



ConnTact

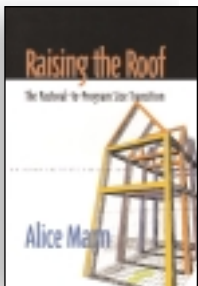
**United
Church
News**

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Welcome

Mill Plain Union Church

BY NATHAN EDDY

M eet the Connecticut Conference's newest member: she is medium-sized, likes kids, loves Jesus, and is about 120 years old. Her name is Mill Plain

Union Church of Waterbury, and she would like to introduce herself.

That is, if you haven't already heard the name. Waterbury's fourth United Church of Christ church has long given money to the association and the conference, and all of its ministers except one have been ordained in the **Congregational** *Continued on page A6*

**A Timeless Message:
Your Friends and Neighbors**

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6

A Timeless Message



The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister

In Connecticut, we have so long thought of ourselves as the largest Protestant denomination in the state that it is easy for us to lose sight of our contextual reality. Yes, we are over 100,000 people in 257 churches in 169 towns and cities. Yes, we are indeed the largest denomination of Protestant persuasion.

Yet there are over 3,400,000 people living in

Connecticut. A great many of them are affiliated with other religious bodies, yet probably at least one third are completely without any faith relationship at all. These are your friends and neighbors. Some were once affiliated, and maintain a vestigial faith. Some are new immigrants who have carried their faith and culture with them from their homeland. Many of this million, however, do not know the gospel of Jesus Christ at all.

In past columns I have occasionally addressed my concern for evangelism. If we are set in the midst of a million people with no faith relationship, we have a God-given responsibility to reach out to them with

the timeless message of God's love, to let them know we are here and ready to welcome them, to care for their spiritual well-being. I am convinced a sizable proportion of that million are unaware that a church like ours exists – one where the life of the mind is valued, where we seek to make God's extravagant love incarnate in our welcome, where questions are de rigeur, where women are fully a part of the life and leadership of the church, where we care powerfully about living for

justice and peace in the midst of God's world.

Connecticut is changing. We are receiving more and more new immigrants. Our neighbors now are far more likely to be persons of color than ever before in our history. In my neighborhood in South Windsor, within less than a third of a mile, I have neighbors who are African American, Korean, Taiwanese, Filipino and Hispanic and there are probably others I have not yet met. As Connecticut diversifies, how will we welcome people from many different cultures into our churches? Are you making an effort now to reach out to those who are new to your community, to be sure they know they are welcome? They may not assume so.

One of the ways for us to greet and welcome new immigrants is by starting new churches, worshipping communities where they will feel at home culturally and linguistically. Obviously we want all of our existing churches to be places of welcome, but for some one of another culture and language, a support community where one is completely at home is very important. The best of both worlds comes when an existing church provides a "nest" for a fledgling church of another culture. The two can then support and transform one another, growing in understanding, strengthening the evangelical outreach of both.

Another opportunity comes with the many storefront and start-up independent churches all around us. Often we assume they are alone because they want to be. Yet experience teaches us that we have

The best of both worlds comes when an existing church provides a "nest" for a fledgling church of another culture.

much in common and they are yearning for a community of churches. Is there a new church, or even one many years old, in your town or city that has no wider connection? How might you build a relationship with them, for the sake of the wholeness of Christ's church?

If we will continue to be true to our heritage, and commit ourselves also to the future, these are subjects for prayer, study and dialogue in every church of our Conference. Start this summer and fall and let us know what you discover!

ORIGINAL SPIN • THE REV. HAL CHORPENNING

A Long, Strange Trip v.2

Last month, I wrote about three ways in which Connecticut's UCC churches are blessed, but that these beatitudes can also carry a burden. To recap: Connecticut

has the highest concentration of UCC congregations in the nation; we have a rich history; we have excellent staff resources.

As I write this final column for Conntact, I offer a few more ways in which we in Connecticut are richly blessed and challenged.

Blessing IV: We are the establishment. Even though Congregationalism was disestablished as the official religion of the state of Connecticut in 1818, we still are the largest Protestant denomination in the state. Unlike any other UCC conference I know, we have a legislative advocate, Kim Harrison, who works on our behalf to represent our Conference Resolutions in the state legisla-

ture in Hartford. (The Roman Catholic Church also has a legislative advocate: on some issues we work together and on others we diverge.) Most of us worship in beautiful, paid-for meetinghouses that occupy a central place on the town green or in the city. Some of our congregations have endowments as large as \$20 million. These are characteristics of the establishment.

The curse is as Emerson said it: "There are always two parties ... the Establishment and the Movement." It's difficult to DWJD (do what Jesus did) when you look more like a Pharisee than a follower of the Jesus Movement, though it's certainly not impossible. I think of churches in which members are forced to be generous, because the congregation's survival depends upon it; churches in which new members must be welcomed in order for the congregation to reach critical mass; church members who are bonded to each other, because religious persecution is the norm. I think of house churches in China and new churches in the West and Hispanic churches here in Connecticut. Their vitality comes with struggle – with being the Movement.

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• United Church News •

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Colombia Delegation

As you read this issue of Conntact, a delegation from the Connecticut Conference is en route to Colombia, to visit our partners in the Mennonite Church and to see for themselves the situation in Colombia. While a 38-year-old civil war, more than 2 million displaced persons, and narco-trafficking are not the only chapters in the story of Colombia, they dominate the pages of our newspapers, and finding solutions to these problems dominates the work of our partners at JustaPaz, the justice and peace arm of the Colombia Mennonite Church.

UCC members from the Central Atlantic and Massachusetts Conferences are also on the trip, which is being coordinated by Witness for Peace. The delegation from Connecticut includes

The Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree (First Church in Windsor and Conference Minister)

The Rev. Kent Siladi (First Church in Guilford and Regional Minister)

The Rev. Jerry Streets (Church of Christ in Yale University)

Lyn — (First Church in Middletown)

Hugh and Kate McLean (First Church in Windsor)

In advance of the trip, I interviewed Dr. Crabtree about her perspectives on journeying to Colombia.

Tell me why you're going to Colombia?

Quite honestly, I feel like I need to be there as a symbolic representative of the body of Christ. If we're going to be in partnership, it can't be one-way. People often say to me, "It's so dangerous." There is no question that there is danger involved, but if our partners – Ricardo and Janna and Bonnie and the Mennonites in Colombia – live in the midst of it, we need to experience it in order to be one with them. The least we can do is visit.

What are some of your concerns about going?

One concern is that the delegation is so large that we'll seem more like an invasion than a pastoral visitation. Given the environment in the world right now,

and the political and economic dimensions of the so-called war, a large delegation has an impact. And it's important for us to go with our partner conferences from Central Atlantic and Massachusetts.

I don't want to say I have no concerns about safety, but I trust Ricardo [Esquivia, executive director of JustaPaz] implicitly.

What are your thoughts about the Colombia Partnership and how it might have changed since September 11?

I think the partnership changed in a couple of ways for me: the world that seemed so secure for us and so insecure for Colombians became insecure for us, as well. The words of Ricardo and his presence with us at the Conference Annual Meeting a year and a half ago have taken on a new life and meaning for me. Another way is that since September 11 and the decision of the United States government to declare war on terrorism and to respond to the crime of the acts of September 11 with full-scale military action, we've seen nation after nation around the globe resort to violence. I think we forget, as a nation, that we are a pacesetter, and I think we've set an unfortunate pace. So the connection to Colombia is that with the U.S. right now debating increasing military aid to Colombia, does that mean we are readying for war with our partners?

Where is there room for hope in the situation in Colombia?

It has been my experience all over the world that people who live in settings that we think of as the most despairing are the people who are capable of the most profound hope. That's true for Ricardo; it was true of my experi-

ence in Uganda. Our partners in Korea lived profoundly by hope through the human-rights struggles through which their witness was so important. So, there is more room for hope in Colombia, in an ironic way, than there is room in our hearts, because we do not live by hope in the same kind of way.

What sort of learnings or experiences do you hope to bring back from Colombia?

People. When I talk with Kent Siladi, Jerry Streets, or Barbara Gerlach [of First Congregational UCC in Washington, DC] – three good friends who have been there – what I hear

The world that seemed so secure for us and so insecure for Colombians became insecure for us, as well.

from them are stories of people. That's what is missing for me right now. I know Ricardo and Bonnie, but to go there and experience what they live is really important. I've been reading a book by Ingrid Bettancourt [Colombian senator and former presidential candidate] called *Til Death Do* *Continued on page 5*

ORIGINAL SPIN • continued

Blessing V: Most of us know what it means to be from the Congregational tradition. We get it when people talk about empowered laity. We understand what is meant by democratized church governance. We have a profound comprehension of congregational autonomy (though we're still working on that wider-church covenant piece, which balances autonomy and keeps it in check).

The curse is that most of us think of ourselves as Congregationalists, not as members of the United Church of Christ (or even as Congregational UCC). We aren't in touch with the richness of our Evangelical and Reformed siblings in the United

Church and all they have to offer. And we often miss out on the delicious newness of the recombinant UCC: the denomination that has taken Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, Reformed traditions, tossed them together and produced something new that exceeds the sum of its parts. (It's not all that new: the UCC is older than I am!)

I would not suggest that we lose our Congregational-ness, but rather that we add some UCC-ness into our tradition. I love, honor, and am proud of our Congregational heritage, but I also love who we have become as the UCC.

Blessing VI: We have one of the finest

conference ministers in the denomination. It has been an honor and a privilege for me to work with Davida Foy Crabtree for the last three years. She has vision, passion, drive, and an uncanny ability to find the right people to do the right things. She also has a fine entrepreneurial spirit that seeks out new opportunities and finds people to develop them.

The curse is that we ask much – if not too much – of our conference minister. Conference ministry isn't for wimps, to be sure, but we ask Davida to be pastor to our clergy, staff for our board, spokesperson to our media, responsible for a \$5+ million budget, representative to boards (Amistad America and

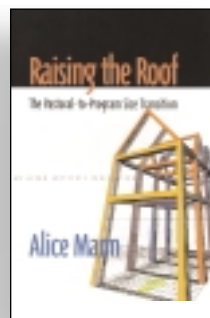
Andover-Newton to name two), and to be a leader in our wider church. Add to that the demoralizing, disinspiring work of dealing with clergy misconduct, and it becomes clear that this is either a call from God or gluttony for punishment. We need to work together to keep nurturing her spirit, encouraging her efforts, and thanking her for her service.

I close with thanks for the blessing that you have bestowed on me: allowing me to minister with you for the last three years.

Hal Chorpenning begins as St. Minister at Plymouth UCC in Ft. Collins, Colorado, this month.

Raising the Roof

Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition
by Alice Mann
Alban Institute, 2001
176 pp., \$15



One of the most common – and most difficult – changes a healthy, mid-sized church can make is to outgrow its mode of being the church. If your congregation is growing in weekly attendance

from about 150 members to 200 members, you're likely in the transition from a church in which the organizational dynamic centers around the minister and a small group of leaders to a congregation that has distinctive ministries and

programs, several pastoral staff, and where pastoral care is the concern of both laity and clergy. It is also a stage that the Rev. Alice Mann identifies as "the plateau zone." This is where a lot of congregations get stuck in the mud. "Many aspects of the congregation's culture will have to change," she writes, "and the church's enduring values will have to be expressed in new ways if the shift is to be made successfully."

Fortunately, Alice Mann, a church consultant and Episcopal priest, has written a wonderfully approachable book that will help lay leaders and clergy find ways to grow in numbers and in the depth of their common ministry. *Raising the Roof* was only

published last year, but it is already in its second printing (and on backorder until July), which indicates not only the widespread nature of the pastoral-to-program transition, but also the usefulness of Mann's work.

In a very clearly enunciated format, Mann outlines the pitfalls of changing size, as well as the barriers to growing into a "program-size" church. She goes through some of the characteristics that congregations can embrace to catalyze such a change. One of the aspects of Mann's work, which is also reflected in her consulting practice, is that she asks congregations to come to grips with their history and the vocation. Where have we been? Where are we now? How do we want to be the church in the future?

The spirit of discernment is alive and well in Mann's book, which distinguishes it from others in the church-growth genre. She includes seven biblical reflections with suggestions for group Bible study in the appendix. This, along with other tools, occupies just less than half of the book, lending it a very practical edge, as well as one that is attentive to the Spirit.

One of the most useful tools for congregations here in the Connecticut Conference is Mann's "System Change Index." She invites congregations to do a self-evaluation about nine key issues: congregational self-definition, role of the pastor, size of the paid staff, physical space capacity, movement toward growth, delegation of planning, aspirations to quality, infrastructure for member care and involvement, and effective conflict management and prevention. Using these criteria as well as attendance figures, Mann provides an instrument that suggests whether a congregation is in a position for growth.

Even if your congregation is not in the midst of size transition or considering a long-range plan, the book would be a valuable way for lay leaders in a congregation to appraise their church's current and future outlook. I would recommend that clergy serving churches with weekly attendance in the size range of 100 to 300 read the book and see if it might help to provide a structure or a system for inviting a healthy transition.

Volunteers as Employees for Workers' Comp

BY THE UCC INSURANCE BOARD

The question regarding Volunteers often arises... Which volunteers qualify as an "employee" for purposes of Workers' Compensation? The following clarifies some of the issues and there may be other factors as well.

1) States vary in how broadly they interpret the definition of an employee. For a volunteer to obtain statutory benefits they need to be recognized as an employee under the specific state's statutes. Some states are silent on this issue and others are not. Some states only recognize public volunteers as eligible for comp, such as volunteer firefighters. Many times the question will need to be "litigated" and the administrative agency or courts will make a ruling based on the facts of the particular case. You may not be able to change the status of a worker simply by agreeing to do so.

2) The second issue is whether the volunteer can be considered an independent contractor, rather than an employee. Usually the right to control the individual in the performance of a job is the determining factor, but there are several other factors that must be considered. For example, whether on not the worker is engaged in a distinct occupation or business, or whether the work is also performed for others or involves the kind of work that is usually done by independent contractors. The length of time involved may also be considered. For example, if a volunteer spends an hour of time at the church on one occasion to cut the lawn while the staff custodian is on vacation, it is likely that they will not be considered an employee. However, if a party who is not an independent maintenance contractor does ground maintenance and custodial work for the church on a regularly scheduled ongoing basis they might be considered an employee (i.e., Staff Custodian), even if they are not being paid. As you can see, it often depends on multiple factors.

3) One test that is gaining popular acceptance is the specific nature of the work in relation to the regular

business of the employer. If the work is an integral part of the business operation, and is directed and controlled by the insured, they are more likely to be considered an employee. Many states exempt work that is casual (brief and irregular) and different in nature from the work regularly done by the business. Another way to look at this is whether they are performing an essential job function that would otherwise be performed by a paid staff person or regular employee. An example would be the group of volunteers that stop by on Saturday to give the church a new coat of paint. Most jurisdictions would likely reject such claims under Workers' Compensation. However, the church's regular Secretary, who happens to be a volunteer, would likely be seen as an employee. Likewise, volunteer Camp Directors are usually considered to be employees.

Since states vary in how broadly they apply these tests, it is important to research the law in the specific jurisdiction. Often these issues must be determined by litigation or hearing. In questionable cases the claims are routinely denied and the administrative agency or court must decide the matter.

To reduce ambiguity about the intent of the Volunteers as Employees Endorsement, the Insurance Board's insurance package contains a clarification that is in keeping with the popular "test" described in item 3 above. Understanding that it is subject to State interpretation, we endorse use of the following definition of Volunteers as Employees for the purposes of the Workers' Compensation Coverage – enhancing coverage for our churches:

Volunteer - Any non-compensated natural person while that person is subject to your direction and control while performing essential employment functions/duties otherwise performed by paid staff or regular employees. Independent sub-contractors are specifically excluded.

Feel free to contact our Conference Agent, Ken Krause at 203-488-6386, if you have any questions or to receive a proposal with the enhanced coverages provided by the UCCIB Program. The Connecticut Conference is proud to share that we have 92% of our UCC Churches in the Program.

Update from the Board of Directors

BY DONALD K. KETCHAM

There are eighteen members of the Board of Directors plus support staff. This year's Board includes seven new members. Because of this rather large turnover, it was clear that our first goal was to get to know one another and to become oriented to the tasks and responsibilities of members of the Board. This process started on our daylong retreat in February and continues each meeting with one of the senior staff coming to the meeting to describe their ministry. We have all been struck by the competency of our staff and the heavy responsibilities they are asked to shoulder.

Once again this year, for all intents and purposes, we met our goal for Our Church's Wider Mission and were able to send on to the United Church of Christ the full amount of our commitment. We thank all the staff for doing the kind of work that our churches want to support and for encouraging giving beyond the local church.

Three task forces have been established: one to propose Bylaw changes, another to reflect on the resolution process, and a group to study the theological issues raised by the events of "9/11." The Nominating Committee of the Board found people to serve the many committees of the Board.

Much is being done to get ready to make recommendations regarding a major Conference-wide capital campaign. We are very fortunate to have Kate and Hugh McLean as co-chairpersons, who are members of First Church in Windsor. Kate is a former Moderator of the Conference, and has chaired the Korean Partnership Committee. Both Hugh and Kate have served on the Conference Board in the past. They have been generous donors to the work of the Conference in many ways. A few years ago they led a campaign for their alma mater that went 30 percent over its goal, so they are well experienced!

A small campaign planning committee has been formed and includes Alan Green (Faith, Hartford), Rev. Hannah Howe (Conference Moderator), Sue Waldron (Connecticut Women of the UCC), Rev. David Spollett (Fairfield, First), Rev. Bill Zito (Watertown, First). Davida meets with them, as does Diane Ciba, our campaign coordinator. Support for the campaign will be a major focus of the Board for several years.

We have been very impressed with the work of the Silver Lake Conference Board. A plan is in place to ensure a balanced budget over the next five years and a full examination and documentation of the physical needs of the Center has been accomplished. The Board voted to spend \$46,000 to bring power to the new cabins and to solve deficiency issues with the present power service. In addition the Board voted to spend \$100,000 on the absolutely basic repairs necessary to open the camp for the summer. This allocation includes a \$20,000 contingency fund to provide emergency water supplies should there be local water deficits.

The Board continues to have a good spirit and is able to strike a balance between a willingness to take calculated risks and being cautious. The members are dedicated and knowledgeable. At our meetings we have almost 100 percent attendance. We could not do the work we do without the superb guidance and support of our Conference Minister, Davida Foy Crabtree; Ken Ulmer, Associate Conference Minister for Administration; Peggy Wright, Assistant to the Conference Minister; and Sue Furness, Registrar and Assistant to the Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns.

The Rev. Don Ketcham is chair of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference and Senior Pastor at the West Avon Congregational Church.



Youth Gather at Killingworth

On Sunday, April 28, youth from Connecticut's UCC churches gathered at the Killingworth Congregational Church gathered for the third annual youth symposium.

Attendance at the first year's event was 70; it grew to 100 last year, and this year 211 young people and their leaders came together to play, celebrate and worship.

The gathering was aimed at youth in seventh through ninth grade, starting with worship at 10:00 a.m. After lunch the youth participated in workshops on music, yoga, a challenge course, kickboxing, kite design, and others. Music for the event was performed by Wendi Cooke and her band, and the sermon was presented by storyteller Ouida Williams Haynes.

According to one participant, "It was a truly moving experience for so many of our youth to come together and allow their spirits to soar!"

Deb Sodergren contributed to this article.

COLOMBIA DELEGATION *Continued from page 3*

Us Part. She is an inspired advocate for human rights and integrity in government who has stood virtually alone in the midst of corruption and was kidnapped several months ago. Reading her book has made Colombia come alive in an interesting way. In the midst of her own story, she tells the recent history of Colombia. 159 union leaders were killed there last year (that doesn't include journalists, clergy, educators, or jurists). What I'm looking forward to most is to know the people, understand their struggle and their hopes.

How would you define the underpinnings of our partnership? Why is that important theologically?

The reason that we need to be in partnership – not just with JustaPaz, but church to church, pastor to pastor, people to people – is because we are children of the same God. Unless we know our siblings personally when we have

the opportunity, how can we claim to be children of the same God? We may be rhetorically brothers and sisters, but we aren't in relationship. For me, Christianity is all about relationship. God's gift of the trinity is the gift of relationship. So, we are never a church unless we are in relationship. It also involves the quest for justice, and our need for transformation, and our need to discover that what we think of as risk is not risky at all. The ease and comfort of our lives is far more morbid to our faith than the dangers of living in Colombia.

If we live here in isolation, we are essentially saying, "What need does the eye have of you?" and the people of the of the Mennonite Church in Colombia are the heart and the ear of the body of Christ. If we claim to be the body of Christ together, we need to deepen that relationship.

East Hartford

The First Congregational Church of East Hartford climaxed its 300th anniversary after a 3 year celebration, remembering the slow process of its birth. Between 1699 and 1702 residents on the East side of the river established The Third Church of Hartford with little or no support from the other two churches. It became the First Church of East Hartford in 1783 when East Hartford became an independent town.

Poquonock

Community Church advised their members that there is a low vision monitor available for use at the LP Wilson Community Center. It is an easy to use monitor that magnifies material such as papers, books, magazines, bills, etc.

East Windsor

Congregational Church has invited snorers to join the choir. According to a study done in Exeter, England, chronic snorer's were helped by practicing scales and vocal exercises.

Windsor

First Church is creating a large canvas labyrinth and is looking for help with painting and planning. Those involved with the project will be guided through meditations followed by painting and reflections.

Hartford

Center Church is providing an opportunity for those who are unable to attend Sunday Worship services to phone in and listen to the service.

Bolton

Congregational Church participated in the U.S. Congregational Life Survey. The results that came back to the church reflected a strong and healthy congregation that is united and focused on doing God's work together. The results show that there is room for growth as well.

Manchester

Second Congregational Church had a Walk for

Warmth to raise money for church World Service Mother's Day blanket program.

Clinton

First Church of Christ celebrates Seeding Sunday each May. Harvest of Talents challenges church members to use their talents to raise funds to fulfill the pledge of mission support. Seeds such as vegetable and flower seeds, lemonade packets, and five-dollar bills are distributed. In November the harvests are celebrated and collected.

New Britain

South Church displayed a wishing well full of paper flowers. Each flower listed an item needed for the Christian Education program. Gifts donated were celebrated at the Children and Youth Sunday worship service.

Rocky Hill

Congregational Church honored Great Grandmothers with a small gift on Mother's day. 53 ABC quilts were displayed and then donated to organizations for AIDS babies and other seriously ill young children.

Granby

South Congregational Church is participating in an outreach project in Appalachia this summer. To raise funds they are selling "Living Stock". Contributors receive a stock certificate, bridge-building relationships and a fine dinner in September.

Farmington

First Church offered a writing seminar. Members were given the opportunity to do some autobiographical writing with the final goal of a completed version of an early church memory.

Hartford

Asylum Hill Congregational Church has invited women to gather with other women in an intimate setting for prayer, sharing, song and ritual on a monthly basis.

Mill Plain Union Church

Continued from page 1

Church or the UCC since its founding. But something is different today in this handsome stone church. The change began nearly two years ago, when the 401-member congregation first started exploring membership in the UCC, and the change continued through February when the church's congregational meeting approved the move. The Naugatuck Valley Association made membership official on April 28. The Mill Plain Union Church becomes the 257th church in the Connecticut Conference.

"I think the bottom line is that people had realized over time that this would be something that would strengthen our church over the long term," said the Rev. Michael Ciba, the church's 46-year-old pastor, who has served here since 1998 and was ordained in the UCC in 1992.

To meet this church and find out what Ciba thinks the UCC will strengthen, you need to start at Mill Plain's birth. In the 1880s, when this East End neighborhood was a melting pot of ethnic and religious identities, Protestants in the area realized they needed a community church. No denomination held sway, so the founders sought out common ground among their traditions and started a union church.

For the church's first 40 years, ministers from Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational churches in the city led worship in the young church on a rotation; the Methodists got the first Sunday of the month and the Congregationalists the last.

Today, the church is home to folks whose grandparents bowled and played basketball at the church during the Depression, as well as former Roman Catholics and others seeking an ecumenical worship experience.

"We still retain the character of an interdenominational church in that we welcome Christians from different denominational backgrounds," Ciba said. "I think the reason the church moved forward into joining the UCC at this time in its history is that the UCC is a very ecumenical denomination."

Other reasons informed the decision, as well. The step was clear to Dick Borchardt, chairman of the church's governing body, after the search for Ciba showed him how important the association's resources were, he said. Others spoke of stewardship materials, educational resources, and of course the long and friendly association the church shared with the Naugatuck Valley Association.

Still other influences were harder to pin down. Ciba and others mentioned a simple openness that inspired the discovery process two years ago and a steady but undramatic swell in the life of the congregation that most regular churchgoers have probably experienced in their own communities.

"It's the contact with the people," said Louise Leavenworth, the church clerk and historian who helped search for Ciba, and who turned 75 in May. "I can feel like I'm with God anytime, but I feel it here, too. I'm a person that's got to try something. You have to change. Even at 75, I feel you've got to change."

"I like the activist connection, because that's what I'm all about," said 20-year church member Lyda Wright, who was one of five African-American students in her Waterbury high school class and an early fighter for civil rights in the city in the 1960s. She has years behind her as a teacher, hospital administrator, and community organizer, as well as an arrest en masse in the 1980s while protesting apartheid outside the South African embassy in Washington in her 60s.

"I prefer working with my city to make things better," Wright said. "There's a spiritual side, but there's much more to religion than the spiritual side."

Whatever the reasons for joining, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Neville, western regional minister and guide through Mill Plain's exploration of the UCC, sees gifts on the conference end that Mill Plain Union Church will offer.

"You walk into that church and you recognize immediately that this is a healthy church — transformational," he said. "They're growing, and they're interested in new forms of ministry. It's a wealth of ministry that this congregation will bring."

But perhaps Ciba sees best what place joining the UCC will take in the rich and still-unfolding history of the conference's newest member.

"What to me it points toward is a desire to begin looking toward the future," he said, "and to begin being open to some new possibilities while still retaining the heritage."

Nathan Eddy is Education Director at South Congregational Church in Middletown. He will enter Yale Divinity School as an Master of Divinity candidate in the fall. Previously, he worked as a reporter for the Milford Daily News of Milford, Massachusetts.

CLASSIFIEDS

Positions

ANSONIA — The First Congregational Church, UCC is seeking an Organist/Choir Director. Position to begin July 2002. 3 manual draw knob pipe organ, 36 ranks, 33 stops. Chickering baby grand piano in sanctuary, 9-10 member Chancel Choir. One 10 AM Sunday Service. Contact: Mrs. Clifford Hoyle, 7 Elizabeth St. Ansonia, CT 06401 203-735-6284 [8/02]

COLCHESTER — Colchester Federated Church is seeking a Director of Music Ministries. This is a vibrant community of 500+ members with many talented musicians. This person should be someone who can work with many others to bring together a balanced, varied, and sacred program to support worship and congregational singing. Contact: Colchester Federated Church 60 main St. Colchester, CT 06415 860-537-5189 colcheseferederated@juno.com [9/02]

COLUMBIA — Columbia Congregational Church is seeking an Organist/Choir Director to enhance their worship. Responsibilities would include providing music for Sunday Service and special holidays, directing Sanctuary and children's choirs, coordinating with bell/chime choir director, and attending staff and Music Committee meetings. Average worship attendance is 150-175. Position is ticketed for 15 hrs. a week with a salary of \$11,000 to \$13,256, commensurate with experience. Contact: David Pearce Columbia Congregational Church c/o Search Committee 325 Route 87 Columbia, CT 06237 860-228-4669 husky58@yahoo.com [9/02]

EAST GRANBY — East Granby Congregational Church is seeking an organized, self-directed individual to provide management and administration of the church office. Responsibilities include reception, clerical tasks, publication and report writing. Knowledge of general office equipment, Word, Excel, Access and Publisher is required.

Applications in person will not be accepted, no phone calls please. Contact: Resumes are to be sent with cover letter addressed to Janice Gibson, PO Box 390 East Granby, CT 06026 [8/02]

GLASTONBURY — Vibrant Glastonbury UCC congregation seeks committed, creative Director of Christian Education. Responsibilities include coordinating Church School and special seasonal programs, selecting and training Church School teachers, developing adult education opportunities and managing the Church library, all with the assistance of the Board of Christian Education. Part-time (20 hours per week/10 months). Commitment and enthusiasm more important than formal certification. Contact: Sarah Moriarty, Personnel Committee: First Church of Christ Congregational, 2183 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033. (860) 633-4641 firstchurch@glastonburyfirst.org [9/02]

GRANBY — Wanted: Choir Director/Director of Music First Congregational Church of Granby is an historical church in a growing town, known for its excellence in music with a knowledgeable choir. Many of the 32+ volunteer choir members sing in other groups, including the Hartford Chorale and the Farmington Valley Chorale. Our pipe organ was recently enhanced. We are seeking a team player who will work with our organist and pastors to provide a harmonious worship experience. Contact: Resumes may be sent to Nancy Rodney, First Congregational Church of Granby, 219 N. Granby Road, Granby, CT 06035; or e-mailed to sprichard@fcc-granby.org. [9/02]

GREENWICH — Director of Ministries for Children and Young Families

Looking for a person who feels a deep calling to minister to and with children and their families. While it would be preferable for the person to have a degree in an education related field and have experience in ministry in a church

setting. Second Church is seeking a person who has a deep love for children and desires a creative place in which to minister. Contact: Mail resume to Rev. Robert H. Naylor, Second Congregational Church, 139 E. Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830 or email - info@2cc.org [7/02]

HAMDEN - Chief Executive Officer New Samaritan Corporation, a large nonprofit developer and manager of affordable housing with roots in the Connecticut Conference is seeking a dynamic President to provide executive leadership for three affiliated companies with a staff of 500+ and \$10M operating budget. Successful candidate will bring five-plus years of experience in nonprofit management, knowledge of affordable housing development and property management, strong communication skills, and the ability to develop a successful fundraising program. Competitive salary and benefits package. Send letter of interest and resume to: Chair, Transition Committee, New Samaritan Corporation, 2666 State Street, Hamden, CT 06517 An Equal Opportunity Employer

HARTFORD — Associate Conference Minister for Administration sought by CT Conference. Responsible for oversight of finance, personnel, purchasing, property administration. Team player with excellent management and people skills, desire to work in fast-paced setting with great staff! Ordination not required. Must share Conference commitment to multicultural, open and affirming, just peace and accessible ministry, AA/EEO. Contact: Resumes to ACM/A Search, 125 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105. [9/02]

HARTFORD — Associate Conference Minister for Wider Church Ministries sought by CT Conference. Responsible for mission interpretation, media relations, editing CONNtact, teaching among the churches. Theologically grounded, ordination desirable but not required. Same fast-paced setting with

great staff team. Must share Conference commitment to multicultural, open and affirming, just peace and accessible ministry. Contact: Resumes to ACM/WCM Search, 125 Sherman St., Hartford 06105. [9/02]

HARTFORD — Associate in Youth Ministries sought by CT Conference. Work with youth and advisors in local churches, develop vision for Conference-wide youth ministry, enable special events! Must share conference commitment to being a multicultural, open and affirming, just peace and accessible ministry of the church. Ordination not required. Contact: Resumes to Youth Search, 125 Sherman St., Hartford 06105. [9/02]

God's Neighborhood:

Finding Our Common Ground That They All May Be One

General Association • Sept. 23-24, 2002

Silver Lake Conference Center

KEYNOTERS:

Dr. Benjamin Griffin,

President of Andover Newton

Dr. Heidi Hadsell,

President of Hartford Seminary

Dr. William Imes,

President of Bangor Seminary

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Clergy and Christian Educators are encouraged to save these dates. Watch for registration forms in June.

Contact Sue Furness at 866-FOR-CUCC or susanf@ctucc.org

Save the Date

9:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m. • First Church, Congregational, Fairfield

Conversation and Worship with
General Minister and President: The Rev. John Thomas

A time for clergy and laity to reflect and pray about September 11

Friday,
Sept. 6,
2002

EVENTS

Wednesday, July 31, 2002 7 PM Hartford Family Institute, 17 South Highland Street, West Hartford. Interfaith Training Program introductory lecture. The Interfaith Training Program in Body-centered Gestalt Pastoral Care is for clergy, religious leaders, spiritual directors and others in pastoral work. It is designed for professional growth and personal self-care. Call 860-236-6009 for information.

Sunday, September 15, 2002 12 to 5:30 PM • First Church of Christ (Center Church) in Hartford • Youth Leader Training Event • Keynote speaker and workshops of interest to those leading youth groups...details soon! Watch the mail and FIDO! Cost: Fee for lunch to be determined. Contact: Kathy Peters kathyp@ctucc.org 866-367-2822 or 860-233-5564

Sunday September 22 4 PM • First Congregational Church of Stamford • Dr. Susan K. Smith Spiritual Renewal Message • The dynamic preacher from The Advent United Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio will deliver a Spiritual Renewal Message. Contact: Revnor@aol.com or 203-323-0200

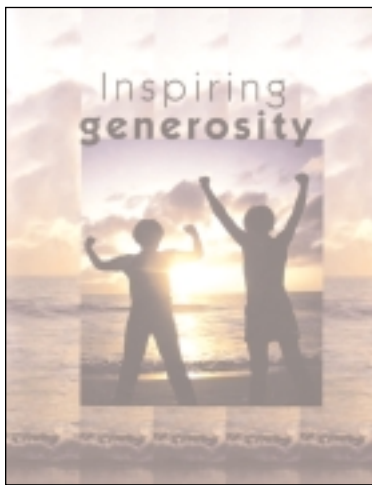
September 23-24, 2002 • Silver Lake Conference Center, Sharon, CT • General Association • "God's Neighborhood: Finding Our Common Ground That They All May Be One" Keynoters: Dr. Benjamin Griffin, President of Andover Newton, Dr. Heidi Hadsell, President of Hartford Seminary, Dr. William Imes, President of Bangor Seminary. Clergy and Christian Educators are encouraged to save these dates. Contact: Sue Furness susanf@ctucc.org

Saturday, September 28, 2002 9-12 AM • First Church of Christ in Glastonbury • Church School Teacher Training Event • Workshops for teachers, pastors, and mission committees. Especially geared for churches using Season of the Spirit and Bible Quest. Registration materials to be sent in July. Contact: Kathy Peters kathyp@ctucc.org 866-367-2822 or 860-233-5564

Inspiring Generosity

New Resource from the Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry Team

REVIEWED BY AMY BEVERIDGE



The Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ has recently published *Inspiring Generosity*, a total package in one book of the theology and mission of stewardship, as well as

"how-to's" of budget building and annual campaigns. As the title suggests, this resource is designed to help church members celebrate God's abundant gifts through generous living.

There is a wealth of useful material in this book. It begins with a section on "Stewardship Theology and Motivation," which includes discussion questions to

help us see the ways in which we have all experienced God's graceful generosity in our lives. These questions could be the basis for background study for the Stewardship Committee or as part of an adult study series. They could be suggested to members as reflective questions for spiritual growth. They might even be sermon starters. A quote from the first page of this section sets the tone of the message:

Stewardship presumes blessing and abundance. It is not about overcoming scarcity, or guarding against it, or getting something we don't have — or being prudent. It is not about giving to people in need. It is about recognizing all that we already have, helping both ourselves and others know and enjoy the abundance in which all can share, right now.

From the theology of stewardship, the book moves on to "Understanding Mission" as inseparable from stewardship and basic to our understanding of church. In fact, the authors say, "Mission is the church." The book examines both local and wider mission.

The rest of the resource deals with the practical issues of "building a budget" and "asking for support." The budget chapter leads the reader step-by-step through budget development, provides methods of estimating the giving potential of the church's membership, and helps you or your committee decide on what will likely be a reasonable financial challenge to present to the congregation.

"Asking for Support" provides four different methods for seeking financial, time, and talent commitments from the membership. Here you will find the "Consecrating Stewards" program, but also "Invited to Give, Thanks," and "Faith-Promise" as well as a program based on personal visits.

Finally, *Inspiring Generosity* includes worship resources and a bibliography of "the best books on stewardship."

Inspiring Generosity is \$12.00 and may be ordered by calling United Church of Christ Resources at 800.325.7061.

Amy Beveridge serves as a Stewardship Specialist with the Connecticut Conference, UCC, and can be reached at amyb@ctucc.org or at 860-233-5564.

**Mark Your
Calendar Now!
October 18-20, 2002**

**135th Annual Meeting
of The Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ**

*Hill Career Regional High School, New Haven, CT
Sunday afternoon worship United Church
on the Green in New Haven
Hosted by the New Haven Association*

All are welcome to attend!