

**Michigan Conference United Church of Christ  
Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)  
Saturday, July 15, 2023  
10:00 am**

**Present:** Judith Booker (Presiding), Akua Budu-Watkins Rev. Cheryl Burke, Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel, Judy Furman, Abbie Goerg, Rev. Sue Greenwood, Rev. Dr. Diane Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Rev. Liz Larrivee, Mary Ann Martin, Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Rhodes, Rev. Jonathan Riedel, and Karen Wheeler.

**Excused:** Antoinette McGarvin, Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe.

**Opening Prayer:** Mary Ann Martin

**Liz Larrivee volunteered to take minutes for Antoinette McGarvin (Secretary)**

**Consent Agenda: Motion to approve. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Consent Agenda. Approved.**

**Link to all BOD Meeting Reports:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K1OCkpxx8jzfnHUGzOsAfunIdc-hWqJo>

**Introduction of New BOD Member: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Rhodes (UNA Liaison)**

**Financial Report:** Presented by Karen Wheeler, Interim Financial Director, Staff. Motion to Approve. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved.

**MI Conference By-Laws Task Force:** A task force is being formed to review the MI Conference by-laws. Diane Baker volunteered to be the chair. Stephen Johnson, Sue Greenwood, and Liz Larrivee also volunteered. One area for review is the Mission Area Teams.

**Annual Meeting Update: Diane Baker (Moderator)**

Plymouth UCC Grand Rapids is the location of this year's meeting. Working on the menu. Display tables will be staffed during breaks. Looking into ride sharing. Grand West Association is having a meeting the week before. Diane is reaching out to Sal Sapienza (Moderator) about this. Jonathan Riedel reports that the GWA meeting should not interfere with the MI Conference Annual Meeting as it is a routine meeting they have during that time.

**BOD/Staff General Synod 34 Attendee Update:** (BOD Delegates, BOD Attendees, Conference Staff Attendees):

Delegates: Abbie Goerg, Sue Greenwood, Stephen Johnson, Liz Larrivee

Moderator: Diane Baker

Staff: Lillian Daniel, Cheryl Burke

Attendees: Judy Furman, Jonathan Riedel

Abbie Goerg: Was an eye opening and emotional experience as a first-time delegate and attendee. Don't think General Synod is well known. Somewhat overwhelming. A lot of good work on the national level. Taking a lot back to the local churches. She is making an announcement during worship.

Stephen Johnson: Also a first-time delegate and attendee. He sees a disconnect between what happens at GS and on Sunday morning. Saw the broad spectrum of the UCC. A big crowd of people including both delegates and non-delegates. Observed Roberts Rules of Order being used in novel ways. Would like to strengthen the connection between the national expression seen at GS and the autonomous local church expression.

Sue Greenwood: So great to be back in person vs. on-line. An amazing GS. Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson elected GMP. Learned pineapple is an acceptable pizza topping. Learned how GS resolutions are used to lobby in Washington DC to ensure the UCC voice is included in the crafting of legislation. Also observed a disconnect between GS and the local church.

Judith Booker was congratulated and celebrated for being elected to the National UCC Board of Directors.

Judith Booker thanked the delegates, Lillian Daniel, Cheryl Burke, Jenn Ringold, and Lisa Soulliere for all their hard work behind the scenes and in-person related to the General Synod.

Judy Furman: Expressed concern about the resolution process recommending General Synod be held every three years vs. every two years. Observed Robert's Rules being disregarded. Seeking transparency. She had difficulties finding out what the GMP compensation package was. After some effort, former GMP, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, got back to her with the information.

Diane Baker: She was impressed by the number of folks who were not delegates who came and participated. Demonstrates thoughtfulness and intention. She observed a lot of care with semantics and word choice in the revising of resolutions in committee. Attended the breakout with the Washington D.C. lobbyists. She reported having trouble getting on the app and with the wifi connection.

Jonathan Riedel: Expressed shock about the omission of the 5<sup>th</sup> Stream until its official recognition at this GS. He cites the need to revise new member training, church history, confirmation materials, and polity classes.

Lillian Daniel: A clarification for those who were not there - the vote that passed said that after 2025, GS will meet every 3 years instead of every 2 years. Board terms were extended from 6 years to 9 years. We learned about the 5<sup>th</sup> Stream of the UCC, the Afro-Christian Church, to add to the Evangelical, Reformed, Christian, and Congregational streams we have historically noted.

Liz Larrivee: Shared her impressions of several inspiring GS experiences, but unfortunately couldn't speak spontaneously and take meeting minute notes at the same time.

Abbie George: She agreed with Liz about the incredible people. Wow! She is making connections and plans to partner with other local churches for events and studies. There is so much to come out of GS. She is grateful to be a part of the larger church. She sees opportunities for the local church to live into these national resolutions. She is planning intentional conversations and debriefing sessions exploring how to do this. Emotional, overwhelming, enlightening, beautiful. One of the best experiences she has ever had. We also were the fun table. Loud and proud MI UCC. Supporting all.

Judith Booker: Is excited about her role serving on the National Board of Directors. It is an opportunity to make things better, to make a positive difference, and to broaden perspectives through mutual conversation around topics like the transparency of clergy salaries. She wants to continue to hear from the MI Conference. Nine years is a long term. She asks for prayers for the strength and the energy to continue her work in this new expression of the UCC.

Lillian Daniel: For a mid-size Conference, MI was well represented. We were recognized for our New Church Starts and Vitalization. These are seeds that have been planted by Cheryl Burke's work. We had the largest Youth delegation (9 total). National wants more lay people and younger people to attend.

**Michigan Conference Full-Time Position:** (Lillian Daniel)

Posted on the UCC job site.

The link to the job description for MI Conference Staff Associate Minister of Church Vitality and Transition

[https://oppsearch.ucc.org/web/fastdetails.aspx?id=5794&KeepThis=false&TB\\_iframe=true&height=860&width=960](https://oppsearch.ucc.org/web/fastdetails.aspx?id=5794&KeepThis=false&TB_iframe=true&height=860&width=960)

Refer to Lillian's Conference Minister report for more information on this and other topics.

**Comments/Concerns:** (Judith Booker)

Judith is serving on PIMAT on the Anti-Racism Task Force. Rev. Michael Young is the facilitator. It's challenging work. It is painful because it invokes many painful conversations. It's a learning process, a painful learning process. Boundaries have now been set that hadn't been in place before. The Anti-Racism Task Force would like to have additional folks join from your Local Churches and your Association. There will be a display table at the Annual Meeting. There is a lot of work to do.

### **ACM Report (Rev. Cheryl Burke)**

Refer to her submitted report. There is a conversation around those who are incarcerated for life without parole. We have a MID in this situation. A resolution is being put together about this.

She is very busy with search and call. Ruth is retiring. It's much harder now because we don't have names to send. The clergy shortage is very severe.

New Church Starts are very exciting. She is amazed at what God is doing. \$2M has been spent on New Church Starts in the MI Conference over the last 20 years. A lot of them have been successful and a lot have not. Different models used at different times in different contexts. Potter House received \$700,000. We learned from that experiment. There may be a large amount of money – possibly another \$2M still available.

### **Conference Minister's Report (Lillian Daniel):**

Refer to her submitted report for additional information.

September 30 is Vitality Day. Author of *Part Time is Plenty* is the keynote. Not something to grieve or mourn. Reclaim the lay folks' ministry. She is working with Cheryl and consultants/coaches to create calls so that part-time clergy can make a living.

Lillian asks for thoughts and prayers around the E. Lansing property. There is a lot of deferred maintenance. Only three staff using it on a part-time basis. She is working to identify how much it costs to operate this building. Lisa is now working mostly remotely. We don't have to sell, but it's a stewardship issue. Something to flag for our future long-range planning.

**Closing Prayer:**(Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Rhodes)

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** September 16, 2023 via Zoom

