

Autumnal Meeting Minutes
Rhode Island Conference of United Church of Christ
Saturday, November 5, 2016
Beneficent Congregational Church, UCC
Providence, RI

Rev. George Peters called meeting to order at 9:02am.

Rev. Cleo Graham delivered the opening prayer.

The registrar determined that we did have a quorum:

- 24 churches
- 32 ministers
- 67 delegates
- 2 members in discernment
- 11 visitors
- 4 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 2017- budget distributed to all
Motion and second to approve was unanimous.
3. Open and Affirming- the entire resolution was distributed to all
Kurt Walker presented the recommendation for the resolution. He has chaired the task force, which was charged with presenting the resolution for the Autumnal Meeting.
Motion made and seconded to declare the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ is an open and affirming conference.
After some discussion, the vote was a majority to approve with 1 “nay”. Motion carried.
4. Compensation Guidelines- packet distributed to all
Motion made and seconded to approve the Compensation Guidelines for 2017.
Motion approved unanimously.
5. Statement of Witness- statement distributed to all
Motion and second to accept the Statement of Witness was made. After discussion, **Nancy Soukup proposed an amendment** to be added to the fourth bullet point, which will read as follows: “We stand, speak, and act in solidarity with the people of God whose holy ground is called Standing Rock Reservation, **as well as the first peoples who inhabited the southern New England region before us.**” (amendment in bold type)
The motion with the amendment to accept the Statement was unanimous.

Keynote Address: “Wade in the Water” delivered by Rev. Alison Butrick Patton

Rev. Patton’s address encouraged all of us to pick up the sacred task of confronting white privilege. In her speech she asked us to remember, “Privilege, like disadvantage, is unearned!” She ended her address by asking us to think about four things:

- Write your spiritual autobiography through the lens of race.
- Ask how certain moments would be different if you were a different race.
- Become a student of whiteness.
- Notice who you trust! (Not hate)

Recognitions: presented by Barbara Libby

1. In the Church's Wider Mission- the RI conference is 1 of 38 Conferences. 35% of our money from basic support goes off to the National office and 65% stays here.
2. Of all the churches nationwide in their per capita support, Newman Congregational Church is #97 and Central Congregational Church UCC is #44. Celebrate!!!
3. 3 churches have achieved Green Church status- Beneficent Congregational Church, Newman Congregational Church, and Seekonk Congregational UCC. Celebrate!!!
4. We wish to praise and lift up staff members George Weavill, Sandy Tremblay, and Tiffany Vale. Without their continued hard work, attention to detail, and endless hours doing the Conference work, we would not be where we are today. Celebrate!!!

Speak Outs:

20 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.

Worship and Communion:

The offering was divided between those impacted by the latest hurricane in Haiti and St. Paul's Emergency Shelter, which provides overnight accommodations for the homeless.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Steere, clerk