

MINUTES – Corrected and Approved
Michigan Conference United Church of Christ ~ Board of Directors
Michigan Conference Office

March 16, 2019

Present: Vaughn Peterson, Judy Furman, Cheryl Burke (Associate Conference Minister), Karen Wheeler, Bob Heisler (Business Manager), Mary Ann Martin, Dan Spaulding, Ruth Moerdyk (Secretary), Greg Briggs (via Zoom, Vice-President), Campbell Lovett (via Zoom, Conference Minister), Judith Booker (via Zoom, President), Coni Simon (via Zoom), Akua Budu-Watkins (via Zoom)

Excused Absences: Ralph Sims, Ivana Barrow

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Moderator nomination

- Greg Briggs introduced Rev. Phiwa Langeni bio
- Moved and seconded to approve Phiwa as moderator

Other introductions made

Conference Minister Update

- Moved on agenda due to Campbell's need to leave meeting early
- Campbell reviewed previously distributed report

Synod Update

- Moved on agenda due to Campbell's need to leave meeting early
- Reported that resolution forwarded from 2017 Michigan Annual Meeting to Synod re: display space at Synod for Faithful & Welcoming Churches is going forward for consideration at Synod.
- 25 youth from Michigan registered so far to attend

Conflict of Interest Policy and Board Responsibilities

- Reviewed basic responsibilities of Board
- Copies will be distributed to members of Board who have a need to sign Conflict of Interest policy

Adoption of Consent Agenda

- Moved and seconded to approve consent agenda

Approval of January 2019 Board Meeting Minutes

- Moved and seconded to approve January minutes with correction that under "2020 Vision updates" that statement "four broad areas need focused attention" be changed to "five broad areas need attention"

Prioritizing Vision Action for 2019 (conversation facilitated by Ruth Moerdyk)

- Based on prior discussion about 2020 Vision Plan
- Please note that because of the nature of this topic, more detail than usual about points raised during conversation is included
- Conversation about priorities for 2019 returned to five broad areas identified during discussion at January 2019 Board meeting:
 - clergy support
 - revitalization of congregations
 - communication and connection within Conference
 - finances and property
 - staffing challenges and need to look at new staff “architecture.”
- Discussion about clergy support included:
 - Information that all congregations were recently encouraged to form pastoral relations committees, using UCC resource “A Sure Foundation.”
 - Coaching might soon be more accessible to pastors in the Conference
 - Progress on this area has generally been good
- Discussion about revitalization of congregations included:
 - Potential usefulness of compiling a list of churches and pastors who have successfully undertaken revitalization work, with intention to help communication and learning together
 - Need to engage this topic better at Annual Meeting
 - Need to be better aware of Association spring meetings and possibly encourage use of those venues for conversation about revitalization
 - Possibility of developing a vitality ‘toolbox’ for Conference website
- Discussion about communication and connection included:
 - Question of how to communicate across diversity of generations and diversity of congregations
 - Question re: clarity (or lack of clarity) about what are we trying to communicate and why
 - Awareness that we have good tools and resources available
 - Need to encourage cross-posting in available social media accounts and locations
 - Need for consistency of quality and appearance
 - Need to make electronic communications easily used in congregational newsletters. Encourage ease of ‘dragging and dropping’ information.
- Discussion about finances and property included:
 - Need to better support Friends of Conference, perhaps including some “Why I Give…” testimonies on website or in e-newsletter
 - Possibility of redeveloping OCWM Ambassadors program, with attention to specific talking points and who is a good fit for particular congregations
 - General need for better education about OCWM
 - Ongoing conversation about Camp Talahi
 - Ongoing conversation about potential uses of office space and property. No existing policies re: rental of space in office building.
- Discussion about staffing and staffing “architecture” included:
 - Ad hoc arrangements are mostly put together for now
 - This is a long-term conversation that we need to begin approaching and educating ourselves about *now*

- Specific points of action to pursue in 2019 that were generally agreed upon were:
 - Begin better educating pastors (and other leaders?) re: OCWM and Conference giving and activities
 - Better distinguish purposes of local giving and OCWM giving. Reinforce need for OCWM and its role as a vehicle for expanded local mission
 - Be more intentional in use of speakouts at Annual Meeting
 - Encourage conversation about the faithful use of property before conversation about its disposal becomes necessary
 - Encourage posting both Conference and UCC websites in local church bulletins, with a note such as “Want to know more about what’s going on in the larger church? Check out the Conference website www.michiucc.org See our weekly e-bulletin where the latest goings on are published: <insert link here> (Wording offered by Greg Briggs).
 - Encourage updates to website re: activities of MATs, reports, etc. Try to funnel information through one common location
 - Assess functionality of website; solicit volunteers to do so

Special Mission Relationship with United Church Homes/Pilgrim Manor

- Signing Document

Financial Report

- Treasurer’s Report. Distributed and reviewed by Karen Wheeler.
 - OCWM giving for 2018 approximately \$63,000 short of budget and approximately \$40,000 less than 2017
 - Finance Committee will be considering whether this has ramifications for adjusting 2019 budget
 - Ongoing conversation about possible asset managers
 - Financial statements end-of-year 2018 reflect loss of almost \$1 million in fund assets due largely to sharp December drop in investments
- OCWM Review
 - Bob Heisler reviewed previously distributed reports
 - End-of-February report shows slight improvements over year-to-year comparison of 2018 and 2019
- Budget and Finance & Investment Committee Updates

Mission Area Team Updates

- Prophetic Integrity. Has not met yet for 2019
- Vital Growth. Report distributed previously. About 50 people attended Vitality Day.
- Faith Formation. Approved spending to help cover costs for youth to Synod (\$8000) and discussed possibility of redirecting some money from Emmanuel Scholarship Fund. Clarified that it covers multiple paths to ministry.
- Compassionate Generosity. Forming a workshop for helping churches generate more resources for stewardship and giving to their community, in coordination with Center for Progressive Renewal. Planning tentatively for 2020.

Response to anti-Muslim violence

- Agreement to ask Campbell to work on a draft to circulate and check with Executive Committee.

Comments emerged toward end of meeting re: having more reflection on Board re: revitalization, the 'why' of our work on Board and at Conference level.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Moerdyk, secretary

Next Meeting: May 18, 2019 – Location TBD