

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ
Annual Meeting Minutes
Virtual Annual Meeting (Via Zoom – Voting via Whova)
May 8, 2021

Ian Tosh, Moderator of the Southern New England Conference welcomed all to the gathering. The Moderator introduced Persephone Hall, Vice-moderator of the Southern New England Conference. An overview of the location of materials on-line was given, including the Behavioral Covenant and Rules of Procedure requiring no vote. The Moderator then described the voting procedures including the use of Whova software. The Moderator then stated that of 510 people registered for Annual Meeting; 241 were clergy, 210 Lay or Board Members, meaning 410 voting members were present for the meeting. The Moderator declared that a quorum was present for the second Southern New England Conference Annual Meeting.

The Moderator announced that the Business Committee consisted of the Moderator and Vice-moderator; the Rev. Angela Menke Ballou; the Rev. Jim Latimer; Grace Steere and Chairperson the Rev. Ian Holland. The Moderator then introduced the Parliamentarian team of the Rev. George Peters and Harry Pape.

The Moderator invited the Rev. Philomena Hare to move the Nominating Slate for a vote and stated that the document could be found in the Delegate Materials. There being no discussion, the Moderator called for the vote and it overwhelmingly passed.

Nominating Slate SNE21-AM-01	<i>The Second Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference Accepts the Nominating Slate as presented in the Delegate Materials.</i>
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The Moderator called the Rev. Lynn Dolan, Board Member to move the vote to Endorse the General Synod Resolution to affirm the creation of the formal group of The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers. The Moderator then opened the floor for any debate.

The Rev. Dr. Shelly Stackhouse brought forth the question of asking for clarity as to why this is being proposed. The Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa offered a response to the inquiry and offered the background that many conferences don't have the same resources that the Southern New England Conference has access too and can feel more isolated or lack the ability to network. The creation of the formal group will give the group more access to connect as well as gain support as an officially recognized group within the bylaws.

No other debate was brought forward, and the Moderator called for a vote and it overwhelmingly passed.

Endorse General Synod Resolution SNE21-AM-02	<i>The Second Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference endorses the following resolution to be presented to the 33rd General Synod: "The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ Requests to be Recognized as a Formal Group."</i>
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The Moderator invited Calvin Price, Treasurer of the Conference, to speak about the Budget. He pointed everyone to the 2021 budget located in the Delegate Materials. Mr. Price shared how the budget aligns with the Conferences and is allocated towards the central values. The largest current partnership commitment is to the United Church of Christ, totaling around 1.4 million dollars. The Treasurer shared that total Budgeted Expenses for the conference total \$6,383,850. This number does not reflect all ministries cost in this total but stated you can find those numbers in the traditional budget report in the delegate materials. He shared that the total Budgeted Income for 2021 is \$6,232,300 making this around \$157,000 less than our expected operating expense. Mr. Price stated that the Board believes it is safe to proceed with this modest deficit, as historically there are usually areas of underspending in budgets of this size.

The Rev. Darrell Goodwin gave the Executive Conference Minister Address sharing ways in which the Conference is and will continue to live out its mission and what we are all called to do.

Ian Tosh then stated that the offering was going to take place and the collection from the days offering was going to go to the newly developed Center for Transformational Leadership.

The Moderator introduced Board Chair Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer who gave her address, sharing that the newly formed conference has welcomed new staff and the formation of the Conference continues with the Board of Directors being an active partner with staff leadership that is required to navigate this season.

The Rev. Darrell Goodwin and the Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer led a conversation focusing on the ways in which the Conference has been moving in the missional understanding of Living the Love and Justice of Jesus by reflecting on the social justice moments the Conference is engaged in.

The Moderator introduced the Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa and the Rev. Liz Garrigan Byerly who shared with the Conference the Authorized Ministers celebrating 25 and 50 years of Ordination. The Rev. Holly Millershank then shared a remembrance of the lives of clergy that were lost in the past year.

The Rev. Darrell Goodwin brought forth the intent of a covenant with the incoming Board of Directors by leading the Board in an installation of the members.

Ian Tosh, as Moderator, reported that all business of the Annual Meeting has been accomplished. All were thanked for their work on this Annual Meeting. Mr. Tosh adjourned the business section of the meeting and declared that the Annual Meeting will officially end at the end of worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hillary Sage, Recorder

Appendix A:

THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP

A Prudential Resolution

Submitted by the:

Iowa Conference

Nebraska Conference

New Hampshire Conference

South Dakota Conference

SUMMARY

The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers (AACM) seeks to be recognized as a Self-Created Group according to United Church of Christ By-Laws, Article VI., existing to be a supportive expression of the Living Christ, in relationship with one another and with the Body of Christ, in all its forms. The term “Associate Conference Minister” is used ubiquitously in AACM documents to refer to all persons who serve in the role either designated as associate conference minister or all the various titles of those functioning in similar job responsibilities and expectations. AACM serves to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING

The fundamental biblical grounding for the proposed recognition of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers is found in Christ’s farewell discourse in the Gospel of John, “...that all of them may be one,” John 17:21 (NIV). For centuries, this has been a scriptural basis for uniting Christians throughout the world.

In the context of the challenges of today’s secularizing culture and the opportunities created by increasingly powerful means of communication, we have been inspired by the Deutero-Pauline ambition, “...that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith...and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV). To us, this means that we are called to outgrow an attitude of “going it alone” that has been prominent in our polity for more than three hundred years (since the 1648 Cambridge Platform). It means that we are called to build a stronger and larger network of covenants through which we can become stronger as the body of Christ serving across the breadth of the United Church of Christ. It means that we can be much stronger by capitalizing on the many ways we are increasingly interdependent in today’s world. This means building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ Associate Conference Ministers through the existence and support of the AACM.

The Alliance seeks to live out its purpose of:

- Building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ Associate Conference Ministers.
- Developing and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with the United Church of Christ Council of Conference Ministers, officers of the Church, UCC Covenantal partners, and UCC Board of Directors.
- Being a resource to share information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.
- Being a collective voice of advocacy for concerns important to the role and work of the Associate Conference Minister as they relate to the life of the United Church of Christ.

We believe that discerning God's will and God's call to us is best done in community, gathering, listening and sharing with one another. This we have done through meeting and sharing ideas at AM21 in 2018 and 2019 intentionally discerning a call to unite for the intention of being a resource to share support, information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ takes seriously our individual Christian covenant with God as the primal covenant from which our human covenants are derived and by which they are 5 shaped. ¹

WHEREAS in the above view it is "the covenantal relationship with God that creates the church and, in turn created a covenantal relationship among the people who are the church."²

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ holds seriously the call to be an open and welcoming faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in God's people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender identity and expression.

WHEREAS the work of conference ministry and associate conference ministry places those doing the work at the intersection of church life, between the Local Church and the National Setting, including associations where those exist calling for "keeping communication flowing in all directions, nurturing relationships, articulating and supporting covenantal relationships."³

WHEREAS in response to "[t]he Proposal for Action adopted by the Twentieth General Synod called upon local churches, conferences and associations, those called and employed by the church, and various national bodies to act in a variety of ways in support of the fair and just compensation of all persons called and employed by the church"⁴ the AACM states it provides resources and advocacy to support ACMs in their positions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers be identified as related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through a primary relationship as a Self-Created Group with the United Church of Christ Board.

FUNDING: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ (pp.32). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

² Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ (pp. 33). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

³ Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Our Covenant as the Wider United Church of Christ. In *Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ* (pp. 36). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

⁴ Fair & Just Compensation A Report to the Twenty-first General Synod 97-GS-50 62-65