PSEC

ennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ

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Associate Conference Minister

For Search and Call
(Full-time)

Conference Profile & Job Description

April 2021

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Welcome!

To: Prospective Associate Conference Minister of Search & Call Candidates
From: Rev. Antonio L. Villareal, Conference Moderator
Rev. Bill Worley, Conference Minister and President

Dear Friend,

Greetings from your UCC ministry partners in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ – an odd and wondrous mix of 36,000 people among 155 congregations and affiliated ministries that seek to be agents of redemption and transformation. Thank you for taking time to discover and discern the exciting possibility of joining us to work in the world for good and for God!

We are a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, theologically and economically diverse group. We include people who have a deep and abiding attachment to the United Church of Christ, people who have just discovered the UCC, as well as people whose UCC connection is made tenuous by social-theological differences. Regardless of our place, every one of us is part of a Christian congregation that faces the ongoing pain of the pandemic, the pre-pandemic decline of religious affiliation in America and the uncertainty over what future forms Christian discipleship and community will take.

We have been blessed by the exceptional leadership of our most recent settled ACM/SC and our Interim ACM/SC who both worked diligently to connect pastors and churches amid some of the most anxious times of transition a congregation can experience. Our goal now is to continue on the path of ministerial excellence with a candidate who will be a good match for an incredibly high functioning and well-connected staff who work together to provide an expansive level of faithful service. We seek a candidate who is authentic and self-aware, confident in their relationship with Jesus Christ, comfortable claiming and sharing authority, values transparency in all things and has evidence of a call to model and teach non-anxious, adaptive leadership and church growth. Our new ACM will be radically inclusive of, and comfortable with, people at every place along the theological, cultural and political spectrum. A tenacious command of administrative and organizational detail is an absolute must.

If you are a person who continues to nourish a vibrant relationship with God, who seeks the Spirit for wisdom, and lives the teachings of Jesus the Christ, we invite you to explore our Conference through the information shared in this profile, on our website (www.psec.org) and social media platforms. We pray for your current ministry search and ask that you pray for ours until we are all in that place where the still speaking God is calling us to be.

Yours in Christ,

Revs. Antonio L. Villareal and Bill Worley

PSEC At A Glance

We are 155 United Church of Christ congregations in this tiny corner of Pennsylvania!



Conference Background

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ is made up of 155 churches with 36,800 members in Philadelphia and the surrounding six counties. The Conference is a unique blend of congregations, most that stem from the colonial German foundations of our nation to new ethnic and multicultural congregations that have become part of the UCC.

We have recently welcomed into affiliation African American, East Indian and Spanish-language congregations. We have union churches, shared ministries and federated congregations that combine UCC with Lutheran, Schwenkfelder, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, United Methodist, and Baptist traditions. There are congregations who have declared themselves to be Open and Affirming, and several who identify as Faithful and Welcoming. We also cultivate international partnerships with the Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts in the former East Germany, the Church of South India and the Federation of Baptist Churches in Cuba.

We are blessed with a compact geography that makes us one of the smallest UCC conferences geographically, and yet numerically one of the larger. This provides easy opportunities for friendship and peer-support, collaborative partnerships, and resource sharing. We strive to nurture an ethos of expectation, experimentation, and transformation throughout the Conference. We deeply value lifelong learning, continued personal growth, and awareness of our changing world through continuing education, diversity workshops, and boundary training. We endeavor to bolster and build adaptive leaders through regular lay and clergy conferences and webinars to build and support relationships between and among ministry colleagues.



Ministries of the Conference

Over the past decade, our Conference has gone through some difficult times. The "Church House" and camp were sold. Financial challenges were overcome, and the conference is now moving with clearer purpose and renewed energy. In 2015, the Conference Consistory created a five year **"2020 Vision and Strategic Plan"** which included goals for vitality training, birthing new spiritual communities, training for Members in Discernment, and increasing the expectation of pastoral excellence for all authorized ministers. Conference Consistory is currently working toward a new strategic plan that builds on our mission to be

the link that connects our church's various and diverse ministries both locally and globally. Together, we provide our local churches, pastors and congregations with the training and inspiration they need to carry out our church's wider mission. We are stronger together; therefore, we embrace diversity, and above all, we spread God's love!

Several working groups and resources already support this purpose.

The **Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative** was born to reclaim and reconcile a 1911 lynching that took place within the boundaries of our Conference, to work toward racial justice and to build diverse communities. **The Climate Justice Team** creates opportunities to work toward eco-justice and engage in environment friendly lifestyles. **The Addictions Task Force** was born from the opioid addiction crisis and now raises consciousness about all forms of addiction with particular attention to reducing social stigma around addiction and recovery.



PSEC At a Glance

One of several Conference resources is the **PSEC New Ministries Fund** created following the sale of the Church House, to fund mission work led by churches and pastors up to $15,000 per request. Applications are accepted twice a year and have sourced a variety of missions including the expansion of food pantry services, life skills classes, online leadership training, new worship styles, and training church leaders to minister to veterans. **The PSEC New Church Start Fund** was launched in 2017 with generous legacy gifts from closing Conference congregations to launch new Christian communities in southeastern Pennsylvania.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

This is not a comprehensive list but among the highlights are:

1. Pastoral Excellence Program (currently 14 active Communities of Practice).
2. Disaster Ministries which offers Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation.
3. Ecumenical exchanges with partners from Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts, the Church of South India and the Federation of Baptists in Cuba.
4. Member in Discernment Academy and Events and a new Conference MID Coordinating Committee
5. Spring and Fall Annual Meetings.
6. Bi-annual Youth Events.
7. Annual Clergy retreats and Annual Tri-Conference Clergy Convocation.
8. Ongoing lay leader training and retreats for bookkeepers, church administrators, pastor-parish relations teams, stewardship teams and congregation presidents.

Conference Ministers and Support Staff

The role of the Conference staff is to coordinate and communicate the events, information, opportunities, and resources necessary to connect and support pastors and grow congregations. The PSEC staff has recently known a time of effective relationship and team building and is one of the known strengths of the Conference. We have reduced the footprint of our office space in order to be good stewards of our resources. Currently staff members work from mobile (home) offices throughout the Conference.

- **Conference Minister and President** – is the spiritual and administrative leader of the Conference, head of the Conference Staff, and is responsible for collaboratively developing and implementing the Conference vision, mission, goals and policies. Working with the Associate Conference Ministers, Conference leaders and professional staff, the Conference Minister is responsible for directing and modeling all areas of Conference life and leadership.

- **Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call (ACM/SC)** works full-time with Association Committees on Ministry to identify, prepare, authorize and oversee ministerial leaders. The ACM/SC works closely with congregations at all stages of the search and call and pastoral transition process and gives oversight to the Pastoral Excellence Program and the Communities of Practice.
- **Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development (ACM/CD)** works part-time to help congregations increase their mission focus, deepen Christian Discipleship and maximize church growth potential. The ACM/CD operates at a group level, individual counselor or as a congregational coach.

Support Staff Positions - The Conference has two full-time support staff positions:

- **Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister and Conference Events Coordinator** provides direct support to all facets of Conference activities, support of the Conference Minister, Consistory and other Conference Committees.
- **Associate for Search and Call and Conference Registrar** provides direct support to all facets of the Conference Search and Call process as directed by the ACM/SC and maintains current records on every authorized minister and congregation in the Conference. Serves as Clerk to the Conference Church and Ministry Council.

The Conference also has two part-time support staff positions:

- **Financial Operations Manager** provides oversight of conference accounting systems related to general operating expenses and invested funds. Guides the work of the Conference Budget and Finance Team, and Endowment Team. Offers financial guidance to local churches and training events for lay leaders with church finance responsibility.
- **Conference Bookkeeper** is responsible for all recording all financial transactions, posting debits and credits, processes requests for payments/reimbursements, and assists the Financial Operations Manager with the Conference annual audit.

Conference Structure and Governance



Five associations lie within the borders of our Conference. The **Philadelphia Association** includes 23 congregations within Philadelphia County and the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area. The 22 congregations of the **North Penn Association** stretch through the Upper Montgomery and Central/Upper Bucks counties. The **Ursinus Association's** 34 congregations are in Montgomery and Chester counties. The **Covenant Association** shares borders with Berks County and has 48 congregations. And the **Schuylkill Association,** with 28 congregations, is at the Conference's northern end. Each Association is governed by its members, an executive committee and a Committee On Ministry.

The governing body of the Conference is comprised of local churches members called together for the purpose of conducting the Conference's business. In between official Conference meetings, **The Conference Consistory** is vested with the authority to act as the Conference body. The Consistory meets bi-monthly and consists of fifteen members--5 officers (President, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer) and 2 members elected by each of the 5 Associations. It has primary responsibility for the policies, personnel, program and financial assets that sustain our shared ministries.

The Consistory is also responsible for creating and implementing a strategic plan in partnership with the five associations and all local churches. It carries out its work with the assistance of the Personnel and Budget and Finance Committees. All ordained Conference staff attend Consistory meetings and prepare written reports prior to the meeting.

The Church and Ministry Council, comprised of two representatives from each of the five Association Committees On Ministry, provides oversight to all facets and phases of authorized ministry. The Council is led by two officers, the Dean and the Clerk and meets on the off months when Consistory is not meeting.



PSEC Financial Snapshot

Our Churches Wider Mission ~ Current Support

- The 2021 operating budget is based on $771,700 in OCWM contributions and an additional $194,000 from various income sources to match an expense budget of $965,700.
- Three years ago, we set a goal of 100% participation of all congregations in OCWM. We are five congregations short of that goal.
- We pass along to the National Church 10% of all OCWM contributions received by our Conference.
- At the end of 2020, we successfully completed participation in the UCC Pension Board Ministerial Assistance Campaign making an $80,000 plus contribution to that effort.
- At the end of 2019, we surpassed our OCWM annual goal for the first time in eight years. This generated a great deal of excitement we hoped would carry into 2020. The pandemic kept us from this goal, however, we were able to grant every Conference congregation $1000 in pandemic support from our "rainy-day" savings fund. The following is a snapshot of our yearend financial picture comparing actual (column one) to budgeted (column 2) receipts and expenses.

	2020 Actual	2020 Budget
OCWM contributions	$781,801.00	$843,540.00
Other Income	$152,835.00	$191,255.00
Total Conference Income	**$934,636.00**	**$1,034,795.00**
National OCWM Payments	$84,966.00	$84,354.00
Other Conference Expense	$781,902.00	$950,441.00
Total Conference Expenses	**$866,868.00**	**$1,034,795.00**

Pass Through Income	$179,964.88
Pass Through Payments	$(119,539.90)
Net $1000 COVID-19 Checks to Churches	$(152,000.00)
Generations of Service Campaign	$(6,231.00)
New Ministries Grants Paid	$(6,700.00)
Church Closure Income	$226,941.00



Current Debt and Investments

The Conference currently carries no debt and owns no property.
We lease a minimal office footprint at 1441 Laura Lane, Pottstown, PA.
Invested reserves and endowment funds total just over $2.3 million.
The operating budget has historically included a drawdown of six percent (6%) of invested funds. We set a goal to reduce that to 2% over a five-year period. While we have not quite reached that target, we have been holding at 3% for the last 3 years.

Around the PSEC Region

Our communities, though diverse in many ways, are plagued by the same problems: poverty, hunger, access to affordable health care, violence, and substance abuse. However, the counties in Pennsylvania Southeast Conference consistently average better than the state average. According to the 2016 Pennsylvania Health Report, our region has fewer adults in fair or poor health, a higher per capita personal income, lower unemployment, more diversity, and lower poverty than the state average.



Photo by R. Kennedy, courtesy of Visit Phill



Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board





Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board

Southeastern Pennsylvania has a large variety of **attractions**. Hike the Appalachian Trail. Cheer on a professional sports team. Visit any number of amusement parks. There's something for everybody. This region has skiing, fishing, biking, historical sites, cultural attractions, and a large variety of shopping options from markets to malls. For even more attractions, drive for just a few hours and find yourself in New York City, Washington DC, Baltimore, or a variety of Atlantic Ocean beaches.

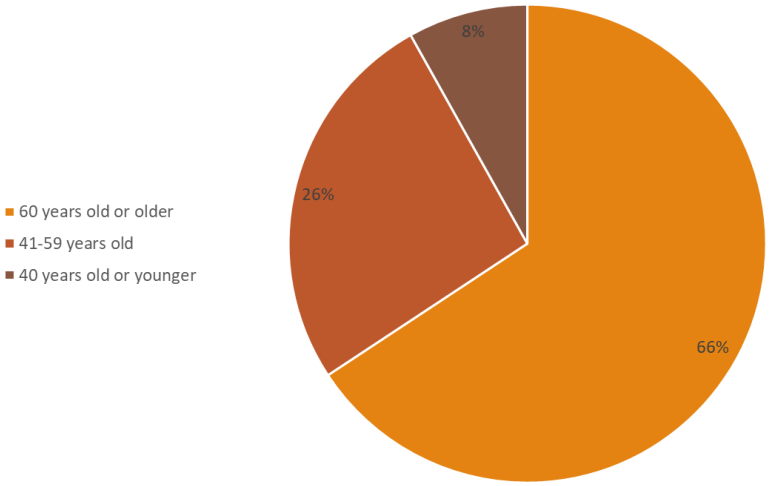
There are dozens of opportunities for **higher education** in the seven counties that make up this conference. With nearly 100 colleges, universities, and institutions of higher education, there are opportunities to further one's education in every region of our conference. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Palmer Theological Seminary are within PSEC's boundaries. And nearby are Moravian Theological Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary, a UCC-affiliated seminary that offers a three-year doctor of ministry program that uses online coursework and just five days of on-campus work per semester.

Southeastern PA is also home to many award-winning and nationally recognized **hospitals**

Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call

The selected ACM/SC will have exciting opportunities for creative ministry in a solid conference with supportive colleagues to meet the very real challenges faced by most mainline Protestants.

Many of our churches (13 percent) have had the same pastor for more than 15 years. However, many more are in a time of transition. Recently, the number of churches at some point in the search process peaked at 42 churches. We expect the number of searches to remain high as many of our long-serving pastors approach retirement age. More than half of our churches are being served by a pastor who is currently eligible for retirement or will be in the next five years.



Age reporting is based on available information: 90% of PSEC authorized ministers are represented.

This includes all Authorized Ministers (ordained, licensed, etc.) and all settings (church pastors, retired, chaplains, etc.).

Many of our congregations contend with some form of decline and can no longer afford full-time pastoral leadership. Just over half of our 176 ministry positions are now part time. Fewer students attending seminary pursue parish ministry and fewer ministry profiles circulate in the UCC profile system. Our churches are looking for new ideas and renewed energy as they advance to new stages in their ministries.

Additionally, leaders from around the Conference expect to see these key assets in the selected ACM/SC candidate:

- Knows Manual on Ministry and can communicate its use clearly.
- Has a good understanding of how COM's and The Church and Ministry Council function.
- "Is the expert in the room."
- Has a good knowledge and understanding of Association churches and integrates that in the Conference and national settings.
- Ensures the safety of current, and access to past, Committee on Ministry records.
- Has a good sense of boundaries vis-à-vis COM's and helps COM's know their boundaries.
- Has the ability to think in both broad terms and in detail.
- Is pastoral when relating to others. Speaks the truth and helps others to do so as well.

CONFERENCE POSITION DESCRIPTION
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ

Position Title: Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call (ACM/SC)
Approved By: Conference Consistory
Date: December 6, 2019

Reports To: The Conference Minister

POSITION SUMMARY:
The Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call (ACM/SC) will have primary responsibility for the maintaining the search and call process of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. The (ACM/SC) will develop relationships with local lay leaders and congregations engaged in the search process to facilitate the process for identifying and placing permanent, interim and supply pastors. In addition, the (ACM/SC) will assist the Conference Minister, in cooperation with the Conference Staff, with the general responsibilities of pastoral care, administration, promotion of covenantal relationships, and leadership development at all levels of denominational life.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Have primary responsibility for the search and call process for all congregations within the Conference.
- Develop personal relationships with individual congregations involved in the search process, providing as much assistance and guidance as each individual situation warrants.
- Work with individual congregations and pastors to provide effective interim pastoral placements that are focused on assisting congregations in transition.
- Develop personal relationships with lay and ordained leaders of churches in transition to provide guidance and resources that meet the needs of these congregations.
- Actively recruit individuals within the Conference and throughout the wider church to fulfill the needs of the churches involved in the search process.
- Work cooperatively and collegially with the Conference Minister and staff to provide effective administrative leadership (i.e. maintaining pastor's files, contacting other denominations when pastors are seeking dual standing or privilege of call, validate ministerial and local church profiles, assist in coordinating candidating weekends, vetting potential candidates outside PSEC).
- Provide effective oversight of the Associate for Search and Call and Conference Registrar.
- Develop positive working relationships with the leadership of the Associations.
- Work with Conference staff to provide leadership development to both clergy and lay leaders throughout the Conference.
- Have oversight of the Pastoral Excellence Program and the Communities of Practice to include recruitment, training, and coordination of facilitators.

- Provide guidance and coordination for the Church and Ministry Council and the association Committees on Ministry.
- Schedule (and when practical, facilitate) regular boundary trainings for clergy, interim pastor training, Pastoral Relations Committee training, Committees on Ministry training and orientation events.
- Perform ministerial functions on behalf of Pennsylvania Southeast Conference as directed by the Conference Minister.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:
This position requires a minimum of a M.Div. degree, ordination by the United Church of Christ, five years of effective local church ministry. A thorough understanding of, and a heart for, the Christian faith and the United Church of Christ is also critical for ministry success. In addition, the (ACM/SC) demonstrates familiarity in the areas related to search and call and the ability to help congregations and pastors successfully complete the search process matching talents of candidates with local congregational needs.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES:
- Knowledge of current church culture and dynamics on the national, regional and local church level as well as denominational trends in leadership, organization and development.
- Familiarity with the 2018 UCC Manual on Ministry and Formula of Agreements with ecumenical partners.
- Ability to write and speak clearly, concisely and convincingly as well as to execute timely responses to all forms of communication.
- Above average worship and preaching skills, public leadership skills and other forms of oral communication (classroom instruction, workshop leadership)
- Ability to define issues and help individuals and groups/congregations to discern a vision for future development and growth.
- Ability to effectively utilize word processing and electronic communication in fulfilling the responsibilities of this position.
- Ability to adapt to extended hours and multiple demands of the position.
- This position includes significant evening and weekend responsibilities, and, pre-Covid, involves a significant amount of driving (800-1,500 miles/month).

Compensation:
Salary and benefits commensurate with experience according to PSEC Conference Guidelines
https://psec.org/resources/compensation-guidelines/

How to Apply: Please send your profile and answers to the following three questions to: brea@psec.org on or before July 15, 2021.

1. What experience do you have that would equip you well to serve as the Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call in the PSEC?

2. As the ACM, you will report to the Conference Minister and function as a part of the leadership team of the PSEC. How do you see your role as a team player as you provide leadership for the diverse programmatic areas in your portfolio?

3. What do you believe is the key to successful communication? Share an example from your professional experience that represents that.



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