

Meet the candidate for the new Associate Conference
Minister for Congregational Development Position



Pennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ

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Psec.org

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Introducing new ACM CD Candidate - Rev. Cean James

Dear PSEC Conference Members and Friends,

After following the prescribed search process of the United Church of Christ to solicit, interview and select a candidate for the part-time position of Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development, the Conference Consistory is pleased to unanimously and enthusiastically present for your election the Rev. Cean James, Pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship Church, United Church of Christ, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rev. James, a self-proclaimed 'church nerd,' meets all of the qualifications for the position and comes with our highest recommendation.



About Rev. James:

Hometown: Philadelphia, PA. Originally from Chicago, Illinois

College: Florida A&M University, Bachelor Science, Biology, 1996

Seminary: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA. MDiv 2010

Current Ministry: Grace Christian Fellowship. Founder and Senior Pastor (UCC affiliation in 2013)

Previous Ministry: Bright Hope Baptist Church, Pastor, 1998-2005

Wider Church Ministry: Moderator, Philadelphia Association; Member, PSEC Conference Consistory; Participant, Next Generation Leadership Initiative (UCC Pension Board Program); 2015 General Synod Delegate; POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild) Interfaith Social Justice Ministry.

Plan for bi-vocational ministry: Rev. James will divide his time between part-time ministry at Grace Christian Fellowship Church and his part-time work with our Conference.

From his UCC profile:

If I am honest with myself, I have felt a call to ordained ministry for most of my life. I grew up as a pastor's kid, but I was blessed with parents who insisted that I feel no pressure to go into the ministry. I was even discouraged from it, with my parents believing if you are truly called, nothing can keep you from it. But I was the child who accompanied my father to preaching engagements, and regularly attended the 8 and 11am services. Even as a boy I was fascinated by the work of the church and spent as much time there as I could. When I was 12 years old, I recited a ML King speech at school and I remember everyone being fascinated. That was the first time I thought maybe I was called to go into ministry. But I went through high school hearing my parents warning and moving towards being a scientist. I decided to study biology in college. During the summer after my sophomore year I did an internship at Cornell University. One day a group of us decided to go to church; a church far outside my tradition. In the middle of service, everything went quiet, and there I heard a quiet voice bidding me to come. I went straight to my room after service and wrote my first sermon. 22 years later, I still hear my parents warning that only God can call and I still hear that quiet voice.

Rev. James was selected because he fulfilled all qualifications of the position and possesses:

- A strong love for Jesus Christ and spirit for evangelism
- Solid experience and a record of success with new a church start & church growth.
- A clear passion for the mission of church growth

- A commitment to formal education & personal growth (he is working to complete a Doctorate in Ministry)
- An appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity and the capacity to help people make connections across lines of diversity and division
- An awareness of the ministry needs of the millennial generation now conspicuously absent from many of our congregations.
- Experience with successful workshop leadership on church growth at PSEC's Annual Meeting
- Familiarity with PSEC conference, staff and consistory
- Concrete ideas/plans to hit the ground running

Regarding the ACM CD position, Rev. James writes:

I am a pastor in the conference who is passionate about church growth and development. I am a church planter and I believe in the positive work of starting new churches. I am not afraid of the challenges of this work and actually consider it to be vital to the health of the church universal. But I am also someone who has worked in historic, traditional churches and assisted congregations in keeping their wineskins fresh so they can hold new wine.

I am passionate about the church of Jesus Christ. I love the church! The church has done more for me than I could ever pay back. I believe in the church. I believe that the best days of the church are ahead of her.

I have a utility belt full of strategies and techniques that I have used to plant a successful congregation in one of the most difficult area of America. I am always looking for something new and innovative that is working to draw people into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. I believe that I will be a great asset in implementing the new vision that the conference has developed.

We are excited that Rev. James has accepted the call to the ACM CD position and believe you will quickly come to see the qualities and attributes that make him a strong candidate for this position. He will be presented for election at a Special Meeting of the Conference, Saturday, January 21, 2017 at 2pm at St Paul's Amityville in Douglasville. At that meeting, Rev. James will introduce himself, his ministry philosophy and theology and conduct a short workshop on Congregational Development.

You will have THREE opportunities to meet Rev. James to learn more about him and his future plan for Conference ministry before the January 21st on the following dates:

~~Saturday, January 7th @ 10:00 am at Community UCC in Reading~~

Monday, January 9th @ 7:00 pm at St. Andrew's in Perkasie

Wednesday, January 11th @ 7:00 pm at St Mark's UCC in Cressona

In Spirit of the Risen Christ and the Season of Thanksgiving,
Rev. Barbara Pence, Moderator, PESC



SAVE THE DATE
Special Conference Meeting

Saturday, January 21, 2017
@ St. Paul's UCC Amityville
1:30 Registration - 2:00 Meeting

Quorum Required !



PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Administrative Center is located at 1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100, Pottstown, PA 19464.

Walk-in Office Hours : 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Thursday

9 am to 12 noon on Friday

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