

United Church of Christ, Southwest Conference

Annual Meeting – May 5-6, 2017

The United Church of Christ, Southwest Conference gathered for an Annual Meeting May 5 and 6 at the Sheraton Airport-Albuquerque and First Congregational UCC Albuquerque in New Mexico. The meeting materials that contain information about actions taken by the Annual Meeting (top line budget, nominating slate, and bylaws changes) should be considered addenda to these minutes.

FRIDAY

Southwest Conference Moderator Rebecca Glenn called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm at the Sheraton. Rebecca asked delegates for a motion naming Brendan Mahoney (First Congregational Phoenix) as Annual Meeting Parliamentarian. James Clark (Church of the Palms) made this motion; Susan Stephens Whitney (Casas Adobes) seconded. The motion passed without opposition.

Rebecca welcomed guests of the Conference: Stacey Pettice, UC Funds; Jake Pomeroy, Cornerstone Fund; Nancy Brink, Chapman University; Leslie Taylor, Pacific School of Religion; and Kathleen Day, Northern Arizona University. Rebecca introduced officers of the conference board and the staff. One staff change was announced: Wende Gonzales is moving from a contract position to Relational Communications Coordinator and Eli Johnson is transitioning to Assistant to the Conference Minister.

Rebecca announced the result of opening ballot measures, all of which passed. The Annual Meeting has 119 attendees, 96 of which are delegates representing 32 churches. A quorum was declared; official business of the conference may proceed with full force and effect.

Susan Whitney, Chair of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers and standing committee members, the full list of which was included in meeting materials.

Wendy Spurgeon provided an introduction of the by-laws changes that are on the Saturday agenda. Wendy expressed appreciation for the work of the Mission Planning Board (to be renamed Mission and Church Vitality Committee upon approval of by-laws changes) and for the appreciative inquiry process that the group used to discern the scope of their work together.

Treasurer Phil Ward introduced the fiscal year 2017-2018 budget and financial statement. The conference's auditor has recommended rearrangement of several accounts, using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, which will make the conference's finances more accurate and more transparent.

Rebecca Glenn introduced the recommendation from the Executive Board to call Bill Lyons as our settled Conference Minister. Rebecca noted that Bill is supported unanimously by the

Executive Board and that he has shown himself to be a transparent and hardworking learner while working among us.

Friday's business session concluded at 2:40 pm.

SATURDAY

Moderator Rebecca Glenn called the session to order at 9:10 am. She expressed great appreciation for the Annual Meeting planning committee and those who worked to make the meeting run smoothly. Following announcements, Rebecca shared her moderator report, the written portion of which is in the meeting materials.

Rev. Dr. Bill Lyons gave his Designated Conference Minister report which included appreciation for the unpredictable yet joyful work so many are called to participate in.

Rev. Sue Joiner led delegates and guests in prayer.

The following agenda items come to the Annual Meeting as recommendations from the Executive Board or from standing committees. As such, they do not require a motion or second. Votes (written ballot or voice) follow discussion.

Susan Stephens Whitney expressed appreciation for the nominations committee and invited those interested in conference service to put their names forward for consideration. Recommendation from the nominating committee – the slate of officers, at-large members of the Executive Board, and standing committee members – passed without opposition.

Rebecca Glenn led deliberations and discussion regarding calling Bill Lyons as settled Conference Minister. Members of the Executive Board came forward to deliver brief statements of support. Many delegates offered their opinions and statements about Bill's work over the last 16 months.

Following much discussion, Joyce Buckers moved to approve Kelly Kahlstrom and Julie McCurdy as non-delegate tellers for vote counting. Sue Joiner provided a second. This motion passed and written balloting commenced.

Business continued as votes were tallied.

Treasurer Phil Ward led discussion on the 2017 budget. Phil noted the trust and investment income from the closure of First Church Tempe. Phil also noted the increased expenses for an Associate Conference Minister which will allow regular staff to fulfill duties instead of grant-funded and contract employees. Executive Board member Nancy Ackley spoke to the provided narrative budget as a visual representation of the conference's financial priorities and decision-making process. Others noted the continuing importance of strong support to the conference via Our Church's Wider Mission.

Phil Ward called for the question; the budget passed without opposition.

Wendy Spurgeon led discussion regarding by-laws changes. John Leum (First UCC Flagstaff) offered an amendment from the floor, adding the language “to expire every year” to the nominating committee section on page 10. Donna Gentry (Scottsdale UCC) seconded. This motion to amend passed.

Rebecca Glenn interrupted discussion of the by-laws changes to announce results of the vote on a call for Bill Lyons. This recommendation passed with 1 nay vote and 1 abstention. Bill expressed his confidence in the conference and appreciation those present. He expressed his desire to serve as Conference Minister “for the whole conference.” He also took this opportunity to welcome Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, United Church of Christ General Minister and President.

Discussion on the by-laws continued. Wendy Spurgeon (Silver City UCC) moved to amend changes, replacing ‘Mission Planning Board’ with Mission and Church Vitality Committee throughout the document. Additional amendments from Wendy are as follows:

In lines 11-14, under Definition of Community, change which exist(s) and that has active standing

In line 17, under standing committees, add the newly formed Endowment Fund Management Committee.

Jennifer Smith (First UCC Phoenix) seconded these amendments offered from the floor. Amendments passed.

Voting on the by-laws changes began via written ballot.

Danny Rodriguez (First UCC Phoenix) spoke with energy and passion to the resolution regarding sanctuary. Rev. James Pennington (First UCC Phoenix) introduced a friendly amendment that came out of the resolution hearing on Friday. The amendment from the hearing is as follows: deleting language re. agitating, replacing with ‘prophetic action.’

Resolution regarding Sanctuary passed on a voice vote with some nay votes.

Rebecca announced the results of the by-laws vote: passed with 1 nay and 3 abstentions.

Rebecca passed the cross and gavel to incoming moderator Rev Liana Rowe (Shadow Rock UCC). Liana noted with much appreciation Rebecca’s patient leadership and care for the conference during a busy and often trying year of ministry.

Liana announced the 2018 Annual Meeting: April 20-21, 2018 at Rincon UCC in Tucson AZ.

Susan Stephens Whitney moved to adjourn; Grace Bunker seconded. Motion to adjourn passed at 11:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richter,
Secretary, Southwest Conference UCC