

**PSEC Consistory Meeting
Minutes for May 18, 2024
@ PSEC Office**

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

Word of Prayer and Devotions offered by Mr. Tom Wright.

Hospitality offered by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green.

Meeting called to order by Moderator Mr. Charles Kuthuru at 9:05 am.

Work of God's People

Motion to approve the meeting's agenda by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Ms. Donna Fried. No discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the March 16, 2024, minutes with the stated correction, by Ms. Mary Loiselle and seconded by Rev. Kevin Fruchtl. Mr. Joe Birli's name on page 3, in the CM Report is spelled incorrectly, motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence – Rev. Caroline Bashore

In January, PSEC received an email from Anne Few, the Co-Vice President of Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates, thanking the conference consistory for their donation in memory of Wanda Kramer.

Reports:

1. Treasurer – Rev. Ken McDowell

Budget and Finance committee received a clean bill of health on the 2023 auditor's report. A variety of charts were offered during the treasurer's report, one being net assets: comparing unrestricted cash, operating cash, and total funds; making clear that the majority of assets are restricted (52%). In the 2024 budget, Rev. Ken McDowell pointed out that 60% of our total budget goes towards paying staff which factors into the \$79,000 deficit that was passed. Looking at OCWM giving, at the end of April 2024, PSEC is at a deficit compared to the budget of \$8,390. In order to make up the passed deficit of \$79,000, PSEC would need to be surpassing the budgeted amount each month in OCWM giving, which is not the case as of the end of April. A prediction chart of the next few years was provided, assuming that income would decline by 3% yearly and expenses increase by 3% yearly; this chart showed that by 2027 the cumulative deficit would surpass the income, in 2029 all unrestricted funds would be exhausted, and in 2034 all funds would be exhausted.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report by Rev. Selina Hamilton and seconded by Rev. Melissa Burkhart. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

OCWM Calls – Each association reported hearing from most of the churches on their call lists. Some feedback included that most of the churches on the list this year were on the list previous years, a lot of the churches on the list are in pastoral transitions and/or do not have an administrator, there is confusion as to who is responsible for returning the pledge cards, and there are churches who do not pledge but collect donations that are sent to the conference.

2. Personnel Committee Report – Rev. Melissa Burkhart – no report.
3. Disaster Ministry Coordinator Report – no additions to the written report.
4. Generosity Task Force Report – Ms. Caroline Dunleavy – In addition to the written report, more information was shared about the Lake Institute Executive Certificate and Religious Fundraising course that Ms. Caroline Dunleavy is enrolled in.
5. Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development Report – Rev. Cean James – no additions to the written report.
6. Associate Conference Minister for Search & Call Report – Rev. Kevin McLemore – no additions to the written report.
7. Conference Minister Report – Rev. Bill Worley – At March's meeting there was discussion on supporting Bethany Children's Home in their legal fees from the Saint Thomas settlement; their legal fees were \$73,213.12. A motion was made to cover the full \$73,213.12 expense for Bethany Children's Home from the \$201,732.66 that PSEC received in the settlement by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Rev. Selina Hamilton. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously. After PSEC's legal fees and the motion to cover Bethany's legal fees, PSEC is left with \$83,517.54. A motion was made to move the remaining \$83,517.54 to unrestricted cash (General Savings) by Rev. Ken McDowell and seconded by Rev. Kevin Fruchtl. Discussion around the New Church Start fund and transparent communication to the wider conference took place, it was clarified by Treasurer, Rev. Ken McDowell that the funds would be placed in General Savings as unrestricted cash which would later be used to offset the deficit, motion carried unanimously. Also highlighted from the written report, 55 retired pastors attend the retiree gathering and Rev. Bill Worley was a presenter for the conference's church administrators' gathering.

Motion to approve the above reports (2-7) by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Ms. Donna Fried. No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

1. Keystone Study Update – the delegate packet for the meeting is being finalized and will be posted online; included in the packet will be possible staff plans, 2026 budget, governance

documents such as bylaws, and the motion to be presented at General Synod.

2. Conferring Session Discussion update – PSEC has not yet reached quorum, there are 108 signed up to attend in-person and 28 online; 150 are needed. On the agenda will be honoring those whose terms are ending, keystone discussion (90 minutes), state of conference address from Rev. Bill Worley, and discussion on the 2025 PSEC budget (40 minutes).

Questions for Keystone discussion:

- a. How does the merger impact people in the pews?
- b. Why is the merger a better choice?
- c. How will we all be connected statewide? What might that look like thinking out-of-the-box.
- d. What is not clear to you? What do you need to know to get to yes?
- e. How is the merger better equipping us for the future?

A video was recorded at the end of the meeting, to be emailed to the conference on the importance of attending the Spring meeting and sharing the Consistory's approval of the Keystone process.

New Business

1. Update from Open Table UCC – a written report was submitted; highlighted was Revs. Jackson and their work with their coach Rev. Cameron Trimble. In addition, Rev. Bill Worley clarified their ability to report to Consistory again in January, sharing how ministry has been going and report on any financial needs Open Table may have.
2. Financial Plan for 2025 balanced budget – the drafted budget for 2025 that will be presented at the Spring meeting was discussed. Rev. Ken McDowell pointed out the decrease from the 2023 budget to the 2025 budget in OCWM giving: going from approximately \$691,000 to \$675,000. In addition, a draw from the endowment of 3% is budgeted to increase to 6%. On the expense side, 60% of the budget will be put toward staff expenses; this excludes an increase in salary for all staff. Consistory requested that an increase for staff be included. The proposed budget has a \$29,000 deficit without including a salary increase for staff. Opinions were shared about the difficulty of voting on another deficit budget without knowing the result of the Keystone vote. If Keystone does not pass, the 2026 budget will have to look drastically different with a rolling staff reduction.
3. The following out-going members whose terms will end at the conclusion on the June meeting were thanked for their dedication and service: Charles Kuthuru, Moderator, Tom Wright, Covenant, and Kevin Fruchtl, Schuykill

Motion to Adjourn at 12:28 pm made by Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green and seconded by Rev. Melissa Burkhart, motion carried unanimously.

Closing Prayer led by Rev. Kevin McLemore.

For July 20th meeting: Devotions: Hospitality: Ms. Donna Fried

Consistory Meeting dates: 2024: Jul. 20, Sep. 21, Nov. 16