

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,

In This Issue

[Message from the
Conference Minister](#)

[Joys and Concerns](#)

[Refugee Families](#)

[Interfaith Youth Event](#)

[Seminary Sunday](#)

[Clergy Clusters this week](#)

[Save GAMC](#)

[Bread for the World
Workshops](#)

[What is your church
worth?](#)

[Ecumenical Advocacy
Days](#)

[Children's Ministry
Meeting](#)

[Persuing Justice: Day on
the Hill Training](#)

[High School Youth Event](#)

[Regional Youth Event](#)

[Mayflower UCC](#)

[Cherokee Park United
Church](#)

[Hazel Park UCC](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

Get on the list!

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Quick Links

[Donate to Friends of the
Conference](#)

[Minnesota Conference
Website](#)

[Minnesota Conference](#)

Volume 6, Number 07

17 February 2010

Message from the Conference Minister

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Grace and peace to you on this Ash Wednesday!

Writing about the season of Lent in [Things Seen and Unseen: a Year Lived in Faith](#), Nora Gallagher writes, "It is a journey toward the cross. And toward a tomb, and the mysterious, unending joy of those who found it empty. The goal is to bring the journey's geography into the self, to bend beneath it, to allow the soul to find its narrative within it." Lent is, she says, a season of giving up illusions and of falling into grace.

As we make the pilgrimage through this season - whether through events and programs in our congregations or in private disciplines of prayer, study and relinquishment, I pray that this may be a time of truth-telling and truth-finding, and of discovering anew our vocation as followers of Jesus the Christ.

That vocation was expressed well in the generous outpouring of financial contributions from our members and churches in response to the earthquake in Haiti. ***Last week we forwarded to the United Church of Christ for Haiti response nearly \$26,000 that has been sent to us by individuals and congregations!*** I know there are many wonderful stories behind this outpouring of compassion and concern, and I hope you will share them with us and with each other.

I remind you that Susan Sanders, who administers One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) for the United Church of Christ will be among our presenters at this year's 48th Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference. Folks continue to ask me: "When IS Annual Meeting?" ***I urge you to take out your calendars RIGHT NOW and mark June 11-13, 2010 at the College of St. Benedict.***

[Please follow this link](#) to learn more about this year's Annual Meeting, this year's Fall Leadership Retreat, and much more!

News of the Conference

[Joys and Concerns](#)

[Calendar](#)

[National UCC Website](#)

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

1. Rev. Marion Zenke and his wife, Joanne, died in a car accident on Friday, February 12. Rev. Zenke was ordained by the United Church of Canada and served churches in Alberta before accepting a call to be the pastor of Zoar United Church of Christ in Chaska and St. John's UCC in Norwood Young America. He served there from 1960 until his retirement in 1997. He once said that during his long ministry he baptized, confirmed, and/or married three generations of people in one family. Marion was 79 and his wife, Joanne, was 78. Marion was an avid hunter of all kind of game animals and birds (deer, pheasants, moose, turkeys, etc.). Joanne was a talented musician who directed Church and Community Choirs.

Funeral services will be Friday, February 19 at 11:00 AM at St. John's United Church of Christ in Norwood Young America (12980 County Rd. 51). Visitation will be Thursday 4-8 PM at Johnson Funeral home in Waconia (141 E. 1st St.) and at the church one hour before the service.

Clergy are to wear a red stole, but do not bring a clergy robe. Clergy families will be seated in the choir loft at the front of the St. John's Sanctuary. Please identify yourself as clergy when you come into the church. Rev. Elena Larssen, Associate Conference Minister, will be in attendance at the service, representing the Minnesota Conference.

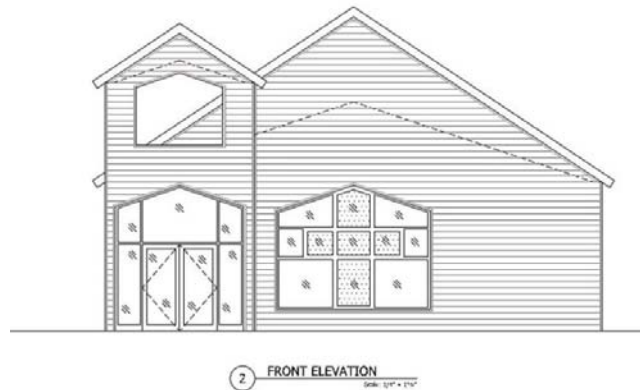
2. A service of ordination and installation will be held for Vicki Wunsch on Saturday February 20 at 1:00 PM at Mayflower Community Congregational Church. The church is located at 106 E. Diamond Lake Rd. in Minneapolis. A reception will follow the service.

3. Tom and Monica Liddle (members of Peace UCC, Duluth and UCC missionaries in East Timor) called Peace UCC and left a message on Sunday that their son was born! Both Monica and the baby are doing well. Due to the time zone, his birthday is actually February 15th. Tom delivered the baby at home. Congratulations!

4. The United Church of Christ, St. Charles was featured on Monday, Feb. 15th on page A9 of the StarTribune. The congregation has recently voted to rebuild their church after it was destroyed by a fire last year.

Moderator, Lori Todd says, "We are still fine tuning the details but I've attached a drawing of the design we selected (please see below). We had a very close vote in terms of which design but the one thing that was constant was the decision to rebuild. The group was steadfast in their desire to continue to stay together and create a new place to worship. Now that the design decision is done, they are all very anxious to move into the new building! Our next steps are to put the design out for bid to with the local contractors and make some additional detailed

decisions about the finishing of the interior. Still lots of work to do but we are hoping to be ready for services in the new building in August. Thanks for your support and faith in us."



5. Kayla Bonewell, Children, Youth & Young Adult Minister of Peace UCC, Rochester was ordained on Sunday, February 14 at Church of the Open Arms in Oklahoma City, OK. Congratulations to Kayla and to Peace UCC!

"Free Cases" Refugee families arriving soon

For the first time in nearly a decade, MCC Refugee Services Program will be resettling refugee "Free cases" to MN. These families have no known connections or family in the US. Ideally, MCC would link these families to a co-sponsorship group who could provide support and material donations for them upon arrival. Unfortunately, we do not have any groups currently in place and ready to take on this task. Meanwhile, our first **three free cases will be arriving next week! We need your help to give them a warm welcome.**

We're looking for volunteers to help collect supplies for the families, set up an apartment for each of them, and provide social support to them upon arrival. MCC is securing apartments for them all upon arrival and will be there every step of the way, but we need your help to provide the welcome they all deserve to give them a boost towards self sufficiency. We will do better for these families if we have help.

Fatuma is a 48 year old widow who fled from her homeland of Somalia in 1992. She will arrive to the US on February 25th. She is traveling with her 18 year old daughter who was born the same year Fatuma and her family fled their home country of Somalia amidst civil war and violence.

Mariam is a single mother of 5 who will be arriving with her children to MN on February 23rd. Mariam and her children fled Somalia in 2005 and been living in Turkey since 2007. She speaks Somali, but does not read or write in any language. She has never received any formal

education and is 30 years old. She will be traveling with her 5 children of the following ages: a 13 year old boy, an 11 year old girl, a 9 year old boy, an 8 years old boy, and a 4 year old girl. We have already secured many donations for this family, but could use some more based on the family size.

An Oromo family of 4 will be arriving to MN on Monday February 22nd. The mother fled Ethiopia in January of 2004 and will be traveling with her husband and two small daughters (4yrs old and 2 years old). Although the mother and father of this family have not completed primary school, they both speak four languages, including some English.

"STUFF" we are currently looking for to supplement what we have on-hand:

- Furniture to fill a 3BR, 2BR and 1BR apartment
- Dishes, glasses, silverware
- Mixing and serving bowls
- Pots and pans
- Linens, pillows, blankets
- Boots
- Cleaning supplies

"PERSON POWER" we need:

- Set-up the apartments to make them "move in ready"
- People to be at the airport to give a warm welcome
- People to help play with kids at the MCC office while parents are completing paperwork
- People to show families around their neighborhoods
- Help with grocery shopping
- Help with shopping for the family to fill in supplies that were not donated (MCC will have a list and funds for this) prior to arrival

If you can provide "PERSON POWER" please contact me directly at 612.230.3216 or Rachele.king@mnchurches.org and I can give you more details on upcoming schedules. If you have "STUFF" that you can donate, please contact Dan Huynh at 612.230.3227 or Dan.huynh@mnchurches.org

Interfaith Endeavor Success in Rochester

The youth group of the Congregational Church UCC, Rochester, recently hosted the youth of the Rochester's Islamic Mosque on Sunday, February 7. The hope of the meeting was to express mutual respect and understanding between the two groups. 17 youth and 4 adults engaged in a question and answer time, a tour of the church and then a pizza lunch. Questions ranged from the content of worship going to "what does chocolate have to do with Easter?" Some questions were theological, some were based on misconceptions. All questions were welcomed

and everyone felt friendly, open and safe. The church tour pointed out the symbolic nature of the church architecture.

Because of the success and excitement of this first meeting, the youth of the Mosque will be reciprocating the invitation and the Congregational youth will ask questions of their new friends at the Mosque.

This interfaith endeavor is grateful for the generous grant given by the Ashley Fund of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.



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.

A printable bulletin insert is [available here](#). If you would like CUE brochures, posters, or offering envelopes sent to your church, please email CUE Development Coordinator, Kiely Todd Roska at cueseminaries@yahoo.com.

Upcoming Events

Clergy Clusters in the Coming Week

Northwest Cluster, February 23rd, 10:00am

First Congregational UCC, Moorhead

Northern Cluster, February 23rd, 11:00am

Pilgrim UCC, Duluth

South Central Cluster, February 23rd, 2:00pm

The Federated Church, Morris

Save GAMC

Please contact your state representative by end of the day Wednesday! 85 thousand Minnesotans who rely on GAMC need your voice now more than ever.

On Thursday morning, February 18th, the Minnesota House will vote on a bill (House File 2680) that would temporarily restore the GAMC (General Assistance Medical Care) program for the next 16 months. Help us ensure that both Democrats and Republicans support health care coverage for the poorest and sickest Minnesotans. Tell your member this should not be a partisan issue!

Background: GAMC offers health care coverage to the poorest adults in the state of Minnesota. The Governor eliminated funding for the program last spring with a line item veto and further reduced funding with unallotments. Without action by the legislature, coverage is gone in April. The Senate has already approved this bill, so now it is up to the House. [More information about GAMC and our vigil for Thursday on our website.](#)

Highlights of GAMC Bill (HF2680, Murphy):

- Reduces costs. This bill cuts costs by \$219 million for the next 16 months of the program.
- Reforms the program: This bill eliminates layers between the health care provider and the patient and encourages new, local collaborations to better manage the health conditions of the many chronically ill Minnesotans who rely on GAMC.
- Provides health coverage for 85,000 people. The Governor's proposal would cover only 28,000 people.
- Saves jobs. Hospitals across the state are preparing to cut hundreds of jobs if this legislation does not pass.
- Does not rely on any tax increases.

Action: Call or email Your MN State Representative Today! [Click here to find your state representative](#) or call (800) 657-3550. Tell your Representative to vote yes on House File 2680 this Thursday. Let them know that it will:

- save money and jobs
- protect thousands of military veterans who rely on the program for their health care
- keep our communities safe
- protect the dignity of Minnesota's poorest and sickest adults

And let them know cuts to county general aid are preferable to cuts to county child welfare and adult mental health services to help pay for this bill.

Bread for the World Workshops

Bread for the World's "Bridging the Gap" workshops

These workshops address the struggle of low-income workers to make ends meet. Registration is NOT necessary - just show up! We hope to see you at one or all of them!

Saturday, February 20, 9-11:30 a.m.
Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way, Edina

Sunday, February 21, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Church of St. Peter Claver, 1060 W Central Ave, St. Paul

Monday, February 22, 7-9 p.m.
Bethel University, Eastlund Room, Community Life Center, 3900 Bethel Dr, Arden Hills

The "Bridging the Gap" workshops focus on Bread for the World's 2010 Offering of Letters campaign, which addresses the struggle of low-income workers to make ends meet. Rent, child care, transportation, and utilities are fixed expenses, so food is one place struggling families will cut corners. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a program that helps bridge the gap, putting money in people's hands to pay the rent, fix the car, or cover a high winter heat bill, rather than taking food off the table.

Who will advocate to protect and strengthen the EITC and other programs that help lower-income workers bridge the gap. Will you? Consider networking with people from your church or school to join one of the events, and help us spread the word by telling your friends, family, colleagues, and committee members at your church or campus. We look forward to seeing you!

Tammy Walhof, Senior Regional Organizer
David Maus, Field Organizer
Ebony Adedayo, Administrative Assistant (part-time)

What is your church worth?

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.

You can register for our next session(s) [by clicking here](#).

**February 23 10:00am CST or February 25 1:00pm
CST**

"What is Your Church Worth?"

Are you gambling your church? Do you know what it will cost to replace it? Do you understand all of the dangers of underinsurance? Information on Insurance Board valuation

services.

You will 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. You will receive e-mail confirmation and meeting reminders. If there are other subjects you want to learn about, please email Carl Kotheimer or call him at 216.736.3244.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2010!

Come to Washington, DC for a weekend of learning, worship and justice advocacy - on us!

Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2010, March 19th through March 22nd, is quickly approaching. You certainly don't want to miss out on this transformational experience that will bring together hundreds of faith-based activists to discuss the critical issues of immigration and migration. [Register now for this event!](#)

There is a powerhouse line up of dynamic speakers that will be joining us, including the Reverend Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Bishop Minerva Carcaño from the United Methodist Church, and Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*. Please join us as the faith community gathers once again to lend its prophetic voice to public discourse.

We're offering scholarships to cover registration, transportation and lodging for UCC young adults (18-35)! The deadline has been extended to Sunday, February 28, 2010. [Apply now by filling out the application and sending it to Michael!](#)

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

Pursuing 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, or

Dwight Wagenius - 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

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](#).

Local Church Events

Mayflower UCC, Minneapolis



Estonian Girls Choir to Sing at Mayflower on Feb. 27th

Mayflower Church, together with Angelica Cantanti Youth Choir, will host the Girls Choir of Old Town, Tallin, Estonia, for a weekend

at the end of February. This award-winning choir of 14 -18 year old girls will be in town for the regional choral director's convention held in Downtown Minneapolis. On Saturday, February 27th at 4 pm, they will give a free concert in the Mayflower sanctuary. This event is open to the public and is a unique opportunity to hear a choir that hails from a country steeped in choral singing. In the 80's, as through all of their history, the Estonian people used singing to express their desire for freedom and to protest foreign domination. In 1991, they peacefully won their freedom from the Soviet Union by the sheer force of their singing. To learn more about the Estonian story go to [the website for the movie, *The Singing Revolution*](#).

Cherokee Park United Church, St. Paul

A Photo Exhibit and Film affirming diversity hosted by Cherokee Park United Church

On Saturday Feb. 27th Cherokee Park United Church will host an opening for the photo exhibit "In Our Family" a museum-quality exhibit about 20 families representing a breadth of diversity and family configurations. The exhibit is open at 4 pm, and will be followed by a chili dinner, with a vegetarian option, at 5:30 pm. At 6 pm there will be a showing of "For the Bible Tells Me So", a provocative and entertaining documentary which brilliantly reconciles homosexuality and Biblical scripture, and in the process reveals that Church sanctioned anti-gay bias is based almost solely upon a significant misinterpretation of the Bible. Cherokee Park United Church is located on St. Paul's West Side, 371 West Baker St, St. Paul 55107. Phone 651-227-4275. More information can be found by going to www.cherokeeparkunited.org or [clicking here](#).

Hazel Park Cong. UCC, St. Paul

Dear Friends,

I just wanted to remind you about our affordable food program. If you could place the following information in your bulletins, newsletters, or any other places deemed appropriate, I would really appreciate it. You will also find a [flyer here](#) to post on bulletin boards.

Fare For All Express is an affordable, accessible, nutritious program that has recently arrived on the East Side. If you

would like to save some money on your groceries each month, this program is for you! Hazel Park United Church of Christ, located at 1831 E. Minnehaha Avenue, is the site where each month you can purchase a variety of healthy, fresh, quality food items for about 30-50% less than what you would pay for the same items at your local grocery store. The next dates are Wednesday, March 3 and Wednesday, March 31 between the hours of 4-6 p.m. This program is open to everyone and payment for your groceries can be made with cash, EBT cards, credit or debit cards - sorry, no personal checks. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Hazel Park UCC at 651-735-2555 or at hazelparkchurch@q.com.

Thank you so much! Peace,
Rev. Sara E. Morse, Pastor
Hazel Park Congregational UCC, Saint Paul

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

[Donate Now](#) to Friends of the Minnesota Conference

Are you on Facebook? [Be a fan of the Minnesota Conference!](#)

Stay up to date with the National Church: [Keeping You ePosted](#)

[Forward email](#)

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to alisonb@uccmn.org by alisonb@uccmn.org.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ | 122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 323 | Minneapolis | MN | 55404