The Keystone Connection

A Message to the Conference

October 06, 2026

Members and Friends of Keystone Conference,

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice." – Philippians 4:4 NRSV

Rejoicing doesn't sound like something I'd be doing if I was stuck in a first century prison, but here Paul is, advocating for it to the Philippians. The Philippians were in a bit of a bind themselves, trapped in conflicts and troubles that Paul addresses throughout his letter. But Paul steadfastly calls them, in an imperative voice, to rejoice, and with good reason.

When we find ourselves in conflicts or troubles, typically the amygdala, the flight or fight part of our brains, is what lights up. We can stay there, too, as we wade through emotions evoked by trapped pools of adrenaline and cortisol in our systems. But when we move in our minds and bodies into the neocortical section of our brains, we can tap into creative, higher order thinking that allows us access to feelings of love and joy that are inaccessible to us when we are trapped in fight or flight. I think that one of the greatest aspects of our faith is how it moves us, both individually and collectively, from one way of thinking and being to another. It requires spiritual discipline, self-differentiation, breathing, movement, and in many ways playfulness for us to get there. But when we do, I believe we embody the Gospel.

Even if Paul didn't know the neuroscience of all this, he still knew it. In Philippians 4:8, he writes, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

When we find ourselves in situations of trouble or conflict in our churches, let's recall this to our minds and bodies, so that we are not trapped in prisons of flight or fight but are free to move toward creative possibilities suffused with love and joy. I think it's one of our greatest callings and opportunities as Christians to do so!

David

Rev. David Ackerman
Transitional Regional Conference Minister, Region 3
Keystone Conference, United Church of Christ

Board Meeting recap

At the September Keystone Transitional Board of Directors meeting, among a number of issues, the following items were addressed:

1. We discussed the proposed 2027 operating budget and recommended it to the Conference for adoption. There will be two town hall meetings to discuss the proposed budget moving toward the November 14 Fall Conference Budget meeting.
2. The Generosity Committee reported that the Annual Report document is nearing completion and will hopefully be available in the coming month.
3. Following the discussion at the August Board meeting, a Search Committee for the Region 3 Conference Minister position has been formed and has begun to meet. A separate Profile Task Force is writing a general profile for the Conference. The Search Committee will be adding the specifics for Region 3.
4. We also began a discussion about how the General Synod delegation will be constituted. We discussed a number of approaches to balance both geographic and demographic representation in the delegation. More discussion will ensue.

Rev. Dr. David DeRemer, Moderator

Fall Conference Meeting
November 14 2026
Online Attendance Only

Registration link: click "Fall Meeting" on the homepage of keystoneucc.org

Delegate Information:

All authorized clergy holding standing in one of our Associations will be entitled to vote.

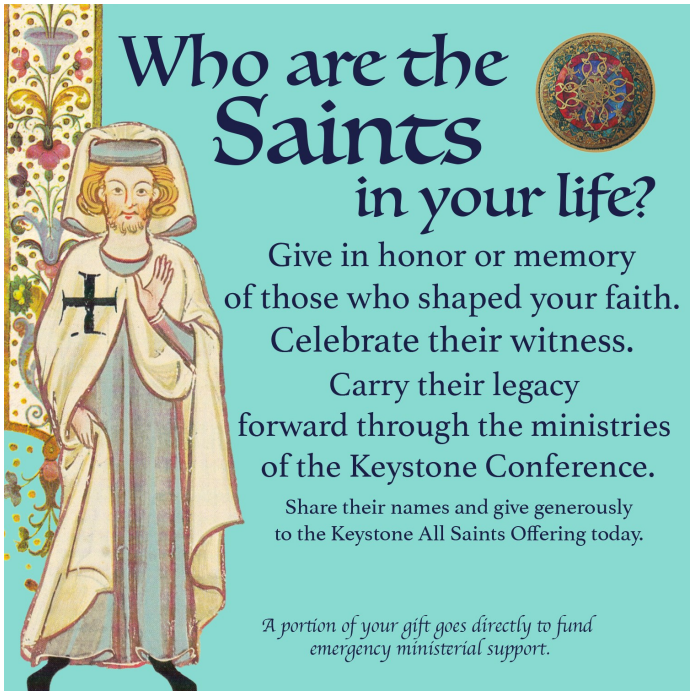
Churches will also have the following delegates:

Membership up to 100—2 delegates
Membership of 101—300—3 delegates
Membership 301—500—4 delegates
Membership over 500—5 delegates
1Youth delegate (ages 14-17) with voice but no vote.

** Our quorum requires that 30% of our churches (152) be represented!

The only agenda item will be the APPROVAL of the 2027 Keystone Fall Budget

Any questions or issues with registration, please contact Sue at the Keystone office at 717-652-1560 opt. 1 or at sue@keystoneucc.org.



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