

**COMMAntary: an e-newsletter of the
Minnesota Conference - United Church of Christ**
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God is still speaking,

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Volume 6, Number 02

13 January 2010

News of the Conference

Joys and Concerns

1. First Congregational Church of Minnesota, UCC in Minneapolis is pleased to announce that it has called the Rev. Jane McBride to be its next Principal Minister. The decision was made on Sunday, January 10 at a Congregational Meeting following the worship service. Rev. McBride will begin her new role on February 15, 2010.

2. St. Peter's UCC in Stillwater is pleased to announce that it has contracted with the Rev. Janet Shannon to be their Interim Minister starting in February. Rev. Shannon recently completed an interim with Community UCC in St. Paul Park.

3. Congratulations to Mayflower Community UCC! The story of their Creekside Commons housing project was recently featured on UCNews. [Read the whole story here.](#)

4. Please hold in your thoughts and prayers the Rev. Obid Hofland (retired, member at Hazel Park Congregational UCC), who served for many years at Cottage Grove UCC.

5. Please welcome The Rev. Elizabeth Endicott, the new minister of The First Congregational Church of Austin, United Church of Christ with your prayers of joy and thanksgiving. Elizabeth comes to us from the Massachusetts Conference, and has begun her ministry following her Candidate Sunday on January 3rd. Welcome to Elizabeth, and congratulations to the Austin congregation!

Correction

Our apologies! Last week we reported the death of Rev. Gordon Goodfellow incorrectly. Rev. Goodfellow's last name was printed as "Goodwin". We have also learned that Rev. Goodfellow served for a time at First Congregational UCC in Baudette, Minnesota.

Haitian Earthquake - Urgent Response Needed

Dear Friends,

The United Church of Christ has launched an emergency appeal for Haiti after a [major earthquake struck the country yesterday](#). Thousands of people are feared dead and countless have been left homeless.

[Website](#)

[Minnesota Conference
Calendar](#)

[National UCC Website](#)

[Join the emailing list of
UCNews: Keeping You
ePosted](#)

The need is massive. [Your gifts are needed to support immediate and long-term relief.](#)

The 7.0 quake struck 10 miles southwest of the capital just before nightfall on January 12. Our Global Ministries personnel, Kim, Patrick and Solomon Bentrott, have reported to us that they are safe.

It is still too early to know the full extent of the damage, but we are expecting very high loss of life, widespread destruction of homes, schools and other buildings, and major damage to key water, electricity and road systems. Funds from the UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing are being rushed to our Haitian partners to support their initial emergency response. However, your generous donations are needed to provide the greatest level of support for the victims of this [terrible disaster](#).

Your prayers and monetary support are needed. [Here is how you can help.](#)

The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte
Executive Ministries
UCC Wider Church Ministries

P.S. If you or your congregation prefer to make your gifts off-line, please send checks to "Wider Church Ministries" and marked in the memo portion "OGHS - Haiti Earthquake Relief" to Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115; or send through your respective Conference office.

Thank you for your compassion and support.

Justice and Witness Offering!

It is time again to support the justice mission and ministry of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ through the annual Justice and Witness Offering. The traditional ingathering day is the Sunday of the the weekend of Martin Luther King Jr. Day - this year, January 17th, 2010 (January 18th is Martin Luther King Jr. Day). Download the materials here (www.uccmn.org/ministrygroups/justicewitness), and please participate in this offering. By supporting this offering, your congregation ensures the continued funding of your Justice and Witness Team's grant program and the mission of justice.

Is your church prepared?

Hopefully you as a Congregation will never have a disaster

in your church family or facility, but if you do, are you prepared to make the best of the situation? Here are some items to consider before such a time occurs:

- What are the kinds of disasters to which you might be vulnerable?
- Do you have sufficient insurance for your building and liabilities?
- Are your vital records protected against fire and water damage?
- In what ways could your building be used to aid the community, and has it been offered to the Emergency Management Authority in your community?
- What the resources (talents, skills and financial) of your members that could be utilized to serve in an emergency?
- Do you have a system (telephone or emails or other) by which members could be reached in times of emergency in order to meet the needs of a disaster?
- Do you know and have the number of the Volunteer Disaster Coordinator for the Minnesota Conference in order to receive Conference and National UCC assistance?
- In summary what would be the mission of your congregation in times of a disaster to serve Christ and your community?

Rev. Robert F. Broeder
MN Conference Volunteer Disaster Coordinator
612-756-2820

Seminary Sunday is February 28th

Please plan to participate in celebrating the work of CUE, (Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries) on **Seminary Sunday, February 28, 2010** (or any Sunday that is convenient for your church). The role of our seminaries in the life of our churches is critical. Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries train individuals for ordained ministry, and they provide resources for lay leadership programs, Christian Education and youth programs. In addition, our seminaries provide leadership, preaching, and continuing education opportunities at conference and association meetings. All of our churches are enriched by the work of our UCC seminaries.

If you would like CUE brochures, posters, or offering envelopes, or if you would like a student from United Seminary to speak or preach at your church, please email CUE Development Coordinator, Kiely Todd Roska at cueseminaries@yahoo.com. Printable bulletin inserts will be included in the COMMAntary in early February, or can be emailed directly to your church.

Antiracism resources and an invitation

Antiracism resources and an invitation to participate in antiracism learning are again being extended by ASDIC, which is under the leadership of Herb Perkins (Cherokee Park United Church) and Margery Otto (Mayflower Congregational UCC). Click to find:

- [a letter describing an upcoming ASDIC Decolonization Retreat](#) on Feb. 13th and 14th,
- [spring Antiracism Study Dialogue Circles](#) beginning in February,
- two documents about whiteness and its implications ([document 1](#), [document 2](#)), and
- [a registration form](#) for the retreats and circles.

Clergy and lay leaders are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to strengthen our capacity for becoming true multicultural/antiracist communities of faith. For more information you can also go to www.Cherokeeparkunited.org and click on ASDIC.

Lenten Study on Immigration

The Minnesota Conference UCC Immigration Task Force invites you to consider immigration as a theme this Lenten season. Members of the Task Force are available to preach, lead adult education forums or Lenten studies. The Immigration Task Force (ITF) has created a Lenten study guide based on liberation theologian Dr. Miguel De La Torre's new book, *Trials of Hope and Terror: testimonies on immigration*. Dr. De La Torre is our guest speaker at our ["No Human Being is Illegal: Mobilizing for Humane and Just Immigration Reform"](#) on January 30-31. The guide will blend lectionary readings, discussion questions, and theological reflection along with sections from the book. The book contains descriptions of economic and social factors and first person accounts of Latino migrants. These descriptions are "testimonios" from those who suffer under our current policies and those who are actively engaged in the pro-immigrant movement. [Click here for more information](#), and contact Rev. Loren McGrail at lorenmcgrail@mac.com.

News from our Local Churches

Robbinsdale UCC, Robbinsdale

**Robbinsdale United Church of Christ &
El Bethel Community Christian Church**

**"The Prophet Speaks: Commemorating the Life of
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."**

Sunday, January 17th - 10:00am and 2:00pm

We will celebrate the ministry of the prophet, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We will sing the songs that formed him and hear the sermons that changed the world. If you

have ever wanted more of Dr. King than, "I Have a Dream", then join us for this special day. The service will be led by the clergy and musicians of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ and El Bethel Community Christian Church.

Excerpt: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968. Ten days earlier, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, author of the classic study The Prophets, introduced him to an assembly of rabbis: "Where in America today do we hear the voice like the voice of the prophets of Israel? Martin Luther King Jr. is a sign that God has not forsaken the United States of America. His mission is sacred, his leadership is of supreme importance to every one of us. Martin Luther King Jr., is a voice, a vision and a way. The whole future of this country will depend on the impact and influence of Dr. King not as a Civil Rights Leader but as a prophet of God naming the evils of economic injustice, militarism, and consumerism, and always leading us back to love."

For directions to the church, visit us at
www.robbinsdaleucc.org

Union Congregational UCC, Elk River

Union Congregational Church UCC needs your support!

The Discovery Group, an interdenominational advocacy group in support of LGBT concerns, is hosting a community service this Sunday, January 17th at 3:00pm in honor of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and his vision of justice. Elk River needs your support, please plan to attend. The service will be held at Union Congregational Church 1118 4th Street, Elk River, Minnesota (763) 441-1203.

St. Anthony Park UCC, St. Paul

Raising Boys - Friday Night Out - January 22

5:15pm Spaghetti supper

6:00-7:45pm "Raising Boys" presentation & discussion for adults, separate activities for children & youth

What are some of the challenges and joys of raising boys? How do parents, grandparents and others tune in to boys' emotional, social and spiritual development? How does the cultural context affect how boys mature and develop? Peter Watkins, Mike Shimek and Bob Bartlett, each of whom is a local educator in the area of boys' and men's spirituality and development, will lead the program. Free and open to the public.

Pilgrims UCC, Maple Grove

Drum Circle Invitational
@ Pilgrims United Church of Christ, Maple Grove

Tuesday evening, February 9 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Bring your drum (djembe's, ashikos, bongos...) and join us for a night of rhythm and sacred drumming. The facilitated drum circle will start with some basic strokes and rhythms that can then be mixed together into a choir of drum beats. Experienced drummers will find room to improvise and newcomers to drumming will find a heartbeat-like rhythm to keep it all going. If you've drummed before, come and join us. If you've never drummed before but want to, come and join us. If you just want to watch, come and join us. Bring a drum, bring a friend. A few extra drums will be available if you don't have one. If you have extras, bring them along. We'll provide snacks to keep the energy going. Please RSVP to info@pilgrimschurchucc.org.

Upcoming Events

Service of Closure and Farewell

Service of Closure and Farewell for Rev. Bridget Haefner
Sunday, January 17th, 2010

8:30 am at Peace United Church of Christ
309 Church Street N, Eden Valley, MN 55329
320-693-3848

and 10:30 am at St. Matthew's United Church of Christ
31355 Minnesota Hwy 24, Litchfield, MN 55355
320-693-3848

There will be a potluck in honor of Rev. Haefner following the service at St. Matthew's in Forest City.

We urge you to have your church represented by lay and clergy persons. If you are unable to attend, you are encouraged to send letters of greetings and good wishes to Bridget at either address given above.

Our visible support and interest will contribute to this occasion. We hope to see you there.

Youth Ministry Lunch

Come grab some lunch, worship and connect with others in Youth Ministry, gather 11:15, program 11:30-1:30 at Plymouth Congregational in Minneapolis on...

Thursday, January 21

Family Based Ministry

Speaker Jim LaDoux of Vibrant Faith Ministries

Please [RSVP to Leah](#) by noon on Tuesday the 19th so we can make sure to have enough food!

2030 Clergy Network Celebrates 2010

All 20/30 clergy and soon-to-be clergy are invited for dinner and fellowship on Friday, January 22 from 6:30-9:30pm at the home of Rev. Jennie Ott, 1206 6th St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413. Hosted by Rev. Jane McBride and Jennie Ott. Dinner will be provided; please bring a beverage to share. All spouses and partners welcome! For more info, contact Jane (janemcbride@juno.com, 612-521-3930) or Jennie (jennieott12@gmail.com, 612-354-2948).

No Human Being is Illegal

No Human Being is Illegal: Mobilizing for Humane and Just Immigration Reform

With Noted Liberation Theologian Dr. Miguel De La Torre
author of *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* and Director of the Peace and Justice Institute
at Illiff Seminary, Denver, Colorado

Explore the faith foundations of immigration reform
Mobilize in support of humane and just immigration reform

Day 1 - January 30, 2010

7:00-9:00pm

at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Keynote: Dr. Miguel De La Torre

Day 2 - January 31, 2010

at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church

10:30am - Interfaith Service followed by lunch

1:00-5:00pm Community Forum

Learn more and register in advance by clicking here:

www.uccmn.org/ministrygroups/immigration

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.

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

After Feb 1st: \$85 youth, \$60
adults

Deadline for all registrations: Feb 26

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 or wadez@uccmn.org. Many thanks to the Youth Event Planning Team for their leadership! Registration forms now available HERE: www.uccmn.org/childrenandyouth

Academy of Vital Christianity

Get geared up for Spring Classes with the Academy of Vital Christianity! Find a list of all the classes at the [Academy's website](#). You can also register for classes at that same website. Register now to take advantage of the early registration discounts. Download regionally oriented bulletin inserts [here, on the right hand side of the page](#).

The Academy for Vital Christianity, in partnership with the Minnesota Conferences of the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church, offers a wide variety of classes designed for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the Christian tradition.

Classifieds

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 - 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 Children's Ministry - Good Samaritan United Methodist Church, Edina
- Director of Outdoor Ministries - Illinois South Conference ([click here for this position only](#))

In Search of New Century Sampler

Back in 1994 or 1995 when the New Century Hymnal was first rolled out, there was a "sampler" of the variety of hymns and songs in the hymnal. It was about sixty pages, glossy black softcover with stapled binding. First Congregational UCC of New York Mills is interested in finding some copies of this sampler. Churches or individuals can contact Rev. Randy Hachfeld at rhachfeld@arvig.net

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