

2018 MMS UCC Heritage Covenanted Ministry Report

The Heritage Committee officially became a Covenanted Ministry last year in June at the Conference Council meeting preceding CAG. Its charge is to assist the Missouri Mid-South Conference and its local churches and other UCC entities in connecting with their historical roots in the United Church of Christ and its predecessor denominations.

The responsibilities of HCM include:

- a. Preserve the history of the Missouri Mid-South Conference of the UCC and its predecessors;
- b. Encourage local churches and pastors and other UCC entities within the Conference to have an awareness of the Conference's history and its relevance (including connections to the predecessor denominations of the UCC, the broader history of the UCC, and the history of Christian churches and religious bodies in the United States);
- c. Encourage local churches and other UCC entities similarly to value, preserve, and celebrate their histories;
- d. Assist the Conference to relate to the various organizations concerned with the history of the United Church of Christ (e.g., the Evangelical Archives at Eden Seminary; the E&R Historical Society; the UCC Historical Council and its related repositories);
- e. Help the Conference celebrate historical milestones of its local churches and pastors and other UCC entities.

HCM members

Joy Dressel, Chair

John Bracke, Vice Chair

David Beebe, Secretary, and Liaison to UCC Historical Council

Bill Biedenstein, Liaison to MMS UCC Conference Council

Michael Boddy, Consultant and Liaison to Eden Archives

Steve Buchholz

Marie Haupt, Historian

Scott Holl, Eden Archivist and member of UCC Historical Council

Janet Kies

William Schwab

Nancy Nollau Mack resigned from HCM when she retired and moved to the Northeast in January to be closer to family. She continues to serve on the UCC Historical Council.

Armin Klemme retired from HCM in February after many years of faithful service on the Heritage Committee. We especially appreciate the hard work that he did as our Historian, keeping track of the names of clergy who have become ordained, who have joined the Conference, who have left the Conference, who have passed away, and so on.

HCM Activities of the Past Year

A large focus of HCM has been recognizing churches and clergy with significant anniversaries each year at CAG. We have a large number of honorees for 2018: Ten churches celebrating big anniversaries, one institution celebrating 125 years and three clergy celebrating their 50th anniversary of ordination. These anniversaries will be celebrated via a display in the vendor area as well as with the presentation of certificates and gifts at the Friday evening CAG banquet.

We published six eCourier articles highlighting the churches and clergy that celebrated large anniversaries in 2017.

Under the leadership of John Bracke, HCM has prepared a workshop for CAG 2018. This workshop, “Ministries of Christ’s Love in the Missouri Mid-South Conference: Theology and Mission in Historical Perspective”, will explore how the theological richness and diversity of the United Church of Christ has, over time, impacted the mission of the health and human service agencies of the United Church of Christ in the Missouri Mid-South Conference. Many of those agencies, established more than a century ago by the Evangelical Synod, a predecessor denomination, have evolved quite a bit.

HCM kept informed of the activities of UCC Historical Council, the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, and the Evangelical Archives at Eden Seminary.

The members of HCM share with each other the knowledge of church history that they have learned through research and study or their first-person experiences.

HCM Plans for the Future

HCM is working with local board members and the president of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society to host the Society’s annual meeting and additional presentations in the St. Louis area in September 2018. There will be an Evangelical Archives tour and several presentations related to the Evangelical (1840 – 1934) and Evangelical and Reformed (1934-1957) roots of our denomination and the agencies that were born out of those predecessor denominations. The presentations will include a history of Eden Seminary, the history of the Evangelical Synod, and a panel discussion on the history and evolution of several health and human service agencies. The tour and presentations are open to non-members. The eCourier will have more information about the events and registration.

A new project is to collect a list of the church historians in our churches. Every church should have one or more people designated as church historian to preserve the records and memories.

We will submit articles to the eCourier highlighting significant 2018 anniversaries of churches and clergy as well as articles related to MMS history and its preservation.

We plan to help empower church historians by providing suggestions and guidelines for their work. We are considering presenting a workshop on the topic.

We would like to consider the issues of closing churches and maybe help with some congregational estate planning. We are concerned about the preservation of the records and the legacies of these churches.

We would be happy to welcome new members to HCM. We have daytime meetings and are starting to make it easier to participate in meetings. Meetings of the past have been at Eden Seminary in Webster Groves, but our most recent meeting was at Friedens UCC in Warrenton. We can also use technology to allow members to participate long-distance.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Dressel, Chair of Heritage Covenanted Ministry