

UWM Great Lakes Region
Annual Conference Business Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2017– 9:00AM-1:00PM
Potowatomi Inn – Pokagon State Park, Indiana

Opening –

The Annual Conference Business Meeting of Great Lakes Unity Regional was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Eastern time on September 26, 2017 in Angola, IN by Rev. Ray Nelson, President.

Presiding Board Members Present:

Ray Nelson, President Kurt Condra, Vice President Glenda Walden, Secretary Vareta Foster, YFM Liaison Tom Sylvester, LUT Rep. John McMahan, UWM Board Liaison Deb Hill Davis, Member at Large	Carl Nawrot, Treasurer, was not present
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Opening Prayer: Rev. Brenda Ehret, appointed Keeper of the Flame, offered the opening prayer.

Vision / Mission / Values for the GLR: Members of the conference body recited together the Vision/Mission/Values of the region.

Vision: “Awakening Oneness, we empower an evolving consciousness that spiritually transforms the world.”

Mission: We serve, build, inspire and empower ministries.

Values: Committed, Empowering, Evolutionary, Integrity, Collaborative, Love

Membership Covenant: Rev. Ray Nelson asked that the conference body join him in reciting the Membership Covenant:

We commit our love and support to the Unity Great Lakes Region, its vision and its mission. As individual members and as representatives of member ministries, we set the intention to do the following:

- Actively engage in our spiritual growth
- Enthusiastically participate in voluntary service to the region
- Consistently include the regional organization in our tithing practice
- Attend all membership meetings
- Regularly support regional functions
- Regularly acknowledge the loving service of regional staff and volunteers

Prosperity Affirmation: The conference body was also led in the reciting of our prosperity affirmation.

Our Great Lakes Unity Region prospers abundantly. Our members freely and consistently give a portion of their tithes to the region each month. We give thanks that we have more than enough funding to fulfill our mission and bring forth our vision.

Introduction of the Current Board of Trustees for GLR: Rev. Ray Nelson explained to the conference body that there had been several resignations in the middle of the year and members of the board had changed roles and responsibilities. In addition, the board had appointed members of the conference body to fill vacant positions. He then introduced the current board members.

Regional Employees Introduced: Rev. Ray Nelson acknowledge our current employees.

Regional Representative: James Parker
Y&F Training Director: Chase
Y&F Ministry Event Director: Tyler Prichard
Administrative Assistant: Cindi Cousineau
Bookkeeper: Diana Repko

Welcome to those new to our region: Rev. Ray Nelson invited all those representing newly pioneered Ministries, Ministers / Spiritual Leaders newly employed by regional Ministries, Newly Licensed or Ordained Ministers, Newly Licensed LUTs to the front to be introduced and blessed with our Unity Blessing.

Grace Nicodemus- pioneer ministry
Phil – re-entry into ministry
Barbara Corcoran
Nancy Berdasco?
Su Podraza-Nagel– New LUT

Roll Call & Qualifications Membership: Rev. Glenda Walden read the **Bylaws Article III, Section 1 – Qualifications for Membership.** Rev. Glenda Walden, secretary, asked voting members to count off. There are 58 voting members present.

Old Business:

Approval of last year's business meeting minutes: Rev. Glenda Walden, secretary, reminded membership that the minutes are posted on the website and copies are available at the registration desk. She then called for corrections or additions to the minutes. There were none. Motion made by Dana Cummins to accept the minutes as posted. Motion Second by Alden Studebaker. Motion approved unanimously.

Nominations and Election of Board Members

- Rev. Glenda Walden reviewed Bylaws Article IV, Section 1.3.a – Qualifications for General Members of the Board Article IV, Section 1.4.b – Qualifications for LUT Representative
- Ray Nelson, President and LRDT Chair announced that there are two positions open on the Board. He then introduced the candidates from the LRDT team recommendations:
 - Vareta Foster- re-election for a second term
 - Glenda Walden- re-election for a second term
 - Grace Nicodemus
- Nominations from the floor: Rev. Greg Coles introduced Meghan Smith, New Thought Unity Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Meghan Smith provided a brief bio to the membership.
- Distribute ballots and voting: Ballots were distributed with instructions to select only two candidates. Board representatives collected the ballots for count.

Conference Reports- All Reports are posted on the GLR website

- **Financial Team Report** -Rev. Diana Repko, Great Lakes Bookkeeper
Rev. Diana Repko asked the conference body to repeat the prosperity affirmation. She then introduced the Finance Team and the new Treasurer. Past Treasurers for the region were recognized for their influence and forward thinking in creating a viable finance team.
Rev. Diana Repko provided an expense and income report on Powerpoint. Comparisons to the budget, history, and 2018 budget were all provided.
Questions from the floor:
 1. What are the programs that GLR sponsors that are listed as program expenses? Ray Nelson directed the body to the financial report and programs listings on our website.
 2. Clarification on the % of our tithes that are counted as a “service tithe”. Concerns were raised about how service tithes are used in lieu of financial tithes. Ray Nelson, President, clarified that the current board is revisiting this issue and has also identified the same concerns.
- **President’s Report** -Rev. Ray Nelson, GLR Board President
Rev. Ray Nelson, GLR Board President, reviewed the turnover of leadership and how the Board has been restructured. He noted that the Board will be consulting with Cynthia Vermillion-Foster to set goals for improving relationships, communication, and functioning. Ray Nelson also reported that the Board will be receiving Board training soon. There will also be a healing circle offered during our breakout sessions for those who would like to express concerns and feelings around the changes in the Board.
- **Communications Liaison**-Rev. Kurt Condra, Vice-President

Rev. Kurt Condra, Vice-President, reported that there has been an increase in information posted on our website. The Board is committed to being transparent and is posting minutes, communications, reports, etc. to keep membership informed. He also noted that Diane Venzera left behind policies, procedures, programs for youth that all ministries have access to through the website. New is the posting of events being hosted by our churches in the region.

Rev. Kurt Condra, Vice-President, asked that everyone assist in the updating of our database and for volunteers to help with the updating of our databases.

We received the Templeton Grant to update our website.

- **Youth Events Directors-Tyler Pritchard**

Tyler reviewed the events for youth that were held in the Region. She also introduced the leadership of the youth events who are youth who assist in creating programming for their peers in the region. She shared the mission statement created by the Regional Officers. Tyler noted that YOU staff the Unitreat.

- **Conference Planning Team-Rev. Joanne Rowden**

Rev. Joanne Rowden reviewed her report which included the event perception forms from 2016 and adjusting the schedule based on the feedback. Current Conference Planning team members were introduced and Rev. Rowden announced that she was stepping down from the chair position. Members were invited to consider serving on this team.

- **Youth Ministry Training Director-Rev. Chase**

Rev. Chase shared that they introduced a prayer circle for the Youth Directors in our region. She also created a Family Service Event where several churches partner to join families in doing some type of community service. Training has been provided in person and on webinars so that everyone has access. Rev. Chase also invited Youth Directors and Ministers to contact her personally

- **Regional Representative-Rev. James Parker**

Rev. Parker reminded everyone that his report is online. He noted that as he has traveled the Region, he has noticed how dynamic our region is. When churches are having difficulty or challenges, he has been asked to come in and provide training and counsel. He encouraged churches to call him before “the pot boils over” and reviewed the services he can provide for our regional ministries. He mentioned that the trends he has noticed includes decline in membership and income. He is personally committed to support ministries in thriving.

- **LUT Representative-Tom Sylvester**

Tom Sylvester introduced Susan Heine as the LUT alternate representative. He asked for volunteers for the LUT Ministry Team and to assist with updating the LUT database. He encouraged LUT’s attending conference to attend the LUT luncheon which is longer and is tomorrow. Tom Sylvester also announced the SEE’s in the field

being offered this year. He noted that he registered for an SEE class through Unity Spiritual Institute so that he could have a firsthand experience of using this new program and encouraging others to use it.

Tom Sylvester introduced two new LUT's to the region, Su Podraza-Nagle from Unity Church of Ames, Iowa, and Mary Nowroozi from Unity of Fox Valley, Batavia, Illinois.

He introduced his 2018 goals as reaching out and personally contacting each LUT in the region, establishing a GLR LUT scholarship program, and Spring LUT training.

Announcements:

- **Breakout Sessions offered this year:**
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 - Rev Valerie Mansfield-Communication
 - Brian Griffith-Technology in the Church
 - Chase-Youth and Family
 - Board Healing/listening Circle-Facilitated by Rev Cynthia Vermillion-Foster
- **Ministry Team SignUp:** Rev. Ray Nelson encouraged the conference body to consider serving on one of the ministry teams available in our region. These include: Conference Planning Team
 - Leadership Recruitment and Development Team
 - Scholarships and Grants Team
 - Bylaws, Policy, and Procedures Team
 - Technology Team
 - Finance
 - Members Data Update

Town Hall Q & A

Ray Nelson reviewed questions that have been brought to the Board which included:

1. Issues/Concerns of residency:
 - a. Greg Coles brought up concerns that the Board's previous Treasurer moved to Colorado in December and the Board did not address this violation of the bylaws.
 - b. One of our membership discussed the difficulty of border towns or ministers that live outside the region, but serve in the region.
 - c. This will be referred to the Bylaws and Policy Team for additional clarification.
2. Our Bylaws state that a Profit and Loss statement will be available to membership at the annual meeting. For both 2016 & 2017 conferences, this was not available, but instead a promise was made that it would be made available.

- a. Rev. Ray Nelson acknowledged this discrepancy and noted that especially when there are changes in leadership roles, it is not always possible to have all the information needed to create and accurate report.
3. Rev. Greg Coles noted that his main point in this discussion was that the region membership has not done a good job of holding the Board and each other accountable to our Bylaws. He asked that we all consider this responsibility in the future.
4. Employee Qualifications & UWM Standards-
 - Cynthia Vermillion-Foster was asked to confirm whether or not the Regional Rep. is qualified to serve. She explained that UWM does not govern the Region or set the standards for the Regional staff positions. UWM is moving to take on the ethics responsibility of its membership so that they will be taking on the Judicatory Rep roles.
5. Deb Hill-Davis addressed the membership and shared that she has a commitment to talking honestly and openly about concerns, responsibilities and accountabilities. She reminded us that we cannot change our past or decisions/actions of those who came before us.
6. Call to Prayer: Rev. Sandie Vanik called us to prayer, Rev. Brenda Ehret, keeper of the flame provided a prayer.

Introduction of New Board members

Rev. Ray Nelson announced that Rev. Glenda Walden and Rev. Meghan Smith were elected by the membership to serve 3 year terms on the GLR board.

Adjournment

- A love offering for the region was collected.
- Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. by Ray Nelson, president.
- Closing prayer- Rev. Brenda Ehret offered a closing prayer.

Meeting Minutes Respectfully submitted by:
Rev. Glenda P Walden