

Penn Northeast Conference
United Church of Christ
2024 Fall Meeting – Saturday, November 9, St. John’s UCC, Laurys Station

Tentative Agenda

Theme: ***Building a Bigger Table***

- 8:30 a.m. Log in Time for Zoom Participants
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome by James Gottwald and Housekeeping Comments
Introduction of Guests – Bonnie Bates
- 9:05 a.m. Devotions by the Congregational Vitality Team and Coaches
- 9:20 a.m. Business
 Call to Order – Lori Balliet
 Appoint Parliamentarian – Joanne Marchetto
 Define the Bar of the House – Lori
 Adopt Agenda – Lori
 Registrar’s Report – Cecilia Baxter
 Adopt the Business Guidelines – Lori
- 9:30 a.m. Discussion of Keystone Merger and General Synod Motion
 Introduction of PNEC Keystone Working Group Mbrs – Bonnie Bates
 Motion Presentation – Becky Beckwith
 Plan B Presentation (***the motion does not pass***) – Bonnie
 Plan A Presentation (***the motion passes***) – Lori, Tyler Shankweiler,
 Steve Davis, and Dave DeRemer
- 11:30 a.m. Vote on the General Synod Motion
- Noon Results of the Vote on the Motion Announced – Four Conference Ministers
Release, Healing, and Celebration – Debra Hess and Bonnie
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Additional Business:
 Approve the Minutes/Spring Conference Meeting – Suzanne Schaeffer
 Adopt the Proposed 2025 Budget – Martin Nuscher
 Affirm the STAR Resolution going forward to General Synod – Bonnie
 Affirm the Slate of GS Delegates/Installation – Rebecca Thomas
 Church Anniversaries, ONA, WISE, A2A, Legacy/Opted-Out Churches
 Kayli Freeman and Bonnie
 Necrology – Bonnie
 Presentation
 Acknowledgements
 Announcement of the 2025 Spring Meeting and Adjourn the Meeting
 Lori
- 2:00 p.m. How to Build Relationships Among Congregations and Inside the New
Conference (if the motion passes) – Congregational Vitality Team and
Coaches

3:00 p.m. Closing Worship with Communion – Congregational Vitality Team and Coaches
Communion is gluten-free bread and grape juice.
Offering will be designated for “Friends of the Conference” and Hunger Free PA (all PA Conference will be participating in this)

Names of Participants in the Order in which They Appear

Rev. Dr. James Gottwald, St. John’s UCC, Laurys Station; Chairperson of the Conference Meeting Planning Team

Rev. Matthew Gorkos, Church of the Good Shepherd, Alburtis; Chair of the Congregational Vitality Team

Rev. Michelle Funk, Heidelberg UCC, Slatington; Chair of the Coaches

Mrs. Lori Balliet, Moderator

Rev. Dr. Joanne Marchetto, Parliamentarian

Rev. Cecilia Baxter, New Creation, Easton; Assistant Moderator

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister

Keystone Working Group:

Rev. Kris Snyder, Union UCC, Neffs

Rev. Dr. James Gottwald, St. John’s UCC, Laurys Station

Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith

Rev. Steve Davis, St. John’s UCC Fullerton, Whitehall

Rev. Bill Metzger, Consultant to the Keystone Conference Ministers

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, PNEC Staff

Mr. Tyler Shankweiler, St. John’s UCC Fullerton, Whitehall

Rev. Dr. David DeRemer

Rev. Debra Hess, St. Thomas UCC Macada, Bethlehem; Chair of the Committee on Ministry

Rev. Suzanne Schaeffer, Emmanuel UCC, Nuremberg; Secretary

Rev. Martin Nuscher, St. Paul’s UCC Indianland, Cherryville and St. John’s UCC, Northampton; Treasurer

Rev. Rebecca Thomas, First UCC and Lower Saucon UCC, Hellertown; Chair of the Nominating Committee

Rev. Kayli Freeman, Union UCC, Neffs; Chair of the Local Congregational Support Working Group, Committee on Ministry

Officers of the Conference Board

Mrs. Lori Balliet, Moderator

Rev. Cecilia Baxter, Assistant Moderator

Rev. Martin Nuscher, Treasurer

Rev. Suzanne Schaeffer, Secretary

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister and President

Ushers

Rev. Martin Nuscher

Rev. Henry Distler

Mr. Ben Gullede

Mr. Lee Schaeffer

Displays

Bethany Children's Home – Jocelynn Phillips

Moravian and Lancaster Theological Seminaries – Diane Bagues

UCC Insurance – Andrew Parry

BUSINESS GUIDELINES

for the

Fall 2024 Conference Meeting at St. John's UCC, Laurys Station

- (1) All proceedings of a Conference meeting shall be governed by the parliamentary procedures in **Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 12th Edition**, unless otherwise provided for in these guidelines.
- (2) Participants in the Zoom meeting who are delegates have voice and vote. Those who want to speak shall secure permission from the Chat Teller – Rev. Rebecca Sausser – through the Zoom Chat Function or by raising their hand in the Participants Panel in Zoom to be recognized. Delegates who are in person in the Bar of the House have voice and vote. They can raise their hand to be recognized by the Moderator. Please give your full name and the church you represent.
- (3) To cast a vote, one must have been named by a local church as its delegate (or alternate if the delegate is absent) or be an authorized minister who holds standing in the Penn Northeast Conference or be a lay member of the Conference Board.
- (4) Only the votes of those qualified to vote and within sanctuary of St. John's UCC, Laurys Station and the Zoom participants, which are declared to be within the bar of the house, will be counted on any issue. Voting will be done by polling (virtually), raising of the official delegate card for those physically present, or by ballot.
- (5) When a motion is introduced, the person speaking shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes for the initial presentation. Anyone speaking about an issue already introduced shall be limited to a maximum of two (2) minutes. No previous speaker on a specific issue shall be permitted to speak again until all who want to speak about that issue have had an opportunity to do so. Attendees may request their chat to be spoken by the Chat Teller – Rebecca Sausser.
- (6) The right to limit the time for discussion shall be vested in the presiding officer.
- (7) All amendments and main motions from attendees who are in person shall be presented in writing to the Conference Secretary. If the attendee is on Zoom, amendments and motions should be presented to the Conference Secretary in the chat function to Rebecca Sausser.
- (8) Members of the Budget Committee shall be available at the Conference Meeting to discuss any pertinent items relating to the proposed budget.
- (9) The Officers of the Conference Board will serve as the Business Committee. It will receive all business items, recommendations, overtures, proposals, resolutions, etc., and determine when they are to be considered by the Conference. It shall also arrange business items in such a way that duplication may be avoided, and the agenda expedited.
- (10) All resolutions, proposals, etc. submitted should be in the Conference Office prior to the Conference Meeting.
- (11) Any resolution not accepted for consideration shall be referred to the Conference Board for consideration and possible referral to the Conference at a later meeting.

**Motion of Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast
Conferences to Join Together to Form the Keystone Conference**

Submitted by:

Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences

1 **SUMMARY**

2
3 Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences of the
4 United Church of Christ (“movants”) recommend the General Synod of the United Church of
5 Christ grant standing to a new Conference, the Keystone Conference, with boundaries covering
6 the geographical area as movants’ boundaries, and terminate movants’ standing as Conferences
7 of the United Church of Christ, effective January 1, 2026.

8
9 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

10
11 As followers of Jesus, “*Together We Are Stronger*” is the “why” of the proposed Keystone
12 Conference. Our mission is to equip our Associations to provide better spiritual, educational,
13 programmatic, and financial support to our congregations. Our work is grounded in Ephesians
14 4:11-13: “*The gifts (Jesus) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some*
15 *evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building*
16 *up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son*
17 *of God.*”

18
19 The Holy Spirit is moving in innovative and transformative ways, and we are called as God’s
20 people to respond to the new thing that God is doing with conviction, compassion, and clarity.
21 We are resolved to trust faithfully in the collective wisdom and leadership to reimagine the Penn
22 West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast Conferences as one body
23 known as the Keystone Conference.

24
25 These current times require fresh expressions of faith, rituals, discipleship, and leadership. We
26 hold in artistic tension the traditions that have formed deeply ingrained identities and practices
27 with the creative power of the Divine who is “making all things new.”

28
29 We believe we are a people who are bound together by biblical covenants and guided by Jesus’
30 fundamental commandment to love one another. By that love, we work together to serve God
31 and our neighbors with compassion, to encourage and inspire one another with hope, and to
32 make bold and courageous choices.

33
34 In January 2022, the Conference Ministers of the four Pennsylvania Conferences gathered to
35 discuss the urgency of issues confronting all settings of the UCC. Our four Conferences share

36 challenges, and we responded to them in partnership with each other by establishing first a
37 “Keystone Study Group,” then a “Keystone Working Group,” which spent many hours together
38 discerning our call to unity.

39

40 We met with an eye toward confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world and listening
41 with a deep sense of our responsibility to answer Jesus’ prayer, “that they may all be one.” We
42 identified the spiritual hunger of our church people and pastors and the call to support and
43 develop the local church. We dreamed about new ways to serve Jesus and our churches by
44 drawing on the strength and giftedness of our clergy, congregations, leaders, and Conference
45 staff.

46

47 We recognize that we are not the church that we were when the denomination was formed in
48 1957, and our current contexts of ministry are different. The pandemic exacerbated the
49 challenges we face. We acknowledge our responsibility to provide support and nourishment to
50 the local church. We recognize our duty to work in partnership with all settings of the church to
51 find and develop the leadership needs of our congregations. We acknowledge the very real
52 financial challenges that impact the future of all our ministries.

53

54 After over a year of meeting to discern God’s call for our Conferences, we believe that
55 *“Together, We Are Stronger.”* Also, we believe that if we are to encourage and transform the
56 church we know, we must transform ourselves and the denominational structures and
57 expectations we have of them and each other. We believe there are compelling reasons to move
58 toward the creation of a unified Conference. This might allow us to:

59

- 60 – Respond with dynamic faithfulness to a fluid world with the timeless truths of the gospel
61 of Jesus Christ and move forward into the future with confidence and vision.
- 62 – Embrace our understanding of discipleship and act like the Body of Christ, humanity’s
63 best witness to the interdependent unity of all living things.
- 64 – Provide stronger collective support for local churches.
- 65 – Strengthen outreach and mission so our passions can meet the world’s deepest needs to
66 reshape our communities with the love and care of Jesus Christ.
- 67 – Serve as a model for our congregations needing to take bold action to adapt themselves
68 and strengthen the mission and ministry of the UCC in our Conference.
- 69 – Equip Associations to promote justice, racial reconciliation, and spiritual revival in all
70 their forms.
- 71 – Increase our participation and positive influence in the wider UCC community.
- 72 – Create conversations and initiate new strategies for the sharing and implementation of
73 “best practices.”
- 74 – Blend together what each Conference does well, building on our individual and corporate
75 strengths.

76

77 We believe it is time for us to be open to God’s work in the four “Penn” Conferences of the
78 United Church of Christ – Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast
79 – and to join together to form a new Conference of the United Church of Christ, named the
80 Keystone Conference.

81

82 “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19 (NIV).

83

84 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

85

86 **WHEREAS** the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast
87 Conferences of the United Church of Christ together discerned that they: *Affirm* devotion to our
88 Creator God, to Jesus Christ our savior, teacher, and friend, and to the Holy Spirit who binds us
89 together in one body and lights the way into the future; *Recognize* that division and change
90 surround and strain the Christian church, challenging faithful people of good will to create novel
91 communities of faith, action, and love for a new age; *Believe* a Conference must model unity and
92 healing in response to theological and ideological shifts in the Body of Christ as a whole and in
93 the United Church of Christ in particular; *Serve, Nurture, and Empower* authorized ministers and
94 all settings of the church within their boundaries; and *Desire* to live into Jesus’ hope for his
95 followers “that they all may be one” [John 17], reflecting the desire for unity in our predecessor
96 denominations and in the entire United Church of Christ; and

97

98 **WHEREAS** the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn Northeast
99 Conferences propose to join together to create the Keystone Conference; and

100

101 **WHEREAS** the proposed Keystone Conference as a Conference of the United Church of Christ
102 aspires to be one body, affirming its commitment to unity centered in Christ Jesus, working
103 diligently to maintain a large tent wherein its members may experience authentic welcome,
104 mercy, empowerment, and hope, striving to share renewed life, fellowship, witness, and gospel
105 proclamation together; and

106

107 **WHEREAS** the four Conferences have collectively discerned that the ministry and mission of
108 their Associations will be stronger as one unified Conference;

109

110 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church
111 of Christ does hereby recognize the Keystone Conference, created with geographic boundaries
112 encompassing those previously of the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and
113 Penn Northeast Conferences, effective January 1, 2026; and

114

115 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod grants the new Keystone
116 Conference of the United Church of Christ standing as a Conference of the United Church of
117 Christ, including all the powers, privileges, and responsibilities of a Conference of the United
118 Church of Christ; and

119

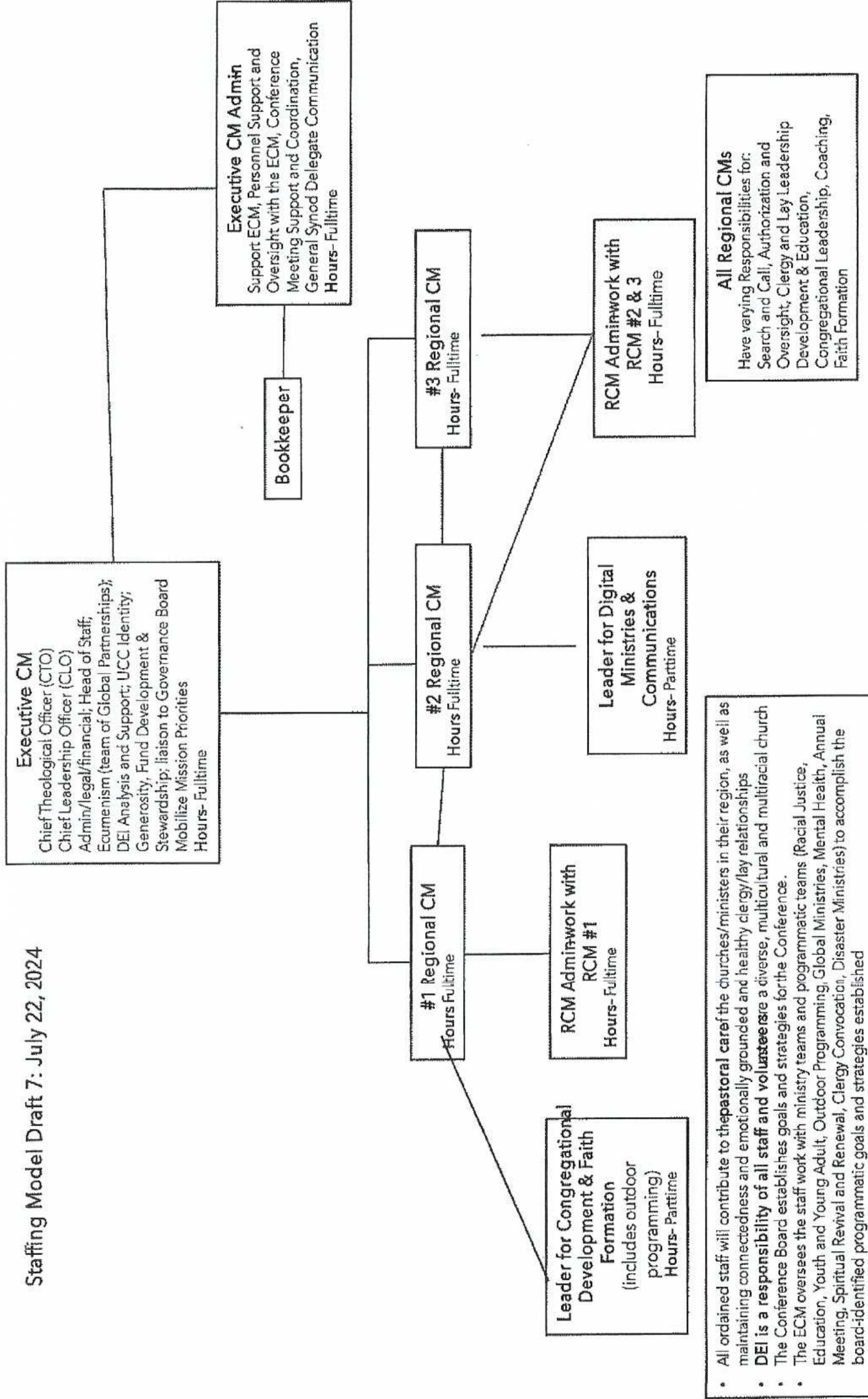
120 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod acknowledges that,
121 effective January 1, 2026, each Association of the said four Conferences shall automatically
122 become an Association of the new Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ, as
123 determined by the new Keystone Conference; and

124

125 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod does hereby approve the
126 termination of the standing of the Penn West, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Southeast, and Penn
127 Northeast Conferences with the General Synod, effective January 1, 2026.

128

Staffing Model Draft 7: July 22, 2024



Keystone Conference Exploratory Budget (this is one possible spending plan for a merged Conference. THEE final 2026 Budget will be drafted by the a Keystone Conference

INCOME	2024 PA Conference Budgets*				2025 DRAFT PA Conference Budgets*				2026 Keystone*						
	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL
OCWM	\$ 763,354	\$ 325,000	\$ 734,000	189,000	\$2,011,354	\$ 701,344	\$ 234,712	\$ 711,980	168,500	\$1,816,536	\$ 701,344	\$ 234,712	\$ 711,980	168,500	\$1,816,536
Individual Offerings	\$ 12,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 1,000	12,000	\$60,000	\$12,000	\$30,000	\$1,000	12,000	\$55,000	\$12,000	\$30,000	\$1,000	12,000	\$55,000
Misc. income	\$ 5,000	\$ 27,500	\$ 24,500	6,676	\$63,676	\$5,000	\$22,000	\$24,500	4,800	\$56,300	\$5,000	\$22,000	\$24,500	4,800	\$56,300
Interest	\$ 6,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 19,050	-	\$33,050	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$20,000	-	\$32,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$20,000	-	\$32,000
Endowment Draw	\$ 70,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 62,359	18,000	\$185,859	\$70,500	\$35,000	\$88,673	18,000	\$212,173	\$70,500	\$35,000	\$88,673	18,000	\$212,173
PNEC Building Sale Proceeds*					\$0					\$0					\$0
TOTAL	\$ 856,854	\$ 430,500	\$ 840,909	\$ 225,676	\$2,353,939	\$794,844	\$327,712	\$846,153	\$203,300	\$2,172,009	\$794,844	\$327,712	\$846,153	\$203,300	\$2,172,009
EXPENSES															
STAFF WITH STAFF MODEL #7															
Admin and PT (Salary + benefits)	\$91,684	165500	280192	24,960	\$562,336	\$94,250	172120	288598	25,896	\$580,864	\$94,250	172120	288598	25,896	\$580,864
Ordained (Salary + benefits)	\$281,120	125200	338088	135,591	\$879,999	\$289,434	133408	348231	138,221	\$909,294	\$289,434	133408	348231	138,221	\$909,294
Staff Development	\$3,500	2000	6900	-	\$12,400	\$3,600	2000	6900	-	\$12,500	\$3,600	2000	6900	-	\$12,500
Staff Professional Expenses		8000	4200	-	\$12,200		8000	4200	-	\$12,200		8000	4200	-	\$12,200
Staff Travel	\$54,000	14000	7700	14,000	\$89,700	\$54,000	14000	7700	14,820	\$90,520	\$54,000	14000	7700	14,820	\$90,520
TOTAL	\$430,304	\$314,700	\$637,080	\$174,551	\$1,556,635	\$441,284	\$329,528	\$655,629	\$178,937	\$1,605,378	\$441,284	\$329,528	\$655,629	\$178,937	\$1,605,378
OFFICE															
Audit/professional fees	\$40,000	9500	12000	-	\$61,500	\$41,200	12000	12500	15,000	\$80,700	\$41,200	12000	12500	15,000	\$80,700
Finance Services															
Communication (digital/paper)	\$7,500	3000	1500	3,100	\$15,100	\$7,725	3000	2000	3,457	\$16,182	\$7,725	3000	2000	3,457	\$16,182
Equipment	\$11,000	2500	12250	5,850	\$31,600	\$11,330	2500	12250	5,006	\$31,086	\$11,330	2500	12250	5,006	\$31,086
Hospitality	\$5,000		2750	-	\$7,750	\$5,000		2750	-	\$7,750	\$5,000		2750	-	\$7,750
IT Support/Software	\$6,000	2500	14000	2,370	\$24,870	\$6,180	2500	14400	2,917	\$25,997	\$6,180	2500	14400	2,917	\$25,997
Legal			5200	2,000	\$7,200			5500		\$5,500			5500		\$5,500
Insurance	\$8,000	18000	7500	3,500	\$37,000	\$8,240	20000	7800	4,500	\$40,540	\$8,240	20000	7800	4,500	\$40,540

Miscellaneous (pens, paper, etc)	\$2,400	4600	6200	600	\$13,800	\$2,472	4600	7350	887	\$15,309	15,000
Rent (including leases)	\$24,000	0	28950	8,100	\$61,050	\$24,720	0	29300	8,100	\$62,120	30,000
Taxes		10000					12000				0
Utilities	\$5,500	19600	14656	-	\$39,756	\$5,665	19600	14800		\$40,065	17,000
Dues & Subscriptions	\$6,000	0	6000	425	\$12,425	\$6,180	0	6000	244	\$12,424	6,000
Board of Directors	\$1,000	1000				\$1,000	1000				5,000
TOTAL	\$116,400	\$70,700	\$111,006	\$25,945	\$324,051	\$119,712	\$77,200	\$114,650	\$40,111	\$351,673	\$279,000
PROGRAM	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	
Academy of Ministry			0	-	\$0			0		\$0	0
Annual Conference Meeting			0	-	\$0			0		\$0	0
Clergy Convocation			0	-	\$0			0		\$0	0
Conf Standing Committees/ministry teams	\$0		0	600	\$600			0	288	\$288	0
Congregational Development (coaching?)	\$6,000	22500	4300	-	\$32,800	\$6,000	22500	4300		\$32,800	40,000
Digital Ministry and Technology (mission in			10100	-	\$10,100			10150		\$10,150	10,000
Disaster Ministries	\$2,500		0	-	\$2,500	\$2,500		0		\$2,500	5,000
Ecumenical Ministries			1500	-	\$1,500			1500		\$1,500	3,000
Generosity / Stewardship			300	-	\$300			300		\$300	3,000
Justice and Witness	\$2,000		3000	-	\$5,000	\$2,000		3000		\$5,000	5,000
Leadership Development Clergy & Lay			1420	-	\$1,420			1420		\$1,420	5,000
Ministerial Care and Assistance	\$37,000		11819	-	\$48,819	\$37,000		11935		\$48,935	30,000
Ministerial Oversight/Authorization	\$12,000		1850	-	\$13,850	\$12,000		1850		\$13,850	12,000
Search and Call Resources	\$10,000		200	-	\$10,200	\$10,000		250		\$10,250	10,000
Spiritual Life and Revival Ministries		1200	5000	-	\$5,000			2500		\$2,500	5,000
Youth and Young Adult Ministries			0	-	\$1,200		1200	0		\$1,200	1,500
Outdoor Ministries	\$60,000		0	-	\$60,000	\$60,000		0		\$60,000	60,000
					\$0					\$0	

	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL	\$129,500	\$23,700	\$39,489	\$	600	\$193,289	\$129,500	\$23,700	\$37,205	\$288	\$190,693	\$189,500
	PCC	PNE	PSEC	PWC	TOTAL												
TOTAL																	
WIDER MINISTRY																	
Ministry Partners																	
Bethany Childrens Home			\$3,500	-	\$3,500									\$3,500		\$3,500	3,000
Evang/Ref Hist Soc	\$5,000	\$250	\$2,000	-	\$7,250	\$5,000	\$250	\$2,000			\$7,250	\$5,000	\$250	\$2,000		\$7,250	5,000
Hoffman Homes				-	\$0						\$0					\$0	1,000
Lancaster/Moravian Seminary	\$5,000		\$3,500	1,000	\$9,500	\$5,000		\$3,500	1,000	1,000	\$9,500	\$5,000		\$3,500	1,000	\$13,500	5,000
PA Council of Churches	\$5,000	\$3,300	\$3,000	1,000	\$12,300	\$5,000	\$3,300	\$3,000	1,000	1,000	\$12,300	\$5,000	\$3,300	\$3,000	1,000	\$12,300	5,000
Philadelphia Interfaith			\$2,000	-	\$2,000			\$2,000			\$2,000			\$2,000		\$2,000	5,000
Phoebe Ministries			\$9,000	-	\$9,000			\$9,000			\$9,000			\$9,000		\$9,000	9,000
Ursinus Campus Ministry			\$1,242	-	\$1,242			\$1,242			\$1,242			\$1,250		\$1,250	1,250
Christian Associates of Western PA				-	\$0						\$0				1,000	\$1,000	1,000
Living Waters Camp				1,000	\$1,000				1,000	1,000	\$1,000				1,000	\$1,000	1,000
Freedom School		\$2,000					\$2,000						\$2,000			\$2,000	1,000
Lehigh Vally Conf of Churches		\$2,000					\$2,000						\$2,000			\$2,000	1,000
Christian Associates of Southeast PA				1,000	\$1,000						\$1,000					\$0	0
Cowan's Gap Ministry	\$3,600				\$3,600	\$3,600					\$3,600	\$3,600				\$3,600	3,000
Lutheran Camping	\$5,000				\$5,000	\$5,000					\$5,000	\$5,000				\$5,000	1,000
TOTAL	\$23,600	\$7,550	\$24,242	\$4,000	\$59,392	\$23,600	\$7,550	\$24,242	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$59,392	\$23,600	\$11,550	\$24,250	\$4,000	\$63,400	\$42,250
UCC National Church																	
AM21 Conference			\$1,750	-	\$1,750			\$1,750			\$1,750			1,750		\$1,750	10,000
CCM (Includes National Legal Counsel)	\$9,800	\$6,350	\$7,866	4,000	\$28,016	10,094	6,500	7,900	3,980	3,980	\$28,016	10,094	6,500	7,900	3,980	\$28,474	30,000
General Synod	\$0	\$10,000	\$23,250	-	\$33,250	40,000	12,000	23,250	-	-	\$33,250	40,000	12,000	23,250	-	\$75,250	30,000
Middle Atlantic Region Conf.	\$5,000		\$2,000	-	\$7,000	7,000		\$2,000	-	-	\$7,000	7,000		2,000	-	\$9,000	10,000
OCWM Offering	\$144,000	\$32,500	\$73,400	14,000	\$263,900	144,000	23,471	71,198	11,500	11,500	\$263,900	144,000	23,471	71,198	11,500	\$250,169	200,000
					\$0						\$0					\$0	
TOTAL	\$158,800	\$48,850	\$108,266	\$18,000	\$333,916	\$201,094	\$41,971	\$106,098	\$15,480	\$15,480	\$364,643	\$201,094	\$41,971	\$106,098	\$15,480	\$364,643	\$280,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$858,604	\$465,500	\$920,083	\$223,096	\$2,467,283	\$915,190	\$483,949	\$937,832	\$238,816	\$238,816	\$2,575,787	\$915,190	\$483,949	\$937,832	\$238,816	\$2,575,787	\$2,006,771
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-\$1,750	-\$35,000	-\$79,174	\$2,580	-\$113,344	-\$120,346	-\$156,237	-\$91,679	-\$35,516	-\$35,516	-\$403,778	-\$120,346	-\$156,237	-\$91,679	-\$35,516	-\$403,778	\$63,171

** PNEC is currently in the process of listing and selling their Conference Office Building in Palmerton, PA. The estimated income of that sale is \$450,000. Of that sum, the Keystone Conference would employ \$50,000 a year for three years (2026-2028) to underwrite startup costs.

KEYSTONE PROJECT TRANSITION TIMELINE (DRAFT)

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

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ
2024 Spring Conference Meeting (Zoom / Hybrid)
Saturday, June 8, 2024, at Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center

The Moderator, Rev. Dr. James Gottwald, welcomed all those in attendance in person and by Zoom to the Spring Meeting of the Penn Northeast Conference.

James then asked Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates to offer Opening Devotions. She began by thanking all who expressed concern for her son Sam's unexpected surgery the day before, having cardiac stents put in place, which thankfully went well, and he is now recovering at home. For the devotions, she used the text from Ephesians 4:2-7, which begins by encouraging us to "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Again, she used her own personal struggles with cultivating patience as an illustration.

Call to Order The Moderator then called the business meeting to order at 9:10 am.

Adoption of the Agenda

The first order of business was to adopt the agenda and he called for a motion to that effect. The motion was made by David DeRemer, and seconded by Tyler Shankweiler. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Establishment of a Quorum

Next, James called on the Asst. Moderator, Lori Balliet, to give the Registrar's Report. She stated that the total registration for the meeting as of 6/3/24 was 117 individuals with 78 in attendance in person and another 39 on Zoom. There were 77 authorized ministers, 19 lay delegates, one youth delegate, and four lay members on the Conference Board totaling 101 voting delegates. Fifty-six churches of the Conference were represented. **This report confirmed that a quorum for conducting business was established.**

Definition of the Bar of the House

He then defined the bar of the house as being participants on the Zoom platform and all those in Room 207 of the Penn Stater Conference Center.

Definition of Business Guidelines

Moving on to adoption of the Business Guidelines, he asked for a motion to adopt them as outlined in the Advance Reports. Gary Barraco made the motion, and Kaye Lentz seconded it. **The motion passed.**

Generosity Team Video

James then asked for a short video produced by the Generosity Team to be played for those in attendance. In it, members of the team explained the origin of the Friends of the Conference campaign to encourage individual donors to give gifts to the Conference directly to offset the decline in OCWM funding from member churches.

Treasurer's Report

The video was followed by the Treasurer's report given by Rev. Martin Nuscher. He covered the end of year balances for 2023 and offered comparisons and trends for several preceding years. Martin reviewed all the information contained in the reports and then offered to answer any questions about the data. When those questions were answered, he acknowledged that 4 of the last 10 operating budgets were deficit budgets, but that, overall, the report was good news for the most part. After all the questions were answered, the Moderator asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Lee Schaeffer made the motion and Bill Metzger seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of the Minutes

James then called on Secretary Helena Lindquist to present the minutes from the Fall 2023 Conference meeting held at Bensalem UCC in Lehigh. After she did so, he called for any questions or corrections from the delegates. One correction in an individual's title was made. James asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the 2023 PNEC Fall Conference meeting, as amended. The motion was made by Christian Creyer over Zoom and seconded by Sue Schaeffer. **That motion also passed with one abstention.**

Approval of Remaining Reports

The next order of business was to accept the other reports from the Board Committees and Ministry Teams on activities which have been undertaken since the Fall Conference meeting. James asked for a motion to accept them as presented in the advance reports. Janice Metzger made the motion and Bob Quinby seconded. **The motion passed.**

Nomination Committee Report

The Moderator then called on Rev. Denise Fry, Chair of the Nominating Committee, to recognize members of the Board, Committees, and Ministry Teams who have completed their terms of service to PNEC. She read the list aloud and offered them all thanks for their time, expertise and commitment.

She was then asked to present the report from the Nominating Committee which contained a slate of twenty-five candidates for several vacant conference positions, about half of which are on the Committee on Ministry. She moved the adoption of the Nominating Committee report. James explained that the Committee made the motion that these individuals be elected upon the recommendation of the committee, and it does not require a second. He then asked if there were any further nominations from the floor for the positions listed in the report. Hearing none, he asked for a motion that would close the nominations for these positions. Gary Barraco made the motion and Kathryn Foster seconded. **The vote to close nominations passed, and the Moderator instructed the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for everyone listed on the Nominating Committee Report.**

Bonnie Bates asked all of those who were appointed or elected today and those who will continue to serve in positions with the Penn Northeast Conference to stand in their places to be installed. She referred everyone to turn to the installation service printed in the Delegate Book and proceeded to conduct the installation.

PNEC Keystone Working Group Discussion

Bonnie introduced the other individuals from PNEC who have been serving on the Keystone Group, Rev. Steve Davis, Rev. Dr. James Gottwald, Rev. Kris Snyder and Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith, and opened the floor to questions or concerns those present might want to ask of them. The questions centered on topics like:

- Will our single association have the same weight (voting power, etc.) as the other three areas which have multiple associations?
- What sense do you have of how the vote will go?
- How can we ensure some of our restricted funds (from bequests, for example) will continue to be kept separate and within the stated wishes of the donor?

At the end of these questions and a brief comfort break, other reports were shared.

Recognitions: Several individuals, congregations and clergy were recognized, as follows:

- Rev. Teresa Martin recognized about 25 clergy who are celebrating special anniversaries of their ordination.
- Bonnie Bates recognized Joyce and Doug Donagan, co-pastors at St. John's Riegelsville, as the newest pastors in PNEC.
- Bonnie went on to list those Clergy who have died since our Fall 2023 meeting, including Rev. Lunette Hilliard who died on 11/09/2023, Rev. Carl Siegfried who died 12/13/2023, Rev. Jack Ivey who died 1/22/24, Rev. Bill Ellsworth who died 4/2/2024, and Rev. Em Finney who died 5/8/2024. She offered a prayer of thanksgiving for their lives and their service.
- Tracy Whitehead explained the PNEC Ambassador program and how each church could participate in the program, and she recognized the many churches who have joined the program and appointed a member to serve in that capacity.
- Rev. Rich Teitsworth presented the five churches which gave over \$10,000 to OCWM in 2023, as well as the top ten churches with the highest per capita OCWM giving. He went on to recognize the more than thirty "5 for 5" churches which contributed to OCWM plus the four special offerings throughout the year (One Great Hour of Sharing, the Christmas Fund, Strengthen the Church and Neighbors in Need). He also listed the dozen Open and Affirming congregations and the two designated as Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged in the mental health of the community and the wider world.

Legacy Churches and those that left the UCC

The Moderator asked Bonnie Bates to announce the congregations which have closed or opted out of the United Church of Christ. She listed two Legacy churches which closed, Church of the Manger in Bethlehem and St. John's in Coopersburg. She also listed two churches who voted to no longer be part of the UCC, The Dille Parish in LeRaysville and Trinity Congregational Church in Scranton.

Appreciation for the Conference Planning Team

James gave sincere thanks to all the members of the Conference Meeting Planning Team; which included Chairperson Doug Taylor, Doug Lander, Bob Gutekunst, James Gottwald, Gary Barraco, Debra Hess and the Conference Staff. And he especially thanked the Tech Team composed of Doug Lander, Becky Sausser and Bill Costello who brought and set up the technical equipment that enabled us to make this a virtual as well as an in-person event. We appreciate their support and their skills.

Next Meeting Date

James then announced the date of the Fall 2024 Conference Meeting will be November 9th at St. John's Laurys Station when we will be voting on the motion to form the Keystone Conference.

Passing the Moderator Gavel

Just prior to the passing of the gavel, Bonnie provided a plaque of recognition to James. Thanking him for his years of service at the Asst. Moderator and Moderator of the PNEC.

Finally, Moderator James Gottwald passed the gavel and the Moderator's Medallion to Lori Balliet, the next PNEC Moderator.

Adjournment

Lori asked for a motion to adjourn the Spring Meeting of the Penn Northeast Conference. James Robison made the motion and Bob Quinby seconded. **The motion passed unanimously**, and James offered grace for the luncheon meal.

Submitted by Helena Lindquist, Retiring Secretary to the PNEC Board

Penn Northeast Conference

2025 BUDGET COMPARISON REPORT

	2022 Full Year	2023 Full Year	Actual June 30, 2024	2024 Full Year Estimate	Approved 2024 Budget	Proposed 2025 Budget
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
Revenue						
OCWM Basic Support	\$ 314,587.59	\$ 277,306.36	\$ 115,881.07	\$ 276,214.11	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 260,000.00
OCWM Special Gifts	159,444.00	21,644.81	20,731.25	35,000.00	35,000.00	35,000.00
Conference Programming Revenue	13,617.50	10,148.10	11,711.44	17,000.00	20,000.00	18,000.00
Interest/Earnings	4,207.24	3,098.09	4,890.05	6,500.00	8,000.00	5,500.00
Budget Reimbursement (Grants or Draws)	-	12,021.03	-	35,000.00	35,000.00	140,000.00
Generosity Team Revenue	2,304.76	1,501.54	1,084.29	3,000.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
Unrealized Gain (Loss)	(56,966.76)	33,140.99	13,723.98	15,000.00		
Gain on Sale of Units	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	<u>437,194.33</u>	<u>358,860.92</u>	<u>168,022.08</u>	<u>387,714.11</u>	<u>430,500.00</u>	<u>466,000.00</u>
Expenses						
Wider Church:						
OCWM to National	31,458.76	27,730.64	8,546.00	27,621.41	32,500.00	26,000.00
UCC Council of Conf Ministers	5,132.54	5,119.98	-	6,181.88	6,350.00	6,500.00
Lancaster Theological Seminary	-	-	-	-	-	-
UCC Affiliated Institutions	4,250.00	4,550.00	2,000.00	4,250.00	4,250.00	4,250.00
Pennsylvania Council of Churches	3,300.00	3,300.00	1,650.00	3,300.00	3,300.00	3,300.00
Total Wider Church	<u>44,141.30</u>	<u>40,700.62</u>	<u>12,196.00</u>	<u>41,353.29</u>	<u>46,400.00</u>	<u>40,050.00</u>
Conference Wide Ministry Expenses:						
Conference Programming Support	15,090.80	10,646.21	7,134.40	12,500.00	22,500.00	20,000.00
National Youth Event	-	1,200.00	-	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Staff Salaries	209,441.56	220,964.99	102,839.19	207,610.38	211,000.00	216,060.00
Staff Benefits	72,474.10	71,506.35	33,612.30	75,750.00	76,500.00	79,000.00
Staff Professional Expenses	19,822.61	15,345.90	11,833.54	25,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00
Retired Ministers Health Insur	3,460.00	3,397.59	811.00	1,530.00	3,200.00	1,530.00
General Synod Delegate Expense	-	2,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Board & Committee Expenses	744.92	410.55	222.96	450.00	1,000.00	750.00
Total Conference Wide Ministry Expenses	<u>321,033.99</u>	<u>325,471.59</u>	<u>161,453.39</u>	<u>334,040.38</u>	<u>349,400.00</u>	<u>352,540.00</u>

Penn Northeast Conference

2025 BUDGET COMPARISON REPORT

	2022 Full Year	2023 Full Year	Actual June 30, 2024	2024 Full Year Estimate	Approved 2024 Budget	Proposed 2025 Budget
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
Administrative Expenses:						
Bldg. Maintenance	2,702.99	3,607.78	938.33	3,500.00	3,800.00	3,800.00
Heat	3,245.68	3,115.89	1,915.49	3,100.00	3,600.00	3,500.00
Light	5,468.38	5,147.52	2,722.64	5,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Taxes	9,710.22	9,137.10	2,810.40	9,433.51	10,000.00	9,900.00
Insurance	11,731.50	13,715.15	7,793.00	14,850.00	18,000.00	16,000.00
Telephone	6,293.30	6,636.42	2,159.96	6,000.00	6,200.00	6,200.00
Office Equipment	2,897.12	1,236.44	1,089.99	5,200.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Accounting Services & Software	2,390.40	2,453.69	2,458.28	15,000.00	12,000.00	18,000.00
Office Supplies	2,459.16	3,421.51	1,701.22	3,500.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Postage	1,568.72	1,992.77	894.70	2,000.00	2,250.00	2,250.00
Copier	1,036.00	1,192.00	686.00	900.00	750.00	750.00
Printing	-	-	69.73	100.00	-	100.00
Other	450.76	(100.85)	57.22	400.00	600.00	500.00
Conference Meetings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Administrative Expenses:	<u>49,954.23</u>	<u>51,555.42</u>	<u>25,296.96</u>	<u>69,483.51</u>	<u>69,700.00</u>	<u>73,500.00</u>
Total Expenses	<u>415,129.52</u>	<u>417,727.63</u>	<u>198,946.35</u>	<u>444,877.18</u>	<u>465,500.00</u>	<u>466,090.00</u>
Excess Ministry Support						
(Shortfall for Ministry Support)	<u>\$22,064.81</u>	<u>(\$58,866.71)</u>	<u>\$ (30,924.27)</u>	<u>\$ (57,163.07)</u>	<u>(\$35,000.00)</u>	<u>(\$90.00)</u>

Note #

- 1 Based on projections that were used for the Keystone Budget Process. 4% attrition per year excluding special gifts which are unplanned.
- 2 Generosity Team Programs - Covenant Sunday hopes and Pentecost Special Commitment Offering. All stays at PNEC.
- 3 Nothing to LTS in 2025 - Harry Brown effect and reliance on local congregations. \$7,889.68 through August 2024.
- 4 Gifts to Freedom School (\$2,000), and LV Conference of Churches (\$2,000) and E&R Historical Society (\$250) and \$3,300 to PA Council of Churches
- 5 3% COL increase for full time staff (lay) positions, 0% for parttime position, includes per diem funds of \$5,000, CM at 2024 guidelines
- 6 Minimal increases for our staff covered through the Pension Boards as Medicare plan has no increase for 2025.
- 7 General Synod is in person 2025 - establishing a Fund reserve (with no cash at this time) to cover 2025 Synod expenses. Will continue to add to the reserve for GS in 2025 as well as expected expenses for the delegates.
- 8 UCCIB and Worker's Compensation UCCIB - increased in past years, expect more of the same
- 9 Insurance agent looking into valuation of building which is valued at \$1,143,811.
- 10 Audit of Financial Records and reviews need to be done per Keystone Project
- 11 Ministry teams are not all revenue neutral and several are still evolving so limited history available. Hope to cover most expenses.
- 12 Some ministry programs have a budget, however, they are funded by their fund balances - Amigos, Disaster Response, and Racial Justice
- 13 Conference Minister traveling for Search and Call so additional funds anticipated. Germany expenses 2024
- 14 Conference Meetings are being covered by the Fund Reserve so no budget impact at this time. Usually break even as well. Per-membership-based charge to cover legal expertise and other expenses for Council of Conference Ministers. Will need to withdraw funds from UCF, hope for additional special gifts, and/or grants to manage deficit unless costs are reduced. Also depends on Fund Balance write-downs that may be needed due to past overspending. Potential partial funding of P. Rehrig's support for ministry from Longsdorf Fund. Investigating this more with UCF and Accountants.

The Small Town and Rural (STAR) Coalition of the United Church of Christ
Requests to be Recognized as a Formal Group
A Prudential Resolution

Submitted by: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas-Oklahoma, Nebraska Conference, South Dakota Conferences

SUMMARY:

The Small Town and Rural (STAR) coalition seeks to be recognized as a Self-Created Group according to the United Church of Christ By-Laws, Article VI., existing to be a supportive expression of the Living Christ, in relationship with one another and with the Body of Christ, in all its forms. As defined by the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ "the basic unit of organization and life within the United Church of Christ is the local church." (Shears, 1990) Local churches may self-identify as a "small town and rural church," meaning they are geographically separated from metropolitan and suburban communities. The STAR coalition serves to support STAR churches in various ministry functions. This action requires a Bylaws amendment at the Thirty-Fifth General Synod.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING:

The fundamental biblical grounding for the proposed recognition of the Small Town and Rural coalition is found in Christ's farewell discourse in the Gospel according to John, "...that they may all be one." John 17:21 (NRSV). This scripture has served the basis for uniting Christians throughout the world.

At the virtual 2021 General Synod, a small group of individuals met to share experiences in small town and rural ministry. The Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates identified that congregations from small town and rural communities had much different needs than the congregations in her larger, urban congregations. Others in the group shared frustrations and concerns about resources available to these smaller congregations. For example, small churches rely heavily on lay members to lead ministries and perform administrative functions as opposed to paid staff (Davis, 2020). From those discussions, the Small Town and Rural (STAR) Coalition developed.

The United Church of Christ is known for responding to the needs of the overlooked and marginalized. Because of this prophetic compassion, significant ministries developed that address the needs and presence of our often-overlooked siblings, neighbors, and communities. In the context of challenges Small Town and Rural churches face, we identify with Paul's letter to the Corinthians, "The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work." 1 Corinthians 3:8 (NLT). This means that we are called to become stronger and more supportive for these STAR ministries by building a stronger and larger network of covenants serving as the body of Christ across the breadth of the United Church of Christ. STAR congregations can bind together and be strong and vital presences in their immediate and global communities, offering spiritual, missional, and relational sources of hope, reflecting the love and light of Jesus Christ, who spent most of his ministry reaching out to those who are tied to the land and community. The covenant is not just with the churches, but between the churches as well (Hoffman, 2008). This means building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ STAR churches through the existence and support of the STAR coalition.

The STAR Coalition seeks to live out its purpose of:

- Planting and maintaining a covenantal and communal relationship with all United Church of Christ STAR ministries.
- Growing and nurturing a covenantal and communal relationship with the United Church of Christ Council of Conference Ministers, officers of the Church, UCC Covenantal partners, UCC Board of Directors, and Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers.
- Being a resource to share information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.
- Being a collective voice of advocacy for concerns important to the role and work of STAR ministries as they relate to the life of the United Church of Christ.

In the past, the United Church of Christ was asked to be aware of the predicament of the small rural congregation, its members and pastors. Individuals from small congregations across the United Church of Christ have come together and met monthly sharing ideas and resources. We have intentionally discerned a call to unite for the intention of being a resource to share support, information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION:

Whereas, 64% of the churches in the United Church of Christ are located in small towns and rural areas.

Whereas the vitality, relationality, and ecological aspects of our STAR congregations with their important presence within the body of the United Church of Christ, is as essential and important to the health of the entire Church as any other group of people (Ephesians 4:4).

Whereas the United Church of Christ seriously holds the call to be an open and welcoming faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in God's people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender identity and expression.

Whereas STAR congregations frequently find their needs and unique lived experiences underrepresented on a Conference and National level.

Therefore be it resolved that the Small Town and Rural Coalition be granted official status in the United Church of Christ Bylaws, Article VI, Self-Determining Groups.

FUNDING: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

Bibliography

Davis, Danny (2020) *Rural Church Turnaround: Real Life Experiences of Rural Pastors and Lay-Leaders*. Rapid City, South Dakota: CrossLink Publishing.

Hoffman, Jane Fidler (2008) *Covenant: A Study for the United Church of Christ*. Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press.

Shears, R.A. (1990) A Covenant Polity. In D.L. Johnson and C. Hambrick-Stowe *Theology and Identity: Traditions, Movements, and Polity in the United Church of Christ* (pp. 67-78). Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press.

General Synod Delegates
July 11-15, 2025 in Kansas City, Missouri

Clergy - Class of 2025

Virginia Schlegel
Gary Barraco
Gregory Edwards
James Robison
Cecilia Baxter, Assistant Moderator
Edward Livingston
Denise Fry
Bob Rapp

Laity – Class of 2025

Trudi Egan
Lori Balliet, Moderator
JoAnne McGee
Tyler Shankweiler (under 30)
Ben Gullede
Denyse Edwards

Clergy – Class of 2028

Steve Davis
Becky Sausser
Bob Gutekunst
Jeff Kistler

Laity – Class of 2028

Mandy Muschett
Doug Lander
Chris Lander
Brian Saylor
Ron Smith
Tamara Pammer
Paul Wilhelm
Samantha Kistler

Churches Celebrating Milestone Anniversaries in 2025

225th – First Congregational UCC, Harford (1800-2025)

150th – Salem UCC, Weatherly (1875-2025)

Open & Affirming (ONA) Congregations

1. Faith UCC, Center Valley
2. St. John UCC, Riegelsville
3. New Creation UCC, Easton
4. St. John's UCC, Allentown
5. Trinity Reformed UCC, Bloomsburg
6. St. John's UCC Fullerton, Whitehall
7. First Reformed UCC, Berwick
8. Forks UCC, Stockertown
9. St. Paul's UCC Big Creek, Lehighton
10. Good Shepherd UCC, Slatington
11. Union UCC, Neffs
12. Heidelberg Union Church Slatington

And,

the very latest congregation:

- 13. Faith UCC, Hazleton**

WISE Congregations

Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged in the Mental Health of the Community and the Wider World

1. St. Thomas UCC, Bethlehem
2. St. John's UCC, Allentown

And,

the very latest congregation:

- 3. UCC Greenawalds, Allentown**

A2A (Accessible to All) Churches

- 1. St. John's UCC, Allentown**

Legacy Churches

Trinity UCC, Bethlehem

Penn Northeast Conference
United Church of Christ

**November 9, 2024 Fall Conference Meeting Evaluation
In Person and Virtual at St. John's UCC, Laurys Station**

Check one: I was in person _____; I was online _____

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	POOR
How do you rate today's Conf. Meeting?				
Business	—	—	—	—
Keystone Presentation/Motion	—	—	—	—
Worship	—	—	—	—
Agenda	—	—	—	—

What was the high point of the meeting?

What was the key learning for you?

What could we have done better?

Please complete and deposit in the boxes as you leave or email to BarbaraJ@pnec.org