Illinois Conference Annual Celebration
October 31 – November 1, 2025
Business Session Part 1; October 31, 2025

After the group The Many opened worship with song and praise, we were dismissed to learn at various workshops, followed by lunch and more workshops.

Emily Mitchell welcomed the gathered at 2:38 pm and we celebrated church and clergy anniversaries, recognized members in discernment, new ordinations and new calls to our Conference. Rev. Terrill Murff gave out certificates to over 50 churches who have given to the 5 for 5 campaign and we mourned the closing of churches and clergy deaths of the past year.

Call to Order
Juanita Bradley called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

Quorum
It was established a quorum was present.

Opening prayer
Rev. Andrea Lasticly opened the meeting with prayer.

Test Votes
Since we had an agenda to vote on, several test questions were asked to make sure everything was in working order; it was.

Appointment and election of a parliamentarian for this meeting.
Shall Mr. Norman Williams serve as the Parliamentarian for the 2025 Annual Celebration Business meeting?

AC 10-31 01	**vote on above motion**	**PASSED**

Approval and adoption of Special rules of order and meeting covenant
Shall the Illinois Conference adopt and abide by the rules contained in the document entitled "special rules for the 2025 Annual Celebration Business Meeting?"

AC 10-31 02	**vote on above motion**	**PASSED**

Shall the members of the Illinois Conference adopt and agree to abide by the behavior guidelines contained in the document entitled "Covenant of hospitality and welcoming for the Illinois Conference UCC?"

AC 10-31 03 vote on above motion PASSED

Appointment and election of tellers (person to count votes, if needed)
Shall the selected persons serve as tellers for the 2025 Annual Celebration Business Meeting?

AC 10-31 04 vote on above motion PASSED

Approval of the Agenda for the 2025 Annual Business Meeting
Shall the proposed agenda for the 2025 Annual Celebration Business Meeting be adopted (as amended)?

Jon Prain moved "that the proposed agenda be amended by inserting the following item of business between #12 (report of the Interim Conference Minister) and #13 (Nominating Committee Report and Elections) as follows: "discussion/action regarding clarifying our understanding of determining maximum term limits (and eligibility to serve) in Conference positions – under the new Illinois Conference Constitution and Bylaws." Ernie Potter seconded. There was no discussion.

AC 10-31 05 vote on above motion PASSED

Approval of the minutes of the 2024 Annual Celebration
Shall the minutes of the 2024 Illinois Conference Annual Celebration be adopted as presented? Harlette Washington moved, Lindsey Svetlick seconded.

AC 10-31 06 vote on above motion PASSED

Emily noted that on page 9, the nickname of Mr. Williams be removed. Ernie noted that on page 15, first line, the amount Conference gives annually to the camps should be $50 thousand instead of $500 thousand. Another change regarding the budget, noted on page 16, remove "the rate of", and balance "the" budget.

Shall the minutes of the 2024 Illinois Conference Annual Celebration be adopted as corrected?
Harlette Washington moved to accept the minutes as amended, Lindsey Svetlick seconded.

AC 10-31 07 vote on above motion PASSED

Motion to receive, and place on file, written reports of the Conference staff members, Associations, Camps, Conference officers, committees, task forces, teams and similar entities

(with the exception of the financial reports, budgets, Nominating committee report, and Camp Forward report).

Shall the written reports of the of the Conference staff members, Associations, Camps, Conference officers, committees, task forces, teams and similar entities (with the exception of the financial reports, budgets, Nominating committee report, and Camp Forward report) be received by the Conference and placed on file?

Mark Binder moved, Catherine Erwin seconded.

AC 10-31 08 vote on above motion PASSED

Report of the Conference President – Juanita Bradley
Juanita asked the people to review her report on page 17.

Interim Conference Minister's report – Terrill Murff
Terrill thanked the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT); Michelle Hughes, Kathy Lawes and Shernell Edney Stilley for all their hard work and dedication. He referenced his report on pages 18-20 in the booklet for details and said he's been focused on stabilizing our Conference, building trust and collaboration within the Conference. He recognizes the pain and trauma we've gone through and seeks to be a healing and empathic leader and build that within other leaders. He thanked God for the work of the many who have filled the atmosphere with love and looks at the church as a source to embody and build a foundation of love. He thanked everyone.

Jon Prain's agenda item motion on discussing and clarifying our understanding of term limits
Jon Prain moves the following "when calculating maximum term limits -- and when calculating eligibility to serve in any positions in the Illinois Conference – all periods of service in any Illinois Conference positions – PRIOR to the conclusion of the 2025 Annual Celebration/Annual Meeting – shall NOT be used when determining maximum term limits nor in determining eligibility to serve in Conference positions. (The terms of Conference President and Conference Vice President shall be exempt from the provisions of this motion, as they are already specifically covered under other exemptions in the Constitution and Bylaws)". Harlette Washington seconded the motion.

There followed a lively discussion with questions for clarification. People wondered about term limits and when the new Constitution and Bylaws take effect. Term limits are: people are eligible to serve 2 terms of 2 years each with 1 year break. The new Constitution and Bylaws begin with this Annual Celebration. Due to the difficulty of finding volunteers, people can serve again, even if they've served prior as all is reset. Eric wants to move forward with new governance and said

the Nominating committee has the responsibility for the entire slate, not Associations who have their own responsibilities.

AC 10-31 09	**vote on above motion**	**PASSED with 2 opposed, 1 abstained**

Nominating Committee Report and Elections – Eric Quinney-Burnard
Eric explained the committee wasn't given adequate time to recruit enough people to fill all the positions. The report is on pages 34-38. They have names but are looking for more diversity, and are asking leadership to nominate people who are gifted, called but hiding. He said sometimes, people are transformed when their gifts are called out and leaders express confidence in their abilities. If anyone has a nominee, to write down their name, phone number, email, Association and what their gift is and send to Eric. He asked for an extension to fill in the rest of the slate until January. Someone asked if the nominations should be brought to the Board of Directors instead of the Association/committee, but the Board is scheduled to only meet 4 times a year.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition from the former Constitution and Bylaws to the new Constitution and Bylaws, the Illinois Conference authorizes the members of the 2025 Illinois Conference Nominating Committee to continue the task of finding and recommending nominees to fill any vacancies on the proposed slate of nominees through January 31, 2026. Such nominees shall be presented to the Illinois ~~Council~~ Conference Board of Directors or the respective committees or teams for a simple majority vote of approval and appointment to their offices.
Harriett Dart moved to empower the existing nominating committee to complete the vacancies as possible through January 31, 2026. Mark Binder seconded.

AC 10-31 10	**vote on above motion**	**PASSED**

Shall the Illinois Conference elect the persons named in the report of the nominating committee and those nominated from the floor to the offices and terms listed?

Eric Quinney-Burnard moved to accept the slate as presented. Terri Smith seconded.

AC 10-31 11	**vote on above motion**	**PASSED**

Shawn Hillman noted that his name is listed as Rev. but he is not ordained (from Eastern Association nominee).

Presentations
TPIRC – Melody Seaton said Little Home Church By the Wayside in Wayne shared the benefits of being part of TPIRC in their workshop. They work together and inspire mutual respect

between the pastor and the congregation. They took advantage of all the program offers and Melody said it's not a cure all for everything but promotes best practices and listening to what's helpful. The Holy Spirit will reveal what needs to be done to become successful, but the church has to be willing to change, adapt and do the work. Melody introduced the rest of the staff for the program.

Transitions – Shernell Edney Stilley introduced herself and her background and said the Conference received a grant to help congregations going through transitions; from the time a pastor announces their leaving until a new pastor is hired and in the pulpit. The program has healthy tips on how to go from "me to we" and become a better church. She said their table has butterfly papers infused with seeds that within 4-6 weeks will sprout and she hopes that churches will contact www.metamorphosisilucc.org for assistance. She suggested people browse the website, tease out new mission ideas and plant the seeds with intention. The program is an option to look into the mirror and see potential.

Terrill introduced our partner organizations that support health and invited anyone to feel free to reach out to them for help with mental and spiritual wellness and also congregations with trauma; there is a chaplain available to connect with for virtual care and support.

The meeting shall be in recess until the call of the Chair on Saturday morning (November 1, 2025).

Saturday November 1, 2025
Session 2

Juanita Bradley called the business meeting back in session at 9:05 am.

Jon Prain opened with a prayer.

Presentation and approval of Camp Forward Implementation – Amy Wildermuth
Amy introduced the team and said they have recommendations the team would like to implement. They have worked to separate the two camps into individual 501(c) 3 entities, and hopes the Conference will continue to provide strong relationships with the camps.

Pilgrim Park will become its own independent 501(c) 3 entity with continued ties to the Conference and have articles of incorporation to become the Pilgrim Park Association. This will necessitate transferring the property to PPA from the Illinois United Church of Christ Conference with its own bylaws. Therefore, the new name will be Pilgrim Park Association.

The specific purpose of the incorporation is to administer facilities, provide spiritual care and have opportunities and activities to include, but not limited to, those associated with the UCC. If the camp ever dissolved, the property would return to Illinois United Church of Christ Conference.

The new bylaws will guide how to run the new Association. There will be 9 members on the Board, with 3-year term with the option to run for 2 terms with a 1-year break before being eligible again. To start, one will begin with a 3-year term, another with 2-year term and another 1-year term to implement the proper rotation of members. 2 will be ex-officio of Conference, 1 as Conference Minister or delegate, 1 the president of Illinois Conference governing body.

Tower Hill already has bylaws and will need organizational change to make it independent with continued ties to the Illinois Conference, which will require revision of the existing articles of Incorporation. Their Board of trustees will change from the current 6 members to 9 members, with updated language and have the same term limits as Pilgrim Park Association.

They also will have 3 Board Trustees from the Ill. Conference and 2 ex-officio members. It will be known as the Tower Hill Camp Association. The other 6 members will be selected by the current Board from each Association.

The covenant between Illinois Conference and both Camps will be revisited every 5 years and will include advertising and fund-raising support. All the documents for the above can be found at https://tinyurl.com/3nkbta7b.

Amy Wildermuth moved the following proposals be approved.
Shall the Illinois Conference approve the transfer of property to the newly formed Pilgrim Park Association?

AC 11-01 01 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference endorse the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the new Pilgrim Park Association as reflective of the Illinois Conference's desired new relationship with the Pilgrim Park Association?

AC 11-01 02 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference endorse the covenant between the Illinois Conference and Pilgrim Park Association as reflective of the parties' hope to maintain a relationship with mutual commitments and obligations to one another?

AC 11-01 03 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference approve the revised purpose of the Tower Hill Camp Association as reflected in the revision to Article III of the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation for the Tower Hill Camp Association?

AC 11-01 04 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference endorse the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as reflective of the new relationship between the Illinois Conference and the Tower Hill Camp Association and, by this amendment, encourage the current Board of Directors to vote to approve them?

AC 11-01 05 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference endorse the covenant between the Illinois Conference and the Tower Hill Camp Association as reflective of the parties' hope to maintain a relationship with mutual commitments and obligations to one another?

AC 11-01 06 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference authorize the Conference Board of Directors to approve any necessary technical or non-major changes to the language of any documents as we go through the filing and approval process?

AC 11-01 07 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Shall the Illinois Conference ratify the following members for the Pilgrim Park Association and Tower Hill Camp Association Board of Trustees?
Pilgrim Park Association: Hank Fairman 1 year term, renewable for 3 more years
John Rogers 2-year term, renewable for 3 more years, Karen Karczewski 3-year term, renewable for 3 more years.
Tower Hill Camp Association: Ernie Potter 1 year term, renewable for 3 more years, Michelle Hughes 2-year term, renewable for 3 more years, Michael Cusack 3-year term, renewable for 3 more years.

AC 11-01 08 vote on above motion UNANIMOUS

Financial Report and Discussion – Scott Peterson and Rocky Sheneman
Scott announced that Rocky was unavailable today. During the last 18 months, there have been a lot of changes and they have worked hard to smooth out and strengthen the processes. He then went into details about the financial report.

The summary of financial position reveals our assets are down 1.8% and we had to withdraw from our reserves to be able to continue to function. We had investment gains of 6.5%. Due to the Camps transfer of property, we will lose some of our fixed assets, as we will act as custodian for the fund and not able to use.

Scott then focused on page 29, he said the details of the report are correct, however, the totals are not. The end of year beginning balance for 2024, the was $4,857,283.12 and as of August 31, 2025, the ending balance was $5,081,356.38.

The Conference Council has access to accounts 501 (CC directed UCF), 502 (ICUCC sold properties and 802 (General Operating – Council directed) with a 5% draw of the balance over the past 3 years. We've withdrawn $300K as scheduled, with 2 payments to the camps of $50K each, leaving $200K to cover budget expenses,
leaving us with a 3-year reserve which needs to be addressed. In recent years, due to loss of income, we've had to exceed the 5% draw with approval from the Council.

Summary of Activities, OCWM depends on local church support and continues to be down. Due to our agreement with National, 20% goes to them and we keep 80%, 100% of Friends of the Conference stays with us. We've taken $200K from sold properties to help pay expenses.

TPIRC and Lilly grants are restricted funds and will last until the grant is used up; the qualifications for them is the Conference must commit an equal amount ($126K) which is included in the 2026 budget. However, we must account for how the money has been used. Ernie Potter pointed out that some of the percentages listed on page 31 are off. Due to the fact the Council relinquished vehicles to MLT staff last year, that expense will no longer be applicable. They will continue to get mileage reimbursed.

Larry McClure then talked about the Stewardship Committee report. Since giving is down within the Conference, Larry said the team is ready and willing to help individual churches, however, none have called the Conference office. He asked us to please contact them so they can be of assistance.

Scott then moved that the Illinois Conference receive and approve the 2025 financial report as presented.

AC 11-01 09 **vote on above motion** **UNANIMOUS**

Shall the Illinois Conference adopt the proposed budget for the year 2026?

AC 11-01 10 **vote on above motion** **PASSED 2 opposed**

Other business or announcements
New officers as per the new Constitution and Bylaws were installed.

Donors to the Annual Celebration were thanked for their generous contributions which helped to reduce the costs to participants. Benna Bell won a praycation and will be notified. Jon Prain and the technical people were thanked, as well as the Annual Celebration and TPIRC planning team.

Larry McClure moved to close the business meeting, seconded by multiple people. Terrill Murff prayed and meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Fraley