The meeting opened at 9:00 AM with the “gathering in” worship segment which included a call to worship and gathering song, “I Am One Voice.” The worship experience continued with a personal story, from Kristin Forselius, about living out our faith through acts of justice.

Kristin is the Director of Education and Faith Formation at the Community Church of Durham. She has worked for 20 years in community building and teaching and is a founder of a non-profit organization. She spoke about an initiative to begin church meetings with a 15 minute discussion on the book White Privilege by Deborah Irving. The book inspired them to dig more deeply into their own stories, listen to other stories, and rethink their own implicit biases and the impact of white privilege. A collaborative read followed with other churches and community groups. She described the strong bonds of relationships that were built within the church and among the community. A prayer of response was offered.

Call to Order: at 9:20 Marcie Miller, a member of First Congregational Church & Society, United Church of Christ, in Rindge and Conference President, welcomed the gathered to the 2019 Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, and called the meeting to order.

Announcements were made to inform the gathered body about voting cards, speak outs, offering, and other matters.

Introductions and Greetings: Names were projected on the surrounding screen recognizing Conference Officers, the Board of Directors, Conference Staff, Consultants for Special Services, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee who then served as the Business Committee for Annual Meeting, the Worship Committee, and special appreciation was extended to guests. The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ the King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO, was introduced. She delivered the keynote address.

The Moderator then called upon Neal Cass, a member of the First Congregational Church in Hancock, United Church of Christ, and member of our Annual Meeting Planning Committee.
Motion: On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Neal Cass moved that clergy serving in a local church of the New Hampshire Conference who do not have ministerial standing in an Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, and that special guests be granted voice without vote for this meeting. Since there was no objection to the motion, it passed.

Minutes of last year's meeting, as approved by the Board of Directors, acting on behalf of the Gathered Conference on November 10, 2018, have been posted on the Conference website and were available to delegates by the medium they selected at registration.

Motion: On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Neal Cass moved the adoption of the Proposed Standing Rules as presented. The vote was in the affirmative, and the Standing Rules were adopted.

Motion: On behalf of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Neal Cass moved the adoption of the Proposed Program as printed. The vote was in the affirmative, and the Program was adopted.

“Celebrate All the Saints – The Church Invisible and Visible”

We remembered the people who have gone before us, as beloved friends and honored colleagues in our faith communities. We honored them as steadfast saints of the church visible and invisible. Their lives and legacies are reminders that God continues to speak and act through all of us, for each of us is part of Holy Love’s living narrative.

The Rev. Mark I. Hamilton
February 11, 1948 to November 26, 2018

The Rev. Dr. Richard T. Stuart
February 2, 1943 to November 30, 2018

The Rev. Dr. Lois N. Sundeen
May 4, 1927 to May 7, 2019

The Rev. David W. Cutting
March 2, 1935 to September 2, 2019

The Rev. Dr. Fred Berthold, Jr.
December 9, 1922 to September 18, 2019

Election of Conference Leadership
Pat Harris, a member of Congregational Church of Hollis, United Church of Christ, and Chairperson of the Conference’s Nominating Committee, was called to present the Report of the Nominating Committee for Conference Officers, the Board of Directors,
Nominating Committee Members and General Synod Delegates. The names submitted for nomination were projected on the surrounding screens.

The Moderator explained that our bylaws do not require a ballot vote be taken. Since only one name has been submitted for each position and there are no objections, the Chair declared those individuals nominated, to be elected. The newly elected along with those appointed to serve on the Conference Ministries were then commissioned by the Rev. Gordon Rankin.

**Celebrations: New Calls in NH, Significant Anniversaries**
The Rev. Richard Slater, Associate Conference Minister, recognized those with new calls in NH and significant anniversaries of Authorized Ministers with standing in an Association of our Conference. Those with 25 and 50 year anniversaries were individually acknowledged with a brief reading of their biographies. It was noted that the Rev. Richard Slater, our Associate Conference Minister celebrated 45 years of ordained ministry!

A laying on of hands by those around the room followed, and prayer was offered.

**Report from our Registrar**
Following the break, the Moderator reported that we have a **quorum** present.

Present were.....

- 286 In attendance, representing 87 churches
- 78 Clergy Delegates
- 135 Lay Delegates
- 6 Youth Delegates
- 13 Conference Board of Directors
- 41 Visitors and 13 Exhibitors

**2019 Horton Center Report - Tim Hughes**
Tim Hughes, Interim Executive Director, offered highlights of the amazing outdoor ministry where lives are changed. 345 campers in 2019, up from 258 in 2018; 17 camp sessions; 2 work weekends; an open house; confirmation retreat; and rental groups and local church retreats. Each week had 3 summer camping sessions for the multi age groups: young, middlers, and high school. A mission work group from Connecticut also worked a week. Horton Center is in a better financial place due to higher registrations and lower expenses. Tim then showed a film by campers. Personal invitation cards were placed on the delegates tables to be shared with others who would benefit from a camping week.
Outdoor Ministries Report – Rev. Gordon Rankin
Our Conference Minister, the Rev. Gordon Rankin presented an overview of the strategic direction for the Conference Outdoor Ministries. He noted the significant progress in 2019 toward financial stability. At the end of September there was only a $4,000 deficit. $25,000 to good since we voted last year. Rob Grabill chaired the Horton Center Fund which raised $11,000. Tim Hughes was recognized for his out of the box thinking and may return for one more year as the Interim Executive Director. Tivvi Pare served as an excellent summer director. 2020 will build on our new programmatic model. The Tower Lease was renewed for 40 years, and a search for more settled director will take place. Partnerships with ME and VT are developing, but that growth has to happen organically over time.

Presentation of the Resolution
The Rev. Gray Fitzgerald and Ms. Janet Zeller, both members of South Congregational Church in Concord, and members of the Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group, presented the background and rationale for the Resolution of Christian Witness calling for the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ and the NH UCC local churches to endorse the Back from the Brink Initiative to end the threat of nuclear war. Rev. Fitzgerald reminded us how through our tax dollars we are funding nuclear weapons and without speaking out we could be complicit in destroying our planet. Five actions are in the resolution: renounce the option to use nuclear weapons, remove the president as sole authority to discharge nuclear weapon, take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, cancel plan to replace arsenal with enhanced weapons, and pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Janet urged participation in their workshop and reminded the gathered that peacemakers work at preventing a nuclear holocaust.

Presentation on How to Become a Racial Justice Church: The Rev. Dr. Dawn Berry, a member of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Hopkinton and chairperson of the Racial Justice Mission Group of the New Hampshire Conference presented on overview of the process for becoming a Racial Justice Church and why it is important for churches to participate.

Presentation of National Youth Event 2020: Ann Desrochers invited participation in this exciting youth event that cost $375 for registration plus transportation to Indiana. Glen Vodra, a youth Synod delegate and who attended the previous youth event, was identified as someone to talk to about the event.

Recognizing with gratitude for their service: The Rev. Gordon Rankin invited President Marcie Miller and Laura Sevigny to the podium. Laura, chair of Annual Meeting Planning Committee for several years, was thanked for her work. Marcie was thanked for her leadership of the Board of Directors and as President of the Conference. The Rev. Gordon Rankin presented Marcie with a plaque recognizing her leadership as a model to follow.
“Proclamations and Responses” Morning Worship Segment


“Step out of line” became her theme in the sermon. She noted: the 400th year commemorating the history of slavery in the USA; the repercussions of the malformed theological Doctrine Discovery that is the underpinning of white supremacy and hate; and that what we are witnessing now is not the America we have become, but the America we have always been. Key concepts:

- We fail to think beyond the limits of our culture and ourselves.
- White Supremacy is an emergency.
- Jesus’ conversion demonstrated a more just way of being willing to hear the cries of the marginalized.
- Racial Justice is the work we do on behalf of saving ourselves.
- Question how are we living out the gospel that allows people to sit in pews then leave and spew hate.
- Authentic relationships with others challenge us until it changes us. It may benefit them, but it restores our souls.

A Skit on courage among biblical characters who had to be persuaded Moses, Jonah, and Esther followed.

An offering of spirit and financial was received.

**Buffet Lunch/Connecting Sessions:** *Rev Richard Slater offered a prayer for the meal that we were to receive.*

Session 1A Conversation with the Rev. Traci Blackmon

Session 1B Confession Writing

Session 1C Conversation with Rogers Johnson (Governor’s Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion)

Session 2A Discussion on the Back from the Brink Resolution of Christian Witness

Session 2B Conversation with the Conference Minister

Session 2C Conversation with the General Synod 32 Delegation

Session 2D Forgive Us Our Trespasses, facilitated by the Racial Justice Mission Group

**Speakout:** Dr. Kit DeVries, member of South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Concord, coordinated the following Speakouts:
✓ Rev. Chris Owen, theological reflection podcast “What in God’s Name?”
✓ Claudia Lister, Economic Justice Mission, Living Wage.
✓ Gail Kinney, Workers’ Justice Minister, Meriden, faith and labor.
✓ Rev. Ruth Gallot, Prepared to Serve
✓ Amy Hayden, Community to Community Racial Justice Experience to Englewood, NJ with the Lyme Church, 10 seats left.
✓ John Tostenson, Friends of Horton Center Update
✓ Peggy Martin, Piano Recital at Plymouth Congregational Church
✓ Rev. Jason Wells, NH Council of Churches, celebration at Brookside Congregation
✓ Rev. John Gregory Davis, Poor People’s Campaign bus to Washington DC June 20, 2020
✓ Jeff Scott, Wider Church Mission Group survey
✓ Max Gehring, increasing the number of youth and young families in the UCC

Following the Speakout the gathered body sang “I Am One Voice” to lead into the next worship segment.

“Dedication of Gifts and Testimony” Worship Segment:
The unison prayer of dedication was led by the Rev. Deborah Knowlton. Bienfait Polepole shared his testimony as an asylum seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo who was detained at the border. The NH Immigrant Rights Project represented him, and our Conference’s Immigrant and Refugee Support Group paid his bond so he could continue working on his asylum case outside of the jail. Rev. Tara Allen offered a Prayer of Response.

Treasurer’s Report, John Herbert, a member of the Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Salisbury and our Conference Treasurer, presented the Treasurer’s Report. John reported that the NH Conference is alive and well, and financially sound.

In addition to the Operating Funds, the Conference also has a number of specific funds whose purpose is to assist local church. The Pembroke Fund provides grants for retreats, conferences, and meetings. The Revolving Loan Fund offers low interest loans for local church renovation projects. These funds are set up so that only the income from interest can be used each year. Board of Directors and Executive Committee manage the Conference finances and expenses by monitoring the budget progress during the year.

A year ago, John reported that he was concerned how the budget year 2018 would end. We finished the year with a deficit of about $37,000 which included a $23,000 operating deficit for Horton Center. The Horton Center deficit did not include the income from the cell tower and the cost of the Interim Director of Outdoor Ministries.

Coming to the end of 2019, John is again concerned with how the budget year will end. We can expect another deficit. At the end of September, the revenue and expenses show that we have a deficit of $85,000. John expects that it will get better by year end. Factors contributing to this significant deficit include the continuing decline in OCWM
contributions across the UCC; and so far, only 60% of the anticipated OCWM contributions for 2019 have been received by NHCUCC. The generosity of the churches to OCWM is the major factor in limiting the deficit. Contributions to the Friends of the Conference is another source of funding. Horton Center has had a much better financial year and is expected to have a smaller deficit than last year. Careful spending by the Conference ministries, committees, and boards help the budget. Reduction in staff hours at the Conference, made in previous years, keep the General Ministry expenses within their budget. Rental income has helped increase revenue.

The budget will not balance at year end, but the Conference is financially sound thanks to the generosity of churches and individuals. We continue the work of the United Church of Christ in New Hampshire.

John explained that he has served as the Conference Treasurer for six years, and according to the by-laws, he is not eligible for another term. It has been his privilege to work with some outstanding and dedicated volunteers and staff. It is reassuring and helpful for churches to have the support of such a faithful staff.

**Proposed Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2020**

The Rev. Carolyn Keilig, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented the Proposed Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2020. A copy of the Mission Income & Spending Plan was available in delegates’ packets.

Key aspects of 2020 MISP include:

- Reducing the share of OCWM with national setting from 40% to 35% (will share more if there is a surplus)
- Increasing membership dues by $1 to $12/persons
- Raising the target for the 2020 Horton Center appeal to $15,000
- Completing the rental of all the offices in the Conference Center
- Maintaining the investment draw rate of 5.25% for unrestricted and Board restricted funds
- Retiring the loan on the Conference Center roof
- Receiving contributions from Friends of the Conference
- Honoring financial requests from the Conference Ministries
- Providing $15,000 for the sabbatical of our Associate Conference Minister per our covenant
- Self-funding of most Conference events
- Resulting in a deficit budget for 2020 of $36,000

**Motion:** The Rev. Carolyn Keilig moved, on behalf of the Board of Directors, the Adoption of the Proposed Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2020, as printed. The vote was in the affirmative, and the motion passed to adopt the 2020, Mission Income & Spending Plan.
National News

General Synod Recap, the Rev. Stacey Kullgren provided us with a General Synod update, following her participation as a Delegate at General Synod 32. Stacey thanked the meeting for the honor and privilege of being a delegate, and thanked the staff: Ann Desrochers, Gordon Rankin, and Richard Slater who provided support and interpretation. Debbie Gline Allen was honored at Synod, and the Rev. Eric Jackson was elected to the Board of Directors.

Vote on Resolution

The Reverends John and Faye Buttrick and Ms. Janet Zeller, members of South Congregational Church in Concord, and members of the Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group presented the Resolution of Christian Witness.

Motion: On behalf of the Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group of the New Hampshire Conference, Janet Zeller moved the adoption of the Resolution of Christian Witness as presented.

Faye Buttrick spoke about her personal reasons for supporting the resolution. John Buttrick then spoke in favor of the resolution by citing scientific explanations that make clear the devastation of using nuclear weapons cause the user, the one bombed, and all creation. Five people spoke in favor of the resolution; and one question was raised and answered. The motion passed unanimously, and the Resolution was adopted.

“Open Minds and Hearts” Worship Segment

The Rev. Eric Jackson, a pastor in the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. Eric has been blessed to serve congregations in New York and New Hampshire. Eric is president of the Greater Manchester NAACP and serves on the Board of the Directors of the National United Church of Christ. Eric noted that grace is to the Christian faith as water is to the ocean. The Manchester NAACP extends grace to people who return to their communities after being incarcerated through Annullment clinics held twice a year and open to the public. Rev. Tara Olsen Allen will offer the Prayer of Response.

As worship began, permission was asked of the Indian peoples to have the meeting on their land.

The Rev. Richard Slater led the Unison Prayer of Confession developed in one of the connecting sessions and the Assurance of Pardon and Grace. The Rev. Gordon Rankin celebrated the Sacrament of Communion.

The Moderator adjourned the 2019 Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ at 3:55 pm since there was no further business. The Rev. Gordon Rankin offered a benediction as we concluded our time together.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn C. Berry, Secretary