

**PSEC Consistory Meeting
Minutes for November 18, 2023
@ PSEC Office / Hybrid**

In attendance: Rev. Bill Worley, Mr. Charles Kuthuru, Rev. Melissa Burkhart, Rev. Bob Fogal, Ms. Caroline Bashore, Rev. Selina Hamilton, Mr. Tom Wright, Ms. Caroline Dunleavy, Rev. Alan Miles, Ms. Mary Loiselle, Rev. Kevin Fruchtl, Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green, Ms. Donna Fried, Ms. Alisa Unell, Rev. Kevin McLemore

Word of Prayer & devotion offered by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and Mr. Charles Kuthuru.

Meeting called to order by Moderator Mr. Charles Kuthuru at 10:10 am.

Work of God's People

Motion to approve the meeting's agenda by Rev. Selina Hamilton and seconded by Rev. Alan Miles. No discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the September 16, 2023, minutes as presented by Ms. Donna Fried and seconded by Ms. Mary Loiselle. No discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the online ballot vote, choosing OCWM as the recipient for Giving Tuesday donations by Rev. Bob Fogal and seconded by Ms. Donna Fried, motion carried unanimously. Rev. Bill Worley reiterated that there is a generous donor who has offered \$3,000 in matching funds for contributions collected on Giving Tuesday.

Reports:

1. Treasurer – Rev. Bob Fogal led the CC through the various reports to highlight items that seem to merit attention.
 - Concerning OCWM donation – YTD at the end of October, donations are \$42,552 below the budget; this is a significant improvement from September's \$52,127 deficit.
 - OCWM October 2023 contributions (\$58,811) are similar to OCWM October 2019 contributions (\$58,542), whereas OCWM October 2020, 2021, 2022 were noticeably lower.
 - Total Conference Income YTD Budget is \$725,356 and the actual is \$734,294 exceeding the budget. Total Conference Income actual includes the \$40,000 grant for Hurricane Ida (Expense Line 54022).
 - Church closure income \$188,220 came from the final payment from St. Luke's, North Wales, St. Luke's, Philadelphia, and St. Mark's, Reading
 - A few highlights on the operating statement were made.
 - Income Line 40611 – \$40,000 grant to VOAD for Hurricane Ida
 - Expense Lines 51100 & 51215 – Variances in actual from budget reflect Rev. Kevin McLemore's medical insurance arrangement
 - Expense Line 51405 – appears to be overspent by \$3,553 but consists of reimbursement travel expenses which Rev. Bill Worley is working on
 - Expense Line 53125 – budgeted \$0, actual \$3,969; major cost of which went toward scanning all paper files of active clergy records to a secure online server location for easy access
 - Expense Line 53520 – appears to be overspent by \$46,816 but General Synod was paid

for with savings

- Expense Line 53655 – reflects some new auditing requirements with regard to lease equipment
- Expense Line 54060 – underspent by \$5,355 due mostly to how facilitators are paid for holding trainings
- “Settlement on sale of W Phila German E&R Church” - \$400,000 settlement dropped to \$327,744 due to attorney and realtor expenses. Also seen on Balance Sheet Line 10091.
- Noted on the balance sheet: Savings accounts were previously held at 3 local banks; funds of approximately \$710,000 in the Citizens Investment Services have been transferred to Phoenixville Banks who will distribute the funds to four different banks in accounts less than \$250,00 to assure that they are insured by the FDIC – all PSEC savings now held in Phoenixville Bank and TD Bank.
- Value of investments as of December 31, 2022, was \$1.87 million and as of September 30, 2023 is now \$1.99 million.

Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Rev. Alan miles. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

2. Generosity Mission Team Report – Ms. Caroline Dunleavy – The OCWM video was not played at every association meeting; Generosity Mission Team will continue to reach out to associations and encourage the sharing of the video. Giving Tuesday is Tuesday, November 28, 2023; donations can be made online any time through Tuesday with all donations up to a total of \$3,000 being matched. Lastly, Generosity Mission Team is working on a generosity themed event or workshop to be held in PSEC in early 2024; more information to come. If there is feedback on the slides presented at the PSEC Fall Meeting, comments can be directed too Ms. Caroline Dunleavy or Rev. Bill Worley.

Motion to approve the Generosity Mission Team Report by Rev. Selina Hamilton and seconded by Ms. Donna Fried. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

3. Disaster Ministry Coordinator Report – no additions to the written report.

Motion to approve the Disaster Ministry Coordinator Report by Ms. Donna Fried and seconded by Ms. Caroline Dunleavy. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

4. Personnel Committee Report – Rev. Melissa Burkhart – no additions to the written report.

Motion to approve the Personnel Committee Report by Ms. Mary Loiselle and seconded by Rev. Bob Fogal. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

5. Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development – Rev. Cean James – no report.

6. Associate Conference Minister for Search & Call Report – Rev. Kevin McLemore – 4 churches out of the 8 on the active search list will be removed shortly and two or three added. Rev. Kevin McLemore added a reminder that all information shared with PSEC Consistory is confidential. Adding to the report on Tinicum UCC, Rev. David Ellis was supposed to retiring but after the death of a backbone member, he will be staying a few more months. Rev. Bill Worley inquired how many profiles on average result in an interview; Rev. Kevin McLemore predicted approximately 85-90%. Elaborating on the report, Interest

rates and costing of housing and living are high, especially in the area effecting statistics around length of pastorates, the timeline of church transitions, and clergy coming into the Conference. Ms. Caroline Dunleavy pointed out that a large percent of churches in transitions are churches that show up on the 'zero OCWM' list; suggesting that there could be a variety of reasons for this correlation.

Motion to approve the ACM for Search & Call Report by Rev. Alan Miles and seconded by Rev. Selina Hamilton. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

7. Conference Minister Report – Rev. Bill Worley – The numbers at the end of the report are wrong and should be disregarded. An update on the situation with St. Thomas UCC in Reading: St. Thomas amended their bylaws in 2012 in violation of their amendment process and when creating their final distribution process violated their constitution by creating a list of donors of which Bethany UCC was the only UCC affiliated donor for their approximately \$1 million worth of assets. PSEC attorney is making the argument that the funds were directed to the congregation of St. Thomas for their ministry and not for the other charitable organization that were named to receive their assets. All parties have now been deposited and Rev. Bill Worley believes the judge is stating that the PSEC does not have claim to the assets because the UCC Constitution guarantees complete and total autonomy. Next step would be a trial, in the meantime there is a settlement for \$45,000 that would not quite cover PSEC's legal bills for the case. In a related matter, Rev. Bill Worley reiterated from the report that of the 14 congregations that ended their ministry in the last 10 years, all but the Berks County churches, with one exception, have contributed a portion of their assets to PSEC. Rev. Bill Worley will continue to work with the PSEC attorney and try to schedule a time for him to meet with Consistory.

Motion to approve the Conference Minister Report by Rev. Alan Miles and seconded by Ms. Mary Loiselle. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

1. Keystone Study Group update – Rev. Melissa Burkhart – The Keystone Group met yesterday, celebrating the anniversary of the beginning of conversations last year. Discussions surrounded concerns and questions brought up in the town halls and other meetings, such as the diversity of the potential Keystone Conference and the name reflecting all churches with some churches outside of Pennsylvania. Subgroups are being formed to work on specialized areas, bringing in more voices. The work of the group is specifically and solely for the purpose of bringing together all four conferences; the work would need to start over if one or more conferences vote against the merge. Lastly, the Spring meeting will be 3 days: June 7th-9th, 2024 with Continuing Education opportunities Friday morning and meetings Friday afternoon through Sunday.
2. Disaster Ministries Requests
 - a. I recommend that the Consistory approve the Conference Disaster Coordinator Position description for now, realizing that it will change in the Keystone Conference.
 - b. I am recommending that we put the PSEC Disaster Ministries Protocol on the shelf for now, deferring to the Keystone Conference discussions.
 - c. I recommend that this tool (at template for a Conf. Disaster Coordinator Position, be used by those working on the Disaster Ministries vision for the Keystone Conference.
 - d. I am asking for your support for my recommendation that I begin to pull back my (our) involvement

in Ida recovery in Philadelphia.

- e. I ask for your support to move the PNEC trailer to Drexel Hill United Methodist Church for use in Ida recovery. Of course, the PNEC Board needs to approve it as well.

Motion to approve the above recommendations by Rev. Bob Fogal and seconded by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

3. De-brief Fall Meeting – Rev. Bill Worley expressed gratitude for Moderator Mr. Charles Kuthuru, Vice Moderator Rev. Melissa Burkhart, Host Clergy Rev. Steven Simpson, and all PSEC Consistory members for filling in where needed. Thoughts on the ease in passing the deficit budget included clarity and transparency in stating that Consistory will not present a deficit budget again, the possibility of a future Keystone Conference with a whole new budget, and trust conference-wide in the PSEC staff. Though the meeting ran over, it was encouraging how many individuals stayed for the Keystone discussion. Lastly, there were some comments following the meeting that it was difficult to hear conversation from the officer table for those in the back and online; sound was clear and audible from the pulpit.

New Business

1. Housing Allowances – Rev. Bill Worley - \$30,000, Rev. Kevin McLemore - \$28,800, and Rev. Cean James - \$0.
Motion to approve the above requested housing allowances by Rev. Selina Hamilton and seconded by Rev. Alan Miles. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.
2. Select date for meeting w/ Open Table – Meeting with Revs. Zach and Nicole Jackson going to be scheduled for Wednesday, December 6th at 7:00 PM via Zoom based on PSEC Consistory members' availability to discuss Open Table's ministry and any need for further financial support. Rev. Bill Worley shared that Open Table has received a couple of grants from National.
3. Transfer Tax on St. Peter's UCC, Frackville – Rev. Bill Worley shared that PSEC's name is still listed in the chair of ownership; there is a \$5,200 tax bill on the property, half (\$2,600) of which PSEC is responsible for. PSEC has paid its half, the private owner is refusing to pay his half causing a lien to be placed on PSEC. Rev. Bill Worley inquired how the PSEC Consistory would like to handle the situation, suggesting either paying the private owner's half or simply waiting for the private owner to make the payment. The payment would be a one-time payment.
Motion to wait and revisit the situation at PSEC Consistory's next meeting (January 20, 2024) by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green, consensus met.
4. Consideration/approval to allocate the \$400K – Rev. Bill Worley suggested designating a portion to be used to defray the cost of delegates attending the June 2024 Spring Meeting and/or put the money into PSEC savings account. Expecting costs per delegate to attend the meeting to be approximately \$300-\$400 with around 220 delegates in attendance, in order to cover half of the cost for every delegate \$33,000 would be needed. Rev. Selina Hamilton suggested a day-long retreat of the Consistories of the four Conferences, there was interest from others. There is some scholarship money, approximately \$2,000, available for individuals who need extra assistance.
Motion to set aside \$50,000 to subsidize the cost of delegate participation in the 2024 Spring meeting

by Rev. Bob Fogal and seconded by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to put the rest of the money into general savings until the next meeting (January 20, 2024), where PSEC staff could present a couple of recommendations for its use by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Rev. Melissa Burkhardt. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn at 12:30 pm made by Ms. Donna Fried and seconded by Rev. Selina Hamilton, motion carried unanimously.

Closing Prayer led by Rev. Bill Worley.

For January 20th meeting: Devotions: Donna Fried Hospitality: Donna Fried

Consistory Meeting dates:

2024: [Jan. 20](#), [Mar. 16](#), [May 18](#), [Jul. 20](#), [Sep. 21](#), [Nov. 16](#)