



2023 Standing Rules of the Annual Meeting New York Conference of the United Church of Christ

1. Voting members must sign in as delegates at the time of registration. Voting information will be given before each vote is taken. Quorum will be determined by members present and registered. All proceedings of the annual meeting shall, unless otherwise provided for, be governed by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
2. No other business than that on the program as presented and adopted by the delegates, or other business as may logically emanate from it, will be considered, unless it is first presented to the Business Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Conference.
3. No delegate may speak more than twice to the same subject and the first speech shall be limited to two minutes and the second speech to one minute.
4. If a delegate wishes to speak to a subject, she/he/they must obtain permission from the meeting moderator to make his/her/their presentation and identify themselves and their stance on the subject (pro or con) before speaking. Discussion will be terminated by the Chair when one point of view becomes vacant but can be reopened by a 2/3 vote.
5. Any amendment to motion which, in the opinion of the Chair, substantially changes the force or intent of the motion shall be declared out of order until submitted to and approved by the Business Committee as a new motion.
6. All motions approved by the Business Committee for action must be distributed to the delegates in writing not less than four hours before coming to the floor for debate.
7. All motions and principal amendments (other than editorial) must be presented to the Moderator and/or Secretary in writing at the time of introduction.
8. When voting, delegates must be present.
9. Visitors shall have the privilege of the floor with voice but without vote and shall be subject to the same rules as apply to the delegates.

New York Conference of the United Church of Christ

2024 Total Income \$1,023,320

CHURCHES GIVE TO OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION OR REFORMED ASSOCIATION ASSESSMENT

We now call this Local Church Basic Support.

**61% of the total Income of the Conference comes from LCBS
\$625,000**

90% of this offering stays in the New York Conference to help support the work and missions of the Conference.

2022 RESULTS

Giving Range	Number of Churches	Total Income	% of Total Income
\$0	62	0.00	0%
\$1 to \$1,000	67	28,992.00	5%
\$1,001 to \$2,500	41	67,359.00	11%
\$2,500 to \$5,000	24	86,622.00	14%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	22	167,907.00	27%
\$10,000 and up	12	270,756.00	44%
	228	621,636.00	100%

THE 62 CHURCHES THAT DO NOT GIVE TO LCBS More than half worship fewer than 50 people

ASSOCIATION		
Black River	3	All worship under 50
Genesee Valley	7	All worship under 50
Hudson Mohawk	4	All worship under 50
Metro	25	8 do not report; 7 worship under 50
Oneida	4	All worship under 50
Reformed	3	2 do not report
Susquehanna	5	All worship under 50
Western	11	4 do not report; 7 worship under 50

7% OTHER CONFERENCE SUPPORT \$76,000

Per Capita paid by the Associations	\$45,000
Legal fees	\$5,500
Friends of the Conference	\$20,000
Strengthen the Church	\$5,500

The bill for Per Capita from the Association to your church will be **\$2.50 per member in 2024**



16% PROGRAM INCOME \$162,320

NYSOM	\$60,400
Support	\$29,300
Wider Church	\$30,000
Search & Call	\$1,000
Youth	\$35,000
Justice & Witness	\$6,620



16% INVESTMENT TRANSFER \$160,000

The amount that we need from our investments to balance our 2024 budget.



New York Conference of the United Church of Christ 2024 Total Expenses \$1,146,679

SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR: PROGRAM AREAS & STAFF SALARY ALLOCATIONS TO THOSE PROGRAMS

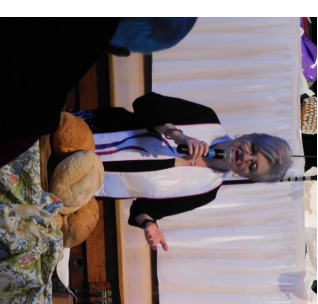


19% CLERGY & CONGREGATION SUPPORT \$217,847

Staff support for Individual Clergy, Congregations, Committees on Ministry, Commission on Ministry, Congregational Vitality, ONA, WISE, Conflict Mediation, New Church Starts, Church closures and new affiliations.

3% JUSTICE & WITNESS \$39,405

Culturally Responsive Ministry Training, Congregational Welcoming Diversity Inventory, Climate Justice, Commission on Justice. More than 125 people participated in our New & Right Spirit Anti-Racism book studies.



11% NYSOM \$126,005

The New York School of Ministry (NYSOM), offers continuing education for authorized ministers -- which includes: Boundary Awareness Training and Culturally Responsive Ministry Training -- plus educational opportunities for all who are interested in enhancing their ministries. Each semester we offer two 20-hour core ministry courses, learning events, short courses, and a ministry practicum, providing opportunities for all to learn as well as a path of preparation for ordination for MIDs in the NY Conference for whom seminary is not a reasonable option.



15% WIDER CHURCHES \$168,384

National basic support & other shared expenses, Annual meeting, General Synod, NY Council of Churches, Global Church, Ecumenism, Disaster Ministries, Conference Board & Committees.



31% ADMINISTRATION \$356,724

Continuing Education & Staff Development, Legal fees, Accounting & Audit fees. Employer Payroll Tax, Workers Comp, Disability and PFL, ACM's office space.



4% YOUTH \$41,411

Youth Ministry is a vital part of the ministries supported by the New York Conference. We offer state youth experiences every year but also in 2024 we will be part of regional event.

8% OFFICE & OUTSIDE SERVICES \$91,571

Building and Auto Insurance, technology expenses, telephone, postage. Building expenses for the Amistad Center.

2023 PROPOSED BY-LAW AMENDMENT

(Current Language)

ARTICLE V Governance

The Conference Board shall consist of no fewer than fourteen (14) members, nominated through the Conference Governance Team and elected at Conference Annual Meeting. The Conference Board will have as members: the Conference Minister, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, Secretary, one member from each association of the Conference, among whom at least one member will have administrative expertise, one member will have Congregational Development expertise, one member will have Wider Church expertise, one member will have Leadership Development expertise. Elected Conference Board members will be eligible to serve for two three-year consecutive terms. A representative of the Conference Personnel Committee shall serve as ex-officio member.

(Proposed Amendment) (changes in bold/italic)

ARTICLE V Governance

170 The Conference Board shall consist of **members**, nominated
171 through the Conference Governance Team and elected at Conference Annual Meeting. The
172 Conference Board **will include the Officers:** the Conference Minister, Moderator, Vice
173 Moderator, Treasurer, **and** Secretary. The Board membership shall be one member from
174 each association of the Conference ***and three (3) additional at large seats. The at-large***
175 ***seats shall be reserved exclusively for Persons of Color selected from the diversity within***
176 ***the Conference. The Governance Committee should make every effort to expand the***
177 ***breadth of the Conference geography in filling at-large seats. Each at large seat must be***
178 ***filled from differing associations so that no association holds more than two seats on the***
179 ***board, excluding the Officers.*** Elected Conference Board members will be eligible to serve
180 for two three-year consecutive terms. A representative of the Conference Personnel
181 Committee shall serve as ex-officio member.

BY-LAWS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY ASSOCIATION
of the NEW YORK CONFERENCE of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Effective October 1, 2023

ARTICLE I

NAME:

010. The name of this Association is the North Country Association of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES AND POWERS:

020. To express the oneness in Christ of the churches composing it and to make more effective their Christian witness and service.

030. To continue without break the ecclesiastical and legal identity of the Black River-St Lawrence and Essex Associations of the Congregational-Christian Churches, and those local churches within its boundaries which are not part of the United Church of Christ.

040. To determine, confer and certify to the standing local churches of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.

050. To determine, confer or remove, and certify to the standing of authorized ministers of the United Church of Christ.

060. To exercise the powers and perform the functions of an ecclesiastical council on request of a church or other parties concerned.

070. To stimulate the spiritual and missionary interests of the churches; to cooperate with the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and through the Conference with the United Church of Christ and its boards, agencies and instrumentalities.

080. To do everything which an Association of the United Church of Christ may do in the Spirit of Christ to extend the Gospel, advance true religion, promote education and encourage Christian charity.

090. Any adjustment of Association boundaries or transfer of membership of churches between Associations shall be done in consultation with and by approval of the Association concerned and the New York Conference.

100. The Association shall be guided by the most recent *Constitution and By-laws of the United Church of Christ* and its *Manual on Ministry*.

ARTICLE III

FAITH:

110. This Association accepts as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers, particularly as that faith is expressed in the Preamble of the most recent approved edition of the *Constitution of the United Church of Christ* and in the Statement of Faith adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, July 8, 1959.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP:

120. Churches

120.1 The United Church of Christ churches, and Congregational Christian Churches, located within its boundaries. Any local church whose articles or statement of faith are in essential agreement with that of this Association, and which, having covenanted with the Association to assume and fulfill faithfully the obligations of a member church as hereinafter set forth and has been recommended by the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Association, is received into membership by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Association.

130. Authorized Ministers

130.1 Ordained ministers who, as of the date of adoption of these By-Laws, hold their ministerial standing in the North Country Association.

130.2 Any person upon whom full ministerial standing is conferred through ordination by this Association in cooperation with a local church.

130.3 An ordained minister who, having been examined by the Committee on Church and Ministry and found to be qualified by virtue of their educational and theological attainments, knowledge of the history, polity and practices of the United Church of Christ, Christian faith and experience, and having been recommended by the Committee.

130.4 A minister licensed or commissioned by the Association to serve a local church or a particular calling.

130.5 The Association shall also recognize the most recent edition of the Manual on Ministry's definition of authorized ministers.

140. Honorary and Affiliated Members

140.1 The Conference Minister, other members of the Conference staff, official representatives of the General Synod, national boards, agencies and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ in attendance are Associate Delegates with voice but without vote.

140.2 An authorized minister of another denomination, serving a local church in North Country Association, who has requested and been granted dual standing by the Committee on Church and Ministry, may have the rights and privileges of such membership during the duration of the pastorate.

140.3 If their dual standing ceases, such persons shall not be elected officers nor continue to serve as officers of the Association, Conference, General Synod, nor delegates to General Synod.

150. Voting Credentials

150.1 All authorized ministers shall have voice and one vote at all duly called meetings of the Association. The standing of the authorized minister shall remain regardless of the standing of the current church served.

150.2 Each member church is entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association by four lay delegates. Such lay delegates shall have voice and vote at all duly called meetings of the Association.

150.3 Lay members of the Association Executive Council who are not delegates from their churches shall have voice and vote at all duly called meetings of the Association.

ARTICLE V

PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER CHURCHES:

160. A church holding membership in this Association has, in covenant, a God-given responsibility to the Association, its labors and its witness, even as the Association has, in covenant, a God-given responsibility to the well-being and aspirations of each member church. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

160.1 A church in good standing is one that accepts the responsibilities of the member churches through its active participation in the Semi-Annual meetings of the Association and strives to support the Association financially or through per capita assessments.

160.2 Per capita assessment payments are due from the date the churches are billed through December 31st.

170. The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. (See #18 of the UCC Constitution.)

180. No church may be removed from the roster of the Association of Member Churches except upon recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry and by two-thirds vote of credentialed voters present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Association, due notice of the proposed action having been given to the parties concerned.

190. A church which votes to leave the Association is removed from the Association rolls if such action and vote was done in accordance with the New York State Religious Corporation Law and the local by-laws.

ARTICLE VI

PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORIZED MINISTERS:

200. Just as Member Churches and the Association have, in covenant, mutual responsibility laid upon them by God for each other's well-being and aspirations, so have authorized ministers and the Association. All authorized ministers serving in the Association agree to be faithful in attendance at meetings of the Association and in participation in its work.

210. Any authorized ministerial members failing for two years to report either in person or by letter to the Registrar and/or the Committee on Church and Ministry shall forfeit their membership and standing in the Association, but such membership and standing may be restored on their application to the Committee on Church and Ministry and approval by that body and a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting of the Association.

220. The privilege and responsibility of witnessing to the Gospel belongs to every member of each local church. The Association diligently seeks, therefore, in concert with the New York Conference and the United Church of Christ, to provide opportunities for the members of its churches to exercise such gifts of teaching, evangelizing, healing, preaching, and administration as God has bestowed upon them.

230. The Association recognizes that God calls certain persons to service for various forms of ministry in the Church. This calling is recognized by ordination, licensure, commissioning, or other, appropriate categories and services of dedication.

240. An authorized minister under fifty-five years of age who withdraws from active service in the ministry may apply to the Association through the Committee on Church and Ministry for a Leave of Absence. The Association may grant said person Leave of Absence for one year at a time. Except in special circumstances, such Leave of Absence is not granted for more than five successive years.

250. Authorized ministers retiring from active ministry by reason of age or sickness shall not forfeit ministerial standing in this Association or their vote.

260. Ordained ministers who are in good and regular standing in this Association may receive a transfer to the ecclesiastical body of their choice upon written request to the Registrar and provided that such request does not violate the most recently approved By-laws of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE VII

MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION:

270. Regular meetings of the Association shall be held in the spring and autumn at such time and place as the Association may designate or, lacking such designation, as may be determined by the Moderator and Registrar. Any or all delegates may participate in a meeting of the Association by means of a telephone or video conference or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time.

280. Special meetings may be called by the Registrar upon request of the Association Executive Council, or upon the written request of at least four churches in the Association.

290. Ecclesiastical Councils may be called by the Registrar at the request of the Committee on Church and Ministry.

300. Notice of all meetings of the Association shall be made in writing by the Registrar to all churches and authorized ministers prior to the second Sunday preceding the date of the meeting.

310. Sixteen persons from not less than seven member churches of the Association, including four authorized ministers of the Association shall constitute a quorum except for Ecclesiastical Councils when four ordained ministers are required.

ARTICLE VIII

OFFICERS AND DUTIES:

320. The officers of this Association shall be a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar (who may also serve as Treasurer), Treasurer and Ecumenical Officer.

320.1 Terms of officers shall begin with their election at the Spring Association meeting and shall be for one year.

320.2 The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

320.3 Following the completion of two terms, the Moderator and Vice-Moderator may be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of one term.

320.3 The Registrar and Treasurer may serve additional terms upon the recommendation of the Association Executive Council.

330. Moderator and Vice-Moderator

330.1 The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Association and the Association Executive Council and shall be the Chairperson of the Association Executive Council.

330.2 The Vice-Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in cases of his or her absence or inability to act, or by request of the Moderator.

330.3 When possible, the office of Moderator shall alternate between an authorized minister and a layperson.

330.4 When possible, the Vice-Moderator shall succeed to the office of Moderator.

340. Registrar and Treasurer

340.1 The Registrar shall keep the roll of the churches and ministers of the Association and the recorded minutes of its meetings and shall issue calls for meetings.

340.2 The Registrar shall conduct correspondence and render such other services as pertains to the duties of this office.

340.3 The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all money of the Association.

340.4 The Treasurer shall present a detailed report of all income/disbursements at each meeting.

340.5 The Auditor will serve at the direction of the Executive Council and shall examine assets, receipts, disbursements, supporting accounts and disclosures, as well as the accounting principles and practices being used by the Treasurer. The Auditor shall report yearly to the Association at the Spring Association meeting and advise the Executive Council.

ARTICLE IX

ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

350. The Association Executive Council shall consist of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar, Treasurer, Ecumenical Officer, and the Chair or a representative of the Committee on Church and Ministry and the Nominating Committee. If a program or fellowship is recognized by the Association or Executive Council for a particular event or time period, their chair or representative will attend and provide a report as appropriate. At least five Association member churches must be represented on the Executive Council, otherwise up to two at large members will be elected for a one-year term to ensure better representation of the Association.

350.1 Association Executive Council members are expected to attend Association Executive Council and Semi-Annual Association meetings.

350.2 The Moderator shall inquire regarding an Association Executive Council member's ability to serve if that Council member is absent for three of the five Association meetings in one year. If the member in question is deemed inactive, that person may be asked to resign from the position.

350.3 The Nominating Committee shall seek candidates to fill vacancies annually and the Association Executive Council may appoint individuals to fill vacancies created by the unexpired terms to be voted upon at the following Association meeting.

360. Ex officio members shall include the New York Conference staff representative and the member of the New York Conference Board from the North Country Association with whom the Executive Council shall work in close cooperation with on all applicable matters.

370. The standing committees of the Association shall be:

370.1 Committee on Church and Ministry

370.2 Nominating Committee

380. The Association Executive Council may recognize certain programs or community interest groups which shall be groups having a written and common purpose contributing to the life of the Association, its Member Churches, or its authorized ministers. Each shall possess a set of rules governing its operation and may request funds through the Executive Council from the annual budget.

380.1 The Association at its meetings or through the Association Executive Council may establish an Ad Hoc committee or appoint people to special programs or groups as it may determine necessary to accomplish and perform specific projects or to deal with particular areas of responsibility or concern.

380.2 Such examples include: Spiritual Life, Youth, Social Justice, Missions, Outreach, Stewardship, Creation Justice, Poverty & Homelessness and such others as the Association may authorize.

390. The Association Executive Council shall:

- 390.1 Carry out the stated goals of the Association reviewing and coordinating its work and promoting in every way the well-being of churches.
- 390.2 Represent the Association in emergencies that may arise between meetings of the Association.
- 390.3 Prepare the programs of such meetings.
- 390.4 Prepare the budget with the methods of raising needed revenue for presentation at the Fall Association meeting.
- 390.5 Have general oversight of all expenditures.
- 390.6 Fill vacancies on standing committees between Association meetings and approved at the next Association meeting.
- 390.7 Transact such business as may be necessary.
- 400. The Association Executive Council shall meet at least three times each year.
- 400.1 Five members of the Association Executive Council shall constitute a quorum, and the vote of a majority of the members present shall decide any question, except as noted elsewhere in these by-laws.
- 410. The Association Executive Council shall secure an Auditor who shall report at the Spring meeting.

ARTICLE X

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH AND MINISTRY:

- 420. There shall be a Committee on Church and Ministry consisting of nine persons elected for a term of three years each and arranged so that three shall be elected annually.
- 420.1 No less than five of the nine members shall be authorized ministers holding standing in the Association. It is strongly suggested that no less than three of the nine members are laypersons to allow for a different perspective and representation.
- 420.2 The Committee on Church and Ministry shall elect its own Chairperson.
- 420.3 The Committee may appoint ex officio members to the Committee as deemed necessary. Ex officio members will have voice without vote.
- 420.4 The Committee will notify the Association Executive Council of all ex officio appointments, purpose and terms.
- 430. The Committee shall maintain and preserve confidential records of its proceedings. These records shall be in the custody of the Committee chair.
- 430.1 The Committee shall appoint a scribe from among their members, who will be responsible for communicating information to the Registrar as applicable.
- 440. The Committee shall be guided by the most recent Constitution of the United Church of Christ and the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ.
- 450. The Committee shall review the credentials of local churches applying for membership in the Association and shall recommend to the Association those which it deems to be qualified.
- 460. The Committee shall act upon the credentials of persons applying for ordination to the ministry in the United Church of Christ and authorized ministerial standing in the Association and shall recommend to the Association those whom it deems qualified.

470. The Committee shall have full authority to confer and remove standing for all authorized ministers. Appeal for review of the process may be made to the Association Executive Council.

470.1 The Committee shall have authority to confer and remove a candidate's status as a Member in Discernment.

480. The Association holds ministerial misconduct to be a violation of pastoral ethics. When a concern about a minister's fitness for ministry is raised, the Committee on Church and Ministry will follow the most current procedures outlined in the most recent edition of the Manual on Ministry, the NY Conference's Unified Fitness Review Board process, and other supplemental documents and resources provided by the UCC.

490. The Committee shall evaluate the support given to all authorized ministers and recommend or initiate ways to improve support. The Committee shall assist in church/pastor relations when called upon, or as necessary.

ARTICLE XI

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

500. The Nominating Committee shall conduct its business as a committee. The senior member of the Committee shall serve as the Chair. The Committee shall appoint a Recorder who will be responsible for transmitting records to the Registrar. The Chair may also serve as Recorder.

500.1 The Committee shall consist of four members appointed by the Association Executive Council to serve terms of three years each, so that at least one new member is appointed each year. Members completing a term shall be eligible for reappointment after a lapse of one year.

500.2 The Association Registrar may serve as an ex officio member of the Committee, maintaining a database of members' past services, job descriptions for each position, and contact information for pastors of Association churches.

510. The Committee shall submit a slate of potential nominees and alternates to the Association Executive Council no later than final Association Executive Council meeting before the Spring Association meeting each year. At the Spring Association meeting, the Committee shall present a slate of nominations for Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar, Treasurer, Ecumenical Officer, and when applicable Association Executive Council at large members, candidates for the New York Conference Board Representative (every third year) and candidates for General Synod Delegate (every fourth year) as well as candidates to fill vacant positions.

520. The Committee shall be committed to the goals and objectives of the mission of the Association in making nominations, giving due consideration whenever possible, to equitable representation by geographical area, age, gender, race, laity, and clergy, and shall take into consideration the respective strengths of the local churches within the Association.

530. The Committee shall take into consideration the gifts, skills, and experiences of candidates to match them with positions for which they are best suited whenever possible. Prospective candidates shall not be contacted by a member of the Nominating Committee until discussed and approved by the Committee.

540. Nominations for all positions may be made from the floor at the Association meeting when elections are held.

ARTICLE XII

FISCAL YEAR

550. The fiscal year of the Association shall begin January 1st and end on December 31st and shall begin on January 1st of the first calendar year following adoption of these by-laws.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

560. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of credentialed voters present and voting at any regular meeting of the Association, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, provided that the notice of proposed amendment(s) is sent in writing to the churches and authorized ministers at least four weeks before the proposed amendment is acted upon.

ARTICLE XIV

TERM LIMITS

570. All persons elected or appointed to positions can serve two terms in any given function, unless defined elsewhere in these by-laws, and cannot be re-elected or re-appointed without at least one year intervening.

570.1 The Executive Council may appoint extended terms or members to special groups or committees by special vote when required to do so in order to complete the work of the Association.

ARTICLE XV

RULE OF ORDER

580. Business shall be transacted by a majority of credentialed voters present and voting at any duly called meeting of the Association, a quorum being present, except as otherwise provided in these by-laws.

590. The order of business shall be in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise provided in these by-laws.

Racial Justice Coordinator NY Conference Annual Report 2022-23

Programming

- Collaborated with a team of clergy to develop and rollout the Culturally Responsive Ministry Training (CRMT) for Clergy. Co-facilitated the program four times and led the last hour (the white affinity group portion) during two additional sessions. A total of 120 clergy participated in the CRMTs that I co-facilitated. Additional CRMT sessions were also led by other facilitators.
- Co-developed a specialized version of the CRMT for Committees on Ministry and co-facilitated the session with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams.
- Offered three programs for five congregations in the Western Association after the mass shooting in Buffalo. The sessions focused on the following:
 - History of Racism
 - Micro-aggressions
 - Reparations
- Began collaborating with Rev. Jason Boyd, pastor of First Congregational UCC in Norwich to have his congregation partner with other local congregations for a year-plus-long journey that will involve liberation listening, shared learning through the New and Right Spirit “Let’s Talk Race” program, and shared community vision-casting and then “living into” the vision. We anticipate at least five congregations, including First Congregational UCC, Norwich, to engage with this program.

Community Presentations

- Offered a program titled, “Facing Racism with Faith”, at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Syracuse in collaboration with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams. There were 25 people who participated in this ecumenical program.
- Led a program, “Building Bridges by Embracing Diversity” for the Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York. Thirty people participated.

Book Studies

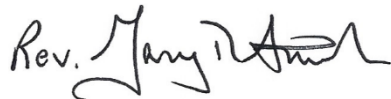
- This year’s book discussions centered voices of color to give a broader perspective of cultural and lived experience. The books used were written by people from the following cultural backgrounds: African American, Moroccan, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Korean. In the eight book discussions, 125 people participated.
- The following books were used this year:
 - *Loneliest Americans* by Jay Caspian Kang
 - *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee
 - *Dog Whistle Politics* by Ian Haney Lopez
 - *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
 - *Undocumented Americans* by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio
 - *How the Word Is Passed* by Clint Smith
 - *Conditional Citizens* by Laila Lalami
 - *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Other

- Participated in a meeting with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams and the Kentucky-Indiana Conference to discuss the racial justice work of the New York Conference, and to share ideas about programming and best practices.
- Facilitated a Racial Justice Working Group at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Syracuse. In that capacity I collaborated with church members to develop three “Action Teams” that are currently working on actions and programming related to antiracism. Approximately 35 people comprise the three “Action Teams.” The focus of the “Action Teams” are as follows:
 - African American Music – working to bring African American musician and singer, Kim Harris, to Syracuse for a public learning program on the history and meaning of African American music.
 - Art and Race – working to incorporate more inclusive signage for the church and to partner with a local artist who will create a work of art related to race that will be shared with the community.
 - Reparations – working to educate people about this challenging topic and engage in the process of re-developing the NYS Route 81 corridor.
- Met with the Cortland LGBTQ Center (along with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams) to prepare for the next CRMT module.

NOTE: This work involved more than 100 volunteer hours for the UCC-NY Conference.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Gary T. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being the most prominent.

Rev. Gary T. Smith, Racial Justice Coordinator, NY Conference, UCC

New York Conference, United Church of Christ
COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS
Annual Report, June 2023

ECUMENICAL CONNECTIONS

North American Partners

- We continue partnerships with the United Church of Canada, the Reformed Church in America, and the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ, sharing programs, resources, and information whenever possible.
- Rev. Howard Cain has been our interface with the Eastern Ontario Outaouais and the Nakonha:ka Regional Councils of the United Church of Canada, and has kept abreast of the continued restructuring of the regions. Rev. Jan Jorgensen, ordained in the UCC, is serving the Kahnawake United Church in the Montreal area. The commission sent a donation to help with the translation of the Bible into the Mohawk language.
- The Reformed Church in America is engaged in a 2-year plan of restructuring, which will likely make it more difficult for churches to hold dual affiliation. Meanwhile, five additional RCA churches have become dually aligned and have joined the Reformed Association of the NY Conference UCC.

NY State Council of Churches (NYSCOC)

We continue our financial support of the NYSCOC, where Rev. Peter Cook serves as Executive Director, Gary VanKennen serves as President of the Executive Committee, and Rev. Alan Dailey represents the NY Conference on the Council and serves as Vice-President of the Executive Committee. Peter and Gary attended the World Council of Churches Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in August.

Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau (EKHN)

- Gospel Choir In the summer of 2022, Rev. Carolyn Blair spent 3-months as Sabbatical Pastor at First Congregational Church, Waukesha WI. This was an offshoot of Carolyn's work with the NYC Conference Gospel Choir (which was born from our partnership with the EKHN), and the Wisconsin Gospellers (who have a partnership with the *Evangelische Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz* --EKBO).
- Visits to EKHN Many thanks to youth workers in Frankfurt and Offenbach, who hosted Rev. Ryan Henderson in a planning session for youth exchanges. Thanks also to Rainer Brunssen, Rev. Birgit Hamrich, Jessica Kogoi, Jonas Pabst, and Dr. Wolfram Wirbelauer for hosting Randy and Martha Stone, who visited the Frankfurt region for a few days in July 2022.
- Leadership Transition Rev. Birgit Hamrich has left the Ecumenical Center in Frankfurt to take on the position of Dean in the Deanery of Büdinger Land (northeast of Frankfurt). We wish her well in her new position. She is succeeded by Rev. Christina Schnepel, who is serving as the new Officer for Europe, USA and the Action "Hope for Eastern Europe.
- A delegation from the EKHN, including Rev. Christina Schnepel, Rev. Detlev Knoche, Director of the Ecumenical Center, Rev. Volker Jung, President of the EKHN, and Mrs. Claudia Jung, will be visiting the NY Conference in July, 2023. They will then attend the UCC General Synod in Indianapolis as well.
- Internships We hope to revive this program as the US restrictions on visas for religious workers loosen in the coming years.

Kirchenkreis Berlin Stadtmitte (KKBS)

- Visit to Berlin In August, 2022, Peter Cook visited KKBS partners in Berlin, in connection with his trip to the World Council of Churches. Christoph Schmid, Transatlantic Partnership Coordinator for the KKBS, will attend General Synod in Indianapolis in July, 2023.
- Covenant Renewal After six years of partnership, the KKBS and the NY Conference have decided to renew our covenant and extend our partnership. A new covenant document will be signed in July, 2023, at General Synod.
- Leadership Transition Berthold Höcker will be retiring from his position as Superintendent in December, 2023. Silke Radosh-Hinder and Matthias Lohenner will succeed him as co-Superintendents.

Evangelische Kirche in Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz (EKBO) and Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts (ELA)

- In October, 2022, Melva Victorino coordinated a visit to NY City for a delegation from the Berlin area, including Church President Mr. Joachim Liebig (Protestant Church of Anhalt); General Superintendent/Regional Bishop Ms. Theresa Rinecker (Goerlitz Region of EKBO); Rev. Dr. Christof Theilemann, Director of Berlin Mission and Ecumenical Center; Rev. Ms. Barbara Deml, Deputy Director of Berlin Mission; Ecumenical Officer; and Alexander Benatar, Representative of EKBO. Their itinerary included a wide range of churches and ministries in the Metro Association. Although we do not have official partnership with these churches, we are connected through their partnerships with several other UCC Conferences.

EKD Forum (formerly UEK Forum)

- Rev. Martha Koenig Stone serves as Co-Chair of this national steering committee for the UCC's partnership with the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD). This year marks our 42nd year of *Kirchengemeinschaft* (ecclesial communion) between the *Union Evangelischer Kirchen* (UEK) and the UCC. Because the UEK has now been subsumed into the larger EKD (which includes not only the Reformed and United churches in Germany but also the Lutheran churches), our forum now has a new name.
- As this report is being written, a delegation of six from the UCC is on the way to the *Kirchentag* (an international gathering of Protestants from all over Germany and their ecumenical partners from around the world), held this year from June 6-11 in Nuremberg. Dr. Randall Stone is representing the NY Conference at this gathering and will attend a luncheon hosted by the EKH. Rev. Traci Blackmon will lead a workshop on "Black Lives Still Matter and serve on a panel on "Theology between Crisis and Catastrophe"; the delegation will host an open mic session on what it means to be a "Just Peace Church"; and Rev. Blackmon will be the preacher at an English language communion service, led by members of the UCC delegation along with Adele Halliday of the United Church of Canada and several German partners from the EKD.
- Rev. Ute Hedrich is now serving as Executive Secretary of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and Head of the Middle and the Far East, Australia and Pacific Desk. Ute visited our Cleveland and Washington DC offices in May, 2023, and coordinated the planning for and hosting of the UCC delegation to Kirchentag. We look forward to working with her in the years to come.

United Reformed Church, Northern Synod, United Kingdom

Rev. Chris Lawrence continues his work with InnerCHANGE East Harlem, a small ecumenical community in NYC that is pioneering a new initiative with partners in the UK and other parts of the USA. Called “urban village” they are hoping to foster debate and practical initiatives around the crisis of local churches in inner-city locations that have disconnected from neighbors, because of the almost total absence of local congregation members who still actually live within these neighborhoods. InnerCHANGE has established a 501(c)3 called EL BARRIO HOMES, an investment prospectus for those interested in supporting us with interest free equity-linked loans for 7 year terms to help make deeply affordable housing an option for church members being pushed out of their neighborhoods. Chris is hosting conversations in the US and UK on Zoom about leaning into the neighborhood, particularly inner city neighborhoods in larger cities. By mid 2024 they hope to have material in the form of recorded webinars and podcasts ready for distribution. The idea is to grow the conversation about how URC and UCC congregations in these sorts of neighborhoods might reimagine mission in order to become “hyper local.”

Puerto Rico

Maria Vives keeps us abreast of needs and developments in Puerto Rico. Damaris Whitaker has moved back to Puerto Rico and is our contact there. Recovery from the multiple hurricanes has been slow. The Commission has sent another financial donation to help with relief efforts through a group called Proyecto Matria.

Liberia

The Commission helped to support the Rev. Dr. Ruby Wilson on a trip to Monrovia, Liberia in April 2023, where she spent two weeks teaching seminarians.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS

- Rev. Lori Keller Burns continues to work with the Network of Religious Communities in Buffalo.
- Rev. Mark Lukens and Rev. Dwight Wolter continue to work with the Interfaith Institute on Long Island.
- In collaboration with the NY State Council of Churches, Gary VanKennen, Howard Cain, and Peter Cook continue to monitor the ongoing human rights abuses in India. Gary spent two months in India earlier this year. We are concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, and other non-Hindus, some of which is supported financially by Hindu nationalists here in the US.
- The Commission stands ready to assist local churches in their efforts to connect with persons of other faiths, counter fear, increase knowledge, and promote peace across faith communities. Please let us know of your projects and needs.

Respectfully submitted by the Rev. Martha Koenig Stone, Chair, on behalf of the Commission:

Rev. Howard Cain, Rev. Peter Cook, Ms. Sue Frost, Rev. Ryan Henderson, Rev. Lori Keller Burns, Rev. Chris Lawrence, Rev. Mark Lukens, Ms. Melva Victorino, Ms. Maria Vives, Rev. Dr. Ruby Wilson, Rev. Felicity Wright.

Report of the NY Conference Commission on Ministry

Rev. Dr. Ann M. Van Cleef, Chair

The Commission on Ministry advocates for the New York Conference Authorized Ministers and Members in Discernment in all settings. The Commission meets four times a year, although we occasionally have extra meetings to discuss specific topics. All meetings, with the exception of our May meeting, are accomplished via Zoom. We normally have a face-to-face meeting the morning of the Consultation for Committees on Church and Ministry. This year, we will once again be meeting in person on Tuesday, May 16, at the Homer Congregational Church in Homer, NY. Here is a summary of our responsibilities, as well as what we have accomplished in the past year.

New York School of Ministry. Known as NYSOM, Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine of the Conference Staff serves as Dean.

Fall 2022 courses included: Congregational Life, Rev. Mark Lawson, Ph.D., Instructor; Liturgy & Worship, Rev. Michael L. Sloan, D.Min., Instructor; and Introduction to Christian Theology, Rev. Steve Johnson, Ph.D., Instructor.

Spring, 2023 courses included: Congregational Life, Rev. J. Mark Lawson, Ph.D., instructor; American Church History, Rev. Steven Johnson, Ph.D., instructor.

In the Christian Leadership Program, there are four students from three Associations (Black River / St. Lawrence, Reformed, and Western). In the Word and Sacrament Program, there are nine students from five Associations (Black River / St. Lawrence, Genesee Valley, Metro, Oneida, and Western) and one student from the Fairfield East Association, Southern New England Conference.

The Fall Learning Event was called, “The Pastor as Teacher: Reclaiming a Neglected Call, led by Mark Lawson. Thanks to a generous grant from the Jeanine Heller Foundation, this event is free of charge for all MIDs.

Our Ministry Core Course Fees remain the same: 20-Hour Course Fees for NY Conference Participants: Credit \$250, Audit \$175, Repeat Course Audit \$100 20-Hour Course Fees for Non-NY Conference Participants: Credit \$275, Audit \$200. An additional \$70 will be charged for the Distance Learning Support Fee.

The Supply Preacher Certificate Program will be offered in 2023-2024.

The good news about NYSOM is spreading; not only are there students from New York and New England, but there have been inquiries from other parts of the country as well.

The Commission on Ministry would like to express its deep gratitude to Dr. Marjorie Purnine for her excellent leadership of NYSOM.

Boundary Awareness Training (BAT): Our BAT Coordinator and Curriculum writer is Rev. Gary Gossel.

Basic BAT is offered as needed via Zoom by the Conference, and Refresher Trainings are offered by the Conference and by Associations, who have the option to offer the class in-person or Zoom. Boundary Awareness Training is required every three years.

There will be a Zoom training for those trainers who did not get trained in 2022 All Boundary Awareness Training in the New York Conference must be taught by people who have received Conference training.

The Commission put special emphasis on retiree issues, as retirees face their own special set of boundary issues. A separate BAT curriculum has been developed by Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams; the first training took place on April 28, 2022, and subsequent trainings will be posted in *Happenings*. This training is for retirees and those who are considering retirement within the next few years.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Webinars: New York State Labor Law, section 201-G(1) and (2) requires all people employed in New York State to take a sexual harassment prevention training class each year. This includes clergy and church employees. Penny Cannon, and Charlaine Apsel, of Practical Resources for Churches, have developed a curriculum for this, which is offered as a 90-minute interactive Webinar. Although New York State has a PowerPoint presentation for this, PRC's on-line class offerings will make it easier for churches to comply with this law.

Scholarship Program: Rev. Susan Fast coordinates this program, with Lisa Delgado of the Conference Office and ACM Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine assisting. In the past, this was a scholarship-loan program, but several years ago, the Commission voted to eliminate the loan repayment component. Scholarship funds are available for Members in Discernment who are enrolled in seminary or in NYSOM.

This past year, we awarded five scholarships. Congratulations to the following recipients: Cydney Badger (GVA), Vanessa Pugh-Reefer (Metro), Jonathan Reidel (Hudson-Mohawk), Leo Wolters Tejera (Western), and Marcia Tolman (Western).

Compensation Guidelines. Rev. Dr. Ann Van Cleef works on the guidelines. The Commission updated them in 2014 so that people who pursue further theological education are compensated accordingly. In 2015, we added columns to accommodate people who had taken seminary classes beyond the M.Div level, but are not pursuing a Doctorate. For 2024, the suggested compensation will be raised by 4%. The new guidelines will be published on the Conference Website in August. People who need the guidelines prior to August should just add 4% to last year's numbers.

Consultation for Committees on Authorized Ministry. This Consultation is held every year, and is a training session for Association Committees on Authorized Ministry.

The 2022 Consultation took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 10 – 11, and was hosted by the good people of Homer Congregational Church in Homer, NY. MESA Staff members Rev. Renee Jackson, Minister for Ministerial Formation were with us in person, and Rev. Tara Barber, Minister for Ministerial Support and Accountability joined us on Zoom. In addition, several Conference Staff members led sessions. Conference Minister Rev. David Gaewski gave a final talk as Conference Minister, and was applauded enthusiastically by all in attendance.

Conflict Mediation Team and Training. We had several people Conference-wide trained in conflict mediation and restorative circles. However, churches have not been using these people, so the Conference Staff recommended (and the Commission affirmed the recommendation with a vote) to suspend the program.

Response Team and Training. The purpose of the Response Team is to conduct interviews when a Fitness Review takes place. At the present time, 14 people in the Conference have been trained as members of the Response Team. Transitional Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Marsha

Williams oversees the Response Team and conducts the training. New members are needed.

Unified Fitness Review Board (UFRB). As it is very difficult for members of an Association Committee on Authorized Ministry to conduct a Fitness Review for a colleague, the Conference-wide UFRB allows for people from other Associations to be trained to conduct a Fitness Review. Rev. Valerie Meyer chairs the UFRB. Various Conference Staff members are assigned to this Board, depending on the situation. New members are needed.

Continuing Education. Our Associations now require 25 hours of Continuing Education per year. (The Western Association requires 75 hours every three years.) The Commission on Ministry urges the Associations and Conference to distribute CE certificates that state the number of hours earned at the conclusion of workshops and BAT sessions. Continuing Education opportunities are published each week in Happenings, as well as on the drop-down menu under Ministries on the NY Conference website. In addition, Practical Resources for Churches offers many opportunities for CE credit through their webinars.]

A Continuing Education Institute will be held on Thursday, June 15, as part of the Conference Annual Meeting in Niagara Falls. Participants may choose one of three course offerings: *Culturally Responsive Ministry Training*, *The New Face of Grief*, or *Forming a 21st Century Christian Religious Imagination*. On Friday, June 16, an additional course called *Liberation Listening – A Spiritual Practice and A Model for Ministry*.

Culturally Responsive Ministry Training for Authorized Ministers: All of our Association Committees on Ministry have voted to make this training mandatory for all Authorized Ministers, and, for Metro Association Clergy, Module 1, *Race and Culture*, will fulfill the Anti-Racism training requirement. 65 participants Conference-wide took this class in 2002.

Guidelines for Pastors Leaving a Call. These written guidelines clarify boundaries for clergy as well as congregations when a Pastor leaves a call. Rev. John Werley and Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams worked on this project for two years. The guidelines are available as a resource on the Conference website.

Commission on Ministry Personnel. New member: Rev. Barbara Toll is our new Hudson-Mohawk Liaison. Many thanks to Rev. Hafidah Saadiqah for representing Hudson-Mohawk on the Commission.

Rev. John Hottenstein served as Scholarship Chair for many years, and has now retired. Thank you, John, for all of your hard work and organizing. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

Rev. Susan Fast, who formerly served the Commission as the NYSOM Student Representative has stepped into the position of Scholarship Chair. Thank you, Susan, for taking on this important calling. And, congratulations on your new position at The First Congregational Church of Ithaca!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams for her years of service as Conference Staff Liaison to our Commission. She brought leadership, encouragement, fresh ideas, and a lot of energy to the table. It has been a real pleasure to work with her as Conference Staff Liaison; she has brought those same gifts to her new position as Transitional Conference Minister.

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine has stepped in as our Conference Staff Liaison. Her knowledge, energy, and organizational skills are incredible, and I love working with her.

I would also like to thank each and every member of the Commission for their service. It is a joy to work with this outstanding group of people.

The members of the Commission on Ministry include:

+John Werley	Black River / St. Lawrence Association
+Valerie Meyer	Genesee Valley Association
+Barbara Toll	Hudson-Mohawk Association
+Ruth Shaffer	Metropolitan Association
+Lynn Sullivan	Metropolitan Association
+Mike Grinnals	Oneida Association
+Julia Turner	Reformed Association
+Ann Van Cleef	Suffolk Association; COM Chair
Susan (Sue) Frost	Susquehanna Association
+Jeremy Lopez	Western Association
+Rev. Gary Gossel	BAT Coordinator
+Marjorie Purnine	NYSOM Dean and Conference Staff
Joanne Nugent-Ward	COM Secretary
+Susan Fast	Scholarship Chair

(+ Denotes Authorized Clergy)

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Ann M. Van Cleef,
Chair, Commission on Ministry