

Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ
Conference Annual Gathering - Drury University in Springfield, Missouri
Session One

Friday, June 7, 2013

Call to Order

Wes Hurt, Christ the King UCC, St. Louis called the meeting to order at 8:11 PM. Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree opened with prayer.

Credentials Report – Judi Privitt (on file)

The credentials report showed that we have a quorum.

Introduction of Acting Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree - Wes Hurt

Davida will accompany us pastorally and serve and lead when it is appropriate. She challenged us to think about what is it we envision and how can we (with Davida's support) become all that we are called to be? The voice of the UCC is needed in Missouri, Arkansas and Memphis. It is not an option; it is imperative. She told us of a refrigerator magnet she enjoys: "always make new mistakes".

Adoption of Agenda Revision #2 – facilitated by Wes Hurt

Agenda was adopted as written (on file). **Tim Farrell, Immanuel UCC, New Franklin made motion, and Rev. Stephen Redman, Ebenezer UCC, Levasy, seconded. Agenda was adopted as amended. (Revision #2, Presentation of Deaconess Foundation by Rev. Starsky Wilson will follow presentation of Visioning Team).**

Approval of Minutes from 2012 Conference Annual Gathering – Wes Hurt

Minutes approved by acclamation as presented.

David Beebe reminded delegates of Roberts' Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure)

- 1) Majority rules
- 2) Minority is respected
- 3) You have to have permission from moderator to address the group.

Introductions of officers, guests, conference staff – Wes Hurt

Wes recognized Dr. Dick Hamm.

Wes also recognized Conference Council Officers – Ken Ulmer, Treasurer, Joyce Bathke, Vice Moderator, Judi Privitt, Secretary. He also invited current council members to stand and be recognized.

Wes also expressed thanks to Rev. Dale Parson, Jeremy Force, Jeff Fulk, Renee Cordes, Julie Simmons and Lorraine Brooks. He also expressed special thanks to Dannie, Ken, Joyce and Judi for attending a meeting in Higginsville, and expressed thanks to his parish pastor.

Davida expressed her thanks to Wes and felt he is the moderator for just such a time as this.

Wes introduced Darlene Sowell, Neighborhood Houses, and invited her to the podium for greetings. She invited everyone to view the information regarding upcoming events at their booth this weekend.

Oral History Project - Spot One - David Beebe

David Beebe, Good Shepherd of St. Charles stated that each church can pick up one free DVD detailing the history of Missouri Mid-South Conference. Joy Dressel was thanked for her work with this project.

Presentation of the 2013 revised budget presentation - Ken Ulmer

Presentation of the 2013 revised budget presentation - Ken Ulmer

Wes Hurt recognized the Finance and Administration Committee for its work during the past year and introduced Ken Ulmer, Conference Treasurer, who presented the 2013 Revised budget: Ken stated that the Finance & Administration Committee has determined that the 2013 Budget approved in June 2012 at the Conference Annual Gathering had inflated assumptions for revenue for the Conference, MoVal, and Shannondale Community Center. When 2012 was completed, actual income was 16% less than the actual income in 2011. These two issues generated the development of the 2013 Revised Budget.

Ken Ulmer reported that over the recent 5 years the Conference has almost depleted available resources for cash flow support. At this point in time only \$60K of unassigned assets remains to cover cash flow requirements. A key assumption in the 2013 revised budget is that the Conference will not receive more income in 2013 than in 2012. The Finance & Administration Committee presented to the Conference Council a 2013 Revised Budget with adjusted revenue and expense assumptions. The 2013 Revised Budget includes revenue of \$1,334,075 and expenses of \$1,334,939 for a net result of (\$47,364).

Ken Ulmer also noted that the Revised 2013 Budget includes the calculation of the best practices target threshold for income for church camps. In 2013 the Revised Budget estimates that MoVal will generate revenue of \$34,000 over the threshold of 80% of expenses for FY 2013. The Revised 2013 Budget for Shannondale estimates that operating revenue will fall short of 80% of expenses by \$14,000. Jeremy Force, Director of MoVal and Jeff Fulk, Manager of Shannondale Community Center, assisted the Finance & Administration Committee by revising their 2013 budgets and are diligently monitoring their expenses.

Following a discussion and questions for clarification Wes Hurt asked for consideration of the adoption of the 2013 Revised Budget with includes revenue of \$1,287,575 and expenses of \$1,334,939 for a net result of (\$47,364).

Ken moved that we accept the revised 2013 budget with our three endeavors. David reported that it does not require a second. Call for questions. Motion carried.

Presentation and Commissioning of Visioning Team – Wes Hurt

Wes shared that Dr. Hamm discussed the visioning process with Council in January. Council took a vote to engage in a visioning process and contracted with Dr. Hamm. Wes sent letters to all associations asking for at least 6 nominees, so that we could have 3 from each association represented. Conference Minister will be ex-officio. We asked for a diverse cross section of age, gender, clergy/lay, etc.

Point of order: Alan Mader asked if there are persons with disability represented on this committee. Wes stated that two groups are not represented in the slate of nominees: people with disabilities and people of color. Discussion followed regarding how we can have a visioning team and not have minority representation. David Beebe reminded delegates that we either need to commission these folks (we've gone beyond point of order), or select nominations from the floor and pursue this further. Wes consulted with Dr. Hamm, and he recommended that we commission those that are here, but also make sure we also have persons with disability, LGBT, persons of color and youth on this visioning team. Darlene Sowell (neighborhood houses) felt that it needs to be a greater balance than displayed here. David Poe suggested that we rethink this process and get it right. **It was decided to restart the process and make sure we have diversity represented for the Visioning Team.**

Polly McWilliams, Emmanuel Weldon Spring, inquired if it would be possible to have members attend meetings via a conference call (college students, etc.) Dr. Hamm shared that it is possible to have those types of nominees. Dr. Hamm shared that he would be happy to respond to e-mails and other correspondence as needed.

Mr. Starsky Wilson – Representative of Deaconess Foundation – He was invited to the podium to update us on the work of the Deaconess Foundation.

Presentation of the 2014 Conference Budget, Ken Ulmer

Wes asked for consent to go ahead with presentation of 2014 budget. Approval was given. He introduced Ken Ulmer, Conference Treasurer.

Ken Ulmer reviewed the highlights of the 2014 proposed budget. He stated that similar to the 2013 Revised Budget the revenue assumption for 2014 Proposed Budget is the same as the actual income for 2012. He underscored three assumptions that will yield optimism that the Conference will achieve a balanced budget:

- 1) Our camp operations are running with much more attention to income and expenses (now monthly, not quarterly)
- 2) The approval of the reserve fund policy at the June 2013 Conference Annual Gathering ensures that assets given to the Conference are invested and thus the earnings will be sustainable.
- 3) OCWM income from the churches of the Conference are 2% ahead of April 2012.

Ken Ulmer reported that Jeff Fulk, manager of Shannondale and Jeremy Force, Director of MoVal, have identified additional sources of 2014 income for the two endeavors. The 2014 budget for the Conference endeavor includes reduced personnel and staff travel expense in that there would be one ACM after June 30, 2014. He stated that an overall increase of 8% in OCWM revenue would be needed if the budget were to include the second ACM. The 2014 Proposed Budget includes revenue of \$1,334,075 and expenses of \$1,313,364 for a net result of \$20,712. Following this presentation Wes Hurt reported that the action on the 2014 Proposed Budget is scheduled for the morning session on Saturday.

Announcements

Speak outs will be tomorrow. This is for items not specifically discussed on the agenda. Contact Dale Parson, if interested. *The meeting recessed at 9:41 PM*

Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ

Conference Annual Gathering

Session Two – Saturday, June 8, 2013

Call to Order/Speak Outs

Mr. Wes Hurt called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM , following speak outs. Dale invited people forward for speak-out sessions.

Speak-outs: Facilitated by Dale Parson

- Carol Shanks (Eden) discussed the Explore Scholarship. First year of tuition is free.
- Heather Arcovitch (Grace UCC) harcovitch@aol.com. Spoke about the Justice and Witness Covenanted Ministry – encouraged folks to e-mail her, if interested.
- Rick Oberle spoke regarding United Church Funds' investments
- Norma Klemme – expressed her appreciation for Mission 4/1 Earth and shared updates regarding our progress to date. She also gave a Festival of Sharing update.
- Jane Fisler-Hoffman encouraged us to recycle our plastic cups and be aware of recycling efforts at meals.
- Don Johnson (Cape Girardeau) expressed his appreciation to Dr. Marc Wessels for taking time from his busy schedule to be with them
- Stephen Redman (Disaster coordinator) Disciples and UCC are putting together a program to be the eyes and ears to help with disasters in your area.
- Carole Barner (Grace/Mt. Tabor) reminded us that we are all persons in ministry. Save the date – September 16-18 Port Arrowhead for Persons in Ministry Retreat. Spouses and partners are welcome to attend.
- Margaret Philip (St Thomas UCC, Chesterfield) invited us to their church fried chicken dinner.
- Davin Rustic (St Lucas) representing Camp Mo-Val August 31 is the annual the golf tournament.
- Andy Mockridge (Grand Pass/Blackburn) July 17 – Church picnic. The Marshall Community Band will be performing.
- Mark Phillips feels that if we had today's bible study at every conference meeting, there would be no shortfall in OCWM giving.

Presentation and Vote on the MMS By-Law Amendments, Laura Dierberg Ayers

Laura updated delegates on the 2012 CAG motion. This motion was passed to review by-laws for possible revision, so the process was started. Wes asked her to lead this group; it was decided to proceed with a task group (limited duration, limited purpose). It was Laura's recommendation to look at what was working, what wasn't working, and look at comments and concerns. There weren't specific purposes noted in any previous minutes. Joyce Bathke was also asked to join the group since she was a part of the Habakkuk Project. Revs. Chris Ross, Bob Atkinson and Roger Horn were also members of this task group. Laura expressed thanks to St. Peter's (Washington) for hosting the meeting. The committee did receive one set of written comments as well as Finance and Administration committee

recommendations. CAG minutes and Conference Council meetings were also reviewed. The task group also looked at the work of Donald Clark as it related to the life of the church and governance. On the conference website, there were 5 different documents detailing their work.

Laura then stated that the Conference Council approved these by-laws at their April Council meeting, and Wes stated that since it was presented to the body from a committee, it does not need a second.

Wes asked if we would rather approve these by-laws as a whole, or proceed article by article

Brett Singer moved to adopt the amendments to the Bylaws as a whole, seconded by Mark Robinson.

Rev. Chris Ross moved to amend the motion and presented a printed copy of his proposed amendments. Rick Riedel, (Hermann) seconded.

Following is the language of Rev. Ross' amendment, with difference from the main motion in **bold**:

ARTICLE V

CONFERENCE MINISTER AND ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS

The daily operation of Conference business, including, but not limited to the hiring, supervision and termination of Conference staff (**not** including Associate Conference Ministers), the management of all Conference programmatic activity, and the implementation of the policies adopted by the Conference Council, will be entrusted to a Conference Minister who will, in addition to such other qualifications as may be required by the Conference, be authorized for ministry in the United Church of Christ. The Conference Minister will be an ex officio member, with voice, but not vote, of the Conference Council, each Conference standing committee, each Conference Authorized Ministry and all other duly appointed Conference committees.

The Conference may employ as many Associate Conference Ministers as it may determine necessary and appropriate to accomplish the mission and purposes of the Conference. Each Associate Conference Minister will, in addition to such other qualifications as may be required by the Conference, be authorized for ministry in the United Church of Christ. Each Associate Conference Minister will be an ex officio member, with voice, but not vote, of the Conference Council, each Conference standing committee, each Conference Authorized ministry and all other duly appointed committees.

The Conference Minister **and each Associate Conference Minister** will be called to service by the Conference assembled in annual or special meeting upon such terms and conditions as mutually agreed; provided, however, that the Conference Minister **and each Associate Conference Minister** may be dismissed with not less than ninety (90) days written notice from the Conference Council and may voluntarily terminate his or her employment with not less than ninety (90) days written notice to the Moderator of the Conference Council.

SEARCH COMMITTEES

When a vacancy occurs in the office of Conference Minister **or of any Associate Conference Minister**, the Leadership Development Committee, with the approval of the Conference Council, will engage the services of an interim to fill the vacancy until such time that a new Conference Minister **or Associate**

Conference Minister has been called by the Conference. **The Leadership Development Committee will also, again with the approval of the Conference Council,** appoint a Search Committee of nine (9) persons fairly representative of the Conference and its three (3) associations. The Search Committee will perform its work in covenant with staff of the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ and periodically report its progress to the Conference Council until such time as it has selected a candidate for election by the Conference.

Following discussion, Steve Swope called for the question. Asked for count of vote, youth stewards conducted the count (74 yes, 63 no); needed 2/3 majority, so discussion proceeded.

David Beebe stated that the amendment takes precedent over the original motion. We take a vote on the amendment first and then vote on the revision as a whole.

Jack Wendleton (Hermann) asked for clarification on amendment. It was stated that there would be only changes made to article 5, noting the changes on the Chris Ross sheet.

It was noted that the main motion provides for sixty (60) days written notice, and Rev. Ross accepted this as part of his motion to amend.

Discussion then followed (pro and con – each was given 2 minutes to speak, alternating pro/con microphones)

Court Buchanan moved to amend the amendment. Nylin Bathke seconded: to amend the amendment to read as follows in the first paragraph (Buchanan language in bold):

The daily operation of Conference business, including, but not limited to the hiring, and termination of Conference staff (not including Associate Conference Ministers), the management **and supervision** of all Conference **staff and all** programmatic activity, and the implementation of the policies adopted by the Conference Council, will be entrusted to a Conference Minister who will, in addition to such other qualifications as may be required by the Conference, be authorized for ministry in the United Church of Christ. The Conference Minister will be an ex officio member, with voice, but not vote, on the Conference Council, **the Executive Committee**, each Conference standing committee, each Conference Authorized Ministry and all other duly appointed Conference committees.

Discussion then followed regarding the amendment to the amendment (both pro/con, given 2 minutes to speak)

Amendment to the amendment (Article V) carried by simple majority.

Meeting reconvened at 11:30 AM

Mark Robinson made a procedural motion to table the motion. Motion failed.

Debate continued on the proposed amendment as amended.

Rev. Mark Roberts asked for Rev. Dr. Davida Crabtree to comment on the situation we are currently facing. Davida reflected on her own experience as a Conference Minister in two different approaches to the calling of ACM's. She wondered whether these are the best conditions under which to be taking such action and curtailing ongoing discussion.

Debate continued again regarding the amendment to the revision of the by-laws as well as the revision of the by-laws.

Clarification was asked for regarding the fact that the amendment was never presented to Laura as the chair of the by-laws task force chair. That was confirmed.

There was a call for the question for the amendment to the proposed Article V. Simple majority is required. Motion carried. Amendment adopted.

Motion to accept the proposed by-law changes (including the adopted amendments). Motion carried.

Workshop session from 11-11:45 AM did not take place as listed on the agenda due to time constraints.

Meeting recessed at 11:56 AM for lunch.

Meeting reconvened with gathering music at 1:15 PM

Wes reconvened the business session 3 at 1:27 PM.

Recognition of Clergy and Churches – Dale Parson

Dale recognized ministers celebrating five year-increment ordination anniversaries. He also recognized pastors that are new to the conference in the last 12 months. Dale also read the necrology report, and it was noted to add Earl Lischer (not ordained) to the necrology report.

Churches with significant anniversaries were also recognized.

Action on the 2012 Audit – Dannie Burk

Dannie stated that our By Laws, Article 3, requires a formal audit every 5 years. Conference Council does have the option to request an audit each year, but we MUST have an audit every 5 years.

Formal motion: The Finance and Administration Committee, with Council approval recommend suspension of the independent audit of fiscal year 2012 and instead accomplish a completeness review. Committee presentation so no second is required. Motion carried.

The following items on our approved agenda did not occur, due to time constraints

- MMSUCC Oral History – Spot Two, Three and Four
- General Synod Preview (from morning agenda) – Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
- Photo Album – Doug Kaufman(from morning agenda)

Shannondale Carbon Credit LLC Presentation – Jeff Fulk, Sean Carney and Mike McKee

Jeff, Sean and Mike answered questions from delegates.

Election of the Conference Council Class of 2016- Joyce Bathke

Joyce shared the slate of nominations:

Eastern – Rick Reidel, Joyce Bathke, Gus Elia

St. Louis – David Mehl, Wes Hurt

Western – Steve Buchholz, Judi Privitt, Mark Ferbet

No nominations from the floor.

Call for vote on the slate as presented by Joyce. Motion carried. 1 abstention.

Vote on the 2014 Budget – Ken Ulmer

Ken answered questions regarding the proposed 2014 budget.

Will we continue to search for another ACM (replace Marc) if we pass the 2014 budget? Ken stated that this budget includes the continuation of a second ACM until June 30, 2014. We need those 15 months to make the transition to one ACM.

Andy Mockridge asked for clarification for mileage expense for churches since we will only have an ACM in Western (how will they travel in the Eastern)? Expenses/Travel will not change until end of June 2014. Ken stated that we will consolidate our travel expenses.

Explanation for difference in salaries for 2013 and 2014 for staff at Shannondale and Mo Val – Jeremy shared information related to his 2013 revised budget. He has increased his rental business and usage has increased. 20K increase is for benefits (pension/insurance), and this will only be made if there is a surplus in his budget.

Jack Wendleton reminded us that our reserves have disappeared. Those services are going down because we don't have the money to support the extra ACM. He continued to remind us to continue our giving to OCWM. Challenged all of the churches to increase OCWM.

Ken challenged us to increase our OCWM contributions by 8% at the local churches so that we could finance the one ACM that would be lost through the proposed budget.

Have we looked at the possibility of having two part-time ACM rather than have one full-time? Wes shared that we haven't looked at all the possibilities, but we have been charged with bringing a non-deficit budget.

Davida reminded us that we have significant work ahead of us as a Conference of churches and authorized ministers. She challenged us to ask our members to increase their giving. She reminded us that it won't do us any good to decline the 2014 budget.

Wes reminded people that we don't particularly want to present a budget like this, but this is where we are. This is a step towards turning things around.

Call for vote. 2 abstentions. Motion carried and 2014 budget is adopted.

Resolution to Increase Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) Basic Support – Don Frandsen

Don Frandsen, Chairperson of the OCWM Covenanted Ministry, shared with the delegates an 11-year comparison (2002 to 2012) of giving from MMSC churches. He noted that over 11 years membership has decreased 28% and OCWM giving has decreased by 44%. "We have the money to support our local churches, but we are often forgetting about OCWM." He introduced the resolution to increase (OCWM) Basic Support and encouraged adoption of the resolution.

Don encouraged those present to go back to their local churches and encourage their church leadership to increase the OCWM giving by their members. Discussion followed.

Motion (came out of committee), and voting on the “therefore” portion (statement of resolution)

Motion carried with one abstention.

Delegates requested that Don’s graphs be posted on the conference website (along with the resolution).

Installation of New Conference Council and Officers – Davida installed Council officers

Announcements

- Afternoon workshops are on
- Still Speaking magazines are available
- General Synod delegates were recognized
- Laptop is available in the lobby to sign on with your general information so that we can begin to create a database for the conference. People will need to self-identify with respect to diversity so that we can identify them for future committees.
- Paul Westcott suggested folks pass on the workshop and attend choir rehearsal instead (Clara Thompson)

Rev. David Beebe, Good Shepherd in St. Charles, made a motion that following tomorrow’s worship the meeting be adjourned and that the secretary complete the minutes for approval at the next conference council meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Privitt, Secretary