

**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 08

24 February 2010

News of the Conference

Joys and Concerns

1. Grace Anderson (member at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, Christian Ed Director at Olivet UCC, both in St. Paul) would like to thank all who donated the Church World Service hygiene & baby kits, their time and contributions toward shipping. With your help, a grand total of 234 kits were collected and shipped! These kits are greatly needed to folks who have been left with nothing.

2. Pastor Dennis Glad will end his tenure as Interim Minister at Wabasha United Church of Christ on Sunday, February 28. The Minnesota Conference is grateful to Pastor Dennis for his faithful service to Wabasha UCC.

3. A service of farewell will be held for Pastor James Clausen at First United Church UCC in Sauk Centre at 9:30am on Sunday February 28. Rev. Clausen has served First United since July 2001.

4. Zion UCC in Le Sueur has called Rev. Beth Benson to be their new minister! Rev. Benson came for her trial sermon Sunday on February 21st and it was a great success. Her starting date will be Sunday, May 2nd. They have gone through a successful interim process with Rev. Ken Ribe. Rev. Ribe's last day will be April 25th. Congratulations and best wishes to all!

5. The local NBC affiliate in Rochester has been doing stories about the ELCA's recent struggles and churches leaving their denomination over the ordination of gay clergy. With Rev. Kayla Bonewell's (Peace UCC, Rochester) blessing and affirmation, they chose to do a story on Peace UCC and Kayla. [Check out the news spot here](#). Footage is from Peace UCC's Ash Wednesday Service - her "first" service as an Ordained Pastor! What a wonderful message for our community and the UCC!

Resolution Reminder!

All resolutions for the 2010 Annual Meeting are due into the Conference Office by Monday, March 1, 2010. They may be sent by US Mail to 122 W Franklin Ave #323, Minneapolis, MN 55404 or by email to alisonb@uccmn.org.

United Church News - Digest

In [last week's UCC Keeping You E-Posted](#) there were links to print out the December 2009 and February 2010 [United Church News - Digest](#). You can print out the edition of UCN Digest on 8 1/2 x 11 paper and

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](#)

makes copies for church members to pick up - or distribute to church leaders - or include in your weekly bulletin. The February UCN Digest is 6 pages; when printed back to back, will take 3 pages of paper to print. This is one way you can keep your congregation and leaders informed of what is happening throughout the UCC. [Click here to check it out!](#)

JRLC - Interfaith Statement on Saving GAMC

Joint Religious Legislative Coalition: Interfaith Statement on Saving GAMC Health Care

"The provision of health care is an abiding issue of justice for Jews, Christians and Muslims because healing, binding up of wounds, restoring to wholeness, and preventing illness are ways we make sure that human dignity is protected and enhanced. **When human lives are endangered by lack of access to health care, we fail to uphold human dignity.**

The urgent matter before us is the imminent end of Minnesota's GAMC program. The recent veto of a bi-partisan, temporary extension of GAMC means over 30,000 of our poorest neighbors will lose their GAMC coverage in a few weeks. We are convinced that for many enrollees, loss of GAMC coverage will result in declining health status and, in some cases, avoidable deaths. Our task now is to stand with those who are experiencing poverty and poor health and to urge that the compromise forged among lawmakers be made into law. We are heartened that so many lawmakers passed this bill with strong bi-partisan support. We fervently hope the spirit of problem-solving will continue.

Retaining health insurance for people in poverty struggling with homelessness, mental illness, and chronic health conditions should be among the first priorities of our state. **We urge all legislators to once again support the extension of GAMC."**

See all the signers of this statement [by clicking here](#). If you are a religious leader or member of the clergy or a person of faith committed to this issue, we invite you to add your name by [sending us an email](#).

Additionally, JRLC will be holding another Interfaith Vigil on the second floor of the capitol rotunda on Monday, March 1st at 12:30pm. They will be praying for the passage of GAMC and for the recipients of GAMC.

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

Southeast Cluster, March 2, 2010, 11:30am
Peace UCC, Rochester

Twin Cities East Metro Cluster, March 3, 2010, 12:00pm
Macalester-Plymouth, St. Paul

Central Cluster, March 4, 2010, 11:30am
Gaylord UCC, Gaylord

Northeast Cluster, March 4, 2010 11:30am
First Congregational, Brainerd

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, 10:00am - 1:00pm

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

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

Questions: Hillary Freeman - hfreeman@gmcc.org, or Dwight Wagenius - dwagenius@unitedseminary.edu

Chiapas, Mexico Global Justice Trip

Chiapas Global Justice Trip -June 14-24, 2010
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Guests are WELCOME! Refundable Deposit Due: March 1st

Faculty Trip Leader: Chris Smith

Assistant Leader: Don Christensen

In Country Trip Leader: Teresa Ortiz, Mexican educator from the Twin Cities who lived and worked in Chiapas

Estimated Price: 20 participants - \$1900, 15 participants - \$2000
Airfare and trip expenses included, this price does not include course tuition.

To learn more and to register, [click here](#) or contact Chris Smith at csmith@unitedseminary.edu or 651-255-6128.

Spread the Word to End the "Word"!

Becoming Accessible to All - Spread the Word to End the "Word"!

No, not that Word...but the words "retard" and "retarded." March 3 has been designated a special day of awareness for ending the "R-word". This is an especially excellent campaign idea for youth groups to take on with their congregations. Of course, it can happen any time and supporting materials can be found at www.r-word.org.

The following states absolutely why this should be a concern in our United Church of Christ: "But for our part, we are trying to awaken the world to the need for a new civil rights movement - of the heart. We seek to educate people that a crushing prejudice against people with intellectual disabilities is rampant - a prejudice that assumes that people with significant learning challenges are stupid or hapless or somehow just not worth much. They're um, "retarded". And that attitude is not funny or nuanced or satirical. It's horrific." (Tim Shriver, CEO Special Olympics, Washington Post, 2/15/10)

Immigration Reform Vigil

Activists Launch National Campaign Calling on President Obama to Put an End to the Expansion of the U.S. Immigration Detention System

What: Faith Action and Vigil

Who: Interfaith Coalition on Immigration

When: Sunday March 7, 2010, 2:30-3:00 PM

Where: Ramsey County Adult Detention Center, 425 Grove St, St Paul

Contact: Rev. Loren McGrail, 612-386-9789 or

interfaithimmigration@gmail.com

Over 100 people are expected to participate in the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration's monthly Faith Action.

In March we join in solidarity with the Detention Watch Network and activists across the country as they launch the national campaign "Dignity, Not Detention: Preserving Human Rights and Restoring Justice" which calls for an end to detention expansion nationally. [Click here for more information and to keep reading.](#)

High School Youth Event

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



Registration: \$85 youth, \$60 adults
Deadline for 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**

Click here for a [youth registration form](#).
Click here for an [adult registration form](#).

*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](#).*

News from our Local Churches

Grace Community Church UCC, St. Paul

Owing to a major choir not being able to participate, Grace Community Church's Annual Black History Month Concert has been postponed until after Easter. A new date will be posted in March. We apologize for any inconveniences.

First Congregational UCC, Winona

On Sunday January 31, 2010 the First Congregational Church Youth Group did not attend the service at their church. They even posted a sign on the Church door that said, "Jesus has left the building with the Youth Group." The note was a reminder to the Congregation that the Youth Group was living their faith in the community. Youth Group advisor, Brian Pember stated, "We spent time at Lake Winona Manor and enjoyed talking with Harriett Tweedy, Jack Andressen and Judy Schmidt." Linda Runstrom took her group to Watkins Manor and the other Youth Advisor Cindy Samples and her group descended on Callista Court. Resident Jo Edstrom shared a story about what the church

looked like when she was 3 and attended her first Sunday school class at FCC. She said, "That was 95 years ago since I'm 98!" Some of the youth members had never met these Church members. This was one of four outings to visit home-bound members they will participate in 2010. The next 5th Sunday Outing will be in May. The 5th Sunday Outings prepares the Youth Group for their Mission Trip work in summer when they will travel to Louisville, Kentucky and work at nursing homes, food shelters and a homeless shelter. On March 13 the youth will offer a March Madness Meal from 4-7: 30pm at First Congregational Church. Anyone is welcome to come to the meal. This fundraiser will help them pay for their Mission Trip to Louisville, Kentucky in July.



First Congregational Church UCC's 5th Sunday Group prepares to go out in the community for the 5th Sunday Mission Work

Parkway UCC, Minneapolis

Christian Ed Director, David Becker and the Parkway UCC, Minneapolis youth/children have done a Lenten video series.

[Check back here](#) each day for something to ponder during Lent. Brought to you by the young people of Parkway UCC!

[Wednesday, February 17 - Day 1, Ash Wednesday](#)

[Thursday, February 18 - Day 2](#)

[Friday, February 19 - Day 3](#)

[Saturday, February 20 - Day 4](#)

[Sunday, February 21 - First Sunday in Lent](#)

A video version of UK artist Simon Smith's depiction of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. The depiction of Satan is an interesting surprise...

[Fan Parkway Youth on Facebook!](#)

Share this devotional with friends and family!

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Parkway United Church of Christ.
3120 Washburn Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55411
612-522-2982 | www.parkwayuccminneapolis.org

Mayflower UCC, Minneapolis

Margaret Shreves joined Mayflower United Church of Christ in January as Director of the Mayflower Early Childhood Center. The Center is expanding to offer programs that align the preschool with the church's social justice ministry. With the construction of Creekside Commons workforce housing complex adjacent to the church, Mayflower's early childhood program will serve Creekside's young children, as well as the current community of families. [Click here to read more](#) about this new ministry and to see how you can be a part of it!

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](#).

Saint Paul's UCC, Saint Paul

3 Sessions on the UCC with Rev. Dr. Clyde Steckel

St. Paul's UCC in St. Paul hosts three consecutive evenings highlighting the history and identity of the UCC with one of our denominational treasures - Clyde Steckel! Beginning Wed. evenings we'll learn the following:

March 3: UCC History: Mary Strands, One Fabric;

March 10: UCC Beliefs: Traditional, Innovative, Still-Speaking;

March 17: UCC Governance: Freedom in Covenant

This is a great opportunity for new members from other congregations who could use a "UCC 101" opportunity. Please extend the invitation to any in your congregation or anyone you know who might like to join up with our group of 25. A simple meal will begin at 6:00pm with Learning Sessions at 6:30. A \$5 donation is appreciated.

Saint Paul's UCC | 900 Summit Ave, St. Paul, MN 55105
RSVP to spoffice@comcast.net or 651-224-5809

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
- Pastor - 3 yoked congregations: First UCC, Marietta, St. John's ELCA, Marietta, St. Paul's ELCA, Nassau

In Search of Singers

The choir of **Union Congregational UCC St. Louis Park** welcomes volunteer singers to join us in a performance of the *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré on Palm Sunday, March 28, 2010 at 2:00pm. We are a small choir, energetic, and eager to learn. It is the first time for most of us to sing this wonderful piece that is so appropriate for the season of Lent. To join us and for rehearsal schedule call choir director Art Clyde 952-476-0229.

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