

MINUTES of the Western North Carolina Association of the United Church of Christ
Abernathy Laurels, Newton, NC
October 1, 2016

OPENING AND WELCOME:

President William Sowers opened the meeting with a prayer and welcomed everyone for attending. He thanked the previous President Elizabeth Schiemann for her service, as well as, Abernathy Laurels for hosting the event, the Planning Committee, Jerry Rhyne and Stephanie Leichman for their hard work, and the guest speakers for their presentations.

Rev. Susan Roddy, Chaplain for Abernathy Laurels, welcomed everyone to the facility. She shared information on the United Church Homes and Services and Abernathy Laurels. Rev. Roddy also instructed attendees on housekeeping issues during the meeting.

Rev. Dr. Edward Davis, Conference Minister, brought greetings from the Southern Conference. He spoke on several initiatives and missions that are on the forefront within the Southern Conference.

1. **Church Visitation Strategic Initiative:** Belinda Sledge, Southern Conference Accountant, reported that at this time all the churches in the initiative have been visited by UCC members and board members. This 2x2 visitation of 120 UCC and board members has begun to help improve the Western North Carolina Budget because churches who have not been involved in the past are now paying dues and have responded positively because the WNCA board members reached out to them.

2. **Campaign of Hope:** The Keep Hope Alive UCC group traveled to the Middle East and were enlightened by the sense of hope that the people have in the Middle East even during desperate and difficult times. Rev. Dr. Davis distributed candles to attendees and encouraged members of the conference to Keep Hope Alive within the United Church of Christ.

3. **Building Bridges:** Rev. Dr. Davis feels that the conference has started to mend and build bridges. He listed strategies to continue this building process. They are:

A. Promote a stronger UCC identity within the Southern Conference.

B. Train a Fitness Response team.

C. Encourage stronger leadership.

D. Build a stronger youth program.

E. Have more unified practices within the conference and UCC.

F. Widening the Circle

G. Boundary Training

H. Revise the budget.

I. Continue the Strategic Development Initiative: Rev. Cheri Lovell spoke on targeting younger clergy to be board members. Have younger clergy involved in search and call procedures. Encouraging more youth retreats and supporting Catawba College youth programs.

J. New Website

K. Healthy Churches: Ideas to develop healthy churches:

1. Support Lay Leadership

2. Focus on Justice Issues

3. Communication and Technology

4. Financial Development

5. Missions

6. Property Management Concerns

Presenting of Awards:

Rev. Dr. Davis presented Rev. Jerry Rhyne with an award for 50 years of service in the Christian

ministry. Rev. Rhyne was thankful for the award.

JOHNS RIVER VALLEY CAMP:

Rev. Curly Stumb presented his report on John's River Valley Camp. He thanked the conference for including JRVC in the Mission Outreach budget. His goal for the coming year is to make JRVC a Youth Work Mission Outreach Destination. Rev. Stumb announced that he will be retiring at the end of 2017. He ended his presentation with his top 10 pictures from JRVC Work Camp.

The WNCA CHED Talks:

Rev. Jerry Rhyne introduced the program titled The WNCA CHED Talks. These are four fifteen minute talks/discussions on key church education topics. The four areas cover giving, missions (vision), who is your neighbor, and covenant (belonging).

LET'S TALK MONEY:

Rev. Cheri Lovell presented the first CHED talk on "Let's talk money." During this talk she asked that churches give 3% of their working budget to the conference. Rev. Lovell encouraged pastors and lay leaders to talk about money and budgeting openly within their church congregations, as well as for pastors to know who gives what amount within their churches. She emphasized that we are called to give to the church and suggested that giving is a spiritual discipline that should be honored and respected. Rev. Lovell said to make giving easy and to always make people feel appreciated for giving.

MISSION AND VISION:

Rev. Jim Luck gave the second CHED talk on "Mission and Vision." Rev. Luck looked at the Slow Food Movement and how we can utilize that method to improve our churches. He says that the "Slow Church" movement will work for the church. Churches need to figure out who they are, who their neighbor is, and what their vision is. Instead of being churches that have a little bit of everything we should focus on our identity and stay steadfast to who we are, instead of trying to make everyone happy. Growth will come when we narrow down our vision and do what will work for our church locally. In essence we need to be who we are and be the best at it.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR:

Rev. Jerry Rhyne presented the third CHED talk on "Who is our neighbor?" In this talk Rev. Rhyne encouraged attendees to register for Mission Insight.com to learn more about our communities. This website will tell you about all the demographics within a geographical area. It will give you a mosaic report of what the community looks like. This information can be extremely useful for a religious community. The WNCA account number for MissionInsight.com is 1VUIi. Rev. Rhyne also reminded everyone that the new local church profile will be coming out next month. Every church needs to update their profile every 3-5 years. By doing this a church can better see who they are and who God is calling them to be.

COVENANT AND BELONGING:

Rev. Tamara Franks presented the fourth and final CHED talk on "Covenant and Belonging." Rev. Franks emphasized that belonging is when you join your voices as one and become connected as one. Most importantly belonging is about covenant. Rev. Franks suggested that the foundation to keeping a covenant relationship is listening. When we stop talking and truly listen to others that is when a real covenant relationship is formed and that is how we will sustain a covenant relationship with each other no matter how different we may be.

REPORTS AND BUSINESS:

After a lunch break Rev. William Sowers opened the business meeting with a prayer.

Rev. William Sowers, President, appointed Rev. Butch Conrad as parliamentarian for this meeting.

It was MSA (moved, seconded, and approved) to adopt the Agenda.

Rev. Jerry Rhyne, WNCA Minister of Church Affairs, introduced Stephanie Leichman, and asked for continued prayers for Heather Burns.

Rev. Dr. Edward Davis presented awards and recognition's. Rev. Jim Luck was recognized for 25 years of Christian Ministry. Rev. Dr. Nancy Allen, Rev. Nathan King, and Rev. Susan Smith Walker were all recognized with the Justice in Ministry Award.

SECRETARY REPORT:

Rev. Misty Polston-York presented the Minutes from the October 3, 2015 meeting as written by previous Secretary Robert M. Thompson. It was MSA to approve the minutes as distributed. (Rev. David Crook moved to accept the minutes and Rev. Don Flick seconded the motion).

TREASURERS REPORT:

Doug Sink, Treasurer, presented the proposed spending plan for the fiscal year of 2017. Rev. Trudy Irving questioned line items 107 and 108, asking why the youth ministry budget had been taken out. Mr. Sink said that the \$1150.00 line item should be in there. Which would make the total \$11,650.00. Mr. Sink also noted that \$7,000.00 was utilized for a bus to take children to a youth retreat. The WNCA and ENCA both agreed to pay \$2,000 of these expenses. Mr. Sink stated that he would correct these line items and present a new report. It was agreed to wait for the new report.

Rev. Ed Neff spoke on line item 102. There is a \$2,000.00 increase on that line item. This is for Church Renewal. It is seed money for grants to offer struggling congregations support when they are in need of repairs or have unforeseen circumstances. Rev. Neff suggested that congregations take up a second Pentecost offering to be put toward the Church Renewal fund. This will make funds available for congregations that may need our help.

Sarah Bostian suggested that line item 310 (Administration) be given to the youth fund because it was not used this year.

After all of these suggestions the budget total would be \$29,350.00. Doug Sink agreed to make these changes. There was a motion to accept the budget with corrections. Ed Neff presented the motion and Dawn Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted and approved after changes.

CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMISSION:

Rev. Coleen Samson, co-chair of the Church and Ministry Commission (co-chair with Rev. Mark Burns), presented the commissions report. The Church and Ministry Commission made a motion to accept the report. Rev. June Grubb seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Nominating Committee: Rev. June Grubb thanked members of the committee who have completed their terms. Rev. Grubb then presented the list of new nominees. The Nomination Committee made a

motion to accept the new nominees and Rev. Alex Nance seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Rev. Dr. Edward Davis and Rev. Jerry Rhyne commissioned the newly elected officers, members of the Board of Directors, and members of the Committee on Ministry.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business at this time.

WORSHIP SERVICE AND HOLY COMMUNION:

The meeting closed with worship and Holy Communion led by Rev. Diane Tugel, Dawn Wilson, Rev. Michael Baldonado, Rev. Colleen Samson, Annette DeJong, Rev. Jerry Rhyne, and Rev. Dr. Edward Davis

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by President William Sowers and followed by a sending forth from Rev. Dr. Edward Davis.

Minutes Recorded by:

Rev. Misty Polston-York, Secretary
Western North Carolina Association
October 1, 2016