

## Growing the Church's Future

Strengthen the Church, one of four special mission offerings within the United Church of Christ, grows the UCC's future by:

- Funding new church starts and invigorating existing congregations
- Nurturing lay and pastoral leadership
- Building youth and young adult ministries
- Supporting the God is Still Speaking Ministry and its extravagant welcome for all within the United Church of Christ.
- All gifts are directed to activities and programs of your Connecticut Conference as well as the UCC's national ministries.

## Spread the Love

The offering is typically received on Pentecost - the day we celebrate the founding of the Christian church - but churches may choose to receive the offering on any Sunday; some choose their local church's anniversary or Thanksgiving Sunday. In 2008, Pentecost is May 11, which also happens to be Mother's Day!

Explore the resources found at [www.ucc.org/stc](http://www.ucc.org/stc) as you prepare to receive the Strengthen the Church offering in 2008. For more information, please contact Rev. Doris Powell, Minister for Pastors and Congregational Stewardship, at [powelld@ucc.org](mailto:powelld@ucc.org), or 216-736-3853.

part of an arts-of-faith "Festival of Sharing," an opportunity to experience how some churches are expressing their faith and fellowship creatively. All are invited and welcome to attend. **Youth 18 and under register for free.** Lunch fees will still apply. Register online at [www.ctucc.org/news/annlmtg08](http://www.ctucc.org/news/annlmtg08)

### The Evening Performance

A part of Cliff's Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Arts (MICA) has been the creation of the Oikos Jazz Ensemble, a world music jazz group that performs at many UCC events and leads jazz vesper services around the country in collaboration with Global Ministries. They were main stage headliners at General Synod 26 in Hartford.

Oikos will perform that evening at 7 p.m. at South Congregational Church. Enjoy an early dinner at one of the Middletown's many fine restaurants and return to the church for inspired and inspiring music. A free-will donation will be received for admission. Don't miss this very special evening of music that will do your soul good!

### All Are Invited

"New Wineskins" will feature a jazz worship celebration, playshops and performances as

## Silver Lake Hires New Site Manager

Tim and Anne Hughes, co-Directors of Silver Lake Conference Center, have announced that Dave Kobersmith has been called as the new, year-round Site Manager, effective April 1. Dave comes to us with 15 years experience at Camp Birchwood in Alaska, a ministry of hospitality and Christian faith formation within the Alaska Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Dave and his wife, Kim, both missionaries, bring their two children, Sayer and Cavin, to Silver Lake's year-round ministry of serving retreat groups as well as our busy summer church camp conference program.

Dave has a broad background in site maintenance, forestry, and organizing volunteer work groups. His passion for Outdoor Ministry,

sustainability, and love of camp, will enhance the work of caring for Silver Lake's 65 acres, multiple year-round and summer buildings, and the hospitality of this sacred place.

As Site Manager, Dave's responsibilities include ongoing facility maintenance and grounds-keeping with an eye towards repair, reuse and recycling, reducing environmental impact and increasing sustainability of the facilities and resources used at Silver Lake; recruiting and nurturing the wider volunteer community to engage proudly in the upkeep of Silver Lake Conference Center; and training and supervising the Ecological Task Force, our summer maintenance crew, as a dynamic, integral part of an outstanding summer staff team of Silver Lake's Outdoor Ministry summer program.

Please join us in welcoming Dave, Kim and their boys to their new home at Silver Lake!

## Save the Dates!

**CT Conference Spring Annual Meeting** – "New Wineskins for a New Day." Saturday, May 10, South Church in Middletown. All are invited! *See story on page 5.*

**Oikos Jazz Ensemble** – "Global Village Jazz," 7 pm, Saturday, May 10 at South Church in Middletown. The critically acclaimed group presents a free-will donation concert for all ages!

**Silver Lake Golf Tournament** – Tuesday, June 10, 9 am. **Lyman Orchards Golf Club, Middlefield, CT. For details and registration, contact Silver Lake Conference Center at 860-364-5526; or [slcc\\_registrar@ctucc.org](mailto:slcc_registrar@ctucc.org)**

**National Youth Event** – "Living the Life" July 24-28, University of Tennessee. *See story on page 2.*



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"We have an opportunity to make America a better nation."

—The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 3, 1968

## Let's talk about race.

**O**n Sunday, May 18, many pastors across our church, the United Church of Christ, will be preaching on race in hopes of beginning a sacred conversation, a dialogue that is needed in our pews, our homes and the hallways of power across our country.

Sacred conversations are never easy, especially when honest talk confronts our nation's painful past and speaks directly to the injustices of the present day. Yet sacred conversations can, and often do, honor the value of diverse life experiences, requiring an openness to hear each others' viewpoints.

Over the coming weeks, as we prepare to speak from our pulpits and organize follow-up conversations with our 1.2 million members, we pray this effort will be an important step toward a holy and reconciling dialogue within our church and for our nation.

We invite all communities of faith to join with us. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, your voice is needed — now.

### God Is Still Speaking,

*A version of this ad ran in USA Today, Friday, April 11, 2008. Both national UCC and the Conference are preparing resources to assist churches with the conversations.*



**God Is Still Speaking, Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ**  
125 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105-2281 • Phone: 860/233-5564 • Fax: 860/231-8111 • [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org)

## New Ministry Team

The Connecticut Conference has taken a significant step in living up to the challenge of being part of a Church that declares, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you’re welcome here.”

Ann Marino of the Church of Christ, Congregational in Newington, and Jacky Schofield of the First Congregational Church of Greenwich have been called to be co-Chairs of the Conference’s newly formed Disability and Inclusion Ministry Team.

The team’s initial work will focus on coordinating the introduction of the UCC’s Accessible to All initiative (A2A) to churches in the Conference, teaching congregations to be more aware of, and inviting and accessible to, people of differing abilities. “Our prime responsibility is to make local churches aware of welcoming opportunities,” says Marino.

A 2005 General Synod resolution, “Called to wholeness in Christ: Becoming accessible to all,” sponsored by the Minnesota Conference, challenged the UCC “to embody a philosophy of

inclusion and interdependence” and to support and implement the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The UCC’s Disability Ministry Team has developed a congregational resource, “Any Body, Everybody, Christ’s Body.” One of the lead writers was the Rev. Jo Clare Hartsig of Wayzata, Minnesota. She says the church’s mindset, above all, is what needs attention.

“It’s not ministry ‘to’ persons with disabilities,” says Hartsig, “but ministry ‘with and by’ persons with different types of abilities.” Her teaching mantra is clear - “Never about me without me.”

The conference’s Disability and Inclusion Ministry Team will work closely with the national ministry team. Schofield, a 2007 graduate of Yale Divinity School, says that it’s important for congregations to consider who we become when we become more intentionally inclusive. “The A2A curriculum emphasizes two key, interdependent points – physical accessibility and a theology of hospitality,” she notes.

To learn more about the Disability and Inclusion Ministry, please contact Ann Marino at [amarino\\_767@msn.com](mailto:amarino_767@msn.com) or Jacky Schofield at [jacky5ph@aol.com](mailto:jacky5ph@aol.com). Additional material also can be found on the UCC web site, [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

**For those unfamiliar with our Sharon, CT campus and Silver Lake’s summer offerings, the web site now features a “Virtual Tour” at <http://www.silverlakect.org/> tour. Illustrated with photographs, the tour covers the themes that are so familiar to experienced conferees, including what a day at camp is like, fun at the waterfront, games and crafts, meals, nature and nourishment for the youthful spirit!**

**We’ve recruited another great Camp Family team and summer staff of young servant leaders. We also are excited to welcome Youth and Young Adult Minister, Rev. Da Vita McAllister, to the mix this summer! Don’t miss out on a week – or two - of community filled with friends, fun and faith-building. See you at the Lake this summer!**

**Anne and Tim Hughes are Co-Directors of Silver Lake Conference Center – your Conference Center!**

## New Youth and Young Adult Minister



The Rev. Da Vita D. “Day” McCallister, the dynamic preacher for the opening worship of last summer’s 50th Anniversary General Synod and a woman with over twenty years’ experience in ministry

with youth and young adults, has been called to be the Connecticut Conference’s Associate Conference Minister for Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

The newly created senior staff level position will support and equip youth workers and ministers, and build a multiracial, multicultural youth leadership movement. “There are many dimensions to the position,” said Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, “including encouraging our churches to participate in the National Youth Event and working with Silver Lake and its programs.”

As the first person to hold this particular position, Rev. McCallister is excited about the opportunity to challenge the conference, local churches and seminaries to reconsider what it means to be called by God. This work will include deepening connection with local churches, extending to youth and young adults the invitation to

leadership in the Church and encouraging young people to consider a call to the ministry. “This is an amazing position and an amazing time for youth ministry in New England,” she said.

Ordained in the Southeast Conference in 2004, Rev. McCallister has served in the historic First Congregational Church UCC in Atlanta, Georgia; with the Fund for Theological Education, the staff of the Southeast Conference, and most recently as Minister for Youth, Young Adult and Outdoor Ministries for the United Church of Christ.

The commitment to this position is made possible in part by the strong response to OCWM Basic Support in 2006, as well as careful management of Conference resources in previous years, which provided additional funds to help make this a reality.

“This is a crucial strategic move to support our local churches, to express our invitation and hospitality to youth and young adults, and to deepen the covenants among us,” said Rev. Crabtree. She stressed that the Conference’s ability to carry forward this revived focus on Youth Ministry will depend on our local churches sustaining the momentum with their OCWM dollars.

Rev. McCallister has an office at the United Church Center in Hartford. She can be reached at [DaVitaM@ctucc.org](mailto:DaVitaM@ctucc.org), or 860-761-7115.

## Two Million Dollars!

That got your attention didn’t it? *Now for the Future*: The Campaign for Silver Lake has passed \$2 million in gifts and pledges! Almost all of these gift commitments are from individuals, but we are also making good progress in enlisting churches to undertake their own *Now for the Future* campaigns.

We’re in the middle of the Commitment Phase of the campaign, with the goal of having 150 of our churches committed to participating in *Now for the Future*. Fifty churches have already welcomed a campaign presentation for the congregation or a selected group of church leaders. And 84 churches have established a campaign presence by either appointing a church rep or committing to the campaign even before naming a representative.

They recognize Silver Lake as a place of year-round ministry, offering Christian community and the grace of God’s creation as it serves the youth and adults of the Conference’s nearly 250 United Church of Christ churches. In that spirit, they’ve indicated their intent to be part of *Now for the Future*.

**Who plans it?** NYE is planned by the collaborative efforts of UCC Local Church Ministries, Worship and Education Ministry staff and a National Youth Event Planning Committee comprised of a diverse group of youth and adult volunteers.

**What does it cost?** \$345 per person includes meals and accommodations. Registration is now open.

We also are focusing new efforts toward folks who have attended summer conferences, were on camp staff or who attend events at Silver Lake. While many of our alums are sitting in our churches here in Connecticut, many others are out of state. An effort to contact them and enlist their support will start soon. If you or a family member are a Silver Lake alum, please go to the web site (<http://silverlake.ctucc.org/alum>) and let us know your contact information.



YOU CAN HELP!

• Make your own gift to *Now for the Future*. [Individual gifts from church members will be credited toward the church’s campaign goal.]

- Get involved with your own church’s *Now for the Future* planning group.
- Add your name to the Silver Lake Alumni/ae Directory.

For campaign materials and further information, please go to the website, [silverlake.ctucc.org/nowforthefuture](http://silverlake.ctucc.org/nowforthefuture), or contact Bev Hughes, Campaign Coordinator at [bev@ctucc.org](mailto:bev@ctucc.org); 860-233-5564, x103, or toll-free, 866-367-2822.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Rev. Day McCallister at [DaVitam@ctucc.org](mailto:DaVitam@ctucc.org), 860-761-7115; or Rev. Kelly Burd, Local Church Ministries, UCC, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115; 216-736-3860 or toll-free, 866-822-8224, ext. 3871; [burdk@ucc.org](mailto:burdk@ucc.org). And please visit [www.ucc.org/youth](http://www.ucc.org/youth) for NYE news and updates!

## Summer at Silver Lake

by Anne and Tim Hughes

**Silver Lake summer sign-ups are in full gear now. There is still space in many conferences for youth entering 4th through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. You can register online at <http://silverlake.ctucc.org>, and see all the conference descriptions for your age group! This year we are offering a \$25 discount when you sign up for a second summer conference. Bring a friend and get a free Silver Lake t-shirt.**

**Also, check out the Silver Lake video on our website, or ask your church to show it for interested parents and youth ages 8 to 18. You’ll find the link for the video on the front page of the SLCC website, right underneath the link for registration.**

## 2008 National Youth Event: LIVING THE LIFE July 24 - 28

**What is it?** The National Youth Event is a UCC gathering held every four years. NYE provides an opportunity for over 3,000 youth and their advisors and chaperones to gather for four days of worship, workshops, faith, fun and fellowship.

**When and Where is it?** The next NYE is July 24-28 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. NYE begins Thursday with dinner and opening worship. Friday, Saturday and Sunday offer opportunities for fun workshops, recreation, great music, worship and community! NYE concludes Sunday evening; Monday morning we check out from campus dorms and head home.

**Who can go?** NYE is for youth ages 13–18, their youth advisors and chaperones.