

215TH ANNUAL MEETING
NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Saturday, October 22, 2016
Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH
Theme: Music in the Air
MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Conference President Neal Cass called the 2016 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, he declared by observation that a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

Information regarding the exhibits, evaluation form, Nominating Committee Report, Speakouts, and voting cards was given.

The President read the names of those who served the Conference since last Annual Meeting and expressed his gratitude for their service: Conference Officers, Board of Directors, Conference Staff, Contractors for Special Services, Volunteer Consultants, Annual Meeting Assistants, Annual Meeting Planning Committee, who serve as the Business Committee for Annual Meeting, and the Worship Committee. He also recognized honored guests and clergy new to the Conference. All their names were projected on screens and listed in the Annual Meeting packets distributed at registration.

GRANTING VOICE WITHOUT VOTE

Laura Sevigny, chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, moved 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 ANNUAL MEETING – 2015

The minutes of last year's meeting as approved by the Board of Directors, acting on behalf of the Gathered Conference on November 14, 2015, have been posted on the Conference website and were printed in the Annual Meeting 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. The President declared that two thirds of those voting were in the affirmative, and the Standing Rules were adopted.

Laura Sevigny then moved, on behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, the adoption of the Proposed Program as printed. The motion passed.

MORNING WORSHIP

An inspiring service of worship followed with music accompaniment by Adam Peithmann and the Rev. Bryan Sirchio. Rev. Sirchio offered a moving keynote address encouraging congregations to find their “song,” which motivates them in their ministry and mission. Conference Minister, the Rev. Gary Schulte, offered the pastoral prayer which included those clergy who have now entered the Church Triumphant. As their names were read, Associate Conference Minister, the Rev. Richard Slater, lit candles of remembrance. An offering was received and the Sacrament of Communion was celebrated. The musical theme and message were carried throughout worship by the African- American spiritual “Over My Head: *Over my head, I hear music in the air.*”

REPORT FROM THE REGISTRAR

Following worship and a break, the Conference President reported from the Registrar:

- 326 in attendance, representing 95 churches
- 103 Clergy Delegates
- 161 Lay Delegates
- 5 Youth Delegates
- 6 Conference Board of Directors
- 51 Visitors, special guests and exhibitors

STATE OF THE CONFERENCE – The Rev. Gary Schulte

The Rev, Gary Schulte first recognized the youth delegates present, 25 years of age and under, and encouraged more representation from that age group. He then delivered his State of the Conference based on the Easter Gospel: *Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.* Summary: NH Conference is 215 years old, sometimes set in our ways and worried about our survival. It is easier to look back than toward the future which is unclear; yet we must look forward seeking the Risen Christ and signs of hope. There are signs of the Risen Christ among us in our congregations, in the mission of Horton Center, on the steps of the State House, in our UKAMA in Zimbabwe, and in the example of a retired clergy who continues to serve in the nursing home where he lives. Churches are continuing to make disciples, calling them to live together in covenant while facing societal changes.

He then outlined challenges to the Conference. The staff is diminished because of transitions. Instead of the old stories of scarcity, it is time for a new generosity of spirit and to financially support the Church we love. The message to carry home:

“God is at work in the Conference and its churches. Tell them that there is hope...and ask, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” And proclaim the truth to them: “He is not here, he has risen! Let us seek the Risen One where he goes. Let us follow wherever he leads us now...always!”

STATE OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES – The Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt

Emelia Attridge and the Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt reported a 20% growth rate for Horton Center. The focus is what it means to be church and community as followers of Christ through Biblical stories. Outdoor ministry offerings include: Arts on the Mountain program, a growth in leadership participation, a new adventure camp, a Fourth of July family camp, and the clergy Sabbath in June. Eleven church and non-profit groups rented the site in the spring and fall. Collaborating with the Maine and Vermont Conference, campers from New England enjoyed Pilgrim Lodge in Maine, and two VT-NH camps were offered: Green and White Unite joint camping experience and Horton Center at the Rock.

The Rev. Holly Tomilson reported that over \$2000 was raised for the camp mission project *End 68 Hours of Hunger* as campers explored hunger in our communities and what to do about it.

Ways of supporting Horton Center were described and the 120 people attending the June Open House was celebrated. Mollie outlined the Capital needs of Horton Center. Mollie expressed her gratitude and what a gift it has been to serve as Director of Outdoor Ministries. Her farewell is November 13, 2016.

2016 NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT PRESENTATION – Ann Desrochers

The 2016 youth event was held at Disneyworld. The six New England Conferences worked together to organize and send youth. A slide projection was shown of the NH youth participants. Ann expressed thanks for all the ways chaperones, churches, the Conference, youth and families supported NH youth's attendance.

BOXED LUNCHES AND FOCUS GROUPS

Six Focus Groups were held:

- Conversation with Bryan Sirchio
- Conversation with the Conference Minister – Rev. Gary Schulte
- Outdoor Ministries – Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt and Outdoor Mission Group
- Staying Awake to White Privilege – the Racial Justice Mission Group
- Stewardship – “From Tippers to Tithers” – Rev. Paul Nickerson
- Syrian Refugee Mission Group – Joyce Ray

SPEAK OUTS – Dr. Kit DeVries

Dr. DeVries explained the one minute rule for speaking and John Herbert was the timekeeper.

Rev. Michele Bagby Allan - Thank you from the UKAMA Partnership

Rev. Jed Rardin - The Rev. Dr. Frank L. Memorial Fund

Rev. John Buttrick – Peace with Justice Advocates

Rev. Jan Howe – Disaster Response Mission

Kathy Blair – Godspell at UCC in Keene

Rev. Rebecca Maccini – NH School of Ministry

Rev. John Gregory-Davis – Racial Justice Mission Group

Rev. Maren Tirabassi – New music in the Annual Meeting packet

Rev. Larry Brickner-Wood – UNH Campus Ministry

John Tostenson – Friends of Horton Center

Rev. Gina Finocchiaro – Finance Committee

Rev. Mary Westfall – Spirituality and Earth Stewardship Mission Group

Eleanor Kimball – Christmas Fund

Rev. David Keller – Encouraging churches to have a partner church in Zimbabwe, 20 years

Wayne Martin – 25th Anniversary of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ vote to become the first ONA church in NH

Gerri Canon – November 5 “The Gathering at South Congregational Church, UCC”

Rev. Gray Fitzgerald – Justice Witness Ministry Speaker’s Bureau

Diane Wells - Women’s Fellowship

Gail Kinney - Economic Justice Group

TREASURER’S REPORT – John Herbert

The Moderator called upon John Herbert to present the Treasurer’s Report. This year is a better financial story because we ended 2015 with a smaller deficit than anticipated, but it was still difficult to carry \$58,000 into a new year’s checkbook. The 2016 budget included a planned \$29,939 deficit, and it is expected that we will end the year with a smaller deficit than planned. Contributing to the 2016 better news includes: the generosity of churches, frugal spending by Conference ministries, and significant reductions in Conference staff hours made in 2014 and 2015. One significant contributing factor in our budget shortfall is year by year reduction in OCWM receipts which is the case throughout the UCC. 45% of OCWM received is forwarded to the National Office. We have sent \$181,640 and by year’s end will send the full \$281,250 budgeted. Cash flow has gone well this year with member contributions and the new schedule of monthly receipts from our investments now managed through the

Connecticut Conference, rather than the former quarterly distribution of our investment funds. John also shared words of commendation for the ministry of our Conference and Associate Conference Ministers.

PROPOSED MISSION INCOME & SPENDING PLAN FOR 2017 – Marcie Miller

Marcie Miller presented the Proposed Mission Income and Spending Plan for 2017. A copy of the plan was in the Annual Meeting packets. To make this a transparent process, Ministries were invited to submit budget requests and a Webinar was held to explain the plan before Annual Meeting. The committee believes that it is important to have a balanced budget and summed up the plan in this way:

- ❖ Fiscally responsible to balance NHCUCC MISP
- ❖ Three Proposed Differences from Past
 - Reduce share of OCWM to National Setting from 45% to 40%
 - Eliminate sharing of event collections (Prepared To Serve and Annual Meeting) was 45%
 - Eliminate sharing of investment income (was 15%)
- ❖ Expenses managed very tightly
- ❖ New Hampshire gives generously to the National Setting
- ❖ Surplus → more to share with National @ 50%
- ❖ Raise awareness at our local churches
- ❖ New Hampshire Conference has much to celebrate

The proposed 2017 MISP carefully weighs both the NH Conference needs and supports the needs of our local churches while honoring our covenant to the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

Marcie Miller moved, on behalf of the Board Directors, to adopt the Proposed Mission & Spending Plan for 2017, as printed. Since this came from the Board of Directors, it did not need a second. There was no discussion and the vote to adopt the plan passed. Neal thanked Marcie Miller for her work.

REPORT ON THE CAPITAL FUND CAMPAIGN EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

President Elect Marcie Miller called upon the Rev. Deborah Knowlton and Douglas Hatfield to give a report on the work being done by the Capital Campaign Committee. Doug Hatfield urged the Annual Meeting to consider continuing exploratory work for a Capital Campaign. Deborah Knowlton described her experience as a child growing up

and, now, as a pastor in the Conference and the generosity she experienced by congregations of the Conference.

Questions were asked and answered: "Where is the money for consultant in the 2017 budget?" The consultant will be paid from the money raised in the campaign. "What is the target goal?" 1.5 million dollars, but we really need the consultant to help assess the capacity within the Conference. "Will the consultant be used in a feasibility study?" A consultant will be needed to contact local churches in the feasibility study.

The Rev. Deborah Knowlton moved that the Board of Directors of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ proceed with the planning of a capital campaign on behalf of the churches which shall include establishing a Capital Campaign Committee, retaining a Capital Campaign Consultant, and seeking final authorization to initiate the campaign from the Gathered Conference at a regular of duly called special meeting. Doug Hatfield seconded the motion. The motion passed..

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – The Rev. Nancy Talbot

The Rev. Nancy Talbot presented the Nominating Committee Report which was included in the packet. Since no other nominations were brought to the Business Committee and each position had only one name, nominations were closed and Marcie Miller declared the individuals nominated to be elected.

LITURGY OF COMMISSIONING – The Rev. Gary Schulte

The Rev. Gary Schulte led us in the Liturgy of Commissioning for the newly elected officers.

CELEBRATIONS: SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES – The Rev. Richard Slater

The Rev. Richard Slater recognized those clergy with ordination anniversaries. The Rev. Henry Beairsto was called forward and presented a plaque in recognition of his 50th Ordination Anniversary.

Marcie Miller then adjourned the meeting at 3:10 pm and asked the Rev. Richard Slater to offer the benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn C. Berry, Secretary