

**216th ANNUAL MEETING
NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Saturday, October 21, 2017

Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH

Theme: In Search of Sanctuary: Won't You Be My Neighbor?

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Conference President Neal Cass called the 2017 Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ to order at 9:00 am and welcomed all those in attendance.

Although no report was available yet from the Registrar, the Conference President declared by observation that a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

The President called the meeting's attention to the projection screens where the names of Conference Officers, Board of Directors, Conference Staff, Consultants for Special Services, Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Worship Committee, Special Appreciation, and Clergy Accepting a New Call in the NHCUC were presented. From this point, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee served as the Business Committee. The President also introduced those sitting on the stage with him: Augie Stratoti as Parliamentarian; Marcie Miller, Conference President-Elect; and Laura Sevigny, Chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

GRANTING VOICE WITHOUT VOTE

Laura Sevigny moved on behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee *that clergy who are serving in a local church in the New Hampshire Conference but do not have ministerial standing in an Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ and our special guests be granted voice without vote for this meeting.* Since this motion came from a committee, it did not need a second. The motion passed.

MINUTES OF THE 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

The Minutes of last year's meeting, as approved by the Board of Directors, acting on behalf of the Gathered Conference on November 12, 2016, have been posted on the Conference website and are printed in delegates' packets. No action was required.

STANDING RULES AND PROGRAM FOR ANNUAL MEETING

On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Laura Sevigny moved *the adoption of the Proposed Standing Rules as printed.* A 2/3 vote is required to adopt. The vote was in the affirmative, and the Standing Rules were adopted.

On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Laura Sevigny moved *the adoption of the Proposed Program as printed.* The ayes had it and the motion was agreed to adopt the Program.

MORNING WORSHIP

The Rev. Dwayne Royster was the Keynote Speaker and preaching from Luke 10:25-37 challenged us with the question, "Where is the Samaritan Church? Who is willing to be the Outcast Church so God's Will will be done?" Lively and engaging music was offered by The Prodigals. The Rev. Richard Slater offered the pastoral prayer including those clergy who have entered the Church Triumphant. An offering was received for the mission of the New Hampshire Conference and the Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated. Transitional Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Charles Buck, offered the closing prayer.

REPORT FROM THE REGISTRAR

Following worship and a break, the President-Elect Marcie Miller presided as Moderator and reported from the Registrar:

- 311 in attendance, representing 86 churches
- 81 Clergy Delegates
- 162 Lay Delegates
- 10 Youth Delegates
- 13 Conference Board of Directors
- 34 Visitors, and 11 Exhibitors

A quorum was officially declared.

INTRODUCTION OF AND GREETINGS FROM THE TRANSITIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTER -The Rev. Dr. Charles Buck

Dr. Buck expressed his gratitude to the Rev. Gary Schulte as a colleague and that the New Hampshire Conference is one of the stronger Conferences in the United Church of Christ. He noted his commitment to walk with us on this journey together in search of a Conference Minister. He also encouraged our conviction to do something to witness to the Good News and share it in such a time as this.

STATE OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES – The Rev. Leslie Chatfield

The Rev. Leslie Chatfield, Acting Director of Outdoor Ministries, presented her report on the Outdoor Ministries highlighting aspects of her written report included in the Annual Meeting packet. The 2017 Horton Center curriculum theme was *Branching Out: Connecting through Christ*. She noted that the task of Horton Center is to make better people and reflected that many Junior High and Senior High campers remark that camp is the only church they have. She thanked the NH Conference and OMG members for their welcome and support. She noted that Horton Center achieved American Association Accreditation again. She highlighted the gifts brought to camp from the International Staff and noted that campers came from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. The challenge continues to be building a stronger and solvent camp.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION “*Creation Care for Our Conference Churches Partnering with Our National Leadership*”

Marcie Miller noted that this resolution was approved by the Board of Directors at the September 16, 2017 meeting. The Rev. Robert Grabill, Associate Pastor at the Church

of Christ at Dartmouth in Hanover, and Sue Moore, member of South Congregational Church, UCC in Concord, were invited to present the resolution. Both spoke highlighting how the Resolution came to be following the Emergency Resolution brought to the 2017 Synod and the actions that are called for in the Resolution. As an action in accord with the resolution, a Youth Environmental Justice Summit, sponsored by the NH Conference UCC is scheduled for April 7, 2018 from 9 am – 4 pm, at Brookside Congregational Church, UCC in Manchester.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION ON IMMIGRATION TO BE VOTED ON BY THE GATHERED CONFERENCE

The Rev. Sandra Pontoh, Pastor of the Maranatha Indonesian United Church of Christ in Madbury; Gail Kinney, Meriden Congregational Church, United Church of Christ; the Rev. John Gregory-Davis, Co-Pastor of the Meriden Congregational Church, United Church of Christ; Eva Castillo, Advocate for the NH Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees; Mamadou, a teenage refugee seeking asylum in the USA, and three members of the Maranatha Indonesian United Church of Christ presented the Resolution of Christian Witness: “The New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ Stands in Solidarity with the Maranatha Indonesian UCC in Madbury and with its Members (and Other NH Immigrants Similarly Situated) Who Face the Threat of Deportation – and Calls Upon All Settings of the NHCUCC to Provide Welcome, Support and/or Sanctuary for the New and Long-Term Immigrants and Asylum Seekers in Our Communities.” The resolution was voted on in the afternoon session.

LUNCH AND FOCUS GROUPS

Dr. Buck offered a prayer of thanks for the meal about to be received.

The Focus Group Sessions are as follows:

- ✓ Sessions 1A & 2A “Conversation with the Transitional Conference Minister”
- ✓ Sessions 1B & 2B “Back Bay Mission”
- ✓ Sessions 1C “Capital Campaign Feasibility Study”
- ✓ Session 2E “Conversation with Bishop Royster”
- ✓ Session 1D “Resolution Discussion”
- ✓ Session 2D “The River Cried: “Mni W Coni”

SPEAK OUTS – Dr. Kit DeVries

Dr. DeVries explained the purpose of Speak Outs and the 1 minute time limit. John Herbert served as the timekeeper. The Speak Outs are as follows:

- Rev. John Buttrick – Peace with Justice Advocates
- Mark Koyama – Opioid Crisis
- Kathy Blair -Ukama Mission Group
- Rev. Eleanor Kimball -Christmas Fund/Pension Boards
- Rev. John Gregory-Davis – Racial Justice Mission Group
- Gail Kinney – Immigration Resolution
- Claudia Istel - Medicaid Expansion, Economic Mission Group
- Rev. Jan Howe – Disaster Ministry Mission
- Rev. Ruth Gallot – Prepared to Serve
- John Tostenson – Friends of Horton Center

- Rev. Dr. Jim Howard – A New Thing Task Force
- Joyce Ray – Wider Church Ministries
- Diane Wells – Celebration 2018, Women’s Fellowship
- Gerri Cannon – Speakers Bureau, ONA Concerns
- Cheryl Stromski – Campus Ministries
- Rev. Bob Marrone – Horton Center
- Milli Knudson – Immigration, Congregational Church of Henniker
- Norma Brettell – NH School of Ministry
- Sue Moore – Environmental Justice

TREASURER’S REPORT – John Herbert

John Herbert reminded the meeting that last year he reported that he was concerned how 2016 would end financially with such a deficit, and it turned out that we ended the year with a \$21,000 budget surplus. Several factors contributed to the 2016 surplus, but this year 2017, he expects no such positive ending.

By the end of September, 2017, the budget was overspent by about \$76,000. Several factors contribute to this deficit:

- OCWM contributions continue to decrease across the UCC and in New Hampshire.
- Although the budget had predicted less in OCWM, contributions this year are at 65% of the anticipated budget.
- Horton Center will end the year with an operating loss of \$35,000, \$10,000 more than last year.
- The transition from a settled Conference Minister to a Transitional Conference Minister was not anticipated.
- The Feasibility Study for a Capital Campaign at \$10,000 was not budgeted.
- Contracting Search and Call Consultants was also not in the budget.

The budget will not balance at the end of the year, but our Conference is financially sound, thanks to your generosity, and we continue the work of the United Church of Christ in New Hampshire.

PROPOSED MISSION INCOME & SPENDING PLAN (MISP) – Matt Van Wagner

Matt Van Wagner, member of the First Congregational Church, UCC in Nashua, a member of the Conference Budget Committee, and Chair of the Finance Ministry, presented the 2018 MISP (in the packet) with humor and an emphasis on words beginning with RE: Re-formation of churches seeking pastors, Re-membering membership, Re-view of budget development process, Re-cognition of a Re-venue problem, and Re-cent translated “give ev-re-cent you can.”

He noted that there will be an increase in Fellowship Dues by \$1.00 for 2018. The total anticipated revenue is \$1,021,110. The National Setting will receive 40% of the NH Conference OCWM income. Expenses are anticipated to be \$1,061,458, leaving a \$40,348 deficit.

Matt Van Wagner, on behalf of the Finance Ministry, moved *to adopt the Mission Income and Spending Plan as printed*. The motion passed.

Following the break, Neal Cass moderated.

GENERAL SYNOD – Rev. Richard Slater

Rev. Slater reported that 13 delegates, including 3 youth delegates; 2 associate delegates; and 20 plus visitors from New Hampshire Conference attended the General Synod Meeting held in Baltimore this summer. A video of Synod highlights was then shown.

ELECTION OF THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE – The Rev. Nancy Talbott

Rev. Talbott presented the Nominating Committee Report which was included in the packet. The Rev. Amy Hayden, Lyme Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, was added to the members of the Nominating Committee. Because only one person is nominated for each position and our bylaws do not require that a ballot vote be taken, the Moderator declared those individuals nominated to be elected.

LITURGY OF COMMISSIONING – The Rev. Dr. Charles Buck

The newly elected individuals were commissioned.

VOTE ON THE IMMIGRATION RESOLUTION

The Rev. Sandra Pontoh presented the Resolution on Immigration: *On behalf of the Immigration Working Group of the New Hampshire Conference, I move the adoption of the Immigration Resolution as presented in your packet.* Since this resolution was referred to the Annual Meeting by the Board of Directors, it does not require a second. The motion passed.

CELEBRATIONS AND SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATION

The Rev. Richard Slater recognized with gratitude the work of Neal Cass as President of the Conference and presented him with a plaque. Neal received a standing ovation. Rev. Slater then recognized by name clergy who had anniversaries of ordination. Their names were included in the packet.

REPORT ON THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FEASIBILITY STUDY – Marcie Miller

Marcie reviewed the Report on the Capital Campaign Feasibility Study which was included in the delegate packets. The Capital Campaign would have had 6 foci:

- ✓ Horton Center
- ✓ Technology Upgrades
- ✓ Grants for Children and Youth Ministries
- ✓ Ministerial Compensation in Small Churches
- ✓ Solar Panels for Conference Center
- ✓ Grants for Justice and Witness Ministries

As a result of the Feasibility Study, it was decided that the Conference was not ready to move forward, but the report identified questions of purpose and sustainability of

Conference that will provide guidance during this time of transition. Concerns were expressed about Horton Center, undergoing the campaign during a major transition, and developing our vision. Other concerns included setting up endowment funds for future projects, the use of the Conference Center, and the lack of awareness at local church and individual levels as to what the Conference is about. Responses were uniformly positive in rating the effectiveness of the New Hampshire Conference and for the staff.

Annual Meeting adjourned with a closing prayer offered by the Rev. Dr. Charles Buck at 3:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dawn C. Berry, Secretary