

Lots of news this month: reports from General Synod and Annual Meeting 2015, information from Charleston and across the South, ordinations, and much more from around the Conference!



Jottings from June: "Peace, I Say to You"

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

I thank you for your prayers and kind communications during this difficult few months in my life. General Synod this year was hard for me as we presented the resolution in response to the shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church. I had never written a resolution before and to have to present a powerful and compelling document in the midst of my own grief and prayers for friends who had family members killed took a lot of spiritual and emotional energy. I am so grateful for the spiritual strength of Rev. Jeremy Rutledge, pastor of Circular Congregational Church in Charleston as he represented that community in the midst of his own grief and need to be present as a pastor to his local community.



My vacation was resolving some contractor and permit issues with my house in California, the committal of my mother's ashes at sea, being with my father who could not travel for the committal of ashes, and the resolution of a difficult legal case involving one of my sons. It has not been a peaceful few weeks.

I think the whole world is in need of peace. I have been overwhelmed with black lives that did not matter and cannot fathom how the list grows longer seemingly every week. My heart is troubled and I don't know how to respond. I have been working with UCC and ecumenical partners to respond to the church burnings in South Carolina and other places in the South. Whether it is indeed arson or from other causes, the loss of a sacred place is heartbreaking and each report renews our fears and our uneasiness.

And matters of women clergy have occupied my heart and mind as I read about black female pastors being threatened. This in the midst of being involved in two national UCC initiatives that are looking to develop diverse leadership for local churches and especially for wider settings of the church such as Conference and National ministry. I am weary of fighting the gender battle and proving each day that I am as good as the next person despite my racial ethnic heritage.

But as I reflect on my weariness and my heartache and my continued call to ministry, I know that I am in the place I am meant to be. I know that I am the voice that is called to proclaim God's peace and Christ's call to serve the world. I know that I am equipped for all that I am called to do and surrounded by a community of care and accountability that will journey with me as we seek to establish God's realm on earth.

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us. (Isaiah 26:12)



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 prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the August and September prayer list](#)
- [Click here to download the entire 2015 prayer list](#)

Highlights for July:

- We welcome back **Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim**, Southeast Conference Director of Theological Education and Dean of PATHWAYS, from sabbatical.
- Prayers for the **Commission on Ministry** as they conduct a response team training on August 6 at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Chattanooga and have their orientation and regular meeting August 7-8.
- A joint memorial service for **Ted and Donna Braun** will be held on August 8 at 1:30 at the Pleasant Hill Community Church in Tennessee. Ted served at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Carbondale, Illinois from 1973-1992. They retired to the UCC Uplands community in Pleasant Hill in 1992. For more information about the service, please call the Pleasant Hill Community Church at 931-277-3193. Donations may be sent to: Tennessee Technological University Department of Music, Donna Braun Memorial Fund, PO Box 1915, Cookeville, TN 38505 or the Shalom Center for Continuing Education, PO Box 167, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578.
- **Michelle Holtmann** was ordained at Central Congregational Church UCC on July 12.
- **Rev. Glenna Shepherd** was installed as pastor and teacher at Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC, Pleasant Hill Tennessee on July 26.
- **Scott Williamson** will be ordained and installed at United Church of Cookeville (Tennessee) on August 29 at 6:00 p.m.

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; 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.

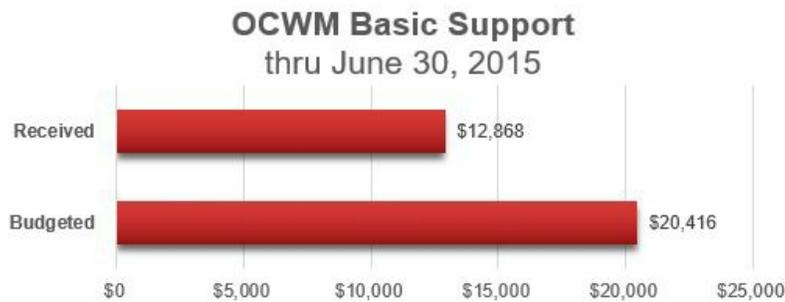
Reflections from General Synod 30

From June 26 through July 1, delegates from the Southeast Conference were totally immersed in the work of the United Church of Christ's General Synod 2015, "Unexpected Places." Being a delegate for those five days is not for the faint of heart! They worked and studied and listened and worshipped from 7 am to sometimes 10 pm at night. It was good and heart-changing work.

Because their reflections are quite insightful (and wordy... some are preachers!) you can read their musings on our website: <http://www.secucc.org/reflections-from-general-synod-2015/>

Our Church's Wider Mission

OCWM Basic Support payments for 2015 are 33% behind of where we should be half way through the year. Please ensure that your church has submitted a payment for 2015. The work of the Conference depends on it. Thank you!



Save the Date

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 Region Women's Retreat
Sumatanga Retreat Center, Gallant, AL

July 26-29, 2016 - National Youth Event in Orlando, Florida



Living Our Faith in a Multi-Faith World

October 5-7, 2015

Living Our Faith in a Multi-Faith World

5th Annual Retreat for Retired UCC Servants

Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock, North Carolina

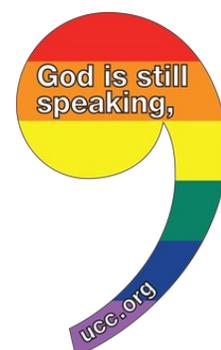
Speakers will be UCC Volunteer Coordinator, Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss, who serves as Team Leader, Global Sharing of Resources, National UCC Staff and Dr. Jan Fuller, Chaplain at Elon University, will lead our discussion about Islam.

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

Decatur UCC becomes an ONA congregation

Celebrate with the Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC as they welcome church number 1307: Decatur United Church of Christ in Decatur, GA.

Decatur UCC joins these other ONA congregations in the Southeast Conference: Beloved Community, Pilgrim Church, Covenant Community Church, The United Church, United Church of Pensacola, Central Congregational, Open Table, Rush Memorial, Virginia-Highland Church, Pilgrimage, Church of the Savior, Safe Harbor Family Church, Circular Congregational, Peace Congregational Church, Garden of Grace, Pilgrim Congregational, United Church of Cookeville, Church of the Savior, Brookmeade Congregational, Holy Trinity Community Church, and Pleasant Hill Community Church.



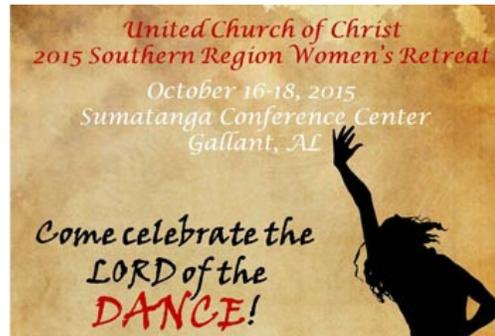
2015 Southern Region Women's Retreat

We invite you to come dance with us at this year's Southern Region Women's Retreat. This includes the United Church of Christ Conferences: Southeast, South Central, Southern and Florida.

This fun and meaningful event is taking place October 16-18 amidst the beautiful fall foliage of Sumatanga 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](#)



News from around the UCC

UCC Peace Cranes Make Their Way To Charleston

Members of Everett United Church of Christ in Everett, Wash., are sending colorful wishes of peace and solidarity from one corner of the country to another. In a continuation of the peace cranes tradition that has spread throughout the UCC, the church has sent 1,000 folded paper cranes to Circular Congregational Church UCC, located just a few blocks from Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., where nine people were killed by a gunman last month.

Read more: http://www.ucc.org/news_peace_cranes_make_way_to_charleston_07142015

UCC Announces 2015 Matching Grants For CWS Kits

UCC Disaster Ministries' CWS Kits Matching Grants are back! For the second year in a row, the United Church of Christ is offering \$250 matching grants to its congregations to assemble Church World Service Kits. Kits can be crucial to the recovery process following an international or domestic disaster.

Read more: http://www.ucc.org/disaster_2015_kits_match

2016 UCC Medical and Dental Benefits Plan Rates

For those enrolled in the UCC Medical Benefits Plan, rates are going up for the 2016 Plan Year. The Non-Medicare Plan, the Medicare Supplement Plan with Rx, and the Vision Plan will experience a rate increase of 5%. Rates for the Dental Plan will remain unchanged from 2015 levels. This rate action is significantly less than what is being experienced nationwide. Individual contribution rates will vary.

Opportunities for Continuing Education

August 18: Mental Health First Aid at Peachtree Christian Church in Atlanta, GA

- As many pastors and church leaders have experienced, untreated mental illnesses can have wide-reaching impact on any community, including churches. Mental Health First Aid, an internationally taught and recognized program, provides tools for

responding to mental illness and guiding people towards real help. [Visit the Georgia Disciples website for more details.](#)

November 3-7: Emotional Intelligence in Moravia, NY

- The Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church invites you to a training workshop in emotional intelligence by staff of the Alban Institute Upper New York. The five-day workshop is scheduled for November 3-7, 2014 at Casowasco Camp and Retreat Center in Moravia, New York. [Visit the UNY UMC website for details.](#)

November 16-20: Mediation Skills Training in Columbia, SC

- Consider attending the Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders in Columbia, SC from November 16-20. This training is open to church leaders in all areas of ministry, and is valuable for dealing with current conflict as well as learning to be proactive so that conflict can be transformative. Register now and save \$100. [Visit the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center website for details.](#)

Fall 2015: Shalom Center for Continuing Education Short Courses

The following Short Courses are available this autumn in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee:

- **Exploring Economics** - Six 90 minute sessions weekly, beginning Wednesday, September 23 at 3:30 pm. Leader, Susan Pummill
- **Music for Social Change** - Five 90 minute sessions weekly, beginning Thursday, September 15 at 4:00 pm. Facilitator, Rev. Glenna Shepherd
- **Progressive Spirituality Perspectives** - Six 90 minute sessions weekly, beginning Monday, September 21 at 6:00pm. Course Leader, Mark Canfield, Ph.D.

More details available at <http://www.shalomcenterpleasanthill.com/p/new.html>

Still Speaking Worship Event Offered Online

The Faith Formation Team of Local Church Ministries is offering an online opportunity for United Church of Christ churches to enter into a panel discussion on "Creating Sacred Space" for worship. This panel of liturgical art specialists will be discussing the importance of the worship space and offer ways to use it creatively in order to enhance worship.

The event will stream live at 11 AM (EDT) on October 27, 2015 from the Amistad Chapel at the Church House in Cleveland, Ohio at ucc.org/creating_sacred_space. This event will be recorded and posted at this link for later viewing.

Visit ucc.org/creating_sacred_space or contact Rev. Ivy Beckwith at beckwithi@ucc.org with any questions.

Widening the Welcome 2015: Inclusion for All National Conference

The 5th National UCC Widening the Welcome: Inclusion for All Conference will be September 24-26, Hartford, CT. These Conferences have been a sign of the movement in our UCC to address concerns and issues around disabilities, mental health challenges, and cognitive/developmental disabilities. Our hope is for our congregations to be inclusive of persons who are living with these life experiences.

Along with theological insights there will be practical applications and networking with others from across the country. There will be inspiration through worship, music, and storytelling. You are invited to attend and to send the information along to others. This Conference is hosted by the UCC Disabilities Ministries and the UCC Mental Health Network.



<http://www.moredomainsforless.com/wideningthewelcome/>

For Sale

Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta has a commercial carpet cleaner (new \$1700) that they no longer are using. They are willing to give the equipment to a church in the Southeast Conference. It does need about \$600 worth of repairs to recondition it. You can see the description of the unit here: <http://www.jondon.com/priority-manufacturing-samurai-100-carpet-extractor.html>. If interested, please contact Truman Moore at 770-934-2881 or tajjmoor@bellsouth.net.

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