

MEETING MINUTES
United Church of Christ Board
October 2-3, 2020
Video Conference (Via Zoom)

Members Present: Yvette Wynn, Chair, Cameron Barr, Vice-Chair, Kearstin Bailey, Traci Blackmon, Brian Bodager, Emma Brewer-Wallin, Charles Buck, Carlyne Call, Rachel Chapman, Eleanore Chong, Michael Cich-Jones, Hannah Cranbury, John Dorhauer, Mark Dutell, Shernell Edney-Stilley, Derrick Elliott, Thaddaeus Elliott, John Folk, Julia Gaughan, Darrell Goodwin, Kevin Graham, Carla Gregg-Kearns, Tim Hachfeld, Richard Harter, Alice Hunt, Penny Lowes, Yesenia Menendez-Sanchez, Gloria-Ann Muraki, David Nelson, Shari Prestemon, Gordon Rankin, Michael Readinger, Inez Reid, Franz Rigert, Bob Sandman, D’Angelo Smith, Kylie Steever, Paul S. Tch , Karen Georgia Thompson, John Vertigan, Harriet Ward, Diane Weible, Marsha Williams, Jeanette Zaragoza De Leon, Lewis Zeidner

Non-Board Member with Special Expertise: Ron Patterson

Members Absent: Faufau Alaelua, Dennis Coy, Eric Jackson, James Maki, Bill Worley

Staff Present: Cindy Bailie, Donyale Copeland, Cindy Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Dianne Roberts, Kent Siladi, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2020

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

DECLARATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-01: to approve the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-02: to approve Consent Agenda Items UCCB-19-10-02a-g which includes the following items of business:

UCCB-20-10-02a: grant voice without vote to the following staff and others making presentations to the UCCB: Cindy Bailie, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Dianne Roberts, Kent Siladi, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

UCCB-20-10-02b: grant voice without vote to Non-Director Committee Members with Special Expertise: Lawrence Bashe, Ron Patterson.

UCCB-20-10-02c: appoint Brian Tracy, Acting Chief Financial Officer of the United Church of Christ, as Treasurer for the United Church of Christ Board, Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), and Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ).

UCCB-20-10-02d: receive the Group Exemption Compliance Report.

UCCB-20-10-02e: authorize the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ to provide supplementation of small annuities, effective January 1, 2021 based on an income level of \$34,800 with three-fourths of that amount, \$26,100, as the level applicable in determining supplementation for a deceased member's surviving spouse/partner.

UCCB-20-10-02f: approve that the Clergy Housing Allowance under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder ("Section 107") during calendar year 2021 for each ordained minister in good standing with their respective denomination and any other "Minister of the gospel" within the meaning of Section 107, who is in the employ of a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ, shall be a sum equal to such employee's good faith estimate of the amount which will be excludible under Section 107 with respect to the providing of a home by such employee for such year; however, unless and until such employee shall provide in writing the estimate described above, the amount of said Clergy Housing Allowance for such employee shall be a sum equal to one third of such employee's gross salary compensation.

UCCB-20-10-02g: to receive the minutes and written reports from the following Task Forces and Committees:

CCM/UCCB Task Force, Development Committee, Living Together as One Task Force, Ministry Committee and the UCCB Evaluation Committee.

APPROVAL OF UCCB AUGUST 2020 MINUTES

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-03: to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2020 Special Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TASK FORCE REPORT
By Darrell Goodwin

The Strategic Priorities Task Force made an oral presentation to the directors.

Opening Remarks by Yvette Wynn, Chair and Cameron Barr, Vice-Chair

Report of General Minister and President by John Dorhauer

Supporting document: GMP Report

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-04 to move into Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
(separate minutes)

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-05 to return to Regular Session.

Adjournment

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

Justice and Local Church Ministries Report by Traci Blackmon

Wider Church Ministries and Operations Report by Karen Georgia Thompson

Supporting document: WCM ECCB Report-October 2020

Director of Philanthropy Introduction and Remarks by John Dorhauer and Kent Siladi

Supporting document: UCCB-20-10_Philanthropy_Dir_Remarks

ASSOCIATE GENERAL MINISTER RENOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORT
By Cameron Barr

The Associate General Minister Renomination Committee recommends the United Church of Christ Board nominate Rev. Traci Blackmon for election by General Synod as Associate General Minister.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-06 to nominate Rev. Traci Blackmon for election by General Synod as Associate General Minister.

Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-AGM_Renom_01_Final_Report

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**By Carla Gregg-Kearns**

The Governance Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board elect the following people to the Office of Communication, Inc. Board of Directors, each for a term of three years commencing on the date of election and ending upon the election of a successor at the October 2023 meeting of the UCC Board of Directors: Cynthia Bailie, Mike Denton, Sara Fitzgerald, Hyo-Jung Kim, Brian Lapis, Marti Weston, and Earl Williams.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-07 to elect the following people to the Office of Communication, Inc. Board of Directors, each for a term of three years commencing on the date of election and ending upon the election of a successor at the October 2023 meeting of the UCC Board of Directors: Cynthia Bailie, Mike Denton, Sara Fitzgerald, Hyo-Jung Kim, Brian Lapis, Marti Weston, and Earl Williams.

Supporting documents:

UCCB-20-09-GOV-05 (OC Nominee Bios) Rev 09-04-20

UCCB-20-09-GOV-06 (OC Board Demographics) 09-04-20

The Governance Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board recommend the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws to the General Synod.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-08 to recommend the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws to the General Synod.

Supporting documents:

UCCB-20-09-GOV-04 (Sept 8 2020 Draft UCC Bylaws - Redline) 09-10-20

UCCB-20-09-GOV-07 (Sept 9 2020 Memo-UCC Bylaws Amendments) 09-10-20

The Governance Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board hold confidential the March 7, 2019 executive session minutes related to litigation update and release the June 20, 2019 executive session minutes related to the resolved legal issue involving Minnie's Seaside Rest.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-09 to hold confidential the March 7, 2019 executive session minutes related to litigation update and release the June 20, 2019 executive session minutes related to the resolved legal issue involving Minnie's Seaside Rest.

The Governance Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board hold confidential in perpetuity the March 8, 2019 executive session minutes related to a personnel matter.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-10 to hold confidential in perpetuity the March 8, 2019 executive session minutes related to a personnel matter.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Yvette Wynn

Yvette Wynn delivered an oral report of the Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee reviewed the UCCB agenda, heard a report from Kevin Graham on the Church Building & Loan Fund Task Force, received an overview of the Strategic Priorities Task Force Report, and received brief information on the status of the racial equity assessment RFP, and raised awareness.

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

By Inez Reid

The Audit Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board receive the Combined Financial Report of The United Church of Christ Board and Certain Affiliated Entities dated December 31, 2019.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-11 to recommend that the United Church of Christ Board receive the Combined Financial Report of The United Church of Christ Board and Certain Affiliated Entities dated December 31, 2019.

Supporting documents:

UCCB-20-08-AU-03_2019_Audited_Financial_Statements

UCCB-20-08-AU-04_Financial_Overview

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-12 to move into Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(separate minutes)

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-13 to return to Regular Session

The Audit Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board accept the report of the Audit Committee and General Counsel's recommendations regarding the Conflict of Interest report.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-14 to accept the report of the Audit Committee and General Counsel's recommendations regarding the Conflict of Interest report.

Supporting document: UCCB-20-08-AU-05_2019_Mgmt_Letter

INVESTMENT AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

By David Nelson

The Investment and Endowment Committee recommends that the UCCB approve a draw rate of 4.75% on the unrestricted investment portfolio based on the average balance of the preceding 20 quarters for the year 2021.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-15 to recommend that the UCCB approve a draw rate of 4.75% on the unrestricted investment portfolio based on the average balance of the preceding 20 quarters for the year 2021.

Supporting document: UCCB 20-09-IE-03 UCF REPORT

David Nelson provided an update on the Investment and Endowment Committee's work on an Investment Policy Statement, which has not yet been finalized.

FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

By Cameron Barr

The Finance and Budget Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board approve the proposed 2021 Combined Unrestricted Funds Budget with a total Revenues of \$18,501,915 and total Expenses of \$18,501,915 for the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP), Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), Local Church Ministries (LCM), and Wider Church Ministries (WCM).

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-16 to recommend that the United Church of Christ Board approve the proposed 2021 Combined Unrestricted Funds Budget with a total Revenues of \$18,501,915 and total Expenses of \$18,501,915 for the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP), Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), Local Church Ministries (LCM), and Wider Church Ministries (WCM).

*Supporting documents:**UCCB-20-09-FB-03 Combined IS BS--2020-08-31**UCCB-20-09-FB-04 2021 Combined Budget*

The Finance and Budget Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board approve the National Basic Support allocation base of \$4,576,173 for 2021 and the funding to the Office of the General Minister & President, the Covenanted Ministries and the Pension Boards allocation as follows: Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP) \$2,933,172 or 64.1%, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) \$980,000 or 21.4%, Local Church Ministries (LCM) \$100,000 or 2.2%, Wider Church Ministries (WCM) \$300,000 or 6.6% and The Pension Board \$263,001 or 5.7%.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-17 to recommend that the United Church of Christ Board approve the National Basic Support allocation base of \$4,576,173 for 2021 and the funding to the Office of the General Minister & President, the Covenanted Ministries and the Pension Boards allocation as follows: Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP) \$2,933,172 or 64.1%, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) \$980,000 or 21.4%, Local Church Ministries (LCM) \$100,000 or 2.2%, Wider Church Ministries (WCM) \$300,000 or 6.6% and The Pension Board \$263,001 or 5.7%.

Supporting document: UCCB-20-09-FB-05 2021 NBS Allocation

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT**By Michael Cich-Jones**

Michael Cich-Jones provided an oral report of the Marketing Committee, including a discussion of marketing strategy and SWOT analysis.

Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-MKT MarketingCommitteeUCCBReportOct2020

GENERAL SYNOD PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**By Penny Lowes**

Penny Lowes provided an oral report of the General Synod Program and Planning Committee, including a discussion of the agenda of GS2021, and noted that the budget for GS2021 will need to be resubmitted to reflect the needs of a virtual General Synod.

CHURCH BUILDING AND LOAN FUND TASK FORCE REPORT
By Kevin Graham

The Task Force affirms the evolving mission of Church Building and Loan Fund. It does not support the alteration of the Bylaws and the alteration of the status of Church Building and Loan Fund. The Task Force affirms that current pay practices are in alliance with pay practices of the National Setting. CBLF has been heard and the Task Force affirms the importance of their role to UCC.

The Church Building and Loan Fund Task Force recommends that the United Church of Christ Board accept the recommendation of the Church Building and Loan Fund Task Force as set forth in the Task Force report.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-18 to accept the recommendation of the Church Building and Loan Fund Task Force as set forth in the Task Force report.

Abstentions: Carrie Call, Traci Blackmon, Penny Lowes, Elly Chong, Gordon Rankin, Darrell Goodwin, Shernell Edney Stilley, Shari Prestemon, Diane Weible, Karen Georgia Thompson, D'Angelo Smith, John Vertigan

Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-CBLF-Task October 2020 Summary Report

FINANCIAL HEALTH IN MINISTRY TASK FORCE REPORT
By Carrie Call

The Financial Health in Ministry Task Force recommends that the United Church of Christ Board recognize that the Pension Boards is the best vehicle for addressing clergy indebtedness and to dissolve the task force. The recommendation is to be reported back to General Synod.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-19 to recognize that the Pension Boards is the best vehicle for addressing clergy indebtedness and to dissolve the task force.

Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-FinHealthTF-01_Final_Report

**DISCUSSION: EXPLORING A TRIENNIAL MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE
GENERAL SYNOD**

By Yvette Wynn

The directors engaged in a discussion on how best to create a task force to explore a triennial meeting schedule of the General Synod. The Chair will create this task force.

It was VOTED:
UCCB-20-10-20 to go into Executive Session for a litigation update and executive session
minute approval.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION
(separate minutes)**

It was VOTED:
UCCB-20-10-21 to return to Regular Session.

REGULAR SESSION

It was VOTED:
UCCB-20-10-22 to approve the October 26, 2019 UCCB executive session minutes.

It was VOTED:
UCCB-20-10-23 to go into Executive Session. The Officers were recused.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION
(minute review only; no separate minutes)**

It was VOTED:
UCCB-20-10-24 to return to Regular Session.

REGULAR SESSION

It was VOTED
UCCB-20-10-25 to approve the October 27, 2019 UCCB executive session minutes and the
March 27, 2020 executive session minutes.

**FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE SECOND REPORT
By Cameron Barr**

The Finance and Budget Committee recommends that the United Church of Christ Board reappropriate \$95,525 from the UCCB 2020 Governance budget to provide a year-end bonus distributed equally to staff of the NS in gratitude for their service through the difficulties and disruptions caused by COVID-19.

It was VOTED:

UCCB-20-10-26 to reappropriate \$95,525 from the UCCB 2020 Governance budget to provide a year-end bonus distributed equally to staff of the NS in gratitude for their service through the difficulties and disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Abstention – John Dorhauer

COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE MINISTERS UPDATE

By Gordon Rankin

Council of Conference Ministers and the Officers will distribute a letter regarding the election and the stress it is creating. Conversations will begin Tuesday and continue until they are no longer necessary.

Q&A with CHHSM, Pension Boards and United Church Funds by Michael Readinger, Brian Bodager and Charles Buck

Supporting documents:

CHHSM.docx

PB UCCB Report

United Church Funds

NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION

Council of Conference Minister Letter to United Church of Christ Board

By Yvette Wynn

The directors engaged in a discussion of the letter sent by the Council of Conference Ministers to the United Church of Christ Board regarding the hiring of Kent Siladi. The Chair emphasized that United Church of Christ Board has the ability to fulfill the oversight role for the General Minister & President. Alice Hunt made remarks and requested that a written copy of her remarks be included in the minutes. Those remarks are attached as Appendix A. The Chair will work with the UCCB, the CCM leadership, and retreat facilitators to arrange an additional time for discussion.

Link to Human Resources policy: <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/NMUCC-Policies-Current-August-2020-revised.pdf>

Cameron Barr offered the closing prayer.

Meeting Adjourned.

Appendix A

Alice Hunt statement on letter to Council of Conference Ministers

Response to the CCM letter written to the UCCB

Alice Hunt

3 October 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Alice Hunt and I am in my last year of 6 years of UCCB service. I ask the secretary to include my specific remarks in the minutes. I will send a written copy to the secretary and to the CCM.

I have been around these inner UCC circles for a long time – going back to 2008. In fact, I remember my awe and then disappointment in 2008. I became president of Chicago Theological Seminary in the summer of 2008. Shortly thereafter I was invited to attend the annual consultation in Cleveland – at that time the annual consultation was crucial to the life of the church – a gathering of leaders from across the church to talk about matters critical to the life, work, and mission of the work. And the topic that year? Sacred conversations on race. I was thrilled. This dutifully ordained National Baptist had joined the UCC, had completed a dual standing, and was coming to participate in a sacred conversation on race. I was SO pumped. Finally – a progressive denomination. Finally – a group of people who would be willing to participate in – to engage in – the really important conversations around racism – we would deal with systemic racism – we would get to the root of things – we would do the hard work... We gathered in Cleveland – 700 Prospect. We gathered at the church house. There ended my awe and anticipation. What happened? We had a facilitated conversation about racism– and appropriate for this conversation... Sacred conversations on race. Some of you were there. You remember. And what happened? My most vivid memory of that conversation was of a white man sniffing – whining because “they are making me feel bad – they are making me feel guilty about being white.” And that consumed the conversation. The UCC – my hope – my excitement – sniffing about white people being made to feel guilty. I’ve been around these inner circles of our UCC for a long while.

And, based upon my experience, I would like to share some reflections about the letter we, the UCCB, received from the CCM. I am saddened by, and I am angry about, this letter and I’d like to tell you why. My “whys” will take just a few moments.

First of all, no questions were asked. No conversations were had. This is a gotcha letter that serves no good purpose.

The letter begins with a quote from scripture – implying that the CCM is speaking truth in love. That the letter is based on love, I find that hard to believe – at least based on my experience and understanding.

Now I will grant you, this letter might give the appearance of “speaking truth to power” – a phrase quite popular in our progressive circles. In many experiences of my life – and especially when I was president of CTS – there were many students – and even some faculty – who thought their sole purpose in life was to speak truth to power – to call out the sins of others – and to rush to be the first to name it (and publicly – social media) and, of course, to be considered righteous by all who saw them speaking truth to power – was the be all, end all. And then, of course, for anyone who has participated in actually trying to make something positive happen, there is the whole question of whether naming anything can, in and of itself, fix a situation. Speaking truth to power and feeling righteous about ourselves in the process – or trying to make ourselves look righteous to others – is not appropriate or helpful. Speaking truth to power – even when that is *actually* what is happening - is insufficient.

Also, throughout the ill-conceived letter from the CCM – and with four full paragraphs at the beginning of the letter – the CCM associated the GMP’s hire of a Director of Philanthropy with the brutal murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, along with the shooting of Jacob Blake. That association is preposterous --and shameful.

In fact, the *only* place in the CCM letter where there is even a modicum of humility is in this one statement – “We acknowledge we are not immune to white supremacy and confess our complicity in it.” That’s right. We *are* complicit. All of us. Of course – white supremacy and racism are pervasive in our church, in our conferences, in our churches, and in our lives. We must continually be about doing everything we can to dismantle white supremacy and racism. Some of us like to think we, the UCC, are “better” about such issues. Fact is, we are not. Racism permeates our lives – our personal lives and our collective life. And we better be working on it. All the time. Already. Accompanying that - we white people, have, too long, *performed* out of fear of being labeled racist. And that has been our stopping point. Well - you are welcome to label me racist. I label myself racist. I am a recovering racist and I work on this every day. I have done some work and I have much more work to do. Labeling myself, however, cannot be enough. We cannot stop there. We have work to do. And we discount God’s call on our lives when we become paralyzed because we are afraid someone will label us racist. That is sick and sin-full. My point is that we liberal, progressive white people spend too much time hoping that someone will notice that we are one of the good white people. We are not. We are all broken. We are broken before God and before each other.

In the CCM letter, the CCM made the thinly veiled implication that the co-chair of the GMP search committee used power and influence to get his dear friend nominated and elected. There is nothing further from the truth. As one who served on the search committee, I am happy to give you more details if that would be helpful. This suggestion the CCM made

discounts the engagement and agency of every single dedicated UCC member who gave of their time and energy to serve on that crucial committee – Jean Barnes, Dale Bonds, Kaji Dousa, Michael Downes, Don Hart, Brian Holeman, Kathy Houston, myself, Linda Jaramillo, Pierson Kemp, Corliss Marsh, Marilyn Pagan-Banks, Ernie Reyes, Shari Prestemon, Kent Siladi, Eric Smith, and Bernard Wilson. Nothing is further from the truth of the CCM implication.

In the CCM letter, the CCM talks about the appearance of cronyism. It is not right or in good faith to single this out in this instance. It was completely within the GMP's role and responsibilities – as outlined by our United Church of Christ bylaws – to make the hire. If we should have a conversation about cronyism and incest – then perhaps we should put that on an agenda. We can, at the same time, talk about how it is that all the boards of the UCC ministries are populated by the same relatively small membership pool in a denomination of 900,000 people. We can reflect on the hiring of Jim Moos, Kathy Houston, Edith Guffey, Charles Buck, Krista Betz – I am sure there are others. And I am sure that some of the CCM who signed onto this letter participated in some of those hirings.

In the CCM letter, the CCM talked about the need for better internal practices in the UCCB and national setting. Several points here:

- a) The CCM is, by its letter, calling into question the integrity, service, and agency of a strong and dedicated staff member, Alisa Lewis, who has served competently and effectively as Human Resources Director for 20 years and as HR Manager for 5 years prior to that. She is Certified as a Professional in Human resources (PHR) and member of Society for Human Resource Management - Certified Professional (SHRM-CP). Our HR Director is outstanding at her job and brings decades of experience in best practices in HRD.
- b) Furthermore, the National Office has appropriate, best practice HR procedures in place. These best practice procedures are followed consistently. The national setting has outstanding hiring practices that has resulted in an extremely balanced and authentically diverse workforce, arguably more diverse than most or all of our Conference staffs.
- c) Furthermore, the GMP IS held accountable. We, the UCCB, hold annual reviews. Two points about the review:
 - i. The CCM or individual conference ministers may not like the outcome of the GMP reviews but they should not question my integrity and agency or the integrity and agency of any other UCCB member who participates in these reviews. If you know me, and if you know my colleagues on the board, you will know that I am, that we are, never rubber stamps.
 - ii. Furthermore, CCM members were asked to participate in the current review. None chose to do that.
- d) Furthermore, the CCM letter talks about the need to reflect the values of the UCC. The fact of the matter is - none of us reflect our stated values – not ONE of us – we are all striving to do so. You may not like how I am striving to do so. I

may not like how you are striving to do so. But we are all working toward reflecting our UCC values.

e) Furthermore, our UCCB Personnel Committee is doing just what it needs to do according to best practices. Having a personnel committee, or any board committee, that moves into management functions is, in fact, contrary to best practices. Board governance responsibilities are fiduciary and strategic – NOT management. According to best practice and according to our bylaws, the UCCB holds the GMP accountable for management.

f) Furthermore, the UCC National Setting already HAS policies, processes, and accountability tools to ensure fair, transparent, anti-racist hiring practices.

So, basically, the CCM letter is audacious, full of contempt and resentment, callous, bitter, and spiteful. Let's be plain - this letter is a lesson in gaslighting. To what end did the CCM send this letter? To what end did the CCM spend 5 weeks and over 20 hours on this topic while the world burned around us? BLM, MeToo, islamophobia, white nationalism, environmental collapse, immigration issues, police violence, COVID-19 – all burning around us. To what end? Where did this effort take the CCM? What has this gained the CCM? What has this gained the church? What has this gained our values? Our mission?

The CCM, and/or individual members of the CCM, may not like some of the GMP's decisions. Well, as a matter of fact, I don't like some of his decisions. You think he is not as effective as he could be? Work with him to help him be more effective. But he is the GMP – fairly elected according to our bylaws. The CCM has an obligation to work with him – in good faith – because we care about the mission of this denomination – and that has not happened. To pretend that the CCM comes in good faith is, at best, weak and immature – reflecting internal CCM issues that sorely need addressing. The CCM is not functioning for the leadership of the church. The CCM's dysfunction is a festering wound, infecting the church. And, the CCM is, ironically, accountable to no one – not even to itself – and it shows.

Finally, the CCM letters asks for a formal process to be developed for engagement between the CCM, the UCCB, and the officers on a regular basis. Efforts have been made – multiple efforts in multiple years – to create these spaces. Perhaps the CCM needs to step up and take on some of this responsibility.

How does anything come out of this for the leadership of the church? We will not be relevant simply because we think we are relevant. We will not be relevant simply because we want to be relevant. We will not be relevant simply because we demand to be relevant.

I care about the UCC. Deeply. I have given blood, sweat, and tears. Some of you have as well. This letter saddens me – as a board member – as a UCC member – as one who would like to be hopeful – would like to see the mission realized. I have watched the disintegration of the CCM as a body – with sadness. It saddens me to know this potential within the UCC has been solely focused on the GMP rather than on helping us move toward a vision of a just world

for all. Rather than leading, the CCM has spent its time criticizing – the GMP and each other. Rather than building the body, the CCM has concentrated on tearing the body down. What does ‘united in Christ’s love’ have to do with this letter? This letter is not worthy of the church – not worthy of the CCM.

We have work to do. The world is burning around us. Let us be about that work.