

56th Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference
Associate Conference Minister Report
Rev. Audrey C. Price, Ph.D.
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One of my favorite hymns of the church is *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand*. Over the course of year that has transpired since last year's annual meeting, the words of this hymn have rung true and provided comfort.

Time is filled with swift transition,
None, none on earth unmoved can stand
Build your hopes on things eternal
And then hold, hold onto God's unchanging hand

With all the emotional challenges with which 2020 has confronted us, holding to God's loving, caring, just, peaceful, and unchanging hand has kept me, encouraged me, and fortified me. For that I give God all the praise!!

Search and Call – Catoctin & Shenandoah Associations

Pastoral transitions remain steadily active in the Catoctin and Shenandoah associations. Search and call continue to be a tremendous amount of my work and ministry as ACM. While the COVID-19 pandemic posed some challenges and consequently changes to the search and call process, nevertheless, pastoral transitions happened. I believe this is worthy of praise in that even in the midst of the pandemic, churches and pastors after prayerful discernment united and began ministry together. I have had the sheer joy and humbling privilege to journey with several churches in Shenandoah and Catoctin that resulted in the call of interim, designated and settled pastors in part-time and full-time positions.

Additionally, after several years of stagnation, in 2019 I revised and updated the CAC Compensation Guidelines. Subsequently, in 2020, the compensation guidelines were updated. Working with the committees on ministry and the CAC Ministry Team, the guidelines were revised to present a leaner and more accessible graph specifying salary guidelines based upon pastor experience and the church's ministry size. The guidelines were also updated to incorporate cost of living adjustments. Most importantly, the guidelines now incorporate theological grounding upon which our conversation shall be rooted with embarking upon establishing a living wage compensation packet for pastoral leaders in the CAC.

Communities of Practice

The Community of Practice program consists of intentional facilitated clergy community groups to be part of the life of clergy so they can continue to *flourish* in both their work and in their personal lives as people who are also called to ministry. We strive to build, through our core values, strong fellowship between the participants, enhanced learning, provide opportunity for growth, promote unity and consistency for clergy, reflection and worship for the practitioner, enhancing a ministerial integrity, support, and overall whole person health for clergy. Rev. Darryl Moch serves as the Dean and I provided overall administrative oversight and leadership.

The Community of Practice ("**CoP**") program is thriving and headed into its third program year. Participation has doubled and we have a goal to have 100 authorized ministers participating in next program year.

For the upcoming program year, the CoP program received two substantial grants. These grants are imperative to the vitality of the program as program funding has been cut substantially within the conference's budget. CoP received a **\$30,000** grant from the **E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation** and **\$10,000** from **Brown Continuing Education Grant**. These grants focus on recruitment and retention of authorized ministers into communities of practice particularly clergy in historically underrepresented groups. Because of these grants, all participants in the program—returning and new—will receive a grant of \$50 - \$125 towards their program fee giving them up to 50% discount on program fee.

UCC Wider Setting

I was humbled by the invitation to participate in the UCC Juneteenth churchwide event, "*And Still We Rise*" produced by the UCC's national staff where I was asked specifically to share my reflection on resistance being in the DNA of persons of African descent thriving in America lifting the voices of Black theologians. As we know, next year's General Synod will be held virtually. I have been invited to serve on the national committee recommending and organizing topics for Synod workshops. This work will include evaluating the proposals for workshop to be considered for presentation and the virtual platform.

UCC Polity/UCC Polity Teachers' Network

I serve as a member of the National UCC Polity Teachers' Network. Within the CAC, I co-facilitate, with the incomparable Rev. Daniel Sack, Cleveland Park UCC, three of the four UCC institutes in the CAC. They are: UCC Theology, History, and Ministry. Rev. Amber Neuroth facilitates UCC Governance. This has been an essential program for candidates seeking authorization or ordination in the CAC. These institutes provide a low-cost, content-rich training that fulfills the UCC Polity requirement necessary for ordination but more importantly an understanding of this precious and unique denomination in which candidates are called to do ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. Due to the pandemic, we postponed the institutes planned for the spring and will conduct the fall and winter institutes, UCC Theology & UCC History, virtually.

In October 2020, I will conduct, **A seminar on UCC History, Theology and Polity for Local Churches**. This 2-day seminar sponsored in partnership with Heritage UCC will explore these questions, *What is the **polity** of the UCC? Does the UCC have a **theology**? What do we believe? From where has the UCC come? How does our historical foundation inform who we are today and where we are going?* The seminar is open to all churches in the CAC and I expect a tremendous participant attendance based upon pre-registrations.

I am truly blessed and grateful to serve on the CAC Ministry Team particularly in this season and life of the CAC. We tirelessly give our best efforts to the work and ministry of the CAC. My motivation for ministry rests in God's assurance, "my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:58

In Christ's Service,

Audrey C. Price

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