



Potomac Association

Central Atlantic Conference-United Church of Christ

Potomac Association Spring Meeting 2009

Plymouth Congregational UCC-Washington, DC (Location Rescheduled)
Saturday May 16, 2009
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Meeting Specifics

Theme

Strengthening Partnerships: Ministry in Such a Time as This
for people, for congregations, and for our life together

This meeting was developed by the Association Strategic Planning Committee, recently charged with the task of “strengthening partnerships” between the Local Churches in the Association.

Schedule

- 8:30 Registration, Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Opening Plenary
 - Call To Order/Reading of the Roll Call
 - Approval of the Minutes from the Fall 2008 Meeting (10/25/08-Rockville United Church-Rockville, MD)
 - Report of the Board of Directors
 - Moderator’s Report
 - Treasurer’s Report
 - Associate Conference Minister’s Report
 - Reports from the Chairs of Standing Committees
 - This is a time to add clarification to the written reports contained in the Delegate Packets*
 - Christian Education
 - Church and Ministry
 - Higher Education
 - Local Church Development
 - Social Action and Mission
 - Report of the Nominating Committee
 - Approval of the Nominations for the Class of 2009
 - Other Business for the Assembly
 - Report from the Conference Minister, Rev. John Deckenback on Conference Staffing and Finances

- 9:45 Special Report from the Association Strategic Planning Committee: Strengthening Partnerships
***Strengthening Partnerships: Ministry in Such a Time as This
for people, for congregations, and for our life together***
A Baseline Presentation
- On the National Setting of the United Church of Christ
 - On the partnerships within the Central Atlantic Conference
 - On the partnerships within the Potomac Association
 - On the partnerships between our Local Congregations
- 10:15 Breakout Sessions: Feedback/Reflection Groups
“Issues, not Answers”
A feedback sheet will be provided to each Group
A Summary of the sheets will be distributed to the Delegates and Local Churches
This information will be used in developing the partnerships between the Association Churches
- 11:15 Report Back to the Assembly, and Next Steps
- 11:30 A Special Report from the Committee on Social Action and Mission:
The COREM Statement on the restructuring of the National Setting of the UCC: The United Church Board
- 12:00 Lunch and Displays
- 12:30 Closing Worship, Installation of Officers, and Communion
- 1:30 Adjournment



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Financial Reports are attached at end of document

Reports from the Board of Directors

Report from the Acting Moderator

We began 2008 on a very different place in our ministry together. Some of this was due to the state of our nation and our world, some to transitions on life's journey within the members and local churches of the association.

Changes in our Local Congregations

As noted by our Committees on Church and Ministry and Local Church Development, many of our local churches are in a time of flux. There is a wonderful joy in sharing in a time such as this together: it gives us a chance to remember our covenants with each other.

In response to this, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to a self-study. The Self Study Task Force, convened by Rob Peters and chaired by Pete Davis, has begun to help the association focus on its ministry together. Our bylaws state that our first purpose as an association is:

To enable its local churches to cultivate a closer Christian fellowship, to deepen their spiritual life, and to cooperate more effectively in advancing the mission of Christ's Church (Article III.A)

The Self Study Task Force adopted the theme of "*Strengthening Partnerships*," calling us to reflect on our covenant to be one body in the Association, and to look for ways to address common concerns, ministries, outreach, and activism together. I thank this group for their leadership at the Spring meeting, and for the coming time.

Changes in our Board and Committees

We have had a large shift in the leadership of the Association in the past 18 months. This began with the departure of Vernor Clay, our Scribe, in October 2007, as he was called away from us in service to Florida. I came into the office of Associate Moderator in February as a "fill-in" for Bruce Irwin as he was called away from us to service in Pennsylvania. And with Robin McCord's untimely passing, the office of Moderator became vacant. Also, we were delayed in seating a new treasurer for the Association until December. A great vote of thanks to Barbara Lowery for her extended service (and patience!), and to Christine Rowe for coming to share her gifts with the Association. Add to this a large number of unfilled seats on our Committees. Yes, there is a moment for renewal in our covenant, and I believe it is taking place in right now!

As we enter 2009, I have great thanks in my heart to our local churches. We have been able to fill many of the vacant opportunities in service. In February of this year, a special note was sent to our larger churches, asking for their direct participation in the Board and Committees. It is a pleasure to bring such a full slate before you this year.

Changes in our life together

We have had several deaths in among our community this year. At our Spring Meeting in April, we lifted up the life and ministry of John Mack. John died peacefully on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at his home surrounded by his family.

At our Fall Meeting in October, we remembered Robin McCord. Robin passed away suddenly on July 20, 2008. May I give my sincere appreciation for the combined choir who shared their gifts at the worship service.

Let us also remember Hubert S. Beckwith, the founding pastor and Pastor Emeritus of Little River UCC-Annandale, VA (affectionately known as Beck) died peacefully at home October 12, 2008.

I know that there are more in our numbers who we remember in their service. Let their memories live richly among us.

I thank you again for the privilege to serve in this office. While it was not the task I had thought on my path, it has been deeply meaningful and your confidence much appreciated. May we continue to grow in our ministry as the Potomac Association as God guides us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Henry E. "Hank" Fairman,
Moderator, Potomac Association

Report from the Treasurer

Documents are attached are:

2008 Balance Sheet

2008 Annual Financial Report

2008 Designated Funds Report

Audit Report for 2008 (Pending)

2009 Approved Budget

2009 Approved Assessments

2009 First Quarter Assessments Report

2009 First Quarter Financial Report

2009 First Quarter Designated Funds Report

Potomac Association Balance Sheet

Barbara Lowrey, Treasurer

Calendar Year 2008

Bank Balance 12/31/2008

checking	\$	14,214.12
savings	\$	31,680.80
total	\$	45,894.92
Year end deposits	\$	992.00
Uncleared checks	\$	4,578.00
Book Balance	\$	42,308.92
Operating Balance	\$	(1,237.00)
Designated Funds	\$	20,998.01
Unallocated Reserves	\$	22,547.91

Potomac Association Designated Funds and Other Reserves

Barbara Lowrey, Treasurer

12/16/2008

Fund	Previous Balance	Receipts Dec	Expenditures Dec	Current Balance
Women's Coordinating Committee	\$269.98	\$0	\$0	\$269.98
WCC Scholarship	\$874.00	\$0	\$0	\$874.00
Stanley Scholarship	\$9,307.03	\$0	\$0	\$9,307.03
Association Self-Study	\$6,000.00	\$0	\$0	\$6,000.00
LCDC Mission	\$3,067.00	\$0	\$0	\$3,067.00
Association Newsletter	\$200.00	\$0	\$0	\$200.00
Seminary Gift (2)	\$1,280.00	\$0	\$0	\$1,280.00
Funds for Church History	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
Funds for Fredericksburg	\$25.00	\$0	\$25	\$0.00
Designated Funds	\$20,753.03	\$0	\$25	\$20,728.03
2007 surplus*	\$3,812.05	\$0	\$0	\$3,812.05
Other Funds	\$17,953.65	\$0	\$ -	\$17,953.65
Total Funds	\$42,518.73	\$0.00	\$25	\$42,493.73

* preliminary estimate

Report for the Conference Ministry Team

Big Celebrations

For me the calling of Michael Murphy as Senior Pastor of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ is the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel in the large number of pastoral transitions and searches in the Potomac Association. Prior to his official start at the end of February, Rev. Murphy made several trips to the area in order to become acquainted with the church and community. These trips included his being present during a number of activities during the Inauguration of President Obama. He participated in an Inaugural Reception that I helped organize and host January 20 at the JW Marriott Hotel in downtown Washington, where members of Congress, the judiciary, Executive Branch, churches and community groups spoke and engaged in spirited fellowship.

Faithful Witness in Ecumenical Settings

While the nation and the world came to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the traditional yet historic peaceful transfer of power with the inauguration of Barak Obama as President of the United States, the day to day witness of our people and churches continued to provide reasons to celebrate.

In February, just west of the White House, leaders of the Potomac Association-Central Atlantic Conference, United Method District – Annual Conference and United Church leaders met to consider the future of that church and our ecumenical partnership there. The issues have been reported to our board in the past. The board can expect continued enlightenment on the difficult matters at the church. But the issues boil down to what will be the witness of the United Church and our ecumenical partnership in that hub of Washington, D.C. in both the near and long term.

Our meeting at the United Church was followed by a meeting with our Presbyterian, United Methodist and Disciples Judicatory partners at the United Christian Parish of Reston, Virginia and its local church leaders. The ecumenical relationship at that church has also been uneasy during the last few years. That situation also involves indications that the United Methodists are no longer committed to the partnership. At that church, we relate to the Virginia Annual Conference. At the United Church in Washington, D.C., we relate to the Baltimore/Washington Annual Conference. The conferences are different. But the issues are similar. We all have money and property invested in the ministry that we do with those churches. The Methodist want to leave. But there are legal and financial conditions that have to be addressed.

On a more positive note, the Potomac Association/Central Atlantic Conference has renewed its contacts with the Capitol Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) regarding

1. The United Christian Church (UCC) located in St. Mary's County, Maryland. That worshipping community was formerly known as the Southern Maryland Faith Community. The church is poised to request full standing as a church in the United Church of Christ and to request that we join the Disciples of Christ in installing their new pastor. Also

2. Association/Conference staff has met with the Disciples at the National City Christian Church regarding questions of our engaging in Latino Ministry Partnerships in the Region and Conference. The Disciples have a Minister on staff at National City, whose duties include Latino Ministries. She is the Rev. Noemi Parilla-Mena. She shares the desire for a partnership between our judicatories in this work.

Vital and Developing Churches

Also in February, we had Association and Conference participation in the Reception of the United Church of Christ of Fredericksburg as a “Church in Full Standing.” This church represents the determination of people who want to have a progressive witness in an area where the population continues to grow. A decade old study suggested that Northern Virginia down to Richmond is an area where the United Church of Christ should be planting churches. But our involvement in that area and the growth of this one church has been slow. So, we also face the issue of determining when the prospects for a church are marginal and resources can be better used in other places. We do not have final answers for these questions. But they are on the table.

During this period, we also began the evaluation of the revitalization effort at Lincoln Congregational United Church of Christ. As the pastor, Nathan Harris, continues to be in the employ of the Conference in agreement with that local church, we are approaching the five year mark for that church to become self-sustaining. The Conference, Association and church are engaged in an evaluation that will produce a report with recommendations. It is hoped this process show that the church is vital and moving into a healthy and faithful future.

Social Witness

The Potomac Association continues to make strides in the areas of Social Action, Mission and Witness.

Local church leaders are participating in a program with Howard University School of Divinity Professor H. Dean Trulear, Ph.D, in producing local church based “prison re-entry” programs. Those Potomac Association churches, Dr. Trulear and the Casey Foundation have chosen to no longer use the term “prison re-entry.” Instead, they are calling this local church based work, “Returning Citizens into Healing Communities.” With the financial support of the foundation and the local church, each church identifies members who have loved ones in prison. They work to have a plan for welcoming those persons back in the community, when the time comes for them to return from incarceration. The churches and foundation work with the families and the church family to help them be ready to receive these returning citizens.

The Shaw Community Ministries in the Center City of Washington, D.C. has received a \$50,000 grant from the Government of the District of Columbia to conduct work with the elderly in that struggling community. The Shaw Board, its Executive Director and the City are working together in finding ways of being most effective in helping this underserved population. But this has been a huge vote of confidence in this Ministry of the Potomac Association and its service through our churches to the community.

Getting Ready for the UCC Governance Proposals

The UCC Governance Issues, that will come before General Synod this summer involves some very significant issues. In my making a very narrow reference to this unfolding national church matter, my work with both the UCC Association of Conference Attorneys and Christians for Justice Action involves requests that these organizations help identify legal and policy issues that are likely to cause confusion in this restructuring of our denomination. Each of these groups is engaged in studying and preparing to report on their view of the impact of the structural changes that will start to be presented at Synod. Many persons and entities of the UCC are involved in looking at the major changes that have been proposed. My involvement is through the efforts of these two organizations in their grasping the issues

Other Significant Events

- A very successful Pillar of Faith Luncheon.
- I participated in a reception for Rev. Joshua DuBois and D. Paul Monteiro. Rev. Joshua DuBois is the Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Advisor to President Barak Obama, and D. Paul Monteiro is the Religious Liaison in the Office of Public Liaison in the White House.
- Peace for Iraq vigil at National City Christian Church and the White House
- Service of re-dedication with Faith United Church of Christ at their building located at 4900 10th NE, Washington, DC

Respectfully Submitted,
Kwame Osei Reed,
Associate Conference Minister for the Potomac Association

Reports from the Standing Committees

Committee on Christian Education

Tents of Hope

Potomac Association joined with people from 360 cities, 48 states and 8 countries to erect 300 colorfully decorated and inspired tents on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The tents were viewed by thousands of persons who also heard speakers and panel discussions, heard inspirational music, viewed displays and shared concerns of the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

The Potomac Association sent a number of tents from churches which were decorated by children, youth and adults. At our fall meeting, Potomac Association participants painted squares that would be sewn together to make another tent.

Tents were packed up after the event and went to Darfur to be used as classrooms and shelter.

It was a very visible of love flowing from

National Youth Event 2008

Over 2900 youth, young adults and leaders attended The National Youth Event in Knoxville, Tennessee. NYE is held every four years, provides an opportunity for youth ages 13 to 18 to gather for worship, workshops, faith, fun and fellowship. It is planned by the collaborative efforts of national staff and an NYE Planning Committee comprised of a diverse group of UCC youth and young adults. We had adults from the Potomac Association help with the planning. Potomac Association sent a number of youth to the event.

Planning for the future

Potomac Association members are working with others in the CAC to planning for the Central Atlantic Youth Event for July 24-26, 2009 @ Stevenson University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Potomac Association Christian Education Committee would like to give more support to local congregations in the areas of Christian Education. We are aware that many congregations do not have professional Directors of Christian Education. PA-CE, along with Partners in Education, will be working on ways to help congregations with how to choose curriculum, find and evaluate resources, update safety procedures, and other topics. We hope that we can do some training at the association meeting and other special training at resource fairs.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Heaslet, Chair

Committee on Church and Ministry

The Potomac Association Committee on Church and Ministry is scheduled to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at Bethesda UCC. No meeting was held in August 2008. The January 20, 2009 meeting was cancelled because the date conflicted with the presidential inaugural; the committee met by conference call on January 27 instead.

We extend our thanks to Bethesda UCC for its continuing hospitality (and large parking lot). Thanks to each member of the Committee for his/her dedication, spiritual discipline, and diligence in serving the Association.

Much of the Committee's time is spent on interviews. Each candidate for in-care, ordination, installation, partnership standing or privilege of call is interviewed. The determination of the Committee is recommended to the Potomac Association Board of Directors for action.

Potomac Association UCC Polity Institutes

At the end of January, the Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Zikmund, who designed and implemented the Polity Institutes in 2006 for the Potomac Association wrote:

The United Church of Christ Institutes sponsored by the Potomac Association are a success. They have now been going for almost three years and over 20 people have attended one or more of the institutes. Nine people have completed the sequence of four institutes. When these people are authorized for ministry in the UCC, we are able to say with greater clarity that they know UCC history, theology, ministry and polity. Being part of the UCC is being part of a culture and the four Saturday Institutes provide an enculturation process. This is very important because so many people seeking ministerial standing in the UCC did not grow up in the United Church of Christ.

Dr. Zikmund's model intended for others to cooperate in leading the various institutes. During the 2008-2009 Institutes the Committee has been grateful for the participation of and instruction provided by Rubin Tendai and Art Waidmann (Polity in the UCC), Janet Parker (UCC Theology and UCC History) and Sid Fowler and Donna Schramm (Ministry in the UCC). The Institutes are free and open to anyone interested. Details may be found on the Potomac Association website at <http://potomacucc.org/uccinstitutes.html>

The Committee on Church and Ministry is presently organizing (at the direction of and in cooperation with the Potomac Association Board of Directors) a coordinating committee for the UCC Polity Institutes in the Potomac Association which will oversee the growing administrative demands of the Institutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Letha E. Dreyfus, Chair

Record of Actions Taken by Committee on Church and Ministry in 2008

Students in Care (new and continuing)

Potomac Association currently has eighteen (18) students in care:

Mary Barrino-Smith, Emmaus/Heritage UCCs
Regina Boyd, Peoples Congregational UCC
Karen Byrne*, First Congregational UCC
Bart Cochran, Little River UCC
Kristen Curlee, Cleveland Park Congregational UCC
James Semmelroth Darnell, The United Church
Michael Durst, Cleveland Park UCC
James Andrew Estes, First Congregational UCC
Juliana Holm, Little River UCC
Mark Granfors-Hunt, Greenbelt Community UCC
Lucas Lindon, Emmaus UCC
Mike Neuroth, Westmoreland UCC
Nae Pearson, Christ Congregational UCC
Lois Phemister, United Christian Parish, Reston
Lillian Roane, Peoples Congregational UCC
Laura Robeson, Amistad St. Paul's UCC
Jeanette Salley, St. John's UCC
Suzanne Schmidt, UCC of Seneca Valley
**approved for ordination, pending call*

Ordinations

Charles N. Myer, Bethesda UCC, August 2008
Phyllis Danielson Gille, First Congregational UCC, February 2009
Susan Hayward, First Congregational UCC, February 2009

Transfers of Standing into the Potomac Association

Joe Alfred
Mari Castellanos
Al Fuertes
Richard Hyde
Harvey Joyner

Transfers of Standing out of the Potomac Association

Audrey Chapman
Jason Hays
Vicki Kemper
Gloria van Houten
Chuck Wildman

Partnership Standing into the Potomac Association

Peggy Miller, Disciples of Christ

Committee on Local Church Development

A question posed in the committee annual report last year was - Does LCDC need to exist?

There have been many success stories this year in the Association from our local churches, as well as the Association. Some of the stories are:

- Church vitality program hosted by Hope UCC - Alexandria
- 11 of 33 association churches attended that CAC church vitality meeting held at Zion UCC - Perry Hall, MD
- Several churches received rural church grants from CAC
- Two churches received small urban church grants from CAC
- UCC Fredericksburg was granted full standing in Jan 2009
- Bethel UCC - Arlington hosted an "Open House" for it's neighbors, to get to know it's neighbors and vice versa

Several of our churches are going through pastoral searches. The Committee on Church and Ministry has its hands full with this one. But several of the churches have called new pastors, completed local church profiles, and/or have secured interim pastor.

But the news is not all good. Of the 30 local church survey forms handed out at the Fall meeting, only 6 have come back completed - even those left some info off. We will be transmitting an electronic version of the form either at the Spring 09 meeting or soon after.

For most of our local churches - the economic crisis has made us open our eyes and made us very fiscal conservative and have fewer events / benevolences. We encourage all of our churches to utilize the Association website to post activities or look and see what other churches are doing. Encourage your members to participate in events at other local UCC church locations especially if you had to drop a similar program.

The answer is absolutely to question above. As you can see, we have accomplished a lot, but need to do more. We can do more united by talking with each other.

One last request - LCDC needs your help. We need membership on the committee. The committee has quite often operated with only a few persons. We need more, so we can do more.

Respectfully submitted

David Diesselhorst, Chair

Committee on Social Action and Mission

Community Missions

One of our tasks is to allocate funds for various mission projects in the Potomac Association. This year we began a process of trying to evaluate the projects we have supported in the past. One of our aims has been to focus on missions that have a UCC presence such as the active involvement of Potomac Association churches or missions which have members of Potomac association congregations on the mission board.

Most of our money (\$15,150) goes to the support of the Shaw Community Ministries. This ministry was founded by the Potomac Association to minister primarily in apartments built for low-income people by the *Lincoln* and *Westmoreland* congregations. Most of the board members of the SCM come from Potomac Association congregations. The Social Action and Mission Committee looks forward to continuing a supportive relationship with the Shaw Community Ministry and its new director, Anne Troy.

This year we added a new ministry, the Micah Ministries in Fredericksburg, Virginia. There is an active UCC presence in this ministry through the *United Church of Christ of Fredericksburg* which operates its "Saving Soles" foot care ministry to the homeless through Micah Ministries.

Mission Outreach for 2009

Community Ministries of Montgomery County \$500
114 West Montgomery Ave. Rockville, MD 20850 (New name and new address)
Prince George's Co Ministries \$150
Community Ministries of Rockville \$500
1010 Grandin Avenue, Suite A1 Rockville, MD 20851 (New address)
DC Interfaith Center (DC) \$600
Shaw Community Ministries \$15,150
Virginia Council of Churches \$500
Virginia Interfaith Center \$800
Micah Ministries (a new ministry serving the homeless) \$500
P.O. Box 3277 Fredericksburg, VA 22702
Dinner Program for Homeless Woman \$500
Anti Racism Training \$500
Contingency \$300
TOTAL MISSION OUTREACH \$20,000

Southeast DC

We realize that Southeast DC is an area that is not served very well by the United Church of Christ. We plan to explore with the Disciples of Christ ways the association might minister in this area.

Shaw DC TimeBank

The Social Action and Mission Committee and the Potomac Association endorsed a proposal for a Time Bank Ministry which would be carried out by the *Lincoln Congregational Temple* in the Shaw neighborhood of DC. At present this new ministry has not found funding. We plan to work with them to explore ways of funding the ministry.

2009 - 2010 Organizational Meeting

The Reverend Doug Hodges is stepping down as chair of the Social Action and Mission Committee. The Reverend Allison Smith has agreed to serve as convener at the next meeting. The next meeting will be held at 3pm, Tuesday May 19 at the *Bethesda UCC*. Future meeting times and place will be discussed.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Hodges, Chair

Reports from the Special Committees

Strengthening Partnerships Committee

The Self Study/Strengthening Partnerships Committee was formed by the Board of Directors in Fall 2007. The group was convened in Spring of 2008 in order to “review the service and fellowship of the Association in order to strengthen our sense of direction and programs, and to form a more cohesive association.”

The Committee has met regularly, in discussion, debate, and planning. Over their meetings, the work of revitalizing the Potomac Association, the group concluded that:

- Connection is the answer – not money;
- Connection building must be an ongoing initiative of the Potomac Association Board; and
- The Potomac Association structure is no longer valid.

The Recommendations:

In January, the Committee presented the following recommendations to the Board of Directors:

- That the Potomac Association adopt “Strengthening Connections” as its theme for the 2009 spring and fall meetings.
- That the Potomac Association spring and fall meetings devote time and workshops to “Strengthening Connections.” These could include: youth ministry; OWL; Web site development; and mission development (Our mission is to be a mission.).
- That the Potomac Association spring and fall meetings preregister attendees.
- That Potomac Association Board Members, in groups of at least two, visit every Potomac Association church at least once each year. The only agenda will be to build connections and to discuss issues of mutual interest.
- That the Potomac Association Board should restructure the Association, after proper consultation and deliberation with local churches, with the aim of ensuring key functions, lines of authority, and accountability.

Working on Strengthening our Partnerships

From the Spring Meeting 2009, this group will continue to lead the Association in investigating new ways to be the church together. The outcomes of the Spring Meeting Feedback & Reflection groups will guide their work in seeking the “ties that bind” us together.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete Davis, Chair.