

*Annual Spring Meeting Minutes  
Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ  
May 3, 2014  
Barrington Congregational Church, UCC, Barrington, RI*

The meeting was called to order by Conference President Peter Hainsworth at 9:04am following the opening hymn sing led by the Rev. Claudia Demick. A welcome was extended to the attendees by Rev. Jeff Larsen, Pastor of the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC.

The meeting continued with a service of morning prayer. Following this the speaker for the day, Adam Hearlson, was introduced by the Rev. Dr. Claudia Demick. Dr. Hearlson proceeded with his presentation on the topic, "Is Anything Too Wonderful for God?" [Note: The Presentation was interrupted for 20 minutes when Bill Claflin, Parliamentarian, was taken ill. Rescue was called and while Bill was being attended to, a hymn was sung and prayers offered. ] Adam continued on with his presentation after expressing the sense of awkwardness in doing so, but he did an exceptional job in moving the group from chaos and confusion following the interruption to being back on track, ready to move forward. At the conclusion of the presentation, a short break was taken.

The meeting was reconvened by the President at 11:15 am for the Business Meeting.

Following an opening prayer offered by the Rev. Dr. Beverley Edwards, the first item of business was the declaration of a quorum for the meeting by Registrar, the Rev. Dr. Leslie Simonson. Details provided below were provided by the Registrar directly to the Clerk to record in these minutes:

Churches represented	25
Lay Delegates	71
Clergy	37
Members In Discernment	2
Visitors	5
Staff	3

Peter began by recognizing the response everyone made to Bill's illness.. Peter asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting as presented.

Motion made by Frances Munro and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_. Discussion: None. Vote: Approved unanimously. George Weavill noted that a few additional copies of the packets were available for those who had difficulty printing them out.

Next was a motion to approve the minutes of the Fall Meeting. Motion made by George Peters, seconded by Claudia Demick. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimously approved.

First of the reports to be considered was Bev's which she gave verbally. These remarks were in addition to her written report appearing in the packets. Bev chose to focus these remarks on what she has learned during her time as our Interim Conference Minister which centered on a much deeper and richer understanding of the "UCC." She closed by saying she hopes we will continue to discern where Christ is inviting us to go together.

Second of the reports was the Report on the Personnel Committee given by George Peters. He referenced his written report in the packets. He then observed it is not quite two years since the Conference called Rev. Dr. Beverley Edwards as Interim Conference Minister and that she has provided exactly the type of leadership we needed at that time which was pastoral work of healing and comforting. Now it is time to do the work of the interim period to help us to determine our vision moving forward. The Personnel Committee has been charged by the BOD to undertake the search for the next Interim which they have done. George reported there are 12 candidates with 3 finalists identified. Hopefully interviews can move forward and we hope to have someone in place by mid-summer.

The next report to be heard was that of Finance and Budget, presented by Business Manager George Weavill. George noted that he made an error, sending out the old financial report instead of this year's. Copies of correct report made available.

In 2013, we ended the year with a \$10,000 surplus, due to reduced expenses rather than increases in income. Per Capita income and Basic Support were both up but Missions was down somewhat. Still much improvement over what had been. We need \$50,000 per year more to restore the Conference budget to its previous levels. Most significant changes to expenditures were in the area of salaries. Regular on-going operating expenses were in line with what was budgeted. Laotian Evangelical Church building which the Conference owned was sold after a long struggle, and that will impact the 2014 budget positively. Irons Homestead is also a key part of the Conference budget, primarily in the operational budget. Last year there was about \$20,000 in capital expenses at Irons to support greatly increased usage of the facility. Support for the Hispanic Church is also a key part of the budget. We were able to increase our support to the denomination by \$14,000, a significant item to note. The churches of the RICUCC collectively through the four major offerings contributed \$37,000 to those combined offerings. The Haiti Mission Task Force contributed \$53,000 to that work on behalf of the Conference. The Conference also provided \$9,000 to support seminarians through scholarships. Another item of note is that \$15,000 from the Harriet Smith Fund were used to support the work of missionaries in Indonesia. This will continue this year as well. We also collectively we sent \$16,700 to support Typhoon Relief efforts. Membership did decline slightly last year overall but 15 congregations – half – experienced membership growth.

- Questions:

- Bill Sterrett asked that the additional information provided be sent to him in writing to share with others.

The next item was the Nominating Committee report presented by Frances Munro. She began by noting the correct form of the Nominating Report which is the basis of her report. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Frances moved that the slate as presented be accepted. Peter noted a second was not needed because it is a Committee Report. Vote: Unanimously approved.

- Frances Munro noted Nominating Committee is appointed by the Board so a vote to be taken is to affirm that action by the BOD. So moved. Seconded. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Outgoing and incoming members of the Board of Directors were recognized and installed by Rev. Dr. Beverley Edwards.

Under New Business:

- Claudia offered an update on the condition Bill Claflin she had just received from Caroline which was that he was stable and being treated for flu.
- Harry Edwards, Delegate from First Congregational Church in Warwick brought up a concern about how our churches are listed, or not, in the Yellow Pages. Feels we should be united in the way all the churches are listed. He made a motion that the UCC Conference and all the churches correct their listings in the Yellow Pages so that we are all presented as one under "Congregational" or "UCC." Seconded.
  - Discussion: Comment that the Yellow Pages is dead and many of our churches do not use them. Also noted there is more effectiveness through social networking.
  - Another comment that this is a financial matter for individual churches to decide.
  - Observation that those who are currently listed in the Yellow Pages need to be contacted to make sure that all those churches listed are listed in the same way.
  - Motion that this motion be referred to the BOD for further discussion. Seconded. Vote: Approved with four nays.
  - Additional points of information came up but the matter was referred to the BOD.

The next item of business was Acknowledgements:

- Peter offered recognition and gratitude for the service of Bev, of Carole and the members of the Process Design Group (PDG).
  - Gift certificate presented to Bev with reference to card and cake.
  - Plants presented to PDG.

The next items of business was a report on “When Churches Gather” event offered by John Peters and Evelyn Watkins. Over 180 people attended the event, surpassing all expectations with 23 congregations represented. Huge thank you to everyone for supporting the event so enthusiastically.

Paul Bizer from Church and Ministry led the gathering in the farewell ritual with Bev with Peter representing the BOD.

The gathering ended with announcements from local churches for upcoming events. Clerk did not attempt to capture all of these for the minutes since they were time sensitive. Noted that there were a number of announcements pertinent to Irons Homestead, made with much enthusiasm.

George Peters offered the grace and closing prayer. Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth  
Clerk