

CONFERENCE *connection*

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



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

September 1, 2016

From the Conference Office

Jottings from June

I am mindful as I compose this message of the approaching 15th anniversary of September 11, 2001. Most of us will recall where we were when we heard the news of the horror and destruction that befell so many on that day, similar to an earlier generation who recall where they were when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. These are societal and cultural markers that define an era and the characteristics of future generations.



Change is a constant in our lives and that change is often brought about by some traumatic event. We are a nation that is increasingly diagnosed and suffering from the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. Medical professionals and therapists and scientists are understanding more about life events that dispose us toward this kind of stress reaction. And our churches are not immune to this.

One of the conversations I seem to be having repeatedly in the past few weeks is about patterns of behavior in congregations. I share a story about a youth retreat model I developed that asked the young people to study the scripture about the house built on the sand and on the rock. (Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49). Then we did a review of earth sciences and about the three kinds of rocks and how they are formed (igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary). Then I asked the young people to reflect on and share what kind of foundation that their local church was built upon. Almost universally, these young people were able to identify that there had been times of great upheaval or change in their history that shaped that foundation. Adults were generally surprised as the events had often happened years before, certainly before the active participation of these young people in the life of the church.

What I pointed out to those adults, and now point out to churches who are in search of a new pastor or experiencing some kind of change or upheaval in their life together, is that we learn patterns of engagement, behavior, and relationship that emerge from our response to that metamorphic or fiery event. And we continue to practice those patterns long after the event is past or the situation resolved. It is unconscious and we pass that along to following generations and those new to our communities of faith as normative behavior. And that goes for those sedimentary

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Coming Events

**Office Closed for
Labor Day Holiday**
Mon, Sept 5, 2016

**Board of Directors
Retreat**
Sep 9 & 10, 2016

SEC Staff Meeting
Thu, Sep 15, 2016
Conference Office

churches also where nothing much changes as their stories and history get laid down day to day.

The key here, in this time of change and upheaval and uncertainty, is to be aware of our response to what is going on and to reflect on how appropriate that response is to the situation at hand. Perhaps we need to learn or recall other ways of engaging one another and responding to the environment around us. And that does require checking in with others who are a part of that same house and those patterns of community and personal engagement.

I pray you will consider my words and commend to you the epistle text from this past Sunday's lectionary. *Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* (Hebrews 13:7-8)



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 **Roy Siewert** who lived in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. He died August 20, 2016 at the age of 86. He is survived by his wife Evelyn and four children.
- Condolences to the family of **Rajer Finklin**. She died August 21, 2016 at the age of 39. She was the treasurer of Rush Memorial Congregational Church in Atlanta. A funeral was held August 27, 2016 at Virginia Highland Church.
- Congratulations to **Heather Bardole, Josh Kuipers,** and **Jodi Yarini** who were approved for ordination pending call in an Ecclesiastical Council held at Virginia Highland Church on August 27, 2016. (See *related article*)
- **Rev. Lacey Brown** will be installed as associate pastor of Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta on September 11, 2016.

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.

**Capital Campaign
Grants Open**
September 19, 2016

**Retired Servants
Retreat**
October 3 - 5, 2016
*Blowing Rock Conference
Center in North Carolina*

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Connect with Us!



PATHWAYS introduces Explorer Series Courses

In the coming months, PATHWAYS is offering three Explorer Series Courses that are designed to provide a short term, low commitment online learning experience to inspire and enlighten those who love to learn. These courses will also acquaint inquirers with the PATHWAYS Theological Education program and introduce them to progressive Christian theology and praxis closely related to the best practices of the United Church of Christ. The asynchronous online learning platform enables participants to study, learn, and interact with peer learners on their own pace each week. If you enjoy engaging in theological reflection and in group discussions, you are invited to partake in this special learning opportunity. All are welcome on first come, first served basis. Space is limited. Tuition is \$99 per course. Contact the PATHWAYS administrator at pathways@secucc.org at your earliest convenience to enroll. [Learn More.](#)



Ecclesiastical Council Approves Three Candidates for Ordination

The Southeast Conference Commission on Ministry held an Ecclesiastical Council on August 27, 2016 at Virginia Highland Church for Heather Bardole, Josh Kuipers, and Jodi Yarini. Heather is a member at Kirkwood UCC and was presented by Kathy Carter. Josh is also a member at Kirkwood UCC and was presented by Jess Chancey. Jodi is a member of Decatur UCC where she is serving as licensed pastor and was presented by Ruth Gabriel. Each candidate gave a brief statement and then answered questions from those gathered. When all had addressed the group, those assembled affirmed by consensus to approve each of them for ordination pending call. [View photos on our website.](#)

Board of Directors to Meet in Retreat

The Southeast Conference Board of Directors will meet on September 9 & 10 for their annual leadership development retreat and organizing meeting after elections at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting in June. Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Birmingham and Rev. Paul Eknes-Tucker will be hosting the meeting. [View the Board members.](#)

Errand in the Wilderness: Congregationalism in Appalachia

Errand in the Wilderness: Congregationalism in Appalachia
Appalachia is an overlooked region of the United States, put bluntly. No one considers it even remotely glamorous, with its multitude of social and economic problems deriving from isolation and resource exploitation. It has been compared to the overseas "third world" countless times as a result, and is further impenetrable to outsiders due to the persistence of traditional folkways and customs. [Read the entire article.](#)

"Just Peace Sunday" is September 18

The 30th General Synod called on UCC churches to renew our witness as a Just Peace Church and annually designate a "Just Peace Sunday." On September 18th, churches will lament the tragic events of Orlando and give witness to our identity as a Just Peace Church, reflecting on the intersections between peace and justice using the question posed in Jeremiah 8:22 "Is there no balm in Gilead?" [Learn more about Just Peace Sunday and start planning ways for your congregation to engage!](#)



UCC invites churches to lead by "Building Bridges" with Muslim neighbors

In light of recent events including the back-and-forth between the Khan family and the Donald Trump campaign, the UCC Communications Team wants to make folks aware of an interfaith initiative of inclusivity we launched last month and invite you to participate. The Building Bridges initiative invites all people across the wider church build relationships between Christians and Muslims in local communities around the country. [Learn more.](#)

Training and Retreat Opportunities

6th Annual Retired Servants Conference/ Retreat is Oct 3-5

You are invited to attend the Sixth Annual Retired UCC Servants Conference/Retreat that will be held Monday dinner through Wednesday morning on October 3-5, 2016. This event is being planned for Retired UCC Servants of the Southeast and Southern Conferences of the UCC. It is being held at Blowing Rock Conference Center in Blowing Rock, NC amid the beauty of fall coming to the NC mountains!

[Click here to view all the information on our website.](#)



African American Women in Ministry Conference

is Oct 13-15

Registration is now open for African American Women in Ministry Conference to be held at Franklinton Center in North Carolina October 13-15. Apply as early as possible if you need scholarship assistance. Rev. Charmaine Penn Johnson serving Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta is one of the co-chairs of the conference. Come: let us find hope For Such a Time as This.

[Learn more.](#)

Sister Helen Prejean in Pleasant Hill, TN

Pleasant Hill Community Church, UCC; The Shalom Center for Continuing Education in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee and Center Stage at TN Tech University in Cookeville, are presenting two programs featuring Sr. Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and *Death of the Innocents*. On Sunday, September 11, she will be in Pleasant Hill, preaching at the 10:45 am worship service of the Church. The Shalom Center will sponsor her talk, "Dead Man Walking - The Journey Continues" Sunday at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary of the Church.

[Learn more.](#)

Worship Planning Retreat for Pastors and Worship Teams with Marcia McFee

Join nationally recognized worship designer Marcia McFee, Ph.D. in Clayton, Georgia for a week that rejuvenate your passion for your work of worship ministry, give you a major jump-start on planning for the year, and help train others to help with the task of carrying out worship plans. In each session, Marcia offers the creative pre-work she has done with the history and theological significance of each season as well as an exploration of Revised Common Lectionary, Narrative Lectionary and non-lectionary themes. Then after steeping you in musical, verbal and visual resources, she sets you to working together with your team on the season. [Learn more.](#)

Upcoming Events at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta

The Candler School of Theology of Emory University has a full slate of free seminars, lecture series, exhibits, and conferences in Atlanta. Topics include "Faith & Politics in the 21st Century," the Annual Women's Forum featuring Sara Miles, "Preaching Anti-Racism Amid the Backlash and Resistance of White Moral Injury?", "Inclusive Leadership in Refugee Resettlement" and much more. [Learn more.](#)

Online Doctor of Ministry Program at Lexington Theological Seminary

Applications for the 2016 Doctor of Ministry cohort at Lexington Theological Seminary are being accepted through Sept. 15. This program is designed to enhance pastors' capacity to critically interpret and engage contemporary cultures as a means to give fresh expression to the gospel and to transform congregations for effective ministry in the twenty-first century. Since 1865, Lexington Theological Seminary has been committed to ecumenical education and is the oldest seminary in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Contact Bill Turner at bturner@lextheo.edu or 859-280-1253 with questions, or visit lextheo.edu/dmin/.

Training and Counseling Center at St. Lukes

There will be no TACC Live and Learn Lunch in September but please consider these offerings for the later fall.

<http://www.trainingandcounselingcenter.org/#!/live--learn-lunches/c10sm>

Job Opportunities

Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta is seeking a **Director of Children's Ministry**- Support Staff for 12-15 hours per week. Hourly wage to be negotiated. For details, contact Rev. Lacey Brown, Associate Minister. lacey@central-ucc.org

Covenant Community Church in Birmingham is seeking a **Part-Time Music Director**. Contact Joe Griffin, church administrative assistant, at 205-599-3363 for more information.