

Council Minutes
New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ
November 15, 2007

Present: Sandy Alley, Winn Alley, Doug Brenner, Jim Christensen, Don Clarke, Fred Atwood-Lyons, John Gregory-Davis, Diane Durgin, Luther Durgin, Margie Galabrun, Doug Hatfield, Bill Hoysradt, Andy Jepson, Carolyn Keilig, Joyce Lovejoy, Pete Lovejoy, Karen Maleri, Wayne Martin, Deb Moore, Cindy Naiditch, Les Norman, John Tostenson, Art Urie

Les Norman called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and offered the opening devotions.

Minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Faith Formation – Les Norman presented a power point proposal for faith formation as primary focus for the New Hampshire Conference to be developed and implemented over several years. The proposal formulated by Gary, Andy, Beth and Les was based on input gathered at the October council retreat. A lengthy discussion pertaining to the need to define 'faith formation;' the settings in which that happened; what across the lifespan meant; what the next steps would be; final expectation and criteria for evaluation followed. Next step for the present: convening a working group to begin the process of developing a program that would 'do a more effective job of creating disciples in the conference.'

Report from Annual Planning Committee – Karen Maleri provided an update on the planning committee's work thus far. Two meetings have been held; 3 commissions/boards within the conference have approached the committee regarding the theme for the 2008 meeting. The committee is pursuing other options for a site location for the annual meeting based on feedback received via evaluation sheets for the 2007 meeting. Also discussing different options for the overall format of the meeting, dates and time of the meeting, how to include youth, and how to reach beyond the delegates.

Guest – John Gregory-Davis introduced a representative of the Granite State Fair Tax Coalition who provided material from the coalition. Mr. Henle is available to make presentations in local churches.

Report for Witness and Action – Don Clarke provided the council with an overview of what this commission does and the many working groups it is involved with. That the commission has been working with only half of the 12 members needed has been a major struggle. Don encouraged council members to get the word out about the many working groups and programs

the commission is affiliated with: economic justice task force, congregational health ministries, ONA task force, earth stewardship, peace and justice, Zimbabwe, service trip programs, global travel grants, United Valley to Faith Project, the chaplaincy program at Goffstown Women's Prison.

Report from the Nominating Committee – Art Urie

Art presented a letter for Commissions, Committees, Boards and Groups regarding meeting times.

The following nominations were approved by council:

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| Witness and Action | Rev. Susan Lamport, Frankestown (Hillsboro) |
| | Rev. Charles Kennedy, Newport (Sullivan) |
| Budget and Finance | David Chin, Hampstead (Rockingham) |

Report from the Transitional Associate Conference Minister – Andy Jepson

See attached.

See also: attached request from Kimberly McKerley for a special hunger appeal not covered through OCMW. MOTION to grant request made by Jim Christensen, SECONDED by Winn Alley. MOTION APPROVED.

Written Report from the Conference Minister – Gary Schulte

See attached report offered by Andy

Written Report from the Director of Outdoor Ministries – Beth Martindale

See attached report offered by Andy

Budget and Finance – Carolyn Keilig

Budget and Finance had not met

Loan Payoff process and progress – Bill Hoystadt

Bill distributed copies of the monthly financial statements and OCWM contributions. The conference is debt free at the present. \$100m to stay in Citizens Short term pending an amendment to the loan and will then be transferred to CIF. Don Hart will meet with the investment committee to discuss new investment options. Bill introduced a formal resolution to all conference employees to utilize the UCC Flexible Spending Account Plan was presented:

Adopting Resolution for the UCC Flexible Spending Account Plan

Resolved that, the UCC Flexible Spending Account Plan for UCC Ministries that operates in and is administered through the Pension Boards – UCC be, and the same hereby is adopted for the employees of the New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ; and

Resolved further, that such Plan shall include provision for participating clergy and lay employees to elect a health care reimbursement account, a dependent care account or both according to plan provisions that are substantially of the manner described in the attached materials; and

Resolved further, that this Plan shall be made available to our clergy and lay employees as soon as administratively feasible.

MOTION to approve the Resolution made by Doug Hatfield, SECONDED by Carolyn Keilig. MOTION APPROVED.

Covenant of Leadership – Les Norman

In terms of denominational identity, Les affirmed that we aren't always able to say who we are. The conversation is on-going.

Fred Atwood-Lyon offered the closing prayer; the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Faithfully,

Deb Moore

Conference Minister's Report

November 15, 2007

I am attending the Orientation for new Conference Ministers, November 15-17 at the Church House in Cleveland. You might be interested to know that there are eight (8) new Conference Ministers at this training.

Lawsuit Update: I attended the November 1st mediation in Portsmouth. Unfortunately, that session did not yield a settlement in the case. Thus, we have moved into the oral discovery (deposition) phase. My hope is that this matter will be resolved prior to the trial date, which is currently set for the week of June 16, 2008 at the Hillsborough County Superior Court in Nashua.

Since the October Council Meeting, I have been to the following churches on behalf of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ:

Congregational Church – Amherst – October 21
Sanbornton Congregational UCC – Celebration for Dennis Akerman – October 21
South Congregational Church – Concord – October 28
Merrimack Association Fall Meeting – Congregational Church – Center Harbor –
October 28
Union Congregational Church, UCC – Bartlett – November 11
North Country Assn. Semi-Annual Meeting – Lancaster Congregational UCC –
November 11

The annual Clergy Convocation at Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford Pool, Maine was an important time for building and renewing relationships among our clergy. The facilitator, Rev. Burns Stanfield, provided excellent leadership for the group of thirty-seven folks who gathered for the event.

Last week, I attended the Council for Theological Education in New England (CTENE) Meeting in Vermont. One key topic before us is how to fund theological education at our UCC-related seminaries (Andover Newton & Bangor) in this region. I suspect some concrete proposal will be formulated within the next six months.

The Conference needs of a person with ecumenical vision and passion to represent us on the New Hampshire Council of Churches Board of Directors. The commitment involves six (6) meetings per year. Our previous representative, Rev. Mary Westfall, recently resigned after several years of stellar service on the Council. Each of the ten judicatories represented on the NHCC Board has two directors—the executive (or her/his designee) and one additional person. Rev. Jean O'Bresky has already expressed some interest in serving on our behalf. Should I work to fill the vacancy or would others take responsibility for that?

Next Steps in the National UCC Peace Effort: The Collegium is making plans for a continuation of the 100,000-theme as a “*Season of Peacemaking*” for the Advent/Christmas seasons. Three components are being considered:

1. Raising \$100,000 to provide aid to Iraqi refugees through the Middle East Council of Churches.
2. Soliciting 100,000 prayers and letters for U.S. service personnel.
3. 100,000 emails, letters, visits to congressional offices to advocate on issues of refugees, veterans’ needs, and alternatives to the direction of the current war strategy.

Conference Ministers are being asked to organize visits to congressional offices while Senators and Representatives are home during November/December recess. I anticipate that more details will soon be available from the national UCC.

In this season of Thanksgiving, I continue to be exceedingly grateful for your service as leaders of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Gary M. Schulte,
Conference Minister

New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ
Outdoor Ministries
DOM Report for NHCUCC Council
November 2007
Prepared by: Beth Martindale

Since post camp season the DOM has facilitated and/or attended many meetings, trainings, three retreats, workshops, a youth ministry symposium, etc. The work has also consisted of completing post season submissions: fiscal and/or program accountability reporting. The camp is now closed for the winter. Verizon will continue to construct the site pad, weather permitting.

The OMB attended a retreat facilitated by Mike Silver CEO of The Deering Center. The purpose was to self reflect as a body on the current board culture and begin intentional direction to “run like a business and act like a ministry”. The OMB is currently researching and evaluating the insurance and liability coverage and beginning discussions regarding the co-ed and unit camping model that has been in place at Horton Center for the last 32 years. The work ahead of us is significant, exciting and meaningful. We have the opportunity to design and provide what Christian camping in the NH Conference and New England region will become!!!! The opportunity to bring Christ to “all who will listen” in an outdoor ministry setting is His true gift for which I am thankful. Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

Blessings,

Beth Martindale

Subject: Hunger Appeal for Zimbabwe

Dear Les,

I had a conversation this morning with Gary Schulte and he asked that I share it with you, and ask that you share it with Council at your meeting tomorrow.

As you may know, life in Zimbabwe is pretty desperate these days. Banks are failing. Inflation is the highest in the world at 8000%. Supermarket shelves are virtually empty and people are hungry. Jobs are scarce -unemployment now stands at more than 80%. Businesses, schools and homes are without electricity for days on end, because Zimbabwe does not pay its bills, and because the demand is higher than the little they can pay. Water is increasingly unavailable. it has been rationed for quite some time now, but some places are without city services at all. HIV/AIDS continues to rob futures from so many. as do malaria and tuberculosis. Life expectancy has shrunk from 67 years to 37 years in less than a decade.

The list goes on..

As partners with the UCC in Zimbabwe, we are pained by their suffering, and are always looking for ways to respond. Our Ukama covenant reminds us that our relationship is primarily one of friend-to-friend in a spiritual relationship, not benefactor to recipient; it is a "partnership" not a "project". But it also names clearly the need and desire to respond when friends are suffering. To this end, in 2000, the NH Conference responded with an offering from churches and individuals after a devastating Cyclone Eline. which covered whole communities under feet of water. That effort sent some \$20,000 to Zimbabwe for rebuilding efforts. In 2005, a hurricane struck, destroying the water system at Chikore Mission Station. a UCCZ ministry. The Zimbabwe government threatened to close Chikore Hospital, as it had no water. A number of churches in NH again responded, and sent almost \$9000 to rebuild the system. Water is now flowing. and there are patients again at the hospital.

Now a number of churches have asked how they might respond to the hunger crisis in Zimbabwe, and our Ukama Advisory Board has been asking the same question. We would like to explore the idea of a Hunger Appeal for Zimbabwe. Gary gave the idea his blessing after our chat this morning. If Council agrees that this is a worthy undertaking, the Ukama Board will begin to put a plan in place. I envision a pastoral letter going to all the churches in the Conference. inviting their response to the initiative in a free-will offering that will be received through the month of December. I will speak with Rev. Sandra Gourdet, Africa Executive at Global Ministries to discuss the best way to get the money to Zimbabwe. My guess is that we will channel it through Christian Care, an ecumenical relief agency in Zimbabwe with whom Global Ministries and our Ukama/Partnership have a long relationship. Christian Care works with a number of international food relief agencies, including World Food Programme. I will also be in conversation with Christian Care myself, as we have two members of the UCCZ who serve on that Board. We will make sure that there is a clear plan for getting the money to Zimbabwe, and for purchasing and transporting the food. We will also need to determine if monies will come through the Conference to Global Ministries, or go directly to Global Ministries -that is something else to discuss with Sandra and with Bill Hoysradt. All this after we receive the affirmation of Council!

I want you to know that we understand the responsibility of churches to support our own Conference needs: whenever the subject of money comes up in relation to our Ukama/Partnership, we sing the OCWM song! But this feels like an important additional way to reach out to our loved ones in a time of deep need.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Kimberly S. McKerley
Local Church Coordinator
Ukama/Partnership
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

APPROVED