

**53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference - United Church of Christ
June 12-14, 2015 | College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota**

PLENARY SESSION #1

GATHERING MUSIC

Led by Aaron Swetska.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Annual Meeting Planning Work Group (AMPWG) member Rev. Beth Donaldson described the arc of worship through the weekend, and led the body in gathering Open Worship. AMPWG co-chairs Leslie Amundson and Pam DeMarce welcomed delegates and visitors to the 53rd Annual Meeting, and invited first-time attendees to stand and be recognized. Those who have attended previous Annual Meetings were asked to welcome first-time attendees, and join them at meals or break-out times. Amundson introduced last year's Annual Meeting video project *Why the UCC?* and invited all gathered to participate in this year's project *What does it mean to 'Be the Church'?* with filmed interviews through Saturday evening. Conference Minister Shari Prestemon welcomed all gathered, and introduced the Conference staff.

Rev. Steve Boorsma, Associate Conference Minister

Rev. Rick Wagner, Associate Conference Minister

Wade Zick, Associate Conference Minister of Faith Formation for Children and Youth

Lese Wright, Financial Development Officer

Barbara Nilles, Finance Team

Sandy Peterson, Administrative Assistant to the Conference Minister

Marita Karlisch, Administrative Assistant to the Associate Conference Ministers

Zac Norenberg, Administrative Assistant to the ACM of Faith Formation & Registrar for PPC

Gigi Nauer, Pilgrim Point Camp Site Manager and Program Director

Jenny Buskey, Pilgrim Point Camp Assistant Director

CALL TO ORDER Moderator Cindy Mueller called the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ to order at 2:40 p.m. on Friday, June 12, 2015.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Secretary of the Conference, Maureen Engelhardt gave the credentials report: 157 delegates representing 62 churches. Mueller declared a quorum for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ORGANIZING MOTIONS

DeMarce and Amundson presenting organizing motions.

Amundson, on behalf of the AMPWG, **moved the approval of the Procedures and Rules Regarding Business Sessions as printed and distributed for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Motion passed.**

Amundson, on behalf of the AMPWG, **moved the adoption of the Agenda as printed and distributed for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Motion passed.**

DeMarce, on behalf of the AMPWG, **moved the acceptance of the written reports as posted on the Minnesota Conference of the UCC website for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Motion passed.**

Amundson introduced James Snoxell, member of the St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, who will serve as Parliamentarian.

Amundson, on behalf of the AMPWG, moved the appointment of James Snoxell as the Parliamentarian of the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Motion passed.

DeMarce, on behalf of the AMPWG, moved the adoption of the Minutes of the June 2014 Annual Meeting as posted on the Minnesota Conference of the UCC website for the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Motion passed.

Jean Ostrom, on behalf of the AMPWG, described the process for participating in Speak Outs!

WELCOME

Rev. Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister, welcomed the delegates and visitors to this 53rd Annual Meeting of the Conference.

RECOGNITION OF HONORED GUESTS

Prestemon moved that the following honored guests and presenters be approved for Voice without Vote at the 53rd Annual Meeting:

Reverend Dr. Jennifer Harvey, Drake University
Reverend David Moyer, Cornerstone Fund
Reverend Dr. Barbara Holmes, President of UTS
Reverend John Lee, UTS Chaplain
Sandy Lindahl, Lindahl Consultants
Josh Larson, Insurance Board
Randy Monson, Insurance Board
Kim Shaffer, member First Congregational Mankato
Bob Peterson, member UCC New Brighton
Renee Pfenning, Disaster Coordinator for the MN Conference

Prestemon moved that Voice with Vote be approved for the following Ministers currently serving member local churches of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ at the 53rd Annual Meeting:

Rev. Tom Porter, Congregational Church (UCC) of Excelsior
Rev. Daniel Maiden, Granite Falls/Montevideo UCC
Rev. Lisa Johnson, First UCC, Zumbrota
Rev. Leslie Moughty, First Congregational UCC, Brainerd
Rev. Lauren Snell, Federated Church, Morris
Rev. Dennis McKee, Gaylord UCC
Rev. Michelle Webber, First Congregational, Moorhead
Rev. Lora Sturm, St. John's UCC, Faribault
Rev. Steve Boorsma, Associate Conference Minister

Motion Passed.

OCWM MOMENT

Bob Peterson, member of the OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) subcommittee of the Finance Committee, introduced the pink cards in the Annual Meeting packets, printed with BTYBYOCWMG. (Brought to You by Your OCWM Gifts). Delegates and visitors were invited to wave the card when speakers bring news of events or programs funded by OCWM.

NOMINATING WORK GROUP

Rev. Rick Wagner, Associate Conference Minister and staff liaison to the Nominating Work Group, introduced the members serving on the Nominating Work Group. He presented the slate of candidates to be voted upon by the Annual Meeting, along with one candidates to be added to

the ballot:

Finance Committee: add Don Fancher (UCC New Brighton) for the term 2016-0

Wagner described the process for nominations from the floor: made with the express permission of the person nominated, a biography to be given to a member of the Nominating Work Group, all volunteers must complete a Self-Disclosure Form in fulfillment of the Conference Safe Conduct Policy.

Wagner, on behalf of the Nominating Work Group, **presented the slate of nominees for Board of Directors, committees, work groups, and officers of the Conference as a business item for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.**

Wagner asked attendees to fill out the Skill Bank forms and to recommend candidates who might be interested in serving to the Nominating Work Group.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Rev. Sara Morse, chair of the Committee on Ministry, reported on the work of the Committee on Ministry, referring people to the report in the Annual Reports booklet. She thanked the members of the Committee who are ending terms for their faithful service.

MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT

Morse, on behalf of the Committee on Ministry, **moved that the Minnesota Conference Acting as an Association affirms the Member in Discernment Status Report recommended by the Committee on Ministry and presented in the Annual Report.**
Motion passed.

Members in Discernment for Ordained Ministry in the Minnesota Conference

<u>Name</u>	<u>Church Membership</u>	<u>Rec'd In Discernment</u>	<u>Seminary</u>
Ava Adams-Morris	First Congregational, Mankato	3-25-2011	Meadville Lombard
Gail Antonson	St. Paul's UCC, St. Paul	1-15-2010	UTS
Cecilia Baxter	Falcon Heights UCC	4-7-2011	UTS
Jameson Baxter	Falcon Heights UCC	2-19-2014	UTS
Joann Bell	Living Table UCC, Minneapolis	10-23-2008	Chicago Theological
Deb Braun	Congregational Church, Faribault	8-29-2012	UTS
Amber Espinosa	Olivet Congregational, Minneapolis	5-28-2014	UTS
Michael Fritz	Bethlehem UCC, Maple Lake	1-20-2011	Andover Newton
Laura Gatzke	St. Anthony Park UCC, St. Paul	4-19-2012	Luther Seminary
Sam Goodrich	Lyndale UCC, Minneapolis	2-27-2013	UTS
Ashley Harness	Living Table UCC, Minneapolis	1-19-2012	Union Theological
Kathy Hodges	First Congregational, Alexandria	5-28-2014	
Keven Johnson-Glassel	Union Cong. UCC, St. Louis Park	1-16-2014	
Karl Jones	Plymouth Congregational, Mpls	9-30-2011	UTS
Anna Larson	Cherokee Park United Church, St. Paul	10-21-2010	UTS
Aaron Lauer	First Congregational of Minnesota, Mpls	1-16-2014	UTS
Wilma Lawrence	All Nations Indian Church, Mpls	4-16-1992	UTS
Thomas Liddle	Peace UCC, Duluth	12-8-2010	Luther Seminary
Robertta Malles	Living Table UCC, Minneapolis	9-30-2011	UTS
Patti Mogren	St. Peter's UCC, Stillwater	8-19-1999	UTS
Mercy Monroe	Living Table UCC, Minneapolis	1-16-2014	UTS
Kathryn Morin	UCC New Brighton	10-18-2012	UTS
Charles Owens	Union Cong'l, St. Louis Park	4-15-2010	UTS

Kelsy Renk	St. Paul's UCC, New Albin, IA	9-18-2013	UTS
Nathan Roberts	Lynnhurst Congregational, Mpls	10-15-2009	Luther Seminary
Mary Shaffer	Mayflower Community, Mpls	8-29-2012	UTS
Luann Suilmann	Union Congregational, Elk River	10-23-2008	UTS
Ben Talberg	Robbinsdale UCC	11-30-2011	Chicago Theological
Andrea Tatley	Wayzata Community Church	4-19-2013	UTS
David Tillman	UCC New Brighton	6-19-2013	UTS
Terese Tomanek	Peace UCC, Duluth	1-17-2013	St. John's Seminary
Dwight Wagenius	Mayflower Congregational, Mpls	4-19-2007	UTS

CELEBRATION OF ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATION

Conference Minister Shari Prestemon recognized these eleven people celebrating the anniversaries of their ordination, four of whom were in attendance. The *Celebrating God's Goodness* booklet contained a brief biography of each person recognized.

50th Year of Ordination

Rev. Jerald Barnhart
Rev. David Martens

55th Year of Ordination

Rev. Willard Albertson
Rev. Joseph Clay
Rev. Charles Eversman
Rev. Dr. Marion Pocker

65th Year of Ordination

Rev. Chester Olsen
Rev. Clarion Olsen
Rev. Dr. Clyde Steckel

60th Year of Ordination

Rev. Raymond Ahrens
Rev. Harold Dean Stille

SPEAK OUT!

The following items were noted during the first Speak Out!

1. Thom Haines (Mayflower Mpls) Global Ministries will shortly release a new publication through Pilgrim Press, *Restoring Dignity, Nourishing Hope: Developing Mutual Partnership in Mission* (a working title), a resource guide of best practices for local church use
2. Cindy Mueller (First Congregational UCC, Hutchinson) offered congratulations to the Hutchinson congregation for their restart with a new mission
3. Mark Kuether (UCC Detroit Lakes) looking for annotated meeting materials
4. Dawn Carlson Conn (Robbinsdale UCC) Inviting interested people to help tie quilts for Pilgrim Point Camp, attend a quilting retreat on October 8-11
5. Renee Pfenning (Cherokee Park UCC) Reaching out to congregations to create disaster preparedness plans
6. Gary Kwong (Hackensack UCC) one of the presenters for the anti-racism workshop was unable to make it, invite participants

BREAK

PLENARY SESSION #2

STATE OF THE CONFERENCE REPORT

Rev. Shari Prestemon gave the State of the Conference Report. As she has read local church newsletters through the last year she has heard a common thread - yearning for relationships. This theme also figured strongly in the recently completed Feasibility Study for a Conference-wide campaign. She listed some of the ways that Conference staff have engaged with local churches to support relationship-building: visiting churches, assisting with leadership transitions, Conference Youth Events, Fall Convocation, 4th Thursday gatherings for Faith Formation leaders, New Beginnings, Church on the Move. Prestemon introduced the creation of the 21st Century Fund, seeded by the proceeds of the sale of the former Pilgrim UCC in Maple Grove. The fund will be tapped to support church renewal and new church starts. She shared a vision for local churches to be engaged in their communities and with each other, saying we could more authentically *be the church together* throughout the Conference by remembering that none of us are alone in our ministries, and by having the courage to more intentionally reach out to one

another in the sharing of our gifts, joys and concerns. She challenged members to go beyond our tendency to go it alone, to Be the Church Together, to celebrate the gifts each of us bring to the world, to have courage to go deeper with one another, to know that we can accomplish more together than we could ever accomplish alone, to embrace our life together so that God's power and love can be unleashed.

BACK BAY MISSION

Bob Peterson shared photos and stories of a recent work trip to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, enumerating the projects completed while on site. Another work trip is planned for next winter, all are invited to participate.

BODY IN MOTION

Beth Donaldson led a simple dance break designed to get everyone moving.

RESOLUTIONS

Mueller introduced Pam DeMarce, who described the Resolutions Process. On behalf of the Annual Meeting Business Resolutions Group, DeMarce **reported that there were two resolutions submitted prior to the March deadline, for action at this Annual Meeting.** She then described the Resolution Process consisting of a Reading with background and rationale on Friday afternoon, a Hearing for discussion and possible amendment on Saturday afternoon, and debate and vote on Saturday evening.

Mueller called for any Timely Resolutions – those dealing with issues, problems or concerns about which there was no possible knowledge or information before the resolution deadline in March, and where a delay would render the resolution moot – to be presented. There were no Timely Resolutions.

Ostrom invited the spokespersons for each resolution to come to the podium.

Resolution #1 – RESOLUTION CALLING THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UCC TO DECLARE ITSELF A FAIR TRADE CONFERENCE, submitted by First Congregational UCC Mankato, Jane Dow, spokesperson

Resolution #2 – RESOLUTION CALLING THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE OF THE UCC TO TAKE ACTIONS TOWARD A JUST PEACE IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT, submitted by the Global Partnerships Team, Glen Harrington Hall, spokesperson

2016 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Mueller called on Rev. Rick Wagner to present the 2016 Compensation Guidelines, as recommended by the Professional Development of Authorized Ministers Team.

CORNERSTONE FUND

David Moyer gave a brief introduction to the Cornerstone Fund, a financial ministry of the United Church of Christ. Individuals are invited to invest in the Fund; capital is used to provide loans to local churches. The Fund also provides financial education to local churches and their leaders. Moyer will staff a table in the Exhibit Hall on Saturday, inquiries are welcome.

CUE TEAM

Rev. Cherie Daniel and Rev. John Tschudy spoke of the work carried out by the Chicago, United and Eden Seminaries of the UCC, or CUE. They encouraged members and local churches to support the seminaries with financial gifts.

CELEBRATING WORK ON PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Mueller brought news of work done in response to the charges of recently approved Resolutions.

- Resolution Calling for Divestment from Fossil Fuel-Free companies (2013) The Finance Committee is in compliance for all new investments, and phasing divestment of existing funds by investing in the United Church Foundation's "Beyond Fossil Fuels" fund. The Committee continues to seek investment opportunities to be fully divested in five years.
- Anti-Racism Resolution (2014) This Annual Meeting agenda is greatly influenced by the resolution, and anti-racism training is planned for the Fall Leadership Retreat.. Many thanks to the Task Force for the work preparing for this weekend.
- Resolution Calling for the End of Bed Quotas by the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2014) Shari Prestemon sent letters to members of the Minnesota legislative delegation. Although the Immigration Team was unable to get a meeting with any member of the delegation, they continue to provide educational materials to local churches.

SPEAK OUT!

The following items were noted during the second Speak Out!

1. T. Michael Rock (Robbinsdale UCC) Encourages clergy to explore the Center for Congregational Spirituality, a source for pastoral training
2. Diane Haines (Mayflower) Invites participation in the Immigration Team workshop on the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade proposal
3. Kay Welsch (UCC New Brighton) Come help New Brighton celebrate their 125th Anniversary on August 8-9
4. Steve Boorsma (Associate Conference Minister) The national setting of the UCC has a focus on literacy (www.ucc.org/readingchangeslives), encourages volunteering as a reading tutor
5. Lawrence Richardson (SHIFT) There is a new app being developed to help people find a church
6. Kathy Stutzman (First Congregational Austin) Come see the documentary film *Finding Home* tonight
7. Ray Daniels (Union Congregational, St Louis Park) Thanks to the 13 churches who responded to the Justice and Witness team survey

RECESS

Dinner break.

PLENARY SESSION #3

GATHERING MUSIC Led by Aaron Swetska.

CELEBRATION OF ANNIVERSARIES OF CHURCHES

Rev. Steve Boorsma recognized these Minnesota congregations celebrating historic milestones and directed people to the *Celebrating God's Goodness* booklet.

125th Anniversary

UCC New Brighton
First Congregational UCC, Staples

100th Anniversary

Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Williams

50th Anniversary

Faith UCC, Bertha

WELCOME TO NEW MINISTERS

Rev. Steve Boorsma welcomed those Authorized Ministers with standing in the Minnesota Conference who are new to the Minnesota Conference since the 2014 Annual Meeting.

Received Standing by Ordination

Rev. Ashley Harness, Living Table Mpls
Rev. Karl Jones, Plymouth, Mpls
Rev. Kathryn Morin, UCC New Brighton
Rev. Terese Tomanek, Peace UCC Duluth
Rev. Dwight Wagenius, Mayflower Mpls

Rev. Mary Shaffer, Mayflower Mpls
Rev. Charles Owens, Union, St Louis Park
Rev. Cecilia Baxter, Falcon Heights
Rev. Tom Liddle, Peace UCC Duluth

Newly Licensed

Jacob Kanake, Oak Meadows Chaplain

Standing Transferred into Conference

Rev. Michelle Webber, First Cong Moorhead	Rev. Leslie Moughty, First Cong Brainerd
Rev. Daniel Maiden, Granite Falls/Montevideo	Rev. Dennis McKee, Gaylord
Lynn Thomas, Graceville/Ortonville	Rev. Rachael Keefe, Living Table
Rev. Donald Mackenzie, Retired	Rev. Gary Smith, Plymouth Mpls
Rev. Howie Tobak, First Cong Winona	Rev Jennifer Amy-Dressler, Pilgrim Duluth
Diane Hatman, New Ulm	Rev Arianna Arends, St Paul's Lewiston
Rev. Steve Boorsma, Conference ACM	

NEW BEGINNINGS ASSESSMENT SERVICE

Boorsma spoke of the work underway with the current cohort of five local churches (First Congregational Cannon Falls, Faith UCC International Falls, Chapel Hills Edina, St Mark's UCC Bloomington, and First Congregational Hutchinson.) Kim Schutte, Hutchinson Moderator and member of the New Beginnings work group, spoke of the efforts and renewed energy her congregation experienced through the program. She encouraged other congregations who might be contemplating the program to jump in whole-heartedly.

LEYSATH AWARD

Prestemon recognized Rev. Beth Donaldson as the 2015 recipient of the Murdale Leysath Award. Murdale Leysath served in Minnesota as the first female Conference Minister in the United Church of Christ. Upon her retirement Murdale created this award of encouragement for women in ministry.

PILGRIM POINT CAMP

Wade Zick, Kim Shaffer, and Gigi Nauer spoke of current activity at Pilgrim Point Camp where numbers of participants continue to increase: 1500 campers and 200 volunteers through the 2014 camping season. They expect to host 2000 campers and members from 50 local churches this year. The Pilgrim Point Camp Committee and volunteers continue to make improvements to facilities and services, with work teams sent from many local churches. Shaffer and Nauer gave particular thanks to Zick on behalf of the Committee for his leadership and coordination as the Committee reinvents itself. Zick thanked Shaffer for chairing the Committee for the last six years.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mary Kay Sauter, chair of the Development Committee, gave thanks to the many churches who have given to the Conference in the past year, listed in the *Celebrating God's Goodness* booklet.

The following 58 churches were recognized as 5 for 5 congregations:

First Congregational UCC, Alexandria	Congregational Church of Excelsior
First Congregational UCC, Anoka	First Congregational UCC, Fairmont
Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Benson	St. John's UCC, Fairmont
Faith UCC, Bertha	Falcon Heights UCC
First Congregational UCC of Brainerd	St. John's UCC, Faribault
Cottage Grove UCC, Cottage Grove	First UCC, Fergus Falls
Congregational Church of Detroit Lakes	St. Matthew's UCC, Forest City
Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Duluth	First Congregational, Grand Marais
Peace UCC, Eden Valley	Union Congregational UCC, Hackensack
Chapel Hills UCC, Edina	Mizpah UCC, Hopkins
Union UCC, Elk River	First Congregational UCC, Hutchinson

Faith United Church of Christ, International Falls
First Congregational UCC, Mankato
Bethlehem UCC, Maple Lake
Congregational UCC, Medford
Mendota Heights UCC
Grace UCC, Millville
Living Table UCC, Minneapolis
Lynnhurst UCC, Minneapolis
First Congregational UCC, Moorhead
St. John's UCC, New Albin
UCC, New Brighton
First Congregational UCC, New York Mills
First UCC, Northfield
Associated Church, Owatonna
St. Paul's UCC, Plato
First Congregational UCC, Princeton
Peace UCC, Rochester
Congregational UCC, Rochester

Union Congregational UCC, St. Louis Park
Hazel Park UCC, St. Paul
Macalester Plymouth United, St Paul
Olivet Congregational UCC, St. Paul
St. Anthony Park UCC, St. Paul
St. Paul's UCC, St. Paul
Community UCC, St. Paul Park
First UCC, Sauk Center
New Spirit UCC, Savage
Clark Memorial UCC, South St Paul
First Congregational UCC, Staples
St Peter's UCC, Stillwater
Wabasha UCC, Wabasha
First Congregational UCC, Wadena
Circles of Faith UCC, Waubun
Parkview UCC, White Bear Lake
First Congregational UCC, Winona
First Congregational Church, Zumbrota

Sauter gave also thanked the seven Top Contributing churches to OCWM, the five Top Contributing churches on a per-member basis, and the three church contributors to the Peace Fund. She thanked all individuals who became Friends of the Conference in the past year, and encouraged even greater support in the new fiscal year.

SPEAK OUT!

The following items were noted during the third Speak Out!

1. Bill Lindberg (First UCC Mpls) Express appreciation of social justice and the resolution process, strength as a wider church
2. John Tschudy (Pilgrim UCC Williams) Invite all to come north to Rainy River on July 12 for the 100th anniversary celebration of Pilgrim UCC in Williams
3. Oby Ballinger (Community UCC St Paul Park) Thanks to facilitators who volunteered to help with small group discussions during Saturday's keynote sessions, invite others who have trained as facilitators to help

RECESS

Mueller called for recess for the evening.

EVENING WORSHIP

Sermon by Rev. John Lee

NECROLOGY

Rev. Shari Prestemon celebrated the lives and ministries of these ministers holding standing in the Minnesota Conference who have died in the past year:

Rev. Dr. Allan McAllaster
Rev. Donald Chapman
Rev. Daniel VanderPloeg
Rev. Donald Hadfield
Rev. Trevor Hausske
Rev. Edward Reinhardt
Rev. James McCutcheon

Other deaths of note:

Rev. Dr. Gary Downing
Rev. Diane Dorsey
Rev. Leonard Stark

SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Led by Rev. Oliver White

PLENARY #4

GATHERING MUSIC Led by Aaron Swetska.

GATHERING WORSHIP Led by Rev. Rebecca Voelkel.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Joe Thom presented the Conference Treasurer's Report. The Conference's financial position continues to be strong with 370 days of working capital, its reserves are in a slight growth mode. One-time property transactions (proceeds of the sale of Pilgrim Maple Grove, transfer of Deed to All Nations) comprise a significant component of the year's financial activity.

2015-2016 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Thom highlighted the budget in its various formats and noted that this was a deficit budget. He highlighted the OCWM component of the revenue side, which has been on a declining trend. He also noted a shift in Personnel expenses resulting from the shift of a financial staff position from a consulting to an in-house staff.

Thom, on behalf of the Board of Directors, **presented the Recommended 2016 Budget of the Minnesota conference, amended by the Board of Directors, as printed and distributed to this meeting as an item of business. Motion passed.**

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pamela Cook, a student at United Theological Seminary, spoke of her experiences at the school where she is experiencing a diversity of experience, of race, and of faith traditions within the student body. The program's focus on Global Justice, with trips to Israel-Palestine, Turkey and the Boundary Waters, have helped her clarify her own values and mission. The seminary will soon launch the Twin Cities School of Theology in downtown Minneapolis' North Loop neighborhood, offering an interdisciplinary approach to study.

BODY IN MOTION

Beth Donaldson led a simple dance break designed to get everyone moving.

FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN FEASIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

Prestemon, Mueller, and Shaffer were joined by consultant Sandy Lindahl to present findings of the year-long process of inquiry. Building upon the Conference's Mission Priorities and Objectives, a test case was presented for a five year campaign for \$8.5 million, with the proceeds to support \$5.2 million in improvements at Pilgrim Point Camp and \$3.3 million to launch and run a Leadership Initiative program.

The study assessed four key indicators of the campaign's likelihood of success: endorsement of the plan, financial support, a willingness to volunteer, and logistical capacity of Conference staff. Key findings of these four indicators are:

1. The plan aligns with critical functions of the Conference, but members want to know more. There is a shared desire to develop outdoor ministries in some way.
2. There is not financial support to reach the goal at this time.
3. There is a good level of willingness to volunteer in support of the campaign.
4. There is a high level of respect for the staff and Board of Directors, and donor outreach currently collaborates with efforts from the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee. However, the staff is maxed out, office tracking and data management software is outdated.

Lindhahl made the following recommendations:

- Take manageable steps to increase the value of the Conference to local churches.
- Prepare for a campaign by developing and strengthening relationships between the Conference and local churches, and training leaders.
- Further develop camp program planning, address concerns about sustainability, bring the camp experience, virtually if necessary, to a broader audience.

Shaffer added that Pilgrim Point Camp attendance is growing, the camp is stable, and the current program now addresses two of the four Conference priorities. A Task Force made up of members from the Board of Directors, the Pilgrim Point Camp Committee, and Wayzata Church is investigating opportunities for future use arrangements.

Mueller, on behalf of the Board of Directors, expressed gratitude for Conference-wide confidence in the staff and leadership. In the Feasibility Study report she saw an affirmation of the services the Conference provides to local churches, and a desire to benefit even further through the proposed Leadership Initiative. There is a solid base of support and donors, but communication needs to be improved. There is a clear yearning for a strong sense of relationship. The Board of Directors and Pilgrim Point Camp Committee will continue to work to align their priorities and strategies.

SPEAK OUT!

The following items were noted during the fourth Speak Out!

1. Adam Westrich (St John's) Invite to the workshop on part time ministry
2. Aaron Dreyling (SHIFT) With a plan for fewer members to march in the Pride Parade, UCC members are encouraged to show support by coming to one of several planned stops along the parade route
3. Kathryn Morin (UCC New Brighton) and Karl Jones (Plymouth) Invite chaplains to join a newly created support group, next meeting is Sept 24 over lunch at the Church Center in Minneapolis
4. T. Michael Rock and friends (Robbinsdale UCC) They received a \$40,000 Worship Renewal grant to explore communion in the congregation, and wish to serve as resources to any other congregation interested in finding out what they learned
5. Victor Jortack (Zwingli UCC) They are using a portable woodfire pizza oven as a summer fundraiser, welcome others to come and support them or consider this as a fundraising vehicle
6. Daisy Stahlberg (First Cong Alexandria) Thanks to the Immigration Team for their support of her church's Lenten theme on immigration
7. Teresa Roberts (Congregational UCC Rochester) Looking for a full time Faith Formation staff member
8. Emily Goldthwaite Fries (Mayflower) Express joy that the South Dakota Conference voted to return all deeds of Lakota churches to their members
9. Dwight Wagenius (Mayflower) The United Church Fund "Beyond Fossil Fuels" fund is performing well, invite local churches to consider investing in this opportunity; Interfaith Power and Light can assist local churches.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Okogyeamon introduced Rev. Dr. Jennifer Harvey, Associate Professor of Religion at Drake University in Des Moines and author/researcher/teacher in anti-racism work, who gave the keynote address.

Harvey spoke of the continuing lament about alienation while celebrating diversity with an awareness of racial separation. Her theory is that the reconciliation paradigm has failed us, it has not given us the results, particularly in communities of color, that were hoped for in the 1960s. The way we talk about race is the main reason we have failed. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr.'s *Beloved Community*, united in divine love, God's intention for humanity, rests on an incomplete racial story. It is missing the element of white power and economic inequality. An increase in influence from the Black Power movement resulted in an increased sense of alienation in the white churches along with a response of silence, repudiation and denial which continues today. A new Reparations paradigm offers a hope to identify pathways out of our current "stuck" status. Reparation work could transform the church – learn and honor untold stories. The UCC has been working in this paradigm for about 15 years. Many communities of color have already defined what reparation looks like, we are called to listen and respond appropriately.

Attendees broke into small groups for a facilitated discussion on racial identity, naming positive and negative facets and socialization of our own racial identity, times we have been faced with differences in identity.

BREAK

Mueller called for recess for lunch.

PLENARY #5

Attendees broke into regionally-based small groups for a facilitated discussion in response to three prompts, *Dear White Christian – Now What?*

- Describe how racial reconciliation might be lived out in our own life or congregation.
- How might repair be lived out in our own life or congregation?
- Why might reconciliation be an insufficient model for addressing current racial struggles? What might be an alternative vision for racial transformation?

RECESS

Mueller called for recess for work sessions, workshops and dinner.

PLENARY #6

BAR OF THE HOUSE

DeMarce explained that attendees could sit wherever they wished, that a formal Bar of the House would be set up if the Moderator saw a need to physically separate voting delegates from non-voting visitors. Anyone wishing to address the floor was asked to step to the microphone designated "FOR" or the microphone designated "AGAINST" and begin by identifying themselves and their local church.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Rev. Rick Wagner, on behalf of the Nominating Work Group, **presented the slate of nominees for Officers, Board of Directors, Committees and Work Groups of the Annual Meeting for election and moved that we accept the slate by acclamation. Motion passed.**

DISCUSSION & ACTION ON RESOLUTION NO. 1

Howard Bell, hearing moderator, gave a brief summary of discussion regarding the resolution entitled "RESOLUTION CALLING THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UCC TO DECLARE ITSELF A FAIR TRADE CONFERENCE." There is a preference for supporting U.S. farmers over foreign farmers. Products labeled "Fair Trade" are said to follow specific principles but are not guaranteed as such. It is often difficult to find high quality Fair Trade products. How might a local church that wishes to be a Fair Trade church do so if there is insufficient product availability? There is a desire to clarify terms, to better understand the three principles required to be considered a Fair Trade product.

Jane Dow, resolution spokesperson, **presented an amended motion representing a consensus of those who attended the Saturday afternoon hearing. She moved the adoption of the resolution amended as follows:**

Lines 61-63: replace the entire text with “Therefore be it resolved that the Minnesota Conference U.C.C. encourages churches in the Conference to become Fair Trade churches, by 1) Using and promoting fair trade products; 2) Celebrating Fair Trade through events; and 3) Educating and raising awareness of Fair Trade.

An amendment from the floor adds the following:

Lines 66-67: add “Be it further resolved that the Minnesota Conference U.C.C. also use and promote Fair Trade products at events and activities whenever possible.”

Amendment moved, seconded, passed. Motion passed.

Motion to approve the Resolution passed.

DISCUSSION & ACTION ON RESOLUTION NO. 2

Maureen Engelhardt, hearing moderator, gave a brief summary of discussion regarding the resolution entitled “RESOLUTION CALLING THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE OF THE UCC TO TAKE ACTIONS TOWARD A JUST PEACE IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT”. The Finance Committee reviewed the resolution and proposed replacement language. This resolution does not subscribe to the national Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign to increase economic and political pressure on Israel. Concern that boycott and divestment breaks relationship with interfaith partners. Question the effectiveness of economic sanctions to effectuate change when the focus is on only one party. There is a focus on education (lines 40-44) and a dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths (lines 46-50). Recognition that the final text of the resolution to be presented at General Synod may differ from the one we have in front of us today.

Glen Herrington Hall, resolution spokesperson, **presented an amended motion representing a consensus of those who attended the Saturday afternoon hearing. He moved the adoption of the resolution amended as follows:**

Lines 38: add “and for the Minnesota Conference to consider at a future Annual Meeting of its members any action (such as divestment) proposed by an Israel-Palestine resolution passed at the 30th General Synod. At that meeting a proposal for action would be presented by a working group including members of the Finance Committee and the Global Partnership Team.”

A motion from the floor called for a suspension of rules to allow for further discussion.

Motion moved, seconded, failed.

Motion to approve the Resolution passed.

DISCUSSION & ACTION ON COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Rev. Rick Wagner, representing the Professional Development of Authorized Ministers Team, explained that the proposed compensation guidelines are based on the standards of other mainline denominations in Minnesota and the UCC standards in Iowa and Wisconsin. The proposed guidelines represent a 2% increase over 2015. Wagner **moved that the 2016 Compensation Guidelines be accepted.**

Motion passed.

FINAL DISCUSSION ON BUDGET, VOTE

Joe Thom, on behalf of the MN Conference Board of Directors, **moved adoption of the budget for the fiscal year 2016, for the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ.**

Motion passed.

ARMSTRONG-VOSS SCHOLARSHIP

Rev. Rick Wagner announced the 2015 Armstrong Voss Scholarship is awarded to Kathy Hodges. She is a Member-in-Discernment at First Congregational UCC of Alexandria and is enrolled at Chicago Theological Seminary to begin this fall.

SPEAK OUT!

The following items were noted during the fifth Speak Out!

1. Okogyeamon (Cherokee Park) Appreciation for thoughtful discussion during keynote and follow-up session, turn in feedback forms, look for What's Next opportunities
2. T Michael Rock (Robbinsdale) Recommends Tehone experience with malespirituality.org, meeting in Sandstone next week
3. Norma Rae Hunt and Jackie Carrol (St Paul's UCC St Paul) Gratitude for delegates, particularly youth delegates in attendance
4. Cindy Lemke (Wadena) winner of Disaster Preparedness drawing is Nancy Zworsky
5. Kim Schutt (Hutchinson) Congregation is beginning their search for a full time called pastor to help them with their re-start
6. Mary Kay Sauter (Plymouth) Collaboration between Beacon and Westminster to build housing for ex-felons is looking for advocates
7. Oby Ballinger (Community St Paul Park) Just beginning racial reparation, gathering names of those who are interested in state-wide work
8. Kathy Itzen (Parkway) Encourage reading with at-risk children in the after school program "Patrick's Quilt" which is looking for volunteers
9. Todd Smith Lippert (Northfield) Congregation recently joined ISAIAH, went through powerful training sessions, next leadership training session will be August 2-7 in Mankato
10. Jay Sorensen Navarre (Cherokee Park) Invite those who are called to examine racial identity to a 10-session ASDIC circle at Cherokee Park this fall.

RECESS

Mueller called for recess for the evening.

EVENING PRAYERS AND MUSIC

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Led by Rev. Emily Goldthwaite Fries

PLENARY #7

FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Moderator Cindy Mueller invited Wade Zick to speak on faith formation.

Zick reported on Conference-wide efforts to move into Faith Formation with reshaped ideas and models. There has been a particular emphasis on investment in leaders: a Taizé pilgrimage equipped 47 young adults to lead youth with a depth of spirituality; funding new local church initiatives in Faith Formation through micro-grants; making up to \$25,000 available to assist in Mission Trips; holding Conference Youth Events and Middle School Youth Events; sponsoring Fourth Thursday gatherings to build community and share resources among Faith Formation leaders.

RECOGNITIONS

Shari Prestemon gave thanks to the following:

Outgoing Pilgrim Point Camp Committee Chair: Kim Shaffer

Annual Meeting Planning Work Group Members: Leslie Amundson, Pam DeMarce, Dick Fylling, Jean Ostrum, Beth Donaldson, Lisa Bodenheimer, and Rebecca Voelkel

Anti-Racism Task Force Members: Tim Johnson, Lawrence Richardson, Lisa Bodenheimer, Oby Ballinger, Okogyeamon

Delegates to General Synod: Cindy Mueller, Lawrence Richardson, Shuji Moriichi,

Sapphire McKnight, Nancy Swanson, Emily Olson, Shirley Hoff, Becky Kruse, Zoe Kuester, Kathy Gibson-Christenson, Bridget Haefner, Aaron Lauer, Mark Kuether, Peter Wagner, Mark Scott, Allen Hilton, Rick Wagner, Steve Boorsma, Shari Prestemon
Prestemon asked that all assembled participate in the Conference's communication tools by signing up for the COMMANTary and liking the Conference's Facebook page. She also announced that Rev. Garth Schumacher will serve as Interim Associate Conference Minister for Faith Formation for Children and Youth beginning July 6, 2015. Finally, in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the New Century Hymnal she recognized the work of Art Clyde and Howie Tobak.

FINAL CREDENTIALS REPORT

Secretary Maureen Engelhardt read the final credentials of 222 delegates and 131 visitors – a total of 353 attendees – representing 82 churches.

GIVING THANKS

Pam DeMarce and Leslie Amundson, co-chairs of the AMPWG, gave thanks to the many individuals who contributed to the success of the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ:

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Harvey

Preachers: Rev. John Lee and Rev. Barbara Holmes

Musicians: Aaron Swestka and Gigi Nauer

Bible Study Leaders: Rev. Oliver White and Rev. Emily Goldthwaite Fries

Chaplains: Lawrence Richardson, Bonnie Buckley, Eliot Howard, Pamela Cook and Moussa Moore-Foster

Moderator and Chair of the Board of Directors: Cincy Mueller

Parliamentarian: James Snoxell

Conference Secretary: Maureen Engelhardt

Conference Minister: Rev. Shari Prestemon

Associate Conference Ministers: Rev. Rick Wagner, Rev. Steve Boorsma, and Wade Zick

Technology and AV Crew: Rev. Jeff Palmer, Shelley Lindenfesler, and Donald Olson

Childcare Workers: Maria Groos and Ricki Larson

College of St. Benedict: staff led by Jessica Reiter, student workers, videographers and photographer

Liturgical Artists: Dawn Carlson Conn, Peter Stucki and Heather Stucki Vietz

ADJOURNMENT

Call for adjournment following worship moved and seconded. Motion passed.

Sermon by *Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes*

COMMISSIONING NEW BOARD, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND GENERAL SYNOD DELEGATES

Moderator Cindy Mueller and Vice Moderator Janet Bartz led the service of Commissioning.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen Engelhardt,
Secretary