



July 15, 2016: General Synod Wrap-up and More!



From the Conference Minister

Greetings! General Synod was its usual heady, exasperating, faith-filled experience. There were over 35 persons from the Southeast Conference in attendance at GS31 in Baltimore, MD. We were staff, delegates, visitors, members in discernment, polity students, resource persons, and friends. Such an amazing time!

This issue of the SEC newsletter is full of all things General Synod. Please take the time to read it and find what things speak to your heart, or raise questions. Then ask me about how you can connect into where and how are national setting is leading. The United Church of Christ is us! Without each and every one of us showing forth God's love and grace where we live, we hide the promise of the gospel. So, be brave, be strong...

Blessings,
Marie

Our Daily Blog Posts from General Synod

We were very fortunate to have guest bloggers who provided a bit of insight and perspective from their time at General Synod in Baltimore. Here is a list of all the articles that were published on our website during General Synod:

1. [We're Heading to Baltimore](#)

2. [General Synod: Surprisingly Exhausting — and Glad!](#) by Larry Gipson
3. [Synod: More of a Family Reunion than a Meeting](#) by Rev. Kim Sorrells
4. [Living Across Religious Traditions: A Breath of Fresh Air](#) by Rev. Katie Kilpatrick
5. [Awesome Attendance by the Southeast Conference at General Synod](#)
6. [Letting God Work](#) by Matt Lewellyn-Otten
7. [Open Table UCC Shares Free2Be Support Group at Synod](#) by Rev. Ellen Sims
8. [Who is the 3 to 5 Percent?](#) by Rev. J.R. Finney
9. [Blessed... and a Bit Surreal](#) by Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi
10. [Unexpected Gifts](#) by Cindy Barto
11. [The PATHWAYS Experience](#) by Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver
12. [Duck, Duck, Duck... Nativity?](#)
13. [A Day of Independence... for All?](#) by James Bowman Harris
14. [Antoinette Brown Trailblazer Awards](#) by Rev. Charmaine Penn Johnson
15. [National UCC Leaders Visit Southeast Conference Caucus](#)
16. [Synod Wrap-Up Video Blog: "All of Me"](#) by Jess Chancey

News from Around the Conference



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 July 9

- Brookmeade Congregational UCC; Nashville, Tennessee
- Marie Bacchiocchi
- Paul Hackett
- Michael Piazza
- David Templeton Jr

Week of July 23

- Decatur UCC; Decatur, Georgia
- Diantha Baker Brown
- Randy Hammer
- Thomas Query
- Ed Sunday Winters
- Patricia Keeler

Week of July 16

- First Congregational UCC; Birmingham, Alabama
- David Brown
- D. Houston Hall
- Shelli Poe
- Phillip Price
- Paige Pearson Wimberly

Week of July 30

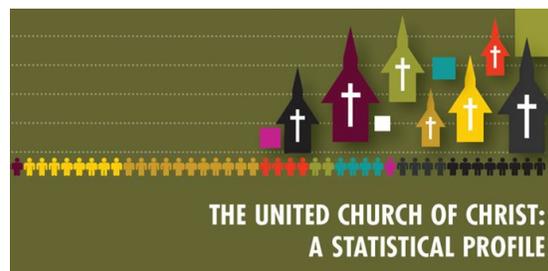
- Church of the Savior; Alpharetta, Georgia
- Lacey Brown
- George Hartz
- Gerald Kummer
- Will Rabert Jr
- Ray Speller

Prayer Requests

- Prayers for **Rev Sam Greening** (pastor at United Church of Huntsville) as he continues to recover from a brief hospital stay earlier this month.
- Prayers of gratitude for the connections made by those who attended **General Synod 31** in Baltimore

Conference Transitions

- **Marsha Brown** will be ordained and installed at 3 pm on July 16, 2017 at Phoenix Christian Church in Wildersville, Tennessee.
- **Larry Gipson** will be ordained at 5 pm on July 23, 2017 at Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta. He has accepted a position as associate minister at Old South Union Church in Weymouth, Mass.



Our Church's Wider Mission 2016 Giving Report

During the 2017 Annual Meeting the Conference announced the following OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) Basic Support giving recognition for 2016, with 75% (or 40) of our churches giving to OCWM last year.

We are grateful and appreciative of the who donated to the 4 special offerings and OCWM Basic Support in 2016.

[View the full list of giving congregations on our website.](#)

How is your church doing for OCWM Basic Support in 2017? Many churches are surprised their church name is not on our recognition list when Annual Meeting rolls around. Be proactive! Check with your church treasurer occasionally to ensure Quarterly giving is being sent for OCWM.

Statistical Profile of the Southeast Conference, UCC

Thanks to everyone for participating in this year's significant increase in church yearbook reporting, we received a \$500 gift card from the UCC. We also received a custom-created Mini Statistical Profile about our Conference.

In general, the SECUCC contains a greater percentage of smaller congregations than the UCC as a whole, with 66.4% of all churches in the Conference having between 1 and 50 members. On average, the Southeast Conference exceeds the UCC in reaffirmations of faith, transfers in, confessions of faith, and confirmations and experiences fewer transfers out. We trail the UCC as a whole in the percentage of churches that give to OCWM Basic Support and the Special Offerings.

[View the full report on our website.](#)

Justice and Witness Opportunities



Your Gift to Back Bay Mission Could Be Doubled!

A generous donor has offered to match up to \$10,000 for Back Bay Mission's client sustainability programs. That means your gift to the Mission could be worth twice as

Pleasant Hill Work Camp Mission Trip to Back Bay

Pleasant Hill Community Church is going on a mission trip to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, Nov 12-18, 2017 and there is limited space for a few others to join this

much!

Back Bay Mission's client sustainability programs meet the immediate needs of the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and help people begin their journeys out of poverty. This year, we're raising \$150,000 for three of these vital programs: Bridges Out of Poverty, our community health partner, and our veterans support fund.

Until August 31, 2017, up to \$10,000 in gifts to these programs will be matched! You can learn more about these programs, and make your gift, on the Mission's website.

team. Service, learning and reflection describe Back Bay Mission trips that are about much more than just the work that gets accomplished.

Strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice and transforming lives describes the work being done at Back Bay Mission which is a ministry of the United Church of Christ located within the bounds of the UCC South Central Conference.

For more information about the November 12-18 trip or Back Bay Mission in general, contact Mary Ruth (931-277-5231) or marybillruth@gmail.com or visit the Southeast Conference website.

Learning and Training Opportunities

PATHWAYS is pleased to announce their Fall 2017 course offerings

EXPLORE - Explorer Courses

These short courses are meant to complement learners in their congregations while deepening their faith understanding in their explorer group. Participants practice reading the Bible as a progressive Christian, finding a prayerful spiritual path for their present lives, and learning the aspects of UCC's history that have made and continue to make UCC congregations diverse and progressive. Cost per 4-week course: \$99

- Singing the Bible (Aug 23-Sep 19)
- What about the Bible (Oct 4-31)
- ADVENT: A Spiritual Journey (Nov 22-Dec 19)



LEARN - Level One: Foundational Courses

Participants may take one or more courses or complete the entire Level One program. The ten Foundational Courses provide a two-year opportunity to explore the basics of theology. Learners are exposed to a contextual approach to the Bible, ethics, worship, the evolution of Christianity over two millennia, spiritual formation, and much more. Within an online community, participants discuss how Christianity has evolved over time. Reading and responding to selected books, authors and facilitators offer ways of connecting your faith to others' ancient to contemporary faith.

UCC History & Polity

PATHWAYS offers a unique opportunity for MID's and those seeking Privilege of Call: an online polity course. The purpose of this course is to explore the history, polity, theologies, and practices of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor denominations.

Successful completion of this course will fulfill the history and polity requirement for authorized ministry in the UCC in many associations and conferences. Registration is limited to ten participants, but the course is offered each Fall and Spring.

Visit the PATHWAYS website for details: <https://www.pathways-ucc.org/courses/>

Job Opportunities

Part time Youth Minister

Open Community United Church of Christ (OCUCC) is in search of a part time Youth Minister for its children and youths. OCUCC is looking for someone who loves children and youths, has experience in children's ministry, is committed for daily devotion and prayer, and has evangelical and reformed faith background. Please submit a resume, confession of faith, and two recommendations from church leaders including the pastor or the senior pastor of the church that you are currently attending. You may mail them to Open Community United Church of Christ, 2676 Clairmont Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329 or send via email to the address below. You may direct your questions to 678-670-6930 or 678-760-1975 or oc.youth.minister@gmail.com.

Southeast Conference Staff

Marie Bacchiocchi

Interim Conference Minister

mbacchiocchi@secucc.org

404-615-2492

Heather Bardole

Conference Registrar / Administrator

hbardole@secucc.org

404-719-6572

Valerie Coe Lowder

Exec Director of Theological Education

pathways@secucc.org

Debbie Spearman

Generosity Coordinator

dspearman@secucc.org

Don Harris

Director of Communications

dharris@secucc.org

Chris Lyman Waldron

IT Specialist

clwaldron@secucc.org