



Potomac Association Central Atlantic Conference-UCC

Spring Meeting 2011

Location:

Faith UCC-Washington, DC

Saturday, May 7, 2011

8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

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Additional Reports:

Financial Report for FY-2010

Nominations for 2011-2012

Agenda

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Opening Plenary
- Reports of the Association Committees
- Church and Ministry Bill Wooten, chair
- Christian Education Jessica Petersen, chair
- Higher Education
- Local Church Development David Diesselhorst, chair
- Social Action and Mission Julie Holm, chair
- Reports from the Board of Directors
- Conference Ministry Team Kwame Osei Reed, Associate Conference Minister
- Treasurer's Report Christine Rowe, Treasurer
- Moderator's Report Hank Fairman, Moderator
- Associate Moderator's Report Felicia Simms
- Nominations for Officers and Committees
- 10:00 Keynote: "Our Ministry grows where our treasure flows": a discussion on our mission together
- 10:30 Resolutions Brought Before the Assembly:
 Resolution titled "for Review and Revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Potomac Association"
- 11:00 Hearing on a Resolution titled "Declaring the Potomac Association to be "Open and Affirming"
- Other Business before the Association
- 12:00 Closing Worship
- 12:30 Lunch

Minutes of the Fall 2010 Association Meeting

Westmoreland Congregational UCC-Bethesda, MD

Saturday, October 23, 2010

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Minutes of the Meeting

8:30 Registration

9:00 Opening Worship

Thanks and appreciation was given to the leadership of Westmoreland Congregational UCC for an inspiring opening worship

9:30 Call To Order/Reading of the Roll Call

Approval of the Minutes from the Spring 2010 Meeting

Amistad-St. Paul UCC-Lanham, MD Saturday, May 1, 2009

MOTION: to approve minutes (Diesslehorst/Simms), carried unanimously

Reports of the Association Board and Committees

Christian Education

Resourcing for our congregations, gathering and sharing ideas, fellowship
Potomac Youth SME, great success; more at the workshop

Church and Ministry

Progressing (and processing) our Students In-Care to their Ordination
Integration of Covenant Baptist Clergy
Boundary Awareness Training, establishing new deadline
Reconnecting with our Authorized Ministers (December Mtg)

Higher Education

Continuing process of re-forming of the Committee
Denise May spoke of UCM-NOVA

Local Church Development

Working on new church starts/standing (8 congregations)
Completed two churches into standing already this year
New sources of funds becoming available, through churches that have closed
Tony Robinson events this weekend at Bethel UCC

Social Action and Mission

Mission Fair coming this winter; seeking representation from all churches
GLBT activities, including ONA resolution for the Association

Board of Directors

Thanks to the Association Board and Committees, and their leadership
Status of leadership in the Association (14 churches in search now down to 6)
New Website online shortly; Potomac Postings will be resumed ASAP

Financial Report and Presentation of the Budget and Apportionments

New Missions for SA&M and LCDC, funding will be sought outside of Budget

MOTION: to adopt the Budget proposed for 2011, and the Apportionments for funding
(Christine Rowe, Felicia Simms)

After a period of good question and debate, the question was called.

Motion carried, with dissention

Nominations for Officers and Committees

Board of Directors

1 At-Large

Christian Education

5 Openings

Church & Ministry

2 Clergy

4 Lay

Higher Education

2 Openings; Need Clergy

Local Church Development

4 Openings; Need Clergy

SA&M

4 Openings

Other Business before the Association

Alice Foltz, Barbara Ferguson Kamara--Justice LED leadership training, December 2-4 at Lancaster

Dave Diesselhorst, calling of Kristen Curlee to Bethel UCC

Perry Sheppler, calling of Amber Neuroth to Hope UCC

Hank Fairman, calling of Kathy Dwyer to Rock Spring UCC

Enrique Miller, welcome of Peggy Miller, Stated Supply Faith UCC

Bonnie Hardy, First DC building will be done in less than none year

IFC-GW celebration on 11/16/2010

10:00 Keynote Address

Stone Soup in Richmond: the ministry of St. John's United Church of Christ
Rev. John Heaslet, Senior Pastor, and members of St. John's

10:45 Break to Workshops

12:30 Lunch and Displays

Respectfully Submitted,

Letha Dreyfus, Scribe

Reports of the Standing Committees

Christian Education

Throughout the past year, the Committee on Christian Education has focused on following up on two of our great successes experienced last year. We worked to offer an educational event to follow up on last spring's educational event on *Faith Practices* (a resource relating to all aspects of congregational life offered by the United Church of Christ and the Pilgrim Press). We also dedicated much time and energy to build upon our 2010 Youth Summer Mission Experience.

Sadly, our follow-up educational event on *Faith Practices* was not able to come to fruition. We had hoped to invite folks who had begun using the resource in their churches to come share what they have learned in that process. However, the busyness of spring was too much, and we were unable to find a date that would work for our speakers. We hope to offer such an event during the upcoming year.

I am happy to report that we have met great success regarding the Youth Summer Mission Experience! Last year's group had a terrific time, and their experience has provided the momentum needed to expand the trip for this summer. More churches, more youth, and more adults will travel, live, work, and play together during this summer's experience (July 3-9, 2011). We will once again work with Almost-Heaven Habitat for Humanity based in Franklin, WV. This year, at the urging of last summer's crew, we will be undertaking a half-house sponsorship and will be engaging in a blitz build. So, we'll have our work cut out for us as we seek to put up an entire house in one week! Of course, we'll also enjoy time to play, meet several partner families, and come together for worship.

This past year has been one of challenges and joys for the Committee on Christian Education. Though we have met difficulties and had to work through setbacks, we have experienced wonderful moments in which God was surely working that give us great hope for the year to come.

Faithfully submitted

Rev. Jessica Petersen (Westmoreland Congregational UCC-Bethesda, MD), Chair

Church and Ministry

Among many actions, the affiliation of Covenant Baptist UCC with the Association is the most noteworthy. The committee would like to thank the Rev. Dr. Christine Wiley and the Rev. Dr. Dennis Wiley for the efforts they and their fellow clergy at Covenant have undertaken to come to an understanding of the UCC.

The committee is also pleased that the Association continues to find excellent ministers for our pulpits, some drawn from our own Members in Discernment. Thanks also to Rev. Francine Vinson for conducting the first gathering of all Members-in-Discernment in September. This will become an bi-annual event to ensure a strong and positive relationship with our Members-in-Discernment (formerly called Students In-Care).

Finally, a special thanks to Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Zikmund and all those who have assisted her in the conduct of the Potomac Association Polity Institutes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Wooten (Rock Spring Congregational UCC-Arlington, VA), Chair

Ordained Clergy

Installation of Ministers:

Rev. Marvin Silver at Amistad-St. Paul United Church of Christ (MD)—5/23/2010

Rev. Peter Dennebaum at First Congregational United Church of Christ (DC)—4/11/2010

New Pastors in the Association (Installations in 2011):

Bethel UCC:

Rev. Kristen Curlee as Pastor

Hope UCC:

Rev. Amber Neuroth as Pastor

Faith UCC:

Rev. Peggy Ann Miller as Stated Supply

Rock Spring Congregational UCC:

Rev. Kathy Dwyer as Senior Pastor

Privilege of Call:

Reverend Dr. Dennis W. Wiley, Senior Minister, Covenant Baptist

Reverend Dr. Christine Y. Wiley, Senior Minister, Covenant Baptist

Reverend Anne Troy (Hope UCC-Alexandria, VA) serving Shaw Community Ministry as Executive Director

Reverend Kenneth King (Covenant Baptist Church UCC-Washington, DC) serving Covenant Baptist Church UCC as Senior Associate Minister

Reverend Audrey Wiggins (Covenant Baptist Church UCC-Washington, DC) serving Leesburg Presbyterian Church as Minister of Christian Education

Reverend Joe Glaze (American Baptist Convention) presently serving as Interim Pastor

Dual Standing Granted:

Reverend Lawrence Sandidge (Minister of Pastoral Care, Covenant Baptist Church)
Reverend Delores Lynch (Senior Associate Minister, Covenant Baptist Church)
Reverend Dr. Donelda Cook (Minister of Spiritual Care, Covenant Baptist)
Reverend Robert Renix (Young Adult Minister, and Supervisor in Training, Washington Hospital Center, Covenant Baptist)
Reverend Kelly Wilkins (Minister of Social Justice, and Faith Based Coordinator for Reentry Ministry, Cluster A wards 7 and 8, Covenant Baptist)
Reverend Kim Bookard (Youth Minister, Covenant Baptist)
Reverend Aaron Wade (New Church Start, Community Church; sponsored by Covenant Baptist Church)

Partnership Standing:

Reverend Robert Phillips, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) serving Covenant Baptist
Rev. Marcus Leathers, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) serving Shepherd Park DOC

Approved for Ordination

Karen Byrne (Ordained 3/27/2010, First Congregational UCC-Washington, DC)
Mary Barrino-Smith (Ordained 3/13/2010, Emmaus UCC-Vienna, VA)
Kristen Casmey Curlee (Ordained 1/22/2011, Cleveland Park Congregational UCC-Washington, DC)
James Estes (Ordained 11/13/2010, Wesley Theological Seminary-Washington, DC)
Lucas Lindon (Ordained 11/22/2010, Sylvania UCC-Sylvania, OH)

Awaiting Call

Jeanette Salley
Regina Boyd

Approved for Affiliation

United Christian Church-Lexington Park, MD (Received 3/28/2010)
Covenant Baptist Church-Washington, DC (Received 5/16/2010)

Granted Member-in-Discernment Status

Stephanie Workman (St. John's UCC Richmond)
Sarah Anders (Christ Congregational UCC-Silver Spring, MD)
Laura Martin (Emmaus UCC-Vienna, VA)
Michael Slagenweit-Coffman (First Congregational UCC-Washington, DC)
Doreen Mannion (Westmoreland Congregational UCC-Bethesda, MD)
Kay Rodgers (United Christian Parish-Reston, VA)

Transfer of standing into the Association

Reverend William Tweedley (Westmoreland UCC-Bethesda, MD)
Reverend Amanda Hopkins (Little River UCC-Annandale, VA)

Higher Education

The Higher Education Committee is responsible for the development and retention of ecumenical campus ministries. Because of the complete change-over of the Committee, these ministries have been monitored by the Board of Directors for the period of 2010.

FUNDING

The report below shows the disbursements to the partner ministries. It should be noted that UDC asked the Association to hold their disbursement, as they are undergoing some restructuring. Also, campus ministry at GWU has not been realized, though we take note of the possibility of a ministry forming in the near future.

TABLE 1- DISBURSEMENTS

MINISTRY	Budgeted	Disbursed
George Washington University	\$0	\$0
University of the District of Columbia	\$12,000	\$0
University of Maryland	\$12,000	\$12,000
Universities of Northern Virginia	\$12,000	\$12,000
	TOTALS	\$24,000

In an effort to increase funding \$1000 per ministry for next year, a fundraiser, "A Showcase of Stars" was held on April 17, 2010 at Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ. Each campus ministry participated. (See table 2 below) Approximately \$3000 was raised. We thank Arlene King-Berry for her work in organizing the affair, and all of the participants for sharing their unique gifts and talents. The funds raised were disbursed in 2011.

Local Church Development

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:

- Several churches received church grants from CAC
- LCDC as a part of C&M will be stepping up its effort on getting local churches to complete the Local Church Survey (electronic copies are available at the May meeting)

Several of our churches are going through minister changes. C&M 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.

For most of our local churches - the continuing 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 local church development committee supports the initiative to have LCDC as a part of Church and Ministry Committee. With the restructuring of the Conference committee to two committees and the distribution of the "development" side of LCDC to a CAC committee that LCDC is not get representation on, it only made sense to look at the Association need for our committee.

In the transition, the chair of LCDC will become a member at large of the PA-BOD. I specifically plan on helping at C&M with the paper work side of the new and or new associating churches with the Association.

Respectfully submitted

David Diesselhorst (Bethel UCC-Arlington, VA), Chair

Social Action and Mission

Open and Affirming

For most of the year, the focus of the Social Action and Mission committee has been on developing a resolution and statement to declare the Potomac Association Open and Affirming. Several discussions have been held over the past year to discuss this, including:

- A breakout group at the Association Fall Meeting, attended by more than 30 people. A panel shared their experience of open and affirming, and we discussed what it would mean for an Association to be Open and Affirming, as well as discomfort that it might cause to churches who were not open and affirming.
- Over the winter we developed a statement and resolution.
- At the Mission Fair in late February, we discussed the statement in detail with about 20 attendees.
- We distributed copies of the resolution to all Potomac Association clergy and to all churches.
- We discussed the statement at a Ministerium gathering.

We will have a hearing at the Association Spring Meeting on May 7, 2011, and hope to bring the Resolution to the association for a vote at the Fall Meeting in October.

Mission Fair

We held our second annual Mission Fair at People's Congregational UCC in DC. While attendance was low it was successful, and we plan to have the third annual Mission Fair on February 25 or 26 at a church in Maryland.

Citizen Re-entry

A member of the committee has represented the Association at meetings on citizen re-entry. This is intermittent, but the committee is interested in continuing this.

Anti-Racism Task Force

A member of the committee has represented us at the most recent meeting of the CAC Anti-racism task force. There is at least one additional member of the committee interested in doing so, and we expect to continue this involvement. We also hope to promote anti-racism training in the Association.

Capital Pride

The Committee is coordinating funds for the association presence at the Pride event. The Pride organizing group is a separate group.

Mission Outreach

The majority of the budget of the committee is benevolence; only \$200 is earmarked for committee operations, \$200 as a contribution of the association to the pride group, and \$700 for Anti-Racism training.

Close to \$20,000 is distributed to organizations, which this year include:

- Shaw Community Ministry
- Thrive DC
- Interfaith conference of Washington
- Virginia Council of Churches
- Virginia Interfaith Center (an advocacy group)
- Micah Ministries
- Centerville Worker Center
- Arlington Free Clinic

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Holm (Little River UCC-Annandale, VA), Chair

Report of the Board of Directors

Conference Ministry Team

Moderator

This report comes as a summary of this past year, and as a culmination of my time in service as your Moderator.

2010 has been a year of conclusions and new horizons. Continuing our work in strengthening the ties between our congregations, we engaged in multiple means of discovering the joy in our diversity as we respond to God's still-speaking word for today.

We continue to enjoy a large number of events in the life of the Association: Ordinations, Installations, Ecclesiastical Councils, Receptions of Local Churches, Mission Fairs, and Training Events. In my time, we have installed a total of 24 individuals to their work among us, seen an equal number depart from their service, and even more ordinations. And we are far from done! If these last three years have shown us anything, it is that we are a resilient Association, ready to roll with change and grow into new places with new faces.

As I noted in last year's comments:

We remain in a period of restructuring, rediscovering what it means to be connected with deeply woven roots. We are discovering our past, as the Committees rediscover the ministry in prior years. We are reconnecting our clergy—not just those in parish ministry, but those in chaplaincy, education, retirement, and a myriad of other places. We are challenging ourselves to rethink what association ministry means, in light of changes in the structure and polity of our conference and national setting.

This remains our task for the coming time. The Annual Clergy Update, managed through our Committee on Church and Ministry, began with a list of just over 125 known authorized clergy in the Association. Now, over 200 individuals have been indentified, and connections made (or better, reestablished!) with those who serve the many faces of ministry among us. Add to that the Committee's continued care for our congregations, clergy, and Members in Discernment. I am always awed by their concern and love.

While we have installed (or will be installing) ten authorized ministers to their ministries this year, another dozen continue in their preparation. Add to that sixteen Members in Discernment (the new language for Student In-Care), and at least four more becoming interested in ministry with us—we will continue to be an active, passionate training ground for the next generation of leadership in the United Church of Christ.

We have also heard the call for more connection in education and youth outreach. The Christian Education Committee brought us together in May for training on the latest curriculum from the UCC: *Faith Practices*. The gathered group challenged us all to continue coming together to expand our knowledge and fellowship. This Committee also managed the first multi-congregation "Potomac Youth Summer Mission Experience," bringing together four congregations in a joint mission trip. The youth who attended last year's trip challenged us to a standing sponsorship with their mission partner, Almost Heaven Habitat for Humanity-Franklin, WV. This year, 50 youth and chaperones will depart for a one-week blitz build, helping to create a new home for a family in just five days!

Our Committee of Social Action & Mission has been diligent responding to the many ministries under their watch. Of note for this period is their year-long study on what it would mean for the Association to declare itself “Open and Affirming.” I give great thanks for the sensitivity that they give in their work, respecting the variety of viewpoint in the Association and honoring their commitment to see the question from all sides. On top of this work, the Committee continues to nurture its relationships with our historic partners, and seek new ways for the Association to partner in the needed ministries in our area.

And yes, those small words I uttered last year are coming to vote today: *Bylaw Revision*. The church in each generation needs to ensure that it has not become “stuck” in the organizational system. We have seen over these past years that our required offices and nominated representation has taken on a character outside of the bylaws. Now, we come to ask ourselves the question, “Does this model fit our ministry?” and (hopefully) come away resolved that we have some work to do. Our call to be a progressive, responsive, living church challenges us to evaluate our mission and ministry regularly.

Of specific note during this time, I give thanks to the members of the Committee on Local Church Development, who have worked diligently, though their tasks were often circuitous. With the leadership of new church starts and vitality coming from the Conference, this committee will stand down for the period of review.

Also, I give thanks to all who have served in the ad-hoc Women’s Coordinating Committee. This group has been offline for some ten years, save the diligent task of naming individuals for the Honored Laywomen Award. This year, our own Felicia Simms will be honored at General Synod 28 for her life and work with Faith UCC-Washington, DC.

Prayers of thanks also go to the many faithful individuals who have come to serve on our Committees and the Board of Directors. The United Church of Christ is only as strong as the bonds that link our congregations—and those bonds are formed by your service. To name all who have served, shared, volunteered, hosted, organized, emailed, and generally put up with the needs of our service together, list of names would be longer than this report. To each of you, Thank You! May God challenge you to invite others to serve as well!

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve the Association in this office. I hope that in my time of service, we all have come into a fuller unity in one body as the United Church of Christ surrounding our nation’s capital. We can all have faith that those who will be leading us into the next period of our life together will do so with great gifts and skills, guided by God’ Spirit. May God continue to bless us and challenge us to be a relevant, progressive, and pugnacious church in the struggle for God’s reign in this world and justice for all of creation in our time and place.

Respectfully Submitted,

Henry E. “Hank” Fairman (Rock Spring Congregational UCC-Arlington, VA), Moderator

Resolutions Before the Association

A Resolution for Review and Revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Potomac Association

In light of our ministry together and our Still-speaking God;

WHEREAS:

In 2006, the Central Atlantic Conference (CAC) Board of Directors approved a resolution to establish a Commission on New Church Development, and a resolution to establish a Commission on Church Vitality and Growth; affirming the Conference's role as the primary agency in church planting within the Conference and its Associations¹;

AND:

That in Article V.5 of the CAC Bylaws, the Board of Directors is charged to "coordinate the implementation of Conference-wide programs in the Associations," such as congregational health, vitality, and stewardship²;

AND:

That several of the functional units of the ministry of the Association have become inactive, or without a current mission and vision for their work.

AND:

That the formation of the Conference Ministry Team is in a period of transition, and it is expected that the relationship of the Team to the Association will need to be formally addressed.

AND:

That in best practices for the life of a living agency, review and revision of governing documents should be performed at regular periods of leadership change³.

¹ Minutes of the Board of Directors, Central Atlantic Conference, June 2006

² Bylaws of the Central Atlantic Conference, Article V.5 (Version dated 6/14/2008)

³ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/1999/novdec/9y6010.html>

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Delegates of the 2011 Spring Meeting of the Potomac Association affirm the need for review and revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Potomac Association;

AND:

That the Delegates affirm the suspension of the following Committees named in “Article V—Standing Committees,” and associated sections of “Appendix C”, and the distribution of any active duties at the discretion of the Board of Directors:

- a. Stewardship
- b. Local Church Development
- c. Women’s Coordinating

AND:

That the Delegates instruct the Association Board of Directors to convene a Task Force to investigate forms of governance, to communicate with the local congregations and clergy about the mission and vision of our ministry together.

AND:

That the Delegates instruct the Task Force to return to the 2012 Spring Meeting of the Potomac Association a revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Potomac Association for consideration by that assembly.

Resolution Declaring the Potomac Association to be "Open and Affirming"

Whereas we, the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ, believe that the inclusive nature of God's love extends to everyone regardless of race, class, culture, gender, occupation, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other difference we may use to set others apart from ourselves; and

Whereas we believe that we are all one in Christ Jesus (John 17:21) and created in the image of God (Gen 1:26), and that as people of sacred worth we are incorporated into the beloved community and called to be imitators of God as beloved children, living in love as Christ loved us (Eph 5:1-2); and

Whereas we affirm that we are many members of the same body in Christ (Romans 12:3-5), that each has a particular gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:7), and that there are a variety of gifts but the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4), and

Whereas we recognize that the United Church of Christ ("UCC") has historically affirmed a rich diversity in its theological and biblical perspectives; and

Whereas persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions are members of our denomination through baptism, confirmation, or affirmation of faith, and are already freely sharing their talents and gifts with the UCC and its congregations; and

Whereas persons of some sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions have been at times excluded from full participation in the life and the leadership of the church, both clergy and lay, regardless of membership in the United Church of Christ; and

Whereas uncertainty as to welcome has also affected people, including young people, who are questioning, exploring or discovering their sexual orientation or gender identity, at a time when such people most need the support and love of the church; and

Whereas many parts of the church universal remain silent despite continuing discrimination and the senseless violence and denial of basic human rights to people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; and

Whereas Christian churches through the ages and throughout the world have often perpetuated discriminatory practices and been unwilling to affirm the full humanness of clergy, laity and staff who are of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, many of whom, as a result, experience isolation, ostracism, violence and fear of (or actual) loss of employment; and

Whereas the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ (1985) adopted a resolution to encourage "a policy of non-discrimination in employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation" and called on congregations to adopt a similar non-discrimination policy and affirm a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith, and the Twenty-fourth General Synod (2003) adopted a resolution to affirm the participation and ministry of transgender people within the United Church of Christ; and

Whereas the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ, as a setting of the church, adopted a resolution in 1996 to declare itself Open and Affirming; and

Whereas the majority of individual churches of the Potomac Association have declared themselves to be Open and Affirming; and

Whereas we, the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ acknowledge that we are related via covenant to the local churches of the Potomac Association, to the Central Atlantic Conference, and to the national setting of the UCC; and

Whereas we, the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ, are joined together as a covenantal community to celebrate and share our common communion and the reassurance that we are all indeed created by God, reconciled by Christ and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

that the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ shall adopt the following statement, and shall display this statement in various forms of communication including print, and on the Association web site, when the full statement is desired. This statement shall be considered the primary expression of our Open and Affirming commitment:

The Potomac Association values all of God's children and welcomes the gifts that each brings to the association and to the local church. Responding to God's still speaking voice and seeking to live out Christ's extravagant welcome to all, the Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ declares itself an Open and Affirming (ONA) association. We embrace persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in all aspects of association ministry.

Where a more limited expression is required, such as in letterhead, on press releases and the like, the term "Open and Affirming" or "ONA" shall be used.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the Potomac Association setting of the United Church of Christ, including but not limited to events, committees, meetings, worship services, hiring, leadership, and ministries, shall be open and available to, and shall affirm and celebrate, all persons regardless of any of the differences and boundaries that separate us;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at appropriate times the Potomac Association shall make public its stand as an Open and Affirming setting of the church in the media, to governmental officials, and to legislative and regulatory bodies as part of the public dialogue on equality and civil rights;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, while this declaration is in no way binding on the local churches of the Potomac Association in their individual settings, the Association encourages all local churches to prayerfully consider the full inclusion of persons people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in their local churches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Potomac Association shall help identify resources for local churches who are prayerfully considering the above request; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Potomac Association shall include, in its social justice ministry, advocacy for all persons who are vulnerable to discrimination due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Supplemental Pages

Report of the Board of Directors

Conference Ministry Team

After the 2010 Annual Meeting and leading up to my January - March 2011 sabbatical, I moved forward with the conclusion of a long period of major transitions in a number of local churches. These were mostly transitions in pastoral leadership. They resulted in successful pastoral searches and planning for the installation of pastors. Starting with the very first day of my return from sabbatical, I participated in a series of installations.

I am fully convinced that both church and minister benefit from a well thought out clergy sabbatical. Yet returning from this time of doing something different can be downright disconcerting. Still, I am back and feeling good about that. Even more, I am definitely back in the swing of working with the conference churches, organizations and wider justice and ministry community. Having spent a number of years following the route of the educational mission of the former American Missionary Association that started in the Southern States during the U.S. Civil War, I have gathered a good deal of material on the schools that were established to educate then recently freed persons.

This latest phase of my visits had a related but somewhat different focus. That was interviewing present members of the university and college communities in these UCC related institutions. This was and will continue to be a satisfying endeavor. I hope others will see it as worthwhile. It will continue because there are many more persons to interview. It certainly will go beyond my sabbatical. However, I am now well on my way. I cannot see how I could have built such solid foundations without this sabbatical.

I am back

My return quickly included meeting with individual and groups of clergy. Some of these contacts had been intentionally postponed until my return. My plan to enter several local churches on various Sundays and just sit in a pew during worship was quickly thwarted in every case. I was either asked to give a brief greeting or sit in the pulpit and participate in worship leadership. My biggest surprise was being asked to be the preacher at one church in both worship services on Palm/Passion Sunday. All of this helped me know that I was back.

Being invited to lead a seminar for the Baltimore United Congregations titled "The Widow and the Orphan: Preparing Congregations to Welcome the Marginalized" provided me a Reentry that left no question that I was back.

I was also able to quickly step back into ongoing work with models for several ministries that groups in the Potomac Association have been building recently. Most of them are now in the organizational structure of various committees. The Social Actions and Missions Committee has the largest share of this "grassroots organizing."

The American Institute of Parliamentarians (AIP) D C Chapter 6 conducts training each month at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, D.C. This was approved as a program of the Potomac Association. It is now fully self-supporting. But the goal includes bringing together members and leaders from our local churches in developing skills in leading meetings of churches and other organizations. It provides training in analyzing and writing bylaws for volunteer groups. I work with this group in training church members. That includes my learning to become a better parliamentarian.

The Prison Returning Citizens Ministry has been approved by the Potomac Association Board of Directors. The approach of this ministry is to make presentations in Association churches that support their establishing ministries to incarcerated persons and their families. These are citizens who are scheduled to return home and to their communities in the near future.

Working with Prof. H. Dean Trulear of the Howard University School of Divinity and the Casey Foundation, this ministry is housed at the Briggs Center for Faith in Action near Westmoreland Congregational UCC. All of the board members and staff of this foundation are members of the Westmoreland Church.

Then there is the Quality of Life Ministry, which is devoted to presenting seminars in Potomac Association and National Capitol Area Churches of the Christ Church. The focus is addressing the resource needs that members have as they grow older. I continue to work with a team that has a design that can be used throughout the Association and beyond. The planning team for this ministry meets at the Briggs Center. The resources for aging persons come from various disciplines. One goal is to benefit from the skills of persons who sit in the pews of our churches in presenting the seminars. Because attorneys in our churches are giving seminars regarding the legal needs and resources, we have to carefully design the seminars so that it is very clear that they are educational in nature and no attorney/client relations are being established. Participants seek their own legal counsel. Still, there are fine lines that have to be understood and observed.

We have developed Disability Ministry Workshops for persons within the ages in which people are typically in the work force. Yet, they have become disabled and cannot work. The main goal of the workshops is to provide leadership from church members who can help disabled workers use the resources that are available to them. This includes identifying their rights and/or disability benefits. Designing this ministry includes making sure that this is a ministry that can be offered to churches. It is possible for persons to work professionally in providing help to disabled persons. The Disability Ministry would in no way discourage such endeavors. In fact it looks at ways in which help can be given to church members who want to work in the area of disability services. However, the goal is for our church to play an educational role only. My role is to develop a design that keeps church programs focused on ministering through educational programs. This does mean paying attention to the fine lines. I think I am learning how the internet can be used as an educational tool and resource for designing models. This ministry has not yet been approved by the Potomac Association.

Travel During and Beyond My Sabbatical

I have expressed my fulfilling experiences in visiting and interviewing persons at AMA Schools. I do want to mention that there are some local churches that are historically related to some of these schools. For example, LeMoyne College was founded at Second Congregational UCC, which is one block from the school. That school later united with Owen College to become LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis, TN. I have been warmly welcome at Second Congregational Church and encouraged in my telling the school's story.

In addition to visiting the schools, I participated in the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference in Chicago, Illinois. This great resource for churches and clergy consists of participants from various Historically Black Colleges, Universities and Seminaries. Still, it has long received major support and leadership from Trinity United Church of Christ. I am in touch with leaders from Trinity and the Proctor Conference regarding my work with our AMA Schools.

I again participated in the Association of Conference Attorneys (ACA) Annual Meeting. It took place during the UCC Annual Consultation in Long Beach, CA. I am consulting with colleges on how to design those Quality of Life and Disability Ministries in such ways that are educational and do not present legal exposure for our churches. The ACA is a great resource for our churches in this and other areas

I also participated in the National Law and Religion Conference that was held in Atlanta, Georgia in late April of 2011. The theme of the seminars was "Protecting Churches... "from legal exposure.

Respectfully Submitted,

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