

**Penn West Conference  
United Church of Christ**

**54th Annual Meeting  
"Dear God..."  
June 10 and 11, 2016  
California University of Pennsylvania  
California, PA**

**Pre-meeting Activities**

On Friday morning, at 10:30 AM, prior to the official call to order, pre-meeting activities included the first annual mission project (donation drive for City Mission of Fayette County) with Chelsea Neatrour, choir rehearsal with Meredith Hutchison and Kathy Fair, a dance workshop with Susie Felten, a Pension Boards presentation by Todd Muchnicki, and technology tutoring with the Rev. Joseph Hedden.

Lunch was held in the dining hall 11:30-1:00PM

**Opening Worship**

The Conference gathered for the opening worship service at 1:21. Planners for the service were Rev. David Ackerman, Rev. Dr. Robert McKie, Rev. Diane Smith, and Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver. The accompanist for this and all the other worship services was Mrs. Katherine Fair, Faith United Church of Christ, Ridgway, Pennsylvania. The sermon was delivered by Rev. David Ackerman, who dynamically presented the message, "I  Problems." His message reminded us that not everything that is broken in life can be fixed by us. Jesus is enough. All we need. He encouraged all to not let the anxiety of the moment take away from the joy of today.

**Call to Order  
Plenary 1A Business**

James Neatrour, Moderator, called the 54th Annual Meeting of the Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ, to order at 2:06 PM. After welcoming comments, he began with prayer and then invited Jill Clawson, in absence of Rev. Robert McKie, Conference Secretary, to deliver the

Credentials Report. Clawson stated there were 45 pastors present and 51 delegates attending, plus 20 visitors. The Chair declared that a quorum was present.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

Motion/Second – To approve the proposed agenda for this Annual Meeting.  
Motion Carried

### **Appointment of the Tellers**

The following individuals were appointed:

The Rev. Stephen Fair– Clarion Association

? Juniata Association |

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Laddie Ohl – Lake Erie

Art Weldy– Pittsburgh Association

Alisa Shaffer– Somerset Association

Glenda Berg- Westmoreland Association

Jim Neatrour invited attendees to visit the Prayer Chapel during conference and thanked Betty Royer and Rebecca Cole-Turner for their efforts in creating a place where attendees could go for quiet time with God.

### **Introduction of Guests**

Rev. David Ackerman, Penn West Conference Minister, introduced the following guests, and Penn West members, serving various instrumentalities and agencies:

The Rev. Kate Matthews, Dean of the Amistad Chapel  
(Presenter/Preacher)

Mr. Todd Muchnicki, COO of the Pension Boards (Pension Boards  
Conversation leader; not present for the introduction)

Ms. Tessa Niederbaumer, Project Research Analyst, UCC (E-giving  
Conversation leader; not present for the introduction)

Dr. Edith Rasell, UCC Minister for Economic Justice (Fair Trade Conversation leader)  
Ms. Terri Roberts, Author (not present for the introduction)  
The Rev. Jana Quisenberry, Pastor, United Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, of Coal Center (welcomed the Conference; presented a t-shirt)  
Our guests from the Philistines (Philippines!)  
Bishop Elorde Sambat  
Conference Minister Noel Pagdilao  
The Rev. Marjorie Belmonte  
Ms. Joni Hufford, Executive Director, Living Waters Camp & Conference Center  
Mr. Bryan Oros, President & CEO, St. Paul's Continuing Care Community  
Mr. Chris Wright, COO, St. Paul's Continuing Care Community  
Ms. Rita Clemente, Director of Colony Living & Community Outreach, St. Paul's Continuing Care Community  
The Rev. Bill Kirker, Director of Spiritual Services, St. Paul's Continuing Care Community  
The Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister, Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania  
The Rev. Jerry McCuller, Director of Spiritual Care, Homewood at Martinsburg  
Mr. James Neatrour, Chaplain, Homewood at Martinsburg  
The Rev. Dr. Lee Barrett, Professor of Systematic Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary (not present for the introduction)  
Mr. Donald E. Hamm II, Agent for the Insurance Board

Our guests from the Philippines presented a beautiful prayer scarf hand crafted by indigenous people in the Philippines to the conference.

### **Introduction of Ministers New to Penn West**

David Ackerman introduced new ministers to Penn West Conference:

Grace Basham, Pymatuning Charge  
Rebecca Cole-Turner, Smithfield  
Doug Satterlee (to be ordained), Woodcock Valley Charge  
Alexa Smith, the Paradise Charge, Somerset  
Robin Swope, St. Paul's, Erie  
Judith Tobias, St. John's, Larimer  
Madeline Edwards, Emanuel, Warren

## **Approval of Minutes**

Motion/Second – To accept the minutes of the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Penn West Conference as printed in the 54th Annual Meeting Program Booklet. MOTION CARRIED

Motion/Second – To accept the summary of the Board of Director's Actions as printed in the 54th Annual Meeting Program Booklet. MOTION CARRIED

## **Acceptance of 2015-2016 Board of Directors Actions**

Motion/Second – To accept the summary of the 2015-2016 Board of Director's Actions as printed in the 54th Annual Meeting Program Booklet. MOTION CARRIED

## **Constitutional Amendment Delayed**

Jim Neatrou announced that the scheduled presentation of a Constitutional Amendment on the meeting agenda for this meeting will be delayed until next year's annual meeting due to timing.

## **Presentation of Nominations**

Officers nominated to serve two year terms are Jill Clawson as secretary, Class of 2018 and Deborah Long as treasurer, Class of 2018. Their biographies are found on page 30 (White Section) of the 54th Annual Meeting Program Booklet.

Motion/Second – To close the nominations for secretary. MOTION CARRIED

Motion/Second – To close the nominations for treasurer. MOTION CARRIED

The list of the General Synod delegates that were elected is on page 31 of the Annual Gathering & Meeting book. It was duly noted that Jim Neatrou

should not be listed as a continuing associate delegate on p. 32 of the book. Instead, the continuing associate delegate is the Rev. Diane Wiley.

Delegates elected to General Synod this year (Class of 2019) are:  
Nathan Hart, Pittsburgh Association  
Joy Johnson, Lake Erie Association  
and Jill Marie, Clarion Association

### **Introduction of the 2017 Budget**

Deborah Long, Treasurer, introduced the budget found on pages 1-14 (Green pages) of the 54th annual meeting program booklet.

### **Speak Outs – First Round – One Minute (ish)**

Rev. Liddy Barlow spoke about Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania, urging support and asking for people to like their page on Facebook. Liddy shared gratitude for Penn West involvement in the association.

Sherry Kelly spoke to promote the Golf Outing for Living Waters fundraiser. August 12, 2016. She also solicited sponsorship for the event.

After the speak outs David Ackerman introduced a break by referencing a "play on scripture," sharing Samson telling Delilah, "The Philippines are upon you." This was in reference to a former slip of the tongue when introducing guests from the Philippines as being from the Philistines.

### **Plenary Session 1B 3:00**

Meeting called back to order by Jim Neatrou.

Presentations:

*St. Paul's Continuing Care Community.*

Presentation by  
with slide presentation sharing mission, vision, core values, and history of  
St. Paul's Continuing Care Community.

*Global Missions report.*

The Rev. Joseph Hedden explained the joy of having our Philippine representatives with us at Penn West Conference. He addressed the importance of making new friends across the world . (David explained that there is a need for additional funding for bringing the guests here. He also encouraged others to join in the visit to St. Paul's)

*Mission Grants Committee report.*

David shared the awarded grants for 2015.

The following grants were distributed to these churches in a celebration ceremony on July 28, 2015 at First Reformed United Church of Christ in Greensburg.

- a. Amity Reformed United Church of Christ, Meyersdale PA
- b. Trinity United Church of Christ, Pittsburgh, PA
- c. Community of Reconciliation, Pittsburgh PA
- d. First Reformed United Church of Christ, Greensburg PA
- e. Trinity United Church of Christ, Greensburg PA
- f. Christ United Church of Christ, Latrobe PA
- g. Zion's United Church of Christ, Transfer PA
- h. St. Mark's United Church of Christ, Fredonia, Pa
- i. Stoystown Charge, Stoystown, PA
- j. Grace United Church of Christ, Duesquene, PA
- k. Denmark Manor United Church of Christ, Export, PA
- l. St. Paul's Community Church, Chicora, PA
- m. Friend's Cove Charge, Bedford, PA
- n. Penn West Academy Students

*Stepping Into Stewardship*

Judith Tobias, Tom Croner, Deborah Long, and Mary Hendrick's shared the need for greater giving to Our Church's Wider Mission. They shared personal testimonies of how others have helped them and conveyed the need to give back. They shared how we can touch the lives of another person who is really hurting through our giving.

*Theological Reflections*

*Kate Matthews*

After greeting attendees and bringing greetings from the national office, Kate reminded us that how people are welcomed is what teaches people if they are welcome far more than signs outside that say people are welcome. Kate addressed her gratitude for the United Church and Christ and conveyed that we are all part of the same story.

*David Ackerman*

Shared by way of his pastor's report about starting a Legacy Team.

-Break for dinner-

### **Celebration Worship Service**

Following dinner, the Conference was called back to order at approximately 7:00 PM for the Celebration Service. The service included the reading of I Corinthians 12:12-13, a solo by Miranda DeAngelo, recognition of ordination and licensing anniversaries by Barry Fillman, and recognition of The Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver's Doctor of Ministry degree. Part of the service was a candle lighting necrology moment remembering; Doug Albert, Rich Ednie, Fred Flick, Billy Plummer, Ed Shantz, and an invitation for those present to lift up names of other saints who have passed away since the 2015 annual meeting. Mission Grants were also acknowledged at this service. The service ended with the unison reading of I Corinthians 12:30-31.

### **Ordination Anniversaries**

LaMar Bender, 60, Somerset  
Clara Settlemire, 60, Clarion  
Daniel Fenner, 50, Clarion  
Keith Kensinger, 50, Juniata  
Frank Demmy, 40, Somerset  
Herman Ridley, 40, Clarion  
Wayne Sautter, 40, Westmoreland  
Stephen Fair, 35, Clarion  
Meredith Hutchison, 35, Westmoreland  
Rosemary Baumgardner, 30, Somerset  
David Williamson, 25, Lake Erie

Richard McCarty, 15, Lake Erie  
Cindy Parker, 5, Westmoreland

### **Licensure/Commission Anniversaries**

Kenneth Tack, 45, Clarion  
Ray Leckemby, 40, Somerset  
Mabel King, 25, Juniata  
John Russell, 20, Juniata  
Avis Specht, 20, Westmoreland  
Dwayne Hay, 10, Somerset  
Robert Newell, 10, Clarion  
Robert Penner, 10, Juniata  
Bonnie Kautz, 10, Westmoreland

### **Penn West Academy – Celebrating Our Graduates**

The Rev. Joseph Hedden, Dean of the Penn West Academy, introduced recent graduates of the academy:

Brenda Haws  
Keith Grimm  
Peggy Mortimer  
TJ Lucas  
Brady Plummer

Hedden closed this portion of the Annual Meeting with prayer

Participants in the Celebration Service in addition to Fillman and DeAngelo were Joseph Hedden, Meredith Hutchison, Jerry McCuller, and Cindy Parker.

### **Living Waters presentation by Joni Hufford**

Joni Hufford, Executive Director of Camp Living Waters reported on offerings at the camp this summer. She encouraged support and prayers for the camp. Joni shared that as an act of faith, again this year, the cost of camps had been lowered to make them more affordable for campers. She invited those at annual meeting to visit her giving tree in the lobby and

commit to choosing from an assortment of envelopes for donations for specific costs at the camp this year.

## **After Hours**

There were various choices to be made by attendees for the evening:

Movie: Jim Neatrou

Bookstore: The Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver

Trivia Game: Judith Tobias

Arts & Crafts: Valarie Poole

Open gym: Brady Plummer

## **Celebrate 5 for 5**

5 for 5 Churches are those congregations that have given to Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) Basic Support, plus One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and The Christmas Fund all-Church offerings. Those congregations were recognized with a certificate of thanks. The 5 for 5 Churches for 2015 are listed on page 15 (Green Section) of the 54th Annual Meeting Booklet.

## **Saturday – June 11, 2016**

### **Plenary 2A**

Following breakfast, the Conference gathered at 8:45 for Plenary 2A. The Rev. Diane Wiley reminded everyone about the September Women's Retreat at Living Waters September 17 and 18. She followed it with our opening morning prayer.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Adoption of the 2015 Budget

Deborah Long, Treasurer, reviewed high points in the budget and entertained questions. The 2016 Proposed Budget is on pages 1-14(Green Section) of the 54th Annual Meeting Program Booklet.

The proposed budget projects an income and expenditures of \$297,785.00.

Motion/Second – To adopt the Proposed 2016 Budget of the Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ. MOTION CARRIED

The budget passed.

## **Votes on Nominations**

### **Speak Outs Two – One Minute**

Meredith Hutchison spoke about the upcoming pastor's retreat September 26-27, 2016 to be held at Antiochian Village in Bolivar.

Joseph Hedden reported on Penn West Academy. He also encouraged attendance at an adult spiritual camp at Camp Livingwaters Aug. 14-18.

Chelsea Neatrou invited participation to Paint Night at Camp Livingwaters June 15.

## **Plenary 2B: Global Missions Worship and Presentation**

The Rev. Joseph Hedden welcomed everyone to Saturday Morning Worship and introduced our United Church of Christ of the Philippines guests; Bishop Elorde Mendoza Sambet, Rev. Noel Pagdilao, and Rev. Marjorie Belmonte who led the service. The sermon for the service by Bishop Sambat focused on dwelling in God's love and giving from the little you have as you love unconditionally. The Bishop shared moving stories from his life and ministry in the Philippines. The congregation was engaged by Hedden and Melissa McLean in a "Dear God" question and answer activity in which they followed the salutation with thoughts one might send to God. After Penn West Conference suggestions were read, the guests from the Philippines shared some responses from our partner believers in the Philippines. After the thanksgiving for our partnership, fellowship liturgy, and presentation of stoles, we recited the Statement of Faith for the United Church of Christ of the Philippines.

## **Conversations**

**Conference attendees could choose from a variety of conversations offered throughout the hour of 11:00-noon.**

Fair Trade: facilitated by Edie Rasell

E-Giving: facilitated by Tessa Neiderbaumsr

Children/Communion/Baptism/Dedication: facilitated by Valarie Poole

Liturgical Movement: facilitated by Susie Felten

Missions: facilitated by Ryan Lucas

Choir Rehearsal with The Rev. Meredith Hutchison & Kathy Fair

Technology Tutoring: facilitated by The Rev. Steve Craft

-lunch-

## **Conversation Reports**

Fair Trade: facilitated by Edie Rasell- the group reported that as Christians, we are called to ask how did this item get to me? We are called to abolish child labor and inhumane practices. This conversation involved suggestions of how to do these things.

E-Giving: facilitated by Tessa Neiderbaumer- the group mainly answered questions about passing the digital offering plate. They discussed online banking. On the UCC website there is a suggestion to look for churches with successful online giving to share techniques. Vanco and Pay Pal for resources were discussed.

Children/Communion/Baptism/Dedication: facilitated by Valarie Poole- the group discussed pros and cons of the issues and decided the essential key point is if children are included in practices, there must be education for children, parents, and other adults.

Conversation reports were cut a bit short as we prepared for the keynote address via SKYPE.

## **Keynote Address**

A very inspiring address via SKYPE was given by author, Terri Roberts. Roberts has survived serious illness and unthinkable tragedy in her community, a tragedy for which one of her sons was responsible. She spoke of God's grace given and received and the mountains it can move. She elaborated on the forgiveness extended by her nearby Amish community when it had been devastated by the tragic loss of several of their children to a senseless shooting.

## **Closing Worship**

The Closing Worship Service was designed by youth of the Penn West Conference at their April 24 gathering. The sermon, "Go Out in Joy," was given by Rev. Kathryn Matthews, Dean of the Amistad Chapel of the United Church of Christ. The service concluded with all sharing in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Offering at this service was designated for *Strengthen the Church*.

After worship, Jim Neatrou thanked the California University students for their assistance, Gladys Plusky and her team for transportation, and the annual meeting planning committee. He requested that each association assign two people for planning for next year's annual meeting. David Ackerman thanked moderator, Jim Neatrou and assistant moderator Diane Wiley for their work.

Adjournment

Motion/Second – To adjourn the 54th Annual meeting of the Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ. MOTION CARRIED

Faithfully submitted,

Jill M. Clawson, (for The Rev. Dr. Robert McKie)



