

Autumnal Meeting Minutes
Rhode Island Conference of United Church of Christ
Saturday, November 4, 2017
Central Congregational Church, UCC
Providence, RI

Rev. Rebecca Spencer gave a warm welcome to all to 116th Annual Meeting of the RI Conference.

Rev. Barbara Libby delivered the opening prayer.

The registrar determined that we did have a quorum:

- 23 churches
- 23 ministers
- 70 delegates
- 7 members in discernment
- 6 visitors
- 2 ex officio
- 5 staff members

Barbara Libby welcomed us all to the meeting and gave a special thanks to all the vendors who came.

Business Meeting:

1. Approval of the annual meeting minutes- minutes distributed to all
Motion to approve and second, followed by unanimous approval
2. **Proposed Budget 2018**- budget distributed to all (George Peters)
It is noted that our income has been decreasing. It is actually the local churches that control our spending. If the money they send to the Conference decreases, then we have less to spend, and therefore less money to send Nationally. OCWM support has dramatically decreased, which means we are trying to do more with less. We have no full-time staff. We do not have a full-time Conference Minister. We are reducing the deficit by drawing down the endowment.

Motion to adopt the 2018 budget, which was approved unanimously by the Board of Directors and the Finance and Budget Committee.

- During the discussion several questions were asked: Are we being fiscally responsible by drawing down the endowment? Can we decrease our rent? Is it responsible to cut spending on the Hispanic Church?
- **George Weavill moved that the Board of Directors re-exam the percentage of income we send to Nationals, so that we would be more in line with other Conferences of our size. Currently we send 35%. Motion was seconded. The vote carried.**

Vote to adopt the budget was 46 yea, 19 nays, and 3 abstentions

3. **Compensation Guidelines 2018**- packet was distributed to all with special thanks to the Church and Ministry Committee. Ed Bagley noted that cost of living raises were given across the board at 1.7% and medical insurance was updated.
Motion made and seconded to accept the Compensation Guidelines for 2018. The vote was unanimous.
4. **Synod Video and Report**
Barbara Libby began by thanking and recognizing the delegates to the 2017 Synod: Rev. Cleo Graham, Wayne Gage, Pat Safstrom, and Alyssa Browning Gray, as our youth delegate. Frances Munro, Rev. Barbara Libby and a number of other ministers also attended. Many thousands, including our 12, attended the Synod, and many issues were brought forward to expand and challenge our faith. 21 resolutions and 5 motions were made. Alyssa Browning-Gray, a youth delegate, spoke about how powerful her experience was and expressed gratitude for all of the workshops, lectures, and meetings she was able to attend.

5. Conference Report

Barbara Libby began her fourth Autumnal Meeting address by recognizing the work done by our staff over the past year: George Weavill, Sandy Tremblay, Tiffany Vale, Peggy Matteson and Kristin Putney. She congratulated newly ordained minister, Rev. Jametta Alston, who has been called to a congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee.

She congratulated Jennifer Geary on her ministry at Irons Homestead. The camp has now become accredited by the American Camp Association. We also celebrate the time and effort spent organizing today's clothing and book drive to support Irons Homestead.

We celebrate all the persons who are in the process of moving toward some form of authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. Our members in discernment are Helen Bodell, Alyssa Browning Gray, Linda Hartley, Shelley Moses, Gabrielle Sclafani, Brandon Yaghjian-Tison, and Ashley Walker.

We celebrate all who are serving on the Board of Directors for RICUCC.

We celebrate all the churches who provide financial support to Our Churches Wider Mission, OCWM.

Currently 35% of the money we receive is sent to National Ministries, and 65% is retained for local use in RI.

We wish to applaud the people who have donated to the Hurricane Relief effort and encourage more to participate. We have collected \$5600 in financial donations, 204 clean up buckets, and 102 hygiene kits so far.

The Friend's of the Conference Appeal letter is being sent and we encourage your participation. Last year we collected \$6000 in generous donations.

TAO- extensive planning is ongoing by multiple teams comprised of the boards of directors and staff members from RI, MA, and CT. The teams are working hard at "putting flesh on the bones" of this visionary undertaking to work on a unified conference proposal. Please pick up a copy of the Vision, Mission, and Purpose Statement. This statement is also available on line. All have also received The Conversation Guide for local churches to help guide the questions about why we are involved with Together, As One. Our next joint meeting will be on June 15-16, 2018.

Keynote Address: "What Would a Community Founded on Grace Look Like"

Dr. Lee Barrett, Lancaster Theological Seminary, delivered the address. Dr. Barrett's speech was based on Mark 20, the story about the owner of the field who paid all the workers in his field the same amount of money whether they worked 1 day or 1 hour. Dr. Barrett encouraged us to envision a world of radical generosity. This might be a world in which compensation is given according to need, rather than what is deserved. He also spoke of the undeserved Grace that God gives to us all and hopes we can envision a common view of generosity for all churches.

Worship and Communion:

"Grace In A Time of Change"- sermon delivered by Dr. Barrett

Speak Outs:

14 people from all around our conference signed up to speak about anything they wished the Conference to know. Each person was given 1 minute to speak. We encourage all of these people to let everyone know what your church is doing by submitting the information to the RICUCC office to be placed on our website.

Central Congregational Church provided an absolutely delicious lunch. Many thanks go out to them and their hospitality.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Steere, clerk