

Documents for Townhall Meetings 2
Proposal for the creation of a merged Keystone Conference
September & October 2024

Timeline

Schedule

Mission Focus

Keystone Project Timeline: Major Tasks/Milestones/Events	Who?	Start Date	Complete Date	Done √
Joint 4 PA Conference Spring Meeting	All	6/7/24	6/9/24	√
Training – to build relationships/scaffolding for Committees on Ministry, etc.	Bonnie Bates Nora Foust	6/2024	12/2026	
*Working group of Association presidents will clarify Association roles, responsibilities & expectations	Nora Foust will staff	7/2024		
Transition info added to draft Bylaws	Carrie Call	7/8/24	8/6/24	✓
Staffing and finance drafts reworked (for Townhall Meetings)	Bill Worley Bonnie Bates Keystone Working Group	8/5/24	9/3/24	✓
Reservation of Keystone Conference name for Corporation (can only be done 120 days in advance)	Carrie Call		8/15/24 3/15/25	
Reservation of Keystone domain name for website	Steve Davis	9/15/24		
Town Halls, info meetings, and forums held in person and by Zoom - covering Transition Timeline, Staffing, Finance, PA-specific Mission Focus, and Associations	ALL Staff, Keystone Working Group	9/14/24	10/31/24	
Each Conference VOTE separately/simultaneously on Motion for Synod	ALL Conference Delegates	11/9/24	11/9/24	
IF MOTION PASSES on 11/9...				
Create Personnel Policies for new Conference	Bonnie Bates and HR sub-team	Fall 2024	Fall 2025	
Submit Formal Motion to GS 35	David Ackerman		11/30/24	
Each Conference Submit formal motion to National	ALL Conference Ministers		11/30/24	
Each Conference VOTE on New Constitution and Bylaws including Transition Plan	ALL Conference Delegates at Spring Meetings of each Conference	5/2025	06/30/25	
General Synod 35 VOTE on Keystone motion	Synod	7/2025	7/2025	
Keystone Working Group work Complete (special gathering)	KWG & 4 CMs	Fall 2025	Fall 2025	
Penn Northeast moves from Conference Status to Association status as of January 1, 2026	Bonnie Bates and Penn Northeast Board	Summer 2025	12/31/26	
Transitional Keystone Conference Board established (TKCB), choose officers	Led by selected representatives from original 4 PA Conference Boards	06/14/2025	6/30/25	

Subgroup formed of personnel chairs from original boards creates Transitional Conference Minister (TCM) job description	TKCB	July 2025	August 2025	
TCM hired/contracted by TKCB **	TKCB		By 11/01/25	
Begin Transitional Board & Officers plan (in new Bylaws)	ALL	08/01/25	08/01/29	
4 PA Conferences become the “Historic Conferences” and retain skeletal boards	ALL Conferences	12/31/25	12/31/29	
Four current Conference Ministers resign their positions	4 CMs		By 12/31/2025	
Keystone Conference Begins		01/01/26		
Three Transitional Regional Conference Ministers (TRCM) hired/contracted	TKCB	01/01/26	03/01/26**	
Transitional Admins Contracted	TCM	01/01/26	03/01/26	
Transitional Staffing Plan in place	ALL	11/01/25	By end of 2026	
Subgroup of TKCB creates Job Description for Settled Executive Conference Minister	TKCB	03/01/2026	05/01/2026	
First Keystone Conference Annual Meeting	All	Spring 2026		
Committee Appointed from TKCB for Settled Executive Conference Minister search	TKCB	By 06/01/2026		
Search for Settled Executive Conference Minister (open search, national)	Search Committee	06/01/2026	01/01/2027	
Subgroup of TKCB creates Job Descriptions for three Settled Regional Conference Ministers	Subcommittee of TKCB	07/01/2026		
Committee Appointed from TKCB for running three Settled Regional Conference Ministers searches	TKCB	By 09/01/2026		
Searches for 3 Settled RCMs	Search committee(s)	01/01/2027	05/01/2028	
Hiring/establishment of permanent admins runs in parallel with calling of settled ECM and RCMs (some transitional admins may move into permanent positions)	ECM, RCMs, and Personnel from Board	By 01/01/2027	By 05/01/2028	

Town Hall Schedule for Keystone Study Group

Town Hall Schedule	Topics I: Timeline, Staffing, Finance	Topics II: Timeline, PA UCC Mission Focus	Topics III: Timeline, Associations
Conference Hosts			
PSEC	Saturday Sept 14, 10:00 am	Tuesday Sept 24, 2:00 pm	Tuesday Oct 15, 6:30 pm
Registration links	https://townhallkeystone914.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone924.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone1015.eventbrite.com
PCC	Monday Sept 23, 6:30 pm	Tuesday Oct 1, 6:30 pm	Wednesday Oct 23, 3:00 pm
Registration links	https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/bsc9gak/lp/eaaf262-c356-4f42-8ccc-52bcc72b25f8	https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/aqppzyh/lp/afa995e9-dc00-4d7e-b962-f87031b585a7	https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/9b2asvr/lp/04f46276-f068-4659-be53-806f68a05552
PNEC	Tuesday Sept 17, 10:30 am	Thursday Sept 19, 10:30 am	Thursday Oct 10, 6:30 pm
Registration links	https://townhallkeystone917.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone919.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone1010.eventbrite.com
PWC	Monday Sept 16, 10:00 am	Tuesday Oct 22, 1:00 pm	Thursday Oct 24, 6:30 pm
Registration links	https://townhallkeystone916.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone1022.eventbrite.com	https://townhallkeystone1024.eventbrite.com

To register for Townhalls: Go to <https://psec.org/keystone/> and click on Town Hall Schedule

To ask questions or leave feedback, email us: Keystone.Conference.project@gmail.com

A proposal for a mission focus for the Keystone Conference ...

People of the Table: **Celebrating and energizing ministries that end hunger**

What do we mean by a “mission focus”?

Our faith calls us into action. The Local Churches, Associations, and Historic Conferences of the United Church of Christ in Pennsylvania are involved—and will continue to be involved—in hundreds of efforts that seek to offer mercy, be of service, advocate in the public square, and build a just world for all. Among all of these laudable projects, we see a need for the newly-formed Conference to unite around a specific direction for our outreach in the coming years.

A mission focus for the new Keystone Conference United Church of Christ offers us a way to concentrate our efforts in this initial season, amplifying our voice and helping to bring us together. We propose that this initial mission focus, *People of the Table*, will be a Conference priority in our founding years (2026-2028), and that the Conference Board might choose either to continue this focus or to determine a fresh mission focus to pursue in the subsequent period of Conference life.

Why choose ending hunger as a mission focus?

Ending hunger is a goal that unites our diverse Local Churches and Associations. Across the proposed Keystone Conference, settings of the United Church of Christ area already engage in ministries to feed our neighbors: food pantries, community dinners, soup kitchens, canned good drives, neighborhood gardens, and political advocacy are just a few examples. We do this work because the Gospel mandate is clear: “feed my sheep,” said Jesus: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.” We are *people of the table*, uniting around our Eucharistic tables and then welcoming our neighbors around our social hall tables. This identity is particularly strong in Pennsylvania, a commonwealth containing over seven million acres of farmland, where many Local Churches take pride in our agricultural heritage. While our members may vary in their perspectives on many social issues, we believe that ending hunger is a priority that brings us all together.

What will the People of the Table mission focus entail?

We anticipate that the majority of the action around this focus will continue to happen within Local Churches and Associations, who will continue or initiate practical projects relating to ending hunger. Meanwhile, Keystone Conference staff and board/committee leaders will play these roles in implementing the mission focus:

- **Cheerlead:** Conference leaders will celebrate and encourage the ways that settings across the Conference are working to end hunger. They will collect stories and statistics about how UCC settings are ending hunger: how many

meals are we serving? how many pounds of food have we collected? how many letters have we written to Congress? Then, they will amplify these stories in Conference publications and in their preaching and public speaking.

- **Resource:** Conference leaders will offer guidance and connections for Local Churches and Associations who wish to begin or improve their ministries relating to ending hunger. For example, the Conference might organize a webinar on establishing a community garden, or it might circulate a set of bulletin inserts on how to write an email to your state legislator encouraging policies to eliminate food deserts.
- **Advocate:** Conference leaders will partner with organizations already working on hunger priorities in state and federal government (e.g. the United Church of Christ Office of Public Policy & Advocacy, Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, Bread for the World, etc.) to bring the voice of the Conference to Harrisburg and Washington DC.
- **Engage:** Incorporate this theme into Conference-wide programs and gatherings. For example, the Conference Annual Meeting, youth gatherings, and clergy retreats might include hands-on projects that help to end hunger and speakers who can inform our advocacy.