

CONFERENCE *connection*

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



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

January 1, 2017

From the Conference Office

Fiscal Year-End Close and OCWM Report

2016 Year End Financial Close is January 10, 2017. Please ensure that your contributions and remittances are RECEIVED by that date at our NEW ADDRESS: Post Office Box 1950, Decatur, GA 30031.

We are pleased to announce that your contributions have exceeded the amount budgeted for 2016 for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). The generosity and support of the congregations and individuals in the Southeast Conference are one of the strengths of this ministry. Please return the pledge form you received earlier so that the Stewardship and Finance Committee can plan more appropriately for 2017.

Conference Office Changes for the New Year

Remember that we have moved to a virtual office.

Our new mailing address is:

- Southeast Conference United Church of Christ
- Post Office Box 1950
- Decatur, GA 30031

Phone Numbers

- Conference Office: 404-719-6572
- Conference Minister 404-615-2492

Interim Conference Minister Update

The Southeast Conference Interim Conference Minister Search Committee has recommended a candidate. The Board of Directors met in special meeting on Tuesday, December 27 to consider the recommendation and approved the call agreement. More details will be shared in the next couple of weeks.

June's Jottings: Hope and Relevation

by June Boutwell, Designated Conference Minister

I have been thinking about the song "Auld Lang Syne" partly as the old year passes, partly in recognition of my father's Scots heritage, and partly as I begin the process of saying farewell to

In This Issue

[Fiscal Year-End Close](#)

[Conference Office Changes](#)

[Interim Conference Minister Update](#)

[June's Jottings](#)

[Caring Community and Conference Connections](#)

[Winter Youth Retreat](#)

[UCC Partners in Service](#)

[Health and Human Service Sunday](#)

[ONA Church #1400](#)

[Environmentally Conscious Congregations](#)

[Renewal Retreat for MIDs](#)

["Our Whole Lives" Curriculum Training](#)

[Ministry Education Scholarships](#)

[Live & Learn @ TACC](#)

[Worship Coordinator](#)

Coming Events

Conference Moves to a Virtual Office

January 1, 2017

SEC Staff Meeting

Thu, Jan 5, 2017

Conference Office

Financial Close for 2016

Tue, Jan 10, 2017

East AL/West GA Association Meeting

Sat, Jan 14, 2017

Board of Directors Meeting

Tue, Jan 17, 2017

the Southeast Conference. I want to assure you that old acquaintance will not be forgot as I move to the next ministry to which God calls me. I will carry each place and each person in my heart and will carry your stories-both hopeful and revealing-to the next place I will go.



I will continue to hold the Southeast Conference and its diverse ministries and settings in prayer as you move into the interim period. When I was called as the Conference Minister for a designated three year term, it was with the understanding that my role would be to work with the Board of Directors to take a deep look at the organizational structure, administrative functions, and ministries of the Southeast Conference. We did not know at that time what that deep look might reveal to us.

My work here has been to ensure the organization was in compliance with its own by-laws, to ensure appropriate fiscal responsibility and accountability by the Board and staff, to foster and strengthen relationships with the Conference Office, to connect various ministries to each other and the wider church, and to help the standing committees of the Board operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. That has resulted in the segregation of all restricted and donor designated funds; restoring the Board to its mandated membership requirements; assisting 18 churches in their search for pastoral leadership; the celebration of the 50th anniversary of this Conference; completion of a two year restructure of the Commission on Ministry; and a balanced budget for 2017, among other things.

None of this could have been accomplished without the capable leadership and creative energy of those who have served during my tenure. Moderators Jim Crabb, Jennifer Austin, Gwen Thomas, and JR Finney; Commission on Ministry Chairs Lawrence Clark and Valerie Coe Lowder; all the members of the Board of Directors; and all those who have told stories, provided sound counsel, and been there in informative and supportive ways. I have much to be grateful for as I prepare to resume my wanderings in ministry. Please know how profoundly grateful I am to have had the privilege to serve you all and the blessing of getting to know you and this remarkable setting of ministry.

As you enter a time of interim ministry and begin the work of discerning God's vision for the ministry of this Conference and doing the strategic planning necessary to build that road, I will be with you in Spirit. I leave you with the theme of the National Youth Event this past summer from Hebrews 11:1-3 (CEV) Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see. It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God. Because of our faith, we know that the world was made at God's command. We also know that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.

As we all enter a new year and a new season of ministry, may you find hope in God's eternal presence and the eyes to see what is revealed for your mission and ministry-personally, in your local church, in the Southeast Conference, in the United Church of Christ, and even unto the ends of the earth. Blessed Be.

Online Web Meeting

**Commission on
Ministry Meeting**
Sat, Jan 21, 2017
Online Web Meeting

OCWM Giving



Our Church's Wider Mission provides for programs, resources, and tools to keep our churches strong, effective, and growing. Thanks to you, we met our 2016 goal, but you can still give.

[Donate Online Today](#)

Conference Staff

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Connect with Us!



Prayer List

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

Week of January 1

- Beloved Community Church-Birmingham, Alabama
- Jane Acuff
- Ginnie Ferrell
- Samantha Snellgrove
- Kate Stulce

Week of January 8

- Bethany Congregational UCC-Thomasville, Georgia
- Donna Farrar
- Leo Maley
- Dale Marshall
- Kim Sorrells

Prayer Requests

- Prayers for **Bob and Beth Hurst** as Bob retires from United Church of Huntsville on January 1, 2017 immediately after worship.
- Prayers for traveling mercies and a safe event as the **Winter Youth Retreat** gathers at Blowing Rock Conference Center in North Carolina over Martin Luther King Weekend, January 13-16, 2017.
- Prayers for those gathering for the **Member in Discernment/Persons in Exploration Retreat** January 13-14 at Pleasant Hill, Tennessee, and gratitude for the leadership and hospitality of the Pleasant Hill Community Church in hosting this gathering.
- Remembering the quote attributed to **Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice," may we be mindful of those actions we can take in this new year to provide extravagant welcome, continuing testimony, and change lives through our faithful discipleship.

Conference Transitions

- The Southeast Conference **Interim Conference Minister Search Committee** has recommended a candidate. More details will be shared in the next couple of weeks.
- **Robert Hurst**, pastor of United Church of Huntsville (Alabama) will celebrate his last service there on January 1, 2017 as he moves to retirement.
- **Jody Yarini** will be ordained on January 15, 2017 at 3:00 pm at Virginia Highland Church. Prayers for Decatur UCC and their leadership as they confirm this relationship.
- **Joshua Kuipers** will be ordained on January 15, 2017

at Kirkwood UCC at 5:00 pm during their regular worship service.

- **Sam Greening** has been called to serve as interim at United Church of Huntsville. He will begin his ministry on February 1, 2017. He comes to Huntsville from La Jolla UCC in La Jolla, California.

Churches in Transition

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville Tennessee; United Church, Huntsville, Tennessee.

News from Around the Conference

Winter Youth Retreat, January 13-16, 2017

Forty-seven people from Southeast Conference will be attending the Winter Youth Retreat hosted by the Southern and Southeast Conferences at Blowing Rock Conference Center in Blowing Rock, North Carolina.

Southeast Conference has groups going from First Congregational, Atlanta; Central UCC, Atlanta; Church of the Savior, Knoxville; and Circular Church, Charleston along with Rev. Lacey Brown who represents the Southeast Conference on the Planning Committee. They are among the 165 youth and leaders registered from 17 congregations in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Mary and Bill Ruth Commissioned as UCC Partners in Service

Pleasant Hill Community Church 'commissioned' UCC Partners in Service volunteers, Mary and Bill Ruth, as they prepare to serve three months in Louisville, Kentucky at USPIRITUS where they will help with restoring hope, instilling confidence, furthering education, encouraging spirituality and faith through a comprehensive continuum of care for vulnerable youth and families. [Read more on our website.](#)

News from the United Church of Christ

Health and Human Service Sunday

Health and Human Service Sunday will be observed on Sunday, January 29, 2017 in many UCC congregations. This is a day to celebrate the UCC's long, faithful heritage of advocating justice and extending care and compassion in Christ's name - within our congregations and among many UCC-related ministries across the nation. [Learn more about this ministry and the impact in the Southeast Conference.](#)

UCC Open and Affirming Coalition certifies ONA church #1400!

It was only a short time ago, when the Coalition celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2012, that they welcomed ONA church #1000. It took us 27 years, beginning with General Synod's ONA resolution in 1985, to reach that number -- an average of 37 ONA churches a year.

On December 29 they certified ONA church #1400: the Congregational United Church of Christ in Punta Gorda, FL. In the past four years they have certified 400 new ONA congregations: an annual growth rate of exactly 100! Our UCC movement is not only the largest, but the fastest-growing network of LGBTQ-affirming churches in the world! Learn more: <https://openandaffirming.org/>.

Is Your Congregation Environmentally Conscious?

Are you switching to geothermal? Are you changing lighting systems to LED? Are you using solar power? UCC is growing a network of environmentally active churches and individuals by constructing a database of info. This will assist in uniting efforts, identifying achievements, applying for grants, and encouraging environmental responsibility. [Learn more on our website.](#)

Training, Learning and Retreat Opportunities

Renewal Retreat for Members in Discernment and Persons in Exploration

On January 13-14, 2017 in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee the Commission on Ministry will host the annual renewal retreat for members in discernment and persons in exploration. This retreat was planned by the Member in Discernment Team led by Rev. Glenna Shepherd. The retreat time will focus on Creating Meaningful and Memorable Worship Experiences. Thanks to a continuing education grant from the UCC Brown Endowment, participants will have the opportunity to spend time with one of today's leading teachers in the area of worship, Dr. Marcia McFee. [Learn more.](#)

"Our Whole Lives" Curriculum Training

You're invited to Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Facilitator Training at Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta.

- When: February 3-5
- Trainers: June Grubb and Erica Hazra
- Contact Rev. Lacey Brown for registration materials and details: lacey@central-ucc.org
- Cost: \$225/person, you must purchase curriculum and bring it with you to the training.

Learn more about OWL [on the UCC website.](#)

Ministry Education Scholarships Available

2017 Ministry Education Scholarships are available to those Members in Discernment who are preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. Members in Discernment may apply for the Brown Endowment Scholarship and ONE other UCC Ministry Education Scholarship per year. [Learn more on our website.](#)

Save the Date: Conferences in 2017

Southern Region Women's Conference

Make plans now to join others from around our region at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas from October 20-22, 2017. We will be

hosted by the women of the South Central Conference.

UCC Musicians Conference

Their National Biennial Conference will be held July 9-12, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme is Empowering Musicians, Transforming Communities. [Learn more.](#)

Retired Servants' Retreat

Held at the beautiful Blowing Rock Conference Center, this retreat is for Southern and Southeast Conferences combined. It will be held Oct 2-4, 2017. Planning Leader for the 2017 event is George Bennett from Southeast Conference. His email is lajoyaredpoint@gmail.com.

Live & Learn @ TACC

January 17, 2017 on Ethics with a Heart from 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM. Please reserve your attendance and lunch by contacting us at (404) 876-6266 or info@trainingandcounselingcenter.org.

"Ethics With A Heart" will focus on self-care and why it can be so challenging. Anne Burton will provide insight into assessing the signs of burnout, joys and hardships, and discovering our points of deprivation. Participants will obtain a self-care tool list and learn the "No Rule Rules."

Please join Counseling @ TACC and community experts for lunch, and to learn more about how to explore life's difficult conversations and challenging situations. All are welcome! Suggested Donation: \$5 for attendance, \$15 for attendance and lunch. For more information about Live & Learn @ TACC, please visit their [website](#).

Employment Opportunities

Worship Coordinator at Holy Trinity Nashville

Holy Trinity Community Church in Nashville is seeking to fill a part-time (approximately 20 hours) Worship Coordinator position. They are looking for a qualified individual with musical education/experience, leadership skills and a passion for worship. Required Education & Experience: Minimum of a bachelor's degree in music or 5 years related experience. Prefer Experience in leading congregational worship, building & leading worship teams (vocalists & instrumentalists), building & directing worship choirs, arranging music for vocals & band, accompanying vocals and congregational worship, and singing solos and harmonies. If interested, please submit your resume to tcccareers@gmail.com.