

Call to Worship & Invocation Andria

Friends,
Welcome.

As we begin this Annual Meeting of the South Central Conference, I invite you to take a breath.

Become aware of the place where you are sitting.

Notice the room around you.

Notice the faces gathered on your screen.

Some of these faces are familiar.

Some are new.

All are part of this community.

Today is not the gathering we imagined.

We had hoped to be together in one place.

To share meals and conversations.

To worship side by side.

Instead, we gather in this way.

And perhaps that is a reminder that what binds us together has never been a building, a location, or an event.

What binds us together is covenant.

What binds us together is a shared commitment to the ministry of Christ.

What binds us together is the Spirit of God moving among us and within us.

The writer of Acts tells us that the early followers of Jesus devoted themselves to one another. They learned together, prayed together, shared what they had, and discovered God's presence in community.

Two thousand years later, we continue that same practice.

We gather because we believe we are stronger together than we are alone.

We gather because the joys and burdens of ministry are not meant to be carried in isolation.

We gather because God continues to call us into relationship—with one another and with the world God loves.

So wherever you are this morning, know this:

You belong here.

You are part of this community.

And God is present among us.

Let us pray.

Holy Spirit,

Gather us now.

Gather our attention from the many demands of the day.

Gather our hearts from the worries we carry.

Gather our hopes, our griefs, our questions, and our dreams.

Remind us that we are your people.

Remind us that we belong to one another.

Remind us that your love is still at work among us.

As we worship, as we listen, as we conduct the work of this Conference, may everything we do be rooted in love, guided by wisdom, and shaped by a deep commitment to the well-being of this community.

Open our hearts to your presence.

Open our minds to your leading.

Open our lives to your transforming work.

For we pray in the name of Jesus, and in the power of your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Scripture: Acts 2: 43-47 Ken

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke

bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Introduction to "If She Has Her Way"

Today I'm going to introduce you to a song that you probably don't know. It is called "If She Has Her Way" and it is written and performed by my husband Michael.

Twenty-five years ago, this song was written for my ordination.

Over the years, I have heard it differently at different moments.

Sometimes "she" sounds like the women who have answered God's call despite every obstacle placed in their path.

Sometimes "she" sounds like wisdom.

Sometimes "she" sounds like hope.

Sometimes "she" sounds like the church becoming more fully the church.

And sometimes "she" sounds like the Holy Spirit herself—still troubling the waters, still pushing us beyond our comfort, still refusing to leave us unchanged.

As we listen, I invite you to consider:

Who is "she" for you today?

And where do you see her at work among us?

[If She Has Her Way]

Lyrics:

The signs of hatred line the curb

Where cries of prejudice are heard

our dreams of justice cast aside

like countless other dreams denied.

and though we say we do our part,

our efforts stop with bleeding hearts,

so many sins we can't deny, we can't deny.

If she has her way, hearts won't fail,

courage makes a change and dreams prevail.

A transformation has begun now women lead when others run.

the church will never be the same, the holy spirit is to blame.

FOR troubling waters long asleep I pray the Lord our church to keep.

that God would help us move ahead like Jesus said.

If she has her way, walls will fall.

women work with men to welcome all.

The church cannot abide, when hatred dwells inside.

God's arms are open wide. Love will not be denied.

If she has her way God's love reigns,

we will make an end to foolish games.

If she has her way, if she has her way, if she has her way, we'll live in peace.

Prayer Into the Meeting Molly

Holy Spirit,

You have never been content to leave your people where you found them.

Again and again, you stir the waters.

You challenge assumptions.

You widen tables.

You open doors we would rather keep closed.

You call forth gifts from people the world has overlooked.

As we begin the work of this meeting, keep us attentive to your movement among us.

May our decisions reflect your wisdom.

May our conversations reflect your grace.

May our work reflect your love.

When we are tempted toward fear, grant us courage.

When we are tempted toward scarcity, grant us trust.

When we are tempted toward self-interest, grant us vision.

Continue your transforming work among us and through us.

For the sake of the church.

For the sake of our communities.

For the sake of your dream for the world.

Amen.

Letter from the President
Annual Meeting
June 6, 2026
rev rameen zahed

Today we enter the Annual Meeting with the sacred obligation to promote the interest and welfare of the South Central Conference of the UCC as good stewards of our faith. It is a privilege and honor to carry out this noble obligation and let us agree to continue to do so in a spirit of humility, compassion, and joy.

In the last year, Rev Molly Carlson and the Board of Directors have demonstrated transparency, integrity, and unity under very difficult circumstances. And holding us all together was our President, Arlene Infante-Turner. Her sudden, tragic death left more than just a hole in our conference leadership, it ripped our hearts wide open. Arlene was a weaver and a woven thing. She was the rare person who wove her intellectual rigor with a universal love for humankind and created a beautiful tapestry for all to enjoy. More than enjoy, Arlene wanted her fellow sojourners to be participants, and not merely spectators in the warp and weft of life. And she demonstrated this in subtle ways: She visited us, cared for us, cooked for us, prayed for us, and loved us. We became her family and were included in her ever-expanding, awe-inspiring tapestry that spoke to all that was beautiful and lovely in our world. And I want to acknowledge how much her tragic death affects us all. It hurts and always will. But let us take great comfort and solace that God gave us a dear colleague, friend, and sibling in Christ – if only for just a little while. May her name and memory be a blessing for eternity.

Under Arlene's leadership and energy, the conference was in great shape and continues to be so even today. But it will take a lot of effort for us to carry-out the work of the conference. We are blessed to have Rev Molly Carlson as our Interim Conference minister. She has breathed life into our conference with her vision, detailed understanding of process/change management, and deep spirituality. Rev Carlson has poured her heart, mind, and soul into her ministry and we are deeply grateful for all that she does. She has demonstrated her sincere compassion for us over and over again with her many visits, phone calls, and emails. Thank-you, Rev Carlson, for sharing your compassionate heart and powerful mind with us.

In what follows, we will hear from our priority teams about the progress they've made, we will vote on changing our constitution and by-laws, and we must prayerfully consider who will be our next, settled Conference Minister. Taken as standalone statements, they seem almost banal and trite. They are not. The work ahead of us is difficult and it will require concentration of effort and considerable energy – as we will soon discover. But this doesn't mean it must be joyless or without meaning. We are doing the gritty and necessary work that is required to create a just, open, and affirming world where everyone belongs and everyone is welcome. Therefore, I encourage everyone to laugh (or giggle), speak gently to one another and ourselves, offer grace where it is absent, and share Christ's unyielding joy and compassion.

Prayerfully submitted by your sibling in Christ,

rameen

South Central Conference

United Church of Christ

2025 Year-End Financial Report



Presented to the Annual Meeting | June 6, 2026

FY 2025 At a Glance

\$130,875

Total Net Loss

Better than \$200K budgeted

\$248,540

Operating Revenue

vs \$142K budgeted

\$4.86M

Total Assets

Net assets \$4.84M

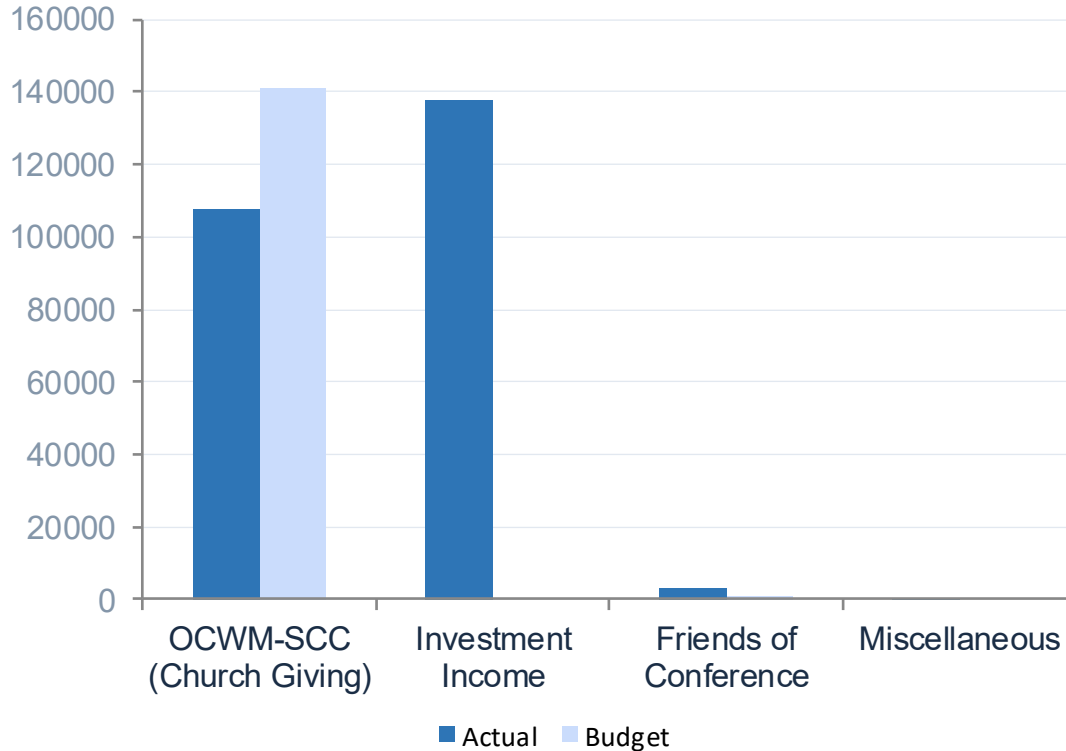
\$108,753

CIF Principal Draw

~3.4% of CIF balance

The Conference is financially stable. The total loss was \$69K better than budgeted — primarily because investment income covered the gap.

Where the Money Came From



\$137,776

Investment Income

Not budgeted — essential to operations



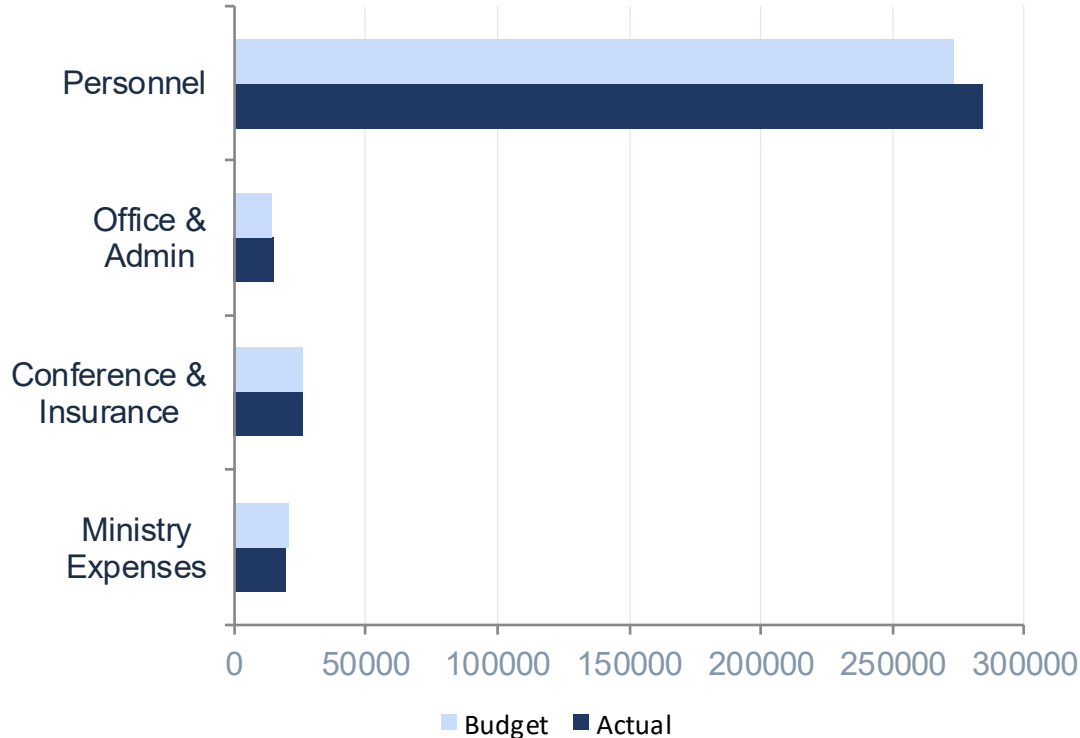
\$107,670

OCWM Giving

\$33,600 short of budget — ongoing concern

Total operating revenue: \$248,540 (budget: \$142,400) — exceeded budget because investment income was counted

Where the Money Went



Expense Notes

Personnel: \$284K

+\$10.7K over budget. Board authorized \$10K extra for Conference Minister travel.

Office & Admin: \$15.2K

+\$1.2K over. Included past payroll tax penalties — non-recurring.

Ministry: \$19.3K

\$1.8K under budget. General Synod costs less than projected.

Total expenses: \$344,934 (budget: \$334,451) — \$10,483 over, driven by Board-approved travel

Program Results: Annual Meeting & Other

Annual Meeting 2025

Net Loss

\$34,481

Budgeted loss: \$8,000

Why: Lower attendance + significantly higher food & facility costs

Response: Board has adopted tighter protocols for future Annual Meeting budgeting and approval

Clergy Retreat

Broke even

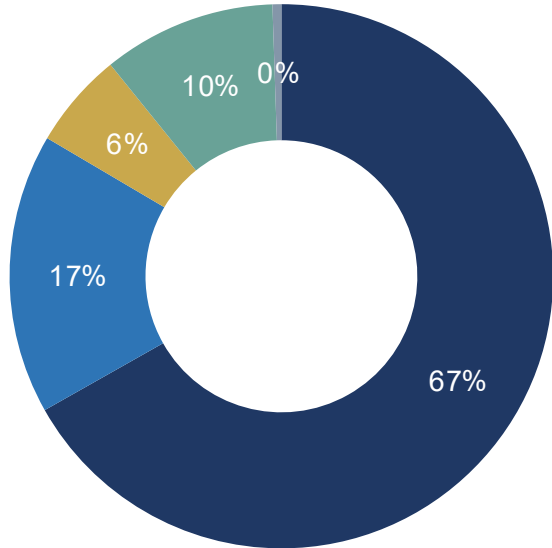
Participant fees + \$10,000 grant covered all costs

General Synod Reserve

Under budget

\$2,623 less than projected; balance moved to operating income

The Balance Sheet: \$4.86 Million in Assets



■ CIF (Morgan Stanley) ■ Church Growth Fund ■ United Church Funds
■ Cornerstone ■ Operating Cash

Fund	Value	Notes
CIF – Morgan Stanley	\$3,244,326	
Church Growth Fund	\$808,967	
United Church Funds	\$276,923	
Cornerstone	\$500,000	Interest only (60-mo term, 4.92%)
Operating Cash	\$25,564	

Looking Ahead

Key themes to carry forward from FY 2025



OCWM Giving

Church giving fell \$33,600 short of budget. As membership trends continue across the denomination, this gap requires attention in how we budget.



Annual Meeting Costs

Protocols are in place for tighter budget controls and approval requirements for future Annual Meetings.



Investment Dependency

Operations depend significantly on investment income. In a down market year, principal draws would be more pronounced and more visible.



Financial Stability

The Conference's \$3.2M unrestricted CIF provides stability. The Finance Committee monitors draw levels and investment performance.

2026 Budget At a Glance

\$306,600

Budgeted Revenue

+21% vs 2025 budget

\$358,234

Operating Expenses

+4% vs 2025 actual

(\$95,434)

Operating Deficit

Operating + program
investments

\$95,434

Authorized CIF Draw

~2.6% of \$3.7 CIF; within 5%
policy limits

South Central Conference

United Church of Christ

2025 Year-End Financial Report

Prepared for the Annual Meeting | June 6, 2026

Executive Summary

The South Central Conference (SCC) continues to have a strong overall financial position and is well positioned to invest in growing our future. The Conference ended Fiscal Year 2025 with a net loss of approximately \$130,875. Conference Assets total \$4,840,000, most of which are invested in financial instruments held by United Church Funds, the Cornerstone Foundation and Morgan Stanley.

On the operating side -- the cost of running the conference day-to-day -- total revenues of roughly \$248,540 against expenses of about \$344,934, producing an operating loss of approximately \$96,394. The 2025 Annual Meeting added another \$34,500 to the loss, reflecting higher-than-expected food and facility costs combined with lower attendance. This program-level shortfall greatly exceeded the budgeted loss of \$8,000.

Including the loss from the 2025 Annual Meeting, the total loss for FY 2025 was approximately \$130,875, considerably less than the 2025 budgeted operating loss of \$200,051. The better-than-budgeted total loss was due to the inclusion of \$137,776 of earned investment interest as operating income. The investment income earned had not been included in the 2026 budget. The operating gap was additionally influenced by Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM-SCC) giving from member churches coming about \$33,600 short of budget. Operating expenses were approximately \$10,500 above budgeted levels, driven by a Board-authorized additional \$10,000 for conference minister travel. The total 2025 loss was covered by draws from the Conference Investment Fund, amounting to approximately 3.5% of the principal, and drawdown of a large cash balance at the end of 2024.

2025 Budget Narrative

Revenue: Where the Money Came From

The conference has three main sources of income: giving from member churches (called OCWM-SCC), contributions from individuals through the Friends of the Conference campaign, and earnings from invested funds.

Revenue Source	Actual	Budget	Notes
OCWM-SCC (church giving)	\$107,670	\$141,300	Fell ~\$33,600 short of budget
Friends of the Conference	\$2,919	\$1,100	Slightly above budget
Investment Income (CIF + Cornerstone)	\$137,776	Not budgeted	Essential to operations
Miscellaneous	\$175	\$0	Minor
Total Operating Revenue	\$248,540	\$142,400	Better than budget due to inclusion of investment income

OCWM-SCC giving is the primary way member churches support the conference's work. In 2025, the Conference's share of OCWM donations (10% of OCWM giving is sent to the UCC) came in at \$107,670, which was about 24% below the budgeted \$141,300. This is the single largest driver of the revenue shortfall and warrants ongoing attention.

Investment income of \$137,776 came from the Conference Investment Fund (managed by Morgan Stanley) and the Cornerstone Investment account. This income was not separately budgeted as a line item for 2025, but inclusion of investment earnings as is a common and accepted practice for organizations with endowment-like funds. Approximately \$108,050 was pulled from the CIF principal. The Finance Committee and Board continue to monitor the use of CIF principal to fill operating funding gaps.

Expenses: Where the Money Went

Total operating expenses came in at approximately \$344,934, running about \$10,483 over budget. Most expense categories were well-managed; the overruns were concentrated in a few specific areas.

Expense Category	Actual	Budget	Variance
Personnel (salaries & benefits)	\$284,028	\$273,291	+\$10,737 over
Office & Admin	\$15,229	\$14,050	+\$1,178 over
Conference & Insurance	\$26,372	\$26,045	Roughly on budget
Ministry Expenses	\$19,305	\$21,065	\$1,760 under
Total Expenses	\$344,934	\$334,451	+\$10,483 over

Conference Minister Travel expenditures reflect an active and engaged year on the road by our Interim Conference Minister, and an investment by the board in the health of our member churches. The board recognized this early, authorizing an additional \$10,000 beyond the base \$12,000 budget, bringing the approved travel budget to \$22,000. Final expenses came in at \$24,367, just \$2,367 over the expanded authorization. The overage is modest relative to the overall travel investment the board endorsed and was offset by less travel by other staff. It is worth noting simply for the sake of accurate accounting.

Other Administrative Expenses came in at \$2,921 against a budget of \$1,000 — an overrun sufficient to require explanation. This category included several unusual, non-recurring items: reimbursement of storage locker costs from late 2024 (\$518); an IRS penalty for a February 2025 payroll tax payment that was not made by Intuit, now resolved (\$295); and a penalty related to unremitted payroll taxes from 2017, also now resolved (\$2,083). These are largely historical issues being closed out, but they should be documented for audit purposes.

Program Activity: The Annual Meeting, Clergy Retreat, General Synod

In addition to regular operations, the conference tracks income and expenses for specific programs separately.

The Annual Meeting generated \$12,128 in participant fees against expenses of \$46,600, resulting in a net program loss of approximately \$34,500. The budget had anticipated an \$8,000 loss from Annual Meeting activity. The sizeable loss was caused by lower-than-expected

attendance, and significantly higher food and facility costs. The Annual Meeting loss is the second-largest driver of the total net loss after the OCWM shortfall. Following this experience, the board established protocols for Annual Meeting pricing, programming, and cost management that take a more conservative approach to budgeting and approval for future Annual Meetings.

The Clergy Retreat and attendance at General Synod, by contrast, broke even or came in under budget, all expenses were covered by fees and a grant received for the Clergy Retreat.

Why the Total Loss Is Better Than Budgeted

The 2025 budget projected a net loss of \$200,051. The actual net loss of \$130,874 was about \$69,176 better. The primary reason: investment income of \$137,776, which was not specifically budgeted, more than offset other shortfalls.

This outcome reflects a structural reality: the conference's operating budget is dependent on OCWM giving from our member churches – organizations that are generally facing declining membership and increasing costs from insurance, maintenance and utilities. Across the denomination, OCWM giving has been declining year over year for some time. The SCC is blessed that we have a sizeable unrestricted investment portfolio from which we earn income and can draw principal if and how needed. However, investment earnings vary from year to year. In a good market year like 2025, that dependency is less visible. In a down year, using principal funds to fill the gap between church giving and operating expenses would be more noticeable.

The Balance Sheet: \$4.86 Million in Assets

The Statement of Position (the equivalent of a balance sheet) shows total assets of approximately \$4.86 million as of December 31, 2025. That figure requires careful interpretation.

Most of the \$4.86 million in total assets are held in investment funds. Approximately \$1,070,000 are held in restricted accounts, with the balance (\$3.8M) held in unrestricted Conference Investment Fund (CIF) accounts. The conference typically holds about \$25,000 in conference operating bank accounts. The Treasurer can obtain funds from CIF, within Board approved amounts, when additional funds are needed for operating uses.

Asset Category	Approximate Value	Available for Operations?
Operating Bank Accounts	\$25,564	Partially -- Approximately \$10,000 is restricted pass-through donations payable to National UCC -- Balance \$15,564 is cash for day-to-day expenses
Main Conference Investment Fund (Morgan Stanley)	\$3,244,326	Yes — investment earnings and limited principal draws within Board approved limits
Cornerstone Investment (part of the CIF)	\$500,000	Principal – No, invested for 60 months at 4.91% interest guaranteed Interest earnings -- available for operations
Church Growth Fund (Morgan Stanley)	\$808,967	No - restricted for church growth purposes
United Church Funds (3 accounts)	\$276,923	No -- restricted for youth programs, ministerial scholarships, church growth

Total Assets	~\$4,859,007	Invested, designated, or restricted
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Several funds deserve specific explanation:

- **Pass-Through Contributions:** The conference accepts donations on behalf of national UCC mission appeals (OCWM National, Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, etc.) and forwards them to national bodies. At the end of 2025 about \$9,946 in collected contributions was still on hand at year-end, held briefly pending remittance in 2026. It is typical to have some National passthrough monies on our books at the end of the year, due to timing of receipt of funds from churches at the end of the year. These funds are never available for operating use.
- **Youth/Camp Funds:** \$31,695 was paid out in 2025 to Slumber Falls Camp and Back Bay Mission per donors’ requests. \$15,140 remains at United Church Funds of which \$1,300 is the remaining balance of the Isliop Camp Scholarships which has been paid out in 2026. The remainder was designated by the Board for youth programming.
- **Tessmann Scholarship Fund:** \$154,599 designated for ministerial scholarships; Board plans to have guidelines established by end of 2026.
- **Church Growth Fund:** \$916,050 total across UCF and Morgan Stanley accounts; designated for church development purposes (governed by the Church Development and Revitalization Committee).

Performance of Investment Portfolio

The SCC has \$4.83M in financial assets. 84% of those assets are currently held by Morgan Stanley Investments, 10% by the UCC Cornerstone Fund, and 6% by the United Church Foundation (UCF). In total, the return on our investments (interest & dividends) averaged 3.6%.

	Morgan Stanley	Cornerstone	United Church Foundation	Total Portfolio
Balance at 12/31/2025	\$4,053,300	\$500,000	\$276,900	\$4,815,200
Return	3.7%	4.9%	2.0%	3.6%

In considering our 2025 investment returns, it is important to note that in the first half of the year, the monies held by Morgan Stanley (85-90% of our portfolio) were held in basic Money Market Funds, earning less than 2% interest. In mid-year, the Finance Committee met with Morgan Stanley and shifted the monies held by Morgan Stanley to two main accounts – one for the Church Growth Funds and the other our unrestricted Conference Investment Fund. In the fourth quarter, the Finance Committee voted to invest \$500,000 of our CIF monies in the UCC’s Cornerstone Fund, to demonstrate our commitment to the work done by our denomination through that fund.

Since re-aligning funds into two Morgan Stanley accounts, the returns on those funds have increased to 4.5-5%. The average return, including the Money Market Fund period, was 3.6%. The funds invested with Cornerstone are in a five-year contract, at 4.92% guaranteed. Monies invested with UCF earn an average of 2%.

The Morgan Stanley monies are held in a variety of investment vehicles with various risk profiles. We are currently in an 80/20 stocks/bond split with Morgan Stanley. That split reflects

the fact that the Cornerstone fund, with 10% of our portfolio, is able to provide the low-risk foundation for our investments.

Investment vehicles used by Morgan Stanley are required to comply with the Conference's statement on Social Responsibility in the SCC Investment strategy:

Where possible, the Conference prefers to incorporate environmental, social, and governance ("ESG") and other socially responsible criteria in the Investment Pool's investment analysis and decision-making process, with particular emphasis on profitable investments with positive social and environmental impacts aligned with the priorities and values of the Conference. Areas of specific interest of the Conference include:

- *The exclusion of companies that manufacture and market tobacco products or weapons.*
- *The exclusion of companies that engage or endorse pornography.*
- *The inclusion of companies or organizations that are committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. Companies that, through their corporate policy or other marketing efforts appear to discriminate against the LBGTQ+ community shall be excluded.*
- *Sustainability factors such as climate change shall be taken into account where feasible.*

Statement of Position - South Central Conference UCC

Fiscal Year ending Dec 31, 2025

	Total	Notes
Assets		
Total for Bank Accounts (Chase Checking & Savings)	\$25,563.81	
120 Cornerstone Investment (CIF)	500,000.00	
130 United Church Funds		
Total for 131 Youth/Camp Funds	\$15,140.02	
Total for 132 Church Growth Funds- UCF	\$107,183.54	Will be moved to Morgan Stanley in 2026
Total for 133 Tessmann Scholarship Fund	\$154,599.39	
Total for 130 United Church Funds	\$276,922.95	
140 Morgan Stanley		
Total for 142 Conference Investment Fund	\$3,244,326.45	Net draw from Principal = \$108,753; \$500k invested with Cornerstone
Total for 143 Church Growth Fund	\$808,966.71	
149 CIF Cash Account	410.00	
Total for 140 Morgan Stanley	\$4,053,703.16	
QuickBooks Tax Holding Account	2,816.94	timing re: payroll
Total for Assets	\$4,859,006.86	
Commitments and Equity		
Commitments		
Total for 210 Payroll Liabilities	\$2,816.94	timing re payroll
Total for 660 Pass-Through Contributions - Local	\$0.00	No longer accepting donations for "local" missions (BBM, CUE, etc.)
670 Pass-Through to UCC National Missions		
Total for 671 OCWM National Portion	\$2,194.20	
Total for 672 Neighbors in Need	\$1,046.02	
Total for 673 One Great Hour of Sharing	\$2,558.00	
Total for 674 Strengthen the Church to Nat'l	\$720.21	
Total for 675 Christmas Holiday Fund	\$3,427.51	
Total for 679 National UCC Other Missions	\$10.00	disaster ministry
Total for 670 Pass-Through to UCC National Missions	\$9,955.94	Will be paid in early 2026
Total for 703 (UCF) Tessman Scholarship Funds payable	\$1,320.46	holding to use for payment of legal fees, per Board motion
Total for 810 Youth Programming Reserve	\$255.09	
830 General Synod		
830.01 General Synod Expenses	-18,333.06	GS expenses were less than budgeted (2yrs), balance transferred to Operating Income
830.02 General Synod Transfer From Budget	20,000.00	
830.03 General Synod Direct Contributions	956.12	
830.09 General Synod TRFR G/L to Income	-2,623.06	
Total for 830 General Synod	\$0.00	
Total for 840 Church Develop & Renewal -- Working Funds	\$4,443.28	
Total for Commitments	\$18,791.71	

	Total	Notes
Equity		
Retained Earnings	-32,872.81	
Net Income	-130,874.93	
910 Church Growth Fund	916,050.10	
920 Tessmann Scholarship Fund	154,599.39	
980 Youth Program Reserve	15,140.02	
990 Changes to CIF YTD	87,399.90	Various deposits and unrealized G/L, less fees
Opening Balance Equity	3,830,773.48	
Total for Equity	\$4,840,215.15	
Total for Commitments and Equity	\$4,859,006.86	
Cash Basis Monday, April 06, 2026 01:36 PM GMT-05:00		

FY 2025 Actuals vs Budget -- South Central Conference UCC

January-December, 2025

	2025		Difference (Good/Bad)	Notes
	Actual	Budget		
Revenue				
345 Miscellaneous Income	174.86	0.00	174.86	
Total for 350 SCC Contributions-OCWM	107,670.37	141,300.00	-33,629.63	
Total for 360 SCC Friends of the Conference	2,918.73	1,100.00	1,818.73	
Total for 370 Conference Investment Fund Earned Income	137,776.44	0.00	137,776.44	not budgeted in 2025
Total for Revenue	248,540.40	142,400.00	106,140.40	Better than budgeted due to interest earned
Expenditures				
410 Personnel Expenses				
Total for 412 Salaries	173,020.17	172,086.00	-934.17	Brooke salary adjustment mid-year
Total for 414 Benefits	76,689.16	76,696.20	7.04	
Total for 416 Payroll taxes	3,611.87	3,609.27	-2.60	
460 Authorized Staff Expenses				
460.06 Conf Minister Travel	24,367.08	12,000.00	-12,367.08	Board authorized \$10k add'l; \$2,367 over
460.07 Conf Minister Cell Phone & Internet	2,528.02	2,400.00	-128.02	
460.15 Conf. Minister Authorized Expenses	3,458.66	3,000.00	-458.66	
460.20 Other Authorized Travel & Expenses	353.18	1,500.00	1,146.82	
460.40 Other Reimbursements (not used in 2025)	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	acc't not used in 2025
Total for 460 Authorized Staff Expenses	30,706.94	20,900.00	-9,806.94	Board authorized \$10k add'l CM travel
Total for 410 Personnel Expenses	284,028.14	273,291.47	-10,736.67	
420 Office & Admin Expenses				
420.01 Bank Charges	80.00	0.00	-80.00	
420.02 Credit Card Processing Fees	135.53	150.00	14.47	
420.03 Payroll Processing Fees	1,222.49	850.00	-372.49	
420.04 Copier Lease	4,032.44	3,750.00	-282.44	
420.05 Telephone / Communication Leases	2,255.59	2,050.00	-205.59	
420.06 Check Scanner Lease	600.00	500.00	-100.00	
420.07 Postage/office supplies	457.70	800.00	342.30	
420.08 Technology Subscriptions	3,523.36	4,950.00	1,426.64	
420.09 Other Admin Expenses	2,921.72	1,000.00	-1,921.72	Storage locker, 2017 PR tax issue, Feb 2026 PR tax issue
Total for 420 Office & Admin Expenses	15,228.83	14,050.00	-1,178.83	Over budget due to past PR tax issues
480 Conference & Insurance Expenses				
480.01 Property/Liability Insurance	25,576.00	25,620.00	44.00	
480.02 Worker's Compensation	796.00	425.00	-371.00	not properly budgeted
480.05 Legal & Audit Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total for 480 Conference & Insurance Expenses	26,372.00	26,045.00	-327.00	
490 Ministry Expenses				
490.01 Board Expenses	7,451.25	6,000.00	-1,451.25	
490.02 Committee on Ministry Expenses	294.92	0.00	-294.92	not budgeted in 2025
490.03 General Synod Reserve	7,376.94	10,000.00	2,623.06	Synod cost less than budgeted
490.04 Ministry Participation Fees	4,182.14	5,065.00	882.86	
Total for 490 Ministry Expenses	19,305.25	21,065.00	1,759.75	
Total for Expenditures	344,934.22	334,451.47	-10,482.75	

Net Operating Revenue	-96,393.82	-192,051.47	95,657.65	Loss is less than Budgeted because of Interest Earnings
Program Revenue & Expenses				
510 Clergy Retreat				
510.02 Clergy Retreat Fees Paid	1,017.56			
510.03 Clergy Retreat Expenses	-10,526.96			
510.04 Clergy Retreat Grant Recieved	10,000.00			
510.09 Clergy Retreat TFR authorized use	-490.60			
Total for 510 Clergy Retreat	0.00	0.00	0.00	
530 Annual Meeting				
530.01 AM Participant Fees Paid	11,268.00			
530.02 AM Contributions	850.60			
530.10 Annual Meeting Expenses	-46,599.71			
Total for 530 Annual Meeting	-34,481.11	-8,000.00	-26,481.11	
Total for Other Expenditures	-34,481.11	-8,000.00	-26,481.11	
Net Total Operating and Program Revenues	-130,874.93	-200,051.47	69,176.54	Loss is less than Budgeted because of Interest Earnings

Cash Basis Monday, April 06, 2026 01:36 PM GMT-05:00

South Central Conference Policy Regarding Acceptance of Non-Liquid and Restricted Donations

Adopted by the SCC Board of Directors on May 12, 2026

Approach to Gifts

The South Central Conference (SCC) of the United Church of Christ (UCC) welcomes gifts that support our mission. This policy guides us in accepting donations that are non-liquid (e.g., cars, land, stock) and those of any type whose use is restricted by the donor. It provides for the SCC to accept such donations in a responsible manner and helps us avoid situations that could create legal, financial, or administrative difficulty for the conference.

Board Authority

Most gifts to the SCC, including unrestricted cash donations, straightforward contributions to Friends of the Conference and donations designated for National UCC or similar Board authorized campaigns, do not require formal Board approval and are accepted in the ordinary course of business. More complex gifts, including non-liquid assets, restricted donations or donations that raise questions about mission alignment, legal compliance, or administrative burden, require review by the Finance Committee of the Board and approval by the Board before acceptance. The Board retains the right to decline any donation. Donors are welcome to propose restrictions, but the SCC is under no obligation to accept them.

Types of Gifts Covered

This policy applies to all forms of non-liquid and restricted donations, including cash, checks, securities, real estate, vehicles, equipment, bequests, and donor-advised fund grants.

What We Accept

The SCC accepts gifts that meet all of the following conditions:

- The gift supports our mission and ministry priorities.
- Accepting it does not require illegal, unethical, or conflicting commitments.
- It does not create unmanageable burdens such as excessive reporting requirements, complex restrictions, or ongoing costs.
- It does not expose the SCC to unacceptable financial, safety, or reputational risk, or excessive administrative burden.

Definitions

Unrestricted gifts support the SCC's overall operations and missions. The Board determines where these funds are most needed.

Restricted gifts designate a specific purpose. We accept restricted gifts only when the restriction is clear, achievable, and manageable.

Designated pass-through donations are gifts designated for UCC or Board authorized directed campaigns, such as Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing and Christmas Fund. Funds given for such purposes are remitted to the designated entity at least quarterly.

Future Flexibility for Restricted Gifts

Because circumstances change over time, we ask donors to include the following flexibility clause when making a restricted gift:

“If the Board determines that the original purpose becomes impossible, impracticable, wasteful, or unmanageable, the donor authorizes SCC to redirect the gift to the closest feasible purpose that advances SCC’s mission and the donor’s charitable intent.”

This language gives the Board authority to repurpose funds if the original restrictions become unworkable, while keeping the gift mission-focused.

Without this clause, changing a restriction may later require donor consent, Attorney General notice, or court approval under Texas law.

Donations Requiring Additional Review

Non-liquid and restricted donations must be reviewed by the Finance Committee prior to any Board action. These include donations involving:

- Real estate or vehicles
- Items requiring storage, maintenance, or insurance
- Ongoing obligations such as staffing, reporting, or matching fund requirements
- Very narrow or long-term restrictions
- Pre-existing financial trusts
- Potential conflicts of interest or reputational concerns

Donations in these categories may be declined unless the Finance Committee determines they are clearly manageable. Following review by the Finance

Committee, the Board will vote on the recommendation of the Finance Committee regarding acceptance or refusal for the donation.

Funds Associated with Closing Churches

Treatment of assets associated with the closing of churches in the SCC require additional processes, including preparation of legal documents. These transfers are not covered by this policy.

Donor Privacy and Gift Receipts

The SCC provides written acknowledgment of all gifts and handles donor information with care and discretion. We are not able to provide financial or tax advice; donors should consult their own tax advisor.

Donor-Facing Language (for Staff Use: Brochures and Public-Facing Websites)

The following paragraph is provided for staff reference when developing brochures or public-facing web content. It should not be altered without Board review.

SCC gratefully welcomes donations that support our mission. Most gifts, including unrestricted cash contributions, are received in the ordinary course of business. More complex gifts, such as non-liquid assets or gifts with donor restrictions, require Board review and approval before acceptance. SCC may decline any donation if the Board determines that its purpose, conditions, or administrative burden is not aligned with SCC's mission or ability to manage and use it effectively. When a donor requests that a gift be restricted to a specific purpose, SCC will work with the donor to document the restriction clearly and to include a "future flexibility" provision so that, if the original restriction later becomes impossible or impracticable to carry out, the Board can redirect the gift to the closest feasible purpose that still advances SCC's mission and the donor's charitable intent. The SCC does not provide financial or tax advice.

Proposed Budget for South Central Conference 2026 (updated 11/18/2025)

	COLA	3.0%	from Personnel Committee	
	Pension rate	14.0%		
	SS/Medicare tax rate	7.65%		
	2025 BUDGET	2026 Budget	Assumptions/ Basis for budget	
Income				
350.99 OCWM Total received		118,000	Full amount, based on actual FY2025 receipts	
OCWM Stretch Goal		6,000	5% increase over actual FY2025 Total	
350.98 OCWM sent to National		(12,400)	To National	
Total for 350 SCC Contributions-OCWM	141,300	111,600		
350.02 SCC Friends of the Conference	1,100	10,000	Stretch Goal (Board has accepted goal of at least \$3,500)	
360 Income from Conference Investment Fund	111,000	185,000	5% earnings on \$3.7M for 2026; imputed budget for 2025 assumes 3%	
Total Income	253,400	306,600		
Expenses				
410 Personnel Expenses				
Total for 412 Salaries	172,086	180,027		
Total for 414 Benefits	76,696	79,704		
Total for 416 Payroll taxes	3,609	3,718		
460 Authorized Staff Expenses				
460.06 Conf Minister Travel	12,000	22,000	based of this year actual	
460.07 Conf Minister Cell Phone & Internet	2,400	2,580	215/month this year actual	
460.15 Conf. Minister Authorized Expenses	3,000	3,000	same as this year	
460.20 Other Authorized Travel & Expenses	1,500	3,650	for Business Manager and Youth Director	
Total for 460 Authorized Staff Expenses	20,900	31,230		
Total for 410 Personnel Expenses	273,291	294,678		
420 Office & Admin Expenses				
420.01 Bank Charges	0	150	estimated 2.50/month + 100	
420.02 Credit Card Processing Fees	150	250	(PayPal) increase to reflect FOC campaign	
420.03 Payroll Processing Fees	850	1,054	this year actual times infl	
420.04 Copier Lease	3,750	4,097	\$350/mon x 6 mos, shipping old copier \$1,500	
420.05 Telephone / Communication Leases	2,050	2,222	actuals, assume no increase	
420.06 Check Scanner Lease	500	600	actual	
420.07 Postage/office supplies	800	626	P.O. Box rental plus ink for printer plus minimal office supplies	
420.08 Technology Subscriptions	4,950	4,468	see details on next tab, assumes new registration/ donation software	
460.40 Other Reimbursements	2,000	0	no longer needed (record in actual account)	
420.09 Other Admin Expenses	1,000	500	Things that don't go anywhere else -- total guess	
Total for 420 Office & Admin Expenses	16,050	13,967		
480 Conference & Insurance Expenses				
480.01 Property/Liability Insurance	25,620	28,182	assumption of 10% increase	
480.02 Worker's Compensation	425	876	Assumption of 10% increase over 2025 actual of \$796	
Total for 480 Conference & Insurance Expenses	26,045	29,058		
490 Ministry & Program Expenses				
490.01 Board Expenses	17,000	6,000	Gathering after AM26 and Board Retreat in Fall; +11k approved 4/14 for Board travel to AM26	
490.02 Committee on Ministry Expenses	0	n/a	FOR 2026, in Specific Program section	
490.03 General Synod Reserve	10,000	7,000	reduced b/c every three years	
490.99 Congregational Resources		1,500	resources to aid pastors and congregations	
490.04 Ministry Participation Fees	5,065	5,532	see details on next tab	
490.98 Website Maintenance		500	Work being done now, defer other major work to 2027	
490.05 Annual Meeting Subsidy	8,000	n/a	AM will be treated a Specific Program	
Total for 490 Ministry & Program Expenses	40,065	20,532		
Total for Expenses	355,451	358,234	0.78%	
Net Operating Income	-102,051	-51,634	2025 budgeted deficit was based on unreasonable income assumptions	

510.00 Clergy Retreat	12,000	Expenses estimated at \$12k. Will submit request for grant from Brown Foundation, plus some participant fees would mostly cover all expenses.
520.00 Youth Programs		
522.00 AM 26 Youth programming	100	Expenses estimated at \$600, Fees from youth (\$75 each) would likely offset expenses
523.00 BBM Mission Trip	6,900	Some grant/funding assistance may be possible
TOTAL 520.00 Youth Programs	7,000	
530.00 Annual Meeting	10,000	Net deficit -- additional spending must be approved by BOD before any expenditures
540.00 Development of Unified COM	6,000	Expenses only, no offsetting fees or grants One overnight, in-person retreat along with several ZOOM meetings.
545.00 Disaster Preparation & Response	3,800	Expenses only, no offsetting fees or grants. National and Regional in person meetings, plus travel to high risk areas/ churches; participation fees
546.00 Southern Regional Women's Retreat	0	Fees will offset all costs
550.00 Engaging Giving Priority		
555.00 Leadership Development Priority		
560.00 Building Trust Priority	5,000	Allocation for expenses association with Priorities work
565.00 New Ways of Being Church Priority		
570.00 Future Strategy Priority (Tiger Team)		
Conference Investment in Growth & Programs	43,800	
Other Expenses		NOT USED
Net Other Income		will show if over/under grants in general
Likely Grants offset	-	for Clergy Retreat and BBM youth trip
As currently budgeted (operating loss and budgeted programs)	(95,434)	Assume no grants
Percent additional draw from CIF	2.58%	

Conference Development and Renewal Committee Report

South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ
Annual Meeting 2026

After finally becoming fully staffed during the first quarter of 2026, the Conference Development and Renewal Committee (CDRC) began its work amid a season of transition and grief following the tragic death of Rev. Arlene Turner. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Brenda Square stepped down as chair while remaining an active member of the committee. Rev. Nikki Stahl agreed to serve as chair moving forward. The committee is grateful for Rev. Square's continued leadership and participation during this transition.

Current committee members include Jim Tallsman, Rev. Monica Bradley, Rev. Vanessa Monroe, Christopher Schouten (Member in Discernment), Rev. Brenda Square, and Rev. Nikki Stahl.

Because several members were newly appointed, the committee first devoted time to reviewing the Practices, Procedures, and Policies adopted by the Board of Directors on May 30, 2025, which now guide the Conference's work in church development and renewal.

At its April 21 meeting, the CDRC voted to allocate the \$100,000 in Board-designated funds for 2026 using a 45/55 split between new church funding and renewing church microgrants for existing congregations.

The following allocations were approved for new church funding:

- Springs of Life — \$10,000
- Earth Sanctuary — \$16,500
- UCC RGV — \$16,500
- One Coast — \$2,000

In addition, the committee assigned liaisons to each ministry to strengthen relationships, communication, and ongoing support:

- Springs of Life — Rev. Nikki Stahl
- Earth Sanctuary — Rev. Vanessa
- UCC RGV — Jim Tallsman
- One Coast — Rev. Brenda Square

The committee also developed and finalized the Renewing Church Microgrant Program application and promotional materials. These grants are intended to support creative, experimental, and renewal-focused ministries within existing congregations across the South Central Conference.

The application deadline for the 2026 Renewal Microgrant cycle is August 1, 2026. The committee anticipates reviewing applications during its August meeting, with grants to be distributed in September. Draft discernment rubrics and reporting templates have also been created to support both the review process and accountability for funded ministries.

The CDRC continues to meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month and remains committed to supporting both emerging ministries and renewing congregations throughout the Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Nikki Stahl
Chair, Conference Development and Renewal Committee

Unified Committee on Ministry (UCOM)
South Central Conference, United Church of Christ

What is being proposed?

The South Central Conference is proposing the creation of a **Unified Committee on Ministry (UCOM)**—a single, conference-wide body that will carry out the work of ministerial authorization, oversight, and church support on behalf of the Associations.

This model is increasingly common across the UCC and helps ensure:

- **Consistency** in decisions and practices
 - **Stronger training and support** for those doing the work
 - **Shared leadership** across the whole Conference
-

Why now?

Over the past year, this idea has been carefully explored through:

- Conversations with all current COM leaders
- Feedback at all four Association meetings
- A conference-wide retreat with COM members
- Multiple rounds of revision and discussion

Result: Every Association COM has **unanimously approved** this proposal.

What will change?

- A **21-member Unified COM** will replace separate Association COMs
 - Members will serve in **three areas of focus**:
 - Authorization (e.g., Members in Discernment, ordination)
 - Oversight (e.g., clergy standing, reviews, boundaries)
 - Church Support (e.g., new churches, congregational care)
 - Members will be **equitably distributed across all Associations**
 - Most work will be done **online**, with **annual in-person training and relationship-building**
-

What stays the same?

Associations are not going away.

They will continue to:

- Build relationships among churches
- Gather for worship, learning, and shared life
- Host Ecclesiastical Councils and affirm new churches

This change allows Associations to focus more fully on **community and connection**.

How will this affect relationships?

- UCOM members will be **geographically distributed**
 - In-person connections will still happen when helpful
 - Regular virtual meetings will increase accessibility and participation
 - Annual gatherings will deepen trust and shared practice
-

What happens next?

- **May 2026:** Conference-wide Town Hall (Zoom)
 - **June 5–6, 2026:** Annual Meeting
 - Workshop for discussion
 - Delegate vote on bylaw changes
 - **September-October, 2026:** Association bylaw revisions at Fall Meetings
 - **2026–2027:** Implementation and transition work
 - **2027 Annual Meeting:** Election of the first UCOM
 - **Post-2027:** Training and full launch
-

Bottom line

This proposal reflects a shared vision:

To **strengthen the care, formation, and accountability of ministers and churches** across the South Central Conference—while deepening connection and collaboration among us all.

Unified Committee on Ministry

South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ

Summary

Over the past several years, various conversations have taken place across the life of our Associations about how best to handle the complex work of the Committee on Ministry (COM). This work of authorization and oversight is assigned to the Associations by the UCC Constitution. However, it is increasingly common throughout the UCC for the Conference to “act as the Association” in this particular work. The main reasons for this change are to build consistency, better manage the training required for the wide variety of work, and recruit volunteers more equitably.

Process

While disconnected conversations have been ongoing for some time, our intentional attention to this matter began last fall.

1. The current COM chairs met to discuss with Rev. Molly and each other the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the likely stumbling blocks involved with moving toward a unified COM.
2. Rev. Molly brought a proposal for moving to a unified COM to all four Association fall meetings (2025) and facilitated conversations asking a) What do you like about this proposal? b) What makes you nervous about this proposal? and c) What do you need to feel comfortable with us moving forward?
 - a. Several concerns were raised, including the concern about loss of personal relationships, fair representation from all Associations, future role of Associations, and several points regarding how we get from here to there.
 - b. The overwhelming primary concern about moving forward was open communication.
3. In January 2026, Rev. Molly convened a working retreat in Houston for all current members of all Association COMs. 19 people attended. Rev. Melanie Oommen from the national staff facilitated our time together.
 - a. Every concern from the Association meetings was discussed and discerned.
 - b. New concerns from those currently doing the work were discussed.
 - c. A variety of models for a unified COM were explored.

7. Immediately following the Annual Meeting 2027, an onboarding and training retreat will be held for the new UCOM.
-

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

- 1. Are we dissolving Associations?** No. According to the UCC Constitution, Associations have two responsibilities: the Authorization and Oversight of Ministers, and the building of community among churches in a close geographic area. This second part is critical in a Conference as geographically huge as ours. Without the load of the COM work, the Association can focus on Spring and Fall gatherings for shared business, worship, learning, and community building.
 - 2. Who does Ecclesiastical Councils (EC)?** The current plan, as voted upon by the Association COMs, is for the UCOM to journey with MIDs until they are approved for their EC. The planning and implementation of the EC would be transferred to the Association Council, which would schedule it for the next Association Meeting.
 - 3. What about accepting new churches?** The process would be the same as for the ECs. The UCOM would make the initial decision and pass it along to the Association for ratification.
 - 4. How will personal relationships be built across such a large geography?** Many of our associations are already very large geographies and have developed meaningful relationships. The new UCOM will have members intentionally distributed throughout the Conference. In-person meetings with MIDs or New Churches can be held by those in close proximity. However, most meetings will be held via ZOOM. In addition, the UCOM expects to have one in-person training and development meeting/retreat annually in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.
 - 5. I thought we decided this a long time ago. Why is it only happening now?** Decisions were made and communicated, but no coalition was ever built to advance them. During this interim ministry time, we are learning new ways of making communal decisions that are owned by more than just our Conference Minister. We are glad that Rev. Molly has agreed to extend her contract through September 2027, so she can support us through this transition.
-

UCOM Proposal Approved by all four Association COMs

The Unified Committee on Ministry for the South Central Conference will comprise 21 members elected to serve in one of three sections (oversight, authorization, or church). Members will be recruited based on gifts or insights they might bring to the COM's work.

Each Section will have 7 members, distributed across the Conference, with 1 from NOA, 2 from NTA, 2 from HOTA, and 2 from HA.

Oversight	Authorization	Church
Fitness Reviews	MID	Situational Support
Annual Information Review	Transfers of Standing	New Churches
Face-to-face Clergy 5y	License/Lay Standing	Legacy
Situational Support	Dual Standing	Manual on Church
Boundary Training	Privilege of Call	Training for Churches
	OMPS	

- Each section will initially meet monthly but will be *required* to meet at least once a quarter.
 - The entire UCOM will meet in person once a year following the Annual Meeting. This meeting will include relationship building, process review/improvement, and training opportunities. Each Section will elect its own chair, note keeper, and database liaison during this meeting.
 - The Conference Minister will meet with the three section chairs monthly as well as individual section meetings as needed.
 - The Conference Office Manager will work with the note keepers and database liaisons to maintain clergy files, church files, event registrations, Conference Communications, etc. All files will be converted to digital and be available through our Boomerang Database.
 - When a MID is approved for their Ecclesiastical Council by the Authorization section, they will coordinate with the MID's home Association and the EC will be done during an Association spring or fall meeting. Similarly, when a church is affirmed by the Church section as a new or affiliating congregation, this recommendation will go to the Association Meeting for approval.
 - When a Fitness Review is underway, members of other sections of the UCOM may be recruited to serve on the interview team. In such cases, training will be provided.
 - All members of the UCOM are encouraged to participate in ongoing training offered by the MESA team or through other relevant sources.
 - The Conference Minister will take the lead on developing programs that support the pastoral care needs of pastors, including but not limited to clergy retreats, communities of practice, clergy café, emergency financial support, etc.
-

Proposed Addition to Bylaws - for vote at Conference Annual Meeting, June 2026

Article VI – Specialized Ministries

Section 2: Unified Committee on Ministry

- A. A Unified Committee on Ministry will act on behalf of each Association within the Conference regarding matters of oversight and authorization of ministers and churches.
 - a. Members shall have a two-term limit where each term is three (3) consecutive years and must wait at least one (1) year before being eligible for reelection.
 - b. A total of 21 members will divide the work into sections, with each section choosing their own chair who will serve in this role for one year, renewable. Each Association will have at least three members of the UCOM.
 - c. The Conference Nominating Committee, with input from the Associations, will identify a balance of lay and clergy persons, equitably distributed across the associations, to be elected at the Conference Annual Meeting.
 - d. The Conference Minister will serve as ex officio with a voice and no vote.
- B. Duties include:
 - a. Authorization of ministers as outlined in the Manual On Ministry
 - b. Oversight of authorized ministers as outlined in the Manual on Ministry, including reviews of ministerial misconduct.
 - c. Support of Local Churches as outlined in the Manual on Church, including accepting new churches and accountability for churches in covenant.
 - d. Regular communication with Association Councils, staff, and churches

**SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BYLAWS
Adopted June 12, 2021**

PREAMBLE

These Bylaws, consistent with the Constitution of the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ and with the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, further define and regulate the South Central Conference (hereafter, "Conference") and those agencies established by or responsible to it and describe the covenantal relationships which local churches, Associations, and authorized ministers sustain with the Conference and with each other.

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Regular Membership. The membership of the Conference shall be composed of all local churches holding standing in an Association of the Conference and all authorized (ordained, commissioned and licensed) ministers holding standing in an Association of the Conference.

Section 2 Voting Membership.

- A. The voting membership of the Conference shall consist of:
- 1) All authorized ministers holding standing in an Association of the Conference.
 - 2) The officers of the Conference and members of the Board of Directors, except ex-officio members.
 - 3) Lay delegates to be determined as follows: Each local church shall be entitled to one lay delegate, one additional lay delegate if the membership is more than two hundred (200), and an additional delegate for every three hundred (300) members or portion thereof above five hundred (500) members. The lay delegate or delegates from each local church shall be elected or appointed by their local church in such manner as the church shall decide.
 - 4) Moderator/President of the Associations, Chairs of elected or appointed Conference committees, ~~and the Director of Outdoor Ministry.~~

- 5) Should a Conference youth group be recognized by the Conference, their officers would have voting privileges at any Conference meeting.
- B. No delegate or official representative to the meetings of the Conference shall be entitled to more than one vote.

Section 3 Registered Attendees. Each registered attendee of meetings of the Conference, who is a member of the United Church of Christ, shall have voice on all matters to come before the meeting, without regard to voting status. Authorized ministers holding standing in other denominations while serving as settled, designated, or interim ministers of local churches in Associations of the Conference shall have the privilege of voice but no vote at meetings of the Conference.

ARTICLE II – MEETINGS

Section 1 Annual Meetings and Special Meetings.

- A. The regular business of the Conference shall be inspiration; fellowship; Bible study; examination of our role and mission in this part of the world; discussion of issues facing local churches, Associations, and society; and voting on necessary corporation and administrative concerns.
- B. The Annual Meeting shall: elect Conference officers; elect members to other organizations; elect General Synod delegates; receive reports; have authority to adopt pronouncements/resolutions as set out herein; and conduct other such business as may be necessary.
- C. Special Meetings may be conducted by the Board of Directors using whatever communication method deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee including video conferencing and electronic voting.
- D. Cumulative, absentee, or proxy voting shall not be permitted at any Annual or special meeting of the Conference.

Section 2 Notice of Meeting. Notice of the date and place of the Annual Meeting and notice of date, place, and business to be transacted at special meetings shall be sent by the Board of Directors via U.S. mail or electronic communication to all authorized ministers holding standing in the Associations; each officer, Board member,

Association moderator/president; and every church within the Conference at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

Section 3 Agenda. The Board of Directors shall act as the business committee for the preparation of the agenda for the Annual Meeting and all special meetings.

Section 4 Pronouncements/Resolutions. A pronouncement/resolution relates to the theological, philosophical, or societal concerns of the church.

- A. Proposed pronouncements/resolutions shall be submitted to the Conference office in advance of the Annual Meeting by a date determined by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors or the Annual Meeting may waive this requirement for pronouncements/resolutions of an urgent nature by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting.
- B. The Board of Directors shall set aside time on the agenda of the Annual Meeting and propose standing rules for the conduct of forums for the study and discussion of submitted pronouncements/resolutions.
- C. Each registered attendee of the Annual Meeting who is a member of a local church of the United Church of Christ may participate in a forum without regard to voting status.
- D. Adoption of pronouncements/resolutions by the Annual Meeting requires the concurrence of two-thirds (2/3) percent of those present and voting.

Section 5 Date and Place of the Annual Meeting. Annual meetings of the Conference shall be held in the second quarter of each year, or as changed by vote of the Conference or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE III – CONFERENCE MINISTER AND STAFF

Section 1 The Conference Minister. There shall be a Conference Minister who shall serve the Conference on the following terms and conditions. Conference Minister titles may include Settled, Interim, Acting or Designated, but not limited to them.

A. Qualifications

- 1) The Conference Minister shall be an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ.
- 2) The Conference Minister shall be elected or secured in accordance with Article V of these Bylaws.
 - i. Settled or Designated Conference Minister shall serve the Conference under a Call Agreement between the Conference and Conference Minister
 - ii. Acting or Interim Conference Minister shall serve the Conference under a Contract Agreement between the Board of Directors and the Conference Minister.

B. Responsibilities. The Conference Minister shall:

- 1) Serve as the spiritual leader of the Conference, providing compassionate pastoral care to authorized ministers and local churches.
- 2) Serve as placement officer of the Conference.
- 3) Be the executive representative of the Conference and its Board of Directors to all churches, national boards and agencies, and those ecumenical and interfaith bodies with which the Conference is affiliated. These responsibilities may be delegated by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Board of Directors.
- 4) Assist in implementing the mission of the Conference.
- 5) Give general oversight and direction to the work of the Conference, including its subsidiaries, with guidance from the Board of Directors.
- 6) Attend all meetings of the Conference, unless the Board of Directors provides otherwise, and shall serve ex-officio with voice but no vote on all Conference boards and committees.
- 7) Make an annual report to the Conference and such other reports as the Board of Directors may require including reviews of the Conference, Specialized Ministries, and Conference staff.

C. Evaluation

- 1) The Personnel Committee, at the request of the Board of Directors, shall conduct performance reviews of the Conference Minister in accordance with evaluation policies established by the Board of Directors.

- 2) The review and any recommendations shall be shared with the Conference Minister and the Board of Directors prior to the Annual Meeting of that year.
- D. Termination
- 1) The Conference Minister may be dismissed for cause on ninety (90) days' written notice after the Board of Directors has presented grounds for such action and by a majority vote of the Conference at any Annual Meeting or special meeting.
 - 2) The Conference Minister may resign upon ninety (90) days' notice to the Board of Directors, unless an earlier time is mutually agreed upon between the Conference Minister and the Board of Directors.

Section 2 Associate Ministers and/or Executive Staff Persons.

- A. Associate Minister(s) and Executive Staff Person(s) shall be appointed by the Board of Directors, upon recommendation of the Conference Minister. The duties of such a minister/staff person shall begin at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
- B. Various duties of the Conference Minister, and others as may be required by the programs of the Conference, shall be assigned to the Associate Minister(s) or Executive Staff Person(s) by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Board of Directors.
- C. Financial arrangements for Associate Minister(s) and Executive Staff Person(s) shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and included in the Conference's Statement of Faith and Mission including budget/spending plan.
- D. Termination
 - 1) An Associate Minister or Executive Staff Person may resign by giving a minimum of two (2) month written notice to the Board of Directors, unless an earlier time is mutually agreed upon between the minister/staff person and the Board of Directors.
 - 2) The Board of Directors may terminate an Associate Minister or Executive Staff Person either by
 - a) Giving a minimum of two (2) month written notice to the Associate Minister or Executive Staff Person, unless an earlier time is mutually agreed upon between the minister/staff person and the Board of Directors, or

b) A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

~~Section 3 Director of Outdoor Ministry at Slumber Falls Camp and Retreat Center.~~

- ~~A. The Conference Minister, in consultation with the Slumber Falls Camp and Retreat Center Camp Council (hereafter, "Camp Council"), shall recommend to the Board of Directors the name of a person to serve as Director of Outdoor Ministry.~~
- ~~B. The Director of Outdoor Ministry shall serve the Conference under a contract or call agreement between the Board of Directors and the Director of Outdoor Ministry.~~
- ~~C. The Director of Outdoor Ministry shall be responsible to and supervised directly by the Conference Minister, ultimately answering to the Board of Directors.~~
- ~~D. The Director of Outdoor Ministry shall serve on the Board of Directors ex-officio with voice but no vote.~~
- ~~E. The responsibilities of the Director of Outdoor Ministry shall be developed by the Camp Council in consultation with the Conference Minister and the Board of Directors.~~

Section 4 3 Office Personnel. Secretaries and other office personnel may be employed by the Conference Minister for positions and at rates of compensation approved by the Board of Directors. They shall work under the direction of the Conference Minister and in cooperation with the members of the staff.

ARTICLE IV – THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the following persons:

- A. The four (4) officers of the Conference;
- B. Two (2) representatives from each Association, elected by the Conference;
- C. The moderator/president of each Association, who shall serve with voice but no vote, and who may delegate this position to a representative of the Association;
- D. Youth and Young Adult Representative, elected by the Conference, who shall serve with voice and vote.

- E. A representative of, and appointed by, the Regional Council of the Christian Church of the Southwest (Disciples of Christ), who shall serve with voice and vote;
- F. The Conference Minister, who shall serve as ex-officio with voice but no vote;
- ~~G. The Director of Outdoor Ministry, who shall serve as ex-officio with voice but no vote;~~
- H. At least one of the above voting members shall be under the age of thirty (30) at the time of election.

Section 2 Board of Directors' Covenant.

- A. The Board of Directors shall establish a covenant providing the guidelines to which the members of the board shall abide by and shall hold each other accountable to.
 - 1) The covenant shall be reviewed each year and with new members.
 - 2) The covenant shall be read out loud together at the beginning of each board meeting to serve as a reminder of these guidelines and accountability.
- B. The Board of Directors, with a two-third (2/3) vote, may remove for cause any person continually acting in ways contrary to approved covenant.

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall be the Board of Trustees of the Conference. The signatures of the President and Secretary of the Board of Directors shall constitute legal signatures.

Section 4 Board of Director Meetings.

- A. The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times throughout the year. A special meeting may be called by the President, the Conference Minister, or at least four (4) members of the Board of Directors. A roll call shall be taken to determine those in attendance and to ensure that a quorum is present.
- B. The Board of Directors may hold meetings by teleconference or other electronic device following due notice to all members. The Board of Directors may also allow electronic voting provided a quorum of the voting members participate and a minimum time period is set for electronic voting.
- C. Board of Director Meetings are open meetings unless the Executive Committee calls an executive session. Executive

session is limited to the Executive Committee and anyone invited by the Executive Committee.

Section 5. A majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business. Decisions shall be made by the majority of those present and voting. Attendance by voting Board members is expected. Should a voting Board member be absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, the Board Member shall be contacted by the President of the Board. After three (3) consecutive absences, the Board member shall be asked to resign. The vacancy shall then be filled by the Board of Directors.

Section 6. The Board of Directors shall regularly review Conference priorities in consultation with the Conference Minister, Associate Minister(s) and/or Executive Staff, to the end that the best possible stewardship of resources be secured.

- A. The Board of Directors shall regularly initiate an evaluation of structure and personnel, making appropriate recommendations and changes, when necessary.
- B. The Board of Directors shall present a Conference Statement of Faith and Mission for the succeeding year at the Annual Meeting for the purpose of it being developed, by the Board of Directors, into the official Conference budget/spending plan.
 - 1) The Board of Directors shall present and communicate a proposed Conference budget/spending plan in the third (3rd) quarter.
 - 2) The Board of Directors shall finalize, present, and communicate a finalized Conference budget/spending plan in the fourth (4th) quarter.
 - 3) Such Statement of Faith and Mission including finalized budget/spending plan shall take effect at the beginning of the next fiscal year.
 - 4) The Board of Directors shall have the power to adjust the budget/spending plan as may be needed during the fiscal year and will report and communicate adjustments as they occur.
- C. The Board of Directors shall make rules and recommendations to the Nominating Committee as it deems necessary to avoid any potential Conflicts of Interest by Board Members, Committee Members, or Nominees.

Section 7. The Board of Directors, at the recommendation of the Conference Minister or on its own initiative, shall establish committees/ministry teams to exercise the work and ministries of the Conference. The Conference Minister, with guidance from the Board of Directors, shall design, appoint and direct them in order to accomplish the priorities and goals of the Conference. All such committees/ministry teams shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall dissolve such groups upon completion of their tasks.

Section 8. A vacancy in any elective position of the Conference ~~or~~ ~~Camp Council~~ shall be filled by the Board of Directors until a successor is duly elected at the next Annual Meeting.

Section 9. Upon a vacancy occurring in the office of Conference Minister, the Board of Directors has the following options: The Board of Directors may

- A. Appoint a nine (9) member search committee, composed of four (4) authorized ministers and five (5) lay persons with each Association represented, to proceed at once with the task of searching for and recommending a successor. The Board of Directors shall receive the recommendation and upon concurrence shall nominate a successor. Procedures for calling the Conference Minister follow such provisions as set forth in Articles III and V of the Bylaws; or
- B. Secure an Acting or Interim Conference Minister, without a vote from Conference membership, for a contracted period of time with a specific agenda for that time while the Conference plans the next steps for leadership.
 1. An Interim Conference Minister shall not be eligible for settled position
 2. An Acting Conference Minister may be eligible for settled position; or
- C. Recommend a Designated Minister. Procedures for calling a Designated Conference Minister follow such provisions as set forth in Articles III and V of the Bylaws.

Section 10. The Board of Directors may engage the services of attorneys, bookkeepers, accountants, auditors, financial advisors

and/or other consultants or agents on behalf of the Conference to carry out their work and responsibilities. They shall have the authority to enter into contractual agreements on behalf of the Conference, to designate persons authorized to sign checks and legal documents on behalf of the Conference and shall arrange bonding as needed.

Section 11 Officers.

- A. The President of the Conference shall
 - 1) Act as Moderator at all meetings of the Conference.
 - 2) Chair the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee
 - 3) Execute all deeds, contracts, and other documents requiring the official signature of the Conference.
 - 4) Perform such other duties usual to such office.
 - 5) The President may serve ex-officio on any committee described in these Bylaws or created in the future.
- B. The Vice President of the Conference shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence, inability or refusal to act, or by request of the President.
- C. The Secretary of the Conference shall
 - 1) Keep a permanent, accurate, legible record of all meetings and transactions of the Conference and the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee.
 - 2) Be the custodian of the seal of the Conference.
 - 3) Affix said seal to all written documents requiring the seal and attest the same by signature.
 - 4) Perform such other duties as usually pertain to this office.
- ~~D.~~ The Treasurer shall be responsible for the oversight of financial policies and affairs of the Conference ~~including Slumber Falls Retreat Center.~~
 - 1) The Treasurer shall be responsible for
 - a) Bank Accounts – selecting a bank, opening and closing accounts, signing checks, and investing excess funds wisely.
 - b) Financial Transaction Oversight – being knowledgeable about who has access to the Conference's funds, and any outstanding bills or debts owed, as well as developing systems for keeping cash flow manageable.
 - 1. Bookkeepers, accountants, auditors and financial advisors may be utilized per Article IV Section 10.

~~2. Slumber Falls Retreat Center may maintain their own bank accounts, financial transactions, budgets, and financial policies with Treasurer having full access and oversight as well.~~

- c) Records/Documentation
 - 1. Recording true and accurate records of all business transacted.
 - 2. Ensuring that all funds, securities, papers, personal property and financial documents belonging to or entrusted to or in any way committed to the care of the Conference are maintained for the Conference at a place directed by the Board of Directors.
- d) Budget/Spending Plans – developing, with the Board of Directors, the annual Statement of Faith and Mission and budget/spending plan as well as comparing the actual revenues and expenses incurred against the budget.
- e) Annual Financial Review – ensuring annual financial review conducted per financial policies.
- f) Financial Policies – overseeing the development and observations of the Conference’s financial policies. Such policies are to be approved by the Board of Directors and shall be reviewed periodically.
- g) Reports
 - 1. Keeping the Board of Directors regularly informed of key financial events, trends, concerns and assessment of fiscal health in addition to completing required financial reporting forms (balance sheet, summary of income and expense statement) in a timely fashion and making these forms available to the Board of Directors.
 - 2. Providing annual financial reports (balance sheet, summary of income and expense statement) to the Conference.
- h) Finance Subcommittee – if a finance subcommittee is needed and formed, serve as chair.
- i) Insurance - ensuring contracts are in place and current and that insurance is maintained on all Conference property.
- j) Taxes - tax accounting, reporting and completion of required tax forms.

- k) Housing Allowances - insuring that the housing allowances of the Conference Minister and any other authorized ministers paid by Conference is approved prior to the end of the year preceding payments.
 - l) The Conference's OCWM percentage – assisting the Conference Minister and the Board of Directors in consulting with the National Office of the United Church of Christ in reaching a mutually agreed upon retained Conference percentage of contributions of Our Church's Wider Mission.
- 2) Perform such other duties as usually pertain to this office.

Section 12 Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall include the four (4) officers of the Conference and the Conference Minister, who serves as an ex-officio member with voice but no vote. The Executive Committee shall perform such duties as assigned by the Board of Directors. It shall meet at the call of either the Board of Directors, the Conference Minister, or the President of the Conference. Reports of such meetings shall be made to the Board of Directors at its next scheduled meeting.

Section 13 Personnel Committee.

- A. The Board of Directors, shall establish a Personnel Committee comprised of three (3) persons appointed by the Board of Directors. A Member of the Board shall be one of the members and chair of the committee with voice and vote.
- B. The committee's responsibilities shall entail: providing encouragement and support, serving as an outside source of wisdom and guidance to staff, and being available to staff whenever concerns cannot be resolved administratively; recommending personnel policies to the Board of Directors; assisting in the development of position descriptions; and ensuring that performance reviews of staff are conducted.
- C. The Personnel Committee, at the request of the Board of Directors, shall conduct performance reviews of any Conference employee in accordance with evaluation performance policies established by the Board of Directors. Review and any recommendations shall be shared with the reviewee and the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

Section 1 Officers of the Board of Directors. The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting per Article V of the Constitution. Their terms of office shall begin immediately on the adjournment of the meeting at which they are elected and continue until their successors are elected and assume office. The President and Vice President, having served a full term, shall not be eligible for consecutive succession in the same office. The Secretary and Treasurer may be eligible for two (2) consecutive full terms in the same office, after which, they shall not be eligible for consecutive succession in the same office. Secretary and Treasurer must sit out one (1) full term before eligible to serve in that same office.

Section 2 Conference Minister.

- A. The Settled or Designated Conference Minister shall be nominated by the Board of Directors and elected by the Conference at the Annual Meeting or a special meeting. If the nominee is elected, the Conference shall tender a call.
- B. The Settled Conference Minister shall serve a seven (7) year term upon which the Conference Minister must be reelected at the Annual Meeting or a special meeting.
- C. The Designated Conference Minister shall serve under a call agreement for a specific period of time and defined purpose and may be eligible for the settled position or for a renewed designated term, if specified in initial call agreement.

Section 3 Representatives of the Board of Directors. Representatives on the Board of Directors from Associations shall be elected by the Conference for three (3) year terms. All persons elected shall assume office immediately on the adjournment of the meeting at which they are elected. Representatives must wait at least one (1) year before eligible for reappointment as an Association representative to the Board of Directors.

Section 4 Nominating Committee.

- A. Election of Nominating Committee
 - 1) A Nominating Committee of eight (8) members, nominated by the Board of Directors, shall be elected by the

Conference at the Annual Meeting for three (3) year terms, to rotate.

- 2) A Member of the Board of Directors, who may be either an authorized minister or lay person, shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and serve as a ninth (9th) member and convener of the committee with voice and vote.
 - 3) Each Association shall be represented on the Nominating Committee but with no more than two (2) representatives from any Association at a time. If possible, the membership of the nominating committee shall consist of both an authorized minister and a lay person from each association. The appointed Board member does not represent an Association.
 - 4) Associations may submit nominees to the Board of Directors, to serve as a representative of the Association on the nominating committee.
 - 5) No member shall be eligible for more than two consecutive terms.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall nominate for election by the Conference
- 1) At least one person for each occurring vacancy in the Officers of the Conference and the elected Board of Directors;
 - 2) Delegates and representatives to other bodies and institutions, per those bodies and institutions' guidelines;
 - 3) General Synod delegates and alternates after inviting and considering nominations from Associations;
 - a) Delegates and alternates to General Synod shall be divided as equally as possible between authorized ministers and lay persons, honoring the number of persons who must be under the age of thirty (30) as set forth in the United Church of Christ Bylaws.
 - b) The President and Vice President may be delegates during their terms of office.
 - 4) ~~Camp Council vacancies at each Annual Meeting per Camp Council's Plan of Organization and Operation.~~
- C. Nomination Considerations
- 1) It is the policy of the Conference, in electing or selecting persons to Conference positions, to be inclusive, considering the diversity of the Conference. The nomination or selection

to Conference offices and committees shall have due regard to diversity criteria of the national church. A person nominated for election to Conference office shall be a member of the United Church of Christ in good standing with a local church.

- 2) The Nominating Committee shall consider any specialized skills, interests, or experience that would enhance the work of the Conference for the vacancy. The Nominating Committee shall also consider any existing or anticipated roles of the nominee and avoid nominations that might present any potential Conflicts of Interest.
- 3) Persons named on the Nominating Committee slate shall have been notified in advance of their nomination and shall have indicated their willingness to serve if elected. Nominations may be made from the floor for all positions except Conference Minister. Any person nominated from the floor must likewise have indicated a willingness to serve if elected.

ARTICLE VI – SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

~~Section 1: Christian Education, Spiritual Formation and Outdoor Ministry.~~

- ~~A. Christian education, spiritual formation, and outdoor ministries are sacred endeavors of the Conference. In order to provide church-wide opportunities for Christian growth, designated spaces, and life-giving atmospheres, the Conference owns, operates, and oversees Slumber Falls Camp and Retreat Center, located on River Road in Comal County near New Braunfels, Texas.~~
- ~~B. The Board of Directors formed the Camp Council as a standing sub-committee under the Board of Directors through the Plan of Organization and Operation to manage and operate camp facilities and programs.~~
- ~~C. The Director of Outdoor Ministry, in consultation with the Camp Council, is charged by the Board of Directors in maintaining, safeguarding, and growing this specialized ministry of the Conference by overseeing the management, operations, and~~

~~programs as outlined in the Plan of Organization and Operation.~~

- ~~D. The Plan of Organization and Operation shall be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors. Any changes must have the approval of the Board of Directors prior to execution.~~
- ~~E. The Director of Outdoor Ministry, in consultation with the Camp Council, shall review the camp operations and revenue on a yearly basis, and submit a budget to the Board of Directors to review, modify, and ratify. Changes to the budget shall be made in conjunction with the Director of Outdoor Ministry and Camp Council representative on the Board of Directors to ensure the feasibility of the requests and potential costs or changes that might occur.~~
- ~~F. The Board of Directors and the Director of Outdoor Ministry, in consultation with the Camp Council, shall explore feasible and practical options for shared ministries, resources, and costs in order to be good stewards of capital and financial assets.~~

Section 21 Church Development and Renewal.

- A. The Conference Minister, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint members to the Church Development and Renewal Committee.
 - 1) Members shall have a term limit of three (3) consecutive years and must wait at least one (1) year before eligible for reappointment.
 - 2) Current recipients of Church Development and Renewal Conference funding shall not be eligible to serve on the Church Development and Renewal Committee.
 - 3) Any member seeking funding shall need to resign before the meeting at which a funding request is made.
- B. Duties include:
 - 1) Identifying opportunities for new church development in the Conference and providing leadership in creating new local churches.
 - 2) Working with existing local churches that are preparing to establish new and intentional growth in ministry.

- 3) Administering the various church development Conference funds in accordance with metrics-based disbursement policies developed by the Board of Directors.
- 4) Funds shall not be disbursed without Executive Committee approval in consultation with Conference Minister.

ARTICLE VII - RULES

Unless otherwise provided for herein or by vote of the Conference, the rules of parliamentary practice compiled in Roberts Rules of Order, Revised shall govern all meetings of the Conference.

ARTICLE VIII – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Conference shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at any Annual Meeting or special meeting of the Conference, provided that the proposed amendments have been submitted to each church and authorized minister at least six (6) weeks prior to the meeting of the Conference.



SCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE ELECTION SLATE

JUNE 3, 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT:	Rev. Rameen Zahed, Houston Association Term: May 2026 - 2028
VICE PRESIDENT:	Kim Beauchamp, Heart of Texas Association Term: Completion of Rev. Rameen's term through May 2027
TREASURER:	Carol Etter, New Orleans Association Term: May 2026 - 2028
SECRETARY:	Rev. Ken Ehrke, North Texas Association Term: May 2026 – 2028

BOARD ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES (3 Year Term)

HEART OF TEXAS:	Kevin Dietz Term: 2026 – 2028
HOUSTON:	Robin Stilwell Term: 2026 - 2028

Need 1 HOTA Rep, 1 NTA Rep, and 1 Youth and Young Adult Rep for 2026-2028

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (3 Year Term)

HEART OF TEXAS:	Rev. Dr. Carla Cheatham (Clergy, Chair) Term: 2025 – 2027
HOUSTON:	Kelly Goodson (Lay) Term: 2025 – 2027
NEW ORLEANS:	
NORTH TEXAS:	Rev. Lisetta Thomas Term: 2026 - 2029

Need HOTA member, HA member, and NOA member for Nom-Com

NOMINEE BIO'S

Rev. Rameen Zahed



Rameen Zahed is the Pastor at St. John's UCC in Rosenberg, TX. Prior to his position at St. John's, he served as the Senior Pastor at the Old Meeting House in East Montpelier, VT and Treasurer of the VT Conference. Before entering ministry, Rameen worked as a Risk Manager at various energy companies and was an active member of the UCC. He attended Union Theological Seminary in NYC and Hope College in Holland, MI. His hobbies are cooking, yard work, outdoor sports, and reading. Rameen and his wife, Aster, live in Richmond, TX with their three college-age children: Yasmeeen, Andrew, and Ethan.

Kim Beauchanp



Kim is originally from Seattle, Washington where she received both her BSW and MSW from Eastern Washington University. She has spent her career working with At-risk youth in a variety of settings including Juvenile Court where she worked with restorative justice programs, youth shelters, Victim/Offender Mediation programs, and Prevention/Intervention before coming to Communities in Schools of San Antonio in the fall of 2018. She started off as a Site Coordinator with CIS at Holmes High School where she was able to support the students, families and staff for 4 years before transitioning to the role of Field Manager in 2022. She now oversees the CIS campuses in the Judson cluster as well as Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy and Specialty Courts. Kim's passion is Restorative Justice and is excited to see it being rolled out in our districts and across our city. She is also proud to be a wife and mom to 3 amazing adult children who continue to help keep her grounded and challenged every day.

Rev. Ken Ehrke



Rev Ken Ehrke is a pastor in the North Texas Association who retired in 2024 after 41 years in ministry. He served as secretary of the NTA and NTA COM for 6 years and has served as secretary of the SCC board for one term.

Kevin Dietz



Kevin is a member of Congregational Church of Austin; married to Rachel, three children: Isabella (22), Francesca (20), and John (20); Deputy Director of Texas Legal Services Center (www.tlsc.org) www.linkedin.com/in/kevinpdietz

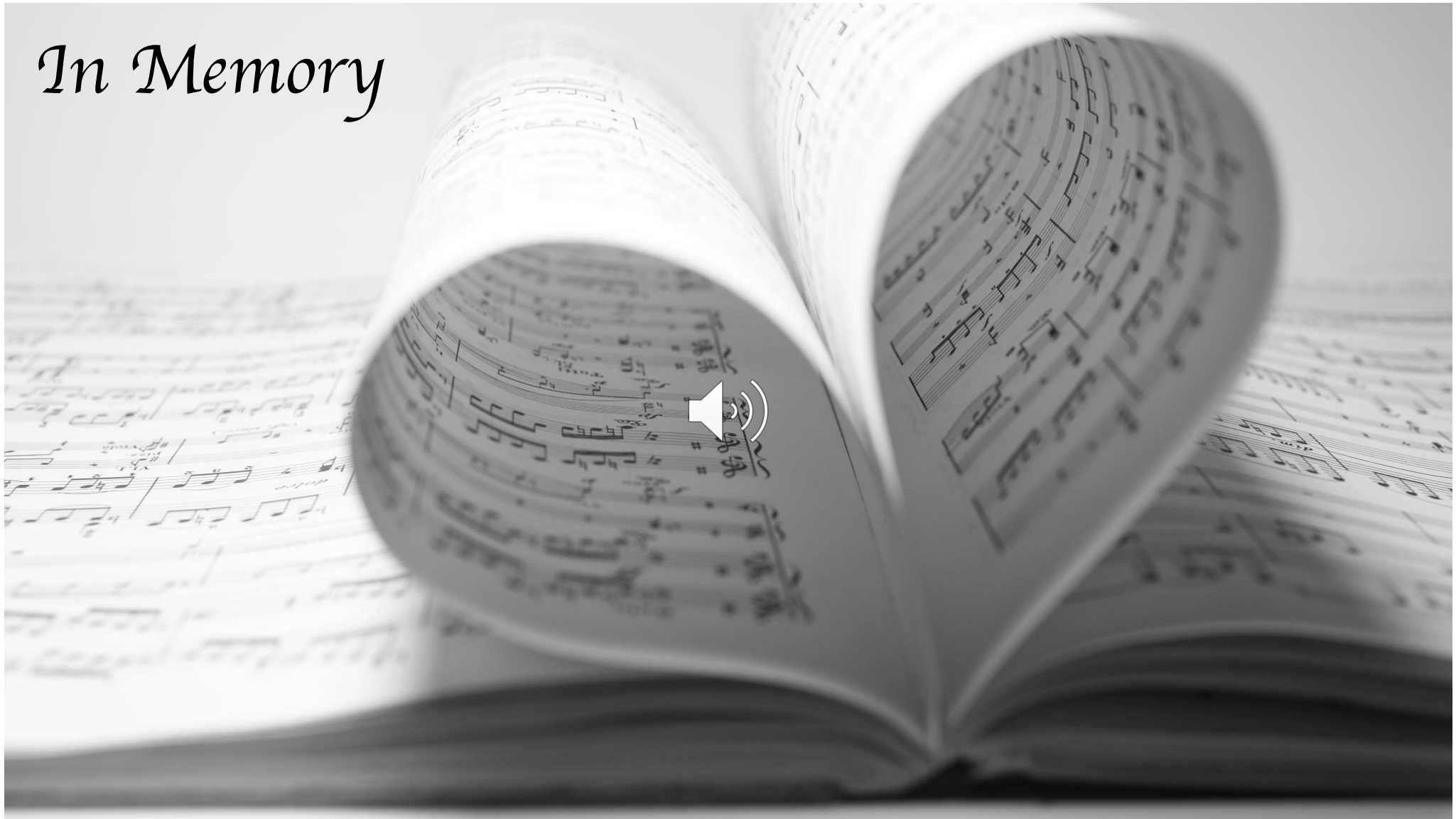
Debra Joseph



Debra is a Lay member of St. Paul's New Orleans and Beecher Memorial. She is a Member of the New Orleans Association. Debra presently serves as the Treasurer of the NOA and has served as the former Chair of the Conference Nominating Committee, NOA Moderator, President of the SCC Board of Directors, and a National UCC Board Representative.

She has been a member of the UCC since 1961 and has served in many positions in the local church, association, conference and the National UCC office and across denominational lines.

In Memory





Rev. Brenda Fluitt

October 12, 1956 - June 7, 2025

Rev. Ludy Manthei
November 23, 1945 - January 5, 2026





Rev. Bill Royster

October 31, 1935 – January 27, 2026



Rev. Arlene Turner

November 22, 1958 – March 16, 2026

The Dash

*I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend
He referred to the dates
From the beginning to the end*

*He noted that first came the date of birth
And spoke the following dates with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years*

*For that dash represented all the time spent
alive on earth
And now only those that loved this friend
Know what that little line is worth*

*For it matters not how much we own;
The cars, the house, the cash,
What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.*



New Ministers to the SCC 2025 ~ 2026

<i>Association</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Standing</i>	<i>Church</i>
Heart of Texas	Rev. Larry Gipson	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	Spring of Life Church
Heart of Texas	Rev. Kyle Riley	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	Friends Congregational UCC
Heart of Texas	Rev. Dr. Burt Burluson	Ordained By Another Denomination	Serving St. Peter's Church of Coupland
Heart of Texas	Rev. Chelsea McCutchin	Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing	Serving Trinity Church of Austin
Houston	Chaplin Robert Goodson	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	Bering Church
North Texas	Rev. Monica Bradley	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	New Church – Chiesa Nuova
North Texas	Rev. Isaac Lawson	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	First Congregational, Ft. Worth
North Texas	Rev. Dr. Thomas Crosby	UCC Ordained Ministerial Standing	Chaplain



Installations & Ordinations June 2025 – May 2026

October 26, 2025	Rev. Peter Scie	Central St. Matthew UCC	Ordination
November 14, 2025	Dr. Mary Brandt	Bering Church UCC	Ordination
November 16, 2025	Rev. Larry Gipson	Springs of Life Church	Installation
February 1, 2026	Rev. Winner Laws	Promise UCC	Installation
February 8, 2026	Rev. Rameen Zahed	St. John's UCC of Rosenberg	Installation
February 15, 2026	Rev. Dr. Burt Burleson	St. Peter's Church of Coupland	Installation

***HEART OF TEXAS
ASSOCIATION
ORDIVERSARIES***

Minister	Ordination Year Anniversary
Rev. Kerry Kirtley	5
Rev. Chelsea McCutchin	5
Rev. Scott Martin	45
Rev. James Pohl	50
Rev. Ralph Ludwig	60

***HOUSTON ASSOCIATION
ORDIVERSARIES***

Minister	Ordination Year Anniversary
Rev. Robert Blake	15
Rev. Joshua Lawrence	15
Rev. Teddy Kissell	20
Rev. Melinda Foster	25
Rev. Janee Wenninger	30
Rev. Rita Wilbur	30
Rev. Capitolina Apura	40
Rev. Felix Carrion	40
Rev. Deborah Whisnand	45
Rev. Barney Federwisch	65

***NEW ORLEANS
ASSOCIATION
ORDIVERSARIES***

Minister	Ordination Year Anniversary
Rev. Susan Lassalle	20
Rev. Malcolm Richard	20

***NORTH TEXAS
ASSOCIATION
ORDIVERSARIES***

Minister	Ordination Year Anniversary
Rev. Yinessa Romero	5
Rev. Betsy Stirbens	5
Rev. Paul Yu	5
Rev. Manda Adams	15
Rev. Leonard Dacy	15
Rev. Jeremy Rose	15
Rev. Nan Baker	25
Rev. Kristin Galle	25
Rev. Dr. Alberto Magana	25
Rev. Kendrick Crawford	30
Rev. Dr. Gary Kindley	45
Rev. Dr. Don Longbottom	50
Rev. Mark Miller	60
Rev. Tom Tucker	70
Rev. Paul Mohr	77

Churches Donating to OCWM in 2025

Heart of Texas Association

Congregational UCC-Austin
Faith UCC-New Braunfels
Friends Congregational-College Station
Rolling Hills Community-Lago Vista
St Paul UCC-Corpus Christi
St Peters Church of Coupland UCC
United Christian Church-Austin
Springs of Life Church

Houston Association

Bering Church
First Congregational-Houston
Open Arms
St John UCC-Houston
St John-Rosenberg
St Peter United UCC-Houston

New Orleans Association

Beecher Memorial
Little Farms UCC-New Orleans
St. Paul UCC New Orleans
Central St Matthew-New Orleans

North Texas Association

Cathedral of Hope-Dallas
Central Congregational-Dallas
Embrace UCC
First Community-Dallas
First Congregational-Fort Worth
Round Grove United-Lewisville
St John-Robinson
St Paul's E&R UCC-Dallas
St. Paul's UCC - Gerald
The Gathering

5 for 5 Churches in 2025

Heart of Texas Association

Congregational UCC-Austin
Friends Congregational-College Station
St Paul UCC-Corpus Christi

Houston Association

Open Arms
St John UCC-Houston
St John-Rosenberg
St Peter United UCC-Houston

New Orleans Association

St. Paul UCC New Orleans

North Texas Association

Cathedral of Hope-Dallas
Central Congregational-Dallas
First Community-Dallas
Round Grove United-Lewisville
St John-Robinson
St. Paul's UCC - Gerald

South Central Conference Annual Meeting. May 30-31, 2025
Hosted by the Houston Association at The Journey and Bethel UCC Houston

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 2:00pm by SCC President of the Board, Rev. Arlene Turner. An overview of the business and meeting was given by Rev. Turner

Quorum was met with 20 churches and 53 clergy present in person and on zoom.

Rev Brook Dooley – SCC Youth Ministry Director – gave an overview of the youth ministry and how local church youth leaders can gain support from one another and the conference leadership.

Greetings from Disciples of Christ by the Southwest Community Regional Minister of New Church Starts – Darren Phillips. Their purpose is to Love, Serve and Transform. He celebrated the new church start, Springs of Life in San Marcos which is a joint effort of UCC and DOC with Rev Larry Gipson as lead pastor.

Rev Leslie Jackson presented the Church Development and Revitalization report. We have provided support to Springs of Life –Rev Larry Gipson and UCC Rio Grande Valley – Rev. Ali Lopez and support the work of the new church in Biloxi, Mississippi. Rev. Gipson and Rev. Lopez each spoke about the exciting work in their new communities.

The Finance Committee report was presented by Carol Etter and Ann Stockert. Data was presented on our current financial position and how our money is invested. The conference offer gratitude and thanks to Ann Stockert and Stacey Silvey who has spent many hours researching and restoring our financial books to meet standard accounting practices.

Nominating Committee – Chair Debra Joseph, presented the slate of nominees presented today. Slate is on page 61-62

President 2025-2027. Rev Arlene Turner (she was filling a vacant term)

Vice President Virginia Smith (lay) 2025-2027 (she was filling a vacant term)

Treasurer Carol Etta 2025 -2026

HOT Association Representative Kim Beauchamp 2025-2028

If Carol Etter is elected treasurer, then we will have a second election to fill her position as New Orleans Association Representative – Thomas Gorham 2024-2027. This is the slate we will vote on Saturday morning. If there are nominations from the floor, please get their names and biographies to the nominating committee.

SCC Business Meeting is adjourned at 2:45pm and will resume Saturday morning at 9:10am

Annual Conference Meeting Resumed at 9:05 am Saturday May 31, 2025

Sacred Time was a Sound Bath breathing experience.

Nominating Committee Chair, Debra Joseph, spoke about UCC General Synod coming up in July 11-15 and how delegates are selected to represent the SCC Conference by the nominating committee. Nominating Committee begins delegate selection the January before General Synod.

Quorum is declared.

Motion to approve the Minutes from the May 17-18, 2024, Annual Meeting as presented in the meeting booklet by Carol Etter, second by Ann Stockert. **Motion carried with 1 abstaining.**

Minutes from the November 2, 2024, special called meeting were presented. Motion by Carol Etter, second by Ann Stockert to approve the May 2024 minutes. **Motion carried.**

Open Forum – no speakers

Kim Wood – Southeast Conference Minister and member of Back Bay Mission Board spoke of the ongoing ministry at Back Bay Mission. They are dealing with loss of government funding including community health worker salaries. The community has begun to step up offering financial and volunteer worker support. She invited churches and individuals to come volunteer.

Jasmine Quinerly spoke in her role as UCC Board Vice President about the call to duty, led by our president, UCC faces in this time of racism, prejudice and political turmoil. On May 29, 2025, Jasmine was elected as the new Chairperson of the UCC Board.

John Etter, from New Orleans, spoke as South Central Conference Disaster Response Coordinator defining what are disasters and how UCC is prepared to respond. Jessica Dutton, from Corpus Christi, has come on as co-coordinator for SCC.

Elections of Officers – Moderator asked for additional nominations to the floor. There were none. **Motion from the nominating committee to approve the slate as presented. Second by Ann Stockert. The slate was elected by all in person and online, Motion to elect Thomas Gorhom to the position of NOLA representative 2025-2027** which was vacant after election of Carol Etter as treasurer. **All voted in favor. Motion carried.**

The members of the Nominating Committee recommend the following people for election to the Nominating Committee:

Heart Of Texas –Rev. Carla Cheatham, Chair (Term End June 2027) Van Herd, Lay (Term Ends June 2027)

Houston –Rev. Rochelle “Shelley” Washington (Term Ends June 2026) Kelly Goodson, MID (Term Ends June 2027)

New Orleans –Dorcas Akande, Lay, (Term Ends June 2027) Debra Joseph, Lay (Term Ends June 2026-2027)

North Texas – Lisetta Thomas, Clergy (Term Ends June 2027). Rev. Chantel Nelson, (Term Ends June 2026)

Motion to approve the slate for nominating Committee members as presented. Motion carried.

Church Sharing Session – Individual Churches shared exciting events in their congregations.

The Business Meeting ended at 11:00am. It was officially adjourned after lunch at 1:10pm.

Rev. Ken Ehrke -- Secretary

Prayer Returning to Worship Rameen

Let us pray.

God of Pentecost,

We pause now at the end of our work together.

Today we have listened, discerned, discussed, voted, celebrated, and remembered.

We have practiced once again what it means to be a covenant people.

Not because we agree on everything.

Not because everything has gone according to plan.

But because your Spirit continues to draw us together.

We thank you for the faithfulness of congregations.

For the generosity of leaders.

For the wisdom of elders.

For the energy of new voices.

For all who continue to say yes to your call.

We remember those who are not with us today

And we ask that the same Spirit who gathered the church in Acts still gather us now.

Renew our imagination.

Renew our courage.

Renew our commitment to one another.

And lead us into the future you are preparing.

Amen.

Introduction to the Closing Playing of "If She Has Her Way" Molly

Earlier today we listened to this song as an invitation.

Now we hear it again after spending these hours together in conversation, discernment, celebration, and decision.

As we listen a second time, I find myself thinking about the many women whose leadership has helped bring us to this moment.

Women who preached when they were told they could not.

Women who led when leadership was not easily given.

Women who nurtured communities, challenged injustice, and helped the church imagine new possibilities.

I think of Arlene.

I think of those whose names we know and those whose names have been forgotten.

And I give thanks for the Spirit moving through all of them.

The church is not the same because they were here.

The church is not the same because the Spirit is here.

May we listen once more for that Spirit's voice among us.

[If She Has Her Way]

Scripture: Acts 2: 43-47 Charles

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad

and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Meditation Molly

When I arrived in the South Central Conference, one of the things people talked about was Annual Meeting.

Not always with excitement.

Not always with joy.

Some spoke of conflict.

Some spoke of disappointment.

Some spoke of wounds that had not yet healed.

Many people in our Conference aren't ready to set aside those memories.

And that matters.

Because community is fragile.

Trust takes time to build.

And only moments to break.

When we read Acts 2, it can sound like an idealized picture of the church.

Everyone together.

Everyone sharing.

Everyone praising God.

But I don't think Luke is describing perfection.

I think Luke is describing a miracle.

The miracle that people choose each other.

The miracle that community is possible.

The miracle that the Holy Spirit can create belonging where division once lived.

Over the past two years, I have watched this Conference choose community again and again.

Not perfectly.

But intentionally.

I have watched people listen more carefully.

Assume better intentions.

Extend more grace.

Build new relationships.

I have watched trust begin to grow.

That may not make headlines.

But it is holy work.

And it is the work of the Spirit.

Earlier we heard the words,

"The church will never be the same. The Holy Spirit is to blame."

I hope that's true.

Because if she has her way,

walls will continue to fall.

If she has her way,

our wounds will not have the final word.

If she has her way,

love will not be denied.

And if she has her way,
the South Central Conference will continue becoming a community where no church, no pastor,
and no person has to walk alone.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.

A Blessing for the Community molly

As we leave this gathering,
may we remember that though our screens go dark,
our covenant remains.
May we carry with us the quiet wisdom
that first drew us together:
that none of us was meant to journey alone,
that churches are stronger in community,
that burdens become lighter when shared,
and that joy multiplies when offered freely.
May the Spirit who gathered believers long ago,
breaking bread together,
sharing what they had,
learning and praying side by side,
continue to gather us still.
When we are tempted toward isolation,
may she call us back to one another.
When we are tempted toward fear,
may she widen our vision.
When we are tempted toward scarcity,
may she remind us of the abundance that emerges
when gifts are shared and lives are held in common.
May the courage of those who came before us
remain alive among us.
May the witness of beloved saints,
especially Arlene,
continue to bless our path.
May we be a Conference
where walls fall more easily than bridges,
where all are welcomed with dignity,
where love is not denied,
and where the gifts of every person
are received with gratitude.
May we continue to trouble stagnant waters.
May we continue to make room for new dreams.
May we continue to trust the transforming work
already begun among us.
And when the road ahead is uncertain,
may we remember that we do not walk it alone.
For the Holy Spirit has not finished with us yet.

She goes before us.
She walks beside us.
She dwells within us.
And if she has her way,
our hearts will not fade,
our courage will make a change,
and God's love will reign.
Go in peace,
held in grace,
bound in covenant,
and blessed in community.
Amen.