

**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 06**

**10 February 2010**

**News of the Conference**

**Joys and Concerns**

1. A service of ordination and installation will be held for Vicki Wunsch on **Saturday, February 20 at 1:00 PM** at Mayflower Community Congregational Church. The church is located at 106 E. Diamond Lake Rd. in Minneapolis. A reception will follow the service.

2. We extend congratulations and best wishes to Rev. John Guttermann (New Brighton UCC) as he assumes the position of Church World Service, Field Director, Comprehensive Immigration Reform. John will office in the Minnesota Church Center. John is active on the Justice and Witness Ministry Team and the Immigration Task Force of the Minnesota Conference UCC. Several months ago he was trained in the Leaders Engaging and Developing (LED) curriculum of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

**Yearbook and OCWM Forms! Turn them in now!**

Has your church turned in your **yearbook form** yet? Already 53 forms have been returned - thank you! We're looking for the other 83 to come in. Forms are due back in the Conference Office this Friday, February 12th!

OCWM Goals forms were sent out at the end of 2009, and were due back in the Conference Office January 31, 2010. You can still send them in! The more we have, the better we are able to plan for the future. So far, we've had 47 returned. Thank you!

Your help with these items is most appreciated. Thank you!  
Alison Bents

**Text to Donate**

The UCC is now able to accept texted donations to go toward UCC efforts in Haiti. All you need to do is text "LOVE" to 25383 and \$10 will be added to your next cell phone bill. Learn more [here](#), and view the terms and conditions [here](#).

**Save the date: April 16th!**

**Tech-savvy outreach:**

## Quick Links

[Donate to Friends of the Conference](#)

[Minnesota Conference Website](#)

[Minnesota Conference Calendar](#)

[National UCC Website](#)

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

## New UCC commercial set to 'spiral' on April 16

The United Church of Christ will launch its next "God is Still Speaking" commercial on April 16, utilizing the church's best broadcasting arsenal: its own members. The new message will be kept under close wraps until introduced at 9 a.m. (ET) sharp on launch day via email, [Facebook](#) and [ucc.org](#). A 30-second version of the commercial will also be available for churches that want to purchase air time on local TV stations.

The Rev. Felix Carrion, coordinator of the UCC's Stillspeaking Ministry, "What makes this debut so significant is that we are counting on the moxy of our million-plus supporters to spiral this viral message around the world. We're asking people to set aside that morning - April 16 - for unparalleled texting, Twittering, Facebooking and emailing of this new spot."

Called "Language of God," the 60-second video message is being produced by Think Media, a national advertising firm known for its edgy, innovative video work.

So, set aside some time bright and early on the 16th to pass on the Stillspeaking message! [Read more about it here.](#)

## Partners in Education go to Nashville

There was a group of six Partners in Education from Minnesota who went to a national UCC Partners Event in Nashville February 1-3. Attending from MN were Cher Duys, Molly Cox, David Becker, Kayla Bonewell, Amy Wick Moore and Wade Zick. The Partners spent their three days learning more about the new Faith Practices resource becoming available late this summer, attending various workshops and participating in a benefit for Haiti.

Here is what a couple of the partners had to say about their time in Nashville, "The Partners in Education event was a great opportunity to dig in to Faith Practices, a new and somewhat unconventional faith formation resource being developed by the UCC" and "We learned about the UCC 'Faith Practices' resources that will be available soon and I am excited about the ways our local congregations will be able to explore and practice our faith in a variety of settings using this resource (ex: Church council meetings, Confirmation retreats, clergy clusters, High School Youth Nights, etc.)." Many thanks to the Board of Directors for making an Ashley grant available for the Partners to attend.

## 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](#).

### 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.

### Cedar Rapids Ecu-Build!

The United Church of Christ is participating this Spring in an ecumenical rebuild in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April 12 through May 21, 2010! Volunteer work groups are invited to spend a week repairing/rebuilding homes that were damaged by the 2008 floods - long term recovery is indeed a marathon not a sprint. We are seeking groups of 10-12 people for each week to bring their gifts and skills and apply them in Cedar Rapids. Volunteer groups will be assigned to work side by side with nine denominational and two local partners to do this much needed work.

Pam Small of Evansville, IN is serving as the volunteer coordinator for the project and can be reached at: [psmall66@gmail.com](mailto:psmall66@gmail.com) or 812-453-3995. We are fortunate to also have John Small serve as a site coordinator during the project. Pam and John Small have served the UCC on the Gulf Coast in Biloxi and New Orleans. We are grateful for their faithful service to the church and the people in communities we serve. We are looking forward to a busy and meaningful six weeks in Iowa! [Click here to learn more](#).

## Upcoming Events

### Clergy Clusters in the Coming Week

**Southwest Cluster**, February 16, 11:30am  
First Congregational UCC, Mankato

## Freedom to Marry Day is Thursday!

United Church of Christ members... your support is needed on Thursday, February 11, at the Minnesota State Capitol as people rally to show support for Marriage Equality. One of the most effective ways for our legislators to know that people of faith in Minnesota are for equal marriage rights for all is a visual demonstration in numbers. This will be a festive interfaith rally, with many religious leaders present and speaking boldly. As people of faith, and as a leading voice within the Christian faith for a future free of injustice, we, of the United Church of Christ have a responsibility to act.

Please consider attending this rally at 8:30am, before the workday begins! Bring your church banners and show the state of Minnesota that the United Church of Christ will act loudly for marriage equality.

## Practicing Justice, Living Faith

### Practicing Justice, Living Faith: Connecting Spiritual Life with Social Action

**When:** Thursday February 11, 2010 - 7:00 PM

**What:** [An interfaith panel discussion](#) among young adult leaders and activists in Minnesota

**Where:** Sateren Auditorium in the Foss, Lobeck and Miles Center, Augsburg College (625 22nd Ave S, Minneapolis)

JRLC and the New Fire Movement are hosting this event to highlight the great work being done in Minnesota for social justice by young adults. This multifaith panel will discuss the connection between one's faith and working for social justice; how different faith communities approach positive social change; the variations in different traditions' approaches to justice; and each panelists' work for positive change in their communities.

This event is co-sponsored by Minnesota Council of Churches and Augsburg College Campus Ministries.

## 21st-Century Stewardship

### 21st-Century Stewardship: Best Practices for Fundraising with New Technology Webinar: 7:00 pm February 18

Back by popular demand! As the Director of Stewardship for the Cathedral of Hope UCC, Coy James has been responsible for raising more than \$3 million a year. This relatively young congregation has achieved this level of support without endowments, investments, or rental income. Almost 100 percent of the church's budget is funded by weekly offerings. The secret of their success? [Click here to learn more and register.](#)

## High Impact Community Ministry

### High Impact Community Ministry 4 New Webinars with Joy Skjegstad

This is an excellent resource available to you! A series for anyone wanting help in learning about the community around your church and why outreach to that community is essential to your congregation's future. These four web-based hour-long webinars will help you to

understand how 'outreach' can be one of the engines that drives your church forward. Start to meet your neighbors and learn about the places and events that define them.

Explore seven creative models for designing a custom community ministry program. Actually get people out of the pew and into engagement with community ministry.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010. 2-3 p.m. EST [Learn more and register here.](#)

## Renewal of Ordination Vows

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

The Minnesota Conference UCC invites all ordained ministers of the Conference to join with our three conference ministers, and 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, laity, and commissioned or licensed ministers 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.

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)

### Persuing Justice: Day on the Hill Training

On Thursday, March 25, the Joint Religious Legislative Council (JRLC) sponsors "Day on the Hill" which brings together people of faith from throughout the state to lobby their legislators on various justice issues. In preparation for that day the Minnesota Conference Justice and Witness Team hosts a training to equip UCC members to make effective presentations to their legislators and build congregational support. This is a chance to hear justice issues that congregations have worked on, learn about grants to put your justice issues into actions, and network with other UCC congregations over lunch.

When: Saturday, March 13

Where: Mayflower UCC, 106 E Diamond Lake Rd, Mpls.

Time: 10:00am to 1:00pm

Registration Deadline: March 2, [click here for form](#).

Questions: Hillary Freeman - [hfreeman@gmcc.org](mailto:hfreeman@gmcc.org), or  
Dwight Wagenius - [dwagenius@unitedseminary.edu](mailto:dwagenius@unitedseminary.edu)

### 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](#) or [Wade](#). Many thanks to the Youth Event Planning Team for their leadership! Registration forms available here: [www.uccmn.org/childrenandyouth](http://www.uccmn.org/childrenandyouth)

## Day on the Hill 2010

### Day on the Hill 2010: Justice We Pursue! March 25, 2010

Register now and spread the word! Add Thursday, March 25th to your congregation's, organization's or committee's calendar.

2010 Keynote Speaker: Rabbi Harold J. Kravitz, senior rabbi at Adath Jeshurun Congregation in Minnetonka. [Read the Rabbi's full biography here.](#)

Our theme for 2010 Day on the Hill is Justice We Pursue! (Deut. 16:18-20). This is a wonderful text that brings direct inspiration and guidance to our work on poverty, health care, judicial fairness, housing, and taxation.

We will begin the day at RiverCentre and then board a fleet of buses for the late morning trip to the Capitol. [Learn more, see the full schedule and register here.](#)

## 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.](#)

## Regional Youth Event Space Reservation

**Regional Youth Event Group Space Reservation Form is due by February 28!**  
**with \$25 per person deposit**  
**Event is July 14-18, 2010, in Kansas City, MO**  
**Registrations will be due April 15**

*This is a time for youth across our region to gather, share in our faith stories and have a lot of fun! Find your group [reservation form here](#). Questions? Contact [Leah](#) or [Wade](#).*

## 2030 Clergy Network Gathering

**Shepherding the Shepherd: A time for clergy renewal connection, professional resourcing, and vital worship**

Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL

June 1-3, 2010

The 2030 Clergy Network is dedicated to strengthening, sustaining, and mobilizing young clergy. This event is designed to connect us with our colleagues and inspire us for our ministries in the United Church of Christ. Come for rest. Come for connection with other young ministers. Come for ideas to revitalize your ministry, or come just for fun! Come to let someone else "shepherd" you for a while. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

## 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
- Interim Pastor - First United Church, Sauk Centre
- Interim Pastor - The United Church, Mapleton

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