

COMMAntary: an e-newsletter of the Minnesota Conference - United Church of Christ

God is still speaking,

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Save the Date

Action at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ postponed a vote on the budget until a Special Meeting of the Conference. An official announcement of that meeting will follow. For now, please hold the following date and time:

**Saturday, September 26, 2009
beginning at 1:00 pm
@ Wayzata Community Church**

The Board of Directors considered several venues but chose one that was easily accessible, had adequate parking, and had room to accommodate the number of participants that might be expected.

News of the Conference

Joys and Concerns

1. We offer gratitude for and blessings to Rev. Henry Heinbuch who celebrates the 60th anniversary of his ordination this Friday, June 19. Henry holds his standing in the Iowa Conference, but resides in Minnesota, worships at Union UCC, St. Louis Park, and participates regularly in the retired clergy gatherings.

2. We give thanks for the willingness of Rev. John Ross, Senior Minister at Wayzata Community Church, to serve the wider United Church of Christ as part of a transition team, offering counsel and support to the Rev. Geoffrey Black, nominee for General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

3. Please hold in prayer those from the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ traveling next week to General Synod 27 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Leading the delegation as Associate Delegates are Dr. Lisa Lindesmith, Vice Moderator, and Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister. Conference delegates are:

- Rev. Ruth Beck, St. Peter's UCC, Stillwater
- David Becker, Parkway UCC, Minneapolis
- Rev. Don Britt, First Congregational, Princeton
- Aleta Christopherson, First Congregational, Austin
- Phil Cool, Peace UCC, Duluth
- Gabe Flynn, Wayzata Community Church
- Rev. Bridget Haefner, Peace UCC, Eden Valley and St. Matthew's UCC, Forest City

[Minnesota Conference Website](#)

[National UCC Website](#)

[Outdoor Ministries Team's "Save Our Camp" blog](#)

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- Marlyne Leary, Community UCC, St. Paul Park
- Nick Lemke, Bethlehem UCC, Maple Lake
- Derek Lyndes, New Brighton UCC
- Rev. Dana Mann, Union UCC, Elk River
- Rev. Alan McNamara, Chapel Hills UCC, Edina
- Sham Moteelall, St. John's UCC, Norwood Young America (also serving on the Credentials Committee)
- Sylvia Fleming, Congregational Church of Detroit Lakes
- Rev. Michael Small, Union UCC, Hackensack
- Rev. Jennifer Jaimez, St. Mark's UCC, Bloomington
- Elinor Strandskov, Lynnhurst Congregational UCC, Minneapolis
- Rev. Al Thompson, First Congregational, Mankato

The Associate Conference Ministers, Rev. Rick Wagner and Rev. Elena Larssen, will also attend General Synod. Ashley Minister of Faith Formation, Wade Zick, will travel with 28 youth and youth leaders from the MN Conference for the Youth @ General Synod program. This is a new program for the national setting which involves youth in 3 days of service and work in the local community and 3 days of participation in the General Synod of the UCC activities. In addition several of our representatives to the national UCC Boards will be in attendance as will a large group of visitors. And, Mary Kuhlberg of the Congregational Church, Detroit Lakes will be feted as Minnesota's Honored Laywoman.

Over 3200 members of the United Church of Christ will gather next week to be immersed in worship, play, work and service. Gavel to gavel coverage of Synod will be provided via the internet. To learn more, visit www.ucc.org/synod, where you will find a rich source of all sorts of information about this Synod - including the numerous resolutions, the proposals regarding a restructuring of the United Church of Christ, and changes to the bylaws associated with implementation of the Ministry Issues pronouncement on forming and preparing pastoral leaders for God's Church.

Yesterday we received the seating chart for the plenary sessions and learned that Minnesota has "front row seats." Several of our younger delegates have volunteered to do some synod blogging and/or short videos. Alison Bents in the Conference Office will keep you updated.

5. The ONA/LGBT Team thanks all those who participated in the second annual Gathering prior to this year's Annual Meeting. Special thanks are due to:

- Linda Coates, music director from First Congregational UCC in Moorhead, for her music leadership during our two worship services;
- Carolyn Pressler and Sue Ebbers, who shared their

biblical and theological insights as well as aspects of their personal and shared journeys in an inspiring keynote address on Friday morning.

6. Congratulations to the Our Whole Lives community for the remarkable write up in this month's Oprah Magazine! The article can be read online at:

<http://www.oprah.com/article/omagazine/200907-omag-adult-sex-education>

Candle Cloths at General Synod

Every local church represented by a delegate or visitor at General Synod 2009 was invited to prepare a prayer and a quilted fabric candle cloth. Participants received a prayer ritual, details about creating a prayer, instructions for the candle cloth and a quilt label for the back of the cloth. All candle cloths will be displayed at General Synod and there will be a reception for all congregations who contributed a candle cloth to the display. Then, each participating congregation will receive a candle cloth from another congregation to take home - providing an opportunity for an ongoing prayer partnership.

Did your local church participate in this opportunity? My regular read of church newsletters let me know that the Congregational Church of Detroit Lakes did so. Here is a story of their contribution. We'd love to hear about and share yours.

The Story of the Candle Cloth

Churches being represented at General Synod were invited to participate in an "Immerse Yourself in Prayer" project by creating a mini-quilt candle cloth that would be exchanged with another congregation.

So, fabrics in the General Synod colors of red, black and white were selected by Judy Enslin and Mary Kulberg; Judy designed and sewed the mini-quilt; the Wednesday Bible Study Group wrote a prayer which Teresa Kuether printed on the back of the quilt; and the completed candle cloth was blessed during Sunday worship before being sent off to the Synod office in Cleveland. It will be displayed, along with the other candle clothes at the June 26-30th General Synod gathering in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where a booklet containing all of the prayers will also be made available.

Sylvia Fleming and Mary Kulberg will be attending General Synod, and when they return, they will be bringing the candle cloth created for our use by another congregation.

The following is the prayer written for the church receiving the candle cloth made by us:

*We pray that if your church building could talk,
it would tell a tale of acts of love and hospitality, and a*

story of living saints.

*We pray for the continued renewal of your congregation
as you seek to listen to the voice of the Still Speaking
God.*

*We pray in the name of the One who binds us together
in the glorious tapestry that is the living Church.
Amen and Amen.*

Annual Meeting: Stewardship Workshop Notes

Thanks to Mark Scott from St. Anthony Park UCC whose notes from the Annual Meeting's workshop on Stewardship are available at the OCWM page:

www.uccmn.org/ministrygroups/ocwm - just click on OCWM Resources.

Annual Meeting: Lost & Found Items

The following items were found at St. Ben's after the Annual Meeting: Film, two phone chargers, a pill case, tennis shoes, a wooden clock and a lapel microphone.

Contact Tina at csbevents@csbsju.edu to stake your claim.

Children and Youth Formation News

Youth Ministry Leader Training & Retreat for Clergy & Lay Leaders (18 and older)

**August 28-30, 2009 | Pilgrim Point Camp in
Alexandria, MN**

\$100 for the first person/church,

\$75 for additional team members

Registrations are due by August 1, 2009

[Find Registration forms by clicking here.](#)

the Minnesota Conference presents the Fall 2009 CYE:

Pluralism: Putting God in More than One Box

**October 9-11 or 16-18 | Pilgrim Point, Alexandria,
MN**

Early Registration: \$75/youth, \$50/adult

Registration after September 14 - \$85/youth, \$60/adult

Deadline for all registrations is October 2, 2009

[Youth registration form is available by clicking here.](#)

[Adult registration form is available by clicking here.](#)

We need to hear from you! Please take 15 minutes to complete this survey if you volunteer or are staff working with youth, are a young adult (19-30) or are a youth. This survey is being done by the national setting of the UCC but information from the MN Conference respondents will be

sent to us to better serve the youth, young adults and leaders in our 139 churches in the MN Conference. Many thanks to those who have already filled out the survey.

<http://uccyyasurvey.questionpro.com>

Please forward this on to youth, young adults or youth leaders in your congregation. Your help is huge!

(BTW - there is a contest among the 39 UCC Conferences for responses and we are still in the lead, but by only 1 with Northern California coming on strong!)

2008 Annual Reports

All Annual Reports received in the Conference Office are available for review on the Minnesota Conference website [by clicking here](#) or visiting www.uccmn.org/annualmeeting

Swine Flu Pandemic Information

We received an update from the National UCC Disaster Response Ministries on the H1N1 Flu pandemic. [You can find FAQs on the pandemic by clicking here](#). Additional, previously posted information can be [found by clicking here](#).

ASDIC Pulpit Supply & Worship Leadership

ASDIC Metamorphosis Ministry, a ministry of prayerful examination, relationship building and community formation for racial justice, now offers worship leadership throughout the State. Led by Herbert Perkins, ASDIC ministry services include preaching, liturgy design, worship leadership and adult forums. Related services such as youth programming and retreats are also offered. [A flyer containing more information is linked here](#).

Herbert A. Perkins, Ph.D., is an M.Div. candidate and serves as adjunct faculty at United Theological Seminary. A member of Cherokee Park United Church in Saint Paul, he has over 30 years of intercultural and interethnic leadership experience, is a frequent guest preacher and workshop leader around the Conference, and has provided worship leadership and pastoral care to various UCC congregations when clergy were on sabbatical, vacation or medical leave. His services are available on a sliding scale basis. Herb may be contacted at 651-224-2728 or hperkins@asdic-alliance.org.

2010 Heritage Grants

New information is available on the 2010 St. Paul's Family Foundation Heritage Grants. [Click here to learn more](#).

Upcoming Events

Ice Cream & Jazz

*Sunday, July 26 from 1-5 pm
Minnehaha United Church of Christ*

**4001 38th Ave. South
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Featuring "The Girls" (Lori Dokken, Patty Peterson, Judi Donaghy and Erin Schwab) from 3:00 to 5:00pm. Also, Ice Cream Sundaes, Root Beer Floats, Cones, Bake Sale, Silent Auction and more! Come, have fun and meet your neighbors. Questions?? Call the church at 612-729-7556.

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus Pride Concert

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, with Rev. Tony Clark (Minnehaha UCC), Jack Gburzinski and Jon Lufte (Peace UCC, St. Cloud), presents its Pride Concert, "Divas, In Praise of Gay Men's Female Icons". 8 pm, Friday June 26 and Saturday June 27, Ted Mann Concert Hall at UMN (West bank). Hear fun, toe tapping, sing along, rock anthems and pop songs made popular by female singers from the 1950's to today. For more info, visit www.tcgmc.org

Called to be a Faithful Minnesota

Minnesota people of faith are gathering for a witness of lament on **Tuesday June 30 at 10:45 AM** at the state capitol to urge Gov. Tim Pawlenty not to abandon the health of Minnesota's citizens, especially those most in need.

Come and join this event in a spirit of lament: wear black, bring flowers and notes for the Governor. Bring your congregational banners well.

The legislature has adjourned and the governor has vetoed the revenue bill which was approved by both houses, so now the governor alone has the power to make changes to the budget to reduce it through a method called unallotment. The governor has already vetoed a bill which would have saved health insurance for 30,000 extremely vulnerable Minnesotans. There is indication he will continue down this road.

These measures may mean that some people will literally lose their lives in order to balance our budget.

As people of faith we want to send the message that this is not the Minnesota we are called to be. Abandoning the poor is against the teachings of all our religious traditions. Minnesota has historically been a state that cared for all its citizens. These actions move us away from those religious and civic traditions. We want to remind Gov. Pawlenty that he is governor of all the people and plead for his care for all.

[Continue to check this website for details about the gathering.](#)

Sponsored by: the Minnesota Council of Churches, the St. Paul Area Council of Churches and many congregations of many faiths.

Invitation to UCC 20 & 30 Somethings

UCC 20/30 somethings are getting together for kickball and fellowship at Bryant Square Park July 9th-30th. The evening will begin with a picnic potluck at 7:00 followed by kickball at 8. Fellowship will continue after the game at Bryant Lake Bowl at 9:00ish. Come when you can. Bryant Square Park is located in S. Minneapolis on 31st and Bryant just past Uptown. If you have questions please call Amy Wick Moore 651-645-3765. If it rains we'll meet at Bryant Lake Bowl.

Becoming an Intergenerational Church

Make plans now to attend one or both of the Intergenerational Church events:

Communicating Across the Generations

w. Rev. J. Bennet Guess, Minister and Team Leader
for the Proclamation, Identity and
Communication Ministry of the UCC

October 1-2, 2009 @ Christ the King Retreat Center,
Buffalo, MN

Ministering to the Missing Generation

w. Rev. Carol Howard Merrit, author of Tribal Church

October 30, 2009, 9am-3pm @ United Theological
Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, MN

[Find more details, a flyer and registration information by clicking here.](#)

Power & Boundaries Training - Save the Dates!

This training is offered on three different dates in three different regions of Minnesota. All sessions are from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Lunch and materials are included.

- Thursday, October 8th 2009 - Fergus Falls, MN
- Thursday, October 22nd 2009 - Hinckley, MN
- Thursday, November 5th 2009 - Lakeville, MN

For more information or to register contact Aundrea Billings at aundrea.billings@mnychurches.org or 612-230-3236 or visit www.mnychurches.org

Employment Opportunities

Organist & Choir Director

St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ seeks Organist and Choir Director to lead the music ministry of the congregation. [Additional information available by clicking here.](#) We are an Open and Affirming congregation. Visit

www.sapucc.org to learn about us.

Send cover letter and resume by June 30, 2009 to:

Organist/Choir Director Search
St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ
2129 Commonwealth Ave, St. Paul MN 55108
or Rev. Victoria Wilgocki at pastor@sapucc.org.

Seeking Children's Ministry Coordinator

Join up with the creative energy unfolding at St. Paul's UCC in St. Paul as we seek to revitalize the ministry of this congregation. We're located in a vibrant city neighborhood and seek to nurture our small band of children and reach out to more families in our area.

If you have:

- passion for children,
- creative energy especially around music, arts and drama,
- interest in Godly Play and Our Whole Lives,
- ability to connect well with adults who teach and shepherd,
- relevant background, experience and/or professional study in education and/or Christian education,
- desire to be part of an emerging progressive faith community,
- limited time but dedicated commitment to an 8 hour starting position with a Sunday morning focus,

You may be the right match at this time in the life of our faith community. We're looking for you! Position to begin in August with competitive pay.

Please contact the church office at spoffice@comcast.net or 651-224-5809 to receive an application. Contact Rev. Norma Rae Hunt, Lead Pastor for Revitalization with questions at: sppastor@comcast.net or 651-224-5809. Deadline to receive applications is Monday, June 22nd.

Seeking Minister of Education

First Congregational Church of Minnesota, UCC is searching for a Minister of Education. This position seeks experience and dedication to the education of children and youth and an ability and willingness to work with and support teachers. We are searching for a person with experience in Christian Education or a deep commitment to learning more. This could be accomplished through consultations, taking a course or other creative ways.

The task of faith formation for children requires creative energy and passion and an excitement for working with kids. This is a permanent, part-time position of 20 hours per week for 10 months each year, with salary and benefits. If this sounds interesting to you, please send a

brief resume to:

First Congregational Church of Minnesota, UCC
500 Eighth Avenue SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Or to the Rev. James Brasel, at jbrasel@firstchurchmn.org.
Closing date for receiving resumes is June 20, 2009.

Supply Pastor needed

Medford Congregational UCC seeks 3- 6 month, part-time supply Pastor for on-going preaching, teaching, worship ministry, and pastoral care. We are more "conservative/traditional" and appreciate a warm personal style. Candidate must have or obtain current boundary training and background checks. Contact Elena Larssen (elenal@uccmn.org or 612-871-0359) to submit profile or learn more.

Have Enthusiastic Youth, Need Youth Ministry Director

Associated Church in Owatonna, MN seeks a staff person with experience and training for a part-time position as Youth Ministry Director. This person will be Spirit-filled and have a heart for youth. He or she will want to "hang with kids" and also be able to effectively engage parents and other adults. Being a motivated self starter, the successful candidate will have a vision for ministry with youth in the church and community, passionately lead volunteers who are called to share this ministry and work well with staff colleagues and the Youth Ministry Team to enhance our ministry with youth in grades 7-12. A working knowledge of computers/media is certainly an asset. Visit www.AssociatedChurch.org and send your resume to: Ron@AssociatedChurch.org

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