

**Minutes of the
Justice and Witness Ministries Committee
of the United Church of Christ Board of Directors
October 10, 2013**

The meeting was called to order, the Executive Minister, Ms. M. Linda Jaramillo presiding until the Chair is elected, the time being 3:55 PM, EDT, Thursday, October 10, 2013.

Members Present: Ms. Maritza Angulo de Gonzalez, Ms. Sue Artt, Mr. Frank Bolden, Ms. Faith Burgess, Mr. Tom Croner, Mr. Edward Davis, Mr. Michael Downs, Mr. Gilberto Garcia-Rodriguez, Ms. M. Linda Jaramillo, Ms. Thea Mateu, Mr. Kevin Peterson, Mr. Rich Pleva, Mr. Dwayne Royster, Mr. Bryan Sickbert, Ms. Elizabeth Walker

Members Not Present: Mr. Geoffrey Black and Mr. Nevan Strobel-McCann

Staff Members Present: Bentley de Bardelaben, Linda Long, Vivian Lucas, Mike Schuenemeyer, Sandy Sorensen

Ms. Jaramillo welcomed the members to the Justice and Witness Ministries Committee (JWMC).

Opening prayers were led by Ms. Jaramillo with an excerpt from a poem by Francis Brien.

Introductions

Ms. Jaramillo informed the members that the United Church of Christ Board is tasked with maintaining a balance of Persons of Color and Youth and Young Adults on the board. She expressed that there are young voices in our midst and on the board of directors and that it makes a huge difference.

During introductions, the members were asked to share a memory of an event that convinced them that the church should be engaged in social justice in the world. They were also asked that during this time to listen to the stories of the members and use this moment as discernment to select their Chair and Vice Chair.

Election of JWM Chair and Vice Chair

BY CONSENT

13-10-JMINCOMM-01 To elect Ms. Thea Mateu as Chair of the Justice and Witness Ministries Committee.

BY CONSENT

13-10-JMINCOMM-02 To elect Mr. Kevin Peterson as Vice Chair of the Justice and Witness Ministries Committee.

Sharing the JWM Story

Ms. Jaramillo gave background on the six ministries that formed Justice and Witness Ministries in the year 2000: The Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ), Office for Church in Society (OCIS), Office for Church Life and Leadership (OCLL), the American Missionary Association (AMA) of the Board for Homeland Ministries (BHM), Office of Communications (OC), and the Coordinating Center for Women (CCW).

JWM has staff in several office locations. We manage Centers for Education and Social Transformation (CEST) in covenant with three conferences (Southern, Pacific Northwest, and Southern California Nevada). Our staff is located in Washington, DC (Public Policy Advocacy), Whitakers, NC (Franklinton Center at Bricks), San Ysidro, CA (Centro Romero), and with one deployed staff person in Seattle, WA. A new partnership with Silver Lake Conference Center and the Connecticut Conference is also being explored.

We support internships at various locations. Currently one person in Washington, DC and more short-term internships are being planned for our Just Peace Program and our Health and Wholeness Advocacy Program.

Ms. Jaramillo also shared that our staff numbers has steadily decreased through the last several years due to financial constraints. When JWM was created in the year 2000, there were 35 staff positions; there are currently 20 persons on staff.

The members were given a flash drive that holds JWM's resources. Everyone was asked to sign up for the Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANetwork) and it was noted that the form is on the flash drive.

Future Agenda Items

Distributed to the members JWM's Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements from 1957 - 2011; these resolutions were adopted by the General Synod (GS) and assigned to JWM and its predecessor bodies.

The JWM Board of Directors at its fall meeting of 2011 agreed that it needed to determine the staff's capacity to respond to all of the resolutions that were adopted and assigned to JWM. From 2000 - 2011 JWM was assigned 62 GS resolutions and/or pronouncements as primary or secondary implementer. Over 1,000 resolutions were given to JWM and its predecessor bodies.

The Board asked to have the resolutions evaluated, hence, the purpose of the resource. A team was formed of former JWM board members, to include one person from each of the Covenanted Ministries, and they were asked to use the measures based on four areas, 1) Is there theological and historical grounding? 2) Is there mutual accountability? 3) What is the institutional capacity? and 4) What is the probability of influencing social change? The members were paired together and assigned two to three resolutions to review during the next few months.

Ms. Jaramillo expressed that she had spoken with Mr. Bernard Wilson Chair of the United Church of Christ Board of Directors (UCCB) and he felt that the committee should have this information and that this could influence future standing rules for the General Synods. The GS is the policy base for JWM. In addition, there may be times when an urgent action is required by the committee, with a recommendation to the UCCB.

Ms. Jaramillo asked the members how they would like to move forward between now and the next board meeting. It was suggested that instead of conference calls to schedule webinars. Based upon the response, it was agreed that Ms. Jaramillo would have conversation with Ms. Mateu and Mr. Peterson and get back with the members.

The members were informed to go to the website for additional information on JWM. The website address is www.ucc.org/jwm

Questions

Time was given for questions.

1. Asked to receive a roster of the JWM Committee members and have posted on BoardMax. Linda Long will check into having the information distributed to the members.
2. Suggested to begin and end the meetings in prayer; it is planned and included on the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Linda Long
Executive Assistant
Justice and Witness Ministries