

**Penn Central Conference
United Church of Christ
Conference ZOOM Budget Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2023**

The Penn Central Conference virtual Budget Meeting was held via ZOOM on Saturday, November 11, 2023.

Welcome and Call to Order

Rev. Dwight Hein, Moderator, opened the meeting with a welcome and called the meeting to order at 9:35 am.

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, Conference Minister, also delivered a welcome message.

Establishment of a Quorum

Dale Mease, Secretary, reported that there were 108 delegates participating in the ZOOM meeting which established a quorum for a business meeting of Penn Central Conference according to the by-laws.

Proposed 2024 Conference Budget Presentation

Rev. Mike Price, Treasurer, delivered the presentation on the proposed 2024 conference budget. Mike used four budget documents that were available to the delegates through the conference web site. The four documents included:

1. 2024 PCC Abridged Budget
2. Notes for the 2024 PCC Budget
3. Proposed 2024 Budget worksheet
4. Board Proposed Salary Details for 2024 worksheet (This document provided a detailed breakdown of the salary and benefits for the conference staff.)

Mike reviewed the income and expense portions of 2024 PCC Abridged Budget in his opening remarks and shared that approximately 9-10% of the income in the proposed budget comes from the generosity of those who came before us and remembered the conference with bequests and gifts.

The total amount of the proposed 2024 PCC Abridged Budget is \$944,800.

Detailed Expense Notes

Lancaster Seminary Support

Rev. Carrie Call provided background on shifting of funds from support of Lancaster Seminary to providing more financial support to retired clergy and to help with healthcare assistance to clergy in need. She also shared that the conference is also working with the UCC Pension Boards and The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ for additional funds to help support retired clergy and to help with healthcare expenses for clergy in need. She also noted the significant reduction in the number of students starting in the Master of Divinity program and other changes in the seminary situation following the merger with Moravian Seminary.

Remarks were shared from the delegates regarding this item which included:

- Concern about the costs of courses through the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry (PAM)

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United Church of Christ
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- Looking at paths for authorized ministry
- Would our conference be notifying Moravian Seminary that we would be reducing our financial support?
 - It was noted that the conference staff will notify Moravian Seminary of our financial support as follow-up to the approval of the proposed 2024 conference budget.

Our Church's Wider Mission – National Support

Mike Price stated that our conference support for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) at the national level would remain at \$144,000 in 2024 which is the same as it was in the 2023 budget.

Lutheran Camping Corporation

Rev. Nora Foust, Associate Conference Minister, noted that the proposed 2024 conference budget includes \$5,000 in support for the Lutheran Camping Corporation which our conference is partnering with for outdoor ministries and programming. By including this support in the proposed conference budget, we are showing the value that we find in the work that they do and the programming that they provide.

Conference Ministries

Mike Price provided a detailed explanation of the proposed salary details for the conference staff. It was also noted that special bonuses of \$1,000 each were included for the associate conference minister and office manager in addition to 4% salary increases for each of these positions.

Administrative Expenses

Mike Price shared that more funds are being provided for Penn Central Conference annual meeting expenses to help cover the larger annual meeting in State College that is being planned for June 2024 with the three other Pennsylvania conferences.

Concluding Financial Presentation Remarks

Mike Price concluded the financial presentation with the following points:

- The balance of the conference investments with UCC Funds as of September 30, 2023 is \$1,668,186.
- The conference investments with UCC Funds are in four different accounts and those accounts include:
 - Outdoor Ministries (proceeds from the sale of Hartman Center that are to be used to help fund future outdoor ministry programs)
 - St. John's UCC Lebanon (proceeds from the sale of the former St. John's UCC property to help support ministry and mission through the churches of the Lebanon Association)
 - Wilbur Valentine Account (bequests received by the conference from estates)
 - Penn Central Conference Account

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United Church of Christ
Conference ZOOM Budget Meeting Minutes
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Open Dialog and Questions

The open dialog following the budget presentation covered these key items:

- General Synod Line Item
 - The finance committee decided to remove the amount for General Synod expenses in the 2024 proposed budget since the next General Synod meeting will be held in 2025. It was noted that this was a change from the past practice of allocating funding for General Synod each year.
 - It was noted that it is difficult to anticipate the costs for upcoming General Synod expenses due to the possible locations and variances in travel costs.
 - Mike Price also stated that there are no designated funds for General Synod expenses in the conference's investment accounts.
 - It was noted that plans will be made, and funds will be made available to cover the actual General Synod expenses in the years when General Synod occurs.
 - There was additional dialog regarding the General Synod line item in the budget and the possibility of amending the budget, however, consensus was obtained to proceed without making any changes.
- Contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) by local churches
 - A question was raised if there are current amounts that are requested or required from each member of the local congregations to contribute to OCWM.
 - Dwight Hein explained that there is no specified per member amount for churches to contribute to OCWM.
 - Carrie Call shared that pastors are asked to educate their churches about the value of OCWM and the programs that it provides as each church decides on its contribution to OCWM.

Approval of the Proposed 2024 Budget

A motion was made by Thaddeus Sampson, Colonial Park UCC, and seconded by Aaron Hartman, St. John's UCC, Chambersburg, to approve the proposed 2024 budget for Penn Central Conference as presented.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:39 am following remarks by Rev. Dwight Hein and Rev. Dr. Carrie Call.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale H. Mease, Secretary