



THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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TOGETHER, WE WILL BE RENEWED!

MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 47TH ANNUAL MEETING
05-07 JUNE 2009
COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT, ST. JOSEPH, MN

July, 2009

Dear partners in ministry,

Thank you for the contributions of your local church to and through the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ. As always, you will want to check for accuracy and report discrepancies to Sian Nelson, Business Administrator. I hope you will also read about and tell others in your setting of the ministries made possible through your generosity.

One hundred percent of your per capita covenant dues (\$10 per member) and 65.5% of your Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) contributions remain in the Minnesota Conference, where they support our ministry priorities of 1) strengthening, building and inviting congregations, 2) identifying and nurturing the gifts and leadership abilities of clergy and laity; 3) fostering the Christian formation and discipleship of children, youth and adults, and 4) increasing our prophetic witness. Here are **just a few** of the many ministries taking place in each area.

Strengthening, building and inviting congregations

- In partnership with Local Church Ministries of the national UCC, we are training and supporting eleven congregations participating in the Vitality Initiative Pilot (VIP) Program.
- We are also actively engaged with more than half a dozen local churches working with the "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church" materials of Rev. Paul Nixon, our 47th Annual Meeting keynoter.
- Plenary presenters and workshop leaders at the Annual Meeting provided a vast array of resources for strengthening the ministries of congregations.
- Thirty of our 138 local churches are in leadership transition, and our staff assists with securing interim leadership, preparing the local church profile, and searching for a called pastor.

Identifying and nurturing the gifts and leadership abilities of clergy and laity

- This spring we provided an opportunity for five clergy to participate in a process of discerning whether conference ministry might be a future vocational calling. In August, two of our authorized ministers will participate in the Church Leadership Institute in Atlanta and another will travel to Chapel Hills, NC to take part in Web University.
- Eighteen delegates represented the Minnesota Conference at General Synod where two of our young people were elected to the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, two of our members were elected to

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serve on national boards, and another was named chair of a national board. Nearly two hundred from across the Conference serve on committees, work groups, teams or task forces of the Conference.

- A training event and retreat for those engaged in youth ministry leadership will take place at Pilgrim Point Camp at the end of August.
- A Brown Grant will make it possible for clergy and laity to participate in two events focused on Becoming an Intergenerational Church. UCC Communications Director, Rev. J. Bennett Guess, will teach us about communicating across the generations and Tribal Church author, Rev. Carol Howard Merritt, will instruct us on ministering to the missing generation. See the website www.uccmn.org for more information and to register.
- The Committee on Ministry assesses and accompanies persons preparing for authorized ministry and in July approved two persons for ordination.

Fostering the Christian formation and discipleship of children, youth, and adults

- A fabulous group of youth and adult leaders participated in serving and learning through Youth@Synod
- Two Conference Youth Events are set for this Fall at Pilgrim Point Camp
- UCC Minister for Curriculum Development, Ken Ostermiller, will be with us the first weekend in November introducing groups in Moorhead, the Twin Cities, and Austin to the new Faith Practices resources of the United Church of Christ
- About 250 children and youth have already participated in programmed camping at Pilgrim Point Camp this summer; family camps drew an additional 75 adults
- Our partnership with United Theological Seminary through the Academy of Vital Christianity provides outstanding learning opportunities available in settings across Minnesota.

Increasing Prophetic Witness

- We continue to partner with A Minnesota without Poverty and the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
- The Immigration Task Force is named and its Convenor, Rev. Loren McGrail, was the primary facilitator at July Family Camp

While celebrating these faithful ministries, we are mindful that at the end of the third quarter of our Conference fiscal 2009, both per capita covenant dues and OCWM contributions were substantially below budget. To date, we have managed to reduce expenses as well. But such an approach is not sustainable over time without reducing and curtailing the ministries we are able to do.

As you prepare for your annual stewardship campaign and build your local church budgets, I encourage you to take advantage of the wonderful resources provided by the national offices of the United Church of Christ, including the brand new OCWM videos available on YouTube (type in keywords [Our Church's Wider Mission](#)). The staff and OCWM Team stand ready to assist you.

I have recently been focused on the bumper sticker of the Illinois Conference UCC that says: "For God's sake, do something." Together, in the Minnesota Conference UCC we **are** engaged in a host of spiritually enlivening and transforming ministries "for God's sake." What better way to reveal that these ministries done "for God's sake" are where our hearts are than to offer our treasures to these ministries as well?!

With gratitude and hope,



Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers
Conference Minister

Enclosure: Quarterly Donor Statement