

## News from the Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ

### “Newest” UCC Congregation

Congratulations to Grace United Church of Christ in Flemington, NJ, which was



voted into membership by the New Jersey Association at the Association's Spring 2011 meeting. Its co-pastors are Rev. Dan Lundquist and Rev. Sue Goodwin. Grace UCC has received support from local congregations, the Association, the Trinity Trust, and the Conference.

Take a look at the church's creative web page: <http://www.graceuccnj.org/>

### News from the Conference Board of Directors

The Conference Board of Directors met in Catonsville on May 6-7. We began our meeting with a post-sabbatical report from Kwame Osei Reed, Associate Conference Minister, regarding his research visits to historically-Black schools and colleges related to the United Church of Christ. These schools and colleges are a rich legacy from our American Missionary Association forebears.

The business agenda which followed was full with pre-Annual Meeting business, including:

- Recommendations for 2011-2012 Clergy Compensation Guidelines
- Receipt of a proposed 2012 Conference Operating Budget (which continues a 70-30 OCWM split)
- Review of the Case Statement for the Campaign for the Conference authorized by the 2010 Annual Meeting
- Recognition of two new church starts, one in Baltimore and one in Hagerstown

News, cont.

- Celebration that Grace UCC has been formally received into the New Jersey Association
- Affirmation of a plan to call an Interim Staff person to serve following Richard Vaught's retirement next year
- Testing of a staffing survey for potential distribution throughout the Conference
- Receipt of a study of the Conference's banking/financial policies in response to a 2010 Annual Meeting motion
- Acceptance of a plan for Round Two of Clergy Boundary Training and referral of the plan to the Associations for implementation.
- Receipt of reports on the re-design of the Conference web site
- Review of Conference legislative advocacy around four key issues - abolition of the death death penalty, reform of the criminal justice system, push for marriage equality, reform of immigration policy - and report on the work of a new ecumenical legislative coalition in Maryland
- Preview of business coming to this summer's General Synod in Tampa, FL

One Final Word on Annual Meeting  
We are excited about having UCC General Minister and President Geoffrey Black with us for Annual Meeting...it should be a great weekend...see you at the University of Delaware, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>!

## **Wake Up! A New Church is Possible**

**June 10, 11, 12, 2011**

**Please go to [www.cacucc.org](http://www.cacucc.org) to find the latest meeting information including**

### **Tentative Agenda**

#### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

- [Sherry Taylor](#)
- [Kwame Osei Reed](#)
- [Richard Vaught](#)
  
- [Boundary Awareness Training Round 2 Report](#)
- [Banking Study](#)

[Report from Lancaster Theological Seminary](#)

[Report From Wesley Theological Seminary](#)

#### **Motion from the Board of Directors:**

The Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors makes the follow motion to be voted at the 2011 CAC Annual Meeting.

That we continue the 70-30 split of OCWM money for the 2012 budget with any surplus we receive going to National to approximate the 65-35 split as closely as possible.

2012 CAC Budget  
2011-12 Clergy Minimum Compensation Guidelines

#### [Workshops](#)

Please contact Arnetta Jones – [ajones@cacucc.org](mailto:ajones@cacucc.org), with your workshop choices. We encourage delegates from the same church to attend different workshops to maximize the information they receive.

Calling all Artists in the Central Atlantic Conference!!!!

It's almost Central Atlantic Conference Annual Meeting Time  
June 10-12 @ the U. Of Delaware

And...it would be great to be surrounded by  
*inspirational artwork*  
as we reflect & pray about this year's theme:

"Wake Up, A New Church is Possible!"



Can you paint or draw, sculpt, sew or weave your vision of what "WAKING UP" or "NEW CHURCH" might look like?  
Do you have a picture of your congregation doing something "NEW?"  
What do you think of when you hear the theme phrase?  
What does your youth group and/or congregation think of?

There is LOTS of WALL SPACE (with hooks already up!)  
in the main gathering area at the U of Delaware.

Please contact Rev. Jen Walters with any questions  
and for more details about displaying your artwork!  
[dragonandturtle@gmail.com](mailto:dragonandturtle@gmail.com) or 443-789-4302

\* Worship at the 2011 Central Atlantic Annual Conference Meeting will include a Children and Youth Pentecost Festival on Saturday at 3 P.M. We are inviting as many churches as possible to bring their children and youth to be a part of the festival. There will be really BIG Pentecost Puppets that take three people to work. There will be special music and parts in the service. We would like every church in the Conference to send pictures of children and youth ministries in their

congregations. The pictures will be used in a DVD we make for worship. Send them to: Lois Carrigan [lc@bim.org](mailto:lc@bim.org).

\* All Central Atlantic Conference Open and Affirming churches are asked to send pictures of their church in worship, Sunday School, meeting, ministries, or simply having fun together. These photos will be added to a video made several years ago now, "What Does an ONA Church Look Like?" Send photos for this DVD to Lois Carrigan at: [lc@bim.org](mailto:lc@bim.org).

\* David Cole, Director of Music/Organist for St. Paul's UCC in Westminster, Maryland, will be directing the choir for the UCC Central Atlantic Conference annual meeting. The theme is "Wake Up! A New Church is Possible." Hopefully, we can recruit a sizable number of singers to present anthems in the worship services (Friday 7pm, Saturday 3pm, and Sunday 9:30am). A rehearsal will be held each day to prepare for that day's service. If desired, sheet music can be sent ahead of time, some of which includes "This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made," arranged by Mark Hayes, and "Everybody Rejoice" from The Wiz. It is possible for singers to commute to participate in the choir without registering for annual meeting, but these individuals would then be responsible for finding their own housing if needed and should not attend workshops or meals. If you or anyone you know is interested in participating, please reply to David at [musicdirector@stpauls-ucc.org](mailto:musicdirector@stpauls-ucc.org). Indicate your voice part, which days you might be available and willing to sing, and whether you have any other musical/instrumental gift you might be willing to share at annual meeting. David will then communicate directly with you regarding details as the date approaches.



## Reflections from the President

### Rev. Jim Bundy

Dear CAC friends,

This is the last newsletter in which I will be writing as president of the conference board of directors. Best wishes to incoming president, Jill White, and incoming vice president, Bradley Thomas (subject, of course, to election at the annual meeting). Other than wishing them well, I will limit myself to just a few words of gratitude and appreciation.

I have always believed as a matter of principle that it is important to support the wider church. It is not only a matter of recognizing the various services provided by the wider church that benefit clergy and local churches. It is also a matter of affirming that we are family and need to do our best to support one another. The reality, however, is that for many of us much of the time the "wider church" is largely an abstraction. Our sense of family is naturally lived out in our local congregation and, perhaps, to some degree in association life. Often our sense of the wider church is understandably limited.

The last four years I have spent with the conference board of directors has made my commitment to the CAC aspect of the wider church much less of an abstraction. I have learned a lot. I am much better informed about conference life. I have met new people

and made new friends. I have gained a deeper

appreciation for the work done by the members of the ministry team, especially as they have adjusted to the reductions in their numbers. I have had my perspective on my church family enlarged and enriched. For all this, I am grateful. In the future, my prayers for people and various parts of CAC life will be more specific and more vivid.

As we consider new ways of carrying out the overall work of the conference, one of my hopes is that there will be increased ways for people to be involved in our work together. The board of directors has only a limited number of positions, does not suit everyone's schedule, and is not everyone's cup of tea. There are, of course, other ways to be involved, and I hope together we can find additional avenues for meaningful involvement in the life of the conference. There are challenges facing us, but I believe it is a good and hopeful time to be part of the CAC.

Peace,  
Jim Bundy



## Conference Minister's Corner

### Rev. John R. Deckenback

Praise that our God is a God of the living! In the last few days, I have attended three services to honor people whose lives have been well lived. Each service has had a significantly different character, but in each there was faithful gratitude to God for the gift of life itself. Each service, in its own way, was a very poignant moment.

Chuck Brader was a marvelous, gentle spirit. A long-time member of Trinity United Church of Christ in Takoma Park, MD, Chuck was a natural to chair the Trustees of the Trinity Trust that was created after the church closed. His life as a church member and federal executive was remembered in a classic "Reformed" memorial service at a Presbyterian church near his home. At the Trustee's meeting a few days after Chuck's death, we celebrated the fact that the Trust has distributed more than \$1 million in grants to worthy initiatives through the Central Atlantic Conference.

Emmy Roberts was my mother-in-law. Shortly after her death last year, her husband became seriously ill and was hospitalized for nearly two months. Burial of Emmy's ashes would have to wait for an appropriate time and place. Mother's Day, 2011 provided the perfect opportunity. We read the powerful words of hope and promise in the UCC Book of Worship and shared the Lord's Prayer as her remains were buried in a quiet spot behind Evangelical Reformed UCC's Trinity Chapel. Within a few hours, pictures from the garden were

flashed to her children and grandchildren scattered across the country. Ironically, an article appeared that day in the newspaper chronicling my-father-in-law's recent adventure on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday - piloting a plane for an hour over Frederick.

Bruce Wickkiser was pastor of the former St. Luke's United Church of Christ not far from the site of the B&O Railroad Museum in downtown Baltimore. Throughout his ministry, Bruce had a love for "high-church" liturgy complete with expansive vestments and lots of incense. After retirement, he found spiritual fulfillment at St. John's Episcopal Church on Glenmount Avenue in Baltimore. Bruce's appreciation for liturgy was well served at the well-attended service. Indeed, after the service, you could still smell the incense as it drifted out of the sanctuary.

Each of these services only a few days apart were celebrations of life! And at each occasion the key scriptural question was posed - "Where, O death, is thy sting?"

As I sat in St. John's sanctuary for Bruce's service I reflected again on what a marvelous gift life itself is - what a blessing! - and that even though we celebrated God's continuing gift in different ways, each of these services had great integrity and meaning. Praise God!

In this post-Easter season, we - like the disciples - could be mourning in doom and gloom (i.e., fishing on one side of the boat with limited results) or we can

celebrate the promise-filled hope of God's continuing presence with us.

From the formal liturgy to the traditional reformed worship to a quiet service in a church garden - praise God from whom all blessings flow!

## **The Spring Meeting of the Catoctin Association**

### **Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma**

On Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Catoctin Association gathered at Trinity United Church of Christ in Manchester, Maryland. In keeping with a recently-established tradition of using the Spring Association meeting as a time of learning together, we invited Rev. Dr. Sidney Fowler to help us engage the notion of Covenant as it is lived within congregations that are in association with the wider church. Following Sid's wonderfully thought-provoking and relationship-evoking presentation, we engaged in World Café Conversations directed first at helping us refine our sense of who we are as an Association and second at imagining the possibilities of what we might do together.

In the many and varied conversations throughout the day, we were able to celebrate some of the Catoctin Association's strengths, which include the collegiality of clergy and a broad-based commitment to outreach. The latter is reflected in such ventures as multiple association-wide trips to the

Gulf Coast region, a project to provide ongoing support in Honduras, participation in Habitat for Humanity, and countless efforts by congregations to make a difference in their local communities. We acknowledged and reaffirmed our shared commitment to providing meaningful programs that expose youth to the wider church and help them continue to find a spiritual home in the United Church of Christ in its many settings. We recalled a tradition of lay collaboration, and we thought about ways to reestablish those connections.

We are an Association of diverse congregations that tend to be in close proximity to each other. We wondered whether geography might prompt new kinds of interaction that would serve some greater good. It was easy to list numerous ways for the Association to help with facilitating the sharing of resources for everything from worship, to programming, to human resource and financial management. We shared a degree of hopefulness, it seemed, about the value of pooling resources so that we all work to strengthen each other even as we strengthen ourselves.

We know that we live in tension regarding ways to balance tradition and innovation. We are not crystal clear about whether we are conservative or liberal as an Association, though we know we are neither purely one nor purely the other. So we remain in discernment about some dimensions of our life together and about our association's identity at this moment in time. Perhaps that conversation was best summed up for now in this

challenge: to find new ways to celebrate old truths. To be sure, there was broad awareness of the ways the world is changing all around the church these days and of the need to continue finding ways to be relevant in people's real lives. Accordingly, we explored the possibility of more fully utilizing social and electronic media to expand our communication with each other and with those who have yet to discover our congregations.



Present from the opening worship service focused on healing led by host Pastor LoisAnn Furgess-Oler and Pastor Jen Walters, interwoven in Sid's presentation on Covenant, built into the World Café Conversations, highlighted in John Deckenback's sharing of news from the Conference and beyond, and implicit throughout our conducting the business of the Association, was a feeling of something special, I think, about being together, reflecting together, and imagining together. I could not help but recall the promise that where two or three are gathered, God is there. I am grateful for all of the ways God was with us in our time together, and I wait in joyful anticipation for all of the ways God will continue to work in and with and through us.



Photos-top: Members of Evangelical Reformed, Frederick , MD and Cathy Green, Insurance Board, President & Chief Executive viewing sanctuary after fire restoration

Bottom: Rev. Mark Wakefield at the rededication of the Sanctuary at Christ Reformed UCC, Middletown, MD

Blessings,  
Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma, President,  
Catocin Association and Senior Pastor,  
St. Paul's United Church of Christ,  
Westminster, Maryland

## Shaw Community Ministry

Commitment to the Community Shaw Community Ministry (SCM) provides a safe, nurturing, and structured environment in a neighborhood troubled by violence, poverty, and chaos. SCM has a history of innovative and creative programming for young people. More than an after-school program, SCM offers one-on-one tutoring and academic enrichment programs in reading, math, and computer literacy, as well as extracurricular activities such as yoga, dance, and nutrition. Promising Shaw teens can find help with the entire college application and selection process, including SAT preparation. But SCM doesn't merely assist youths - it also offers readiness training for 'green' jobs and job-placement assistance for adults and seniors. SCM benefits immensely from the generosity of Lincoln-Westmoreland Housing, Inc., which donates funds, space, and utilities, as well as from the financial assistance of twelve UCC churches, many local community partners, and various private individuals.

### SCM's New Minister

On Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, Shaw Community Ministry celebrated the installation of Anne Troy as its minister. Anne Troy, executive director of SCM, has been an attorney with the federal government for over thirty years. Her



interest in SCM came from her own challenging experiences growing up in New York City: "As an immigrant's

daughter whose first language is Chinese, I grew up with economic challenges and saw first-hand how growing up in America as a female of color creates

great obstacles in learning, self-esteem, and confidence." As a minister, Anne brings experience working with both urban and suburban Washington churches and has a special interest in deepening the spiritual connections among their members. Her special gift is in expanding and deepening parental involvement and broadening community outreach, thereby increasing the overall impact of SCM's small staff.

Anne's service of installation, presided over by John Ellis, William Wooten, and the Revs. Hank Fairman and Dr. Kwame Osei Reed, was held at Lincoln Temple UCC in Washington, DC. Jeff Eagan and Sue Kirk of Westmoreland UCC were the liturgists. Rev. Jeffrey Stinehelfer preached a wonderful sermon entitled "Keep It on the Road." Rev. Dr. John Deckenbeck gave the prayer of installation. Dr. Bob Maddox of Westmoreland UCC and Dr. Reed gave stirring charges to Anne and to the

covenant communities. In addition, many members of the Board of Directors of SCM participated in the service as organizers, ushers, speakers, and communion servers. A special thanks goes to Merlene London of Lincoln Temple Chancel Choir, who directed an ad hoc choir composed of singers from several churches, and to Mark Bublitz for his solo, "Fill My Cup."

#### A Milestone for SCM

SCM also recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Rev. Anne Troy, executive director and newly installed pastor, was joined by founding Board member Anne Weissenborn, Caryn Musil, and past executive director Rev. Paul Sadler in a brief walk down memory lane. There was also a delicious lunch served by active parents and members of the Ministry. This was followed by a great "duet" praise dance performed by the girls and boys who participate in many SCM programs.

There are many children, youths, and adults



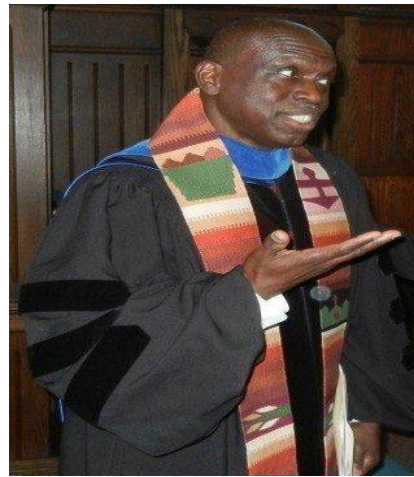
\* Congratulations to Ms. Sheila Helgerson, who was authorized as a Commissioned Minister at a Chesapeake Association Ecclesiastical Council on May 21st. Sheila is a former Conference Moderator and is the Executive Director of Earl's Place (a transitional housing program for men in Baltimore).

## Congratulations!

- Congratulations to Anna Johnson-Winegar, who has been selected to be the new Interim President of Lancaster Theological Seminary. Anna is a member of Grace UCC in Frederick. She is also a member of the Conference Board and chairs its Congregational Vitality Committee.



Congratulations to Prof. Ron Hopson, who was installed at Howard University School of Divinity jointly by HUSD, the Potomac Association, and Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC. The installation took place on April 6, 2011.



Congratulations to Rev. Katie Penick who was installed as pastor of Incarnation United Church of Christ in Emmitsburg, MD on May 21 by the Catocin Association.



Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Kathryn N. Dwyer, newly installed pastor at Rock Spring Congregational UCC in Arlington, VA.

- Congratulations to the Rev. Ken Daniel. Soon he will become head of United Church Homes in Ohio. Ken's standing is in the Catocin Association. His spouse, Barbara, is senior minister at Evangelical Reformed UCC in Frederick, and most recently he has been Lancaster Theological Seminary's Interim President. Ken and Barbara will be doing some long-distance commuting. Their two sons live half-way in-between in Pittsburgh.

- Congratulations to the Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma for completing his DMin at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Marty is the Senior Pastor at St. Paul's UCC in Westminster, MD

## Samplings from Church Newsletters from around the Conference

HCUCC Happenings Volume 1, Issue 1 Holmdel Community Church Holmdel, NJ

### Our Sanctuary Gets a Facelift!



You'll probably do a double-take as you enter the sanctuary for worship on Sunday. Everything will seem brighter, newer, more vibrant. Did someone finally change the light-bulbs?? Nope, after all these years, the sanctuary has gotten a facelift.

Our sanctuary was showing signs of age and everything was getting a bit shabby: frayed carpeting, soot-stained paint and cracks in the plaster. For an historic church over 200 years old, with beams from the original church 300 years old, many in the church took the faded, ancient look in stride. But a group of retired guys that make up the Property Committee finally got tired of the decay, and started planning for an upgrade. At first they thought, "Hey, we can do this ourselves! We'll get some scaffolding, some rollers and we'll be done in no time." Then, clearer heads thought more wisely about 70 year old men doing overhead painting 40 feet off the ground. They went looking for estimates, led by Tom Eddy, the chair of the group, and Bob Liebenow, a steady hand at church repairs.

What happened next is something of a miracle! They approached Jim Murray of Dependable Painting Contractors for an estimate for painting the sanctuary. He said fine, but also said that he was the chairman of a group called the Association of Professional Painter and Decorator Contractors. This Monmouth County group paints one house of worship for free once a year...and our church was chosen this year! What we assumed would be a several thousand-dollar job, suddenly became very affordable! As part of this



gift, Sherwin-Williams Paint, which has several stores in our area, donated the paint. The group did a 'blitz-paint' on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, with over a dozen painters on-site. Church volunteers prepared a gala lunch for them that Saturday, organized by Marilyn Sneed.

The paint job didn't just stop at the walls. Seizing this once in a lifetime opportunity, Marilyn Gentile and Jani Charles worked tirelessly to come up with a beautiful design plan to highlight the intricate tin ceiling; they set up ladders to paint sample

areas, tested over 60 paint colors, and debated over just the right shades and hues. They managed to convince the Property Committee to approve the work, and the painters brought in their team to paint the



ceiling and rounded 'cove' according to Marilyn's beautiful design, which they completed in less than a week. The new color scheme is in perfect harmony with the gorgeous stained glass windows and organ pipes.

To complete the facelift, new carpeting was installed and new pew cushions ordered. The warm, rich coloring is magnificent and truly reflects the Victorian character of the church interior.

Our heartfelt thanks go to those who worked so hard in planning, organizing, and supervising this project. The fruits of your labor will be enjoyed by everyone who enter into the sanctuary. The church will be holding a rededication service on April 10<sup>th</sup> to celebrate this whirlwind of renewal.

## **Prayers and Concerns**

✝ Rev. Justin Nathaniel had triple by-pass surgery on March 23. We understand that he is now recovering well at home.

Please hold him and his family in your prayers.

## **Transitions**

Welcome to the Rev. Terry Fitzgerald – Senior Pastor, First & St. Stephens UCC,  
Towson, MD

## **Websites of Interest:**

UCC Facebook Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/UnitedChurchofChrist>

UCC Forums:

<http://www.uccforums.com/>