



Keystone Working Group: Summary of September 20, 2024 meeting

“Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...” (Hebrews 12:1b-2a)

Meeting on September 20, the Keystone Working Group remains inspired in our journey forward toward a vote for a Keystone Conference. “Together We Are Stronger” energizes and unites our focus. Townhall conversations have begun and have been well received with questions still being addressed. Transitional staffing questions and timeline process have opened more conversation. The subgroups all reported updates, with significant notes shared below:

- **Staffing**

Choosing Transitional Staff for the implementation of the work of the Keystone Conference begins with the search to contract a Transitional Executive Conference Minister and Transitional Regional Conference Ministers. All transitional staff will be eligible to apply for the settled/hired positions. As the process moves forward, there will be opportunities to adjust the current model if necessary. Chairs of Personnel Committees from all 4 conferences have begun meeting and are reviewing Conference Minister position descriptions.

- **Governance**

If merger is approved, there is a transitional board plan in process to be included in the new Constitution and Bylaws. Additionally, the Keystone Constitution and Bylaws will need to be affirmed by the 2025 Spring Meetings of each conference.

- **Finance**

The 2026 Exploratory Budget (which includes a \$63K surplus) was presented in the first round of Town Halls and is posted with all other Keystone related documents at www.psec.org/keystone. Generosity is the key to everything we and the Spirit will accomplish together!

- **Associations**

Association presidents across all 4 conferences have begun to meet and discuss possibilities for strengthening their leadership.

- **Mission**

Following consensus around developing a initial unifying Keystone Conference Mission, a new subgroup created a working draft of “People of the Table.” This would be in addition to, and not to replace, the mission work currently happening across all four Conferences, all of which would continue and expand across the state. The proposed mission focuses efforts already in place in all four conferences around hunger ministries and how we can work together around food insecurity for so many. Please see the link for further information. [Documents for Townhall Meetings 2](#)

- **Process of November 9 Vote**

Additional communications will be shared ahead of the November 9 vote, including 2 Keystone Working Group Communication Team summaries. A packet of specific materials from each individual conference will be distributed through email/mail, and will include: the Agenda, an Information page about voting, registration information, formal notice of this special meeting

per by-laws of each conference, the final motion for proposed merger. A STAR resolution will also be included for PNEC/PCC (Small town and rural church).

Please share this summary in your various ministry settings with ALL!

We urge every congregation to participate in the upcoming townhall sessions, to use the 4 bulletin handouts in worship. With all the available resources, we invite delegates to the Fall meeting to come well informed and prepared in your own work for our merger vote November 9. Please visit the Keystone Conference Project website hosted by the PSEC at <https://psec.org/keystone/>. Share questions and comments by email at Keystone.Conference.Project@gmail.com or direct mail through your own area Conference Office.

We believe God is doing a new thing!

KWG Communications Team

Steve Davis	St. John's UCC, Fullerton (PNEC)
Heather Kurtz	Zion UCC, Arendtsville (PCC)
Deb Long	First Trinity UCC, Youngwood (PWC)
Dave Mears (pinch hitter)	Trinity UCC, Pittsburgh (PWC)
Melissa Burkhart	Zion's Union Church Maxatawny, Kutztown (PSEC)

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