

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

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God is still speaking,

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## News of the Conference

### Joys and Concerns

1. Please hold in your thoughts and prayers Rev. Marion Pocker (retired) his wife, Dorothea, and their family as Marion begins chemotherapy for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. Marion served for years at Falcon Heights UCC and was most recently the chaplain at Oak Meadows, where Dorothea is now on the Board.

2. We announce with regret the departure of Larry Boatman, Financial Development Consultant for the Minnesota Conference UCC. The Development Committee has met and discussed strategies for moving forward. We give thanks for Larry's service among us.

3. The mother of Doug Federhart (Spirit of the Lakes UCC, Minneapolis), Elaine, passed away on December 5th in Charles City IA, where she was a longtime member of First Congregational UCC and a faithful delegate for many years to Iowa's Annual Meeting. In addition to Doug and his brother Jim of Madison WI, Elaine is survived by her husband, Hugo, with whom she celebrated 71 years of marriage last May.

### COMMAntary Notice

There will be no issue of COMMAntary next week, 30 December 2009. Keep your eyes peeled as we hope to roll out a new look for COMMAntary in 2010!

### Five for Five 2009 Deadline: Monday, January 11

#### Five for Five 2009 Deadline set for Monday, Jan 11

Checks with gifts for UCC Basic Support (Our Church's Wider Mission), One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and The Christmas Fund will need to be **received at the Conference Office by Monday, January 11** to be counted toward your 2009 Five for Five tally!

Offerings we receive after Monday, January 11 will be credited, with gratitude, to your 2010 giving. Please help us with your understanding and your support, and by meeting this deadline for 2009 Five Funds gifts.

Questions? Please e-mail Sian Nelson, Conference Business Manager at [siann@uccmn.org](mailto:siann@uccmn.org).

## Mission/Service Trip Grant Updates

We are thrilled that 43 churches representing 469 youth and 148 adults applied for mission/service trip grants!

A few of the reasons the Faith Formation Team asked for these grants to be made available;

- Many churches participate in mission/service projects. These grants are a means for the MN Conference to support that ministry of the local church!
- As the downturn in the economy affects many of our churches, these grants will provide a financial buffer to still participating in life-changing service/mission experiences.
- Grants will provide more time and opportunity for spiritual development rather than spending so much energy on fundraising.
- By going on mission/service trips our youth often learn new ways to help and give witness to others who are often outside the church and/or in need!

## Friends of the Conference

As you may know, the work of the Minnesota Conference can no longer be adequately supported solely by Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and per capita Covenant Dues from local churches. For the past few years we have undertaken an intentional approach to individuals who care deeply about the ministry of the Conference and who might choose to support the conference financially. The conference has a growing list of such persons, and those persons are currently receiving [our annual fund raising solicitation letter](#). If you are not currently in our database of donors, but wish to offer a contribution for the support of the ministries of the Minnesota Conference, please send your check to the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 323, Minneapolis, MN 55404 and indicate "Friends" on the memo line, or give online at [www.uccmn.org](http://www.uccmn.org). Please be sure to indicate whether you'd prefer your gift be used entirely in Minnesota, or whether you'd like it shared with the national setting of the church. We'd also be interested in receiving the names of persons you know who might appreciate our ministries and be willing to consider support.

God bless you!  
Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers  
Conference Minister

## Making it easy to make a difference

### Food Shelf Donation:

KARE 11 & Land O' Lakes are donating \$1 for every person who clicks on their web site. Go to the website listed below and on the right side of the screen there is the green area

where it says: You Click, We donate. It's that easy. Please pass to all of your friends. I know that the food shelves are really hurting this year. [Just click here to get involved!](#)

## High School Youth Event



### High School Youth Event March 5-7, 2010 Camp Koinonia, South Haven, MN

**Early Registration:** by Feb 1, \$75  
youth \$50 adults

**Registration after Feb 1st:** \$85  
youth, \$60 adults

Deadline for all registrations: Feb

26th.

Senior High Youth (grades 9-12 only) and their Adult Leaders (21 and older) are invited to attend this event. Registration begins at 6:30pm on Friday, March 5 (dinner will not be provided that Friday evening). The event will conclude at Noon on Sunday.

Questions? Call Leah Springer or Wade Zick at 612-871-0359 or email: [leahs@uccmn.org](mailto:leahs@uccmn.org) or [wadez@uccmn.org](mailto:wadez@uccmn.org). Many thanks to the Youth Event Planning Team for their leadership! Registration forms now available HERE: [www.uccmn.org/childrenandyouth](http://www.uccmn.org/childrenandyouth)

## Interfaith Vigil on Immigration Reform

### Immigration Task Force leads Interfaith Vigil at Ramsey County Jail

Since October 4, 2009, the MN Conference Task Force on Immigration has been participating in a monthly faith action vigil at the Ramsey County Jail. The vigil calls for comprehensive reform of immigration policy, and supports detained immigrants and their families, elected officials, and jail officials and workers. **The event is from 2:30-3:00 pm the first Sunday of every month, outside the Ramsey County Adult Detention Center, at 425 Grove St. in downtown St. Paul.** Each month the liturgy is planned and led by member groups ... [Please click here to keep reading.](#)

## News from our Local Churches

### Grace Community UCC

Grace Community UCC's Annual Black History Month Concert will take place on February 28 at 7:00pm in the sanctuary. Put it on your calendar now!

## Upcoming Events

### Day on the Hill Training

The Justice and Witness Team of the Minnesota Conference

UCC will be offering a **Day on the Hill Training, Saturday, March 13, 2010 at Mayflower Community UCC, Minneapolis**. Save the date now! More details to come.

### 2030 Clergy Network

#### UCC 2030 Clergy Network: **Shepherding the Shepherd**

June 1-3, 2010 | *Chicago Theological Seminary*  
Save the date. [Find out more here.](#)

### The Academy for Vital Christianity

#### The Academy for Vital Christianity United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

What is the Academy for Vital Christianity? A chance to take seminary-level classes on religion and faith at a convenient time and place.

The Academy offers short-term classes in churches around Minnesota. Classes focus on topics like evil and suffering, understanding the Bible in contemporary terms, and sacred music and arts. Taught by United faculty members and regional experts, the 10-hour classes are offered evenings and weekends. Among this spring's offerings:

- Professor Christine Smith leads discussions on how we can respond to "Eco-Injustice."
- Gail Anderson explores the Metro area's growing communities of non-Christian faiths.
- Dean Richard Weis shares a 21st century perspective on the writings of the prophets.

An interactive format encourages a lively give and take, and United's tradition of hospitality creates a sense of inclusiveness.

**Early registration:** \$175 (up to 2 weeks before the class)  
**Regular registration:** \$225

For more information, including class details and registration, [just click here](#). Questions? Contact Renee Flesner at 651.255.6138 or [rflesner@unitedseminary.edu](mailto:rflesner@unitedseminary.edu).

## Classifieds

### In Search of a Pulpit

The Spiritual Life Committee of Pilgrims UCC, Maple Grove is in search of a new pulpit. In the interest of being a "green" church, they were **wondering if any area churches have an old pulpit that they've set aside and aren't using**, perhaps because it needs refinishing, or just because they bought a new one. If you have a pulpit that may be up for grabs, please contact Deb at [miedema@fr.com](mailto:miedema@fr.com) or Robin at [robin@pilgrimschurchucc.org](mailto:robin@pilgrimschurchucc.org). Thank you!

## Job Opportunities

Check out the Employment Opportunities portion of the Minnesota Conference Website. [Click here to see listings.](#)

### ***Current listings:***

- Interim Pastor - First Congregational UCC, Faribault
- Interim Pastor - Peace UCC, Minnesota Lake
- Pulpit Supply - Zoar UCC, Waldorf
- Pulpit Supply - First Cong UCC, Hancock
- Part-time Pastor - St. Matthew's UCC, Forest City & Peace UCC, Eden Valley
- Community Nurse - First Cong UCC, Anoka
- Director of Outdoor Ministries - Illinois South Conference ([click here for this position only](#))

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