

150th Spring Annual Meeting
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
(Congregational Christian Churches)
Meeting in the 218th year of the Missionary Society of Connecticut

Annual Meeting
&
Authorized Ministry Event
June 16 & 17, 2017
Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, CT

Friday, June 16, 2017
Pre-meeting Events

The Authorized Minister's Event luncheon honoring those with an ordination anniversary of 50 and 25 years was held at the Marriot Hartford Downtown, Hartford, CT 06103.

50 Year Recipients:

The Rev. David B. Eusden, Bloomfield, CT
The Rev. Martin E. Gibbs, Clinton, CT
The Rev. Mahlon B. Gilbert, Columbia, CT
The Rev. David W. Schneider, Woodbridge, CT
The Rev. Douglas L. Sperry, Bremen, GERMANY
The Rev. James A. Simpson, Haddam Neck, CT
The Rev. David B. Eusden, Bloomfield, CT 06002

25 Year Recipients:

The Rev. Mark B. Abernethy, South Windsor, CT
The Rev. Sharon P. Blackburn, Fairfield, CT
The Rev. Paul E. Bryant-Smith, Norwalk, CT
The Rev. Dr. Michael J. Ciba, Watertown, CT
The Rev. Richard DenUyl, Old Greenwich, CT 06870
The Rev. E. Evelyn Eddy, Portland, CT
The Rev. Dr. Doreen M. McFarlane, St. Catherines, Ontario Canada
The Rev. Carmen J. Wooster, Hartford, CT

On behalf of the Rhode Island, Massachusetts, & Connecticut Conferences of the United Church of Christ, we invited Authorized Ministers and their guests to join us at the Authorized Minister Luncheon. This annual event provides an opportunity for Authorized Ministers, lay leaders and others to gather and share time in community. The program included a hot buffet luncheon & the recognition of 25 & 50 year Ordinands. Rev. Kent Siladi, Conference Minister of the CT Conference UCC introduced the keynoter: The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

Friday, June 15, 2017

The Meeting Begins-Session One

2017 TRI-CONFERENCE PLENARY SESSIONS

7:15 PM Opening Worship

Worship provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team

Welcome:

Rev. Paul Goodman, of the Plantsville Congregational United Church of Christ in Plantsville, Connecticut, introduced himself as the Moderator of the Connecticut Conference, and on behalf of all three Conference Boards and staff, welcomed delegates and guests to Connecticut and the first ever, Tri Conference Annual Meeting!

Adjourn, 9:06 p.m.

Saturday, June 17, 2017

Tri Conference Joint Plenary-Session Two

8:30 AM Joint Plenary: Welcome & Opening Worship

Worship provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team

The Rev. Paul Goodman, pastor of the Plantsville Congregational United Church of Christ in Plantsville, Connecticut, and Moderator of the Connecticut Conference welcomed delegates, Authorized Ministers and guests. Paul introduced his counterparts; The Rev. Dr. George Peters is a member of the Newman Congregational United Church of Christ in Rumford, Rhode Island and the Moderator of the Rhode Island Conference. Ms. Linda Mesler is a member of South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ, and the Vice-moderator of the Massachusetts Conference. We are the team who will share the work of moderating our joint plenary sessions today.

Together, As One presentation and conversation:

Introduction and video: Together As One, video *I BELIEVE*

The Moderator introduced three members of the Board of Directors to speak to the: Why The How and The What. The Rev. Damaris Whittaker, Pastor at Hartford First, Ms. Susan Rotblat-Walker from Berrinton RI, and Mr. Tracy Keene, from Old South church Boston.

The Moderator then asked delegates and Authorized Ministers and guests to turn to their neighbors and engage in a brief conversation about their thoughts on the Tri Conference proposal.

The Moderator then introduced Kaeley McEvoy, a lay member of the First Congregational Church of Woodbury, Connecticut, Rev. Cleo Graham, Community Minister at the Beneficent Church, UCC in Providence, Rhode Island, Rev. Kurt Walker, pastor of Chapel Street Congregational Church in Lincoln, Rhode

Island and Rev. Dr. Nancy Taylor of Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts to give their personal testimony about their response to the proposal.

After further discussion The Moderator opened the floor up for Question about the Three-Conference Resolution.

The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, Keynote

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference, introduced our General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer for the Keynote address.

11:30am Break for Lunch

Saturday, June 17, 2017 CT Conference Plenary-Session Three

Connecticut Conference Plenary

Consent Agenda & Recognitions

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *Good afternoon and welcome to the Connecticut plenary of this historic Tri Conference Meeting. This portion of the meeting will include regular business to come before the Connecticut Conference as well as considering the Together, As One resolution as presented in the morning plenary. This is a moment in time when God is calling us to do a new thing. It is a time to consider greater collaboration, interdependence and unity. The intentional discernment proposed by the Board of Directors of the three Conferences has led us to this point. Is God calling us to move forward and consider what new ways of organizing might look like? Are we as bold as those who gathered at the First General Synod in 1957 and set about the journey to the United Church of Christ? It is for us to decide this afternoon if God is calling us to a new way of being in ministry together. As we begin this plenary let us call upon God's spirit to be among us and to speak through us. Please join me in prayer, for guidance.*

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *The Board of Directors adopts the rules for the orderly conduct of the meeting. These rules can be found in your packet attached to the Consent Agenda and you will be asked to accept these rules shortly. The Moderator moderates the plenary sessions, makes announcements and keeps the meeting moving in a timely fashion. The Executive Committee of the Board serves as the business committee for this meeting. If you have any questions or concerns the committee is listed on a sheet in your packet. Please feel free to speak to one of them.*

*Only delegates who have voting cards are allowed to speak at microphones on business subjects, unless you have been specifically granted "voice without vote." Please introduce yourself each time you speak from a microphone by name and church. During open discussion times all microphones will be open. Voting members will find in your registration envelope a **Yellow** vote card to be used for all votes taken in the plenary. You must have this **Yellow** card in order to vote. Please keep that handy for the plenary sessions.*

Pro, con and neutral microphones are available in the front of the room. The White one is for offering an amendment, refer to committee, postpone, call the question (close debate) or limit or extend debate; the Yellow one is for "Point of Order" or other incidental or privileged motion. Basically, if you are confused or just have

a question and don't know which microphone to use, go to the yellow one. We'll help you figure out where to go from there.

Introductions

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Introduced the Assistant Moderator, Persephone Hall of Hartford. Also Chair of the Board of Directors Mark Engstrom of First Church Congregational of Fairfield.

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *Will the following Honored Guests stand as you are called:*

- *General Synod delegates*
- *International guests: Partners from Kyung-Ki (kyoung-key) Presbytery of South Korea*
Rev. Kim, Moon-Hee - Moderator, Kyung-Ki Presbytery PROK (Gyeonggi Presbytery)
Back, Eun Suk, Wife of Rev Kim
Rev. Lee, Kwan Woo, Overseas Committee Member
- *Seminarians and Members in Discernment*

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *I will entertain a Motion to grant Voice without Vote to these honored guests.*

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED #1 – to grant Voice without Vote to these honored guests.

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Invited the following groups to stand and be welcomed by the body: new Connecticut Pastors, new Ordinands, new Commissioned Ministers, newly licensed, and other new clergy in Special Settings. He also invited all Retired Authorized Ministers to stand and be recognized.

Adoption of the Consent Agenda

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *Please find the consent agenda that is attached to the Call Letter in your packet and your Yellow vote card. Please note there is a sheet with some biographical information about the board members and officers you will elect. I call upon the Chair of the Board of Directors, Mr. Mark Engstrom of Fairfield.*

Mark: *I call your attention to the Consent Agenda. Any delegate can remove an item from the consent agenda for separate consideration and vote during a plenary session. I move the adoption of the Consent Agenda.*

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED #2 – the Conference adopts the Consent Agenda, as written and distributed to the delegates in their packets.

Living Waters Award

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Called upon Rev. Kent Siladi and Mark Engstrom to present the Living Waters Award to Joelle Murchison of Faith Congregational Church. Joelle Murchison, her mother, and Pastor Camp of Faith Congregational Church came forward for the presentation.

Silver Lake Conference Center

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Called upon Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer, Executive Director of Silver Lake Conference Center to speak about SLCC and present a short video.

Introduction of PROK Partnership Guests and exchange of gifts.

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Called upon Rev. Kent Siladi and the Co-Chairs of the Korean Partnership Committee, Rev. Ginny McDaniel, Senior Minister of First Congregational Church of Granby to introduce our guests from the Kyung Ki Presbytery:

Rev. Kim, Moon-Hee - Moderator, Kyung-Ki Presbytery PROK

Back Eun Suk, Wife of Rev Kim

Rev. Lee. Kwan Woo, Overseas Committee Member

Remarks from Rev. Kim, Moon-Hee - Moderator, Kyung-Ki Presbytery PROK

Greetings from the Gyeonggi Presbytery

I greet you in the name of the Lord. You are always in my prayer. I am particularly honored to be able to participate in this historic Tri-Conference Annual Meeting on behalf of the Gyeonggi Presbytery. I pray that you and your local churches will be filled with God's peace. I am confident that the three conferences in Southern New England will be bound together for the foreseeable future and will be a model of beautiful cooperation and unity that is pleasing to God.

There is a saying in Korea, "Many hands make light work." I am convinced that the three conferences will work together to overcome the difficulties that they are facing to be able to do more of God's work.

We have been involved in missionary cooperation for over 20 years between the Gyeonggi Presbytery between the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the Connecticut Conference of the UCC. I am confident that we will be able to do more with our partnership as we have two conferences gathered here.

I want to bring you an update on the situation in our country.

In Korea there was a colossal incident of impeachment of the president, but the people showed a democratic maturity awaiting the impeachment through legal proceedings. Now, we are regaining peace quickly. As the new government enters, there is a move to restore conversations between South and North Korea, which have been shut down for a while. We expect the closed Kaesong Industrial Complex to be opened again.

North Korea has not given up its nuclear weapons, as you know, and has been continuously launching missiles. So I think it takes a lot of effort and perseverance to get to the mountains of reconciliation and peace between the South and the North on the Korean peninsula, and to be filled with the energy of peace sprinkled by the God of Peace. Please pray for this.

We are glad and grateful for our partnership with the Connecticut Conference. Twelve Korean teens and two teachers will be participating in Sacred Journey 2017, which will run for two weeks starting July 26.

Thank you to all those who have worked hard to prepare a good program in a difficult situation. I look forward to our work together in the Gyeonggi Presbytery and the Connecticut Conference to create a valuable experience that will last a lifetime for these young people. I pray that it will be successful.

I pray that the Holy Spirit, which unites us, will pour out blessing on this Tri-Conference Meeting, and on all the delegates and congregations represented here. I pray that the Holy Spirit, which unites us, will strengthen the relationship between the three conferences and will do even more. I pray that the Holy Spirit, which unites us, will strengthen our partnership as we look forward to the future together.

"Together, we can do more!" Thank you.

2016 Board Report and Together, As One Proposal

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Called upon Mark Engstrom, Chair of the Board of Directors to present the Board of Directors Report.

After his report, Mark Engstrom moved that upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, the 150th Annual Meeting adopts the proposed resolution to authorize the Board of Directors to prepare a process to create a new Conference of the United Church of Christ, and that this proposal be brought to a joint annual meeting of the three southern New England Conferences of the UCC in June 2018 for approval.

A long and thorough discussion followed, which included pros and cons about forming a new Conference.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED #3 – *That, upon recommendation of the Board of Directors, the 150th Annual Meeting adopts the proposed resolution to authorize the Board of Directors to prepare a process to create a new Conference of the United Church of Christ, and that this proposal be brought to a joint annual meeting of the three southern New England Conferences of the UCC in June 2018 for approval.*

The Rev. Kent Siladi offered a prayer.

Action on Resolutions—Resolutions Committee

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *Remember, delegates, please have your (Yellow) VOTING CARDS available for any actions that need a vote. Also please be sure to have available the resolution that is included in your packets and the rules that are attached to the Call Letter. Resolutions are moved by a committee charged with the task of bringing them to the Annual Meeting; thus, they do not require a second. Please note the Rules of Procedure, as approved in the Consent Agenda, determines the course of action for considering Resolutions. The presenters of the resolution will have 5 minutes to speak to the resolution. If there is a designated reactor they will be allowed 5 minutes as well. Then the mikes will be open to alternating pro and con speakers for 2 minutes each. Amendments must be submitted in writing to the registrar. Forms may be obtained from the registrar for amendments. Please remember to hold your applause out of respect for one another.*

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Called upon Rev. Alice O'Donovan, of Tolland and chair of the Resolutions Committee. Alice acknowledged and thanked the committees for their proposals and work. She also thanked Cecile Gilson for her dedication and commitment to these resolution discussions.

The Moderator introduced the **Greg Gray**, Westfield Congregation.

Greg Gray moved **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING CHURCHES OF THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE MARK TRANSGENDER REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**, Submitted by the congregational meeting of The United Church on the Green, UCC, New Haven to the 150th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ .

It was then

VOTED #4 to adopt the **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING CHURCHES OF THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE MARK TRANSGENDER REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY** as follows:

WHEREAS, Jesus proclaims: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free; (Luke 4:18)” and,

WHEREAS, the apostle Paul writes: “for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)” and,

WHEREAS, we affirm all persons as created equal in the image and likeness of God (Gen, 1:27); and

WHEREAS, transgender people are a minority who are victims of verbal and physical abuse which has resulted in cases of murder (1200 transgender people, more than 200 each year have been reported killed over the last five years*) and suicide (41 percent of transgender people living in the United States have attempted suicide**) out of proportion to their numbers due to ignorance, prejudice, and a lack of understanding or education among the majority; and,

WHEREAS, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 1985 encouraged all settings of the church to adopt policies of non-discrimination regarding sexual orientation and covenants of openness and affirmation toward lesbian, gay, bisexual persons in all settings of the church, and in 1989 the Connecticut Conference UCC declared itself open to and affirming of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ urged all settings of the church to learn about the realities of transgender experience and expression and welcome transgender people into full membership, ministry and participation, as a further embodiment of Open and Affirming commitment; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Connecticut Conference UCC reaffirmed our commitment to welcoming and including all people in all roles and activities of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and

WHEREAS, the General Synod has a precedence for calling on churches to mark special Sundays (i.e. Just Peace Sunday***, Amistad Sunday and,

WHEREAS, November 20th is recognized internationally as Transgender Day of Remembrance;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates to the 150th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ recommend that the churches of the Connecticut Conference mark annually the Sunday prior to November 20th to be Transgender Remembrance Sunday.

* Trans Respect Versus Transphobia, “Trans Murder Monitor,” <http://transrespect.org/en/research/trans-murder-monitoring/> (Accessed March 7, 2017).

** United Church of Christ, “Just Peace Sunday,” http://www.ucc.org/just_peace_sunday_resources (Accessed March 7, 2017).

*** United Church of Christ, “Special – Amistad Sunday,” http://www.ucc.org/worship_worship-ways_nlb_special-occassions_special-amistad-sunday (Accessed March 7, 2017).

The Moderator introduced Alice O'Donovan who presented the Accessible to All Conference.

Alice O'Donovan moved **RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION: FOR THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO BECOME AN "ACCESSIBLE TO ALL" CONFERENCE**, Submitted by South Congregational Church of Middletown, CT and the Disabilities Ministries Team of the Connecticut Conference.

It was then

VOTED #5 to adopt the **RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION: FOR THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO BECOME AN "ACCESSIBLE TO ALL" CONFERENCE** as follows:

WHEREAS, Jesus tells us, in Luke 14:12-14 – the Parable of the Great Banquet – that people with disabilities and the poor would feast in the kingdom of God “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous”; and

WHEREAS, we read in Isaiah 60:11, “The Lord says that our gates shall be open; day and night, they shall not be shut”; and

WHEREAS, The United States Census Bureau records show that 19 percent of respondent’s report having a disability and an increasing senior population will experience difficulties with mobility, vision and hearing; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by the National Organization on Disability and the Kessler Foundation found that people with disabilities are 35 percent more likely to never attend a worship service than their non-disabled peers; and

WHEREAS, God calls us to open the doors to our churches to all people with disabilities, and to embrace them in the entirety of their being; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, the 25th General Synod adopted the resolution “Called to Wholeness in Christ: Becoming a Church Accessible to All”; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 and 2013, respectively, the North California, Nevada and the Rocky Mountain Conferences adopted resolutions to become Accessible to All; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 the Disabilities Ministries Team of the Connecticut Conference was formed to be an educational resource to the churches of the Conference, to inform and assist them to become more accessible and inclusive;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the the delegates to 150th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, declare the Connecticut Conference to be an Accessible to All Conference, working to remove and/or overcome barriers to welcoming, and including all people in the work and witness of the United Church of Christ, including our Conference facilities and ministries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 150th Annual Meeting, call upon the churches of the Conference to diligently assess their facilities and ministries and work to remove and/or overcome barriers to welcoming and including all people in their work and ministries; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 150th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference, welcome and call upon the Disabilities Ministries Team to continue to serve as a liaison between the Connecticut Conference and the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board, to continue its ministries of presence at Conference gatherings, its offerings of resources and its advocacy, through preaching and teaching, to encourage our churches to become “Accessible to All.”

Evaluation forms, recognition of the Annual Planning Team, and closing

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: *Please find the “Evaluation form” in your materials, fill them out prior to leaving the meeting and either drop them in the boxes labeled “Evaluation Forms” or mail them to the address on the form after you return home. We value the responses that you make and pay careful attention to them. It is important that you let us know what is good about these meetings and what does not work by completing the Evaluation Form and submitting it. After all, this is your meeting!*

Moderator, The Rev. Paul Goodman: Persephone Hall to come forward and passed on the gavel and the UCC medallion as Moderator for the 2018 Annual Meeting.

There was a presentation of Thank You gifts for Paul Goodman, Moderator and to Mark Engstrom, Chair of the Board of Directors. And also for our beloved Cecile Gilson. A reminder went out that we would celebrate her retirement on Sunday, June 25 at 2pm at Immanuel in Hartford.

Moderator, Persephone Hall: *The Annual Meeting in 2018 will be held June 15 & 16, at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield, MA. It will be a joint meeting of the CT, MA and RI Conferences.*

“Following closing worship, the 150th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, acting also as the Connecticut Conference of the Congregational Christian Churches, is adjourned.”

Saturday, June 17, 2017
Tri Conference Joint Plenary-Session Four

3:30pm Re gathering hymn, provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team

Prayer was given by The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer

Welcome back and preparation for reports:

Moderator, Rev. George Peters: Welcome back, everyone! We have all accomplished some very efficient business since we were last together, and had an opportunity for deep conversation and contemplation.

In a moment, we will hear from the Moderators of each of our conferences about the results of our separate votes on the Resolution on an Invitation to Create a New Conference. Following these reports, we will hear from each of our Conference Ministers. Our General Minister and President, the Rev. John Dorhauer, will then offer a theological reflection. We will close our meeting as we began it yesterday evening, in worship of the awesome God we know in Jesus Christ.

Before we hear reports on the plenary sessions, however, I want to do two things.

The first is to remind us of Paul's words to the church in Ephesus, spoken also for us. Whatever the results of our votes, we are we are still one. We share one teacher, one faith, one baptism. We have been called by the Source of all creation to travel together, and nothing can change this. The same breath and blood of Christ flows through us all, however God has spoken to each of us in the hours that we have spent together today. Secondly, I want to make an important request. I ask that everyone refrain from applauding the outcome of any vote. This will honor the reality that, despite our essential and unbreakable oneness, we do not all yet agree on a path forward. Even if your own conference voted unanimously one way or another, you may be sure that there are people in this room whose discernment has led them to a different conclusion. As members of Christ's family, let us show compassion and respect for our different perspectives.

Report on Votes

- Ian Tosh, Moderator of the Massachusetts Conference, reported on his conference's plenary vote: Massachusetts voted in favor of the resolution.
- Rev. Paul Goodman, Moderator of the Connecticut Conference, reported on his conference's plenary vote: Connecticut voted in favor of the resolution.
- Rev. George Peters, Moderator of the Rhode Island Conference, reported on his conference's plenary vote: The Rhode Island Conference voted in favor of the resolution. However, there were significant concerns raised. And the RI Conference pleads with the Board of Directors to listen to those with voices of concern.

Moderator, Rev. George Peters invited each of the Conference Ministers to offer a brief pastoral message.

Theological reflection by The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer **Closing Worship, provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team**

Adjournment 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sioux Wilusz, Registrar & Program Associate