

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference
held at Pilgrim Lodge, West Gardiner, Maine**

October 19, 2024

8:30 a.m. EDT

Welcome and Opening Worship. Maine Conference Moderator and Chair of the Board of Directors, Rev. Sara Bartlett, welcomed Annual Meeting attendees. She called upon Stef Michaud, Vice-Chair of the Board, who led both in-person and Zoom attendees through the process to be used for voting during the business meeting. After acknowledging the absence of Conference Clerk, Sue Burgess, Rev. Bartlett invited a motion to accept Mark Terison of the First Congregational Church in New Gloucester to serve as Clerk, *pro tem*.

Motion: Oscar Williams moved that Mark Terison be the Clerk, *pro tem*, for the 2024 Maine Conference Annual Meeting, seconded by Marcia Charles. The motion passed.

Rev. Bartlett noted that the meeting attendees were gathered on Wabanaki land and read the Maine Conference's acknowledgement that Maine is the traditional territory of the Wabanaki nations. Rev. Bartlett and Rev. Susan Reisert of Old South in Hallowell, Chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Team, then led opening worship and lifted up the ways the Conference and its member churches have supported each other and have been "Linked by Love." Worship included a call and response titled "We the People," written by Penny Hood and David Jenckes from Old South, Farmington.

Business Meeting. The Moderator recognized the Conference Registrar, Kimberly Donovan-Poisson, who announced that a quorum was present for the conduct of business, and Rev. Bartlett called the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference to order at 8:51 a.m. She then recognized the Clerk, *pro tem*, who read the Call to the meeting, followed by Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola, who offered the Constituting Prayer.

Appointments and Adoption of the Rules. The Moderator announced the following appointments for the meeting:

- the Parliamentarian, Rev. Sally Colegrove;
- Head Teller, Brad Hirst, of Second Christian Church of Kittery;
- Assistant Tellers, Ian Lynch, of Waterville UCC and Marraine Kettell of Old South Farmington; and
- the Credentials Committee is Conference Registrar Kimberly Donovan-Poisson.

The Moderator noted that the Rules and Procedures for the meeting were posted in the Resource Materials for the meeting, and asked for a motion adopting the Rules and Procedures.

Motion: Charlie Bernaccio moved the adoption of the Rules and Procedures for Annual Meeting 2024, seconded by Oscar Wallace. The motion passed.

Adoption of the Agenda. The Moderator requested a motion to adopt the Agenda for the meeting as posted in the meeting Resource Materials.

Motion: Rev. Marcia Charles moved to adopt the Agenda as posted in the meeting Resource Materials, seconded by Anne Roundy. The motion passed.

Approval of Consent Agenda. The Moderator asked the body's pleasure on approval of the Consent Agenda as posted in the meeting Resource Materials. The Consent Agenda consisted of Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting; and written reports from Resourcing the Local Church, Maine School of Ministry, Conference Minister, Associate Conference Minister, Pilgrim Lodge Director, Conference Board of Directors, Social Action Committee, Anti-Racism Team, Personnel Team, Transition Team, and Governance.

Motion: Marraine Kettell moved the adoption of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Pam Williams. The motion passed.

Visitors' Voice. The Moderator asked for a motion in favor of visitors having a voice with no vote.

Motion: Marcia Charles moved that visitors may have a voice with no vote, seconded by Charlie Bernaccio. The motion passed.

Speak Out #1. The Moderator recognized Anne Roundy to lead a time of speaking out to bring various matters to the attention of those attending the meeting. These included, among others, small church ministry, donations to Friends of the Maine Conference, donations to Church World Service's response to the recent hurricanes in Florida, support for a "Red Flag" law in Maine to address gun-related situations, and a special song from Pilgrim Lodge campers.

Greetings from Friends and Staff. Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors, Stef Michaud, recognized the following Friends who brought greetings to Annual Meeting attendees: Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ General Minister and President (via videotape); Rev. Faith March-MacCuish from the United Church of Canada (via Zoom); Allen Ewing Merrill, Executive Director of the BTS Center, who also brought greetings on behalf of Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches; and Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister from the New Hampshire Conference. Staff greetings came from Malcolm Himschoot, Dean of the Maine School of Ministry; Elizabeth Charles McGough, Director of Pilgrim Lodge (with assistance from Pilgrim Lodge campers); and Conference Minister, Marisa Laviola, who introduced the new Associate Conference Minister, John Fiscus, and then spoke on the "State of the Conference."

Speak Out #2. The Moderator again recognized Anne Roundy to lead a second round of speaking out that covered matters such as the role of public schools in providing clothing for students, available financial assistance for retired clergy and their spouses from the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, and "souls in the rafters" of Pilgrim Lodge.

[The Conference business meeting recessed from 10:35 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a schedule of workshops and discussion groups, and for lunch during which luncheon attendees heard from keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Jodi Cohen Hayashida, Faith Community Organizer with Maine People's Alliance, the state's largest community action organization. The business meeting resumed at 3:00 p.m].

Clergy Compensation Guidelines. The Moderator invited Linda Wallace to present the Clergy Compensation Guidelines for 2025 as prepared by the Chairs of the Church & Ministry Committees of the seven Associations of the Maine Conference, and approved by the Conference Board of Directors.

Motion: Linda Wallace moved that the Clergy Compensation Guidelines be accepted as presented, seconded by Marcia Charles. The motion passed.

The Moderator thanked the Church & Ministry Committee Chairs for their work on the Guidelines.

2025 Budget Presentation. The Moderator invited Hariph Smith, Conference Treasurer who appeared via the online audio/visual platform Zoom, to present the proposed Conference budget for calendar year 2025 on behalf of the Board of Directors, with planned total revenue of \$1,120,633 and total expenses of \$1,105,870, producing an expected surplus of \$14,763.

Motion: Hariph Smith moved that the 2025 Maine Conference Budget be approved (having been put forward by the Board of Directors, the motion did not require a second). The motion passed.

The Moderator thanked the Treasurer and the Finance Committee for their work on the 2025 budget.

Governance Committee Slate of Nominees. Susan Reisert presented the Governance Committee's slate of nominees for new members of the Conference Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. Board of Directors nominees: Stef Michaud as Chair, Brad Hirst as Vice-Chair, John Thompson as Treasurer, and members John Hogue (to fill partial 2-year term, Class of 2026) and Pam Burnham and Carol Kerr (Class of 2027). Board of Trustees nominees: Bernys Doak and Scott Hatfield (Class of 2026) and Hariph Smith (Class of 2027).

Motion: Marcia Charles moved that the slate of nominees be approved (having been put forward by the Governance Committee, the motion did not require a second). The motion passed.

Recognitions. The Moderator, joined by Susan Reisert, recognized the Pilgrim Lodge Staff with presentation of a Communion Plate and Chalice, and thanked New Hampshire Conference Minister Gordon Rankin for his presence with a potted white chrysanthemum. Other recognitions included a long list of those who provided “helping hands” to assist with the Annual Meeting. Also recognized were Members of Resourcing the Local Church, Members of the Social Action Team, and Pilgrim Lodge campers who shared the camp with Annual Meeting attendees. Additional recognition went to the following outgoing members of the Conference Board of Directors: Kathy Woodside, Hariph Smith, and Sara Bartlett.

Credentials Report. Conference Registrar Kimberly Donovan-Poisson presented the following report of Annual Meeting attendees: Friday and Saturday total: 157. Number of churches represented: 80. Number of Conference Associations represented: 7. Number of Clergy: 52. Number of Lay attendees: 68. Number of online attendees: 19. Number of visitors: 16.

Adjournment. Outgoing Moderator, Sara Bartlett, handed the gavel to incoming Moderator Stef Michaud, who called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Beth Haynes moved that the business meeting be adjourned, seconded by John Thompson. The motion passed.

[Immediately following adjournment, Moderator Stef Michaud invited Conference Minister Marisa Laviola to lead closing worship].

Respectfully submitted,



Clerk, *pro tem*