



CONTACT

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Clergy and Lay Leaders Tackle Universal Health Care

BY KEN ESPOSITO

On April 13th, people attending an Educational Forum in Killingly, Connecticut heard President Robert Smanik of Day Kimball Hospital say “our health care system doesn’t just need tweaking or improvements. The system is broken!” Furthermore, he declared we need a “popular uprising” to allow major changes to bring adequate medical attention to Connecticut residents. Many others agreed. The event was chaired by Rev. Alice O’Donovan, sponsored by two local Interfaith Ministries Associations

“Our health care system doesn’t just need tweaking or improvements. The system is broken!”

Robert Smanik, President, Day Kimball Hospital

and organized with the help of local UCC clergy.

Eleven days later, over 30 parishioners and residents of the Coventry community heard similar statements from the president of Windham Community Memorial Hospital and from a local doctor. They were attending a community forum held at First Congregational Church, Coventry and sponsored by the Coventry Clergy Association. Afterwards, Rev. Bruce Johnson, who was instrumental in organizing the forum, called it informational and very motivating.

On, April 27th, 45 people from nine congregations in the greater Hamden region came together at a “Health Care 4 All Potluck”, spearheaded by leaders from Spring Glen Church. They shared food, discussed the health care crisis, and planned future actions

Continued on page 3

A Sense of Mission: Kent and Beyond



Since 2003, the First Congregational Church of Kent has sent three mission teams of youth and adults to work with mission partners in Teupasenti, Honduras. The mutual giving and receiving builds relationships and has the potential to transform lives. Mission outreach, from local to global, is supported in part by proceeds from the church’s volunteer-staffed Quality Thrift Shop.

BY PAT HOWE

The outreach program of the First Congregational Church of Kent has grown dramatically over the past decade. The success of this performance can best be attributed to two simple concepts—“focus” and “involvement.” Rev. Melinda Miko Keck consistently guides our small congregation (about 70 pledging families) along

the path of an outward-looking mission ministry, which is regularly raised up in worship and meetings. As a result, many members of the congregation have become personally involved in the programs supported by the church. We are definitely not one of those churches that votes approval of an outreach budget and then steps back while the treasurer sends out the checks.

Each family is asked to make two separate annual pledges—one to

support the operations of the church and one for the outreach ministries. This approach to stewardship serves two purposes for the Outreach Ministries: first, it requires each member to give careful thought to outreach; and second, if unexpected overruns occur in the operating budget items, the Outreach Ministries remain separate and secure. During the year, funds are also collected for special Outreach Ministries. In addition, he

Continued on page 6

Toward an Understanding of Generosity



As I write this in early May, the economy is major news. Gas prices are the highest they have ever been and a gallon of milk costs almost twice a gallon of gas. I don't need to recite it all here, and besides, the volatility of

the economy is such that it will all have changed by the time you read this.

When reflecting on economics, I like to recall a mini-study I did while in seminary. I decided to go through Luke's gospel and do a simple count of

how many times Jesus taught about money and how many times he taught about sex (the hot topic back then.) I discovered that even taking the most liberal interpretation of sexuality (simple physical touch),

money and economics far outpaced sex in His teaching, by more than two to one, if I recall correctly.

Yet the Christian church has been woefully inadequate in teaching about ethics and money, generosity, wealth, and legacy. About once a year, like it or not, the minister will preach a stewardship sermon. And we have come to associate stewardship almost solely with raising the operating budget, despite our lip service to time, talent and treasure. We act as though both wealth and poverty are sinful – wealth because someone must have done something underhanded to gain it, and poverty because someone must have done something awful to deserve it. I've addressed poverty before in this column, but never riches.

Wealth is a tremendous opportunity for Christian service. Most of those

I know who are persons of great economic privilege think deeply about that opportunity, want to make a difference in our world, and are yearning for meaningful conversation and Christian teaching about the use of their resources. Yet for some reason we clergy are reluctant to broach the issue with them, believing that we are not supposed to notice. As a result, those deep conversations happen apart from the church and without pastoral guidance.

Let me tell you a story. At one time, Augustus Field Beard, son of First Church in Norwalk, was serving as minister of the American Church in Paris, when young Leland Stanford died while studying abroad. Senator Stanford and his wife grieved deeply the loss of their son and sought his counsel spiritually. Their visits turned, at the initiative of Sen. Stanford, to the difference his wealth might make in memory of his son. From those conversations grew the great legacy of Stanford University.

Today there are more persons of wealth than there have ever been in this state. They are largely good and faithful people who know both the joy of

affluence and its responsibilities. They yearn to make a difference and we would do well to invite them into dialogue. It is a spiritual matter of profound significance in their lives.

So...the planning committee for the Fall Annual Meeting (October 17-18 at Central High School in Bridgeport) has decided to focus on generosity, philanthropy and legacy – not just for those of wealth, but for all of us. Our keynoter will be Rev. Steve Gray, Conference Minister of Indiana-Kentucky Conference who has a great passion about this subject, and we will focus break out sessions on everything from new forms of stewardship campaigns, to planned giving ministries, to Bible study on wealth, capital campaigns, greening our churches as good stewardship... It will break us through, we hope, to some new understandings of financial development in this era of our nation's life – for the sake of both the world and the church. It will be very exciting and a great opportunity for the financial and stewardship leaders of our churches, for individuals of means, for pastors and for delegates. I look forward to seeing you there!

Moving On

BY AMY BEVERIDGE

Occasionally when I'm in the English Room where we hold so many meetings, I think about all the people who have met in this building, how much work of the Connecticut Conference has been conducted here, how many times people have worshipped here, and how many celebrations we've held here.

I've been a part of this long river of clergy, church members, and staff flowing through the offices of the Connecticut Conference for a total of 23 years now. At the end of June, I'll be retiring. I know, however, that this place will always be a part of me. I have been privileged to be witness to, and a very small part of, some of the important work that the United Church of Christ has been part of over these years. In my time here, this Church has been a leader in issues such as domestic abuse, inclusive language, AIDS, LGBT concerns, health care, racism, sexuality education, the environment, and public education, to name just a few. Wrapped all around this involvement in social justice, has been the commitment and, sometimes, the struggle I have observed to be faithful always to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Certainly some of this has rubbed off and will go with me!

But mostly what I will take with me is the sense of joy in all the relationships I have had over these 23 years. From my early days with Christian Education, through my time with the Department of Church Life and Leadership, and now through my more recent engagement with the Ruth Dudley Resource Center, Stewardship, and back to Christian Education again, my years have been blessed with all the people I have worked with, both wonderful staff members and all the faithful clergy and lay persons who have come through our doors or who have welcomed me into their churches. I am immensely grateful to have shared being the Church with you. Even though I go on to be part of my own church community in a new way now, all of you will still be a part of me. Many, many thanks!

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Clergy and Lay Leaders Tackle Universal Health Care

Continued from page 1

to involve more people in creating an affordable health care system for Connecticut.

Since January, eleven other UCC affiliated congregations have hosted educational forums attended by hundreds of parishioners. At these forums, people talked about their values and shared stories about their own experiences. Like the fellow parishioner whose family member, even though he had health insurance, had to sell his house in order to continue paying for chemotherapy treatments once he had reached his lifetime limit. Or the small businessperson who struggles to offer employees health care benefits and not go out of business. Or the family doctor who has not given himself or his staff a raise in three years because of rising costs and decreasing reimbursements. They also shared their vision about a health care system that reflects their values - one that would provide affordable, quality care for all. And, after hearing of the opportunities and actions they personally could take to create change, many committed to make this vision a reality. Other congregations are planning future educational forums, either as 2nd hour events or, joining together with other congregations to sponsor evening or Sunday afternoon sessions.

Ken Esposito, Congregational Organizer for the Christian Activities Council, Universal Health Care Initiative, is available to help congregations interested in learning more about this issue or organizing and participating in forums. He can be contacted at 230-994-3366 or espositoww@earthlink.net.

Curriculum about Universal Health Care Available for Churches

A new curriculum for churches, *Health Care for All*, is now available for use in churches. Funded by a grant from the Universal Health Care Foundation of CT and written by adult educator, Amy Beveridge, the curriculum is intended to help members: examine the state of health care in the United States in light of their faith values; consider actions that individuals and congregations might take towards reform of the health care system; and develop skills for effective communication with legislators.

Health Care for All requires a facilitator who has small group skills, but that person does not need to be an "expert" in the issues of health care in the U.S. A "script" is provided for the leader, and much of the work is done in small groups. All of the content materials are provided. There is a plan for one single-session of 1 ½ to 2 hours in length, or a group may choose to use the 6-session plan, or they may select any of the six sessions to design their own program.

Two DVDs provide an overview of the U.S. Health Care System and a Comparison of International Health Care Systems, and these may be borrowed from the Ruth Dudley Resource Center. All of the other materials may be found on the Conference website: www.ctucc.org.

The release of *Health Care for All* is timed for churches to prepare themselves for the 2009 general session of the Connecticut legislature, when new proposals for genuine Universal Health Care for all Connecticut residents will be put forth for action.

Disability and Inclusion

Conference Announces 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 Connecticut Conference is believed to be the first United Church of Christ conference to form such a 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 welcoming 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 or Jacky Schofield at jacky5ph@aol.com. Additional material also can be found on the UCC web site, www.ucc.org.

Recent and Upcoming Pastoral Transitions

NEW CALLS

Finocchiaro, Gina, from CT to Pastor, Portland, ME, November 1, 2007

Jackson, Lucia called from Associate Pastor, North Haven Congregational Church, to Pastor, Hartland, VT, July 9, 2007

RETIREMENTS

Larson, Moby from Pastor, First Congregational Church of Ledyard UCC, June 30, 2008

Johns, Carolyn from Pastor, First United Church of Christ, Bridgeport, June 9, 2008

Rev. George Milne Passes Away

The Rev. George M. Milne, Minister Emeritus of both the Gilead Congregational Church UCC and the First Church of Christ, UCC, of Woodbridge, died April 8th in Colchester, CT. He was 92, and had been ordained for 68 years.

In a message to UCC authorized ministers in Connecticut, Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree described him as "an engaging and pastoral minister," and recognized his deep care and concern for rural churches, for youth ministry, and for the environment.

Ordained in 1940, Rev. Milne served the Hebron and Gilead churches in the 40's and 50's, with an interval from 1943 to 1946 when he ministered as a chaplain in the United States Navy. He served the First Church of Christ in Woodbridge for 27 years.

An avid conservationist, after his retirement to a 52-acre hillside tree farm in the Gilead section of Hebron he led the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, serving for many years as its President. He turned to writing in those years, authoring works on his years in Gilead, a history of the Park Association, and a history of the town of Lebanon.

"He always had conservation and the ministry close to his heart," recalls John Hibbard, a fellow Hebron resident who worked closely with Rev. Milne in the CFPA. He said those who knew and worked with him were inspired by his land ethic and stewardship.

Dr. Crabtree said, "I remember my visits with them, and later, after Janet's death, with him -- full of stories and love and concern for the whole life of the Church! We'd talk at length about Connecticut's forests and fields, the importance of the environment for everyone's wellbeing, and how thrilled they were that they could commit their land to a permanent preservation trust."

The youth cycling trips he led through New England and the British Isles also were very popular and are fondly remembered by those who rode along with him. As minister, environmental conservationist and author, Rev. Milne left a legacy for many budding ministers and nature lovers to follow.

He is survived by his children: George M. Milne, Jr. of Niantic; Duncan Milne of Durham; Margaret Moulton of Concord, MA; and Janet Milne of Etna, NH.

A worship service in honor of Rev. Milne's life and ministry was celebrated on April 19th at the Gilead Congregational Church.

Valerie Tutson Tells and Sings Silver Lake



Celebrated storyteller Valerie Tutson shared personal stories of her years at Silver Lake Conference Center along with her trademark tales from the African

and Native American traditions at five venues around the Connecticut Conference, to raise both awareness and resources for the Now for the Future Campaign for Silver Lake. Audiences joined the campaign's Honorary Co-Chair in energetic camp songs, animal growls, camp memories and laughter as she described her own first encounter with the Silver Lake site and spirit, celebrating the gifts that helped her to grow into herself, her talent, and her faith.

Tutson engagingly mimicked her youthful appeals to her parents to send her to Silver Lake, a step they were reluctant to take because she had fled an overnight camp the previous summer. Her successful campaign led to her participation in the Sing Praise conference – which Tutson has co-deaned for several years in her adulthood – and her first hearing of the Silver Lake commission: “Love God, love each other, and love yourself.” Then as now, the young people of Sing Praise took a Bible story and rendered it in word, song, and action for the stage by the end of the week. The next summer, young Valerie had much less work to do to persuade her parents to return her to “the Lake.”

Since those days, Valerie Tutson has followed an uncommon career path, performing as a storyteller and singer around the region, the country, and indeed the world. She brought some of those traditional tales to her audience as well, telling wide-eyed children and enthralled adults the Native American story of how Grandmother Spider did what the great warrior opossum and eagle could not: bring light from the Sea of Sun over the mountain to a shadowed world. Young and old waved arms and shook legs in camp songs, laughing as Tutson stopped repeatedly and said, “Oh, and I forgot to mention, but when you sing this line you have to do this...”

This summer, Valerie Tutson will return again as Dean of Sing Praise. And at the end of each performance, she left a young person or two with a heart burning for that conference, or for another kind of enrichment experience at Silver Lake. At the end of each performance, she left older hearts remembering how once they were captured by love, joy, and imagination, and how important it is to offer the same to those who come after.



“Spring Action” - prepping the garage for re-painting.



Energy conserving, thermal-paned windows have been installed in the Cedars and Glen.



Newly renovated, handicapped accessible bathroom in the Pines.

Silver Lake Readies for Summer

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 12th grades. You can register online at <http://silverlake.ctucc.org>, and see all the conference descriptions for your age group! This year we're offering a \$25 discount when you sign up for a second summer conference. Bring a friend and get a free Silver Lake t-shirt. If the young people you know haven't already registered, remind them, nudge them, challenge them: Don't miss this special opportunity,

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, right underneath the link for registration.

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 couldn't be more excited about this year's array of fabulous summer offerings, and the energy, excitement and expertise of the volunteer leadership of this year's conferences. We also are excited to welcome Youth and Young Adult Minister, Rev. Da Vita McAllister, to the mix this summer!

Our focus is “Handle with Care” - the care of our earth's resources, habitats and being loving neighbors to all the beauty of God's Creation in our community. In this sacred place we strive to create inclusive, Christian community, a space for spiritual exploration and biblical reflection, an opportunity to fall in love with the outdoors.

Don't miss out on a week – or two - of community filled with friends, fun and faith-building. We've been having the best time of our lives for 50 years, “Loving God, Loving our neighbors, and Loving ourselves” at Silver Lake. Come, and take some of this spirit back with you into the rest of your life. See you at the Lake this summer!

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

A Treasure Box in the Conference Office

BY AMY BEVERIDGE

It sometimes seems that one of the best-kept secrets in the Connecticut Conference is the existence of the Ruth Dudley Resource Center (RDRC). Tucked into a room right behind the desk in the front hall, the Resource Center is immediately visible to anyone entering the building by the front door.

Still, there are many people who do not know about the RDRC, and more to the point, they do not know what treasures lie within. While the center started out to provide a place where church school curriculum could be easily previewed, it has grown into a multi-faceted library offering a range of educational materials for all ages.

You can find here: the newest version of the "Living the Questions" curriculum for adults; award-winning children's story-books; a multi-media tool kit to educate the congregation about poverty; worship resources from many cultures for every liturgical season; a full shelf of books on prayer and spirituality; DVDs from last summer's General Synod events; and much, much more.

But don't take our word for it. Come and browse the stacks in our little treasure box, or call to find out if we have a resource you're eager to preview. It may be here, just waiting for you to check it out! Contact the RDRC at 860-761-7104, or rdrc@ctucc.org.

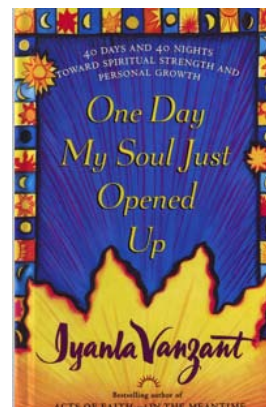
Youth and Young Adult Resources

We are blessed in the CT Conference with an abundance of gifts that have been given to us through the faithfulness of our predecessors. One of our greatest gifts is the Ruth Dudley Resource Center, which is directed by Amy Beveridge. Just after I arrived in Hartford, Amy invited me to recommend materials we could add to the RDRC's outstanding collection of youth and young adult curriculum and resources.

My first thought was to introduce a set of texts that are not often considered "youth and young adult" resources. The resources I had in mind are written by men and women of color, writers who don't usually concern themselves with the divide between the sacred and secular. They write from a cultural perspective that acknowledges the interconnectedness of our lives, our beliefs and our world.

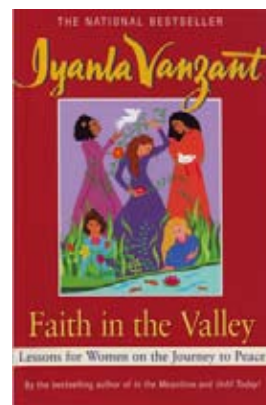
For the remainder of this year, I will review texts from these communities of color (African-American, Hispanic/Latina/Chicano American, Native American, Asian American and Caribbean) found on the shelves of our Ruth Dudley Resource Center. I invite you to explore these texts and their unique perspectives. These additions are just a few of the remarkable texts that are available. We'd like to expand on this focus, so please send in suggestions (DaVitaM@ctucc.org) of additional texts from communities of color that we can add to our list of resources.

Rev. Da Vita "Day" McCallister



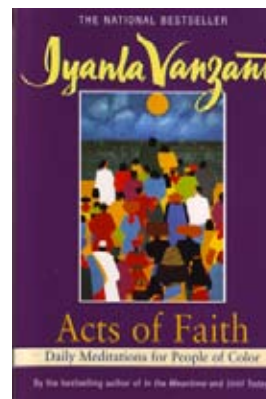
One Day My Soul Just Opened Up: 40 Days and 40 Nights Toward Spiritual Strength and Personal Growth

Iyanla Vanzant's *One Day My Soul Just Opened Up* is a wonderful guide for the process of getting "unstuck." 'Stuck' is the place when you have been trying to overcome a fear, wrestling to forgive, or unable to forget a past hurt and can't quite get over the hump. This short and readable text provides a roadmap for healing that includes daily affirmations, insightful questions and rituals for remembering. It is a great gift for anyone who is looking for a tangible tool on "how to be" faithful in a modern world.



Faith in the Valley: Lessons for Women on the Journey to Peace

Vanzant does it again in *Faith in the Valley*, naming the often unspoken hurts that inhibit our sense of peace. This text is written with women in mind and is a great guide to young girls and young women who are struggling to navigate the difficult spaces of self-identity, decision-making, cultural cues, personal values and community responsibility. The pocket-sized version is a perfect fit for book bags and the chapters are short enough to fit into a busy life.



Acts of Faith: Daily Meditations for People of Color

Vanzant offers a daily word of affirmation and challenge in *Acts of Faith*. This is not your standard book of daily meditations. Instead, the reader is challenged to re-examine personal values and the values of the larger culture that have often put us at odds with nature, each other and God. She provides daily meditations that invite the reader to reconsider how we treat each other, think of one another and respect the presence of God in our midst. This is a great way to start or end the day.



The Women's Yoga and Music retreat group, looking refreshed and centered.

Spring News from Silver Lake

There's been lots of activity at the lake as we prepare for the summer season. Thanks to *Now For the Future: The Campaign for Silver Lake*, we've been able to address some practical needs that will return immediate benefit to SLCC, including a new gas hot water and gas ovens in the Cedars (replacing costly-to-run, non-green electrical units), and new compressors and freezers for the summer kitchen.

We finally launched the second edition of Alumna Newsletter (available online at www.silverlakect.org), and hosted the very successful first Women's Yoga/Music/Massage retreat, led by Sara Billings, Whendi Cook and Heather Ramos, which will return, by popular demand, November 7-9.

The weather blessed us for our new Site Manager Dave Kobersmith's (see accompanying article) first Spring Action Weekend, in late April. We welcomed about 85 volunteer workers, high schoolers, and lots of Silver Lake alums. They split wood, cleared trees downed in winter storms, opened up the summer cabins and social hall, put out picnic tables and Adirondack chairs, repainted the lower wing of the Retreat Center, and thanks to the First Congregational Church of Stratford, cleared paths to and stained/sealed the Hubbell Chapel. The mild weather continued for Silver Lake's Open House May 4th. Some 150 people enjoyed an afternoon of tours, hayrides, cookies and lemonade, and good spirit.

A Sense of Mission: Kent and Beyond

Continued from page 1

church operates the Quality Thrift Shop, with all profits being disbursed to agencies helping those in need.

For reference purposes, pledges and donations to the church's annual operating budget total \$163,000. The Outreach Ministries disburse \$90,500 yearly - \$60,500 from the congregation's donations and \$30,000 from the Quality Thrift Shop operations.

Our outreach ministries fall in three categories: Local, Regional/National, and International.

Local: Like many churches, we support numerous local non-profit agencies that assist those in need. This represents about 45% of our outreach giving. Many church members get involved with these local area agencies, which includes such activities as active board membership, making sandwiches for the soup kitchen, or serving as a hotline counselor at the women's abuse agency. Individuals in need can be given small cash grants from a special Deacon's fund, as well as in-kind donations of clothing and other essentials. Scholarship assistance also is given to help youth attend programs at Silver Lake, to assist working parents in providing day care for their pre-school children and to help enable ministerial students to attend divinity school.

Regional/National: This category, which represents 20% of the outreach grants, has a primary focus on UCC denominational programs such as Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), Neighbors in Need, Elon Homes, the Christmas Fund, Hope Shall Bloom (the Hurricane Katrina recovery fund) and *Now For the Future*: The Campaign for Silver Lake.

International: In this category (35% of outreach donations), many recipients are well-known international NGOs such as Church World Service, Heifer Project International and Habitat for Humanity. The UCC and Church World Service receive considerable support through the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering, and through special appeals when natural disasters occur. In addition, the church has sought out small, lesser-known non-profit agencies that can make a significant difference, *and* where 100% of its contribution goes to program (as opposed to overhead).

The Children's Rescue Mission

Children's Rescue Mission is a small, American-based non-profit agency that ministers in Teupasenti, Honduras, a town of about 9,000 people. Over the past seven years, we have forged a very close relationship with CRM. Founded in 1999 by Miguel Giron of Norwalk in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, its mission is to help the children of Teupasenti, whose families saw their small-scale coffee plantations washed away by the floods and mudslides. Miguel, who is from Teupasenti, determined, in consultation with town elders, that the greatest needs in the area were to feed the children nutritious meals and to provide the older kids with basic vocational skills.

We met Miguel through members of the Kent congregation who had known him for many years. We felt an immediate affinity for CRM, and close personal relationships flourished. Rev. Keck invited Miguel to preach guest sermons and a ministry with Teupasenti was embraced by the congregation.

The priority of the needs we have worked to address was established by village leaders. This attitude of mutual respect and self-reliance is critical to successful mission work. Our first project helped CRM develop a farming

operation by financing the purchase of land, fencing, several milking cows and pumps to bring water from the nearby river. The approximate cost for this project, funded by a special appeal, was \$6,000. Our next project was to provide 500 children an additional meal each week, to be served in the mission's Community Center. The cost to the Kent church is \$12,000 for each year and is funded by a special mid-year effort entitled "Tortillas for Teupasenti".

Lives Transformed

Since 2003, we have sent three mission teams to Teupasenti. Members pay their own travel expenses, carry duffel bags filled with small items for the children, and raise funds to purchase food staples in Honduras for the children's families. This delivers a heart-felt "we care" message to our partners, and provides a first-hand experience of their lives and needs, which has been transformative for those who have gone. Their enthusiasm is the main reason for the congregation's positive, supportive response to the Children's Rescue Mission program. When members of the first mission group, many of whom had never witnessed the dirt floors and tin roofs of the developing world, returned to Kent, it was especially rewarding to hear our high school and college youth tell the congregation "my life will never be the same."

Because of the successful experience in Latin America, the Outreach Committee is currently nurturing a relationship with another small American-based non-profit, this one in Arusha, Tanzania. The first project has already been completed. It involved two 4,000 liter water tanks and foot-operated pedal pumps, serving ten families each on a cooperative basis. Sending mission groups to Africa may be a bit of a stretch, but we are gaining an invaluable awareness of the challenges of the Third World.

Special recurring fundraising appeals are an important component of the Outreach Committee's efforts. For many years, mid-year fund raising appeals, such as "Tortillas for Teupasenti," have helped build local Habitat for Humanity houses, send an ark of animals to Heifer Project, and support the local resettlement of a Bosnian refugee family. Another fundraising appeal that has received wide congregational support is "Alternative Giving," conducted during the five weeks before Christmas. Simply stated, church members are encouraged to skip "Mall Madness" and give the gift of a contribution to either the Children's Rescue Mission or Heifer Project International. This program has been well received and generates about \$3,000 each year.

The Quality Thrift Shop operates with a swarm (43 at last count) of dedicated and tireless ladies (as well as a few men). Established in 1990, the QTS, as it is known, started out in a very limited manner, selling clothing donated by members of the church. As its reputation grew, the range of products expanded to include all sorts of household goods and gift items donated by church members and non-members alike in the Kent area. Working at the QTS is a labor of love where the spirit of camaraderie flourishes. Last year, the shop donated \$30,000 to more than 30 non-profit agencies. In many ways, the Quality Thrift Shop is a wonderful fellowship that happens to generate a lot of money for local outreach.

Our church is not a "rich" church when measured in traditional terms. Our outreach donations are the result of the extraordinary personal commitment of the individual members of the congregation. We are proof once again that outreach habits learned in church lead people, both young and old, to new attitudes and practices of giving and receiving in Christ's name.

Pat Howe is a member of the First Congregational Church of Kent, where he serves on the Outreach Committee.

Remembering Silver Lake's First Director

BY DAVID HODGES

Many of you remember my father, Rev. Deane L. Hodges. Beloved by several generations of Silver Lakers as "Daddy Deane", he was the first Director of Silver Lake Conference Center, and he put his stamp on Silver Lake in a profound and lasting way.

My father took what was a sleepy church camp just getting on its feet and turned it into a laboratory for inspired Christian living. Many of you, I know, were touched by his efforts to reach out to kids and awaken their creative potential.

Our family was privileged to spend summers living and working at Silver Lake. I had many jobs, from sweeping the social hall and emptying trash barrels to mowing lawns and helping on construction of the maintenance barn and the Pines building. But there was also plenty of time for fun, for enjoying the outdoors, and for strong friendships to grow. Silver Lake was a formative place for me, and in later years I have come to see how Silver Lake gave me a lasting, living experience of what it means to live in Christian community.

Now it is time to resume the building and re-invention of Silver Lake. Incredible as it seems, the buildings we built then are over 35 years old. Those we inherited from Camp Easton are much older.

The Silver Lake Board has come up with an exciting blueprint for how the campus of Silver Lake can be renovated and expanded to meet contemporary standards, while being true to the special spirit of "The Lake."

In order to support the *Now For the Future* capital campaign, and to create a lasting memorial to the work of my father and mother, my family and I are making a seed contribution to fund the Gathering Green, the outdoor meeting space that will connect the new retreat center buildings. My father loved the outdoors and never missed a chance to be outside, whether it was fishing, cutting firewood, or photographing flowers. This outdoor space will be a perfect place to remember him. It is our hope that others of you who remember him and my mother will join in contributing to *Now For the Future*, with gifts targeted to "The Rev. Deane L. Hodges Fund." No one more than my father would have been looking towards the future of Silver Lake, and this campaign is a perfect way to ensure that Silver Lake endures and flourishes.

For fuller descriptions of these and other events, including registration forms and directions, please visit www.ctucc.org/events.php

Silver Lake Golf Tournament • Tuesday, June 10, 9 am • Lyman Orchards Golf Club, Middlefield, CT • Join the fun and competition at the 2nd Annual Silver Lake Golf Tournament. The day begins with a 9 am shotgun start and includes a continental breakfast and luncheon buffet. There is a \$30 luncheon-only option for those who want to show their support for Silver Lake. Prizes will be awarded. Last fall, the tournament helped raise more than \$6,000 for the benefit of programs at Silver Lake. • Cost: \$150 per player • Contact: Silver Lake Conference Center, 223 Low Rd., Sharon, CT 06069; 860-364-5526; slcc_registrar@ctucc.org

“A History of Jazz” • Friday, June 13, 7 pm • Faith Congregational Church, 2030 Main St., Hartford, CT 06120 • Join us for an evening of Fellowship, Entertainment, Worship and hors d’oeuvres in our newly renovated auditorium! • Cost: General Admission, \$25; VIP seating, \$35 • Contact: Benjamin Gary, Minister of Music, at 860-547-0820.

UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns National Gathering • “One Tribe, One Table” • June 26-29, Dallas, TX (Please note new location.) • More information is available at ucccoalition.org/programs/gathering.

2008 National Youth Event • “Living the Life” • July 24-28, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee • Every four years, NYE hosts about 3,000 youth ages 13-18, their advisors and chaperones for four days of workshops, recreation, great music, worship, faith and community. Registration is now open. • Cost: \$345 per person, which includes accommodations and meals from Thursday night through Sunday night • Contact: Rev. Day McCallister at DaVitam@ctucc.org, 860-233-5564; or Rev. Kelly Burd, burdk@ucc.org, 216-736-3860, or toll-free: 866-822-8224, ext. 3871. Please visit www.ucc.org/youth for NYE news and updates!

Elizabeth Von Trapp in Concert • Saturday, June 14, 7:30 pm • Plantsville Congregational Church, 109 Church St., Plantsville, CT 06479 • Elizabeth Von Trapp is the granddaughter of Maria Von Trapp, of “The Sound of Music.” Presented by the Christopher Koenig Memorial Music Series, in cooperation with

Truckenbrod Concert Artists. Reserve tickets in advance by calling the church office. • Cost: \$25 • Contact: Chris Muller, Director of Music at 860-628-5595; muller591@comcast.net

New England Ringers • Saturday, June 21, 2 pm • First Congregational Church, 135 Main St., Thomaston, CT 06787 • The New England Ringers is a superb handbell ensemble which has performed around southern New England since 2001. • Cost: \$10; 18 and under, \$5. • Contact: Church office at 860-283-5765, or Sue Wilber at 860-233-5564.

Wild Christ: The Radiant Wilderness of the Divine • Friday - Sunday, June 27-29 • Kripalu Center, 57 Interlaken Rd., Stockbridge, MA • Join artists and teachers, Paul and Tim Frantzich and David Hawkinson, as they walk into the radiant wilderness of Christ using song, ritual, yoga and story. Christianity is asking us to let it rise, with all great religions, to the high road of The Heart. • Cost: \$225 • Contact: Kripalu Center: PO Box 309, Stockbridge, MA 01262; www.wildchrist.com

Roots and Branches: UCC Musicians Association Conference 2008 • July 14-17 • Woodfords Congregational Church, Portland, ME

• By looking at the history of our faith and worship styles, we can delve into new ways to express that faith, exploring the roots of our calling as worship leaders and their implications for today. Presenters include the Rev. Victoria Sirota, the Rev. Bernard Wilson, Michael Kemp and others. Workshops will cover a variety of musical areas, as well as perspectives on topical issues. Worship services, plenary sessions, all-conference rehearsals, exhibits, dinners, an organ concert in Portland and lots of social/networking time also are included. For more information, go to www.uccma.org • Cost: \$320 • Contact: Paul Schnell 501 Long Plains Rd., Buxton, ME 04093; prschnell@securespeed.us; 207-727-6562

Connecticut Conference 141st Annual Meeting Part II - “Encouraging Generosity” • Friday and Saturday, October 17-18 • Central High School, Bridgeport, CT • Keynote speaker will be the Rev. Stephen Gray, Conference Minister of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, UCC. • Contact: Watch www.ctucc.org for updated information about workshops and other programming for the Meeting.

Our Korean Partnership

Sacred Journey 2008 Comes to Connecticut! July 24 - August 7

Every two years, the Conference’s Korean Partnership Committee and our covenanted church partners in South Korea have an opportunity to visit with one another. This summer, it is our privilege to host a delegation of youth and adults from the Kyung-Ki Presbytery who will come to the Connecticut Conference to visit their partner congregations.

Play a part in welcoming this year’s visitors from South Korea,

as we broaden understanding and appreciation for each other’s culture and faith traditions. Our guests will:

- *stay with host families from partner churches*
- *attend Silver Lake Conference Center*
- *do some touring of the summer sites and attractions of Connecticut*

Youth who will be entering 9th-12th grade can sign up for Silver Lake’s Sacred Journey conference,

July 27-August 2. The conference co-dean is the Rev. Gordon Rankin, a Sacred Journey veteran with years of experience with the Partnership Committee. Sign up at <http://silverlakectucc.org>.

For more information about Sacred Journey, please contact co-dean, the Rev. Chang Ho Jun, at 860-487-3534 or 860-690-0472; or changhojun@sbcglobal.net; or Jim Morgan at 860-761-7123, or jimm@ctucc.org.

Positions

AVON - Congregational Church, UCC seeks an Organist/Director of Music, half-time position, approx. 20 hrs./wk. Opportunity to direct additional choirs (children, youth, handbell). Service is Sunday at 10:30, plus weeknight rehearsal(s), and other occasional and seasonal services. Austin Organ, 1964: 6 ranks, 2 manuals, unit organ. Other instruments include pianos, handbells, handchimes, clavinova, Orff, and percussion instruments. Salary: Up to \$35K/yr. Position available as of August 1, 2008. Applications received until position is filled. Send resume and reference names to Denise Beeney, Secretary, Avon Congregational Church, 6 West Main St., Avon, CT 06001; secretary@avon-church.org

ENFIELD – The Enfield Congregational Church seeks a part-time (20-25 hrs. per week) Acting Director of Christian Education for one year, beginning July 1, 2008, with the option of applying for the permanent position at the end of the school year. This position involves direction of the CE program, including church school, adult education, and youth groups. Interested persons should contact: Rev. Robert L. Livingston, Interim Co-Pastor, Enfield Congregational Church UCC, 1295 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT 06083-3171; or 860-745-3646.

GUILFORD – First Congregational Church (UCC), an 1,100 member, open and affirming congregation, seeks an Acting Director/ Minister of Christian Education for a thriving CE program. This ministry serves a church school of 250 children (nursery to eighth grade), confirmation program, and weekly middle school youth group during the school year. Candidate will work as integral member of exceptional church staff, attending weekly staff meetings; monthly Christian Education, Adult Education, and

church school meetings; and developing teachers and volunteers to support the CE program. Acting Director may apply for full time position when posted. Send resume/profile and cover letter to ce_search@firstchurchguilford.org, or 122 Broad Street, Guilford, CT 06437. For more information, please call 203- 453-5249.

HARTFORD – Asylum Hill Congregational Church (www.ahcc.org), a faith community of more than 2,000 members, seeks a creative, full-time Director of Children and Family Ministries to work with over 200 children, birth through 6th grade, from the church and the surrounding community. The ideal candidate will have a calling to serve the entire family, at least three years of educational and administrative experience, knowledge of curriculum development and CE tools, and experience training leaders and volunteers. Full benefits, with salary based on experience. Contact: e-mail cover letter, resume and references to cannon@ahcc.org, attn: David Carter, Search Committee Chair; or mail to Children's Ministry Search Committee, AHCC, 814 Asylum Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105.

HEBRON - The Gilead Congregational Church (UCC), a growing and active congregation in an expanded building, seeks an Organist/Choir Director. Two Sunday morning worship services, Mid-September until Memorial Day; one service in summer. Austin pipe organ; piano, organ and choral experience preferred. Salary commensurate with experience. Benefits include SS and four weeks paid vacation. Weddings and funerals paid separately. Contact: the church office, attn: Ken Cook, 672 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248; church office at 860-228-3077; or gileadchurchucc@earthlink.net. Reply by July 15th.

MADISON - The First Congregational Church of Christ seeks a Director of

Children and Youth Ministry, 20-25 hrs/wk. Responsible for organizing and planning educational programs and activities for children and youth, ages 3-14. Christian education programming background preferred. Energy, passion and enthusiasm backed by a strong faith, in addition to teaching and creative thinking skills, are important for this position. Salary: \$26,000-\$32,500, depending on education and experience. Send resume and references to First Congregational Church of Christ, 12 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443, attn: Personnel; e-mail: mclarktill@aol.com.

MANCHESTER - Center Congregational Church seeks a Discipleship and Christian Education Coordinator for one year beginning July 1, 2008, with the option of applying for the permanent position at the end of the school year. This is a part-time (20hr/wk) position with flexible times. (Sunday 9-noon is a must.) Involves oversight and direction of the CE program, including church school, Safe Church policy, adult education, and middle school youth group. Works directly with CE Board to build an educational ministry for pre-school - 8th grade. Involves curriculum planning, publicity coordination with church office, and program implementation; assists in the recruitment and training of Sunday School teachers. Experience with Workshop Rotation Model a plus. Contact: Center Congregational Church, attn: Moderator, 11 Center Street, Manchester, CT 06040; 860-647-9941.

NORTH HAVEN – The Congregational Church seeks an ordained or soon-to-be ordained Associate Minister, 26 hours per week. This person will complement the work of the senior pastor and the laity in all facets of ministry, including our established ministry with children and

youth, an adult education program, and adult volunteers in support of these ministries. Competitive compensation, including health benefits, is offered.

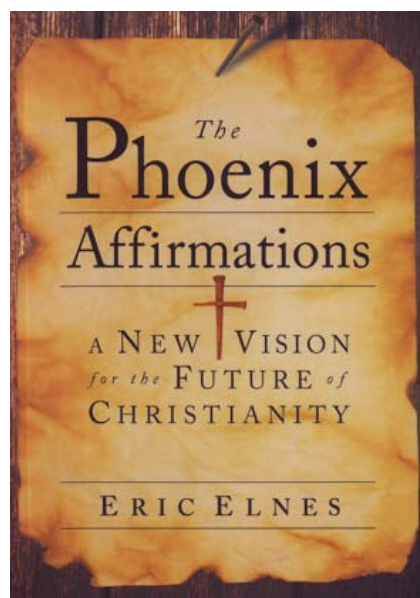
• Contact: Associate Minister Search Committee, North Haven Congregational Church, 28 Church Street, North Haven, CT 06473; 203-239-5691; or northhavenucc@snet.net.

SOUTHBURY – United Church of Christ seeks a temporary, part-time (10 hours per week) Christian Education Administrator. Involves curriculum planning and program implementation for pre-school through 7th grade; assists in the recruitment and training of Sunday School teachers. Experience with Workshop Rotation Model a plus. Flexible times; Sunday 9–11 am a must. Biblical knowledge required. Send resume and references to United Church of Christ, 283 Main St. North, Southbury, CT 06488; or united.ch.christ@sbcglobal.net

WEST HARTFORD – First Church of Christ is seeking a Christian Educator who views C.E. as Ministry Part-time, 15-20 hours weekly for 10 months with a competitive hourly rate; involves planning and leading church school, intergenerational and family programs. Seeking one who is enthusiastic, creative, faith-filled, communicates effectively. Experience with rotation model and the Bible a plus. Flexible team work setting with many resources. Start date ASAP. Submit resume to Rev. Barbara Frey 860-233-9605 x102; revbungler2002@yahoo.com.

For Sale or to Give

ROCKY HILL – Congregational Church has 12 dark blue polyester choir robes in reasonably good condition they are willing to give. Inquiries can be made to the Music Committee at Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.



Three Great Loves

The Phoenix Affirmations

BY AMY BEVERIDGE

Eric Elnes starts this little book with the story of a young woman in his congregation who complained, "I'm tired of being a Christian, but..." What this young woman meant by that rather provocative statement was that she was tired of explaining that, yes, she is a Christian, but that doesn't mean she rejects gay and lesbian people. Yes, she is

a Christian, but she doesn't believe that Christianity is the only valid path. Yes, she is a Christian, but, but, but!

The Phoenix Affirmations arise from congregations in Phoenix, Arizona, that decided to state in as clear and concise a way as possible, basic statements about the Christian faith. The statements are based on "the three great loves that the Bible reveals: love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self." Elnes presents each statement and then expands on each one, giving the reader a broader understanding. Each chapter also includes a section about how we might "walk the talk" in our own ministry settings.

The Connecticut Association of United Church Educators (CAUCE) sponsored several book discussion groups based on *The Phoenix Affirmations* at the end of April. Every group was enthusiastic about the various ways the book might be used: as an adult education series, in Confirmation classes, and clergy discussion groups. A copy of the book is available in the Ruth Dudley Resource Center, and a discussion guide can be found online. Ask you Search Engine to look for *The Phoenix Affirmations*.