

## Guide to the Nov. 9, 2024, Special Meeting of the Penn West Conference

THANK YOU to everyone who is planning to participate in the historic vote at our November 9, 2024, Special Meeting of the Penn West Conference of the United Church of Christ. This is a general guide to what we anticipate will be the process, noting that, as with all meetings, things are subject to change and flexibility is important.

**When:** 10 AM ET, Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024

**Where:** First Reformed UCC (312 S. Maple Ave., Greensburg, PA) and Zoom

**Topic:** Motion of Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences to Join Together to Form the Keystone Conference

### Registration

We are grateful for an anonymous donor who has contributed so that there will not be any registration fees for the meeting. There will be a cost for lunch and a deadline to sign up for it, which will be noted on the registration form. Please note that there is a photo release implied by registration on the form.

### Centering in Worship

We plan to open our time together in worship. We hope and pray that a worshipful spirit will pervade the whole gathering. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, we are committed to living out our Gospel commandment to love one another, and we pray that the entire proceedings will be carried out in a spirit of love for God and for one another.

### Who Are Voting Delegates

One of the important tasks that we will have is to confirm who our voting delegates are. This is spelled out in Penn West Conference Bylaw VII.4:

*When the Conference meets, its voting membership shall consist of the ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers holding standing in its Associations, and of lay delegates selected by and representing the member churches. A church of not more than 200 communicant members (members in full standing) shall be entitled to be represented by two lay delegates and a youth delegate; a church of 201-500 such members, by three lay delegates and a youth delegate; a church of more than 501 such members, by four lay delegates and a youth delegate. Youth delegates are those under the age of 19. Each church should also choose alternate delegates to serve if its delegates are unable to attend. Visitors are welcome with the privilege of voice but without vote. The members of the Board of Directors shall be voting members ex-officio.*

The guide we will use for determining church membership is the 2024 UCC Yearbook. We must know who the lay delegates from our local churches are in advance of the meeting. To that end, we will be sending “Credential of Delegate” forms to all of our churches. We are asking that an authorized officer of each Local Church certify who that congregation’s lay delegates and alternates are. This is essential for us to have before the meeting, as we do not want to have any controversy on the day of the meeting as to who a church’s delegates actually are. Additionally, we are providing each church with “voting badges” that we are asking our churches to give to their lay delegates in advance of the meeting. These will be an

additional means of being able to verify who a church's voting lay delegates are in case there are any unforeseen difficulties with the "Credential of Delegate" forms.

**IN-PERSON DELEGATES:** When delegates who register to be in-person arrive in Greensburg, our staff will sign each person in as an Authorized Minister, Board of Directors Member, Lay Delegate, Youth Delegate, or Visitor. Those in the first three categories will receive ballots. When it comes time for ballots to be cast, a roll call will be given and participants may come forward to cast their ballots. If participants are physically unable to come forward, arrangements will be made for them to have their ballots received at that time.

**ZOOM DELEGATES:** When delegates register via Zoom, a designated Zoom room leader will be assigned to determine who voting delegates are. When it is time for the vote on Zoom, participants may use the Chat feature to privately send their votes to the Zoom room leader. A recording of the whole proceedings on Zoom will be made, and the script of the Chat will be reviewed. The minutes of the meeting taken by the Conference Secretary (or proxy if the Secretary is unable to be present) are the official record of the meeting. While the Secretary can be informed by the recording, once minutes are approved by the Conference at its next meeting, the recording will be destroyed. Consent to the recording will be required with registration.

With regard to voting, as per Bylaw VII.4, youth delegates are not listed among the voting delegates, although they will have voice on the floor. Also, there is no provision in our Bylaws for absentee ballots or proxies, so we cannot permit these.

## What the Meeting Will Include

After worship, necessary agenda items will be attended to, including approving the agenda/order of the day (which calls for the vote to take place at 11:30 AM ET), granting visitors voice without vote, and taking the time needed to confirm voting delegates. There will be some time for discussion on the motion. It is hoped that most of the needed discussion will have taken place before the meeting in interpretive sessions that members of the Keystone Working Group have held/will hold prior to the meeting. Then the time to vote will arrive.

After the vote, we will share the results of the Penn West vote with the Conference. Following this, at approximately noon ET, the first Zoom meeting will end and another Zoom meeting involving all four Pennsylvania United Church of Christ Conferences will begin. The results of the votes from all four Conferences will be shared at that time. We anticipate that there will be a time of prayer as part of that joint-conference Zoom.

Following this, those who are in person at First Reformed who have signed up and paid for lunch may go down to Fellowship Hall to share a meal together.