

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**United Church of Christ Board**  
**June 29, 2023**  
**Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN**

The United Church of Christ Board is the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ Board Corporation, Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), and Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ). Each meeting of the United Church of Christ Board is a meeting of each of these corporations.

**Members Present:**

David Ackerman, Kearstin Bailey, Joyce Bathke, Cameron Barr, Traci Blackmon, Brian Bodager, Noah Brewer-Wallin, Charles Buck, Cynta Butts, Hannah Cranbury, Molly Carlson, Rachel Chapman, Elly Chong, Jasmine Coleman Quinerly, Tyler Connoley, Tom Croner, Edward Davis, Courtney Dobbins, John Dorhauer, Jamar Doyle, Mark Dutell, Shernell Edney Stilley, Derrick Elliot, Gabrielle Fields, John Folk, Julia Gaughan, Darrell Goodwin, Kevin Graham, Tim Hachfeld, Dick Hom, Tracy Keene, Onyx Kuthuru, Gloria-Ann Muraki, Janese Murray, Shari Prestemon, Gordon Rankin, Lawrence Richardson, Bethany Ruhl, Bob Sandman, Rushan Sinnaduray, D'Angelo Smith, Kylie Steever, Karen Georgia Thompson, Elizabeth Walker, Marsha Williams, Jeanette Zaragoza-DeLeon

**Members Excused:** Shernell Edney Stilley, Derrick Elliott, Eric Jackson, Paul Tch e, Careina Williams

**Staff and Others Present:**

Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Charles Jefferson, Heather Kimmel, Tami Marinella, Cheryl Williams

**Roll Call and Declaration of a Quorum**

Heather Kimmel, Secretary of the United Church of Christ Board, declared a quorum.

Opening prayer provided by Molly Carlson.

**Welcome By Chair and Vice-Chair**

Julia Gaughan opened the meeting with a welcome to all. Julia, Chair, and Jasmine, Vice-Chair, will be setting up times to meet up with everyone.

**Approval of Agenda**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-01** To approve the Agenda.

**APPROVED BY CONSENSUS**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-01 Agenda*

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-23-06-02**

To grant voice without vote to the following staff, guests and others making presentation to the UCBB, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Charles Jefferson, Heather Kimmel, Tami Marinella, Cheryl Williams.

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr  
**SECONDED:** Beth Walker  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of UCCB May 2023 Special Meeting Minutes**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-23-06-03**

To approve the minutes of the May 4, 2023 Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr  
**SECONDED:** Darrell Goodwin  
**MOTION CARRIED**

*Abstentions: Karen Georgia Thompson, Hannah Cranbury, Jeannette Zaragoza De Leon*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-02 May 4, 2023 UCCB Special Meeting Minutes*

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**GMP Search Committee on Board Support for the Nominee**

By Noah Brewer-Wallin

Board members have expressed safety and security concerns for Karen Georgia Thompson. She has asked that those concerns be discussed directly with her. She is feeling secure and asks for prayers.

A few members had requested more information on the selection process and were referred to materials on General Synod website.

**Executive Committee Report**

By Julia Gaughan

**Clapbard Inn Transfer** Karen Georgia provided the background information. WCM, through the IBS-Shadan. still maintains a property interest in Kyoto, JP and conversations have been had

regarding the transfer of the property. Proceeds of the transfer will be used to support UCC partners in Japan.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-04**

Sitting as the Board of WCM, to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Wider Church Ministries and the Kyoto District of the United Church of Christ in Japan and authorize the General Minister and President or their designated Associate General Minister to execute the MOU on behalf of WCM.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-05**

Sitting as the Board of WCM, to grant authority to the General Minister and President or their designated Associate General Minister, to take all necessary steps, in consultation with legal counsel, to authorize and effectuate the legal transfer of the Clapbard Inn property from the IBS-Shadan to the General Incorporated Foundation of Clapbard Inn, consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding with the Kyoto District and the United Church Board for World Ministries General Guidelines on the Disposition of Property.

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-05-ExCom-04 Clapbard Inn Transfer*

**Audit Issue: Unauthorized Transfer from WCM Subaccount**

There is an issue concerning ownership of funds in a reserve account. A letter was sent to UCF and a reply was received. This issue is not to be resolved today. The hopes are for the Board to have a shared understanding.

Charles Buck addressed the Board on behalf of United Church Funds. He noted that he is saddened that this matter has escalated. There has been dialogue for a year regarding the ownership of the funds.

In order for these assets to be recognized by state regulators, they cannot be owned by UCC or under their control and must be classified as assets on the balance sheet of the party issuing the gift annuity. There needs to a record of a liability showing that these assets are for the benefit of the reserves.

All the actions taken by UCF have been in good faith and have meant to ensure donors receive their annuities and beneficiaries receive the rest when donor passes.

The Board had discussions after Charles Buck recused himself.

Kevin Graham, Chair of the Audit Committee, provided some background.

The response letter issued by UCF has inconsistencies in the timeline of communication. The Audit Committee sought clarification through end of 2022 without response by UCF to the questions asked. There was a larger meeting with folks from UCF. UCF believes these funds are their property and not that of WCM. Additional questions were raised on how UCF made that decision and the transaction. The result of that meeting led to actions by Ex Com and drafting of the letter to which UCF responded. UCF did not provide clarification of the ownership issue but it did provide many emails that appear to claim the funds are owned by UCF. Up through 2018, RSM was informed that the funds were property of WCM. No documentation was provided for the years 2019-2021.

Tami Marinella, CFO, provided additional information.

Since 2005 and for 10+ years, the UCC auditor sent requests to UCF asking for a list of accounts are owned by UCC and the numbers. The reserve account was included, and included the balance. There came a time when the account disappeared and then we were told the account was not owned by us. Historically, the fund has been an asset on WCM's books since inception. It was noticed the account went from millions to thousands; that's when we became aware that UCF removed the money.

The difference of opinion of who owns the money is at the heart of the issue. UCC was asked three times to assist UCF in upping their reserves; all three times the accounting said it remained on UCC books as our assets; UCF responded to our auditors that the money was ours. UCF was also transferring reinvested interest from the sub account back to our account.

This is an accounting issue that must be reconciled. RSM will finalize its audit but not prior to General Synod. It will be shared during the UCCB meeting in the fall and the minutes of audit will be made available to wider church.

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-05-ExCom-03.pptx (incl.3a-3ad)*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-ExCom-03 FINAL Letter to UCF*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-10 Response to FINAL Letter to UCF*

### **Governance Committee Report**

By Marsha Williams

### **Church Building & Loan Fund Director Election**

#### **It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-06**

To approve the election of Matt Wagner to LCM Church Building & Loan Fund Board class of 2025.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-10 Matt Wagner bio*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-11 CBLF Demo Report*

### **Amendments to United Church of Christ Board Standing Rules relating to Common Global Ministries**

The goal of the UCCB Standing Rules amendments is to strengthen the relationship between CGMB and UCCB.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-07** To amend the UCCB Standing Rules as set forth on Supporting Documents UCCB-23-06-GOV-12\_Memo-CGMB-Gov-Challenges and UCCB-23-06-GOV-13\_UCCB Standing Rules Revised CGMB Update.

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-12 Memo CGMB-Gov-Challenges*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-13 UCCB Standing Rules Revised CGMB Update*

### **United Church Funds Director Election**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-08** To elect David Misemer to the United Church Funds, Inc. board class of 2029.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-09** To elect Rev. Sharon K. Prestemon to the United Church Funds, Inc. board class of 2029.

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Abstentions: Shari Prestemon*

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-10** To elect Yvette Michelle Wynn to the United Church Funds, Inc. board class of 2029.

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-03 UCCB Action Form*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-04 UCCB Demographics form*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-05 Report GovCom Chair*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-06 UCF Bd. 2023-25 Proposed*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-07 David Misemer Resume*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-08 Shari Prestemon Resume*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-GOV-09 Yvette Wynn Resume*

**SITTING AS THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE OF  
THE THIRTY-FOURTH GENERAL SYNOD**

**Approval of General Synod Agenda**

Responsibilities of directors at GS: Sit together inside the bar of the house; be faithful to your committee assignment; Friday evening at 9pm tentative meeting.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-11** To approve the Agenda of the Thirty-Fourth General Synod.

**MOTION:** Gabrielle Fields

**SECONDED:** Janese Murray

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-03 General Synod 2023 Detailed Agenda*

**Grant Voice Without Vote to General Synod Resource Persons**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-12** To grant voice without vote to General Synod Resource Persons as shown on Supporting Document UCCB-23-06-04-GS34 Resource Persons.

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr

**SECONDED:** Marsha Williams

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-04 GS34 Resource Persons*

**Notice of General Synod Committee Liaison Appointments**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-05 Committee Liaison Appointments*

**GS34 Credentials Committee Report**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-13** To receive the GS34 Credentials Committee Report.

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr

**SECONDED:** Darrell Goodwin

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-06 GS34 Credentials Committee Report to UCCB*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-07-GS34 Conference Delegate Demographics Summary*

### **Granting Voice without Vote**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-14** To allow that the following group be accorded voice without vote at the 34th General Synod, under provisions of Rule 10 of the General Synod Standing Rules: Association of United Church Educators (AUCE).

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr

**SECONDED:** Noah Brewer-Wallin

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Abstentions: Bob Sandman*

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-23-06-15** To allow that the following group be accorded voice without vote at the 34th General Synod, under provisions of Rule 10 of the General Synod Standing Rules: Faithful and Welcoming Churches.

**MOTION:** Cameron Barr

**SECONDED:** Karen Georgia Thompson

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Abstentions: Darrell Goodwin, Lawrence Richardson, Bob Sandman, D'Angelo Smith*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-08 AUCE Voice App*

*Supporting document: UCCB-23-06-09 Faithful & Welcoming Voice App*

### **The Business of the Church**

By Cameron Barr

A friend of mine who is an Episcopal priest likes to joke that there are two prevailing myths about church leadership. Myth #1 is that the church is a business. Of course we all know that the church is so much more than a business. The Gospel of Jesus is not a transaction of salvation and

the body of Christ is not held together by a contract. No, by contrast, this is a covenantal community, held together by the presence of the Holy Spirit and sustained by the mutual commitments that we make to each other. So if it is ever said in this board room that the church is a business, I hope that you will resist that pernicious myth.

And what is the second myth that my priestly friend often reminds me of? Myth #2 is the inverse, for it is also a myth to say that the church is not a business. Since the Apostles of Jesus first kept a common purse in the Book of Acts, every church has created an economy. Actually that is what we really mean by mentioning this second myth - the economy of our shared Christian life. You can't just declare that the church is not a business because here we have discussions of resources and equity; there's a treasury that we keep for the sake of the Gospel; there's a ledger that we carefully maintain as a record of the mission that we share. And my goodness in the United Church of Christ don't we have a lot of business language! We have articles of incorporation. We have budgets and endowments and audits. And we now have a whole team of generosity officers deployed around the country inviting us to deepen our commitments to the church. It would be crass to reduce our ecclesial life to these business terms, and in all of these pursuits we fall short of the glory of God, but if anyone here should stand up and declare "The church is not a business!" we should question that, too.

Perhaps even in this board room I have stood to proclaim one day the first myth, another day the second. I could almost hear myself saying - We need more exacting standards for accounting, or for efficiency, or for management. Who is giving the General Minister and President her annual performance evaluation? For after all the church is a business! And on other days surely I have said the opposite. How could we perseverate on God's justice, for our Creator's grace is unscrupulous, and the love of Jesus is wasteful, and after all the church is not a business! I mention these two myths: the church is a business; the church is not a business - because, I confess myself, I have been one who has proclaimed both of these myths to be true, and in this space we regularly disprove both of them. We always live in the tension between them.

The myths reflect two poles between which this board is apt to swing like a pendulum. In the early days of the United Church of Christ Board - I was not here in the earliest moments, but I am told - this was a very efficient and businesslike affair. Our first leaders met the tremendous demands of integrating our various corporations to form a unified board by leading in a very stiff and corporate-like manner. It's fair to say that when pushed to excess, when our life together is defined by quick decisions and authoritative decrees, the relational web of our life together suffers. But there are countervailing winds that can push us much too far in the other direction also. We feel those in the forces of togetherness that paralyze us in indecision. In the community of the church, we are sometimes apt to place the unmet needs of one or a few ahead of the common good of the whole. In our zeal for justice, we are sometimes consumed with anger that does not produce God's righteousness. And I'm sure all of us have experienced the empty use of the language of covenant. We should never speak in the language of covenant when what we really mean is entitlement. Rich Pleva, once the Conference Minister in Iowa who was a leader on our board, used to joke that "autonomy" is for when I want to do something that you don't want me to do. And "covenant" is for when I want you to do something that you don't want to do. When we speak like this of covenant, the church isn't acting like a business - it's not even acting like a church! My point is that one thing I've learned through this work is that we



shouldn't speak of covenant in the midst of an argument. In scripture, covenant speaks not of anything that is owed, only what is committed.

In my experience, the United Church of Christ Board has been at its best when together we have held these two myths loosely, and we have managed the impulse that we feel - both born of our own anxiety - either to seize control, or to drift with the tides. On any given day, one of these myths may be more true than the other. On our most businesslike days and our least businesslike days, I hope that it will never be forgotten that the United Church of Christ Board is a setting of the church.

So what does it mean for us to gather as a board and do - the business of the church? I believe that will always mean a few things.

- That we will pray for ourselves and for each other, and that we especially pray for our ministers and their leadership. There are three who are responsible to this board, and today their names are John, Traci, and Karen Georgia. It is the job of this board to shine a light on their work and to support them in their witness to the gospel because they have been called by God through the discernment of the church to the roles that they occupy.
- That we organize our resources in stewardship of what we have by bequest, what we receive through the philanthropy of local churches and individuals, and what we give of ourselves.
- That we conduct ourselves with efficiency and precision, as if we would be held personally to account, leavened by grace and good humor and rest, affirming that it is God's work in us, and not our effort and exertion alone, that brings us to our mission
- That our board will always be called to risk putting faith in others whom God has called us to share in covenant

I have seen all of these things in the United Church of Christ Board. This board has grown so much in the six years I have been a part of it. I believe deep in my heart that with Julia, and Jasmine, with Karen Georgia and Traci, with Heather and the incoming class of members we have not yet seen the best work of this body.

When I come to General Synod, I am coming to church.

Now let's get down to business!

### **Outgoing Board Members Invited to Share Remarks**

Cameron Barr, Noah Brewer-Wallin, Rachel Chapman, Ed Davis, John Folk, Darrell Goodwin, Kevin Graham, Tim Hachfeld, Onyx Kuthuru, Gloria-Ann Muraki, Shari Prestemon, Gordon Rankin, Marsha Williams all provided comments regarding their experience on the Board.

### **Remarks Honoring the Class of 2023**

Cameron Barr introduced each of the outgoing members with personal antidotes and presented each with a gift.

**Remarks by Incoming Chair and Vice Chair**

Julia Gaughan as incoming Chair and Jasmine Coleman Quinerly as incoming Vice-Chair commented on looking forward to working on the Board.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Kimmel