

**COMMAntary: an e-newsletter of the  
Minnesota Conference - United Church of Christ**  
brought to you by generous contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission

God is still speaking,

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**Volume 6, Number 05**

**03 February 2010**

**News of the Conference**

**Joys and Concerns**

1. Thanks and praise to Rev. Alan McNamara, Chapel Hills UCC (Edina) for 25 years of faithful service with the congregation at Chapel Hills. The members of the congregation managed a surprise celebration on Sunday, January 31. Alan serves the Minnesota Conference on the Board of Directors and as liaison to the Committee on Ministry. Previously he served on the search committee for the Conference Minister.

2. Prayers and best wishes are extended to Rev. Anita Bradshaw (Mayflower, Minneapolis) who has been named to the UCC Ecumenical Team to renegotiate our partnership with the Evangelical Church of Germany. The UCC has long had a partnership with our forebears in Germany, the Evangelical Church of Germany (Evangelical in this case just means Protestant). The Evangelical Church and the Lutheran Church of Germany have become one entity and therefore the UCC needs to renegotiate the partnership agreement to include the Lutheran Churches. A team of four persons has been named to accompany Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President of the UCC, and Cally Rogers-Witte, the Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries, to renegotiate the partnership. The team will be supported in their work by Lydia Veliko, the UCC's Ecumenical Officer and Peter Makari, the Area Executive for Middle East/Europe of Wider Church Ministries.

3. Please hold in your thoughts and prayers Rev. Michael Small (Union UCC, Hackensack).

4. The most recent issue of the United Theological Seminary newsletter features Rev. Brian Olson and Emily, who are engaged in a new church start in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference called Field of God UCC. Brian served as youth pastor and senior transitional pastor at Cottage Grove United Church of Christ. To read about this ministry, [follow this link](#).

5. The 11 month (end of November) CUE financial report shows that 58 of the 136 local churches in the Minnesota Conference UCC contributed this year, an increase of three when compared to the same time last year. Perhaps the most exciting news was that year-to-date comparisons to last year are favorable (\$44,051 vs. \$44,044) - despite a

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special one time gift of almost \$11,000 from First UCC, Northfield last year! As chair of the CUE Board of Directors and member of the United Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, I offer thanks and praise for these generous gifts in support of graduate theological education and in excellent ministry/religious leadership.

Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister

6. Our prayers go out to the Rev. Deborah Bartelt, Acting Minister of the Rainy River Regional Parish, as she recovers from recent surgery.

### **New term for "Local Church" speaks to Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting theme**

A November 2009 Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ letter to our local congregations mentioned a new nomenclature that has been recommended to replace the term "Local Church" with the wider conception "local community of ministry and mission."

These words are authored by the eminent church theologian and scholar Rev. Dr. Clyde J. Steckel, a member of the First Congregational UCC of Minnesota and Professor Emeritus at the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. Dr. Steckel, in his new Pilgrim Press publication, *New Ecclesiology and Polity: The United Church of Christ*, recommends that the term "local community of ministry and mission" replace the more limited and limiting designation of "local church". [Click here to keep reading and to learn more about our excellent keynoters for the Annual Meeting!](#)

### **News from Pilgrim Point Camp**

The Pilgrim Point Camp brochure is at the printers and will be mailed soon but you can find it now on the Pilgrim Point Website. There are two versions. [Click here to view it online](#). You can also download copies of the [registration and health form here](#). The printable version has the registration form in the document. [Click here for a version that can be printed in booklet form](#). You can also find the latest [Pilgrim Point Camp Newsletter here](#).

### **Grants awarded for Youth Mission Trips!**

\$50,000 in grants were awarded to 44 churches in the MN Conference for a variety of 2010 youth mission trips. Churches will be doing a variety of service projects in 13 different states, Washington D.C., the Dominican Republic and Belize. Thanks to the Board of Directors for approving these monies from the Ashley Endowment. Over 550 youth and 160 adult leaders will be participating.

The churches are: 1st Cong'l, Alexandria; Peace UCC,

Duluth; Federated, Fergus Falls; Cong'l Church, Excelsior; Mizpah, Hopkins; Peace UCC, Rochester; Linden Hills UCC, Mpls; Macalester Plymouth, St Paul; Cong'l, Ortonville; Cherokee Park, St Paul; Robbinsdale UCC; 1st Cong'l, Winona; Bethlehem UCC, Maple Lake; First UCC, Northfield; Lynnhurst UCC, Mpls; 1st Cong'l UCC, Austin; Associated Church, Owatonna; Pilgrim Cong'l, Duluth; Colonial Church, Edina; 1st Cong'l, Cannon Falls; Chapel Hills UCC, Edina; Pilgrims UCC, Maple Grove; 1st Cong'l, Dodge Center; Union Cong'l UCC, Elk River; 1st Cong'l, Brainerd; Falcon Heights UCC; New Spirit, Savage; Peace, MN Lakes; 1st Cong'l, Moorhead; Circles of Faith, Waubun; Union Cong'l, St. Louis Park; UCC Community Church, Walker; Parkview & St Peters, White Bear Lake; Zion UCC, Le Sueur; St Paul, St Paul; Hazel Park, St Paul; Cong'l, Rochester; Cong'l, Detroit Lakes; 1st Cong'l UCC, Fairmont; United Church of Mapleton; St Paul, Plato; New Brighton UCC; and Wayzata Community Church.

### **St. Paul's Family Resources Heritage Grant Recipients**

This past Friday was the St. Paul's Family Resources Annual Recognition Dinner where the 2010 grant recipients are announced and past recipients are honored. There are four boards associated with SPFR and the members of these boards are invited in recognition of their service to SPFR. Since the Heritage Grants started in 2008, the awardees have been invited to meet the board members and the other awardees. The eight award recipients for 2010 are:

- First Congregational UCC of Anoka - Parish Nurse
- First UCC, Fergus Falls - a prayer ministry for elders using "The Path - A guide to daily prayer"
- Minnehaha UCC, Minneapolis - Health care, connection, visitation and education of elderly and GLBT Generations
- First UCC, Northfield - Partners in senior caregiving
- Robbinsdale UCC - Faith Community Nurse
- Union UCC, St. Louis Park - Parish nurse
- St. Paul's UCC, St. Paul - Parish nurse
- Wadena First Congregational UCC and Bertha Faith UCC - Website development to connect the elderly and their caregivers in two yoked churches

At a time when churches are carefully watching their budgets, St. Paul's Family Resources Foundation Board is delighted to encourage innovation through these grants. The Grants continue the work for seniors that the St. Paul's Church Home was engaged in for many years before it closed. Congratulations to all recipients - we look forward to your good work!

### **Peace Grants Awarded**

**More Peace Grants Awarded by Your JW Team**

The Justice Witness Team has awarded two grants to Peace United Church of Christ in Duluth. These grants are funded through your donations to the Justice Witness Offering of the Minnesota Conference.

- \$400 for 'Cracking the Shell of Whiteness,' an exciting program that is helping them fulfill their commitment to becoming a more multicultural, multiracial, and anti-racist church.
- \$100 for a series of programs supporting and advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) that is being organized by Peace church (and sponsored by the University of MN - Duluth, the ELCA Northeast Synod Immigration Task Force, and the League of Women Voters).

Your ministry can also be supported by a grant from your Justice & Witness Team Peace Fund. For more information, [click here](#) or contact the Justice & Witness Team Chair, John Guttermann ([intpasj@me.com](mailto:intpasj@me.com) or 651 485-3104).

**Support the Peace Fund Grant: Empowering Mission, Supporting Justice in the Minnesota Conference**

There are many 'good' days for ingathering of this ministry and mission empowering offering: We suggest: February 7, First Day of UCC Women's Week, February 14, Racial Justice Sunday, March 7, Amistad Sunday, as alternate gathering days for the Peace Fund Offering. For a bulletin insert and more information, [click here](#).

**Seminary Sunday is February 28th**

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](#). Printable bulletin inserts will be included in the COMMAntary in early February, or can be emailed directly to your church.

**Upcoming Events**

**Take Action to Save GAMC**

**TAKE ACTION TO SAVE GAMC**  
**Thursday, February 4, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM**  
**Rally at the Capitol to Save GAMC**

Join with hundreds of other Minnesotans from around to state to send a message to our legislators that we must take care of our poorest and most vulnerable citizens, not cut them out of the budget! On the first day of session (February 4) we will be rallying to save the General Assistance Medical Care program that provides health care to Minnesota's poorest.

**WHO:** YOU, and hundreds of others who want to protect the poor and vulnerable

**WHAT:** Rally and community action to save GAMC

**WHERE:** The Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 4, 2010, 11:30am-1:30pm

Questions? Contact Alison Killeen, JRLC Statewide Organizer by emailing [alison@jrlc.org](mailto:alison@jrlc.org) or calling 612-230-3233.

### Clergy Clusters in the coming week

#### Lakes and Rivers Cluster

February 9th, 12:00pm First Congregational UCC, Anoka

#### Twin Cities West Metro Cluster

February 10th, 11:00 St. Mark's UCC, Bloomington

#### South Central Cluster

February 11th, 10:00 Federated Church, Morris

### Safe Church Webinar Series

The Insurance Board is pleased to announce the start of its Webinar conference series, a new learning opportunity geared to church lay leaders and employees. The series will focus on loss control, safety and related insurance issues affecting your churches and related ministries.

#### "Where is Your Safe Church Policy?" Tuesday, February 9, 10:00am CST

Review of the elements of Safe Church policy and related liability issues. Information on background checks and abuse prevention training services. To register for this and other sessions on the webinar schedule, [click here](#).

Ignore the request for the user name and password. Go to Public Sessions in the red bar. You will then see the list of Sessions. Click the one(s) you want to register for and then go to the bottom of the list and click the register button. You will be asked to enter your name and email and will receive e-mail confirmation and meeting reminders.

If there are other subjects you want to learn about, please contact Carl Kotheimer at the Insurance Board via [email](#) or phone: 216.736.3244.

### Connecting Spiritual Life with Social Action

**Practicing justice | living faith:  
connecting spiritual life with social action**

A young adult panel discussion with music & free food  
February 11, 2010, 7:00pm  
Sateren Auditorium, Augsburg College  
Learn more at [www.jrlc.org](http://www.jrlc.org)

**Renewal of Ordination Vows**

**Join In A Renewal of Ordination Vows  
Sunday February 28 4:00pm**

The Minnesota Conference UCC invites all ordained clergy of the conference to join with our three conference ministers, and other clergy colleagues in a renewal of ordination vows. The renewal of vows worship service, and dinner following will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate ordained ministry as well as recommit to the vows each has made "to remain steadfast in faith and fruitful in good work." We are delighted and honored to have all three of our conference ministers leading worship! Holy Communion will be celebrated along with a blessing of the liturgical stoles of the ordained ministers. To make our time of celebration and collegiality complete, members of The Congregational UCC will serve a homemade lasagna dinner.

The Renewal of Ordination Vows Worship and dinner is meant for all ordained clergy of the Minnesota Conference. Family and laity who wish to join in this renewal celebration with our ordained ministers are warmly welcomed and encouraged to be with us for this special occasion.

Renewal of Ordination Vows, February 28, 4:00PM  
The Congregational UCC, Rochester  
965 17th Avenue SW Rochester, Minnesota

*Please RSVP by February 15 to The Congregational UCC, Rochester, 507-289-4581 so the dinner planners can prepare lasagna. Please indicate if you prefer a vegetarian option. Don't forget your stoles, family members, lay leaders and friends.*

The Professional Development of Authorized Ministries Team of the Minnesota Conference thanks The Congregational United Church of Christ and our three Conference Ministers for organizing and hosting this time of celebration and renewal.

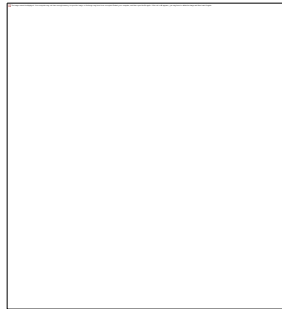
**Children's Ministry Meeting**

**Keep your children in church this summer!**

- Bring your solutions to share
- Experience worship together
- See the new 2010 resources available
- Lunch and great coffee provided!

There is no cost for the event. Feb 25, 2010, 11:00-1:30pm  
Linden Hills UCC, 4200 Upton Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN  
RSVP to Leah by February 21 @ [leahs@uccmn.org](mailto:leahs@uccmn.org)

### High School Youth Event



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

**Registration:** \$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). We will finish at 12:00pm on Sunday.

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

### Immerse Yourself in the Love of God

#### **Immerse Yourself in the Love of God Minnesota "Open and Affirming" Celebration Clark Memorial United Church of Christ**

April 25, 2010 | Workshops @ 2:30pm, Worship @ 4:00pm

Workshops will focus on ONA 101 (the basics) and the inclusion of the "transgender" ONA commitments. Preacher will be Rev. Dr. Anita Bradshaw, former National Field Organizer for the Welcoming Church Movement. Music will be provided by the choir of Spirit of the Lakes and Minnehaha United Churches of Christ. [See and use this linked poster.](#)

### Witnesses... to God's Love for All

#### **Witnesses... to God's Love for all The Minnesota Gathering College of St. Benedict**

(prior to the MN Conference UCC Annual Meeting)  
June 10-11, 2010

Beginning with Dinner on Thursday, June 10, our 3rd annual gathering will feature keynote presenter, Rev. Michael (Mike) Schuenemeyer, Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy with Wider Church Ministries in the national setting of the United Church of Christ. We will spend time exploring what it means to be witnesses to the "open and affirming" movement and how we share our stories of faith both individually and as a church. Look for

flyer to be coming out in early March.

## News from our Local Churches

### Saint Paul's UCC, Saint Paul

#### **Evensong with folk harp and dulcimer Sunday, February 7th**

Join us this evening at St. Paul's United Church of Christ in St. Paul for the 5:15-6:00pm Evensong service. We sing the music of Iona and Taize' and offer prayer and meditation with several readings, both from scripture and contemporary sources. We're located at 900 Summit Ave. We'd love to have you join us! [www.spuconsummit.org](http://www.spuconsummit.org)

### Mayflower UCC, Minneapolis

#### ***Celebrate Recovery* / Sunday, February 7**

Mayflower Congregational Church UCC  
106 E Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN 55419

**Guest Preacher U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad**

**Worship Times: 8:30 and 11:00am**

[Download a flyer here.](#)

#### **Do Support Love - Freedom to Marry Day Rally Thursday, February 11th, 8:30am - Capitol Rotunda**

Make your sign and head over to the capitol to show your support for enacting marriage equality legislation in Minnesota as Clergy and faith leaders lead an inspiring rally for justice! We need a big turnout to show that marriage inequality is a moral issue and that there is strong support from people of faith in correcting this injustice. The UCC, always seeking transformation in all areas of injustice, can be a powerful voice! Contact Mike MacMillan, Lilly Resident at Mayflower UCC for more info: 612-824-0761x133 or [mmacmillan@mayflowermpls.org](mailto:mmacmillan@mayflowermpls.org).

### Robbinsdale UCC, Robbinsdale

#### **Creating a Culture of Peace: Practical Nonviolence for Personal & Social Transformation**

Heritage Hall - Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

We are going offer this amazing opportunity to practice skills of nonviolence. It was the way of life for Jesus and those that followed him in an authentic way. This Training is 20 hours in length; it is all important to develop these skills and we are going to try and offer it in a very simple way.

#### **SESSION 1: Exploring Violence and Active Nonviolence**

Sunday, February 21st - 1pm to 7:30pm and/or  
Sunday, February 28th - 1pm to 7:30pm

#### **SESSION 2: Exploring Personal & Social Change and Building Community**

Sunday, March 7th - 1pm to 7:30pm and/or

Sunday, March 14th - 1pm to 7:30pm

### **SESSION 3: Action Planning and Creating a Culture of Peace**

Sunday, March 21st - 1pm to 7:30pm and/or

Sunday, March 28th - 1pm to 7:30pm

There will be no cost for the training for members of RUCC, but everyone will be asked to contribute some snacks or beverage. We'll have a light lunch prior to each session to transition. We ask for \$30 contribution for visitors to RUCC.

What is this training about? This program has been designed to bring out the extraordinary in all people. It offers a journey through experience of violence, a practicum on active nonviolence, a study of social movements and change, and a practical exercise on how to build community. The workshop ends with planning on how to take this experience into our families, our work and into the world. Please fill out a [registration form](#) and turn it in to the church as soon as possible.

## **Classifieds**

### **Job Opportunities**

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

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

- Interim Pastor - Congregational Church of Excelsior
- Interim Pastor, Shared, 2 Churches - Minnesota Lake
- Pulpit Supply - First Cong UCC, Hancock
- Part-time Pastor - St. Matthew's UCC, Forest City & Peace UCC, Eden Valley
- Resource Development Coordinator - Mayflower Community UCC, Minneapolis
- Interim Pastor - First United Church, Sauk Centre

### **Looking for a font**

Mendota Heights UCC does not have a baptismal font, which is hard to believe that a church that's been around for 50+ years doesn't have one! Does your church have a font that may be in need of a home? Please contact Steven Pavich at Mendota Heights UCC, [spavich@juno.com](mailto:spavich@juno.com) if you have any leads!

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