

St. Louis Association Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Saturday, September 24, 2016

St. John's United Church of Christ, Chesterfield, Missouri

St. John's United Church of Christ, Chesterfield, hosted the St. Louis Association Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, September 24, 2016.

Displays from agencies related to the St. Louis Association were available for browsing as folks arrived and during breaks in the meeting, including before and after lunch.

Welcomes were shared by Heather Arcovitch (First Congregational UCC, St. Louis), President of the St. Louis Association Council, and by Bill Smutz, Interim Minister of St. John's UCC.

Worship was led by Heather Arcovitch. Music was provided on the organ by Ruth Notch, Director of Music Ministries, St. John's UCC. During worship, Keith Karau (Samuel UCC) introduced clergy recently called to serve in the St. Louis Association. An offering was received to support UCC-affiliated LeMoyne Owen College.

Following worship, workshops were held. These included:

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Following workshops, lunch was served by volunteers from St. John's UCC.

Gathering Music in the Sanctuary was provided by Ellen Brandon (St. John's UCC, Chesterfield).

Cheryl Cornish (First Congregational UCC, Memphis) shared the Keynote Address. This was followed by a time for reflection, as folks asked questions of and dialogued with Cheryl.

Speak Outs were introduced by Lorin Cope (St. Paul UCC, St. Louis).

Barb Biedenstein (Kirkwood UCC, Kirkwood), Secretary of the St. Louis Association Council, led the roll call of congregations in the St. Louis Association. A total of 31 churches were represented at the time of the roll call.

Tyler Connoley (Peace UCC, Webster Groves), Sabbatical Associate Conference Minister, brought greetings from the Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ. He shared how we are all the Missouri Mid-South Conference; explained that Ginny Brown Daniel is at the Eastern Association meeting today. The Conference Annual Planning Event was held recently. A brand new Covenanted Ministry, for Older Adults has been created. Ambassadors is now the new name for Conference Deacons. Approval has been given to call a Youth Minister for the Conference. A new Communications Coordinator has been called, Ni Chandler, a bi-vocational minister from Kansas City area.

The Business Meeting was called to order by Heather Arcovitch.

The minutes from the 2015 Annual Business Meeting were approved by consensus.

Report of the Committee on Ministry: Preparation. John Allen (St. Martin UCC, High Ridge) and Carolyn Mulhall (Hope UCC, St. Louis) reported. They referenced the full report emailed in advance. It is a joy to meet those on their journey to authorized ministry. Douglas Anders (Kirkwood UCC), encouraged the sharing of information about the scholarship funds in the budget.

Report of the Committee on Ministry: Oversight. Keith Karau and Ann Wilson (Peace UCC, Webster Groves) thanked the other members of the COM:O, naming them. We are a terrific team, sorry to be losing those whose terms are ending. Keith recognized those who have retired from active ministry during the past year.

Mary Albert, retired from Epiphany UCC

Joe Pfeiffer, retired as a chaplain in Memphis

Betty Sue Sherrod, retired from Christ UCC, Maplewood

Gail Robbins, retired as associate from St. Paul's, Oakville

Heather Arcovitch gave the report from the Association Council. She noted that we are a church in changing times and as a church we are changing. The Association Council is having conversations about what makes us relevant to our churches and to the Conference. She noted how recent keynote speakers at Assn meetings have addressed our changing context and relevance. Heather noted that our Association name is "St. Louis," but we have churches that are as far as Little Rock and Memphis and other churches that are not in St. Louis. She encouraged folks to give suggestions about a better name. There has been conversation about the St. Louis Association becoming an Open and Affirming Association, but there is uncertainty about how to do this. There is also a Synod Resolution that is coming before this body today on how to have conversations about race and racism

Report of the Mission/Outreach Team. Donna Pupillo (St. Peter's UCC, Ferguson) gave the report, noting the advance report that was set out. There are two new programs in the proposed budget for 2017: The Peace Freedom School and LoMoyne Own College: Wendy Bruner (Peace UCC, Webster Groves) talked about the Freedom School and the history of this movement from the 1960s and how it was picked up again in the late 1990s. This will be held next summer at Peace UCC. Donna noted that there is \$4000 in the proposed 2017 budget for this.

Allen Fluent noted that he serves on the boards of Neighborhood Houses and of LeMoyne Owen College. A relationship has been started between these two entities, as youth affiliated with Neighborhood Houses in St. Louis travelled this summer to Memphis to visit LeMoyne Owen College, thanks to financial support from the St. Louis Association Council. The next part of the plan is to bring the LeMoyne Owen Choir to come to STL in 2017 for concerts to continue to build relationships. Donna noted that there is \$1000 in the proposed 2017 budget for this.

Tom Ressler, Bookkeeper, and Floyd Jochimsen (St. Mark UCC, Arnold) presented the proposed 2017 Budget. This comes as a motion from the Association Council. The budget passed. Tom urged attendees to return to their churches to encourage support of the St. Louis Association.

Lorin shared the report of the Nominating/Leadership Team. He shared the slate of nominees and introduced those who were present. The slate passed as presented.

Consideration of the Proposed Resolution for General Synod: *Study of Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity and Institutional Racism*. Margaret Philip (St. Thomas UCC, Chesterfield) spoke about the resolution, giving background on it. The resolution would require authorized ministers in the UCC to have training on Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity and Institutional Racism to maintain their ministerial standing. She gave some examples of why this is important.

Questions: Bill Biedenstein (St. Lucas UCC), asked how will COM:O document that clergy have taken this training. Tyler Connoley noted that this resolution passed at the Conference Annual Gathering. The COM Covenanted Ministry is already looking at this. The hope is to have something in place by next June before the resolution would go to General Synod. Margaret noted that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) already has a curriculum that we are looking at. An Association in the Central Atlantic Conference is also voting on this resolution, since 2 Associations must pass a resolution before it goes to Synod. Douglas Anders asked a polity question, whether Synod can require Associations to do this training. Margaret noted that the language in the resolution is that the General Synod "calls upon" all settings to do this. Rita Hill (Pilgrim Congregational UCC) noted that this is an opportunity to move forward. Motion to adopt comes from the STLA Council. The motion passed.

New Business: None

Heather Arcovitch led the Installation of Newly Elected Leaders.

The meeting was adjourned following the Sending Hymn, Responsive Charge, and Benediction.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Ressler, Recorder of Minutes