

Gettysburg Association Fall Meeting Minutes
September 30, 2023
St. David's (Shermans) UCC, 9 A.M. – 11 A.M.

Attendance: Dave Bankert (Bethel); Rev. Ken Peterkin (Emmanuel Hanover); Rev. Julia Beall (Mt. Olivet & Zwingli); Leonard Bucher and Rev. Sterling Fritz (Redeemers); Pam Harman, Dianne Bankard, & Rev. Scott Sager (St. David's); Linda Brown and Rev. Susan Fritz (St. Paul's Dubs); Nina Redding, Rev. Peter Kuhn, Rev. Dr. Fred Young, and Cindy Hoffman (Trinity Gettysburg); Mike Sabaka (Trinity Hanover); Rev. Heather Kurtz (Zion); and Rhonda Feiser (Zwingli); excused absence – Rev. Rodger Snyder (Trinity/Cashtown Charge).

Churches with no representation (clergy or laity): Christ Codorus UCC, Emmanuel UCC Abbottstown, Faith UCC, Grace UCC, St. Jacob's UCC, St. James UCC, St. Paul's UCC (New Oxford).

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. and opened with a prayer from the Rev. Ken Peterkin.

Keystone Project

The Rev. Heather Kurtz provided an update on the Keystone Project. Key take-aways are:

- A task force of 25-30 people from the four conferences have been diligently working on this project for approximately one year
- E-newsletters are forwarded regularly, outlining the progress of the group. If you aren't signed up through the Conference, sign up!
- Our Association needs to host a town-hall meeting. We will schedule one for November.
- In the near future, all four Conferences will need to vote on whether to proceed or not with a merger – this will take place at the June 2024 Annual Conference meeting. Please plan to attend! If approved, this can be placed on the General Synod Agenda for 2025. Otherwise, it will have to wait until the next Synod gathering in 2028.

Questions that were raised:

- Ken - Has there been any vocal opposition to this process? Response: there appears to be more concern about what we do with our present-day association configurations
- Fred - How many Conferences have gone through this process in the past? Response: two – the So. New England Conference & several Mid-Western state Conferences. Penn Northeast and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference attempted this process several years ago but it failed because the process was not thorough nor clearly communicated to voting members.
- Dianne - How do we get people within our churches to understand how a merger will impact our churches? Response: we're not sure yet but we will need everyone's ideas on how to communicate these very real concerns.
- Nina -Issues around money were raised. Response: it is too early in the process to know what staffing needs will be and how a new Conference will need to be funded. It was noted by others that we need to trust the process and not get overly anxious at this point in time. Please attend a meeting in person or via Zoom so you can learn about what is happening and where things currently stand.

General Synod Report

The Rev. Dr. Fred Young participated on our behalf. He enthusiastically noted that you always get a much bigger idea of who the UCC is when you attend Synod. It is a very diverse group of people that represent our denomination.

There were fourteen key resolutions and only one did not pass. The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected as our new General Minister & President. She will be installed on October 20th at 5 P.M. and you must register to view it via Zoom. General Synod delegates voted to move the frequency of synod from every two years to once every three years. They also sent the issue of term limits to the Board for further review and consideration. The Afro-Christian stream of the UCC was recognized as the "5th" stream; unfortunately, it had never been officially recognized in 1957 when the UCC was formed. The Rev. Dr. Nora Foust is offering education about this new stream of the UCC.

Proposed By-Laws Revision

Rev. Susan Fritz began by acknowledging the work of a former Coordinating Council that put suggested bylaws before the body in 2018. At that time, two pastors had not read the changes and weren't prepared to vote; thus, a vote was not taken. The new recommendations include the work of the 2018 committee as well as additional language that acknowledges that much of what is done today happens electronically. Substantial recommended revisions were reviewed; except for a typographical error, the By-Law changes were recommended for approval by Rev. Julia Beall, seconded by Rev. Ken Peterkin and approved unanimously.

Vision for our Future

The Rev. Sterling Fritz provided a handout that included a quick summary of UCC statistics and trends in churches, right now. Knowing trends in our own area, understanding the trends of all UCC congregations across the country, understanding the work of the Keystone Project, and knowing that it is going to take all of us working together (not necessarily as individual congregations), we can have hope for a bright future...but we cannot continue to act in isolation. In cooperation and coordination with the Conference, we will strive to place more emphasis on this in the future.

General News

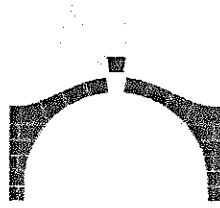
We will be hosting an Epiphany Party for laity and clergy alike on January 5th, 2024. Invitations will be mailed to churches and pastors in October and November and everyone is highly encouraged to bring along a group of people from your congregation ... all in the name of fun!

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 with a closing prayer from the Rev. Ken Peterkin.

Respectfully submitted by,

The Rev. Susan E. Fritz, Secretary/Treasurer

Keystone Project of the Pennsylvania Conferences of the UCC Fall 2023



Please make time to join us this fall at a Town Hall or Association meeting in your area! There will be a presentation about the project and ample time for reflection, discussion, and questions. Your input is needed and desired!

More Town Halls will be scheduled for the winter and early spring, so watch for that information.

Upcoming Town Hall Meetings: Registration links on pecucc.org/register-for-an-event/

October 11: In-person at St. John's UCC in Lewisburg at 6:30 PM

October 18: In-person at St. Paul's UCC in Mechanicsburg at 6:30 PM

November 1: Zoom meeting at 6:30 PM (open to all)

November 15: In-person at Quentin UCC in Quentin at 6:30 PM

Keystone Presentations at Association Meetings:

October 8: Lancaster Association at Bethany UCC in Ephrata, 3:00 PM

October 15: Lebanon Association at St. John's UCC in Fredericksburg, 3:00 PM

October 29: Harrisburg Association at Colonial Park UCC in Harrisburg, 2:00 PM

November 4: Central Association on Zoom, 9:00 AM

November 12: York Association at Starview UCC in Mt. Wolf, 2:00 (lunch at 12:30)

November 12: Mercersburg Association on Zoom at 3:00 PM

Questions? Write us at Keystone.Conference.project@gmail.com

**CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE
WORKING TOGETHER AS THE CHURCHES OF THE GETTYSBURG ASSOCIATION**

QUICK SUMMARY OF UCC STATISTICS

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

CONGREGATIONS: 4,724
MEMBERS: 745,230
AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP: 160*
MEDIAN MEMBERSHIP: 101
AVERAGE IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 52**
MEDIAN IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 36**
AVERAGE CONFIRMATIONS: 1.1
AVERAGE CONFESSIONS: 0.7
AVERAGE TRANSFERS IN: 0.9
AVERAGE REAFFIRMATIONS: 0.9
AVERAGE DEATHS: 3.9
AVERAGE TRANSFERS OUT: 1.2
AVERAGE CHILD BAPTISMS: 1.2
AVERAGE ADULT BAPTISMS: 0.2
OPEN AND AFFIRMING: 34.6%
ACCESSIBLE: 86.2%
WEB PRESENCE: 70.4%

RACE/ETHNICITY BY CONGREGATION

WHITE/EURO-AMERICAN: 83.4%
AFRICAN AMERICAN: 4.9%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER: 3.9%
HISPANIC/LATINO(A): 0.4%
NATIVE AMERICAN: 0.6%
BI-RACIAL/MULTI-RACIAL: 6.4%
OTHER: 0.5%

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

AVERAGE BASIC SUPPORT: \$3,985
AVERAGE OTHER UCC GIVING: \$1,962***
AVERAGE TOTAL OCWM: \$5,946
AVERAGE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: \$321
AVERAGE NEIGHBORS IN NEED: \$198
AVERAGE CHRISTMAS FUND: \$209
AVERAGE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH: \$111
5 FOR 5 CHURCHES: 25.6%
AVERAGE OTHER GIFTS: \$9,792
AVERAGE OPERATING EXPENSES: \$176,720
AVERAGE TOTAL INCOME: \$236,670

**Silent: 1928-1945; Boomers: 1946-1964; Generation X: 1965-1980.
Millennials: 1981-1996; Generation Z: 1997-2012.**

TRENDS IN CHURCHES RIGHT NOW

(Thom Rainer, Baby Boomer, Church Consultant)

Church adoptions. An adopted church is a congregation that comes into the family, care, and authority of another, usually healthier, church.

Of course, more churches will seek adoption because they are about to die and close.

Pastors are leaving the ministry due to burnout. (1 in 4 pastors will retire in the next seven years)

The time between pastors for churches will be longer than ever. Today, many churches have these interim periods for two to three years or more. The number of interim pastors will be greater than ever.

More pastors and staff will become bi-vocational. Bi-vocational pastors are those who have work outside the church because their church could not compensate them with full-time pay.

More pastors and staff will get their theological and ministry training in the local church or online.

(Lindsay Baker Bower, Millennial, consultant)

A hybrid church model is still necessary.

Congregants are looking for more church leadership diversity.

Millennials are coming back. (born 1981-1996)

Doing good in the community is the key to Gen Z (born 1997-2012)

Volunteer numbers will continue to decline.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

The church will always gather, because what Christians can do together far surpasses what we can do alone.

The future church will become bigger and smaller at the same time.

More churches will be using technology to connect with their congregation and community.

Social media will continue to play a significant role in how churches communicate with their members and the community.

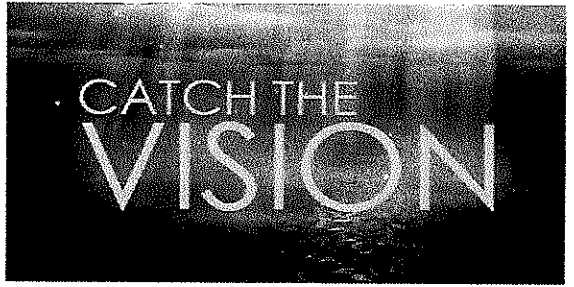
Churches will be focusing more on mental health and wellness programs for all ages.

Churches will be looking for ways to become more environmentally friendly.

There will be a continued focus on economic justice and racial reconciliation within the church.

THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE UCC DATA, THE TRENDS, AND THE HOPES

Which ones concern you and your local congregation the most?



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What are the strengths of our Gettysburg Association churches right now?

What are the opportunities of our Gettysburg Association churches right now?

How can we work together to help our Gettysburg Association congregations, church leadership, and pastors support one another in our shared covenant?



**EPIPHANY PARTY!
PLEASE JOIN US!**

All Clergy and Laity of the churches of the Gettysburg
Association are invited to attend

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2024 5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M

**Location: St. Paul's Dubs Union Church Conway Runkle
Annex, 1958 Dubs Church Road, Hanover PA 17331**

**Cost: \$10/person, balance paid by the Association
Meal prepared by Skip & Penny's Catering, New Oxford PA**

RSVP: Rev. Susan Fritz by Dec. 13, 2023

revfritz1958@gmail.com

Cell: 610-207-3009 Office: 717-637-2419

Please leave a message

