

**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 09**

**03 March 2010**

**News of the Conference**

**UCC responds to Chilean earthquake**

A devastating magnitude-8.8 earthquake struck Chile early Saturday, February 27, 2010, shattering buildings and bridges, killing at least 78 people and setting off a tsunami that threatened every nation around the Pacific Ocean - roughly a quarter of the globe.

Messages of care, concern and support have been sent to Rev. Ulises Muñoz, Obispo Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile; Rosario Castillo, Educación Popular en Salud (EPES); Dora Canales, Comunidad Teológica de Chile, UCC-Global Ministries Partners, and Elena Huegel, Missionary with Global Ministries.

OGHS and -Global Ministries staff are monitoring the unfolding disaster situation and will continue to update this site. [Click here to read this article in full.](#)

**How Can I Help.**

1. Pray for the people of Chile their leaders and emergency and emergency response workers.  
2. Please help the people of Chile by sending gifts payable to your congregation marked for Chile Earthquake & Tsunami with the request they be sent through your Conference office on to Wider Church Ministries.

OR

Send gifts, made out to United Church of Christ and marked in the memo portion "Chile Earthquake & Tsunami" to Wider Church Ministries; 700 Prospect Ave, Cleveland, OH 44115.

OR

Make a [secure online donation](#) to the International Emergency Fund, please note "Chile Earthquake & Tsunami" in the comments section.

**Joys and Concerns**

1. Congratulations to Rev. James Clausen, who began serving Wabasha UCC as Pastor on March 1. Congratulations are also in order for search committee chair Barb Hanson and committee members Jim Brooks, Mary Danckwart, Kathryn Hermundson, Rob LaRocque, Elaine Miller and Marlene Schmidt.

2. Welcome to Rev. Deborah Hasdorff, who began her duties as Pastor at Parkview UCC in White Bear Lake this week! Debi comes to us from Pacific Northwest Conference where she did 5 interims as well as a settled pastorate. She also served on that conference's Board of Directors and chaired the Committee on

Ministry. We are pleased to have her in the Minnesota Conference.

3. Rev. Susan Cline's mother died peacefully on Sunday evening around 11:00pm. Please keep Rev. Cline and her family in your prayers.

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 hygiene and baby kits, their time and contributions toward shipping. With your help, a grand total of 234 kits were collected and shipped to the Church World Service headquarters to be distributed! These kits are greatly needed by folks who have been left with nothing.

### Refugee "Free Cases" in Minnesota

For the first time in nearly a decade, MN will be resettling refugee "Free cases" in Minnesota. These free case 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. Our first three free case families (12 people) are arriving this week. The Refugee Services program needs your help to give these families a warm welcome in this cold climate. Volunteers are needed especially during the daytime to watch children as their parents are filling out paperwork or to join them as they apply for social security cards, etc. If you are available to volunteer please contact Rachele King at [Rachele.King@mchurches.org](mailto:Rachele.King@mchurches.org) or at 612.230.3216. If you can provide furniture, winter coats, etc. please contact Dan Huynh at 612.230.3227 or [Dan.huynh@mchurches.org](mailto:Dan.huynh@mchurches.org).

To learn more about how supporting refugees is meaningful for both refugees and volunteers [visit our website](#).

### Fight Against Hunger

Become a Superhero in the Minnesota Fight Against Hunger! Did you know that from 2008-2009, there was a 24% increase in food shelf visits in Minnesota - the largest recorded increase in 28 years. It is March Campaign time and you can become a superhero for hunger! Help your congregation, corporation, nonprofit, school, local civic group, etc. sponsor a food drive today for Minnesota's largest annual food drive, MN FoodShare's March Campaign. MN FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, co-sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Churches. For more information about how you can become a superhero for hunger [visit our website](#).

### 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 make 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!](#)

### Looking for Volunteers

Those who wish to volunteer with sandbagging or clean up if there is a flood as expected, please contact the Conference Office with their email addresses. It will make our response time a good deal shorter if we have a list of willing folks ready to go if the flood waters start to rise. Send your email address to [alisonb@uccmn.org](mailto:alisonb@uccmn.org) (Alison Bents) to be added to the list! Thank you for your willingness to help your neighbors!

## Upcoming Events

### Clergy Clusters in the Coming Week

**Lakes and Rivers Cluster**, March 9, 12:00pm  
First Congregational UCC, Anoka

**Twin Cities West Metro Cluster**, March 10, 10:45am  
St. Mark's UCC, Bloomington

### Pursuing Justice: Day on the Hill Training

**Pursuing Justice: Day on the Hill Training has been cancelled due to low registration numbers.**

Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis is conducting a two hour workshop about dealing with public officials face to face: "Taking the fear out of talking with your elected official," March 14, 12:30-2:30pm. It's free but we request a reservation by contacting Jan Neville at 612-581-4554 or [janeville@comcast.net](mailto:janeville@comcast.net). [Click here for more information.](#)

### Family Systems Workshop in Wisconsin

FAMILY SYSTEMS WORKSHOP: The Wisconsin Conference UCC is hosting a one-day workshop on Family Systems Theory in the Madison area. Registration deadline is March 5th - there are still spots available! [Click here for more.](#)

### 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](#).*

## Spring Training

### Spring Training: Imagine! The Art of Faith Formation

This workshop, offered by the Wisconsin Conference UCC, is designed for Pastors, Education Directors, Teachers, Boards of Christian Education, Sanctuary Committees, Worship Teams and all creative people interested in the arts and teaching ministries of the church.

**When:** April 17, 2010, 9:00am-3:00pm

**Cost:** \$25 per person \$75 maximum per church.

**Where:** First Congregational UCC, 310 Broadway St, Eau Claire, WI

[Click here to learn more](#)

Make checks payable to: Wisconsin Conference UCC Mail checks and registration form to: The Wisconsin Conference, PO Box 435, Deforest WI 53532-0435

## Immerse Yourself in the Love of God

In Minnesota, we are surrounded by water. This sign of God's loving embrace enfolds us in God's love through the sacrament of baptism. We encounter God in the love shown to us as we are welcomed into the Christian community. The waters of baptism reflect the theme of this year's "Open and Affirming" Celebration: "Immerse Yourself in the Love of God." Those who affirm and celebrate the gifts that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people within the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ will gather on Sunday, April 25th at Clark Memorial UCC, 779 15th Ave N, South Saint Paul. The day's events will include workshops beginning at 2:30pm and a worship service at 4:00pm. All are invited to join us in the celebration.

We will be challenged and encouraged by the preaching of the Rev. Dr. Anita Bradshaw, former National Field Organizer for the Welcoming Church Movement. Rev. Bradshaw now serves as Director of Judicatory Based Education for Eden Theological Seminary. Music will be provided by the choir of Spirit of the Lakes and Minnehaha United Churches of Christ.

Two workshops will be offered as part of the program. ONA 101 (Open and Affirming basics) will be offered for those people beginning conversations within their churches. "Transgender Inclusion" will be offered to help churches expand their welcome to those of differing gender identities.

The "Open and Affirming" program within the United Church of Christ comes from a 1985 General Synod Resolution calling on all settings of the church to adopt statements of "openness" and "affirmation" towards gay, lesbian and bisexual people. A later General Synod in 2003 also called upon the church to acknowledge and celebrate the gifts transgender individuals bring to the church. There are currently 35 "Open and Affirming" UCC congregations in Minnesota.

## Packing the Bus: Leader Training

### **Packing the Bus:** **A training for leaders of camp, mission/service trips and outdoor adventure experiences**

**April 30, 7pm - May 1, 5pm | Pilgrim Point Camp**  
**Cost: only \$10!** (rest of costs are underwritten by an Ashley endowment grant)

**Dr. Paul Hill**, keynote speaker (professor of Outdoor Ministries at Luther Seminary and Executive Director of Vibrant Faith Ministries) will help us in "Packing the Bus" well by preparing (both spiritually and practically) as the leader/s for these big events, tips for getting the most from your time together as a group, handling conflict and arriving home well.

**Practical workshops** on boundaries, leading games, creating "safe space" and more!

[Learn more and register by clicking here!](#)

## News from our Local Churches

### 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!

### Saint Paul's UCC, Saint Paul

#### **Evensong Service w. Prayers for Healing | March 7th**

This Sunday, from 5:15-6:00pm at St. Paul's UCC, St. Paul  
Join a growing group of faithful to our once a month contemplative service. We sing songs of Iona and Taize' with accompaniment by Hammered Dulcimer, Folk Harp, Violin and Viola.

#### **Making Sense of Spirituality with Children: A 3 Session Discussion Series with Early Childhood Educator Marty Watson**

St. Paul's UCC is hosting a workshop series aimed specifically for parents and anyone who works with children. These sessions will be interactive and provide practical ideas that anyone can use to foster spirituality in children.

The topics covered will be:

**March 24:** The Spiritual Life of Children

**April 7:** The Spirituality of Parenting

**April 21:** Helping Children Explore Questions about Death

Our facilitator, Marty Watson has directed early childhood programs in the public and private sector. During her 30-year career, she has provided professional development opportunities for parents, staff, and college students. Her experiences with children in Head Start, full-day childcare and after-school programs, and preschool education have provided opportunities for a variety of interactions with children and adults around these topics. Marty is currently on staff at the Dodge Nature Center.

A simple meal will begin at 6:00pm with Discussion Sessions from 6:30-7:30. A \$5 donation is appreciated.

**Saint Paul's UCC | 900 Summit Ave, St. Paul, MN 55105**

**RSVP to [spoffice@comcast.net](mailto: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
- Acting Pastor - Marietta/Nassau churches
- Summer Sabbatical Pastor - First UCC, Grand Marais

### 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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