

Tarrytown, New York, May 24-25, 2017

Key Actions taken are denoted by the code VOTE UAM2017:(number)
(These are the minutes of record)

Call to the Annual Meeting

The 54th Annual Meeting of the New York Conference United Church of Christ (UCC) was called to meet at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York. The theme for this annual meeting was “Leading off the Map.” Member churches of the newly-formed Reformed Association joined with the UCC delegates for worship and meals.

Pre-Conference Meetings

The New York **Conference Board** met on May 25, 2017 at the Westchester Marriott. The minutes of that meeting are provided under separate cover.

A Budget Hearing, a hearing on proposed changes to the Conference By-laws and a discussion of a proposed resolution regarding establishing a per capita charge to replace Covenant Share, and orientation for new delegates also took place prior to the opening session.

Pre-Conference Activities

Approximately 32 authorized clergy arrived early on Wednesday, May 24, to attend a retreat led by the Rev. Jim Herrington. Herrington has worked with hundreds of congregations around the challenges of personal and congregational transformation. Rev. Herrington has co-authored a number of books on leading congregational change and congregational transformation.

Plenary Session No. 1

Thursday, May 25

At 2:10 p.m. the Rev. **Joseph Medlin, Moderator**, called the first plenary session of the Annual Meeting to order following a Worship Moment video. The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine, Associate Conference Minister for Leadership Development, led the constituting prayer. The Moderator introduced the **Parliamentarian, attorney Paul Cohn**, and the **American Sign Language interpreters, Ms. Patrice Harrington and Mr. Howard Hines**.

Rev. Medlin called on the Secretary, the Rev. Barbara Wright, to provide the number of registered delegates. A quorum was declared, with precise numbers to be announced later. (The total number of voting delegates was 122, and there were 20 guests.)

The **Agenda** (pages 4-5 of the Annual Meeting Booklet) was approved as written, (m/s/c) and the Standing Rules (pages 6-7) were also approved. (m/s/c)

Rev. Medlin introduced the **Tellers /Ushers:** Lynn Sullivan, Sandra Chapin, Ann Van Cleef, Bob Van Cleef

The **Rev. David Gaewski**, Conference Minister, welcomed the following visitors:

Rev. Peter Cook of the New York State Council of Churches

Rev. Dr. Marja and Rev. James Coons-Torn from the UCC Cornerstone Fund.

Rainer Brunssen, Rosalind Gnatt, Torben Schmit from our partner church, Evangelische Kirche in Hessen and Nassau (EKHN).

Martha Cruz, from the UCC Pension Board

Howard Hawkins from United Church Funds

Scott Sharai from the UCC office of Philanthropy

Speak Outs were moderated by Rev. Sandy Boon Damhof

There were no **Announcements** for this session.

Coordinator of Wider Church Ministries Susan Frost introduced the new Conference Mission and Vision statements which had been adopted by the Conference Board on April 1. There being no questions, the Mission and Vision Statements were affirmed by acclamation.

Mission: United in Spirit, and inspired by God's grace, we move forward boldly to welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

Vision: United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

UAM2017-1: Motion to affirm by acclamation these statements as our Mission and Vision Statements. (m/s/c)

Conference Secretary Barbara Wright introduced the proposed revisions to the Conference By-Laws along with an amendment that was proposed too late to be included in the booklet.

UAM2017-2: Motion to table the proposed By-Laws Revision until written copies of the amendment to the proposal could be distributed. (m/s/c)

Conference Minister David Gaewski delivered his **State of the Conference address** on "Leading Off the Map." He noted that neither maps nor GPS systems "think." What we need when maps fail us, is Vision. We have achieved our goal of 20 new churches by 2020 two years. David proposes we reset our goal to 25 new churches by 2020.

He encouraged us to respond not to ask "How can we get new members?" , but to ask instead, "How can we make disciples for Jesus Christ, and what might that discipleship look like in our context?"

He repeated the Mission and Vision statements. We do not build a wall around New York! The mission of the New York Conference will take us "out" of our churches, our communities and our comfort zones.

NYSOM has expanded beyond our Conference to welcome students from other geographical locations. NYSOM is a premier example of an alternate path to ordination.

The budget deficit has been cut in half, but there is still work to do. The additions of new congregations will likely result in a need for more staff. The Board will be working with Ron Buford to create a Case Statement, a brief rationale for the capital campaign.

David thanked delegates and guests for their presence and partnership, for their churches' gifts to OCWM. He also thanked the Conference staff.

The amended proposal to the by-laws changes were distributed.

UAM2017-3: Motion to take the By-Laws conversation back off the table and discuss them. (m/s/c)

Time allowed to study of the amendment to the proposed by-laws amendments,

**UAM2017-4: Motion to accept the changes to the by-laws as amended (moved and seconded).
After a brief discussion, the motion carried without dissent. (m/s/c)**

There being some extra time in the meeting, David G. offered greetings from our partners in Berlin, authored by Berthold Hocker.

The plenary adjourned (m/s/c)

Evening Activities

Following dinner and an opening service of worship, and the Keynote address was delivered by the Rev. Jim Herrington (see his credentials in the Pre-Conference Activities section). He described the 21st-century Church as being “off the map” and spoke of how we might encourage ourselves and our colleagues to find new ways of being the Church that are appropriate for the changing times.

Following worship, there was a time of fellowship and food.

Plenary Session II

Friday, May 26

At 8:35 a.m. the second plenary session was called together by the Moderator.

A Worship Moment was a series of brief Bold Testimony videos lifting up “What excites you about the UCC?”.

The Rev. Sandy Damhof led the Speak Outs, including birthday greetings to some delegates.

- Charlaine Apsell offered thanksgiving for the ministry of David Gaewski
- Marraine Kettel invited guests to stop by the Friends of the Conference table
- Marraine also advocated participation in the Communities of Practice groups
- Ann Van Cleef or Orient UCC announced that the church is celebrating its 300th anniversary this year.

Moderator Joe Medlin made some opening remarks and invited people to fill out and return evaluation forms from the event.

GREETINGS FROM ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

Peter Cook, Executive Director of the New York Council of Churches (NYSCOC) offered greetings and described the mission and history of NYSCOC. Its three main areas of ministry:

overseeing and certifying chaplains, particularly in the prison system

Supporting and Doing Justice work in communities, including pastoral care to persons in need

They also advocate for justice causes by lobbying state legislators and provide faith formation and educational programs

David Gaewski introduced the **Rev. Amy Nyland**, executive minister of the New York Synod of the Reformed Church of America, who celebrated our new partnership in Reformed Association and thanked the UCCNY for its extravagant welcome.

The **Rev. Rosiland Gnatt**, a UCC member who serves in with the EKHN in Wiesbaden. A major project she has worked on is bringing a “UCC spirit and feel” to worship services utilizing the German liturgy. She urged anyone interested in continuing this work to consider applying.

9:05 a.m. Conference Treasurer Yvette Wynn and Conference Finance Manager David Losito reviewed current finances and presented the proposed budget for 2018, pointing out that Charlaine Apsell created the narrative budget. [complete reports are in the booklet]

UAM2017-5 Motion to approve the financial report (came from committee; needs no second.) No discussion; motion carried without dissent.

2018 BUDGET

After a brief video celebrating the various ministries that are supported by OCWM giving, Yvette introduced the budget.

UAM2017-6: Motion to Approve the 2017 Conference Budget (came from committee, no need for second). After a brief discussion consisting of questions of clarification asked and answered, the motion carried without dissent.

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A CONFERENCE PER CAPITA

To have Associations of the New York Conference vote to add a \$2.00 Conference per capita to their Association per capita invoice, which each Association will then forward to the Conference. If all Associations agree to this new policy, the Conference will discontinue the Covenant Share special offering. {Reformed Association will be exempt from this due to the fact that they are already paying a Conference per capita (assessment)}

The Associations are being asked to take this vote prior to the 2018 Annual Meeting. It will require a positive vote of all Associations for this policy to take effect in 2018.

Rationale: Compliance rate in the Covenant Share offering is low. Largest annual amount received was approximately \$27,000. Full compliance would result in a Per Capita income line from the \$66,000. Churches respond well to the Association per capita invoice. This is a system used in many UCC Conference.

UAM2017-7: Motion to take the resolution to each individual Association for approval. (m/s/c)

UAM2017-8: Motion to Receive the Annual Reports in the Annual Conference booklet (m/s/c)

Note: This included annual reports from:

Conference Minister and four Associate Conference Ministers

Wider Church Ministries	Local church ministries	Investment Committee
Treasurer	Personnel Committee	Conference Secretary
Commission on Ministry	Partners in Education	UCCNY Women
Disaster Response Team	NY/HELP Honduras	Commission on Global Church
Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations		

RECOGNITION OF TEN YEARS' PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EKHN

David Gaewski invited Rainer Brunssen to the dais to celebrate the tenth anniversary partnership between UCCNY and EKHN. Rainer then offered a few words and a video highlighting the partnership. David and Dona then presented him with three gifts: a “God is Still Speaking” rainbow banner, a commemorative certificate and a UCC apron with the words, “God likes it well done.”

Because the business of the Annual Meeting was being accomplished ahead of schedule, the business planned for Plenary Session III was taken care of during Plenary Session II, as follows:

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RECOGNITION OF NEW OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) CHURCHES

Freeman Palmer celebrated and recognized these five new ONA congregations:

Congregational Christian UCC of Freehold
 Congregational Church of Manhasset
 St. James UCC of Hamburg
 West Center Congregational Church of Bronxville
 Zion UCC, Tonawanda

GOVERNANCE REPORT

Janelle Richardson presented the Governance Report – nominations for Conference Leadership (pages 38-39 of the meeting booklet):

New Leadership to be elected:

Moderator: Ms. Dona Roll

Vice Moderator: Rev. Judy VanKennen

Secretary: Rev. Barbara Wright

Treasurer: Ms. Yvette Wynn

Board Members Class of 2020: Rev. Joseph Connolly, Rev. Mark Bigelow, Rev. Justo Gonzalez

There were no nominees from the floor.

UMA2017-9: Motion from the Governance Team to cast one ballot for the slate of officers. Motion carried without dissent.

The new officers were installed.

NECROLOGY: Freeman Palmer read the list of authorized ministers of the New York Conference who had died life in the previous year:

Claude Anderson, Virginia Anderson, Jack Bacon, Judy Berges, Carol Gilley, Robert Nunes, Pearl Outlaw, Oscar Roberts, Felicia Walker-Wilson

NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING

The Rev. Paul Dreher-Wiberg, Moderator of the Oneida Association showed a brief video highlighting the attractions of Syracuse and issued an invitation to the 2018 Annual Meeting **June 8-9, 2018** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Syracuse.

Vice Moderator Dona Roll offered a small parting gift to Moderator Joe Medlin, who is leaving the New York Conference to accept a pastorate on the big Island of Hawaii at Hokoloa UCC. With a spoon standing in for a gavel, Moderator Medlin “passed the gavel” on to new Moderator Roll.

UAM2017-10: Motion to adjourn the Conference Annual Meeting (m/s/c) The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Worship with Holy Communion was held at 11 a.m., followed by lunch, and a joyous departure!
 Worship Planning Team, Liturgists and Musicians: (same as for Thursday evening).

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Wright

The Rev. Barbara Wright,
 Conference Secretary