB Medical for individual)

\*\* (Maximum Budget-- Plan A UCCPB Medical for family)

**2026 Keystone Conference Draft Budget**

THE FORMULAS ARE SET TO PUT A POSITIVE NUMBER IN EXPENSES

	2024					2025				
	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>										
OCWM	\$ 763,354	\$ 325,000	\$ 734,000	189,000	\$2,011,354	\$ 701,344	\$ 234,712	\$ 711,980	168,500	\$1,816,536
Individual Offerings	\$ 12,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 1,000	12,000	\$60,000	\$12,000	\$30,000	\$1,000	12,000	\$55,000
Misc. Income	\$ 5,000	\$ 27,500	\$ 24,500	6,676	\$63,676	\$5,000	\$22,000	\$24,500	4,800	\$56,300
Interest	\$ 6,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 19,050	-	\$33,050	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$20,000		\$32,000
Endowment Draw	\$ 70,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 62,359	18,000	\$185,859	\$70,500	\$35,000	\$88,673	18,000	\$212,173
Investment from Other Sources				-	\$0					\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 856,854	\$ 430,500	\$ 840,909	\$ 225,676	\$2,353,939	\$794,844	\$327,712	\$846,153	\$203,300	\$2,172,009

\*All 4 Conferences have not yet adopted their 2025 budgets. 2025 budget numbers are an estimate.

\*\* Does not include income from current Board Restricted Funds that may be redesignated by a future conference board.

**EXPENSES**

**STAFF Revised Staff Structure from KWG meeting 4/19/2024 (Staff Option #2-- 4 Called/ 5 Admin All FT)**

Administration (Salary + benefits)	\$91,684	165500	280192	24,960	\$562,336	\$94,250	172120	288598	25,896	\$580,864
Ordained (Salary + benefits)	\$281,120	125200	338088	135,591	\$879,999	\$289,434	133408	348231	138,221	\$909,294
Staff Development	\$3,500	2000	6900	-	\$12,400	\$3,600	2000	6900		\$12,500
Staff Professional Expenses		8000	4200	-	\$12,200		8000	4200		\$12,200
Staff Travel	\$54,000	14000	7700	14,000	\$89,700	\$54,000	14000	7700	14,820	\$90,520
					\$0					\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$430,304	\$314,700	\$637,080	\$174,551	\$1,556,635	\$441,284	\$329,528	\$655,629	\$178,937	\$1,605,378

**OFFICE**

Audit/professional fees	\$40,000	9500	12000	-	\$61,500	\$41,200	12000	12500	15,000	\$80,700
Finance Services										
Communication (digital/paper)	\$7,500	3000	1500	3,100	\$15,100	\$7,725	3000	2000	3,457	\$16,182
Equipment	\$11,000	2500	12250	5,850	\$31,600	\$11,330	2500	12250	5,006	\$31,086
Hospitality	\$5,000		2750	-	\$7,750	\$5,000		2750		\$7,750
IT Support/Software	\$6,000	2500	14000	2,370	\$24,870	\$6,180	2500	14400	2,917	\$25,997
Legal			5200	2,000	\$7,200			5500		\$5,500
Insurance	\$8,000	18000	7500	3,500	\$37,000	\$8,240	20000	7800	4,500	\$40,540
Miscellaneous (pens, paper, etc)	\$2,400	4600	6200	600	\$13,800	\$2,472	4600	7350	887	\$15,309
Rent (including leases)	\$24,000	0	28950	8,100	\$61,050	\$24,720	0	29300	8,100	\$62,120
Taxes		10000					12000			

Utilities	\$5,500	19600	14656	-	\$39,756
Dues & Subscriptions	\$6,000	0	6000	425	\$12,425
Board of Directors	\$1,000	1000			
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$116,400	\$70,700	\$111,006	\$25,945	\$324,051

	\$5,665	19600	14800		\$40,065
	\$6,180	0	6000	244	\$12,424
	\$1,000	1000			
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$119,712	\$77,200	\$114,650	\$40,111	\$351,673

**PROGRAM**

	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
Academy of Ministry			0	-	\$0
Annual Conference Meeting			0	-	\$0
Clergy Convocation			0	-	\$0
Conf Standing Committees/ministry teams	\$0		0	600	\$600
Congregational Development (coaching?)	\$6,000	22500	4300	-	\$32,800
Digital Ministry and Technology(mission Ins			10100	-	\$10,100
Disaster Ministries	\$2,500		0	-	\$2,500
Ecumenical Ministries			1500	-	\$1,500
Generosity / Stewardship			300	-	\$300
Justice and Witness	\$2,000		3000	-	\$5,000
Leadership Development Clergy & Lay			1420	-	\$1,420
Ministerial Care and Assistance	\$37,000		11819	-	\$48,819
Ministerial Oversight/Authorization	\$12,000		1850	-	\$13,850
Search and Call Resources	\$10,000		200	-	\$10,200
Spiritual Life and Revival Ministries			5000	-	\$5,000
Youth and Young Adult Ministries		1200	0	-	\$1,200
Outdoor Ministries	\$60,000		0	-	\$60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$129,500	\$23,700	\$39,489	\$600	\$193,289

	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
			0		\$0
			0		\$0
			0		\$0
			0	288	\$288
	\$6,000	22500	4300		\$32,800
			10150		\$10,150
	\$2,500		0		\$2,500
			1500		\$1,500
			300		\$300
	\$2,000		3000		\$5,000
			1420		\$1,420
	\$37,000		11935		\$48,935
	\$12,000		1850		\$13,850
	\$10,000		250		\$10,250
			2500		\$2,500
		1200	0		\$1,200
	\$60,000		0		\$60,000
	\$129,500	\$23,700	\$37,205	\$288	\$190,693

**WIDER MINISTRY**

	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
Ministry Partners					
Bethany Childrens Home			\$3,500	-	\$3,500
Evang/Ref Hist Soc	\$5,000	\$250	\$2,000	-	\$7,250
Hoffman Homes				-	\$0
Lancaster/Morvian Seminary	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$3,500	1,000	\$13,500
PA Council of Churches	\$5,000	\$3,300	\$3,000	1,000	\$12,300
Philadelphia Interfaith			\$2,000	-	\$2,000
Phoebe Ministries			\$9,000	-	\$9,000
Ursinus Campus Ministry			\$1,242	-	\$1,242
Christian Associates of Western PA				-	\$0
Living Waters Camp				1,000	\$1,000
Freedom School		\$2,000		1,000	\$1,000
Lehigh Vally Conf of Churches		\$2,000			\$2,000

	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
			\$3,500		\$3,500
	\$5,000	\$250	\$2,000		\$7,250
					\$0
	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$3,500	1,000	\$13,500
	\$5,000	\$3,300	\$3,000	1,000	\$12,300
			\$2,000		\$2,000
			\$9,000		\$9,000
			\$1,250		\$1,250
				1,000	\$1,000
		\$2,000		1,000	\$1,000
		\$2,000			\$2,000
	\$129,500	\$23,700	\$37,205	\$288	\$190,693



## Consolidated Endowment Report Four Pennsylvania UCC Conferences

(Based on December 31, 2023 financial reports)

	<u>PCC</u>	<u>PNEC</u>	<u>PSEC</u>	<u>PWC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Unrestricted Endowment				\$532,491	\$532,491
Board Restricted Endowment	\$1,239,072	\$724,616	\$392,910	\$568,736	\$2,925,334
Donor Restricted Endowment	\$584,049	\$4,233	\$1,385,147	\$485,362	\$2,458,791
Term Endowment	\$0	\$2,808		\$0	\$2,808
Quasi Endowment	\$43,514	\$157,794	\$263,513		\$464,821
Undesignated Savings			\$1,040,226	\$0	\$1,040,226
Donor Restricted Savings	\$68,611	\$31,475	\$627,070	\$0	\$727,156
Board Restricted Savings			\$307,349		
Operating Accounts	\$138,815	\$359,982	\$146,508	\$0	\$645,305
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,074,061</b>	<b>\$1,280,908</b>	<b>\$4,162,723</b>	<b>\$1,586,589</b>	<b>\$8,796,932</b>

**\*\*Does not include the **POSSIBILITY of POTENTIAL** funds (an estimated \$2 million) from future sale of PNEC Conference Center in Palmerton, PA and real estate (Weber Memorial Park) in Penn West Conference.**

### DEFINITIONS

**(Note:** All endowments governed by Pennsylvania Act 141 which allows an annual calculation of 2-7% based on a 3 year average.)

**Unrestricted Endowment**--long term invested assets, the interest and/or principle of which, is used to fund conference ministry.

**Donor Restricted Endowment**--long term invested assets the interest of which is used to fund a specific facet(s) of Conference ministry in keeping with donor intent.

**Term Endowment**-- restricted endowment that allows the use of principal after a defined period of time or the conclusion of a particular event.

**Board Restricted Funds**-- invested funds the use of which (principle and/or interest) is determined by the Conference's governing body.

**Quasi Endowment**--short or long term invested funds the interest and/or principle of which is used to fund a specific Conference ministry.

**Undesignated Savings**-- funds held for immediate Conference use

**Donor Restricted Savings**-- funds held for near-term Conference program/mission in accordance with the donor's intent



**OCWM Projections based on previous 10 year average**

**TOTAL**

**PWC**

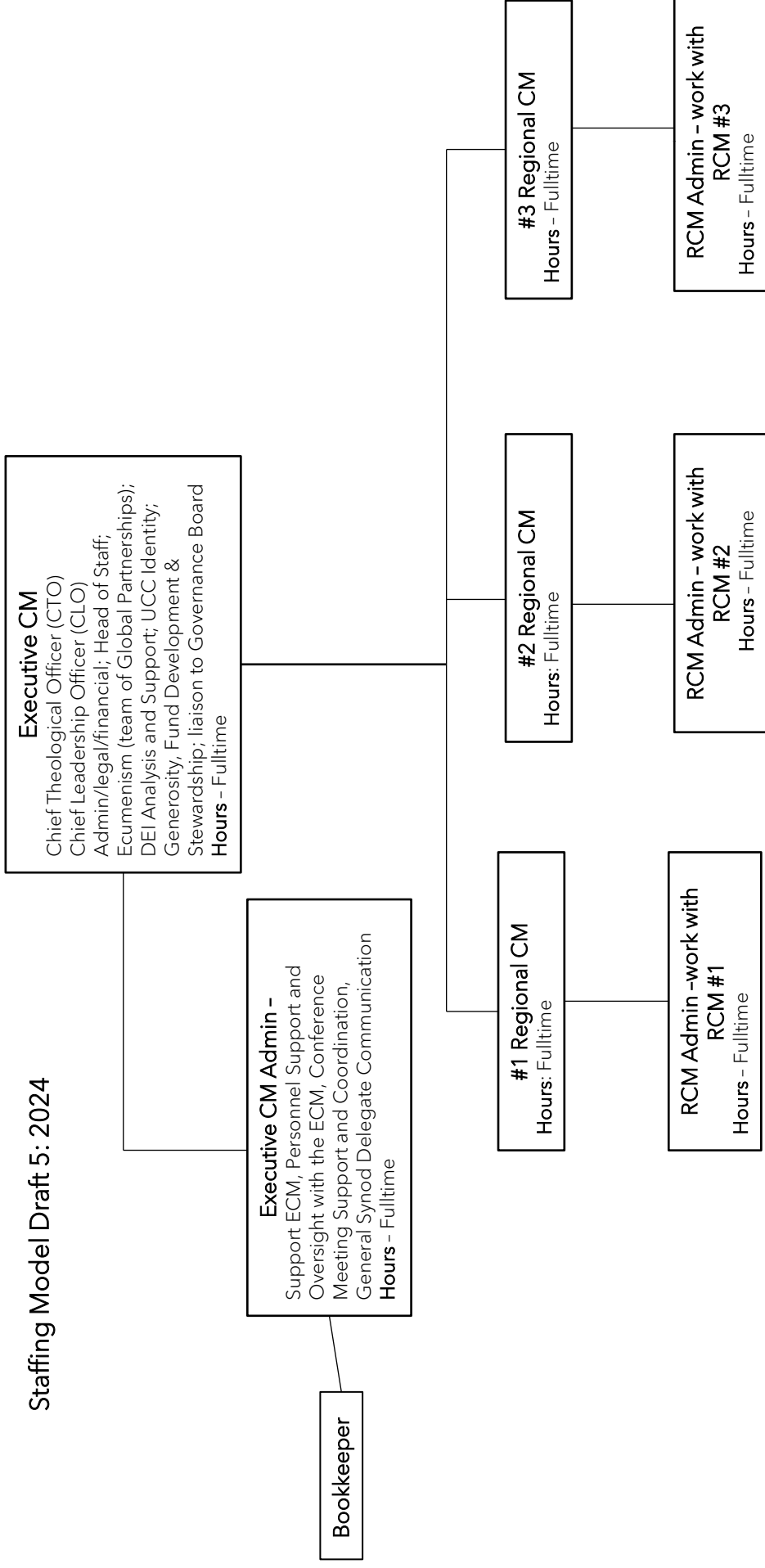
**PSEC**

**PNEC**

**PCC**

	ave. 4% decrease	ave. 3% decrease	ave. 4% decrease
2024 from above budget	\$733,627	\$734,000	\$189,000
2025	\$640,454	\$711,980	\$168,500
2026	\$608,454	\$690,620	\$161,760
2027	\$576,454	\$669,901	\$155,290
2028	\$544,454	\$649,804	\$149,078
2029	\$512,454	\$630,310	\$143,115
	*actual was		
			\$255,122
			\$1,981,627
			\$1,755,646
			\$1,676,769
			\$1,592,305
			\$1,526,104
			\$1,454,025

# Staffing Model Draft 5: 2024

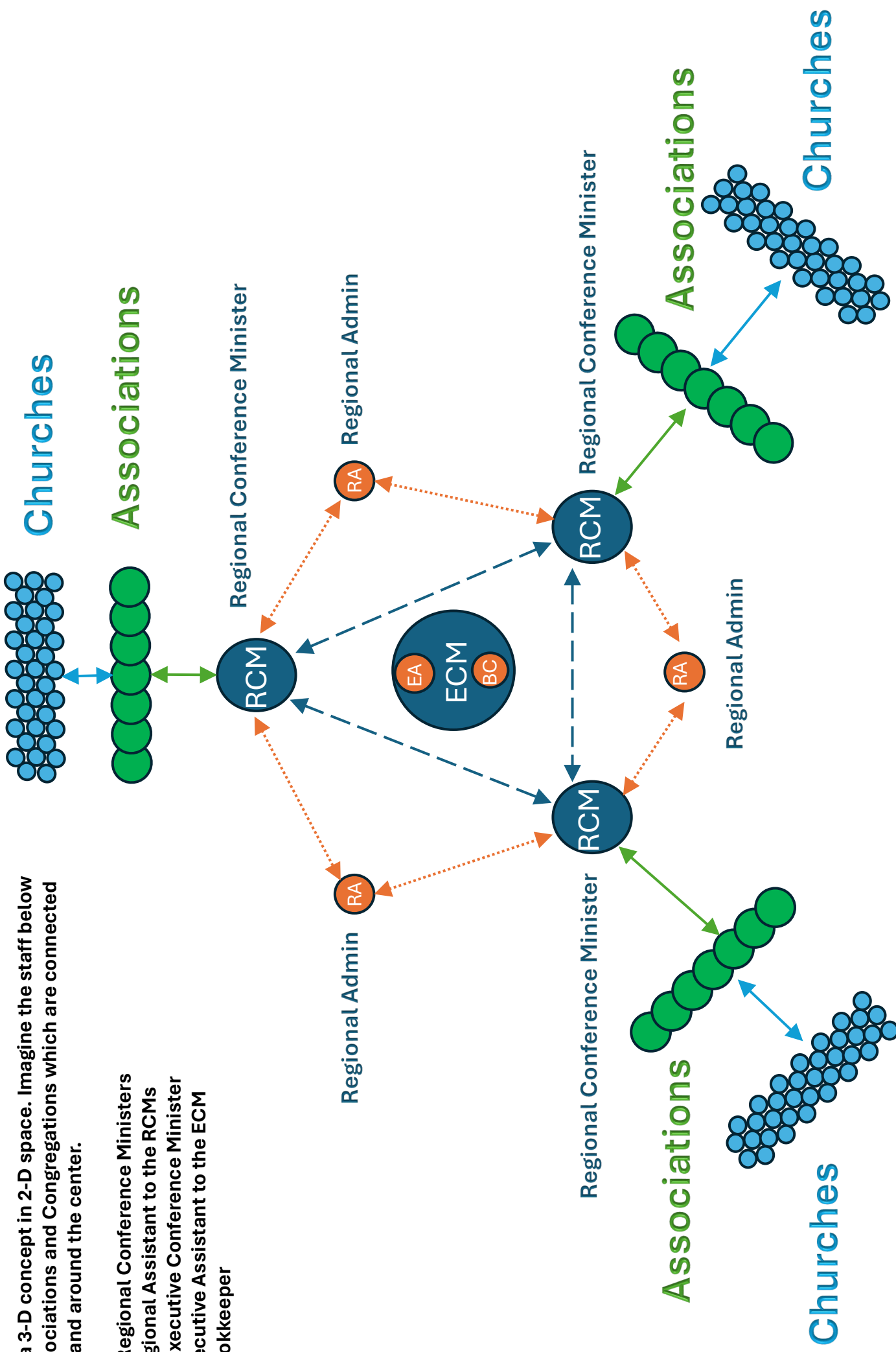


- All ordained staff will contribute to the **pastoral care** of the churches/ministers in their region, as well as maintaining **connectedness** and emotionally grounded and healthy clergy/lay relationships
- **DEI is responsibility of all staff and volunteers** as we are a diverse, multicultural and multiracial church
- The Conference Board establishes goals and strategies for the Conference.
- The ECM oversees the staff work with ministry teams and programmatic teams (Racial Justice, Education, Youth and Young Adult, Outdoor Programming, Global Ministries, Mental Health, Annual Meeting, Spiritual Revival and Renewal, Clergy Convocation, Disaster Ministries) to accomplish the board-identified programmatic goals and strategies established

**All Regional CMs**  
Have varying Responsibilities for: Search and Call, Authorization and Oversight, Clergy and Lay Leadership Development & Education, Congregational Leadership, Coaching, Faith Formation for all ages, Youth & Outdoor Ministries

This is a 3-D concept in 2-D space. Imagine the staff below the Associations and Congregations which are connected across and around the center.

- RCM= Regional Conference Ministers
- RA= Regional Assistant to the RCMs
- ECM= Executive Conference Minister
- EA= Executive Assistant to the ECM
- BC= Bookkeeper



This is a 3-D concept in 2-D space. Imagine the staff below the Associations and Congregations which are connected across and around the center.

RCM= Regional Conference Ministers

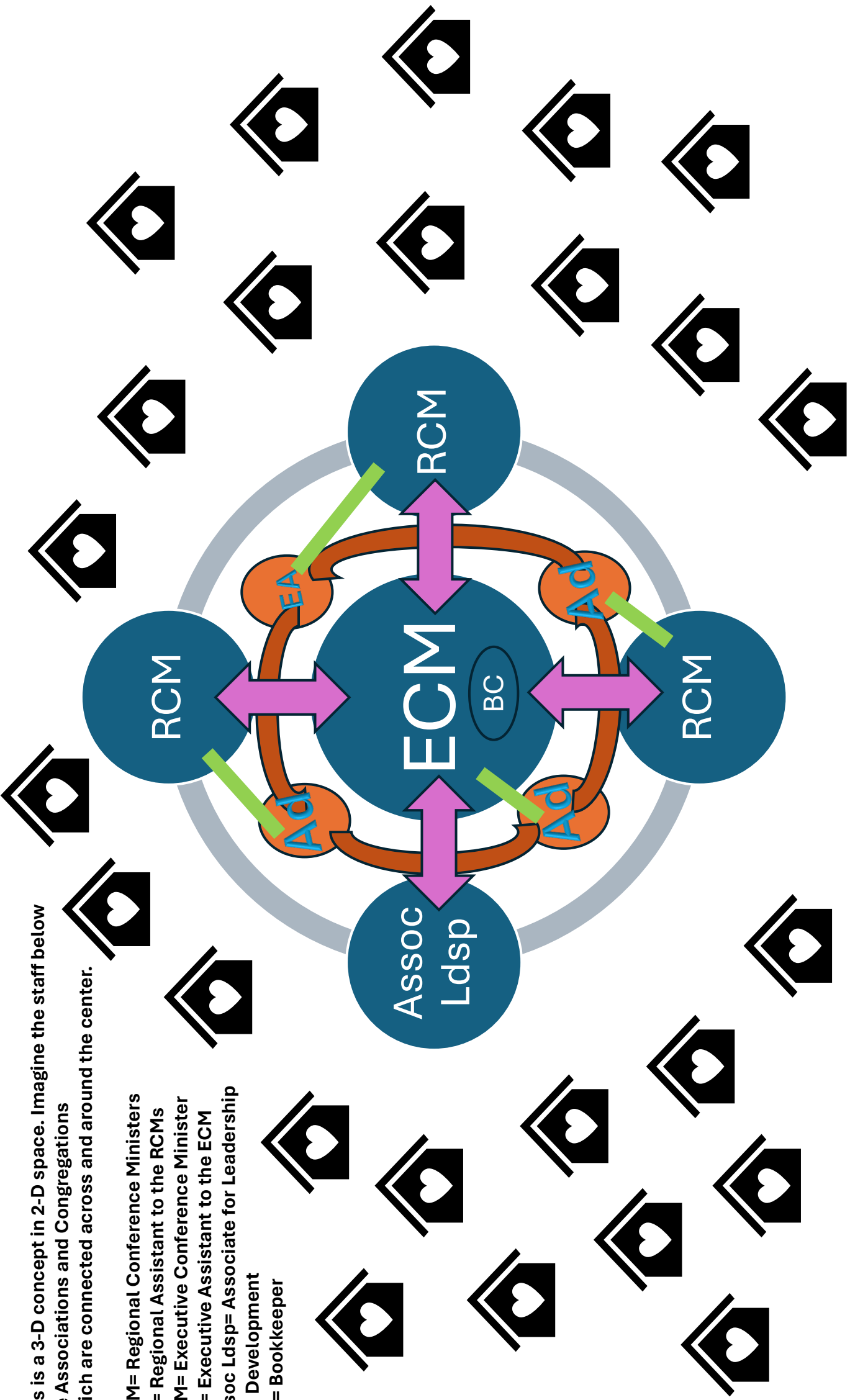
Ad= Regional Assistant to the RCMs

ECM= Executive Conference Minister

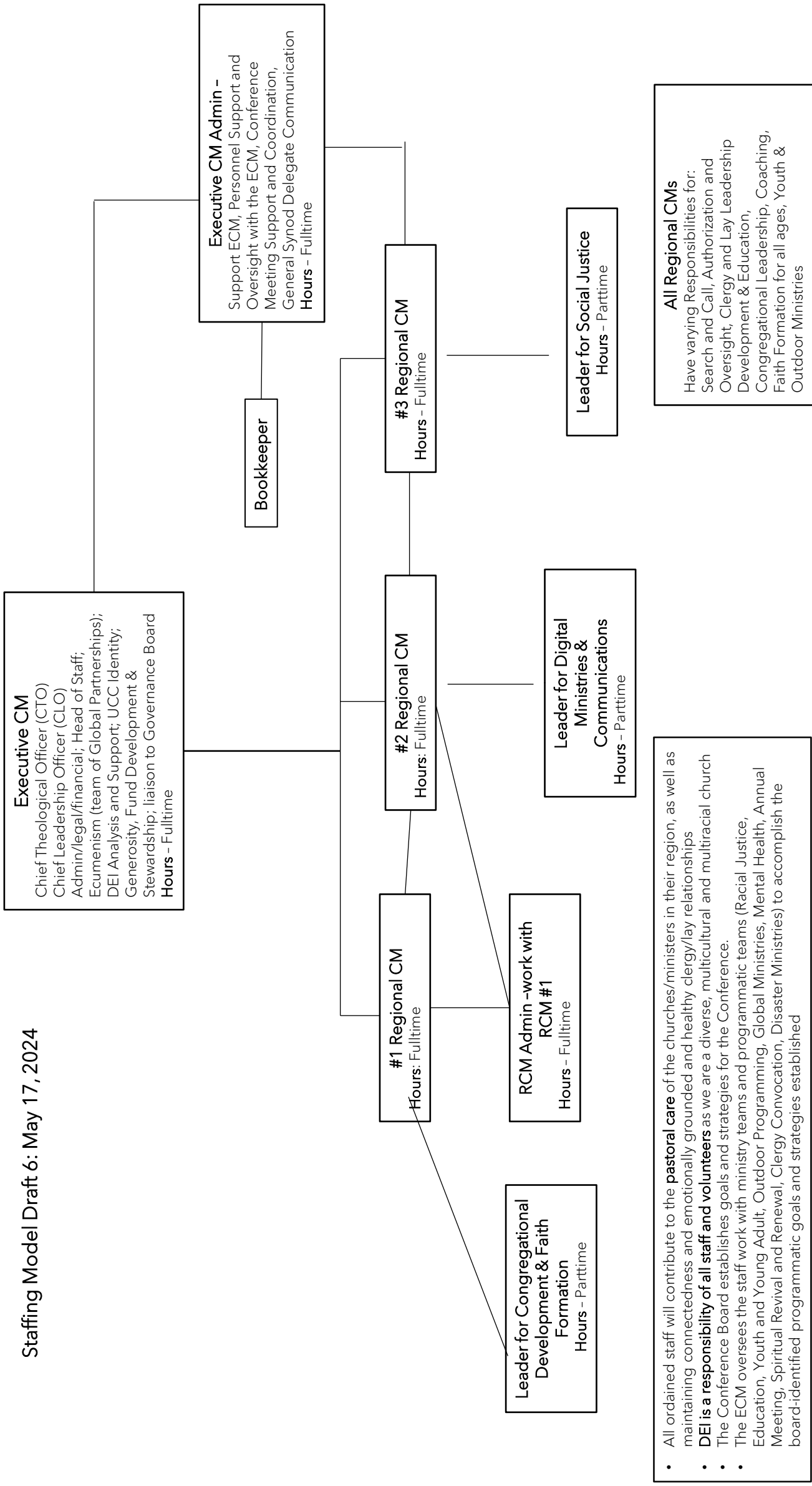
EA= Executive Assistant to the ECM

Assoc Ldsp= Associate for Leadership Development

BC= Bookkeeper



# Staffing Model Draft 6: May 17, 2024



- All ordained staff will contribute to the **pastoral care** of the churches/ministers in their region, as well as maintaining **connectedness** and emotionally grounded and healthy clergy/lay relationships
- **DEI is responsibility of all staff and volunteers** as we are a diverse, multicultural and multiracial church
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## Statement on Staff Position Retention

The Staffing Committee of the Keystone Working Group wants to provide you with this information, as we are working on the staffing model and transition processes for the proposed Keystone Conference.

In this time of transition, we know that anxiety among our current staff may be high. We want to assure our current staff, in all four conferences, that your contributions to the mission and ministry of our conferences are recognized and appreciated.

We want to provide you with some support in the upcoming times of shifting positions.

All staff ordained and non-ordained, who continue to meet performance expectations, will be guaranteed their positions through March 1, 2026. Continued employment is, of course, contingent on continued meeting of performance standards.

As we approve a new staffing model for the Keystone Conference, there may be new positions that are attractive to you, and for which you have the requisite skills and abilities. We would encourage you to consider applications for the new positions when they are posted.

We will make every effort to honor this guarantee unless a significant financial loss or decline impacts our ability to do so. In all cases we will honor your call agreements and contracts to the degree which we are able to financially do so.

# FAQs for Keystone

June 2024

## *1. Where did the Keystone idea come from?*

The four PA Conference Ministers began discussing the idea of shared ministry back in late 2021 as we considered the current trends within churches and conferences. We recognized that our churches are struggling in today's world, particularly regarding leadership, and we were seeking answers about how best to help. We didn't know whether a fully merged Conference was the model we would eventually choose, but we wanted to explore more.

We met with Rev. William Metzger of Renaissance Consulting (in Penn Northeast) and after discussing our ideas, he agreed to help us. We then applied for and were awarded a three-year grant from the Council of Conference Ministers. Each Conference Minister nominated 4-6 members of their own Conference who were in positions of leadership (e.g. Moderator) and the Keystone Working Group met for the first time in October 2022. We begin every meeting with scriptural reflection and weave theological and spiritual aspects into all our work.

## *2. Why create a merged Conference?*

We believe that *Together We are Stronger*. We believe we can better accomplish conference work by sharing resources (both human and financial). We intend to build on our varied theological and cultural traditions to be inclusive with integrity and model the 'big tent' ideal of the early United Church of Christ.

Given the trajectories we are on regarding membership and church size, we do not believe four conferences in Pennsylvania are needed any longer. We considered several options with various potential staff and resource arrangements. However, given the realities of trends in church membership and with a desire to be faithfully proactive, the group moved quickly toward merger.

More details are available on our options evaluation and analysis. In summary, we started this process with our Mission being: "to provide better programmatic, spiritual, educational and financial support to our congregations". Then we identified seven options, ranging from staying as we are with no changes, to several options focused on our four Conferences sharing staff, digital sharing, to forming an Executive board and one staff, to creating two Conferences as a stepping stone to future unification, outsourcing Conference staff work to merging all four Conferences. We developed seven evaluation criteria, weighted those criteria in terms of importance to the mission and ranked each option against these weighted criteria. The outcome of this analysis overwhelmingly indicated that merging into one Keystone Conference would best achieve the Mission.

We are currently immersed in developing a "transition" and "end state" staffing model, financial analysis, governance model, legal analysis and the resolution submittal, review and approval

process within our four Conferences and General Synod. Guided by the Spirit, we are hopeful all this will lead us to a recommendation for all of you to prayerfully consider.

### ***3. Why such a huge change all at once?***

The Working Group took seriously the need to make changes while there was a will and a way forward. Making a change in the church is always difficult and creates anxiety. We believe by managing anxiety and being very intentional about the plans we can handle a large change that will inspire for years to come. We trust the Holy Spirit to make its will known to us through the process.

### ***4. How would this be different from what we have now?***

Several things would change if a Keystone Conference is created. There would be a new governance structure that includes the whole Commonwealth instead of four individual Conferences. Thus, the overall governance would be different in terms of a new Constitution and Bylaws and legal status. This would also hold true for staffing and leadership. The financial assets would be combined for ministry and programming across the Conference. Finally, our merger would create a substantial new footprint within the wider UCC.

### ***5. What are the major benefits of such a merger?***

The largest benefit would be the increase in human expertise and resources. Each Conference currently engages in a multitude of ministries. For those that have significant duplication the ministries would be streamlined in a new model. For those that stand alone (for example, a project on Rural Church Ministry) they would now become available for the wider population. We would be able to share resources to benefit our local clergy and churches. Our Annual Meetings would be large and exciting affairs.

### ***6. Who decides?***

You do. The delegates of Conference will have to decide for themselves whether they wish to move forward into a merger. That vote would happen at individual Conference meetings in November 2024.

### ***7. What's involved with the decision?***

In June 2024 all four Conferences will meet for a shared Summer/Annual Meeting at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College. At that time, delegates will be presented with all the accumulated work of the Keystone Working Group (e.g., governance, staffing, finance, etc.) and a draft resolution that would need to be submitted for vote at General Synod in 2025 (only General Synod has the authority to change Conference boundaries). We will not vote on that resolution at the June meeting. Instead, all 4 conferences will meet on their own on November 9, 2024, to vote individually to accept or reject the resolution. If it passes, the resolution will then



move to the Governance Committee of the UCC Board of Directors for inclusion in the schedule of the 2025 Synod meeting in Kansas City.

**8. *What's the benefit of centralization vs. maintaining autonomy?***

Centralization of the duties of a Conference helps streamline human resources, programs, fiscal sustainability, and mission for the benefit of all in the church. However, every local church remains autonomous!

**9. *Aren't our geographical distances a challenge?***

Yes, they are. However, we have come through the Covid pandemic and learned a great deal about how to connect with others over wide distances. We fully expect to make wide use of technology such as Zoom as well as to advocate for those areas that do not have access to broadband yet! Local and regional gatherings will always be encouraged. We hope the excitement of a new endeavor will encourage people to lean into the process and express willingness to try new things.

**10. *What happens to the Associations?***

We anticipate that associations will play an essential role - as named in our UCC Constitution - in assisting congregations and authorized ministers in a Keystone Conference. The Associations will be supported and equipped by the full support of the Conference to carry out the roles of authorization and oversight of authorized ministers and supporting local churches.

Empowering our Associations will include a move to provide programming by the Associations, hands-on assistance with search and call from local leaders, and more independent work for the Committees on Ministry. This will need committed and engaged Association members. Conference staff will be present for the region but will not always be available to staff every COM, mediate every conflict, or meet with every search committee. Individual consultations and training for the work will remain a priority.

**According to the UCC Constitution:** The boundaries of any new Association, or any adjustment of boundaries between Associations, shall be determined by the Associations concerned with the approval of the Conference or Conferences involved. The standing of an Association as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined by the Conference in which it is located. (UCC Constitution Article IX: Conferences and Associations, lines 283-286)

Therefore, The Keystone Conference Process has no authority to alter Association boundaries, leadership, or duties. The UCC Constitution prohibits such actions unless they are posed by and agreed to by an association directly or in partnership with another association. Now is the time to think about alternative models! For example, would four associations be interested and willing to have one Committee on Ministry? Or one Mission and Ministry team? We hope Associations will see this as an exciting time to try something new.

**11. *How can we be sure the voices of small and rural churches are heard?***

Most churches in the Pennsylvania Conferences are small and either rural or small-town. We are deeply committed to making the process accessible to church members and leaders. You will need to show up at a town hall or an Association/Conference meeting and make yourself heard. We promise to listen.

***12. How will we be sure minority voices will be heard?***

From the start of Keystone discussions in 2022 the Working Group spoke of a rich and nuanced commitment to the wide diversity of individuals and congregations within the conferences. This diversity is one of our greatest blessings and we honor and respect it. To accomplish our desire to be a 'large tent' church we diligently welcome and affirm multiple minority voices, based on race, ethnicity, theological position, sexual and gender identities, geography, and more. This can be challenging work for our churches and requires constant affirmation and recommitment.

Everyone who would be affected by a merger must agree to bring their concerns and questions to the Conference Ministers or to the Keystone Working Group. Please attend a Town Hall or other meeting to share your excitement and your questions!

***13. Would a merged Conference be Open and Affirming?***

None of the current Pennsylvania Conferences are O&A. We know this designation is critical for many in the church. A merged Conference cannot be determined to be O&A from its creation. Like the local church, a Conference must agree to engage in the Open and Affirming process.

***14. Given the UCC national focus on racial justice, won't a merger create a Conference that is overwhelmingly white?***

Given the current population of Pennsylvania and the racial/ethnic diversity numbers in our churches, we are majority white. However, we also hope fervently that a wide inclusion of churches from across the Commonwealth will enable us to share rich theological, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and voices with and among all our churches. We commit to becoming a multiracial and multicultural expression of God's inclusive love.

***15. What will happen to our Board and/or donor-restricted funds?***

The Finance subcommittee will study the current structure of funding sources and will present a recommendation for how to move forward with combined finances. Questions around what will happen with various funds will be addressed by the subcommittee. Any and all financial structural changes must be approved at each Conference's annual meeting prior to merger.

***16. Will there be an actual Conference Office somewhere?***

The new Conference will likely require some minimal 'footprint' for storage of files and other materials. However, the location will depend on the staffing model as we determine the need for office/meeting space and the like. This will be under the Governance subcommittee's purview.

***17. How will a Board be configured?***

This question falls under the work of the Governance subcommittee, overseen by Conference Minister Bonnie Bates (PNE). There are several possible models. However, we are committed to making sure we have equal representation from the Commonwealth. As the Governance subcommittee continues its work, this question will be answered and shared.

***18. What might staffing look like?***

Creation of a staffing model is the work of all four Conference Ministers and a Staffing subcommittee overseen by Conference Minister Bonnie Bates. This group will present a draft model prior to the Summer 2024 meeting.

***19. Will local churches have a staff member nearby (e.g. within 2 hours) who can offer pastoral care, preaching, or consultation with the pastor or church?***

This is an important question and will be answered by the Staffing subcommittee. Since there are different models of staffing, we are considering them all while also keeping our commitment to connection with local churches.

***20. Where does faith formation have a place in the new Keystone Conference?***

The Keystone Working Group identified Faith Formation as a key function of the Conference and the new Conference will help to facilitate its development in all settings of the church. Faith formation is critical to the growth of a local church. Many local churches have asked the question, “Where does faith formation have a place currently in our local churches?” We are committed to helping the church affirm the role of pastor as teacher; the call to form disciples; and the congregational baptismal vow to love, support, and care for our children and new members.