

CONFERENCE *connection*

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



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

September 15, 2016

From the Conference Office

"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.](#)



Neighbors In Need

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. The 2016 theme for NIN is "This we believe" and connects the issue of child hunger to the work that UCC congregations are doing to serve their community and address this injustice. Most UCC congregations will receive the NIN offering on October 2, 2016 as part of their World Communion Sunday observance. [Read more.](#)

Fall 2016 Conference Grants Open on Sep 19

September 19 marks the start of the next application cycle for "Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives" Conference grants. During this time congregations may apply in 3 different ways:

1. Online at secucc.org/giving/capital-campaign-grant-application/
2. Mailing a paper application to the Southeast Conference office
3. Emailing an electronic application to dspearman@secucc.org

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Coming Events

Capital Campaign Grants Open
September 19, 2016

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

African American Women in Ministry Conference
October 13 - 15, 2016
Franklinton Center at Bricks

SEC Staff Meeting
October 15, 2016
Conference Office

Moderator's Message

by J R Finney II, Board Moderator

No matter how much we hear it, "change" is usually not a welcome word for a person, a church or a conference. Yet, change is the one constant in life. In a recent meeting in Orlando with other UCC Board Moderators and Conference Ministers, I listened to the challenges and opportunities that were the topic of all our discussions. The conversations centered on changes needed to ensure the ministry and mission of the UCC and its conferences to not just survive but thrive.



We know that financial resources are and will continue to be a challenge, but perhaps the greatest resources available to us to accomplish the ministry and mission is not being tapped effectively and fully. We need a renewed outreach to enlist volunteers within our congregations for conference work. There are many areas of ministry in the Southeast Conference not active or effective not because of a lack of finances but a lack of volunteers. The change and challenge we face in this SEC must include effectively tapping into our volunteer base.

In speaking of those who gave generously to the ministry and mission of others, Apostle Paul says, in II. Cor. 8:5 "They exceeded our expectations, because they gave themselves to the Lord first and to us, consistent with God's will." As our conference face the challenges of the future, we need much more volunteerism from with our churches in the conference to help others know that "God is still speaking."



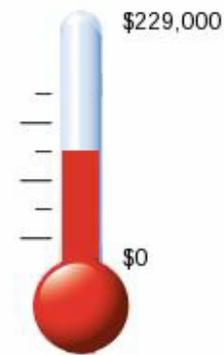
We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2016. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the entire 2016 prayer list](#)

Highlights:

- Prayers for the family of **Cindy Crocker** on the death of her brother. Cindy is the chair of the Southeast Conference Stewardship and Finance Committee and a member at Safe Harbor Community Church in Flowood, Mississippi.
- For the newly elected **Southeast Conference Board of Directors** who met in retreat September 9-10 at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Birmingham.
- **Rev. Lacey Brown** and Central Congregational Church where she was installed as Associate Pastor on September 11, 2016.
- **Minister Carrole Moss** of Victory for the World Church in Stone Mountain, Georgia and member of the Southeast

OCWM Giving to Date



To Date: \$102,971

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Conference Committee on Ministry as she recovers from surgery.

- **Rev. Bob Hurst** has announced his retirement from United Church of Huntsville as of January 1, 2017. We keep Bob and Beth in prayer as they prepare for this transition and for the congregation as they celebrate and acknowledge this ministry relationship even as they begin the process to seek a new pastor.

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.

PATHWAYS

A Season of Harvest

By Rev. Sarah Kim, Th.D.

PATHWAYS is proud to announce the Ordination Service of Pastor Heidi Yvonne Hulme that took place on September 4th, 2016 at the Faith United Church of Christ in Daveport, Iowa. She has been a dedicated learner participant in the PATHWAYS program for four years (Jan'12 ~ Sept'15) and she is named the first PATHWAYS graduate to be ordained in the local UCC congregation. [Read more on our website.](#)

Around the Conference

Board of Directors Meet in Retreat

The Southeast Conference Board of Directors met September 9-10, 2016 at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Birmingham Alabama. Rev. June Boutwell, Designated Conference Minister led the board members in a leadership development and orientation session on Friday, September 9 and the Board met for their initial meeting on September 10.

Among the business the Board of Directors considered was the appointment of an interim search committee and approval to move to a virtual office by the end of 2016. This means the Conference Minister will have a home office and the Conference mailing address will move to a post office box.

[For all the details and photos visit our website.](#)

Clemson UCC Pastor Travels to Ghana for Mission Trip

When Bruce Schoup accepted the call to Peace Church UCC in Clemson as their designated pastor, it was with the understanding that he and the congregation would be developing a ministry plan where he would be spending approximately one month every year in mission. The beginning of August saw him on a plane back to Ghana for "discernment." [Read all about the trip on our website.](#)

Events

Upper Room UCC Fellowship Gathers in Nashville

on Saturday, Oct 22

The Upper Room is an association of United Church of Christ laypersons and UCC friends promoting prayer and daily meditation on God's Word and the greater unity, fellowship and spiritual vitality of the Nashville-area United Church of Christ & UCC friends. The theme for the evening is "But for Me it is Good to Be Near God" (Psalm 73:28a) and our guest speaker will be Rev. June Boutwell, Designated Conference Minister.

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.](#)

Committee Announces Winter Youth Retreat

When: **January 13-16, 2017**

Theme: **What is your purpose?**

Speaker: **Rev. Scott Hardin-Nieri** from Asheville, NC

We will welcome back Mandee and Christi from Alatheia, and are shaking up the break-out sessions by asking students from Wake Forest Divinity School to create and facilitate them. Last, we will offer a few new service opportunities.

[Download the Retreat Flyer](#)

[Download the Retreat Registration Form](#)

Learning Opportunities

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.](#)

Educational Resource on White Privilege

'White Privilege: Let's Talk' is an adult education curriculum designed to invite members to engage in safe, meaningful, substantive and bold conversations on race, is written by five authors from different perspectives and walks of life. The resource became available on September 1, 2016.

[Learn More on the UCC website.](#)

Our Faith, Our Vote

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. [Learn more.](#)