

# CONFERENCE *connection*

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

## SOUTHEAST UCC Conference



March 18, 2017

### From the Conference Office

#### Conference Minister Transition Celebration

Saturday, March 4, 2017 was a wonderful day of celebration in the Southeast Conference of the UCC as we gathered at First Congregational in Atlanta to thank Rev. June Boutwell for her three years of dedicated service to the Conference as our Designated Conference Minister. We also welcomed Marie Bacchiocchi as our new Interim Conference Minister. [Read more and view photos on our website.](#)



### From the Moderator

by JR Finney, Conference Moderator

*Serve the Lord with gladness;  
Come before His presence with  
singing.*  
Psalms 100:2 (NKJV)

Most newer biblical translations change the word "serve" in the above verse to "worship." I like them both, and both words have something important to speak to us about our relationship with God, even though I grew up memorizing this verse as "serve the Lord with gladness." With the recent change of leadership from Rev. June Boutwell as our Designated Conference Minister to Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi as our New Interim Conference Minister, I think the term "serve the Lord with gladness" is more



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### Coming Events

#### Ordination of Edward Colf

Saturday, March 18  
1:00-2:30 pm  
*The United Church of  
Huntsville, Alabama*

#### Commission on Ministry

Saturday, March 25  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
*Pilgrim UCC  
Chattanooga, TN*

#### SECUCC Staff Meeting

Monday, April 3  
10:00 am  
*Atlanta, GA*

### OCWM Giving

appropriate.

The Board of the Southeast Conference is in the process preparing the budget, revising the bylaws, preparing the slate of nominations, as well as planning our Annual Meeting. These things and so many more are vital to accomplishing the work and ministry of the Southeast Conference. However, it takes more than a Conference Minister, a Conference Board, one part-time administrator/registrar, and 5 very part time contract staff to complete with excellence the vital work and volume of ministry before us. It also requires the efforts of many of you from our local churches to step up and "*serve the Lord with gladness.*"

June did a tremendous job helping to sort through the tremendous financial and administrative challenges the Conference faced to poise us to be more effective and efficient going forward.

With joy, we welcome Rev. Marie! We are looking to her to shepherding us as we discern together our God-shaped vision of ministry for the Southeast Conference. In addition, we look to her to lead us into that vision to which God has in store for us. This cannot be a one-person endeavor. To be successful, it will take the efforts of the whole conference: supporting the vision, volunteering our time, talents, and treasures, doing the ministry to which God is calling us.

As the Board Chair and Conference Moderator, I appeal to you brothers and sisters to step up to the plate and "*Serve the Lord with gladness; ...*" You can begin by praying during the season of Lent. Identify one area of ministry within the conference which drives your passions, then be in prayer as to how you are willing and able to offer your help and support to that ministry. If we all "*serve the Lord with gladness,*" what a wonderful celebration it will be when we worship and "*come before God's presence (together) with singing*" at the Annual Conference and throughout the year.

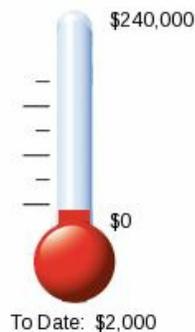
## From the Designated Conference Minister

by June Boutwell, Designated Conference Minister

My deepest thanks for allowing me to be a partner in ministry in the Southeast Conference for the last three years. I said at the Transition Celebration that I will carry a heartfelt of stories with me as I go. I am deeply grateful for those who stepped up to serve in leadership in the Southeast Conference during my tenure and helped build a solid foundation for ministry during the interim and as you live into God's dream for you as beloved community. I commend you to Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi as she begins her ministry among you and commend her to you as a gifted and engaged leader. My prayers will remain with you.



Thank you for all the cards and gifts and fond farewells over the last few weeks. They mean so much. I am headed out to be with family for a few weeks. I will begin a local church interim at Zion's Reformed Church in Greenville, Pennsylvania right after Easter Sunday. I will not be engaged in following any part of the ministry of the Southeast Conference but would be pleased to hear about your lives and catch up. I can be contacted at [revjune@gmail.com](mailto:revjune@gmail.com).



Our Church's Wider Mission provides for programs, resources, and tools to keep our churches strong, effective, and growing. Our goal for 2017 is \$240,000.

**Donate today!**

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**Connect with Us!**



A pastor in the Southeast Conference shared this Shirley MacLaine quote and reflection with me a few weeks ago and I share it with you.

*The pain of leaving those you grow to love is only the prelude to understanding yourself and others. Shirley MacLaine*

*Life is a process of letting go, letting go of conditions we can't control, letting go of people-watching them move out of our lives, letting go of times, places, experiences. Leaving behind anyone or anyplace we have loved may sadden us, but it also provides us opportunities for growth we hadn't imagined. These experiences push us beyond our former selves to deeper understanding of ourselves and of others.*

*So often those experiences that sadden us, that trigger pain, are the best lessons life is able to offer. Experiencing the pain, surviving the pain that wrenches us emotionally, stretches us to new heights. Life is enriched by the pain. Our experiences with all other persons thereafter are deeper. Instead of dreading the ending of a time, the departure of a loved one, we must try to appreciate what we have gained already and know that life is fuller for it. Today will bring both good-byes and hellos. I can meet both with gladness.*

## From the Interim Conference Minister

by Marie Bacchiocchi, Interim Conference Minister

I sit in my office with my cat, KeyKey sleeping on the ottoman next to me, feeling blessed to be settling in to my new home and my new ministry setting in the Southeast Conference. It has been a joy to meet some of you already and I look forward to meeting more of you over these next weeks and months. My schedule is still fairly empty: please invite me to join your congregation at a worship service or other event. I want to see your settings of faithful witness to the gospel.



I am feeling like my Lenten discipline this year is learning new technology. This is my greatest learning curve. I ask that you bear with me as I get used to how all this works. I am available, however, it may take me a while to figure out how to access things and respond back to you!

Just to let you all know, my days off will be Fridays and Saturdays. However, I realize that there are many meetings on Saturdays. This is my flex day. This means I try not to schedule things on Saturdays, but work when I have to and make up time. I try to keep Fridays completely free, however, I am always available in an emergency.

My contact information is: [conferenceminister@secucc.org](mailto:conferenceminister@secucc.org) and 404-615-2492. A backup email address is: [revmarieb@gmail.com](mailto:revmarieb@gmail.com).

I am excited about the paths God is leading us. There is much to do and learn. Let the journey begin!



## Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2017. 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 2017 prayer list.](#)

### Week of March 19

- First Congregational UCC; Atlanta, Georgia
- Common Global Ministries and all mission personnel
- Thomas Baird
- Robert Foreman
- Cheryl Slusser

### Week of March 26

- New Hope Congregational Christian; Clio, Alabama
- Southeast Conference Staff
- William Derstine
- Aubra Love
- Tom Mozley

## Prayer Requests

- Our sympathies to the family of Dr. Erna Ballantine Bryant and communities of First Congregational (Atlanta) and Central UCC. Dr. Bryant died on February 22, 2017 at the age of 87 years.
- Continued prayers for Rev. Gary Myers as he continues to recover from mild stroke.
- Prayers for June Boutwell as she returns to California for a month and then on to her new ministry in Greenville, Pennsylvania.
  
- Prayers for Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi as she begins her ministry as Interim Conference Minister.

## Conference Transitions

- **Edward Colf** is being ordained on Saturday, March 18 at the United Church of Huntsville.
- **Janis Whiteman** was installed as the pastor of First United Church in Belvidere, Tennessee on March 5, 2016.
- **Scott Williamson** has been called as Senior Pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Chattanooga, Tennessee. His start date is yet to be determined.
- **Ann Michelle Brigham Rogers** began her service as Designated Minister at Safe Harbor Family Church in Flowood, Mississippi with the Ash Wednesday service on March 2, 2017.

## Churches in Transition

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; United Church,

## News from Around the Conference

### Call for Annual Meeting Workshops & Displays

It's time to start planning for Annual Meeting, June 9-10, 2017.

- **Workshops:** Do you have a workshop topic you'd like to see offered at this year's SEC Annual Meeting? Your ideas are welcomed!
- **Presenters:** Are you a presenter who would like to lead a workshop?
- **Displays:** If you are interested in setting up a display table in the common meeting/registration area, please let us know.

Contact Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator  
at [dspearman@secucc.org](mailto:dspearman@secucc.org) no later by May 31, 2017.

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### Remembering Dr. Erma Ballantine Bryant

Dr. Erma Ballantine Bryant, 87, of Atlanta, Georgia, passed away surrounded by family and friends on February 22, 2017. Erma was the only black woman in her class at Harvard. She completed her Doctorate in Education Administration from Harvard University in 1974. The Congregational United Church of Christ was always an integral part of Dr. Bryant's life. Her funeral was held at First Congregational UCC, Atlanta on Saturday March 4. [Read more on our website.](#)

## News from the United Church of Christ

### One Great Hour of Sharing is March 26

One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions. The suggested offering date for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering in 2017 is Sunday, March 26. [Learn more on our website.](#)

## Training, Learning and Retreat Opportunities

### Transform Your Worship Experience! A Worship Workshop with Dr. Marcia McFee

Kirkwood UCC invites you to bring your team (program staff, worship associates, artists, musicians and other interested people) to discover ways to enliven and deepen your congregation's worship services. This conference will help you layer visual, auditory and experiential elements into a transformative worship experience. Breakfast and Lunch included. [Learn more on the KUCU website.](#)

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### Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference

In these times of uncertainty and division, UCC members throughout the country are searching for meaningful ways to work for positive change and to live out their faith. In the face of great injustice, how do we work together towards a just world for all? How do we sustain our wearied spirits in the struggle? The 2017 Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference in Washington, DC, April 21-24 provides a wonderful opportunity to engage that

work. It is an opportunity to build up our base of faith-rooted advocates so that the UCC is ready to respond and work for a better world. [\*\*Learn more on their website.\*\*](#)