

Shalom

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
United Church of Christ
VOLUME XXX, Issue 11, Fall, 2011

*"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"*

We are at the beginning of a new time in the life of the Southwest Association and Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ. I look forward as we continue to do the work and mission of the Southwest Association even though the office will officially close as of September 30. How we do some things will change. The support structure for our work is modified. What new ways of living our faith will emerge?

Read about our future in this issue of Shalom:

From the things that are ending –

Fox Lake Congregational UCC closing
Rev. Robert Mutton's retirement after 30 years of service

About the things that are remaining the same –

Spring Annual Meeting
Executive Committee leadership
Church and Ministry Division
Social Concerns Division

Our partnerships – UEK German, Palestine/Bethlehem, Prison Ministry

To what will be different –

Ministerial staff support from an Interim Associate Conference Minister
Administrative staff support from the office at the Trost Center
Self-led development groups and book study groups
Re-imagined district meetings in a new format

Included in this issue is list of contacts for the new staff support and Association leadership. If you do not get your inquiries answered, requests handled or just have questions, please contact me personally at 608-347-5178 or richf@chorus.net and I will follow up.

Rich Fluechtling, Moderator

If you have not received an e-mail with this Shalom as an attachment, PLEASE send a message from the e-mail account you would like to receive the electronic version of Shalom to Susan Taylor (staylor@wucc.org). If you do NOT have an e-mail account please, contact Susan Taylor at 608-846-7780 so we can keep you connected by mail.

Fox Lake Congregational UCC closing

After 158 years of continuous service to the community, the Fox Lake First Congregational United Church of Christ is closing. The church has a rich history in Fox Lake. It is the oldest continuous serving church in Fox Lake. Troops mustered for the Civil War in the church and the pastor serving at that time had a special "send-off" service for the troops and presented them with pocket Bibles. It also operated a Women's College for a time.

The members of the church unanimously voted to dissolve its congregation at the end of October and donate the building to the Fox Lake Historical Society for use as a museum.

The church will be celebrating its 158 years with a special closing service the afternoon of October 23, at 2:00 pm. This service is open to everyone who would like to join us. Perhaps you have some special memories that you can share during the service or during the fellowship time after the service.

Robert Mutton retires

Bob Mutton has served Southwest Association with dedication and love for 30 years.

On Saturday, November 19, all are invited to join in remembering and wishing him well in retirement. This celebration will be held at Windsor United Church of Christ at 2:00PM. There will be a worship service recognizing the conclusion of his ministry. A time for sharing and fellowship with catered meal (cost \$25) will follow.

A special mailing with complete details and reservation information will be sent soon to all churches. Or you sign up by sending your name(s) and a check to the Southwest Association, United Church of Christ, PO Box 435, DeForest, WI 53532.

Mutton Lectureship

In honor of Bob Mutton's retirement, and in deepest appreciation for his ministry among us, the Board of Directors of the Conference has authorized the establishment of the Robert Douglas Mutton Lectureship in Theology and the Practice of Ministry. To initiate this lectureship, the Conference has made an initial gift of \$3,500 to establish a fund to underwrite the lectureship. A committee of laity and clergy is being formed to plan for the annual lectures, and the initial lecture will take place in 2012.

The initial goal is to have a minimum of five lectures over the next five years, but the hope is that the lectureship fund will grow to the point that we will be able to fund an annual speaker into the future. You can support this new program by a gift payable to the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ and clearly mark the gift "MUTTON LECTURESHIP".

Help us honor this exceptional servant of Christ and the Church and help keep alive the rich theological legacy that we have long enjoyed in the Wisconsin Conference. We will announce the results of gifts to this fund at the Southwest Association celebration of Bob's ministry on November 19.

Southwest Association looking to the future

The work and mission of the Southwest Association will continue even though the office will officially close as of September 30. The Executive Committee will take a more active leadership role in this work and encourage your continued participation in this ministry. The Church and Ministry Division has a busy agenda as usual in fulfilling its role. The Periodic Support Consultations Committee and Authorized Lay Pastors Committee are continuing their important work. The clergy development groups have begun meeting this fall and will maintain the support function for clergy. Those who met in district meetings are reviewing their role and considering possible changes to meet 21st century needs. The Social Concerns Division is active and working to provide financial support within budget to local congregations. Both the UEK (German) Partnership and the Holy Land Partnership sponsored trips in 2011 will remain active.

The Association annual spring meeting planning is under way; location and date are pending confirmation of the host church calendar. The planning committee is chaired by Vice Moderator Heide Hackman. Any thoughts on program can be sent to her at pastorheide@bellevillefirstucc.org.

All of the congregations and members make the Association what it is. The future is up to all. Ideas for programs and other thoughts are welcomed and encouraged. Please send them to Moderator Rich Fluechtling at richf@chorus.net or contact any member of the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members in addition to the Moderator and Vice Moderator are Meg Shepherd, Sally Iverson, Winton Boyd, Phil Haslanger, Lisa Schoenwetter, Kerri Parker, Mark Landmark, Doug Fauth, Kandy Keuler, Mary Gafner, Alan Green, Petra Streiff, Luke Bocher and Lois Rosko.

Changes to make note of with the Association office closing:

Primary administrative support for Association activities and contact will be provided by Sue Taylor at the Conference office. She can be reached at staylor@wcucc.org or 608-846-7880. Sue will respond to your inquiries personally or forward it to the appropriate person whether that is a paid staff person or a volunteer leader of the Association.

The office telephone message has already been announcing the conference number for several weeks. The current telephone number will be turned off soon.

E-mails to the office e-mail or Bob Mutton's e-mail will be forwarded for period of time.

SHALOM newsletter will evolve in the future. It will move to an electronic version to make possible wider distribution and less cost. Please send your e-mail and the e-mails of anyone else who might be added to this list to staylor@wcucc.org. If you do not have access to e-mail, let us know so we can keep you connected by traditional mailing include the name and address as shown on the label of this mailing.

What is continuing is the Association Website. Lois Rosko maintains it and is always looking for things to post. Reach her at larosko@hotmail.com.

SOUTHWEST ASSOCIATION CONTACT LIST (keep handy for reference)

Moderator – Richard Fluechtling (608) 271-5599 or richf@chorus.net

Treasurer – Sally Iverson (608) 244-4997 or 249-1537 (W) or siverson@pcucc.org

Division on Church & Ministry Chair

Winton Boyd (608) 271-7212 or winton@orucc.org

Division on Social Concerns Chair

New chair to be selected soon. Send e-mails to staylor@wcucc.org

Divisions on Christian Education and Lay Leadership

Lois Rosko (608) 249-5863 or larosko@hotmail.com

Periodic Support Consultations Committee Chair

Jon Schultz (608) 223-9611 or joncschultz@sbcglobal.net

Authorized Lay Pastors Committee Chair

Ellen Reuter (608) 222-4094 or ejreuter@charter.net

UEK (German Partnership)

Bill Kapp (608) 643-8387 or bill_kapp@ucc-saukcity.org

Holy Land Partnership

Bonnie Van Overbeke (608) 274-1859 or bonnievano@aol.com

Prison Ministry

Jerry Hancock (608) 658-6630 or jhancock@firstcongmadison.org

Interim Associate Conference Minister as of October 1

Kent Ulrey (608) 846-7880 or kulery@wcucc.org

Southwest Association

United Church of Christ

PO Box 435

DeForest, WI 53532

Phone: (608) 846-7880

FAX: (608) 846-7881

Email: staylor@wcucc.org

Association Website: www.swwaucc.org

Lois Rosko Phone: (608) 249-5863

Rosko Email: larosko@hotmail.com

Conference Website: www.wcucc.org

National Website: www.ucc.org

Associate Conference Minister? Huh? What does that mean?

As part of the restructuring of the Wisconsin Conference, there was a decision to split staff responsibilities differently. The new position of Associate Conference Minister (ACM) has both similarities to and differences from the former role of our Association Minister. Here's what you can expect:

- Responsibility for clergy and churches in the southern part of our state. Our new ACM will continue to help with pastoral issues among clergy and in our churches. Looking for coaching, help with conflict resolution, or planning? The ACM will be able to connect you with appropriate resources. The ACM will also be a regular participant in Church & Ministry meetings, helping to advise, provide leadership and offer training.
- Search and Call. Responsibility for assisting with the search process is being shared among a team of conference staff, of which our ACM is a part. Helping to match clergy and churches will continue to be a high priority of the conference. While they'll be involved and up-to-date on progress, the ACM may or may not end up be the person working directly with your church's search committee.
- Being available and accessible. The ACM will be a regular participant in wider church meetings, as a member of the Wisconsin Conference Staff. That includes the Church Development & Renewal Team, Conference Board of Directors, and our ecumenical/interfaith connections. Because one person cannot possibly meet all of the obligations previously covered by two people, you may not see the ACM attending every committee, district, or other affinity group meeting. Participation will be more periodic. However, you can expect visits to preach in our churches and publicized office days. The ACM can be reached through the conference office.

Please be patient as we get to know one another and work out the kinks in our new staffing patterns. This is a work-in-progress! Your prayers are appreciated.

Introducing...Rev. Dr. Kent Ulery

We are delighted to share the news that the Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors has called Rev. Kent Ulery to serve as our Interim Associate Conference Minister as of October 1st. The interim position is planned to last for two years.

Recently relocated from Maine, Kent is currently living in the Chicago suburbs, close to beloved grandchildren. His personal interests include art, jazz music, NASCAR and Big 10 Sports. He cites the spiritual practice of pilgrimage as one that is particularly nourishing, and his travels include visits to early church sites in the Mediterranean basin.

Most recently, Kent served as President and Professor of Pastoral Leadership at Bangor Theological Seminary. He has also served as Conference Minister of the Michigan Conference, where he implemented and taught boundary training for clergy throughout the state. In the local church, he has been Pastor and Teacher of congregations in Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. He has substantial experience in providing keynote speeches, workshops and Bible studies.

Kent's theological training was at McCormick Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. He has a scholarly interest in the Book of Revelation, and has recently published a work on that subject.



Clergy Development Groups

The Development Groups are continuing! These are support groups for all UCC clergy active in ministry in the Southwest Association. **The Verona Group** decided to continue to meet on the first and third Thursdays without an outside facilitator. **The Evansville Group** which meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday at 9:30 and **The Lake Edge Group** which meets the 1st and 3rd Friday are still undecided as this goes to print on whether they will use a facilitator as recommended by the Conference.

There are scholarship money available from the Southwest Association and the Wisconsin Conference to assist clergy to pay for the groups who have chosen to use a facilitator. To apply for those scholarships contact Division on Church & Ministry Chair Winton Boyd (608) 271-7212 or winton@orucc.org. Winton returns from sabbatical on October 1.

Next steps for Clergy Gatherings (District Meetings)

In Process – Tuesday, Oct 18 @ Salem UCC Verona 8:30 through lunch

The Clergy Gatherings (formerly known as District Meetings) met at their appointed times in September. Each meeting was lead by a facilitator that had been trained by Cathy Wille to use Affirmative Inquiry. The Focus Statement for the discussion was: We want to be an Association where clergy have the tools, the relationships, and the support they need for their professional and personal lives. Three general questions were lifted up in each group:

1. What in your past has nourished, energized, and equipped you in your professional and personal lives?
2. What in an association or wider church setting has also helped you in these ways?
3. What would be your dream for clergy support in this Association?

On October 18 clergy are invited to gather together at Salem UCC in Verona to discuss the outcomes of these groups and to make some plans to implement the discussion into programs planning

If you are a clergy person in the Southwest Association and did not get a chance to share your input at these meetings we would love to hear from you. Please, e-mail your responses to the questions to Curt Anderson, Church and Ministry Representative (canderson@firstcongmadison.org); Todd Lippert Dodgeville District facilitator (plymouth@mhtc.net); Lois Rosko Portage District facilitator (larosko@hotmail.com); Luke Bocher, Evansville District facilitator (evansucc@aol.com), Jim Iliff Middleton District facilitator (jiliff@tds.net).

Book Study Groups

Women Authors Reading: Might Be Our Power: How Sisterhood, Prayer and Sex Changed a Nation at War by Leymah Gbowee with Carol Mithens

Contact person -Ellen Reuter

Barth: Church Dogmatics Doctrine of Creation III -Contact person Mark Yurs

Contemporary Reading Group: A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good by Miroslav Volf

Contact person- Jon Schultz

Calvin Study Group: The Institutes of Christian Religion Contact person Mark Yurs

Pulpit Supply List

Churches should be fair and forthright in agreeing upon an honorarium and travel expenses for persons they invite to provide pulpit supply. The Conference Commission on Church and Ministry suggest the minimum of \$125.00 per Sunday. Mileage should be reimbursed at the IRS rate. When a parish has two churches, you should consider a minimum of \$50.00 for the second service.

Ed Beers	271-7329
Arthur Christofersen	356-6373
Chris Currier	848-8684
Jill Sneed Bobholz	381-0412
Larry Collins	206-4436
Earl Eckhart	448-2405
John Eyster	868-3585
Allan Green	588-3650
Jerry Hancock	658-6630
Elizabeth Hazel	(926) 275-3094
Bill McIntyre	424-6285
Kay Krebs	325-3637
Carroll Olm	(262) 473-3054
Julie Overman	279-8936
Doug Pierce	628-1549
Jon Schultz	223-9611
Sue Shanks	(815) 276-3099
Lisa Schoenwetter	273-8774
Julia Weaver	245-9348
Bill Wineke	513-6146
Charles Workman	527-5718
David Yochum	(262) 473-7889

Lay Preachers	
Richard Fluechtling	347-5178
Robert Gwynne	257-5761
Bill Weiss	743-2025

Authorized Lay Pastors	
Brad Bergin	848-1058
Terri Wolff	(920) 927-5412



Keep for reference or note that you can get the current list at any time
By e-mail to staylor@wcucc.org

Church Renewal Program – The Five Practices

Saturday Oct 15, 2011 10-3 Kick Off Registration deadline Oct 3
Trost Center, Wisconsin Conference UCC
Go to www.wcucc.org for details

Want to know more about what is happening around the Wisconsin Conference?

Register for the Wisconsin Life newsletter on the website www.wcucc.com or “friend” them on facebook or twitter.

Bethlehem Partnership

Since 2004 Southwest Association, along with Memorial United Church of Christ in Fitchburg, has had a partnership with Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. Our goals include increasing awareness and support of Palestinian Christians, praying for and supporting the work of the Lutheran church in Bethlehem, and offering opportunities for people to travel to the Holy Land and meet people whose lives are affected by the ministry of the church. In 2003 a nonprofit organization called *Bright Stars of Bethlehem* (BSB) was founded to promote and spread the word about the many outreach ministries of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem that work to build hope and a brighter future for Palestine. Bonnie Van Overbeke, former pastor of Memorial UCC, and Nancy Baumgardner, a member of Memorial UCC, became members of Bright Stars of Bethlehem in order to strengthen our partnership by participating with other Christians in a common effort to support the work of the Bethlehem church.

Mitri Raheb, pastor of the church in Bethlehem and president of BSB, was at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. He spoke passionately about the lives of his people and the life-giving ministries of Christmas Lutheran Church; he invited us to share in the work of his church as it serves the needs of children, youth, families and the elderly in the community. It is our continued hope that congregations across the Conference will be interested in furthering their understanding of the Palestinian people and the ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church.

ADVENT RESOURCES: The season of Advent offers a liturgically appropriate time to remember the people who live in *the little town of Bethlehem*. We have written a bulletin insert for your use in worship (available electronically).

BETHLEHEM PRESENTATIONS: If you would like someone to talk with your worship or mission committee or make a presentation to your congregation about this ministry, contact Bonnie Van Overbeke (bonnievano@aol.com) or Nancy Baumgardner (nancybaumgardner@gmail.com). We have a 45-60 minute presentation with video or slides for use with an Adult Education program, women's group, or mission committee. We could provide a mission moment in worship; Bonnie is also available to preach highlighting the work of the Church in Bethlehem.

TRIP OPPORTUNITIES: If your church is interested in learning more about trip opportunities, please contact us. With Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison we plan to offer a yearly pilgrimage to the Holy Land focusing on the lives, faith, and work for peace of the people in Palestine and Israel.

Jesus is alive in the lives of his people living in Bethlehem. We feel blessed to participate with them in the work of the church through Bright Stars of Bethlehem and we invite you to join us in this ministry!

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of our German Partnership

To celebrate our 25 years in partnership with the Moers Church District, UEK, we have been invited to travel to our partners in Germany and then together travel to Egypt to meet with our partners, the Daughters of St. Mary and the Coptic Orthodox Church of Beni Souef to see the development projects of the Daughters. The cost for the Egypt part is in the neighborhood of 330 euros. This would not include the flight to Dusseldorf. They dates are not nailed down yet, but it looks like late October or early November 2011. If you have interest, please be in touch with Rev. Dr. David McDonald (608) 846-5731 or pastordave@windsorucc.org

Our Prison Ministry

The Prison Ministry Project is a pastoral ministry of word and sacrament for prisoners inside the

- It is a ministry of help for their families.
- It is a ministry of resource for local pastors and congregations faced with members in prison or who want to learn how they can respond to the Gospel of Matthew.
- It is a ministry of advocacy for prison reform.
- It is a ministry of cooperation with other denominations and social justice programs around the state.

<http://www.firstcongmadison.org/content/prison-ministry>

From Our United Reformed Guest-to-be:

My name is Rev. Stuart Nixon, I'm 39 years old and have been a Christian since I was 19. I have a wife and 4 young children. I am the Minister of two churches in the Plymouth area. One is suburban and the other more rural. Both are evangelical in their belief, relaxed in their worship style and are seeking to reach their communities with the love of Jesus. This is done in practical ways through youth and children's work, prayer and personal contact. I have been minister of these churches for just over 5 years and have been in full-time ministry nearly 10 years. I love preaching and am passionate about children's and youth work. My stay with you in Wisconsin will be as part of my 10 yearly sabbatical. My study for this is to look at leadership and in particular leadership in a church that is suspicious of leadership invested in an individual. I am hoping to have some conversations with you about how you "do" leadership in the UCC and see if there is anything we in the URC could learn. My hobbies include swimming, railways, aircraft, food, rock n' roll music and meteorology.

The dates of visitation for the Southwest association are October 15-23. If you have interest in hosting Stuart, please contact Bob Mutton.

GLAUCE: Great Lakes United Christian Educators

Fall 2011 Event Teachable Moments-Hospitality and Evangelism

October 11-13, 2011 Pokegan State Park in Angola, Indiana

Key Note Speaker: Steve Clapp

Workshops: Basic Boundary Training, Technology, Making the Gospel Come Alive

To register find a flyer on the Wisconsin Conference website www.wcucc.org

or go to the AUCE website

But the best part of GLAUCE is just sharing with fabulous Christian Educators !

Division on Social Concerns

The Division on Social Concerns funded grants for the following mission programs in 2011

New Glarus Swiss-Water Irrigation Project, El Salvador	\$1,000
Middleton Community of Hope-Jail Chaplaincy, Dane Cty.	1,500
Madison Orchard Ridge-youth mission trip, Philadelphia	1,000
Fitchburg Memorial-Madison Area Urban Ministry	1,500
Verona Salem-mission trip Alamosa, Colorado	1,000
Brodhead Congregational-youth mission trip, Philadelphia	1,000
Middleton Community of Hope-youth mission trip N.Y.C.	500
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	\$7,500

We encourage any church in the S/W conference to submit requests to the Division on Social Concerns for help in funding mission projects for the year 2012. Projects can be in your home community, national or international. They can involve youth and adults. Please submit your requests via email to Susan Taylor Communication and Outreach Support Specialist (staylor@wcucc.org)

During the summer the Division on Social Concerns received thank you letters from the following congregations. All expressed appreciation for the grants they received.

1. Verona Salem- 21 youth and adults traveled to Alamosa, Co. in June, for a week of immersion in service alongside less-fortunate members of society. They spent time gardening, cooking, working on small construction projects, painting, helping in the thrift shop and at the PALS children's program. The project was hard work, but they report every bit was worth it to see the people smile and know that someone cared.
2. Brodhead Congregational- 5 youth and 3 adults traveled to Philadelphia in August. The grant allowed them to rent a van so that they could all travel together. The trip gave the young people an opportunity to grow in their discipleship by serving people in need. They worked at preparing and serving food for the homeless in the inner city. They also completed a painting project while there. They also had an opportunity to visit several historical sites.
3. Madison Community of Hope- Youth mission trip to N.Y.C. All involved, experienced a rewarding and life changing experience working with and for the homeless people in the city. Time was spent working in food pantries, kitchens and conducted a very successful food drive.

To apply for a grant, your proposal must include:

- 1) What is the nature of the mission project and how will it be conducted?
- 2) What is the timeline for the project?
- 3) What are the anticipated outcomes?
- 4) What are the anticipated expenses?
- 5) What is the amount requested
- 6) What other sources of funding if any, are being pursued
- 7) Is this a one-time or an ongoing project?
- 8) What does your local church contribute to the project?

No Confirmation Retreat This Year

This past spring, the Confirmation Retreat planning committee made the decision to move to an “every other year” schedule for retreats. Several factors went into this decision...

- Over the past 5 or 6 years we have noticed a trend for churches to attend the retreat on an every other year basis
- Attendance at retreats has dropped as churches have decided to come every other year
- The Association has lost a lot of money on the retreats due to lower attendance

By offering the retreat every other year, the committee believes they can wisely use resources to put together a valuable retreat experience, churches will be able to continue attending on an every other year basis, and attendance will increase because all churches participating will attend the retreat in the same year.

For those churches looking for Confirmation retreat experiences, there are several options I would encourage you to consider:

- Elmhurst College has a UCC Confirmation Day event on October 1st. We have had churches from the Southeast Association take advantage of this event and the reviews have been very positive. This year, I am working with the Elmhurst Chaplain’s Office and Rev. Bob Ullman (Sussex) to set up a weekend experience for any Wisconsin Conference groups that would like more than just the day experience. More information should be out soon.
- The Knock Knock Retreat for middle school youth has become a Confirmation retreat for many churches in the Wisconsin Conference. This event is at Pilgrim Center from November 18-20.
- The Jesus Core Retreat for high school youth has become a Confirmation retreat for several of the churches in Wisconsin that offer Confirmation as a high school program. This event is at Pilgrim Center from January 6-8.

To find out more about these events contact Lisa Hart lhart@wcucc.org

Coordinator for Youth Ministry Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ, 4559 Gray Rd. , PO Box 435 , De Forest, WI 53532, <http://www.wcucc.org>, (p) 608-846-7880 (f) 608-846-7881

Kettlewood Retreats Rev. Holly W. Whitcomb, Director

Friday, December 2, 2011

9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

I WONDER AS I WANDER: JOURNEY AND PILGRIMAGE

During Christmas and Epiphany we recall the Magi’s pilgrimage to honor the Christ Child. This Advent we will reflect on journey/ pilgrimage and its vast and exciting implications for our spiritual growth. Where is God inviting you to journey? Is it outside yourself? Is it inside yourself? What support do you need? We will reflect on Jesus’s own life as inspiration as we examine themes of attention, discovery, hardship, arriving home, and the art of walking slowly. Our special guest, master photographer Rick Vollbrecht, will share an exquisite visual meditation. Join us as we thoughtfully prepare for this rich season.

Our leader: Rev. Holly Whitcomb is a UCC minister, spiritual director, and author.

Kettlewood Retreats invites you to this Advent retreat at Cedar Valley. Come join us in the countryside of the Kettle Moraine on 100 spectacular acres (an outdoor labyrinth too!) near West Bend. The noon meal is included.

To register for this retreat, please write a check for \$50.00 to Rev. Holly Whitcomb and send it to: 2095 Elm Tree Ct., Elm Grove, WI 53122. Include your name, address, and phone number(s). Please register as soon as you can. Upon receipt of your registration, you will receive a map. For more information, call (262) 784-5593. <http://www.kettlewoodretreats.com>

General Synod 2011

General Synod (*Imagine what is Possible*) this year was held in Tampa, Florida. Attending as delegates from Southwest Association were Doug Fauth, Rich Fluechtling, Phil Haslanger, Carol Holmes, Jen Johnson, and Terri Wolff; also Susan Shands as a delegate from the Office of General Ministries. The Synod dealt with the business of the UCC and offered educational workshops and speakers. Some of the speakers/groups included Leonard Pitts Jr., Nuttin' But Stringz, Marcia McFee, Roy Jaurez, Jr., Tony Robinson and Michael Piazza. One of the wonderful experiences of General Synod is worship. Again the times of worship were filled with creativity, beauty, multiple sense experiences and the Spirit.

There are a few key business items of interest we have listed below, however there are many others that we would encourage you to review via the website at www.ucc.org.

- *Unified Governance – The Synod adopted revisions to the constitution and bylaws to create a single governing board of 52 persons. This will replace the current structure of 5 separate and independent boards with a total of over 250 individuals. This change will provide a more efficient and coordinated governing system for the future. It is expected to take effect after General Synod in 2013 following ratification by 2/3 of the conferences next year.
- *Frequency of General Synod – A proposal to change holding General Synod every two years to every three or four years was brought forward. There was significant discussion in the committee and in plenary about the continuing cost increases of this meeting, the sense of community it creates and the experience of seeing and living the great diversity of the UCC. The proposal was defeated. This issue has been raised before and discussions will continue about the best uses of financial resources.
- *Human rights and political asylum for LGBT persons – A resolution was adopted to support human rights for LGBT individuals around the world. Another called for improved accessibility for political asylum for LGBT persons escaping from countries where their safety and even their lives are at great risk. More information available at www.lgbtasylum.org.
- *Putting Our Money Where Our Values Are – A resolution that passed overwhelmingly to encourage all settings of the UCC to review their business practices with financial institutions to evaluate whether they reflect the values of the congregation, association, etc.

One responsibility of Synod delegates is to share their experience with others in the Association. Please invite one or more of them to visit your congregation and hear about this great event.

UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns National Gathering

The National Gathering was held June 27-30 in Tampa with the theme ImaginACTion. It was a time to look forward to a future so much changed from its 39 year history. Now is a time when the Open and Affirming movement has passed 950 ONA congregations and is quite fully integrated in the national setting of the UCC. Presenters spoke of the hard work and success and raise issues to live into the future which included keeping the momentum of the ONA going, greater connection with racial/ethnic communities, more involvement of youth and young adults, and addressing the needs of aging LGBT persons as they move into retirement.

The annual business meeting received reports of challenges of the staff transitions and diminished financial resources. A total new Leadership Team was elected to re-energize The

Coalition. Rich Fluechtling completed serving for 11 years as treasurer and accountant.

CALENDAR

FALL 2011

September

- 28 Portage Clergy Gathering 12:30 pm
- 29 Contemporary Theology Reading Group 1:00 pm

Plymouth

October

- 5 Periodic Support Consultations Verona Salem 12 noon
- 6 Verona Development Group Salem UCC 9:30 am
- 6 Executive Committee Madison Plymouth 5:30 pm
- 7 Lake Edge Development Group Madison Lake Edge
- 13 Evansville Development Group Evansville
Congregational 9:30 am
- 13 Division on Church and Ministry Madison Plymouth 5:30 pm
- 15-23 Visit from Rev Stuart Nixon from United Reform Church
- 16 Installation of Rev Phillip Milam Whitewater Congregational 3:00 pm
- 18 Clergy Retreat Verona Salem 8:30-lunch
- 20 Verona Development Group Salem UCC 9:30 am
- 20 Division on Social Concerns Madison Plymouth 12:30 pm
- 21 Lake Edge Development Group Madison Lake Edge
- 23 Celebration of Ministry and Closing Service of Fox Lake Congregational 2:00 pm
- 27 Evansville Development Group Evansville Congregational 9:30 am
- Nov 1 Women Authors Reading Group

