

**51st Annual Meeting
Central Atlantic Conference
June 12-14, 2015**

Plenary Session I

The plenary was called to order at 8:03 p.m. by Moderator Rev. Anne Holmes

Rev. Anne Holmes, Moderator

Lois Carrigan, chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, offered a welcome to the 51st Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Holmes called on Connie Heasley, Registrar, to report on registrations

Quorum count: 75 authorized ministers. 90 lay delegates. 16 visitors
The moderator declared that a quorum was present for the meeting.

Connie Heasley asked that people who have Saturday or Sunday breakfast tickets but who are not using them to return them for others.

Rev. Holmes called on Parliamentarian Rev. Derek Ritenour to make several announcements concerning the standing rules.

Rev. Ritenour reminded us of the standing rules:

1. all speakers must be registered at the conference
2. all revisions to motions must be made by 9:00 tomorrow
3. time to present a resolution shall be five minutes and to speak for or against resolutions shall be limited to two minutes

Anne Holmes called on Bradley Thomas, President of the Board of Directors, for a motion to accept the standing rules.

Bradley Thomas called for a motion to accept the standing rules. Moved and seconded.

VOTED To approve the Standing Rules for Meetings of the Central Atlantic Conference as
15 AM 01 presented. Approved on a voice vote.

Anne Holmes announced that the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting have been on the CAC website and distributed on paper. She called for a motion to accept the minutes. Moved and seconded.

VOTED To approve the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Conference
15 AM 02 Approved on a voice vote.

Anne Holmes called on Conference Minister John Deckenback to introduce special guests.

John Deckenback announced the following guests: Geoffrey Black (General Minister and President), Pat Black (birthday girl), Alice Hunt (Chicago Theological Seminary), Cameron Trimble (Center for Progressive

51st Annual Meeting, June 12-14, 2015

Renewal), Shirley Gravely-Currie (Howard University Divinity School), Carol Lytch (Lancaster Theological Seminary), Kathryn McCloskey (United Church Funds), Howard Hawkins (United Church Funds)

John Deckenback moved that these guest would have voice but no vote for the duration of the meeting. Moved and seconded

VOTED To grant voice without vote to our guests for the duration of the Annual Meeting
15 AM 03 approved unanimously

Bradley Thomas asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting as presented. So moved and seconded.

VOTED To approve the Agenda for the 2015 Annual Meeting. Approved on a voice vote.
15 AM 04

Anne Holmes called on Will Duncan and Doug White to introduce the 2016 Budget and the OCWM and Treasurer's reports

Will Duncan, acting chair of Budget and Finance, announced that the budget has been on the website and will be officially presented tomorrow. Doug White did not speak.

Anne Holmes called on Chuck Rush to introduce the 2015-16 Minimum Clergy Compensation Guidelines.

Rev. Chuck Rush, chair of Operations and Personnel announced a proposal of a 2% cost of living adjustment. The national inflation rate is approximately 1.5%, but closer to 1.7% around here, so the committee is proposing a 2% COLA.

Anne Holmes called on Lois Carrigan to introduce the Nomination's Report

Lois Carrigan announced that we have a full slate to present tomorrow and that it is on the web site.

Anne Holmes opened the floor for additional nominations. None were offered.

Anne Holmes mentioned by name the resolution to be offered for adoption tomorrow. The resolution is on the website site. Anne Holmes announced that the resolution, "In Support of Legislation Authorizing Physician Assistance in Dying" will be introduced tomorrow. A hearing will be held tonight in room C-120.

Anne Holmes made a few additional announcements, then called on Steve Wood to offer a closing prayer for the evening.

Mr. Steve Wood offered a prayer to conclude Plenary Session I.

Anne Holmes declared Plenary Session I closed at 8:21 p.m. Friday, June 12, 2015

Plenary Session II

The plenary was called to order at 8:34 a.m. Saturday, June 13, 2015

Rev. Clara Young opened the plenary with a prayer.

Moderator Anne Holmes called on Rev. John Deckenback to deliver his State of the Conference report

John Deckenback began his presentation by asking Bob Maddox to talk about his work with a coffee coop in Chiapas, Mexico called Cafe Justo (www.justcoffee.org), coordinated by Adrian Gonzalez.

The theme for the past year of the Conference is "Celebrating the Past; Envisioning the Future", given that this year has been the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Conference. As we remember the past, we remember the life of Rev. Dr. Bernie Zerkel, Jr., long time Associate Conference Minister. Gerry Fuss offered words of remembrance. John Deckenback also lifted up Rev. Kwame Osei Reed, who retired in the last year after 27 years of service as Associate Conference Minister.

John called up Ruth Harvey, Interim ACM, who stepped into Kwame's shoes, and the rest of the Ministry Team, and asked Ruth for her impressions of the conference over the past six months. She said she understood why Kwame always looked sleep deprived and expressed her delight in getting to know the ministers and people of the Conference in general and the Potomac Association in particular.

John introduced the other members of the Ministry Team, all of whom are new in the last two years: Marie Bacchiocchi, David Popham, Alex Vishio, and Kendal Brown. John then asked Jill White to help him envision the future, and she gave an overview of the ACM East search process, which began with the first committee meeting in early January and resulted in a candidate, Rev. Marvin Silver, on May 18.

Rev. Silver came up and offered a few words, starting with "Good Morning, Church!" John then asked the Ministry Team members to offer a few words, starting with David Popham. David talked about the Search and Call process centering in NJ and his other work.

Marie talked about her work coordinating Boundary Awareness training with traditional Boundary Training now called Boundary Awareness Training Round I and a new step called Boundary Awareness Training Round II involving 6 modules of 3 hour overviews of specific issues (so far "transitions" and "social media", with "multiracial" coming later this year) offered to be of specific service to the conference.

Before turning to the Kendal, John lifted up Rev. Michael Murphy, pastor of Peoples Congregational Church until his death around Christmas, who was passionate about congregational vitality and who spearheaded the New Visions! campaign that allowed us to hire Kendal Brown. As the New Visions! ACM, Kendal talked about his experiences traveling the country and hearing how many people describe the CAC as the conference with new churches, as in "You have new churches there!" Two new churches in full standing in the last year: Veritas UCC and Beloved Community. Samantha Tuttle and On Earth in Loudon County, VA, is moving toward standing, as is Ron Nichols and Tree of Life in Roanoke, VA.

John then asked Rev. Barbara Kershner Daniels to talk about Evangelical and Reform UCC's building plans, involving a \$3.5 million loan from a local bank to expand their space. Other construction around the Conference has made NOW the biggest building boom in the Conference.

John then lifted up social justice issues and asked Rev. Alex Vishio to talk about his work in social justice. Alex pointed Annual Meeting members to the CAC website to see an overview of where we are in the

social justice environment and what possible directions lie before us. He also gave us an update on resolutions, some of which are headed to General Synod. 3 resolutions were adopted at last Annual Meeting for 2015 General Synod: Dismantling the New Jim Crow (currently support from 6 conferences, likely to be merged with a similar resolution), Israel/Palestine (current support from 7 conferences, likely to be merged with a resolution from the New Hampshire Conference), and a requested name change for the Washington National Football team.

John then asked Rev. Rob Apgar-Taylor to present an overview of his work with the Evangelical Church of Central Germany, where "they have lots of money, but no people and we have lots of people, but no money." John then highlighted his justice and peace work by showing a brief video of an impromptu speech to a rally held in Bogota, Colombia seeking peace in that country, the most prophetic words of which being "peace is not the absence of war; peace is justice for all". John also described his work visiting Pastor Salvador of the Four Square denomination working with campesinos in the jungle.

John then reported he had been invited to speak at the annual meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference and was paired with a delightful Native American speaker and as he was flying back from Spokane he heard and saw the news of the protests-turned-riots in Baltimore following Freddie Gray's funeral. He confessed our blindness to the failure of the war on drugs, and the impact of that war on the people of Colombia as well as the United States, especially young African American men. He offered a prayer that "we will find new ways to relate to the Sandtowns in Baltimore and elsewhere" and expressed thanks for Geoffrey Black's leadership in finding ways, across the country, to respond. He also called up Rev. Julius Jefferson to present the gifts of food and the "Restore Baltimore Fund" that the Conference has created to provide funds.

John then expressed his hope that the presentation of these vignettes will show that this is a conference that is "getting it done!" and that the future is bright. He then invited Jill White to the podium. Jill reported that "it's been 40 years but General Synod is coming back to the Conference" and asked for at least 400 volunteers to help. Sia Barbara Kamara is in charge of hospitality and Bob Ziegler is in charge of logistics. They'll be traveling to 2015 General Synod to shadow the organizers to help us present a successful 2017 synod. John finally spoke of the changes at the national setting: the retirement of GMP Geoffrey Black and the elevation of Rev. John Dornhauer, the sale of Church House in Cleveland and the associated hotel, and the sudden proposed changes to the central structure, which John described as having taken place "under a bad process". He described these changes as the elevation of the GMP to the status of CEO, the reduction of executive ministers from 3 to 2 and the renaming of their title to make the inferior status more clear, the elimination of several boards, and other changes, only two years after the massive restructuring two years ago that followed several years of conversation. John expressed special concern that "participatory governance has been violated." He did report that the proposal to transfer control over calling general synods from General Synod to the Governing Board has been dropped, and that, after listening to the president of the governing board for 45 minutes in its meeting yesterday, the CAC Board of Directors adopted and distributed to other conferences a letter expressing concern about the proposed changes.

John then interviewed Geoffrey Black and expressed our gratitude for his service and disappointment at his retirement. Geoffrey offered his thoughts on the state of the conferences of the UCC, lamenting the need to reduce staffing UCC-wide. John closed his report by lifting up Anne Holmes, Annual Meeting Moderator. Anne was ordained into the Potomac Association in 1979 and was the first openly lesbian ordination in any American church. Anne received a standing ovation led by her wife Linda Anderson.

51st Annual Meeting, June 12-14, 2015

After a short break John Deckenback turned the plenary over to Rev. Dr. Alice Hunt, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, who offered a keynote speech.

John Deckenback declared Plenary Session II adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Plenary Session III

Rev. Holmes convened the plenary at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, June 13, 2015.

Anne Holmes called Rev. Charles Rush, chair of the Operations and Personnel Working Group to introduce the 2015-16 Minimum Clergy Compensation Guidelines which includes a 2% cost of living increase

Rev. Rush moved a 2% increase in clergy compensation guidelines.

VOTED To approve the 2015-16 Minimum Clergy Compensation Guidelines which includes a 2%
15 AM 05 cost of living increase Approved on a voice vote.

Anne Holmes called on Associate Treasurer Doug White to introduce the 2016 proposed budget for the Conference.

Doug White introduced the 2016 budget as approved by the Board of Directors and moved its adoption. In doing so he commented that the hearing held Friday night was very fruitful in explaining the budget to folks new to Annual Meeting. He also lifted up Judy Bowman for working hard to make the budget real and pointed out two elements of the budget: changes to the expenses because of ACM Kwame Osei Reed's retirement and the need for fundraising for General Synod 2017. He called Bob Ziegler up to explain the nature of 2017 expenses that would be starting this year. Bob Ziegler estimates hosting expenses at \$80-100,000, half of which would be raised and half drawn from conference funds.

VOTED To adopt the 2016 Budget for the Conference. Adopted on a voice vote.
15 AM 06

Doug White stayed at the podium and reported we were able to send an additional \$12,000+ in OCWM funds to the national setting over and above our initial promise. We also had 39 five for five (5x5) churches and that is something we're celebrating.

Anne Holmes called Rev. Derek Ritenour (Parliamentarian) for an explanation on the resolution In Support of Legislation Authorizing Physician Assistance in Dying. Derek Ritenour focused the meeting's attention on the "Be It Resolved" clauses and reminded the people present of the standing rules giving speaker time limits and which microphone to use, and how the Moderator will recognize speakers.

Anne Holmes called on Rev. Alex Vishio for a motion to accept the resolution.

Alex Vision moved that the delegates to Annual Meeting adopt the resolution In Support of Legislation Authorizing Physician Assistance in Dying. He then read a statement in support, as follows:

Given that no fewer than 27 jurisdictions are currently considering similar legislation, it is a propitious time to introduce this resolution. The resolution indicates that physician assistance in dying is warranted under certain very proscribed situations.

Michelle Beadle, Christ Reform Church in Middletown, asked the moderator a question concerning the text of line 20: is there a codified UCC definition of "full personhood"? Anne Holmes called on John Deckenback to answer. John pointed out that this is part of the "whereas" statements and thus not germane to the resolution itself, though it will go forward with the resolution. This resolution is based on a resolution sent to General Synod in 2009 and sent by GS 2009 to a study committee, whereupon the resolution died. As a result, there is no codified UCC definition of "personhood", suggesting that adopting of this resolution would create a similar process. The speaker was unable to move an amendment because it was not submitted by 9:00 this morning.

Mary Goodson, Westmoreland UCC, spoke in support, reading a statement by Rev. Gordon Forbes who is not present. To summarize: longevity surrounds us in this senior facility (where Rev. Forbes now resides). It becomes apparent after 3 years in the community that we are moving from 80 to 90 years, with mechanical, chemical, psychological and spiritual aids. Our announcement boards are fill weekly or even daily with death and memorial service announcements. It is important to support human dignity. Hospices do this work and I hope, for me, that my family and friends, that I can take my dying into my own hands with the aid of counsel, medication, and the like. "death, where is thy sting?"

Rev. David Stinson spoke against the resolution, wondering how and why a faith based on the life of our Lord could support such a resolution. He lifted up in particular the information that most (80%) of those in Oregon who choose physician assistance in dying do so without clergy advice, and he encouraged a vote against.

Rev. LL DuBreuil, Faith UCC in Union, spoke in favor, lifting up a proposed NJ act that is currently under discussion and about to be reported out of committee.

Rev. Ryan Sirmons, of the United Church of Christ in Annapolis, spoke against, arguing that we do NOT have control of our lives, contrary to what Alex Vishio's presentation had suggested. Giving people this right cuts to some extent our understanding of God's ownership of us.

Rev. Robert Agpar-Taylor of Veritas spoke in favor. His personal story spoke of a family member who suffered through seizures and a very slow death from brain blastoma.

Michelle Beadle, Christ Reform United Church of Christ in Middletown, moved to suspend the standing rules to permit one amendment. Seconded. Parliamentarian Derek Ritenour explained a 2/3rds majority is required for adoption.

VOTED To suspend the Standing Rules to permit on amendment to the Resolution on
15 AM 07 the floor. Motion carried.

Michelle Beadle edit to line 20: strike "takes away those abilities we associate with full personhood, leaving" and add "leaves" so the text now reads "when illness leaves one so impaired..." Seconded. Explanation: strikes the uncoded idea of personhood.

VOTED To amend line 20 as follows: strike "takes away those abilities we associate with
15 AM 08 full personhood, leaving" and add "leaves" so the text now reads "when illness leaves one so impaired..." Motion carried on a voice vote.

Karen Byrne spoke in favor of the motion, though she personally opposes it. Offered concerns about the clarity of "uncontrollable" pain, the role of powers of attorney, level of safeguards, etc.

Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi (ACM W) spoke in favor, relating the story of her wife's last years and especially months with cancer and in excruciating pain. Having the choice of saying "I am a person who matters" is more important, sometimes, than anything else.

Unidentified speaker (pastor at Christ Reform in Hagerstown) spoke in favor, telling family stories involving chronic pain, the absence of DNRs, and other issues, ending "whether I live or I die, I am the Lord's."

Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear (Zion UCC, Perry Hall) spoke against, expressing a concern that our society values independence and autonomy above everything else and that by passing this resolution the church agrees with this position.

Guy Sebastian Johnson, Grace UCC, Frederick, MD, spoke in favor, lifting up the fact that we deliberately kill our pets "to stop their suffering", and arguing that human individuals should have the same right.

Dennis Russell (St. Johns Reform) spoke in favor, describing himself as a certified nurse's aid, standing against the artificial prolonging of life and also the artificial termination.

Rev. Harvey Joyner (First Congregational Church, Chesterfield, VA) spoke in favor indicating we must respect the choices of other individuals.

Rev. Dee Ledger (pastor, Bethesda UCC) spoke against. Her personal experience in experiencing death and dying in her own family and her own work as a hospital chaplain saw her see more concern among family members who seemed to care more, at times, about the medical bills than about the human.

Alex Vishio called the question.

A Voice vote was called and then a division called.

VOTED To approve the resolution In Support of Legislation
15 AM 09 Authorizing Physician Assistance in Dying 126 in favor. 36 opposed. Motion carries.

This concludes the business of Annual Meeting

Rev. Sid Fowler asked for a moment of silence and a prayer in honor of all the personal stories that were lifted up during the discussion about the resolution just adopted.

51st Annual Meeting, June 12-14, 2015

Rev. Julius Jefferson took a microphone to thank Rev. Kelly Sisson for organizing the food drive.

Moderator Anne Holmes turned the Moderator Medallion over to Jill White, incoming moderator, then adjourned Plenary Session III at 2:44 Saturday, June 13, 2015. The meeting would be adjourned at the conclusion of worship on Sunday morning.