

**St. Louis Association Annual Business Meeting Minutes**  
**Saturday, September 26, 2015**  
**Church of the Master United Church of Christ, Florissant, Missouri**

Church of the Master United Church of Christ, Florissant, hosted the St. Louis Association Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, September 26, 2015.

Displays from agencies related to the St. Louis Association were available for browsing as folks arrived and during breaks in the meeting, including before and after lunch.

As the program began, Mike Krewson, pastor of Church of the Master UCC, welcomed attendees. Heather Arcovitch, (First Congregational UCC, St. Louis) St. Louis Association Council President, shared greetings.

Worship was led by Christopher Grundy (Peace UCC) and students from Eden Seminary. Music was provided on the organ by Tim Clark (Church of the Master UCC).

Heather Arcovitch introduced the offering, which will go for scholarships to Christian Educators to become members of a new Association of United Church Educators chapter in the St. Louis area.

During the morning worship service, the Sermon/Keynote Address was given by Molly Phinney Baskette, author of *Real Good Church*.

Workshops followed worship:

- Let's Talk About New and Renewing Movements, led by Sonya Vann (Christ the King UCC)
- Church for All Ages: Reaching Millennials, Families and Children, led by Molly Baskette
- Healthy Pastors and Healthy Churches Deserve Each Other, led by Keith Herron (St. Lucas UCC)
- Proposed 2016 Association Budget, led by Tom Ressler (St. Paul UCC, St. Louis)
- Association of United Church Educators, led by Emily Stokes (First Congregational UCC, St. Louis)
- Open and Affirming (ONA): 30 Years Later; Why It's Still So Important, led by Barb Biedenstein (Kirkwood UCC)
- Sacred Conversations About Race – Update, led by Heather Arcovitch
- General Synod 30: Unexpected Places, led by Mark Roberts (St. Lucas UCC)

Following workshops, lunch was served by volunteers from Church of the Master UCC.

Gathering Music in the Sanctuary was provided by a trio from Church of the Master UCC ("Those Three Guys") after lunch prior to the start of the Business Meeting.

Speak Outs were introduced by Lorin Cope (St. Paul UCC, St. Louis) and included:

- Lorin Cope – reported that he had gone "dumpster diving" at the Church House in Cleveland and has items he would like to recycle and reuse. "Take them, please!"

- Kevin Cameron (Parkway UCC) – shared that Parkway is hosting a free Play and Panel, titled “Black and Blue.” There are flyers about the event at the exits.
- Jan Barnes (Trinity UCC) – encouraged folks to sign a petition on behalf of Planned Parenthood to resist the defunding effort that is currently afoot; go online or sign the petition that Jan brought today.
- Donna Pupillo (St. Peter’s UCC) – spoke on behalf of the UCC’s health and human service ministries. Sunday, January 31 is Health and Human Services Sunday; invite us to do mission moments that day.
- Kim Brinkmann (St. Mark UCC) – shared that she is part of a new team called “Faith Outreach Ambassadors” through the Alzheimer’s Association. Contact the Alzheimer’s Association for more information on this faith initiative program.
- Stephanie DeLong (Parkway UCC) – shared that this year’s CROP Walk will be held on Saturday, October 11, at Eden Seminary and urged folks to participate in this hunger walk sponsored by Church World Service. Forms are available today or you can go online to sign up and walk.

The Business Meeting was called to order by Heather Arcovitch. Tom Ressler led the Roll Call of the Churches and reported that 38 churches were represented today, with 52 lay delegates, 49 clergy, and 32 visitors present.

Heather recognized clergy who are new to the St. Louis Association since the last Annual Business Meeting. Those present were:

- Paul Porter (Eden UCC)
- Patrick Chandler (St. Peter’s UCC)

Kevin Cameron, representing the Committee on Ministry: Preparation, introduced the Members in Discernment who were present today:

- Chance Beeler (Epiphany UCC)
- Doni Driemeier-Showers (Samuel UCC)
- Vicki Hampton (Kirkwood UCC)
- Julie Hawker (Mt. Tabor UCC)
- Guangyu Lou (Samuel UCC)
- Cheryl Stolze (Parkway UCC)
- Jacquelyne Tyler (Christ the King UCC)
- Sonya Vann (Christ the King UCC)

Kevin noted that two former Members in discernment were ordained within the last year: Jan Barnes and Paul Porter.

The Eden Seminary students who were present were introduced.

Heather Arcovitch led the body in the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, as a sign of our covenant with Members in Discernment and the new clergy in our midst.

Allen Fluent (Kirkwood UCC) brought greetings from the Missouri Mid-South Conference. He noted his relaxed demeanor due to the news that a candidate is about to be announced as the new Conference Minister. Allen noted that his initial 3-month assignment went a little longer than anticipated. He urged attendance at the first annual Conference Planning Event on November 14. This was developed by the Conference Vision Team and is being held in

Columbia to talk about what people think the priorities of the Conference should be. The Planning Event is open to everyone as we look to the future.

The Minutes from the 2014 Annual Business Meeting were approved with one correction: Add a workshop that had been omitted from the list: Creative Worship, led by Sonya Vann, Larissa Forsythe (St. Philips UCC), and Betsy Happel (Kirkwood UCC). The 2014 Minutes were approved by consensus with the correction.

The report of the Committee on Ministry: Preparation (COM:P) was given by Kevin Cameron, who noted that Co-Chairs Bob Molsberry (Peace UCC) and Jackie Wheelehan (Kirkwood UCC) were not available today. Kevin explained the process of becoming a Member in Discernment (MID): a person must be a member of a church in the St. Louis Association for at least a year, then be recommended by the church to COM: P. Next is an interview with COM:P, a psychological evaluation is completed and paid for, followed by journeying with COM:P for at least a year. There are various interviews along the way, feedback from covenant partners, including contextual education reports. Then an Ordination Paper is written by the MID, and an Ordination Interview is held with COM:P, followed by a vote that may recommend the MID for Ordination pending a call. Kevin referenced the written report from COM:P. He noted that COM:P is now interfacing more with Eden Seminary faculty.

The report of the Committee on Ministry: Oversight (COM:O) was given by Kevin Gregory (St. John, Manchester), one of the committee co-chairs. Kevin shared that typically COM:O learns from the Conference Minister when clergy are called to a church; those clergy are asked to provide documentation from previous settings (standing, ordination, boundary training), then those clergy come meet with COM:O. COM:O then formally votes to transfer their standing, then an installation service is set up. At the other end of the spectrum, when a pastor concludes their ministry, COM:O does an exit interview, then works with the new association to transfer standing there. Kevin noted a correction in the printed report from COM:O: The Committees on Ministry retreat was not at Camp Moval this year, but rather was held in Columbia. Kevin noted those who were going off the committee: Kevin Gregory, Adrian McLean (St. Martin UCC, High Ridge), Jo Litto (St. Johns Evangelical UCC, Mehlville), and Rosalee Hahn (St. Martins UCC, Dittmer). The new co-chairs of COM:O will be Ann Asper Wilson (Peace UCC) and Keith Karau (Samuel UCC).

The report of the Association Council was given by Heather Arcovitch. She shared that as an Association we've been living into the new By-Laws. We are enjoying a greater transparency of communications; it's very refreshing to hear what's going on in the committees. The Creative Ministries Team has not taken off this past year. Another attempt will be made to get it off the ground in the coming year. The Spring Association Meeting was on May 7, with leadership from Leon Sharpe (Christ the King UCC), exploring systemic issues around race.

The Association Council had heard a clear call when the new By-Laws were adopted to continue the work on Sacred Conversations on Race. Work has started anew and is moving forward. This is an ad hoc group, meeting on the second Thursday of each month at Eden Seminary. The recent Black Lives Matter Billboard came out of this group. John Dorhauer was here to do a presentation on White Privilege in August during the anniversary weekend of Michael Brown's shooting.

Another project the Council has taken on is creating a curriculum on racial and cultural competency, looking toward creating a pilot program for other associations in the United Church of Christ to use. There may also be a resolution going to General Synod asking that racial/cultural competency training be required for clergy.

The Association Council continues to meet in different churches in the Association. The Council sends representatives to ordinations and installations. It is a privilege to serve with talented and faithful servants who love and serve the church. Joan Gildehaus (St. Lucas UCC) and Florence Simonson (Parkway UCC) are ending their terms on the Association Council. Heather asked that the body would encourage folks who would like to serve on Council to be in touch with Nominating/Leadership Team.

Donna Pupillo and Florence Simonson gave the report of the Mission/Outreach Team. Donna thanked Florence for serving alongside her as Florence ends her service on the Team. The written report was sent out in advance of the meeting. Applications were received from various agencies seeking funding; due diligence was done by Mission/Outreach on these agencies. The Association Council then sets how much total money there may be work with; Mission/Outreach then suggests allocations. This coming year the total of grants in the proposed budget is \$100,000, a decrease from last year. Donna reviewed the proposed distributions for 2016. She introduced representatives from the agencies who were present. Florence introduced a new program in the proposed 2016 budget, a one-time funding for the Parkway/Pilgrim Food Pantry Partnership, noting that this has been a wonderful connection.

In the absence of Treasurer Floyd Jochimsen (St. Mark UCC), Bookkeeper Tom Ressler presented the Proposed 2016 Association Budget. On behalf of the Budget Committee, Tom moved its adoption. The motion passed.

Nichole Torbitzsky (Hope UCC, DeSoto) presented the report of the Nominating/Leadership Team. She thanked those who said yes to serving and those who were asked and had to say no after prayerful consideration. There is still one slot still to fill on the Association Council, either lay or clergy. Heather asked for nominations from the floor. Jan Barnes was nominated to serve on the Association Council (term ending 2018). The full roster was presented for election. The body voted to elect all nominees.

Heather Arcovitch asked for any New Business items. None were presented.

The meeting was adjourned after Closing Worship, which was led by Heather Arcovitch, Christopher Grundy, and Valerie Jackson (First Congregational UCC, St. Louis). Worship included the Installation of Newly Elected leaders and Holy Communion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Ressler, Recorder of Minutes