

MINUTES FROM THE 2024 VERMONT Conference UCC ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 4/19-20, 2024 AT ESSEX JUNCTION

FIRST PLENARY: Friday

Welcome and starting business

- Lynn Bujnak welcomed and opened the VTCUCC Annual Meeting
- Carrie Youngblood called the meeting to order
- A quorum was confirmed
- Special guests were recognized by Carrie Youngblood
- Definitions and the procedures were reviewed and adopted
- Minutes from the 2023 VTCUCC Annual Meeting were reviewed. Dick Dale made a motion to approve the minutes. Amy Dale seconded the motion. Motion was approved.
- Dick Dale made a motion to nominate John Hill as Parliamentarian. Motion seconded. Motion passed to approve John Hill as Parliamentarian
- John Hill made a motion to nominate Karen Braeutigam as scribe. Dick Dale seconded. Motion was approved to elect Karen Braeutigam as the conference scribe

Speak Outs

- Fiora spoke on behalf of Global Ministries
- Sally spoke as an advocate for the Abenaki people
- Hadley spoke on promoting gun safety and storage
- Adam Smedberg spoke on Church World Services
- Jen Johnson spoke on the Star Gathering, a retreat place

State of the Conference by Lynn Bujnak and Paul Sangree

- Lynn spoke of the bigger picture in terms of regions of the whole UCC; the size of memberships of the churches; financial comparisons
- She spoke of some trends in ordained ministry; the different categories of ministry and the new young clergy coming in.
- Paul spoke of the collaboration and the working between the conference and the local churches around the floods
- VT is primarily small churches; Ministry 21 as a way to license new pastors.
- VT has 17 churches that are looking for pastors. 11 do self leadership. We are also in need of pulpit supply.
- He updated us on the Hope Fund's work

New Clergy were welcomed and recognized.

Members in Memoriam were recognized.

They are: Rev. James William Leamon; Rev. Ann Melendy Hancock; Rev. John Holt; Rev. Christina Jane Del Piero; Rev. Cornelius "Neil" Carr; Rev. Margaret "Peg" Slater;

Rev. Dr. Harry Robert Flad; Rev. William E. Nelson; Rev. Dr. Mary Newgeon; Rev. Richard A. White

SECOND PLENARY SATURDAY MORNING

Peacemaker's Breakfast presented by Justice and Witness Ministries

- Peace and Stillness in Nature: Rev. Lava Mueller from Love Church in Randolph
- Perseverance: Peter Evans from United Church of Northfield
- UCC Gifts to the Community: Erika Thompson from United Community Church of St. Johnsbury
- Embracing ONA: Jenni Lund and Carolyn Marsh from West Newbury UCC
- VIA Updates; Rev. Bill Neil from first Congregational Church of Burlington
- Good Neighbor Fund: Rev. Peter Plagge of Waterbury Community Church
- Sister Simone: Rev. Kimberly McKerley of Bethany Church of Randolph
- Flooding: Rev. Dr. Becca Girrell of the United Community Church of Morrisville
- Welcome Home Initiative: Rev. Jessica Moore of First Congregational Church of St. Albans

Motion: Dick Dale made a motion to suspend the rules so that delegates can propose rules, make amendments and have discussion on it. John Hill seconded the motion.

Motion had one no vote. Motion passed.

Ministry 21

Suzie Webster, Dean of Ministry 21 spoke about the program. She spoke of the influence that her grandfather Rev. Max Harris Webster had on her. She described the program, its potential to help congregations. This first year they have focused on worship, best practices and management. The second year will focus on the marks of Successful Ministry. She asks that we name the gifts in our congregations, and encourage to pursue those gifts with Ministry 21. Donations to help with Scholarships would also be welcomed.

Video of Greg Briggs from Disaster Ministries.

Greg spoke of the floods that Vermont has seen and our response to them. They are continuing to work on developing long term recovery groups to be proactive for the next event that will happen due to climate change. We are now in a mode of expecting more and no longer seeing floods as isolated events in Vermont. Some of the challenges are the lack of housing for displaced people, the lack of contractors and the rural nature of VT. There are spiritual support teams that are available to the flooded communities.

Golden Bucket Awards:

United Church of Bethel; Federated Church of E. Arlington; Guilford Community Church; Second Congregational Church of Hyde Park; Congregational Church of Middlebury; United Church of Milton; Grace Congregational Church of Rutland; Stowe Community Church; First Community Church of Shoreham; Congregational Church of Vergennes; Congregational Church of Weybridge; Williston Federated Church; Old South Church,

Windser; Rev. Peter Plagge; Rev. Greg Briggs; Mr. Adam Smedberg; Rev. Jackie Lingelbach; Rev. Becca Girrell; Ms. C. J. King; Rev. Dan Haugh; First Congregation of Essex Junction.

Financial Resolutions with discussion and vote:

- We have an endowment that has a 19% return.
- The 2025 budget is \$634,648. There is an increase to the basic support. New this year is money to help start up new churches.
- Motion was made by Dick Dale to accept the 8 resolutions proposed on Document F. It was seconded by John Hill.
- Those resolutions are: 1) That the division of Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission income for 2025 be 70% of the VT conference and 30% for the UCC beyond VT. 2) That the VT Conference share with the national setting of the UCC 70% of any Basic Support for OCWM budget surplus at the conclusion of the 2025 year. 3) That the Conference continues to encourage each church to increase its Basic Support for OCWM by 1% per year in its operating budget expenses; moving toward a full tithe (10%) and beyond if possible. 4) That in the 2025 Vt. Per Capita be set at \$15.28. (Note: the association portion of Per Capita is in addition to the Conference amount. 5) That the churches be encouraged to pay Basic Support for OCWM and Per Capita quarterly. 6) That the Board of Directors be authorized to take funds from the unrestricted reserves for any emergency deficit in 2025. 7) That the Board of Directors be authorized to adjust the 2025 operating budget as unforeseen circumstances require, within the spending limits established in the budget. 8) That the conference adopt a 2025 Operating Budget of not more than \$634,468 in expense and not less than \$634,468 in income, with the goal of ending 2025 with a balanced budget.

Discussion: There was some concern that a staff increase in salary of only 2% wasn't enough. In terms of staff compensation and insurance there is an 8% increase in insurance and expenses are less. There were questions about how outdoor ministries are being supported. The issue of the Covenant Camp was discussed. The Methodists would need to decide to close that camp. We are presently letting our \$25,000 toward that camp just sit there. There was a suggestion that if the camp comes back to us in the future that we give it back to the Abenaki. This is also affected by the dispute between the VT. and the Canadian Abenaki communities. A vote was taken and the budget was passed.

Recognition of OCWM churches: Barre Congregational Church; Barton UCC; Bellows Falls United Church; Second Congregational Church of Bennington; Benson UCC; Brandon Congregational Church; Brattleboro Centre Congregational; First Congregational Church of Brattleboro; Bristol Federated Church; Brownington Village; College St. Congregational of Burlington; Burlington First Congregational Church; Castleton Federated Church; Charlotte Congregational Church; Malletts Bay

Congregational Church; First Church of Cornwall; Congregational Church of Danville; United Church of Dorset; E. Arlington Federated Church; Old Meeting House of E. Montpelier; E. Corinth Congregational Church; First Congregational Church of Essex Junction; First Congregational Church of Fair Haven; Greensboro UCC; Guilford Community Church; First Congregational Church of Hartland; United Church of Hinesburg; Second Congregational Church of Hyde Park; Second Congregational Church of Jeffersonville; Second Congregational Church of Londonderry; United Church of Ludlow; First Congregational UCC of Lyndonville; Marlboro Meeting House; The Congregational Church of Middlebury, UCC; Bethany Church of Montpelier; First Congregational Church of Morrisville; New Haven, UCC; First Congregational Church of Newfane; United Church of Newport; First Congregational Church of North Hyde Park; North Pomfret Congregational Church; Northfield United Church; Congregational Church of Norwich; Congregational Church of Pittsford; Congregational Church of Post Mills; Bethany of Randolph; Richmond Congregational Church; Rochester Federated Church; Grace Congregational Church of Rutland; First Congregational Church of Sharon; Congregational Church of South Hero; First Congregational Church of Springfield; United Community Church of St. Johnsbury; United Church of Thetford; United Church of Underhill; Vergennes Congregational Church; Waitsfield Congregational Church; Warren UCC; Waterbury Congregational Church; Wells River Congregational Church; West Newbury Congregational Church; West Rutland UCC; Westminster West Congregational Church; Westmore Community Church; Congregational Church of Weybridge; Williston Federated Church.

Hope Fund: The following churches gave to the Hope Fund: Federated Church of Castleton; Grace Congregational Church of Rutland; Pittsford Congregational Church; Brandon Congregational Church; United Church of West Rutland; United Church of Dorset and E. Rupert; First Congregational Church of Manchester; Federated Church of E. Arlington; Congregational Church of North Bennington; Pawlet Community Church; Congregational Church of Rupert; First Congregational Church of Wallingford; Shrewsbury Community Church; Barton UCC; First Congregational Church of Burlington; Charlotte Congregational Church; First Congregational Church of Essex Junction; First Congregational Church of Fair Haven; United Church of Newport; First Congregational Church of Springfield; United Church of St. Johnsbury.

5 and 5 Churches: First Congregational Church UCC of Brattleboro; United Church of Dorset and E. Rupert; First Congregational Church of Essex Junction; Danville Congregational Church; Guilford Community Church; Greensboro UCC; Second Congregational Church of Jeffersonville; First Congregational Church of Lyndonville; Morrisville UCC; North Pomfret UCC; United Church of Northville' Richmond Congregational Church; Bethany Church of Bethany; Grace Congregational Church of Rutland; South Hero Congregational Church; Waitsfield UCCV; Wells River Congregational Church; Weybridge Congregational Church.

Justice and Witness Ministries: Deb Ingram gave an overview of the work of the Justice and Witness Ministries and their mission to bring this to the attention of people.

THIRD PLENARY

Ordination Anniversaries and Church Celebrations

Global Ministries: Peop Fiyordi from Global Ministries spoke about her ministry with Global Ministries. This is a joint ministry between the UCC and the Disciples of Christ churches. They are working to have a common language as to what mission is and is not. Mission is not a doing for but a doing with. Komoto also spoke of his role with Global Ministries. They invited anyone that was interested in becoming involved with Global Ministries to speak to them.

Keynote Revisited: A panel discussion with Peter Plagge, Scott Couper and the keynote speaker Rev. Robin Junker-Boyce was held. The question of What is Human was discussed. There is the need to look closely at the repercussions of this work on an ethical and spiritual level. There was some discussion of developing a leadership team on this subject.

Nominating Report: Dick Dale made a motion to nominate the following slate of officers for the next year. Moderator: Carrie Youngblood; Vice Moderator: John Hill; Treasurer: Ram; and Asst. Treasurer: Laura Nassau. John Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed. There are 2 new members of the Board: Jane LoBrutto and Lisa Sparrow. A thanks was made to those who are leaving the board: Laura Nassau, Peter Plagge and Erik Webster. John Hill presented the gifts to the keynote speaker.

Speak outs:

- Church World Services by Adam Smedley.
- MSSC: a friendly reminder to complete boundary training on line by Katelyn Mc Crae and Mark Wilson
- Summer Lunch Grants by Grace Cleary
- Clergy Convocation by Caryne Eskridge and Mark Blank
- Discrimination felt by some in this conference by Lou Rochford
- Milford Dignity by Ed Sunday-Winters
- Questions for the Church by Natalie Basil
- First Friday Fellowship by Julie Demaree
- Justice and Witness Ministries by Deb Ingram