

Mission Bite: from across the Minnesota Conference



This "Mission Bite" provides a brief report on the **49th Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ**, held this past weekend at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, MN. But first, two requests:

1. If you did **not** participate, please take a few moments to tell

us why by completing [this brief three-question survey](#). Your responses will be helpful to the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group as it begins almost immediately to work on the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting, which will take place June 8-10, 2012. **Mark your calendars now!**

2. As we look ahead to that meeting, please begin now to put in place a process for selecting delegates to this important gathering. Some congregations make the election of delegates to the Annual Meeting a part of their regular election process. A few expect that the congregation's moderator or

president will be one of those in attendance. And a growing number are making sure that they send the additional youth/young adult delegate. What is most important is that you have a process that ensures a vital, meaningful connection between your local church and the Conference.



An excellent summary of this year's meeting comes from one enthusiastic participant who wrote, "Conference is always inspirational!!!! I have a plethora of ideas that I want to introduce to my local church."

More than 330 gathered:

- to be held spellbound by the electrifying teaching and preaching of Rev. Otis Moss III;
- to join in lively Bible study with Rev. Allen Hilton;
- to hear inspiring "Faith in Action" moments from critical mission partners;
- to learn about the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ;



In This Issue

[Mission Bite](#)

[Joys & Concerns](#)

[UCCMN @ 50](#)

[News from CUE](#)

[Led by the StillSpeaking God](#)

[Reformation of Worship](#)

[Camp Registration Deadlines!](#)

[Widening the Welcome](#)

[Act Out!](#)

[Want to go to camp?](#)

[Local Church Events](#)

[Employment Opportunities](#)

Quick Links

[Donate now to Friends of the Conference](#)

[Minnesota Conference Website](#)

[Pilgrim Point Camps and Retreats](#)

[Minnesota Conference Calendar](#)

[National UCC Website](#)

[Join the email list for UCNews: Keeping You ePosted](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

News from
the Wider Church

[United Church News](#)
Headlines from across the United Church of Christ

- to worship, sing, pray and praise;
- to take part in excellent, varied workshops;
- to celebrate clergy and churches of the Conference;
- to vote on three resolutions, several bylaws changes, and the 2012 Conference budget;



- and much more...

When you are with those who attended or hear a report from your congregation's delegate(s), ask them what OM3 taught us about love and justice and about a place that had markets and medicine and the military but was missing something. What was that? Inquire about which small change in the NRSV translation of Acts 1:1 has large implications. Explore the meaning of immigrants in Arizona having family portraits taken. Talk about "the burning platform" and the Conference VIP initiatives. Find out what's new at Pilgrim Point Camp.

The resolutions passed by the Annual Meeting ask the local churches of the Conference to do the following:

With regard to Immigration Reform:

- sign up for and respond to legislative alerts at the website of [The Advocates for Human Rights](#);
- engage in Biblical reflection on the issue of immigration using one of more of the 54 immigration related scriptures available at the [United Church of Christ website](#);
- contact the Conference Immigration Task Force to arrange for speakers and to learn of other resources that can assist in their study and reflection on the reasons for migration and immigrants in the United States, and offer a faithful response as both individuals and as a congregation;

With regard to the support of CTUL:

- support and participate with the Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL) (Center of Workers United in Struggle) campaign for fair pay, dignified working conditions, and justice in their places of employment;

With regard to marriage equality for couples regardless of gender:

- engage in serious, respectful, and prayerful discussion of the covenantal relationship of marriage and equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender; and
- after prayerful biblical, theological and historical study, consider adopting wedding policies that do not discriminate against couples based on gender.

Right now: Are you registered for General Synod yet? Deadline is June 20!

[UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns](#)

Right now: Celebrate 25 years of Open and Affirming

[Global Ministries](#) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ

Right now: Celebrate Global Ministries this fall

[Association of United Church Educators](#)

Right now: Regional educator events announced

[Congregational Vitality](#)

Right now: See Strengthen the Church in action!

[Justice & Witness Ministries](#)

Right now: Are you participating in Community Supported Agriculture?

[Council for Health and Human Services Ministries](#)

Right now: United Church Home creates haven for homeless teens

The Friday evening offering for immigration work of UCC Justice and Witness Ministries gathered \$2,521.23, which will be sent to the national setting. Sunday's offering for Strengthen the Church yielded \$2,684.15. Those contributions are shared 50/50 between the national setting and the Conference. These dollars fund new church starts and congregational vitality, build youth and young adult ministries, nurture lay and pastoral leadership, and support the *God is Still Speaking* ministry. In Minnesota in 2012 some of these dollars will support MissionInsite and campus ministry. Participants also contributed close to \$4,000 to Friends of the Conference during the Annual Meeting.



A single brief "Mission Bite" cannot do justice to the richness of this gathering. Now and in the weeks ahead, check the Conference website frequently for additional posted material related to the Annual Meeting.

Karen Smith Sellers
Conference Minister

all photos by Rev. Scott Keehn, First UCC, Alexandria

Joys and Concerns

1. Congratulations to the Rev. Duane Lookingbill, clergy member with standing in the Minnesota Conference UCC. He has accepted a call to Osage United Church of Christ in Osage, Iowa and will be installed as pastor there on Sunday, June 19, 3:30pm. Best wishes to Rev. Lookingbill and Osage UCC as they begin their ministry together.
2. The Conference office has received word of the death on May 21 of Magel Boyd, a longtime member of First Congregational UCC in Alexandria. During the 1970s, Magel supervised food services at Pilgrim Point Camp. A memorial service was held this afternoon (June 15) in Alexandria.
3. A Service of Closure and Farewell for Rev. Désirée Gold will be held Sunday, June 19, 9:00am at Cottage Grove UCC, 7008 Lamar Avenue South, Cottage Grove.
4. A Service of Closure and Farewell for Rev. Evalyn Carlson will be held Sunday, June 19, 9:30am at First Congregational UCC, 319 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont.
5. Doug Federhart will be ordained Sunday, June 19, 3:00pm at Minnehaha UCC/Spirit of the Lakes UCC, 4001 38th Avenue S, Minneapolis. A reception will follow the service. Please contact office@spiritucc.org or call 612-729-7556 if you plan to attend.
6. A Service of Closure and Farewell for Rev. Muriel Pool Hachfeld will be held Sunday, June 26, 8:45am at First Congregational UCC, 204 5th St NE, Staples.

7. A Service of Closure and Farewell for Rev. Al Thompson will be held Sunday, June 26, 9:30am at First Congregational UCC, 150 Stadium Court, Mankato.

8. A Service of Closure and Farewell for Cindy Lemke will be held Sunday, June 26, 10:45am at First Congregational UCC, 11 E Gilman St, New York Mills.

The Minnesota Conference at 50

Harvesting the History of the Conference

All this year the Minnesota UCC Conference will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding in 1962. As part of that celebration a new history of the Conference is being compiled. We want to know what you have experienced in the Conference. Your recollections and views are important as we gather this history and prepare it for publication. If you sign this form at the bottom and we decide to use your words, we will contact you for your permission. [Please take a few moments and fill out this brief survey.](#) Thank you!

News from CUE Seminaries

Seminary Graduation

In May, Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries celebrated the graduation of 115 students. These students will serve in many capacities across the country and around the world. We rejoice with them as they begin a new phase of their ministry in the world.



CUE Seminaries Video

Many of you were able to view the CUE Seminaries Video during recent Conference Annual Meetings. The video highlights and celebrates the work of Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries. The video can be shown during Church Committee Meetings, Seminary Sunday worship services, at new clergy gatherings, at Association Meetings, or in other settings. It is 5:50 long and available on DVD at no cost. Soon, it will also be available to view directly on the CUE website: www.cueseminaries.org. If you would like to view the video, you can view it at this link: <http://vimeo.com/23274342>. If it asks you for password, the password is cue (lowercase). You will need Flash player to play it. If you need to get Flash, here is a link: <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

To obtain a DVD copy, please contact Kiely Todd Roska, CUE Development Coordinator: kiely@cueseminaries.org or 651-255-6121.

Led by the StillSpeaking God!

"Led by the StillSpeaking God!"

Central Cluster Annual Pulpit Exchange

This Sunday, June 19th marks the Annual Clergy Cluster Pulpit Exchange of the Central Cluster! This group of clergy and congregations is located between Chaska and Le Sueur, extending as far as Hutchinson. They meeting actively during the year and conclude their year with this annual round-a-bout, where pastors preach and lead service in a neighboring congregation. The common liturgy, written this year by Kathy Gibson Christenson, is performed in each congregation, and each pastor preaches their own sermon on the lectionary texts, with the common theme "Led by

the StillSpeaking God!"

Organized by Pastor Dick Mark of St. John's UCC at Bongards, the pulpit exchange is an opportunity to live out our covenantal ties between congregations. Pastor Mark says:

This Sunday gives our UCC churches and our members an opportunity to see how we are in covenant with one-another. We are not alone in our towns and cities, but we have a common mission and task of sharing God's Good News across Central and Southern Minnesota. We are proclaiming that the Still Speaking God reaches out in Love and Peace to our UCC congregations and to the world.

Participating congregations and their respective visiting pastors include:

Rev. Penny Entringer: Chaska - Zoar UCC

Rev. Joe Clay: Gaylord UCC

Rev. Hank Campbell: Glencoe - First Congregational UCC

Rev. Kathy Gibson Christensen: Glencoe - Peace UCC

Rev. Bill Baldwin: Henderson - St. Paul's UCC

Rev. Beth Benson: Hutchinson - First Congregational UCC

Rev. Linzy Collins: Le Sueur - Zion UCC

Rev. Elena Larssen: Lester Prairie - Prairie Comm. Church & Plato - St. Paul's UCC

Rev. Brigit Stevens: New Ulm UCC

Rev. Richard Mark: Norwood Young America - Friedens UCC

Rev. Brian Brosz: Norwood Young America - St. John's UCC

Intentionally timed to be close the Annual Meeting, each congregation will host a Coffee Hour with the visiting pastor, and each pastor has the opportunity to report out on the "doings" of the annual meeting, as well as sharing about themselves and their home church. In addition, each congregation will be greeted via letter by our Conference Minister, The Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, who prays a blessing upon the church and visiting pastor, and shares a thought from the Annual Meeting:

*At last weekend's 49th Annual Meeting of the Conference, amazing testimony was offered about the ways in which our faith is actively being expressed in our local churches and through the wider ministries of the United Church of Christ. There Bible study leader Rev. Allen Hilton reminded us that when we gather as Church, the risen Jesus is present with us. And when we scatter to save and to serve the world, it is, mysteriously, the risen Jesus who **acts through us** - using our hands and feet and eyes and brains and (yes) financial resources - to put our faith into action. Thanks be to God for this blessing and opportunity!*

Thanks be to God for friendship and shared ministry among congregations and pastors! They remind us that we are united in covenant as we are "Led by a StillSpeaking God!"

Blessings,
The Rev. Elena Larssen

Reformation of Worship - Only \$10!

Reformation of Worship

On Campus EVENT at United Seminary

Saturday June 25, 2011, 10:00am-3:00pm

Lunch will be included, only \$10/person!

Come as an Individual or bring your Entire Worship Team. If mainline churches could change only one thing about who they are and how they

function it should be worship. If we could get only this one thing right the decline of the mainline would cease because effective, powerful, transformational worship can be the engine that drives all the other worthy values and ministries of the church. During this expanded version of his wildly popular "Transformational Worship" presentation, Rev. Piazza will demonstrate how technology and 21st-century communication principles can make worship the renewing force for a congregation. Whether you are launching a new service or trying to change how you do worship, a "Reformation of Worship" will give you the tools, and encouragement, you need to take the next step. [Click here to REGISTER TODAY!](#)

Camp Registration Deadlines Coming Up

Middle School and Senior High Camp registration deadlines coming up - get registered now!

Middle School Week: July 10-16, 2011

[Online registration is now open](#) DEADLINE: Monday, June 27th

Senior High Week: July 31-August 6

[Online registration is now open](#) DEADLINE: Monday, July 18th

Camp costs: after April 30 \$350

Widening the Welcome



"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." Matthew 10:40

At least one out of four families in your congregation is affected by a mental illness/brain disorder or disability. Join the movement. Attend the conference! September 29-October 1, 2011 Columbus, Ohio. Developing the life of congregations to include persons with disabilities and persons with mental illnesses/brain disorders and their families

www.wideningthewelcome.com

Act Out!

Act Out!

An Intergenerational Vacation Bible School Experience for All ages based OLD TURTLE by Douglas Wood

Sponsored by First Congregational UCC, 221 West 7th Ave, Alexandria

Where: Pilgrim Point Camp on Lake Ida

When: July 6- 7, 2011

The director for this 2-full-days Bible School event will be Erin Brown-Craven, daughter of one of Alexandria UCC's members. Erin is a dance instructor at an elementary school in Oklahoma. This event is suitable for all ages and abilities. Grandparents and grandchildren will find this to be a delightful way to spend days together in a beautiful setting. This is an appropriate day camp for all ages at a cost of \$25 per person which will cover the costs of meals at the camp. More details and registration forms are [on the brochure](#). You may also e-mail the Alexandria Church office at office@firstcongregationaluccalex.com to register. Pastor Scott Keehn would also have more details: 320-491-6789. Registration deadline, Friday, June 24.

Want to go to camp?

PILGRIM POINT

camps & retreats,

Playing and Living Joyfully this summer at
Minnesota Conference Sponsored Youth Camps!

Middle School Week: July 10-16, 2011

[Online registration is now open](#) DEADLINE: Monday, June 27th

Senior High Week: July 31-August 6

[Online registration is now open](#) DEADLINE: Monday, July 18th

Camp costs: after April 30 \$350

Other opportunities this summer @ Pilgrim Point:

Wayzata Community Church sponsored camps:

Junior High: June 18-23, 2011

Children's: June 24-27, 2011 or June 27-30, 2011

Cross Generation: June 30-July 2, 2011

[Click here for more information](#)

July Family Camp

sponsored by Union UCC, Saint Louis Park

July 17-22, 2011 [Click here for more information](#)

August Family Camp

sponsored by Mayflower UCC, Minneapolis & Saint Anthony Park UCC,
Saint Paul - postcard available [by clicking here](#).

August 7-12, 2011 [Click here for more information](#)

This fall's Minnesota Conference Retreats:

Men's Retreat: September 9-11

[Women's Retreat](#): September 16-18

Does your church want to reserve a part of the camp for your own retreat or camp? There are still weekends and parts of weeks available! [Check it out here](#). For general information on Pilgrim Point Camps and Retreats, visit the PPCR website: www.pilgrimpoint.org.

Local Church Events

Check out all the events happening at our local churches across Minnesota on our [Local Church Events Calendar](#)! You can surf around the calendar to see what's coming up across the Conference. Just click on the title of the event in the calendar to get more details.

- Wednesday, June 8: [Tapping into Living Water, Wellspring of Faith, Burnsville](#)

Would you like your events to appear on this calendar? Just email Alison Bents at alisonb@uccmn.org. Simple as that!

Employment Opportunities

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

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