

February 19, 2024

Dear members and friends of the Penn Central, Penn Northeast, Penn West, and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences:

The Governance Subcommittee of the Keystone Working Group is excited to present a proposed Constitution and Bylaws for the Keystone Conference for approval by the delegates at each Conference's annual meeting this spring.

Our subcommittee, a crack team of polity geeks and grammar nerds from across the commonwealth, has spent months deep in the details of this document. We began by examining the Constitutions and Bylaws of the four historic conferences. Where we found common ground, we retained these practices in our proposal. Where differences existed, we sought to identify the policies that hold the most promise for the new Conference's life together. Our work has been reviewed by the four Conference Ministers, the Keystone Working Group, and United Church of Christ General Counsel Heather Kimmel; we have incorporated their edits and suggestions.

This Constitution and Bylaws assume a "governance and ministry" model: we have sought to build the governance structures that will allow the Keystone Conference to perform its ministry effectively.<sup>1</sup> We anticipate that the Constitution and Bylaws will be accompanied by a flexible "ways of work" document that will offer more detailed best practices for the operations of the Conference Board, Committees, Teams, and Task Forces.

The proposed Constitution and Bylaws include several structures, such as a Transitional Conference Board of Directors and Transitional Conference Ministers, that will be necessary as the Keystone Conference first comes into being. We anticipate that the Conference will amend these documents to eliminate references to these structures once the transitional period is complete.

If approved by all four historic Conferences at their annual meetings this spring, this Constitution and Bylaws will go into effect immediately following the approval of the Keystone Conference at the United Church of Christ General Synod in July.

We hope you will join us at an upcoming Town Hall conversation to explore and discuss these documents with us. Thank you for the opportunity to do this important (and surprisingly fun!) work on behalf of the new Keystone Conference.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, chairperson

The Rev. Liddy Barlow

The Rev. Susan Fritz

The Rev. Dr. James Gottwald

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<sup>1</sup> See Dan Hotchkiss, *Governance and Ministry* (Roman and Littlefield, 2009).