

## Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting

Southwest Association, Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ First  
Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Atkinson, WI  
April 16, 2016

The theme for this meeting was Encouraging One Another based on 1 Thessalonians 5:11. The Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn was the Keynote Speaker using his presentation Meddlesome Spirit: Subverting Minds and Transforming Hearts (Acts 10 & 15) to build on that theme. While we like to think of the early church as spirit-filled and harmonious, there was a great degree of disagreement and discerning of what the core values of the church were. Was it important to follow Jewish law in terms of circumcision or unclean food or was the inclusivity of the church the core value? In today's terms, we must decide what our core values are and have a reason for what we do. Avoiding conflict and difficult discussions limits our ministry and keeps us in the past. We must make sure that all sides of an issue are heard and respected. Talking in a respectful, loving manner is not quick or easy and is not without risk but we must be willing to fail for the sake of Jesus and the ministry Jesus calls us to.

Rev. Franz Rigert did a presentation on the Shift Initiative. Encouraging one another through sharing the promise of the Holy Spirit among us, sharing the kindred spirit between us and determining how do be church now and in the future. The church reforms and trans-forms every 500 years and it takes about 100 years to complete according to author Phyllis Tickle. We are seeing that re-formation and trans-formation now.

Moderator Gretchen Viney conducted the business meeting. The meeting opened with the Roll Call of Churches. The agenda was approved by a motion by Gail Holmes, second by Cindy Foley.

A motion was made by Richard Steele, seconded by Cindy Foley to approve the minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting as printed in the 2016 White Book. Motion passed.

New pastors in the Southwest Association since our last meeting were recognized. These are: Leslie Schenk at Plymouth UCC, Madison  
Sonya Ingebritsen at Community of Hope UCC, Madison  
Tanya Sadagopan at First Congregational UCC, Janesville

Ann Beaty, Associate Pastor at First Congregational UCC, Madison

Susan Shands, chaplain at Agrace Hospice, Madison Pastors with dual standing:

Janet Ruark – First Congregational UCC, Grand Marsh Susan Oeffler – Trinity UCC, Endeavor

Treasurer Jim Iliff presented the Treasurer's Report for 2015. The report was received. The 2017 budget was presented by Rev. Iliff. Membership dues paid to the Association have been increased to \$4.75/member from \$4.50/member. The Communications Coordinator and the Webmaster both received a 2% raise. The budget was approved unanimously on a motion by Jim Iliff and a second by Gail Holmes.

Division and Partnership reports are printed in the White Book. The Moderator's Report is also in the White Book. We thank Gretchen for her time as Vice-Moderator and Moderator of the Association. Rev. Dr. Mark E. Yurs will be Moderator after this meeting.

The 2016 Nominations Report was presented. The Nominating Committee was Mark Yurs, Lois Rosko, Mary Gafner and Phil Haslanger. JoyLynn Graham volunteered to be on Social Concerns Division. Other nominees are as listed in the White Book. Phil Haslanger moved that nominations close and that those attending cast a unanimous ballot for those listed. Approved.

Proposed Constitutional changes were mailed to every clergy and church within the SWA in February. Since these come from the Executive Committee, there does not need to be a motion or second. The changes passed unanimously with no discussion. The major change to Article V of the Constitution is the addition of a new Division on Clergy and Congregation Support while eliminating three divisions that were no longer

functional (Christian Education, Lay Leadership and Partnerships). Some minor changes were made to the make-up of the Executive Committee to make it more functional.

Lay Academy will host its second alumni event this summer at DeForest. All current and former Lay Academy participants are invited.

Four churches of the SWA are again invited to participate with a table to highlight a special ministry of the church at the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting to be held June 10-12, 2016 at Green Lake Conference Center.

The position of Conference Treasurer is open with the retirement of Rich Fluechtling. Thank you, Rich, for your many years of faithful service in this position.

The meeting was adjourned by motion of Cindy Foley, second by Phil Haslanger.

Respectively submitted,  
Karen Steele  
SWA Executive Committee Secretary