

Conference Connection is the monthly eNewsletter of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. You're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in the work of the Southeast Conference. Don't forget to add clwaldron@secucc.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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## ***Building God's House*** ***2015 Southeast Conference Annual Meeting***

We will gather once again at Piedmont College June 12-13 for the 49th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference. Last year we looked at the moment in time that began this journey of renewal and transition. This year we focus our attention on the building of God's house as we do the ministries of the Conference. Next year, as we celebrate our 50th anniversary as a Conference, we will look to the laborers in the vineyard.

We have a full slate of workshops and exhibitors scheduled. Reverend June Boutwell will give the keynote address on the State of the Conference. And we will conduct our annual business meeting to adopt a budget, elect leadership, and install these leaders to their respective positions. And of course we will honor our churches and pastors for their support of ministries and their years of service. We will remember with gratitude the faithful servants that have died during the past twelve months and gather at Christ's table to remind ourselves of the covenant we have with the Holy One and with each other as brothers and sisters in faith.

We are excited to welcome Reverend Elizabeth Diley of the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries in the national setting of the UCC. She will be leading the Authorized Ministers Retreat on June 11, meeting with the Persons in Exploration/Members in Discernment Retreat on Friday morning, and offering a workshop.

We are also hoping that Reverend Denise Bell, Regional Minister of The Christian Church in Georgia (Disciples of Christ) will be able to join us for worship on Friday night. We are working to strengthen the long standing partnership between the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

[Registration is now available online along with detailed information about the gathering. Click here for a link on the SEC website.](#)

Registration books are now in the mail to each congregation. And thank you for your patience and understanding as we live into new ways of doing our ministry together.

Hope to see you at the Annual Meeting!



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2015. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayers requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

[Click here to download the May and June prayer list](#)

[Click here to see the entire 2015 prayer list](#)

Continued prayers for Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim, Southeast Conference Director of Theological Education and Dean of PATHWAYS as she continues her sabbatical in Korea and Japan.

Blessings for Rev. Christophe Ringer as he leaves Howard Congregational Church in Nashville to assume his duties on the faculty of Chicago Theological Seminary.

Upcoming ordinations:

Gail McGill on May 24, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. at Central Congregational UCC

Dan Stark on June 14, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. at Decatur UCC.

Decatur UCC has called Jodi Yarini as licensed minister. Jodi is a Member in Discernment and will finish seminary this spring.

Churches in transition- Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham Alabama; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; United Church, Cookeville Tennessee; Peace Congregational UCC, Clemson South Carolina; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee.

***Jottings from June***

## BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE

I am very excited about our Annual Meeting this year. The pomp and ceremony of my installation last year is now a memory. I have had many opportunities to meet many of you as I have made my way around the Conference. We have been working hard to live into a new reality as the Board of Directors and the Standing Committees of the Conference look at the work that has informed where we are now and begin to form a vision of the future.

Last year I talked about road maps and this year we are working on the blueprints of the Southeast Conference. What are we building in this place and in this time? You are the architects and general contractors of this ministry. We need people with ideas and people who can put the tools in their possession to use in building up the body. Look at the article from the Nominating Committee- can you serve in any of these positions? Look at the article from the Personnel Committee- can you respond to the evaluation of ministry so we can hear what you have to say?

I do hope that I will see you at Conference Annual Meeting on June 12-13. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a full house at the meeting with every pastor and every church represented? And perhaps some of you will attend General Synod where we can get a glimpse of the wider ministries and community that surround us and support us in what we do in our corner of the United Church of Christ.

The welcome mat is out, the door is open, the table is set. Won't you come and sit a while?

***Blessings, June***



## **General Synod 2015 in Cleveland Ohio**



There is still time to register for General Synod this year. The Southeast Conference Delegates are ready to represent the Conference as the entire UCC community gathers for fellowship, worship, and tending to the business of the ministry of the UCC.

These are the proposed resolutions for our consideration. You can find the texts with links to the General Synod website. These resolutions have all been considered by UCC Conferences and congregations and submitted for action by the delegates to the General Synod.

[Commemorating 100 Years since the Armenian Genocide](#)

[Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in the United States](#)

[Resolution to Change the Racially Demeaning Name, Mascot and Imagery of the Washington National Football League Team](#)

[A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward Just Peace in the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict - There are two resolutions with this name - this links to the second](#)

[Transition from Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy](#)

[A Call of Peace, Justice and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula](#)

[Dismantling the New Jim Crow](#)

[Resolution on Full Communion Relationship between the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada](#)

[Developing Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged Congregations for Mental Health](#)

[Resolution to Support Legislation Requiring Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods on Food Packaging](#)

[Resolution Marking the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Just Peace Pronouncement by Recommitting Ourselves to be a Just Peace Church](#)

[Calling on the United Church of Christ to Recognize the Actions of Israel Against the Palestinians as Apartheid](#)

[Responsible Stewardship of the Outer Space Environment](#)

[Calling the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Ethical and Compassionate Treatment of Undocumented Immigrant Children Seeking Refuge in the United States.](#)

[Resolution Urging Socially Responsible Investment Practices](#)

We invite your prayers as we travel and deliberate and celebrate this wonderful denomination and its presence as advocates and doers of justice and bringers of peace.

The following people will represent the Conference as delegates: Debbie Spearman, Carrole Moss, Ben Rose, Lacey Brown, Marvin Morgan, Charmaine Johnson, Jeremy Rutledge, Kirk Lyman Barner, Gwen Thomas, and June Boutwell

## Generosity Corner



*Transforming Churches - Transforming Lives*  
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Earlier this year, we asked our churches to complete their annual church data survey for the UCC's annual Yearbook & Directory. Historically, getting this data has been challenging. The majority of our churches do not respond to the UCC's survey. But this year, with extra effort from Gerri Hudson, Executive Administrator, and the fact that all data was collected electronically, our Conference was able to make a significant increase in church responses.

The Southeast Conference was recognized for a 16% increase in congregational reporting of data. Our double digit increase was also recognized with a UCC Resources Gift Certificate.

Thank you to all who provided us with accurate, up-to-date information from your churches for this annual data collection.

*Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator*

## Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is hard at work trying to fill the slate to be presented to the Conference Annual Meeting on June 13. Positions are open for Vice Moderator for a one year unexpired term, three Board Members at Large to serve through 2017, two members of the Nominating Committee to serve through 2017, and someone to serve as chair of the Stewardship and Finance Committee. We are also seeking members to serve on the Stewardship and Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Commission on Ministry.

If you would like to be considered for any of these positions, please contact Gary Myers, chair of the Nominating Committee at [gary168@centurytel.net](mailto:gary168@centurytel.net).

## Conference Evaluations

The Personnel Committee sent ministry evaluation forms in April to a number of people to provide feedback on the ministries of the Conference during the last year. To date, they have not received many responses. Your feedback and ideas are critical to the work of the Board of Directors and the Designated Conference Minister as they and we move forward in this time of transition and positioning ourselves for the future. They are seeking to provide a report at Annual Meeting. If you received a copy of the evaluation form, please complete it and return it according to the information accompanying the form. If you would like to participate, please contact Holly Nelson, chair of the Personnel Committee at [holly.nelson2011@gmail.com](mailto:holly.nelson2011@gmail.com).



## Have You Ever Met A Student Prince?

You will get your chance on the evenings of Tuesday, May 12 in Atlanta at Central Congregational UCC sanctuary or on Saturday May 15 at Pleasant Hill Community UCC, Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. The 50-member Heidelberg University Collegiate Choir will be performing as part of their annual spring tour through the South. The concert is themed "Faith, Hope, Love", under the direction of Dr Greg Ramsdell.

The music for their concert is drawn from a diverse and eclectic pourri of choral literature. A few of the concert program selections are "Cornerstone", a piece with strong allusions to the gospel style; "Praise the Lord" an African folk song, "Break of Day" an emotionally charged setting of John Donne's poem and "No Time" an arrangement of three camp meeting songs.

Heidelberg is a four-year, Liberal Arts, United Church of Christ-affiliated University located in Tiffin, Ohio and is the alma mater of many of our UCC members throughout the Southeast Conference. And yes, the collegiate mascot is The Student Prince! The concert is free and open to the public. A freewill offering will be taken in order to offset the choir's travel Expenses. Please come and support them. All are welcome.



Please mark your calendar with the following events!

**2015**

**June 11-13** *Pre-event and Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, Piedmont College, Demorest GA*

**June 26-30** *General Synod in Cleveland, OH*

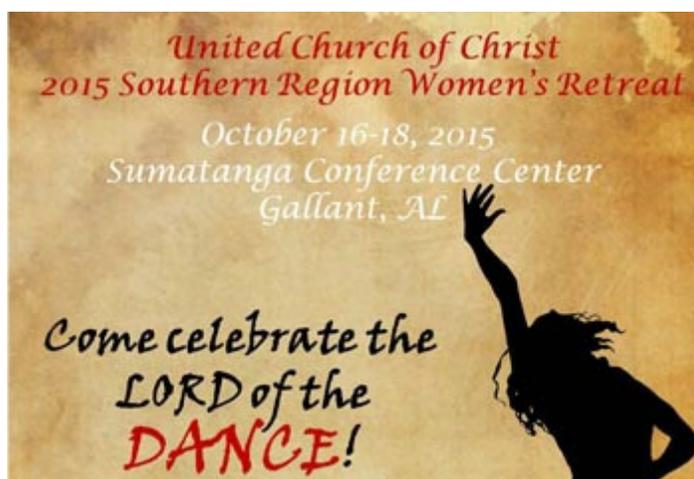
**August 8** *Commission on Ministry, Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga, TN*

**October 5-7** *Retired Servants Retreat, Blowing Rock Conference Center, NC*

**October 16-18** *Southern Regional Women's Conference, Sumatanga Retreat Center, Gallant, AL*

**2016**

**July 26-29** *National Youth Event Orlando, FL*



## 2015 Southern Region Women's Retreat

We invite you to come dance with us at this year's Southern Region Women's Retreat. This includes the United Church of Christ

## Celebrate 30 Years of ONA

**OPEN AND AFFIRMING  
COALITION**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



The Open and Affirming Coalition is celebrating 30 years of ministry, which began with the ONA resolution in 1985's General Synod. The Coalition will hold the National ONA Gathering on June 24-25 in Cleveland, right before the start of this summer's Synod. The gathering will feature dynamic speakers and worship opportunities and two tracks, one for established ONA churches and the other for church leaders that are going through the ONA process.

Conferences: Southeast, South Central, Southern and Florida. This fun and meaningful event is taking place October 16-18 amidst the beautiful fall foliage of Sum atanga Conference Center in Gallant, Alabama, about 45 minutes north of Birmingham.

During our time together we will experience a time of relaxation, refreshment and renewal as all of us, in our own way, Celebrate the Lord of the Dance. You can look forward to a time of fellowship with old friends and new, as well as some great "takeaways" for your own sacred dance and also that of your church.

[Click here to register online](#)

[Click here for more information the SECUCC website](#)

## 2015 UCC Office Support Staff Network



Gerri Ryons-Hudson, Southeast Conference Executive Administrator joined over 45 administrative staff from 12 states gathered on April 9th through April 11th in Fort Wayne, Indiana for this year's UCCOSSN Conference. This network, founded in 1987, is comprised of the support staff of local churches, conferences, associations and national ministries. This Conference is usually held the week after Easter.

A pre-event training was presented for Conference/Association Staff by MESA (UCC Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization) and CARD (Center for Analytics, Research and Data). The attendees gathered for worship, workshops, and networking with new and old friends.

The event was hosted by Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne. Sponsors included the Cornerstone Fund and The Pension Boards. Special guest presenter Valerie Tutson, a much-loved storyteller and friend of the Southeast Conference, helped us rediscover the joy of play.

*"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."*  
-George Bernard Shaw

[Click here for a flyer for the event](#)

## Living Our Faith in a Multi-Faith World

### October 5-7, 2015!

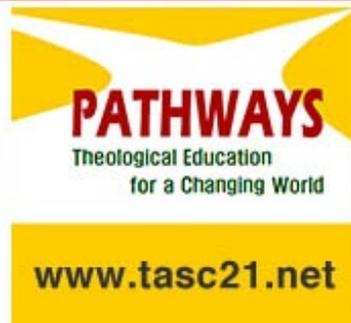
5th Annual Retreat for Retired UCC Servants Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Speakers will be UCC Volunteer Coordinator, Rev. Mary SchallerBlaufuss, who serves as Team Leader, Global Sharing of Resources, National UCC Staff and Dr. Jan Fuller, Chaplain at Elon University, will lead our discussion about Islam.

[Click here for more information and registration on the SEC website.](#)



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Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ



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