

CONFERENCE *connection*

Alabama • Georgia • Mississippi
South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

April 1, 2016

Jottings from June

I have been thinking a lot about leadership—my own, those who labor with me in the Southeast Conference, our beloved United Church of Christ, those charged with our political systems, and those whose ideologies allow harm to come to others. I surely do not have any answers to the larger cultural, religious, and societal questions. But I can reflect on the experience of communities who have lived through their times of upheaval and uncertainty.



Part of my reflection as I journeyed through Lent, and now as we are in Eastertide, is how the small community of followers of Jesus sustained and built a ministry that was radical in its day. How does a group of people committed to significant cultural, religious, and social values define the scope and success of their endeavors? I think that is the question that faced the followers of The Way, as the disciples were often called. And I am reminded of the phrase, "make a way where there is no way." This is the title of the story of God's people and indeed of all creation.

As I enter the last year of my ministry among the people of Southeast Conference, I am working with the Board of Directors to see the way forward when leadership transition happens, yet again. The Board has appointed a small transition task force with two people from the Board and two people from the search committee that brought me into your midst. They will bring a recommendation to the May meeting of the Board on how to proceed with leadership identification so the Board can present a proposal to the delegates at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting June 10-11 at Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of this Conference, we do need to keep in mind that we need to be as adaptable as the followers of Jesus as we preach the Gospel and heal individuals and communities through our acts of love, compassion, and extravagant welcome. As you read the histories of the Conference each month, look for the place of struggle and hard decisions as well as the joy and the commitment to will of God for good in this part of the world. Even as we struggle with the realities of loss, we are reminded that the faithful continued to gather together until the Holy Spirit came with flame and the power of God's breath blowing among them, even as that life giving breath was present at the creation of the cosmos. The promise of new life, the power of the moving Spirit, and the assurance of God's love, and Jesus Christ's example

In This Issue

- [Jottings from June](#)
- [Caring Community](#)
- [Scholarship Applications](#)
- [Our History, Part 4](#)
- [National Youth Event](#)
- [Condolences](#)
- [A Word to the Church](#)
- [Your Vote, Your Voice](#)
- [April's Earth Day Emphasis](#)
- [Ministry of UCBMA](#)
- [Sharia Seminar in Columbia, SC](#)
- [Empowerment Spring Leadership](#)
- [Healthy Boundaries Training](#)
- ["Live & Learn" Lunches](#)
- [Coming Events](#)
- [Conference Staff](#)
- [Connect with Us](#)

Coming Events

Commission on Ministry Meeting
Sat, April 2, 2016
Chattanooga, TN

SEC Staff Meeting
Thu, April 7, 2016
Conference Office

Katie O'Dunne Ordination
Sat, April 9, 2016
College Park, GA

Executive Committee
Tue, April 19, 2016
Web Meeting

Conference Staff

give us hope and courage to face tomorrow and the next day and the next day. Blessed be as you confront all the intricacies of your own journeys.

From the Conference Office



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2016. 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 entire 2016 prayer list](#)

Highlights:

- Condolences to the family of **Jack Yates** who died March 23, 2016. He would have turned 90 on March 27th. He celebrated the 66th anniversary of his ordination in June 2015. We keep Bettye and their two daughters in prayer. Services will be held April 19 at Pleasant Hill Community Church. Details are pending.
- Prayers for the family of **Michael McCaulley** and for Peace Church, Clemson South Carolina. His memorial service was held on March 23, 2016.
- Prayers for **Rev. Bob Hurst**, United Church of Huntsville who had knee replacement surgery March 28.
- Prayers for **Rev. Laurie Hill** as she recovers from surgery. She is serving Fairfield Glade Community Church in Tennessee.

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Beloved Community, Birmingham Alabama; First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee.

Theological Education Scholarship Applications Due May 15

The Southeast Conference administers scholarships through its Scholarship Committee. These funds are made available from the Southeast Theological Scholarship account and provide assistance to those studying to prepare themselves for authorized ministry within the United Church of Christ. Scholarships are awarded to Members in Discernment enrolled in appropriate programs in preparation for ministry. [Read more...](#)

Our History, Part 4: The American Missionary Association

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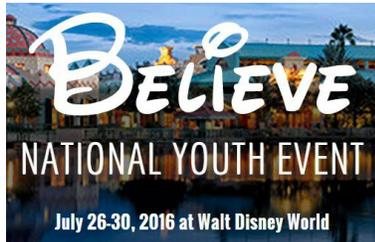
Connect with Us!



Of all the 15 traditions discernibly distinct to be found in the Southeast Conference of the UCC, none may be beloved more by its adherents than the African-American Congregational churches founded by, or else related to, the American Missionary Association. The story of the Conference would be grossly incomplete without reference to their witness in word and deed to their communities, a witness that entails salvation and uplift alike. [Read more...](#)

National Youth Event is July 26-30 at Disney

Mark your calendar to attend the most magical National Youth Event (NYE) of all! From July 26-30 join 4,000 UCC and Disciples youth from across the country and world at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort. [Read more...](#)



News from Around the Conference and Beyond

Condolences

We are deeply grieved to pass on the news that **Michael McCaulley** died on March 15, 2016 while under treatment at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. We hold his family and Peace Church in loving prayer during this time of mourning. The service will be Wed. March 23 at 4 pm at Pendleton United Methodist Church. Instead of flowers, gifts may be made to the Cancer Association of Anderson or Peace Church. You may view his obituary and send condolences at <http://www.integrityfuneral.com/book-of-memories/2431908/McCaulley-Michael/obituary.php>

We also hold **Rev. Dr. Edward Davis**, Conference Minister of the Southern Conference, and his family in prayer. During the Council of Conference Minister's gathering in Cleveland this past week, he received news of the untimely death on March 16, 2016 of his son Andrew Davis. Andrew served the United Church of Christ as a mission intern and he shot some of the film in the Kongo initiative. Condolences can be sent to the Southern Conference Office, 252B West Fifth Street, Burlington, NC 27215.

UCC and Episcopal Leaders Joint Statement on Current U.S. Political Climate

On March 16, June Boutwell joined the 38 UCC Conference Ministers and, together, joined our counterparts in the Episcopal Church (the House of Bishops) by unanimously signing on to a statement released March 15, 2016. The leaders of our two denominations felt the need to respond to the unprecedented political climate in our country as the presidential primary season continues. [Read more...](#)

Your vote is your voice - don't give it up!

These are difficult and challenging times for our local communities, our country, and the world. Divisive and heated rhetoric dominate the public dialogue, and the power of money is shutting out the voice of the average voter. More and more people are withdrawing from engagement in the political process out of a growing sense of cynicism and mistrust.

Now, more than ever, your voice and your efforts are needed. As people of faith, we can play a unique role in this election cycle by encouraging civil, respectful dialogue that builds community and offers a hope-filled vision of the future for all people.

Join the Our Faith, Our Vote campaign and find out how your congregation can participate in the electoral process through faithful, nonpartisan engagement. Check out our resources and sign up for helpful webinars and opportunities to make a difference in this election season. [Read more...](#)

Keep It in the Ground: Preach It, Teach It, Do It

On Sunday, April 24th, UCC preachers around the country will proclaim from their pulpits a simple message: Keep It in the Ground. No, they are not digging up old, arcane arguments about bodily resurrection. They are talking about fossil fuels. [Read more...](#)

Celebrating New Life & the Ministry of UCBMA

For more than a century the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance has been a ministry of the Pension Boards to those who serve the church. This Eastertide we give thanks for the good news of those caring ministries. In all, about \$3 million was disbursed as direct support and \$650,000 in programs that support those who serve the church. Those funds come from the annual Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund, Our Church's Wider Mission, and legacy gifts. To make a gift or to learn more about the ministry of UCBMA, visit www.pbucc.org and click on Ministerial Assistance tab.

Conferences and Learning Opportunities

Sharia - Is it Really a Threat?

The Peace and Integration Council of North America and the University of South Carolina are joining hands to present an event on the hot subject of "Sharia" at the USC campus on April 12. "This is a great opportunity for our non-Muslim friends, to learn, first hand, what Sharia really is" said Chaudhry Sadiq, PICNA President, adding " And they can ask the toughest questions from the renowned speaker on the much talked about subject." The lecture will be followed by a catered reception and an opportunity to interact with the speaker as well as Muslim participants. [Read more...](#)

Empowerment Spring Leadership Training

Atlantans Building Leadership for Empowerment (ABLE) is hosting their Empowerment Spring Leadership training class on April 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Oakhurst Baptist Church, 222 East Lake Drive in Decatur. This is open to both new and advanced participants. Lunch will be provided. [Read more...](#)

Healthy Boundaries for Clergy and Church Leaders

The Southeast Conference, in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia, are pleased to offer two Healthy Boundaries training sessions for clergy and church leaders. The first is April 23 in Atlanta. [Read more...](#)

"Live & Learn" Lunches @ TACC

Every third Tuesday of the Month from 11:30 to 1:00 join TACC staff and community experts for lunch, and to learn more about how to explore life's difficult conversations and challenging situations. April 19: Spirituality in All of Life's Stages. The Continuum of Spirituality in All of Life's Phases and Stages. [Read more...](#)