

**217<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Saturday, October 20, 2018  
Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH  
*Theme: This is the day of poured out spirit. Dreamers and Visionaries arise.*  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Call to Order and Welcome**

Conference President Marcie Miller called the 217th Annual Meeting of the Gathered New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ to order at 9 A.M. and welcomed everyone.

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 NHCUCC were presented. From this point, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee served as the Business Committee.

Special guests were introduced and welcomed:

- The Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr., our keynote speaker
- The Rev. Dr. Menson Mpofu, Senior Ecumenical Chaplain at Midlands State University, and pastor of the Ivene congregation in Gweru, Zimbabwe was welcomed. Dr. Mpofu brought greetings from our partner churches with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. He then introduced the delegation from Zimbabwe.
- The Rev. Marco Cable, Executive for Africa with the Common Global Ministries of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ, brought greetings
- Mr. Neal Cass, chair of the Conference Minister Search Committee and a member of First Congregational Church, Hancock, welcomed and introduced our newly-called Conference Minister, the Rev. Gordon Rankin. Rev. Rankin offered words of greeting and remarked on where he had seen the poured spirit in his ten days with NH Conference.

**Celebrations: Significant Anniversaries, Etc.**

The Rev. Richard Slater, Associate Conference Minister, recognized significant anniversaries of Authorized Ministers with standing in an Association of our Conference. The Rev. Jared Rardin, pastor of South Congregational Church, UCC in Concord, received a certificate in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination.

**Grant Clergy Without Standing and Guests Voice Without Vote**

*On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Laura Sevigny moved that our newly-called Conference Minister, the Rev. Gordon Rankin, whose standing has not yet been transferred to an Association of the New Hampshire Conference, that clergy serving in a local church of the New Hampshire Conference who do not have ministerial standing in an Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, and that special guests be granted voice without vote for this meeting. Since the motion came from a committee, it did not require a second. The*

motion passed without objection.

### **Minutes of the 2017 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 11, 2017, have been posted on the Conference website and are printed in your packet.

### **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.* Since this motion came from a committee, it did not require a second. The affirmative has it, and the Standing Rules are adopted.

*On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Laura Sevigny moved the adoption of the Proposed Program as printed.* Since this motion came from a committee, it did not need a second. The ayes have it and the motion was agreed to, and the Program was adopted.

### **Morning Worship**

The theme of the 217<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: *This is the day of the poured out spirit. Dreamers and Visionaries arise*, was carried through the service of worship. The scriptural text for the keynote address was Jeremiah:4-6, and the title was "...For our Children," offered by the Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, Jr. Dr. Ray invited us to imagine the future to be received by our children and grandchildren and how our witness of faith in the public square would help form that future. The Rev. Gordon Rankin offered the pastoral prayer. Candles were lit by the Rev. Richard Slater to remember ordained ministers with standing in the New Hampshire Conference who have entered the Church Triumphant. The Sacrament of Holy Communion was co-celebrated by the Rev. Gordon Rankin and our UKAMA partner the Rev. Dr. Menson Mpofo. The music and liturgy were inspiring as our voices joined together in praise of and supplication to God.

### **Report from the Registrar**

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

323 In attendance, representing 89 churches.  
82 Clergy Delegates  
159 Lay Delegates  
6 Youth Delegates  
10 Conference Board of Directors  
54 Visitors, and 12 Exhibitors

### **2018 Outdoor Ministries Report – Tim Hughes, Acting Director of Horton Center**

Tim Hughes reported that this summer there was a dedicated staff and 52 volunteers served as Deans or Counselors. He shared campers' favorite things that they had written in prayers and conversation. Registration was down by 9% and revenue down 14%, leaving a deficit of \$24,000. So, the challenge remains how to pay for this ministry without additional deficit. Tim Hughes showed an engaging video of Horton Center this summer that highlighted the value of this ministry.

The Rev. Gordon Rankin then presented a recap of the Horton Center Consultant Reports, and its future as presented in a letter of July 16 mailed to the Conference. In his ten days as the Conference Minister, most of his time has been spent on Horton Center. He does not see challenges, but

resurrection opportunities. Every aspect of the church's ministry is changing, and we are looking for opportunities for new life with Horton Center. The focus of conversation is how we help Horton Center thrive! Conversations have been going on with Maine and Vermont Conferences regarding ways of collaborating for outdoor ministries in staffing and locations. Also, the tri-Conferences are exploring year-round outdoor ministries programs.

The short term goals in 2019 include: a common curriculum for the Confirmation retreat, building relationships among the Conferences, and a summer program. There will be a summer program at Horton Center in 2019 with multiple camps in the same week. The Rev. Gordon Rankin will be on site at Horton Center often.

Long term dreaming: these dreams are still a work in progress. These conversations are not a prelude to a tri-conference merger. There are simply some things that we can do better together, than we can do alone. Three to four Horton Center sessions will be held in various locations around the Conference.

He then reported that a Horton Center Fundraising Committee has been established by the Board of Directors. The Rev. Rob Grabill will chair the committee and was introduced. Rob Grabill spoke about the results of the exploration of a Conference Capital Campaign. What became clear was that there was unanimous enthusiasm for financial support for Horton Center. An Annual Fund will be established for Horton Center, and the committee will explore all sources of income.

#### **Presentation of the Resolution adopted by the BOD in February 2018**

Gail Kinney presented the resolution affirming support for the continuation of *NH Health Protection Program (Medicaid Expansion in New Hampshire)*. Each state needs to approve its own program for Medicaid expansion. The State of NH approved the expansion of Medicaid for two years, but it needed to be voted again in 2018. The State Legislature approved Medicaid Expansion that included a work requirement to begin in 2019. UCC members were strong witnesses for the expansion approval. More than 180,000 people are being insured under this program. It is important that when we vote people to represent us, they will continue to support Medicaid expansion.

#### **Presentation of the Resolution to be approved by the gathered Conference**

The Rev. Renee Rouse and the Rev. John Gregory-Davis presented the *Resolution of Christian Witness in Support of New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ Congregations Awakening to Racial Justice*. This resolution will be voted on during the afternoon session. Renee Rouse offered NH history: 700 Africans in Portsmouth during the Revolution were bought as slaves by Congregational ministers. During that time, pastors were paid with land and bought slaves to work the land for them. We have believed in the lie that NH was and is a white state. This state has benefitted economically from slavery and then didn't recognize the existence of the enslaved. This resolution calls us to recognize the twin evils of our history: genocide and white supremacy.

John Gregory-Davis emphasized that problem of racism lies with those of us who identify as white. Our own liberation depends on our being responsible for our present and future. There are no other Racial Justice Conferences in the United Church of Christ.

## **Presentation of the Amendments to the Constitution of the UCC**

Marcie Miller noted that on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, the 31<sup>st</sup> General Synod passed substantial and substantive amendments to the United Church of Christ Constitution and By-laws. The bylaws state that any amendments to the Constitution must be ratified by two-thirds of the thirty-eight Conferences of the United Church of Christ. Information about the amendments and the process were included in the Annual Meeting packets. The vote on this ratification will be during the afternoon session.

The Rev. Gordon Rankin presented the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ explaining that the Constitutional changes must be ratified, not the by-law changes. Changes to the structure and functioning of the United Church of Christ Board are by-law changes. The changes to the Constitution include editorial changes of updating in the forms of ministerial authorization, a new Article for the recognition and reconciliation of ministry with the United Church of Canada, and the new structure provides for new Associate General Ministers as determined by the General Minister and President and voted by the Synod, rather than a collegium.

This is a vote to ratify a Synod action. The 26<sup>th</sup> conference has ratified the changes to the Constitution, and therefore, the changes have already been made. The voice of NHCUCC matters and will be heard.

## **Presentation from the UCCZ Delegation leader, the Rev. Dr. Menson Mpofo**

The Rev. Dr. Menson Mpofo thanked the NHCUCC for bringing the delegation here. He also thanked the Conference for the Crosby Scholarships which supports those studying for ordained ministry with the Ukama partner churches of The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

As the UCCZ, they are active in mission and prayer despite the difficulties in the country. In the midst of a severe drought, Dr. Mpofo was struggling with what good news he could bring to the congregation. A layman said to Dr. Mpofo, "The ground is dry, but our hearts are warm and ready to go." Dr. Mpofo continued with the words from Philippians 1:6: *I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*

## **Lunch and Connecting Sessions**

The Rev. Gordon Rankin offered a prayer of thanks for the meal.

The Connecting Sessions were as follows:

- ✓ Session 1A Conversation with the Conference Minister
- ✓ Sessions 1B and 2B Conversation with the Zimbabwe Delegation
- ✓ Session 1C Discussion on the Resolution
- ✓ Session 1D Conversation with Global Ministries
- ✓ Session 2A Conversation with Dr. Ray
- ✓ Session 2C Discussion on Horton Center Reports
- ✓ Session 2D Discussion on Amendments to the UCC Constitution

## **Speak Outs**

Speak Out Coordinator, Dr. Kit DeVries explained that this time affords those who have voice at this meeting to share with the Gathered Conference. John Herbert served as the Time Keeper.

- Rev. Michael Denney – ONA Gathering
- Rev. Kevin Pleas – ONA Gathering invitation to First Church, Manchester
- Rev. Chris Owen – What in God's Name podcast
- Rev. Mark Koyama – Opioid Crisis Mission Group
- John Tostenson – Horton Center
- Ethel McConaghy – Racial Justice Mission Group
- Rev. Ruth Gallot – Prepared to Serve
- Rev. John Gregory-Davis – Raise Up NH

- Joyce LaPorte – Harriet Tubman/Black History Presenter
- Rev. David Keller – UKAMA greetings to churches in Zimbabwe
- Rev. Bob Marrone – Silent Auction to benefit Horton Center
- Tony Kacate – Kairos Prison Ministry
- Rev. Eleanor Kimball – Christmas Fund
- S. Straus – Immigrant Support – Post Detention
- Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver – Education Opportunities for Lay Leaders and MID's, Continuing Education for Clergy

### **Treasurer's Report, John Herbert**

John Herbert reported that the NHCUCC is alive, well, and financially sound. Unfortunately, for the 2017 budget the results were not good and 2018 looks worse. In 2017 we ended the budget year with an \$11,500 deficit. Since 2016 finished with a surplus of about \$21,000 which was applied to 2017, the deficit was actually worse, about \$32,000. He expressed concern for how 2018 would end.

Contributing to the poorer budget results in 2017:

- We did not receive the additional funds from our investments resulting from the 2016 change to investing with the Connecticut Conference.
- Horton Center had an operating loss of \$38,000 which was three times the year end deficit of the entire Conference.
- It was a year of change at the Conference, and change costs money.

For 2018:

- The generosity of churches to Our Churches Wider Mission certainly limited the deficit at year end in 2017, but OCWM contributions have decreased from previous years.
- No Conference Ministry overspent their budget.
- Reductions in staff hours at the Conference Center, made in previous years, kept the General Ministry expenses within budget.
- Renting some of the unused space at the Conference Center helped, but rental income is fluid with changes in tenants.
- Contributions to Friends of the Conference help.
- We cannot expect a positive ending for 2018 budget.

At the end of September, the budget was overspent by about \$61,000. This will improve by year's end, but there are continued concerns that contribute to a 2018 deficit. Horton Center registrations are not large enough to fill the camp resulting in an operating budget where expenses are \$30,000 more than revenue. This does not include the income from the cell tower or the expense of the salary of the Acting Director of Horton Center. Although we budgeted to receive less revenue from OCWM in 2018, we have received only 61% of the anticipated amount so far this year. Our continued period of change has resulted in several expenses not budgeted for 2018 which impact the deficit.

Although the budget will not look good at year end, the Conference is financially sound, thanks mostly to the generosity of churches and individual donors, and the Conference continues the work of the United Church of Christ in New Hampshire.

### **Proposed Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2019, Matt Van Wagner**

Ministries of the Conference are active, growing, and doing good work. We have a new Conference Minister. New pastors are called and pastoral searches are on-going. New collaborations are discovered with Maine and Vermont for Horton Center. There is much to be excited about!

The budget committee followed a similar process as last year. Ministries were asked to level fund. The Budget Committee has retired the loan on the Conference Center Roof to eliminate payments of principal and interest (\$14,000). The Horton Center van was sold. There is potential for significantly lowered costs for summer programming. The draw on investments was increased from 4.75% to 5.25%.

Matt Van Wagner encouraged the gathered to be advocates for Our Church's Wider Mission. The budget expenses are \$1,076,311 against revenue \$1,076,907 leaving a projected surplus of \$596! Half of the surplus will be shared with the national setting.

*On behalf of the Board of Directors, Matt Van Wagner moved the adoption of the Proposed Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2019, as printed. The motion passed and the 2019, Mission Income & Spending Plan was adopted.*

### **Vote on the Resolution**

*On behalf of the Racial Justice Mission Group of the New Hampshire Conference, the Rev. Dawn Berry moved the adoption of the Resolution of Christian Witness as presented in the Annual Meeting packet. Since the resolution was referred by the Board of Directors, it did not require a second. The motion passed unanimously, and the Resolution was adopted.*

### **Ratification of the Amendments to the Constitution of the UCC**

*The Rev. Robert Vodra moved that the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ ratify the amendments to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, as voted by the Thirty-first General Synod on July 2 and 3, 2017 as presented in your packet. The motion was seconded and passed. The changes to the United Church of Christ Constitution were ratified.*

### **Election of the Conference Board of Directors and Nominating Committee**

Pat Harris presented the Nominating Committee Report which was included in the Annual Meeting packets. submits the nominations of persons listed in its report in your packets. Since the Business Committee received no nominations from the floor, nominations were closed. 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. Gordon Rankin led us in the Liturgy of Commissioning for the elected individuals.

Since there was no more business to come before the meeting, the Rev. Gordon Rankin offered a benediction and the Annual Meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dawn C. Berry, Secretary