

## President's Report to the Western North Carolina Association October 2014 to October 2015

Dear friends,

Our work on behalf of the Western North Carolina Association has been fruitful and I am pleased to share these highlights. In January 2015, the board elected me president when Rev. Nathan King stepped down; Rev. William Sowers agreed to become vice president.

One of my greatest personal joys in this position has been visiting and worshipping with churches in each district. We have much to learn from each other in both our worship styles and the strengths we bring to this diverse association. My hope continues to be that we will build relationships with the wider church and our local churches by asking our members to share in a "ministry of presence" with each other and our wider communities. Thank you to everyone who has taken on this challenge!

Our Commission on Ministry (COM) worked with ENCA, EVA, and conference staff to align their standards and practices. This group of dedicated servants has worked tirelessly to support members in discernment, new churches, and individual pastors.

Among the priorities set by our board was a commitment to send 10% of our budget to the Southern Conference. We are also exploring ways to demonstrate the value of our churches' contributions to the association and conference through direct programming and communication with churches and their members. Our board continues to offer a program-based budget, and we hope you will find the narrative budget a useful tool to learn more about the work we are planning on behalf of the wider church.

Together we offered the following opportunities between October 2014 and 2015 and our churches offered additional programming in their local communities (you can find more information by subscribing to our e-news).

- Gathered for our Annual Meeting on October 4, 2014 – Rev. Eddie Weathers spoke on covenant, six workshops were offered, and we shared a prayer calendar including WNCA churches, and other UCC conferences and associations.
- Discussed, in partnership with our COM, renewing the use of Ecclesiastical Councils and the implementation of Boundary Training for clergy. Each of these conversations brought new ideas and leadership to light in our midst and we continue to enjoy a lively debate about our work together.
- Learned and served with almost 100 members of our association on March 7, 2015 at the second annual WNCA Learning Event (hosted this year by Mt. Zion UCC in China Grove). We also added longer workshops and a youth service component.
- Labored to revise and refresh our Constitution and Bylaws, in order to better reflect the reality of our current operating practices, and to encourage representative, effective work within our Association.

I am personally grateful for the support and care our WNCA staff, Rev. Jerry Rhyne- Minister for Church Affairs, and Mrs. Heather Burns- Registrar, share with me and our churches. We also appreciate Mrs. Carolyn Cline's support in the office, and Ms. Kelly Schumacher's work during her internship with Catawba.

In service,  
Elizabeth A. Schiemann