June 2018

Dear Friends of the Massachusetts Conference, UCC,

When you called me to be your Conference Minister and President in 2006:

- No one had even imagined Super Saturday.
  - We’ve now benefited from 16 of them, offering well over 500 educational sessions to help local churches build skills!
- The idea for United Church Mission had not yet emerged.
  - 77 churches now participate.
- There was very little cooperation or collaboration across Conference lines.
  - Now we have joint efforts in communications, finances, racial justice training and environmental concerns for more efficiency and greater impact.
- There was little talk of climate justice (although at the 2006 Annual Meeting in Holyoke, I remember Kelly Gallagher wearing a Hazmat suit with a sign that said “Annual Meeting attire 2025”).
  - Now, when it comes to climate justice, our congregations and pastors are among the most active and informed in the nation.
- People were still recalling how 8,000 people visited the Amistad and heard its dramatic story.
  - Now, hundreds are receiving racial justice training.
- The Mass Conference had 56 ONA congregations.
  - We now have over 180 – more than 50% of Conference churches!
- We had 11 Associations (We now have 10) and we had 11 distinct ways to approach clergy fitness reviews.
  - Six years ago, our Associations all agreed to create a single Unified Fitness Review Committee.
- Clergy Communities of Practice were a new, innovative idea.
  - Now we recognize that creating a culture of interdependence is a ministry game-changer.

In these and so many other ways, over the past twelve years, our churches have become more vital while making God’s love and justice more real.

As you’ll see in these pages, our journey together continues to move forward. As you write the future witness of the UCC, you are joined by staff and board leaders who are faithful and prophetic, competent and visionary, creative and dependable, dedicated and joyful.

Serving God in this calling has been the most fulfilling ministry of my life. Thank you for all the ways you have made our witness more faithful over the past twelve years. And thanks in advance for all the ways you will continue to advance God’s call for justice and reconciliation throughout all of God’s creation.

Sharing the yoke of defiant hope,

Jim Antal
Minister and President
The Massachusetts Conference staff and Board – reflecting the needs expressed by churches and their pastors – continue to focus primarily on three areas: Vital Churches in a New Day; Collaboration among Conferences, churches and other faith partners; and Racial, Climate, and Economic Justice. We address these issues in the following pages of this Annual Report.

COLLABORATION.
A sense of collaboration continues to infuse much of our work – from joining together with the Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences on programs and ministry, to working with those outside the denomination on climate change. Read more starting on page 4.

BEING VITAL CHURCHES IN A NEW DAY.
The landscape of ministry is changing – rapidly. Conference staff are constantly seeking new ways and new resources to help churches learn how to adapt and thrive. Find out more about these offerings, and about some new ministry initiatives already happening in our midst, on pages 6-9.

RACIAL, CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE.
The Conference’s work on justice issues this year has primarily fallen into these specific areas, in ways such as offering new racial justice training programs, speaking out for climate justice, and working with churches on refugee issues. Read more on pages 10-16.

THE NUMBERS
Detailed information on the Conference income and spending and on church giving, pages 18-23.

DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES
Is your church taking advantage of all the Conference has to offer? Find out on pages 24-28.

WEBSITE RESOURCES
The Conference website offers a wealth of resources to help you learn more and take action, whether it be sermons to inspire you, organizations to join, films to watch, or books to read. Visit the Resource Section of the website at www.macucc.org/resources.

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God is still speaking, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TOGETHER, AS ONE UPDATE

On June 16 - 17, 2017, at the joint Annual Meeting, delegates from the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences voted decisively to move ahead toward forming a new, joint Conference.

A “Together, As One” planning team, comprised of members from each of the three Boards of Directors and staff, began meeting in July to work on the unified Conference proposal. Their first action was to develop a Vision, Mission & Purpose statement for the new unified Conference (see below). Over the past year, the Conference leaders hosted many online forums for members, talked to consultants, conducted focus groups, and prayed together at a tri-conference staff retreat. A “Proposed Covenant and Affiliation Agreement” was created that expressed the intent of the three conferences to join together in forming a new conference. The three Boards of Directors have voted to ask delegates at their Annual Meetings in June, 2018, to approve the proposed covenant, affiliation agreement, and bylaws.

Vision, Mission & Purpose Statement

Following Jesus’ call to discipleship, and bound by the covenant we share as siblings in Christ, we – the members of the United Church of Christ in southern New England – declare these values essential to our shared ministry together:

† We understand the local church exists to make disciples of Jesus and we welcome all people unconditionally to share in this calling.

† We commit to making God’s love and justice real by loving our neighbors, children, and all of creation through our collective work, such as seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice.

† We believe God calls us to bring new life as agents of change and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformative leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered.

† We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good in their local communities and throughout the world.

In union with the entire United Church of Christ, we respond to Jesus’ call and strive to live our faith by:

God’s Vision:
United in Christ’s love, a just world for all.

The Church’s Mission:
United in Spirit and inspired by God’s grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

Our Purpose:
To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

Our United Covenant:
Living the Love and Justice of Jesus.

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
~ Isaiah 43:19 ~

MORE ABOUT OUR CONFERENCES

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<tr>
<th>Note: June 2017 data</th>
<th>Number of churches with standing (includes Schedule II):</th>
<th>Number of members:</th>
<th>Annual Budget: (Figures shown exclude Basic Support passed through to the National setting.)</th>
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<td>62,752</td>
<td>$2,328,750 (Includes net day camp &amp; retreat center income; includes budgeted use of restricted funds.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
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The Massachusetts Conference Board of Directors announced in September, 2017, that The Rev. Don Remick will serve as the Transitional Interim Conference Minister upon the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal’s retirement on July 1, 2018.

Remick will be coming into this position following the vote at the June Annual Meeting regarding the formation of a new Conference in unity with the Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences.

Remick has served as an Associate Conference Minister (ACM), first in the northeast, and currently in the southeast and throughout the Conference, for eight years. He has guided scores of churches on the path of increased vitality as they have clarified their vision and mission. His leadership and insight are prized not only in the Massachusetts Conference but throughout the UCC.

It is anticipated that Remick will serve in his new capacity for at least a year, and that this appointment will not preclude him from serving either in an executive position or as an ACM in a newly configured Conference.

Patricia Kogut Called as Associate Conference Minister in Southeast

In addition, the Massachusetts Conference has called the Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Kogut, pastor of the North Congregational Church in Middleboro and a highly accomplished vitality coach, as the new half-time Associate Conference Minister serving in the Southeast Area. Kogut will be moving into the position left vacant by Don Remick’s move to transitional interim conference minister.

While serving in Middleboro over the past 19 years, Kogut chaired the Old Colony Committee on Ministry and served on the Old Colony Board, and she currently serves on the Massachusetts Conference board. She is in the process of being certified as a Coach with the International Coaching Federation, has served as a vitality coach for Conference churches and is certified and experienced in conflict facilitation and mediation as well as pastoral counseling.

Kogut will continue to serve part-time at the Middleboro church while serving the Conference. Kogut will only be taking on Remick’s duties in the region, which includes assisting with pastoral searches and transitions and providing other support to churches and pastors and working with the Barnstable, Old Colony and Pilgrim Associations. She will not be taking on Remick’s other work, which includes working with the disaster resource team, providing programming and resources around evangelism and church growth, staffing the interim ministry and working with the Annual Meeting worship committee.

New Fundraising and Development Specialist

In additional staff news, Lee Pendergast Gagen has been hired as the Conference Fundraising and Development Specialist. This new full-time position (which is being tried as an 18-month experiment initially, with assessment along the way), will help the Conference better respond to the changing landscape of charitable giving generally and church giving specifically.

Gagen brings experience and a proven track record with nonprofit fundraising and development. She came to the Conference from a local community foundation where she worked on fundraising through donor development and special events. Gagen looks forward to building meaningful relationships with donors.

CONNECTICUT, MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCES CONSOLIDATE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONS

In January, 2018, Debby Dionne, the long-time business manager of the Massachusetts Conference, began also serving the Connecticut Conference as Director of Accounting. As she transitions into her new role, she is evaluating the accounting software used in each conference, in order to be able to recommend a common platform for both conferences. The two conferences have also undertaken a large project to migrate their databases from two separate systems into one consolidated database. This will allow instant updating of information on the websites, streamlined incorporation of registration information into the database, and improved communication with churches and individuals. The two conferences are in consultation with the Rhode Island Conference about moving toward using these new shared systems in the future as well.

Although the three Conferences are moving toward joining together into one unified conference, these consolidations are not directly tied to that plan. The conferences have been discussing sharing administrative resources for many years, due to declines in church membership and resources.
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE
PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TO HELP HEALTHY, FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE FUTURES

Adopted at the uniting General Synod of 1957, the Preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ represents the core of the theological consensus that brought the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches together in covenant. It reads, in part:

*It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.*

As the Body of Christ, our vitality comes when our churches increase in health, faithfulness and effectiveness. People now are looking for communities of faith that have a clear, God-given sense of their reason for being. It is the churches that have a clear sense of their mission — their identity and purpose given by God — that will thrive and be vital. We often hear from church leaders that they want help meeting this challenge of change and, in particular, how to be and do church in a new day, while keeping our UCC covenant.

The Conference offers a variety of programs and resources that can assist your congregation in understanding the dynamics of your church and the mission field that you are in, or need to be in, if your church wants to make a difference in your neighborhoods and world.

Resources and programs can be found at: macucc.org/growingyourchurch

**PROGRAMS**

- **Churches Alive:** What does it mean for a church to be healthy, faithful and effective in this changing landscape of ministry?

  This program is designed to nurture and provoke the vitality of churches who want to deeply explore and discern their future. Churches Alive provides thorough exploration of all aspects of the church's life and ministry. It also helps the church get an in-depth understanding of its community. The program will also help the church develop conflict transformation skills and deepen its life in spiritual practice.

- **Super Saturday:** Each spring and fall, the Massachusetts Conference holds a Super Saturday event: a full-day of skill building, networking and discussion of best practices.

- **Vision and Vitality Options:** Our staff has been researching and training for a variety of options to help churches become healthy, faithful and effective in the changing landscape of ministry. Please contact your regional Associate Conference Minister or Rev. Don Remick for more information on these options.

- **“Making It Real”**: The Making It Real campaign is an invitation to be invited. Association leaders hope to engage every congregation in a conversation about clarity of each church’s mission and purpose. This effort aims to begin work with the “willing/early adopter” Association churches to be clear about their purpose. In gaining that clarity, or committing anew to it, our churches will take faithful next steps toward mission and ministry of the greatest impact in their community and beyond.

**RESOURCES**

- **Whole Church Evaluations** — A video recording of a Super Saturday workshop which looks at incorporating staff evaluations into a comprehensive plan for vision and vitality in the church.

- **Practical Guide for Mission/Outreach Committees** — Most committees make the mistake of thinking their main job is to spend the money that has been allocated for mission. The truth is that there are three tasks, and allocation of funds is the least important of the three.

- **Demographics** — MissionInsite, a program that researches your community, is provided free to MACUCC congregations.

- **The Parish Paper** — Monthly publication that offers ideas and insights for active congregations.

- **Reading Materials** — Articles addressing options for struggling congregations, ministering in the changing landscape, welcoming newcomers, and vision for your congregation.

- **Online Course** — Growing Your Communication and Conflict Resiliency Capacity: a 10-module online program led by Claire Bamberg, of the Center for Progressive Renewal (available to the first 10 churches who register).
STARTING AND GROWING NEW MINISTRIES

Our Massachusetts Conference continues to support initiatives that give birth and life to innovative new ministries. Each one has its own style, personality and purpose. Some are based on bringing God’s love to people where they live and work. Others want to reach out and reassure those who thought they were not worthy of God’s love. And still others are based on specific ministries and spiritual communities. Some of these ministries are self-funded (from proceeds of the sale of their buildings and liquidation of assets). Several of them have received grants from the national setting of the UCC. The Church Development Council of the MACUCC provides support and guidance to new ministries as they become established in their local Associations.

Below are the New Ministries that have existed for over a year, and continue to grow, as well as an article on one particular church start that is widening its reach. You can read the full story at www.macucc.org/phoenix.

HAVERTILI CHURCH START GROWS BEYOND CITY LIMITS

It’s been a wild ride thus far for Donna Spencer Collins and her church start Phoenix Rising UCC.

Birthed from the 2014 closure of First Haverhill this new ministry followed a search and call process to hire a pastor who could carry out the vision of the remnant of the church. A small band of devotees from the legacy church envisioned a new church for a new Haverhill that would offer an authentic progressive ministry to all generations and to the marginalized within that community and chose Spencer Collins to lead their efforts.

The small group, who once gathered for worship once a month at an historic oak tree (that has since fallen), moved into a storefront in Haverhill in 2017. The church started to plant roots, then got temporarily re-located a year later to a 3rd floor office space above an Italian restaurant in Lawrence while their building was undergoing construction. The new space however, proved to be a boon, with room to hold their 45 regular worshipers plus full band, coffee corner, and multimedia screens — as well as a food pantry, private area for support groups and counseling, nursery, arts and crafts activity and storage rooms, an office, and their “Cracked Pot Café” where they offer refreshments, movies, paint nights, and other casual events that are attended by up to 75 people.

If that’s not enough, bible study, events, and pastor hours are still held at the café in Haverhill where they had gained several followers.

When asked where she got her ideas and inspiration for all the ways she has connected with the community, Spencer Collins was hard-pressed to name any one item because it was a culmination of her life experiences. However she does credit the Massachusetts Conference for providing the education, opportunity, guidance, and support she has needed to help give her the training and confidence necessary to build a faithful following.

- Involvement with so many Massachusetts Conference programs and task teams in the past, like the Evangelism and Vitality Commission, the Church Development Ministry Council, and even Disaster Relief, helped her network with the right people, gain knowledge, and find ideas.
- The training she got from the Vitality Coaches helped give her patience and direction.
- The Associate Conference Ministers give her needed support and guidance as they walk with her throughout her journey.
- Speakers at the New Church Bootcamp and the Women’s Conference gave her inspiration.
- Super Saturday and Missions-to-Members workshops she attended provided her with ideas that she could make her own.
- The “Cracked Pot Café” was inspired by a 2017 Annual Meeting clay pot presentation.

Spencer Collins is also grateful for the New Ministry Community of Practice Clergy Group that she attends. She admits that sometimes it’s ‘pretty scary and intense’ when trying to build a church. She finds the members of the group draw strength from each other and can share their own unique experiences to help support one another.

Spencer Collins is a force on her own but she credits the Conference for giving her the tools and guidance she has needed throughout her journey thus far, and said:

“If the people involved in the Conference did not believe in me, or support me, I could never have moved forward.”

Read the full story at www.macucc.org/phoenix.
SUPER SATURDAYS!

Each spring and fall, the Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut Conferences collaborate to hold a Super Saturday event—a full-day of skill building, networking and discussing best practices. Each event offers numerous workshops, a keynote address, worship, a marketplace of vendors and ideas and an opportunity for church leaders, both clergy and lay, to network with one another. Read more: macucc.org/supersaturday

SUPER SATURDAY, SPRING 2018 - “I'm inviting you to find your voice…”

It was quite chilly in Wilbraham, but that didn't stop 600 people from attending the March 2018 Super Saturday. And it didn't matter that the event fell on St. Patrick’s Day; in fact Conference leaders sported green outfits, hats, socks, necklaces, and even dyed hair as a fundraiser.

The Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, senior minister at Middle Collegiate Church (a 1000-member multiracial, welcoming, and inclusive congregation in New York City) was the keynote speaker and worship leader. Lewis—an activist, preacher, and fierce advocate for racial equality, economic justice, and LGBTQ equality—focused on bringing each line of the “Our Father” to consciousness, and discussing what kind of community the prayer calls us all to be.

She revved up the crowd as she challenged them: “I'm inviting you to find your voice… your voice that prays this radical prayer… What will you tell this nation about the kingdom of God, about the reign of God, so that we can all finally shout ‘the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of God … and he shall reign forever.’ When that day comes and we are shouting it out on the city streets because we have made it so, partnering with our God, we have made it so everybody has enough, we have made it so that Black lives matter, and all lives matter, and we have made it so that no matter who you love, no matter how you look, you know God made you awesomely and wonderfully and we can celebrate every life. ... I want you to find your voice, your tweeting voice, your preaching voice, your facebooking voice, your snapchat voice, your blogging voice, your voice that declares that this is the vision of a healed and whole world. God’s reign, right here, right now, on earth.”

Photos and keynote recording can be accessed here: www.macucc.org/supersaturday

SUPER SATURDAY, FALL 2017 - “That is how we create moments…”

The Rev. Noel Andersen, a national Grassroots Coordinator for Church World Service focusing on Immigrants’ Rights, delivered the keynote address at last fall’s Super Saturday event in Framingham, which was attended by over 450 people.

“When we work together in unity, when we bring our faith communities along with us, when we build enough power to make real change, that is how we create movements,” said Andersen. “All effective social movements have a strong foundation of faith communities that give that spiritual feel to keep going, that moral foundation on which to speak the truth and love.”

Photos can be accessed here: macucc.org/supersaturday
SPOTLIGHTS ON CHURCHES MAKING CHANGES
...THAT WERE INSPIRED BY CONFERENCE RESOURCES

Throughout the past year, many churches took advantage of Conference resources to help re-energize their churches and congregations. Here are a few we spotlighted during the year. Read the full stories at www.macucc.org/spotlight

Bridgewater Pastor Says Super Saturday Session Helped Church Become Less Static
Central Square Congregational Church, UCC in Bridgewater, had a 20% increase in membership (over two years) after the church took action to become more accessible and welcoming to all, and to get more involved in the community. The pastor, Rev. Beth Stotts, credits some of her inspiration to a Super Saturday workshop on Whole Church Evaluations. “That workshop I attended changed the direction of my church,” she said. “I had my six deacons in that workshop with me and it sparked conversation about the ministry of the church which continues today. That workshop made ministry a responsibility of the whole community, not just the staff. It really changed our focus, and put a different lens on what we’re trying to accomplish in creating God’s church.” Watch related video: www.macucc.org/wholechurchevaluations.

Crossroads Steered Agawam Members To Talk About Church
During their Crossroads process to help discern their future, Agawam Congregational Church began expressing deeper spiritual lives through group prayer programs. They are using these prayer and discussion groups to help explore how the spirit of God wants to work in them and through them to help emphasize ministry rather than maintenance. The pastor, Rev. Dr. Gregory Dawson, feels that because of the Crossroads process, those in the church who are now serving as leaders are becoming more excited and vocal about a need to reach out to the community and he is looking forward to what God has in store for them.

Saugus Church Experiences the Covenant Among our Churches
When the First Congregational Church, UCC in Saugus, experienced a 2-alarm fire, the Conference vision statement of “…nurturing the covenant among our churches to make God’s love and justice real” was put into action. In addition to being contacted by an Associate Conference Minister and members of the Conference Disaster Resource and Response Team, fellow UCC clergy friends from about a dozen different churches and Community of Practice groups reached out and offered support, donations, and prayers.

Super Saturday Workshop Inspired a Small Change That Made a Big Difference
At last year’s Super Saturday, Pastor Paul Sangree attended a workshop led by Alex Shea Will, Associate Pastor at South Church in Andover, on being a more welcoming church. The workshop inspired the Westborough church to change the look of their bulletin by adding a section on the first page called ‘Some Notes to Help You Feel at Ease this Morning,” in an effort to embrace a theology of welcome. Sangree believes this probably had something to do with the many new people joining and participating in the church starting last fall, which helps to retain new disciples who may walk through their doors.

West Tisbury Church Pastor Inspired by Conference Partner Coaching Program
In an age when the dominant narrative about church is one of decline, the First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, UCC, is finding new life. A significant dimension of their renewal can be attributed to the church’s small group program called “Mapping Our Faith Journeys”--inspired after the pastor, Rev. Cathlin Baker, participated in the Conference partnership with the Center for Progressive Renewal (CPR) coaching program. Through this study project, the church has experienced an increased spirit of welcome and more overall vitality. Relationships have been strengthened, and some have been inspired to find links between their past spiritual experiences, and their desire to become part of a new, socially-engaged church community.

Racial and Economic Justice

The goal of the Racial Justice Ministry of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ is to engage every setting of the Conference in the work of unmasking, dismantling and eradicating racism in its personal, inter-personal, institutional and cultural forms, to make God’s love and justice real. Here is how we, as a Conference, and as local churches, are answering the call to change the way we live.

**Racial Justice Podcasts**

This year MACUCC launched its racial justice podcast series! There are times when voices outside of congregations, associations, and the Conference can have a different perspective and shed new light on the call to racial justice. Thus far, we have two podcasts available with experts in the racial justice realm. We hope that you tune in for these conversations to hear about the stories of these two leaders in academia and the faith context. Please, listen; spread the word; and share any helpful insights.

- **What is the Church’s Call to Racial Justice in the 21st Century? ~ Rev. Dr. Velda Love**
  
  Rev. Dr. Velda Love and Racial Justice Associate TJ Harper discuss steps congregations can take to be more involved in racial justice and create sustained, positive change such as addressing institutional racism, while also teaching members about the intersection of race and spirituality.

- **Difficult Conversations on Race in Church ~ Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum**
  
  Dr. Tatum and Racial Justice Associate TJ Harper discuss the psychological impacts of racism on individuals and on congregations; the need for racial reconciliation in our society; and what actions can be taken to make churches more racially inclusive.

**White Privilege Training**

Congregations have searched for ways, in addition to the white privilege curriculum from the National UCC, to engage white privilege from a spiritual perspective. The Conference launched a four-hour training that discusses white privilege through a spiritual autobiography, the Four Stages of Grief, Unpacking the Invisible Backpack, and many other helpful perspectives. We will be taking requests for this training on our website (macucc.org/racejustice) in the Fall of 2018.

**Racial Justice Sunday**

Currently, we are working on creating/curating different liturgy options that congregations might be able to use across Massachusetts on the same day to have a conversation about how racism plagues our society. The Racial Justice Task Team worked diligently on conducting research, innovating diverse children’s time stories, and compiling musical selections and history of the music. Please stay tuned!

**Key Updates**

1. Three individuals were trained as Racial Justice Facilitators
2. MACUCC was invited to partner with four additional UCC Conferences to help with their respective racial justice ministries
3. 20 congregations have participated in or are scheduled for a racial justice training in 2018

**Justice and Witness Fund Named for Jim Antal**

See back page
CONFERENCE LAUNCHES SANCTUARY CHURCHES FUND

In opening their doors in welcome, sanctuary churches take on a critical humanitarian responsibility. The Conference both supports this mission and recognizes the significant fiscal responsibility involved, one that becomes increasingly difficult to maintain. In response to the experience of First Congregational Church Amherst – a trail-blazing sanctuary church who decided to offer sanctuary to Lucio Perez (a Guatemalan father of four who has lived in this country almost 20 years) – and with awareness of the substantial costs associated with this unique ministry, the Massachusetts Conference has created the Sanctuary Churches Fund.

The Sanctuary Churches Fund – comprising donations from congregations and individuals responding to the call to care for neighbor – is overseen and administered by the Immigration and Refugee Task Team of the Conference’s Justice and Witness Ministry Council. One hundred percent of donated funds will go directly to Level 1 sanctuary churches to support their ministry once they have a person in sanctuary. No administrative fees are involved.

In addition to helping Level 1 sanctuary churches provide shelter, food, clothing and other basic necessities to individuals in sanctuary, the Sanctuary Churches Fund could also be used by hosting churches to assist the family of the sheltered individual, since they too are living with loss of income and increased expenses. The hope is that this fund will make sanctuary ministry possible and sustainable for more churches in the Massachusetts Conference.

In March 2018, South Congregational Church, UCC, in Springfield gave sanctuary to Gisella Collazo and her two children. Gisella, a Peruvian, has also been in the United States for almost 20 years. Said Associate Conference Minister Kelly Gallagher, “The Massachusetts Conference Justice and Witness Council supports the work of South Congregational Church of Springfield, First Congregational Church of Amherst, and all of our churches seeking to welcome the immigrant and protect the refugee.”

More info: www.macucc.org/offeringsanctuary

Lucio Perez (left) was guest preacher at First Congregational Church Amherst, where he is a sanctuary resident. [photo credit: Melanie Blood]

MANY VOICES BLOG LAUNCHED

In the Spring of 2018, the staff of the three “Together as One” Conferences (Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) launched an experiment in sharing with members some perspectives of the collective ministries in the Conference settings of the United Church of Christ.

The “Many Voices, One Mission” blog is a regular series highlighting the ministries of the three Conferences.

Kent Siladi, Conference Minister of the CT Conference wrote in the first article that the Together as One “Mission, Purpose and Vision Statement” provides a powerful declaration of what brings us together as a people, including: God’s Vision, The Church’s Mission, Our Purpose, and Our United Covenant of Living the Love and Justice of Jesus.

Siladi believes that discernment is not an individual journey, and that we need one another to share our glimpses of God, to build the beloved community, and to work together to make this world more just, more loving, and more compassionate.

Read the blog at www.macucc.org/manyvoices.

OMNIBUS CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL PASSED WITH HELP OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND ACTUAL JUSTICE TASK TEAMS

Members of the Actual Justice Task Team testified before the Joint Judiciary Committee hearing at the state house, asking for more safeguards to protect innocent people from being convicted, and speaking out against the use of solitary confinement. When both houses had passed their versions of the omnibus bill, the task team lobbied the conference committee on key issues that differed between the house and senate. Their efforts culminated in several successes, including: the felony theft level raised from $250 to $1200, parole fees abolished for the first year out of prison, increased access to compensation for those exonerated, special prison units for those age 18-24, and a more humane requirement of DNA testing for new inmates. (The alternative would have been sanctions for not providing a DNA sample immediately upon entering incarceration. Providing the sample is required under the new law, just not immediately.)

In addition, the Actual Justice Task Team continues to work with the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition to end life without parole, following the mandate of the annual meeting resolution in 2017. The task team has provided petitions for signature at both Super Saturdays and will do so at this year’s Annual Meeting.
Looking for Mental Health Awareness Resources?

The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illnesses/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of congregations. Find out more: mhn-ucc.blogspot.com/p/about.html

Rhode Island Conference Ministries for Health: www.ricucc.org/ministriesforhealth

POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People’s Campaign, a national call for moral revival, is uniting tens of thousands of people across the country to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation’s distorted morality.

The Massachusetts Conference is seeking to gather people and resources that can help our churches engage this movement. In January, eleven UCC churches plus Episcopal and Unitarian churches and a local synagogue attended an informational session at Edwards Church in Northampton. Conversations with leaders from poor and marginalized communities, as well as education and training took place in the following months.

Associate Conference Minister Kelly Gallagher commented: “The Poor People’s Campaign is an intentional, multi-year campaign to deepen relationships across barriers of race, class, gender and all other categories that seek to divide us. We are called to find the truth in our unity – that we will only be more just and compassionate and complete when we work together.”

As we go to press, preparations are being made to participate in the 40 days of action from Mother’s Day to the Solstice – a campaign of protests, marches, and other non-violent actions. In addition there will be Super Saturday workshops and webinars offered throughout the year.

More info and resources: www.macucc.org/poorpeoplescampaign

ALE WITH THE ACM

Known for her regularly scheduled office hours at various Panera Bread locations throughout the Metropolitan Boston areas, Associate Conference Minister the Rev. Wendy Vander Hart held ‘Ale with the ACM’ sessions in early 2018.

In the Reformation spirit of Martin Luther who would study scripture with seminarians over beer, Vander Hart invited anyone interested in going deeper with the issues raised by the Poor People’s Campaign to dedicate some study time during the season of Lent. Over ginger ale and pale ale, about 11 people gathered over the course of six weeks at several locations to discuss the book, The Third Reconstruction by Rev. William Barber.

Said Vander Hart, “A number of our churches do theology on tap or have done beer and hymns at different breweries in the area. In that sense I just borrowed from some of the best ideas in our churches!”
OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) UPDATE
SUBMITTED BY KATHIE CARPENTER, CHAIR OF ONA MINISTRY TEAM AND ONA CONSULTANT

ONA is the United Church of Christ’s (UCC) designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Each ONA congregation has independently adopted an Open and Affirming covenant after a journey of dialogue, study and prayer. There are currently over 180 ONA churches in the Massachusetts Conference and 1,500 nationally. (More info: www.macucc.org/lgbt)

Support Throughout the Year
The ONA Ministry Team participated in many activities this past year, including giving the sermon and conducting a forum at United Parish of Auburndale’s ONA anniversary in April 2017. Several team members attended the Coalition’s National Gathering as well as its ONA consultant meeting. One team member serves on the Coalition planning committee for the next National Gathering in Dallas in June 2018. An ONA team member read names and offered prayers at Christ Church Brockton’s Transgender Day of Remembrance in November 2017. As usual, the Conference officially supported Pride celebrations in Worcester, Northampton and Boston, all in proud colors and loud voices.

Transgender Ballot Measure
The Open and Affirming Ministry Team continues to spread the word about the anti-transgender ballot measure that will be up for a vote in November 2018. If passed, it would repeal the current law and roll back protections and access for transgender people in many areas including places of public accommodations. To sign the pledge to defeat the ballot measure and see how you can help, visit freedommassachusetts.org.

The Anti-LGBTQI Nashville Statement
In August 2017, a coalition of conservative evangelical leaders (in the Southern Baptist Convention) presented their beliefs in a new doctrinal statement. They stated their position on human sexuality, including opposition to same-sex marriage and fluid gender identity. In September 2017, the ONA Ministry Team contacted all Massachusetts Conference ONA churches soliciting their signatures on the UCC’s response of love and inclusiveness to the Nashville Statement.

PREPARING FOR EXTREME WEATHER AND DISASTERS

Extreme weather and power outages – along with damage from wind and waves – marked the winter and spring of 2018. Among the many stories that emerged from the various round of storms was the response from our churches. Some churches became warming stations. Some offered shelter from the cold and a place to charge cell phones. Some offered food both at the church and delivered to homebound friends. All offered hospitality and friendship. These extreme weather stories highlight the need for emergency preparedness plans and relationships with disaster service providers. The Conference Disaster Resource and Response Team compiled a list of resources in the event of a disaster, including worship resources, preparedness consideration, protocols, flood and winter storm safety tips, insurance information, emergency alert app and notifications, as well as links to MEMA, the National Weather Service mapping tool, weather and storm predication centers, and a list of warming shelters.

You can find them here: www.macucc.org/disasterresource
Climate Justice & Environmental Activism

CREATION CARE HIGHLIGHTS

Minister and President Jim Antal and Missioner of Creation Care Margaret Bullitt-Jonas had another busy year presenting, preaching, teaching, writing, advocating, organizing, and giving public witness about climate change at both local and global events. Some of these events included Super Saturday workshops, an outdoor interfaith service in Northampton that was attended by nearly 400 people, the “Climate Change and the Growing Risk of Nuclear War” conference, a colloquium for students at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, an interfaith retreat at Trinity Church, sit-ins at the Massachusetts State House, and marching in the People’s Climate March in Washington DC. We’ve highlighted a few events below.

For additional climate justice and environmental activism news, visit www.macucc.org/environment. Read Bullitt-Jonas blog posts at: macucc.org/Jonas and subscribe to her newsletter.

CREATION CARE HIGHLIGHTS

#STANDUPCHARLIE: RISKING ARREST FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

November 2017 saw climate action in the form of the #StandUpCharlie campaign with Mass Power Forward, a coalition of environmental, climate, community, and faith groups (including the Environmental Ministries of the Massachusetts Conference). The action – including a State House sit-in resulting in trespassing and unlawful assembly charges against Conference Minister and President The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal and Missioner for Creation Care the Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas – aimed to push Governor Charlie Baker to sign an executive order that directs all state agencies to do everything in their legal authority to stop new fossil fuel projects. Bullitt-Jonas said “Preserving a habitable planet depends on local and regional action by every sector of society, especially when our national government seems determined to dig us ever deeper into the pit of relying on fossil fuels. Whatever form our actions take – whether or not they include arrest – we will need to be loving, bold, relentless, and strong.” Many United Church of Christ clergy and lay leaders took part in the actions.

Read more: www.macucc.org/whatisshappening
CARDINAL O’MALLEY CONvenes CLIMATE SYMPOSIUM AT WHICH ANTAL AND BULLITT-JONAS SPEAK

Massachusetts Conference Minister & President The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal and the Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas were two of the featured speakers at an unprecedented gathering of religious leaders and scientists invited to come together in February 2018 to talk about climate change by the Archdiocese of Boston.

“We wanted to explore the potential of forming a coalition of leaders drawn from the religious and scientific communities in Massachusetts to advance those concepts,” O’Malley said in his blog. “We anticipate that the coalition will seek to continue the conversation and to explore ways we can better pursue public policy proposals related to environmental issues at the state level. We also believe that the coalition can engage in both public education and in partnership with our schools.”

In her blog post about the event, The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (Missioner for Creation Care for the Conference and for the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts), called the gathering an “extraordinary conversation.”

“Although scientists sometimes serve as advisers and consultants to religious leaders, and although scientists may turn to religion for inspiration, to form a coalition of religious leaders and scientists ‘would be something new under the sun,’” she said. “Such a partnership has enormous potential in this perilous time. In fact, such a partnership may be not just desirable, but even essential.”

CONFERENCE OFFICE GOES GREEN

The Massachusetts Conference now has 83 solar panels installed on the roof of its Framingham office building, which will generate clean energy while allowing the Conference to reduce spending on electricity. The panels were installed as part of a power purchasing agreement, and so were installed free of charge to the Conference. The system will generate about 31,800 kWh of power annually, which is about a third of what the Conference uses. This amounts to a modest projected annual savings of about $1,500 per year on electricity. Thanks to donations to Friends of the Conference, an Electric Vehicle Charging Station is now available for use at no charge to those visiting the Conference office or Edwards House.

TAKING ACTION

Many of our churches have taken climate action by divesting from fossil fuels, installing solar panels, creating gardens, and becoming “Green Congregations.”

Find out what you can do, or tell us what you have done so you can inspire others: www.macucc.org/actiontakenbycongregations.
Before the United Church of Christ was formed, the ecumenical vision “that they may all be one” was animating our vision. Since our formation, ecumenism has been central to the identity and the activity of the United Church of Christ.

**Episcopal and MACUCC Partnership**

The Ecumenism & Interfaith Relations Task Team was filled with joy in October when the Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass passed a “Resolution for Deeper Community, Service and Engagement between the EDWCM and UCC Partners” at their Annual Diocesan convention. In this resolution, the Diocese urges all Western Massachusetts Episcopal churches to deepen their relationships with neighboring UCC churches, saying, “we suggest entering into a year of engagement in prayer, conversation and action that reflects the shared gifts of our respective denominations.”

The Task Team worked with Jim Antal and the Board of Directors to send a response of gratitude to our Episcopal partners. We have also shared this invitation to all UCC churches across the conference. We invite all to seize this time of tremendous openness and welcome between our two denominations by reaching out to your partners in your local community in ways that are most natural for you. For more information about this resolution please visit our website [www.macucc.org/interfaithactionecumenism](http://www.macucc.org/interfaithactionecumenism).

**The Relationship Between the Diocese and Conference Has Been Building for Some Time**

In May of 2017, clergy pairs from local UCC and Episcopal churches gathered in Longmeadow to explore and celebrate some of the naturally evolving community partnerships springing up between churches. In February, 2016, The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas became the Missioner for Creation Care for both the Diocese and Conference, and Antal and Bullitt-Jonas have worked together on environmental advocacy and education.

“We see this resolution as an extension and encouragement to take our relationship further, perhaps to places of unity that celebrate both our shared gospel values and our prophetic particularities,” said Antal. “Surely the Holy Spirit is moving deeply through our two denominations, drawing us closer together in service to the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ.”

The call for exploring a closer relationship between the two denominations gives a glimpse of what the Together, As One planners have talked about in relation to the proposed new, unified conference with the Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences. That proposal calls for forming a new, nonprofit corporation of which the three state conferences are the voting members, but which also allows for nonvoting associate members who “want to align with and act in common cause with” the stated purpose of the new conference. Antal has lifted up the Diocese as an example of an organization that may want to become an associate member.

**Our Mission and Actions**

Witnessing love, working for justice together with partners of faiths is the interfaith mission of the Task Team. In times when discrimination against people of the Muslim and Jewish faiths is on the rise, we have responded by standing with our faith partners during several local events across the conference. We have also shared our love through the “Links of Love” prayer chain. The chain was started at a Super Saturday in 2016. It has grown to over 15 feet of interconnected colored strips of paper with prayers of support and love from all of you. During this year it has been present at the following events: Open Spirit Sign Dedication celebration; Sudbury’s Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship Service; Holy Days at Temple Shalom Emeth, Sharon; and Common Street Spiritual Center, Natick. Please contact our Task Team if you would like the chain to be at an event.

In addition to our local advocacy, the Task Team is proud to continue financial support of the Massachusetts Council of Churches and the Boston-Cambridge Ministries in Higher Education. We also serve as an ongoing ecumenical and interfaith reflection group for our Conference Ecumenical Minister.

We are a resource for you. The team has reorganized our website [www.macucc.org/interfaithactionecumenism](http://www.macucc.org/interfaithactionecumenism) to make it easier to access ecumenical and interfaith resources for churches.
Rooted in the grace of God, the mission of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) is to nurture local church vitality and the covenant among our churches to make God’s love and justice real.

We are a gathering of 358 active churches with almost 60,000 members, making us the largest Protestant denomination in Massachusetts. Our roots go back to the Puritans and Pilgrims who founded this country, making us the Commonwealth’s oldest denomination. The Massachusetts Conference is one of 38 regional bodies of the UCC, which is comprised of nearly 5,000 churches and roughly 850,000 members. The UCC is a distinct and diverse community of Christians who come together as one church to join faith and action.

The motto of the UCC is “That They May All Be One.” This is from the prayer of Jesus (John 17:21 NSRV) for the unity of the church. Members of the United Church of Christ have been leaders in the movement to heal the divisions in the Christian church, and local congregations welcome into membership people from a diversity of religious backgrounds. Today, approximately two-thirds of our members have come to the UCC from other denominations, or from no denomination.

Our churches are large and small, urban, suburban and rural. As a Conference, we support one another in spreading the Word and doing the work of Jesus Christ. On any given weekend in our churches, you may hear traditional hymns or something more contemporary. You may meet people whose families have been in America for generations, or those who still speak the languages of their homelands in Asia, Central and South America. You may find a church hall that houses a soup kitchen or one that houses a coffee house for local performers. You may find a church that has declared itself Open and Affirming to gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual people, or you may find a congregation that is theologically more conservative.

Each of the churches of the Massachusetts Conference is unique, yet we are all united in Christ. We are a people of covenant, a united and uniting church.
UNITED CHURCH MISSION

FUNDING OUR COMMON MISSION

What is United Church Mission?
United Church Mission (UCM) is a new way of funding our common mission through the Conference, Association, and National setting of the United Church of Christ. UCM contributions are based on a percentage of the prior year’s total income received by a local congregation. Approved by the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference in 2014, for those churches that opt in, UCM replaces Conference and Association Fellowship Dues and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) Basic Support as the primary way congregations contribute to the shared ministries of the UCC beyond their local setting.

How many churches have opted in to United Church Mission?
To date, 77 churches — 22% of Massachusetts Conference churches — have opted in to UCM. More have planned to join in the coming year.

How does UCM work?
A UCM Initial Giving Percentage is established, based on wider church giving in relation to total income. The total income figure includes general operating income from all sources, as well as general missions giving, but not special giving such as capital campaign contributions, disaster relief, or special offerings. (See the UCM Fact Sheet at macucc.org/unitedchurchmission for a complete list of sources to be included in the UCM total income figure.) For their first year of UCM, churches commit to giving at least what they contributed in the prior year in combined Dues and Basic Support. After year one, UCM churches apply their UCM Initial Giving Percentage to prior year total income to determine the next year’s contribution. UCM churches are encouraged to consider increasing this percentage over time as they are able.

“United Church Mission’s focus on percentage giving encourages our congregation to take a faith-based approach to supporting the wider church. Instead of settling on a set figure or paying an assigned rate (or both!), we discern together what portion of our own wealth we feel called to share with the broader UCC.”
— Church Pastor

Why might our church want to join UCM?
Churches tell us they appreciate UCM for a number of reasons:
• eliminates the Fellowship Dues “head tax” that keeps some churches constantly cleaning their membership rolls to reduce payments
• streamlines wider church giving and makes it easier to explain to church members
• mirrors the message of proportional giving we give church members as well as the biblical principles of percentage giving that support this approach
• invites generosity generally, promoting giving to the wider and local church as well
• emphasizes that all church giving is mission giving
• it’s fair — all settings of the church rise or fall together

What else do we need to know about UCM decision-making?
Despite its advantages, a decision to opt in to UCM may not be without its challenges. UCM discussions go best when church leaders consider the varied perspectives of people who have questions about the transition and how it might affect the things they care about most. Sharing more information about UCM, more often than one might think necessary, will help make decision-making about UCM go as well as possible. The Conference has developed resources and approaches to help equip church leaders to guide their churches in decision-making about UCM. We encourage churches to be in touch with Conference staff regarding their interest in United Church Mission as early as possible in the church’s decision-making process.

How do we join UCM?
UCM is neither automatic nor mandatory, so churches must choose to join UCM and notify the Conference. Churches are asked to inform the Conference of their decision to join UCM for 2019 by December 14, 2018; with advance notice we can receive churches for 2019 after their 2019 annual meetings. When notified of a church’s desire to join UCM, Conference staff will contact the church to obtain relevant financial information and work through UCM calculations.

How do we get more UCM information or assistance?
If you want more information about UCM, would like a Conference representative to visit with your church leaders to speak about UCM, or are already in discussion about possibly opting in to UCM, please contact Jonathan New, Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Financial Development. Jonathan may be reached at newj@macucc.org or (508) 875-5233 ext. 231. More information is also available at macucc.org/unitedchurchmission.

“United Church Mission is a fair way to give to the wider church. It is simpler and easier for us to explain. If we have a bad year, UCM is flexible so we haven’t made a promise we can’t keep and if we have a good year, we gladly share that.”
— Church Treasurer

“In the past, we paid membership dues which created uncomfortable discussions about who were and were not members. The question was how many people could we afford to pay dues for. The UCM method of giving eliminates this struggle.”
— Lay Leader

“Our church believes mission is important at the local, regional, national, and international levels. United Church Mission focuses on the reality that the greater church is engaged in mission work through just about everything they and we do.”
— Church Moderator

~ 77 Churches Have Opted In ~

Massachusetts Conference UCC
WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

All the funds the Massachusetts Conference receives are given by God’s generous people, who seek to change lives for Christ through supporting the work that can only be done by the wider church. This support comes in a number of ways, as illustrated.

**Net Retreat Center & Camp Revenue - $262,900 (9.7%)**
- Net revenue from Edwards House rentals and Pilgrim Day Camp.

**Program Revenue - $249,500 (9.1%)**
- Income from participation fees for program events and communities of practice.

**Income from Endowments - $446,100 (16.4%)**
- Income from a variety of endowments, some unrestricted and some restricted for specific purposes. The endowments have been built over the years from a combination of planned gifts from individuals, monies donated by churches which have closed, and through gifts from both congregations and individuals as part of capital campaigns.

**Fellowship Dues - $644,800 (23.7%)**
- Fellowship Dues, paid by congregations on a per-member basis set each year by Conference Annual Meeting.
- 2018 Conference dues are $19.50 per member. (Associations also set and bill for their own Fellowship Dues.)

**Individual Donations and Miscellaneous - $187,100 (6.9%)**
- Individual donations to the Annual Appeal and to special projects of the Conference.
- Special Grants (e.g. Lilly Endowment, Carpenter Foundation).
- Restricted Giving for specific projects.

**United Church Mission & OCWM Basic Support - Retained in the Conference - $931,100* (34.2%)**
- United Church Mission, given by congregations and shared with Associations and National UCC.* Learn more about this way of giving to the wider church on page 18.
- Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support, given by congregations and shared with National UCC.*

*NOTE: The anticipated amount of United Church Mission and Basic Support contributions to be passed through to the National setting of the church in 2018 is $668,600, per votes taken at Annual Meeting 2017. The Conference will also pass on roughly $33,000 to Associations in United Church Mission contributions.

RESOURCES ANTICIPATED: $2,721,500
WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Making God’s Love and Justice Real - Justice and Witness Ministries – $312,000 (11.5%)
- Disaster Resource Ministries
- Racial Justice Ministries
- Task forces on Environmental Ministries, Homelessness, MA Innocence Commission, Israel/Palestine, Immigration, and Restorative Justice
- Open & Affirming and marriage resources
- Dialogue and advocacy with other denominations
- Ever Flowing Streams newsletter

Nurturing Pastoral Excellence - Clergy Development Ministries – $381,650 (14%)
- Compensation guidelines for authorized ministers and other church employees
- Boundary Awareness Training
- Pastoral Excellence Program
- Clergy Communities of Practice
- New Clergy Groups
- Super Saturdays
- Worship and preaching workshops
- Safe Church information

Nurturing Church Vitality - Church Development Ministries – $176,750 (6.5%)
- Support and authorization of New Ministry Initiatives
- Hispanic Ministries
- Church visioning & vitality resources and consulting
- Training of Redevelopment Guides
- Resourcing and networking small membership churches
- Help in answering the question “Who is Our Neighbor?” (e.g. MissionInsight and other tools)

Housing and Empowering our Ministries - Buildings and Equipment – $99,300 (3.7%)
- Equipment for all offices
- Major repairs to Conference-owned property in Framingham

Equipping the Saints - Lay Development Ministries – $386,700 (14.2%)
- Super Saturdays and other training events
- Conference communications, including macucc.org and e-newsletters
- Consulting with churches on finance, stewardship and fundraising
- CE Communities of Practice and Certification
- Faith formation and youth ministry training
- Resources for faith formation, youth ministry, worship, mission and justice, church administration and communication, finance, stewardship, planned giving, capital campaigns
- Confirmation programs, youth retreats and other events

Nurturing Church Vitality

Massachusetts Conference UCC
page 20
Leading our Church - Minister & President/Governance – $311,300 (11.4%)
• Minister and pastor among MACUCC churches
• Liaison and collaboration with national and ecumenical agencies
• Representation of Conference in public media
• Board of Directors
• General Synod delegation
• Annual Meeting

Supporting Churches and Pastors - Regionally-based Ministries – $642,400 (23.6%)
• Sharing best practices and provoking creative thinking
• Guidance and support during times of staff transition
• Church assessment and visioning tools and support
• Support in times of crisis and conflict
• Assistance and support for Association boards and committees
• New Beginnings, Crossroads, Churches Alive, and Making It Real programs
• Legacy work with congregations

MINISTRIES TO BE FUNDED: $2,721,500
TOP GIVING CHURCHES PER MEMBER IN 2017

Includes Fellowship Dues, United Church Mission, Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support, One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, and Christmas Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Per Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>*Mashpee Congregational Church, UCC</td>
<td>Mashpee</td>
<td>$5,887.00</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>$96.51</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Congregational Church UCC of Harwich</td>
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<td>Faith United Parish</td>
<td>Fitchburg</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Norwell</td>
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<td>$100.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“5 FOR 5” CHURCHES  2017

5 for 5 Churches Exemplify Excellence
“5 for 5 Churches” have contributed to Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support, or United Church Mission, and all four Special Offerings in the past year.

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Neighbors in Need
- Strengthen the Church
- Christmas Fund

These churches exemplify excellence in Christian mission by supporting all the ways the United Church of Christ is changing lives, whether through disaster assistance, hunger programs, justice work, church vitality, leadership development, youth and children’s ministries, new church starts, or assistance to low income retired clergy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 for 5 Churches in 2017</th>
<th>* UCM opt-in churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agape Spiritual Community, Waltham</td>
<td>First Congregational Church, Fairhaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Congregational Church UCC, Newburyport *</td>
<td>First Parish of Westwood, UCC *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Congregational Church, Chelmsford</td>
<td>Maple Street Congregational Church UCC, Danvers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ Church United in Lowell</td>
<td>Mashpee Congregational Church, UCC *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Congregational Church, UCC, Brockton</td>
<td>Pawtucket Congregational Church, Lowell *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Covenant, Boston</td>
<td>Pilgrim Congregational Church, Lexington *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church on the Hill, UCC, Lenox*</td>
<td>Rollstone Congregational Church, UCC, Fitchburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congregational Church of Westborough*</td>
<td>South Acton Congregational Church, Acton *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwards Church of Northampton*</td>
<td>Southwick Congregational Church UCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeding Hills Congregational Church, UCC</td>
<td>Tabernacle Congregational Church, UCC, Salem *</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Church of Christ, UCC, Sandwich</td>
<td>The Congregational Church of Christ, Leominster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Church of Monson, UCC *</td>
<td>The First Congregational Church in Worcester, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Congregational Church in Billerica, UCC</td>
<td>The First Congregational Church of Southampton, UCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Congregational Church of Milford, UCC *</td>
<td>The Haydenville Congregational Church UCC *</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Congregational Church of West Brookfield</td>
<td>Townsend Congregational Church, UCC</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church, UCC, Chatham</td>
<td>Trinity Church Northborough *</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church, UCC, Spencer</td>
<td>UCC Congregational Church of Norwell *</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church UCC, Stoughton</td>
<td>UCC Congregational of Boxborough</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church UCC, West Springfield *</td>
<td>United Church in Walpole</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church UCC, Whitman</td>
<td>United Church of Christ, Congregational, Burlington *</td>
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<td>First Congregational Church, Amherst, UCC *</td>
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SUPPORT DURING TIMES OF GROWTH, INNOVATION, TRANSITION, CONFLICT, AND VISIONING

Members of the Massachusetts Conference staff are available to assist your church at times of innovation and growth as well as transition or crisis. Churches can begin with their regional Associate Conference Minister for:

- Coaching on best practices from across the country and multiple church traditions, gleaned from churches that have found ways to be effective in the current changing landscape of ministry.
- Support for discerning God’s vision for their next chapter, including help reflecting on identity and purpose and tools to learn about and listen to the culture and community around them.
- Consultation with pastors and leaders during times of conflict to determine the depth and extent of the conflict and the best resources to guide the church to a healthy and faithful outcome.
- Search and Call Assistance in times of transition, when search committees are putting together their church profiles and looking to find the best candidate to serve as their next settled, designated term or interim pastor. (See more at macucc.org/search call.)
- Reflection that recalls what your church has been and done in the past, challenges it to see itself more honestly and clearly by bringing an outside perspective, and holds up a mirror to help your church recognize strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

See more about support during times of growth, innovation, transition, conflict, and visioning at macucc.org/growingyourchurch.

Below is the contact information for each of our Associate Conference Ministers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIONAL ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Gallagher</td>
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<td>Serves Central and Hampshire Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>(413) 210-1124</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia A. Kogut</td>
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<tr>
<td>(508) 875-5233</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill Graham</td>
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<td>Serves Berkshire, Franklin and Hampden Associations</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:grahamj@macucc.org">grahamj@macucc.org</a></td>
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<td>(413) 589-7034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy Vander Hart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serves Northeast and Metropolitan Boston Associations</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:vanderhartw@macucc.org">vanderhartw@macucc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>(781) 369-1396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office: 21 Church St., Winchester, MA 01890</td>
</tr>
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</table>
SUPPORT FOR CLERGY VITALITY

Ellie Richardson
Associate Conference Minister for Lay and Clergy Leadership Development
richardsone@macucc.org | (508) 875-5233, ext. 233

Programs, Aid, Events, Educational, and Renewal Opportunities
The Massachusetts Conference has been a pioneer in creating an environment in which pastoral excellence is vigorously pursued and joyfully supported. With a grant from the Lily Foundation, the Pastoral Excellence Program was launched in 2002 to develop, promote, and sustain excellent pastoral leadership for the churches in the Conference. It was a model that is now being duplicated in other UCC Conferences and denominations around the country. We continue to support the vitality of our clergy.

- The Pastoral Excellence Program is designed to develop, promote, and sustain pastoral excellence through a vibrant Conference-wide network of small groups and large learning events for our clergy in every season of ministry. These programs are great opportunities for collegial support and ongoing development in the practices of pastoral ministry.

Clergy Communities of Practice (CCOPs) designed to help more experienced pastors:
- hone ministry practices
- develop meaningful and supportive collegial relationships
- counteract the risks of isolation and burnout
- navigate the challenges of ministry and enhance growth
- support colleagues, learn from each other, and grow in faith together

Stats: 26 different groups of 5-10 participants each.

New Clergy Groups (NCGs) designed for clergy in their first three years of ministry to help:
- find support and guidance in transitioning from seminary into pastoral ministry.
- develop best practices and meet the challenges of the first years of ministry
- learn and develop habits to help thrive for a lifetime of effective service

Each group is assisted by a more experienced pastor, trained to serve as facilitator and mentor.

Stats: 5 NCGs who meet monthly in small groups of 3-5 participants each.

- The Board of Ministerial Aid provides confidential financial assistance and counseling to both clergy and their families who serve, or have served in the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ and other churches of the “congregational way.” The Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society also offers financial support to clergy and their families.

- Conference-wide Learning Events are designed to provide rich opportunities for learning from expert practitioners and conversation with colleagues on particular topics.

- Super Saturday networking and workshops.

- Renewal events for clergy, such as the Tending the Fire retreat series, offer opportunities for spiritual rejuvenation.

HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

National Setting
UCC Headquarters
700 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115-1100
www.ucc.org

Office of General Ministries
216-736-2100

Justice and Witness Ministries
216-736-3700

Local Church Ministries
216-736-3800

Pension Boards
800-642-6543

Global Ministries
866-822-8224

UCC Insurance (Information)
800-437-8830

Other
Church World Service
800-297-1516
info@cwsglobal.org

City Mission of Boston
617-742-6830

Congregational Library
617-523-0470

Massachusetts Council of Churches:
617-523-2771

Worcester Area Mission Society:
508-755-2329

Andover Newton Theological School
617-964-1100

Seafarer’s Friend
617-889-3222

Wider Church Ministries
216-736-3200

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NURTURING CHURCH VITALITY

Part of the core mission of the Massachusetts Conference is to nurture church vitality, and the Conference carries out this mission by providing resources for people involved in varying aspects of church life, including Church Growth, Justice & Witness, Christian Education and Faith Formation, Stewardship, Communication, Finance, and daily operations. Here are just some of the resources the Conference has to offer.

Growing Your Church
www.macucc.org/growingyourchurch

As the Body of Christ our vitality comes when our churches increase in health, faithfulness, and effectiveness. Our Conference continues to offer programs and coaches to assist you in your journey in understanding the dynamics of your church and the mission field that you are in.

- **Churches Alive** program, designed to nurture and provoke the vitality of churches who want to deeply explore and discern their future. This program now integrates the exceptional church assessment tools from New Beginnings to give a church a clear picture of its realities and potentials.
- **Church Resilience Program**, designed to help a church assess and develop its skills around communication and conflict.
- **MissionInsite** demographics information.

Christian Education / Faith Formation
www.macucc.org/faithformation

The Conference offers a wealth of resources for nurturing faith formation in your church.

- Resources, links, and publications on **Safe Church Conduct Policies**, School **Curriculum, Baptism**, and **Vacation Bible School**.
- Resource Center **Lending Library of DVDs** for use at your church.
- **Events** (e.g. confirmation retreats and national youth gatherings).
- **Christian Educators’ Certification Program**, designed to equip people for the educational ministry of the church.
- Educational & networking opportunities, including 6 Christian Education Communities of Practice.

Communication & Websites
www.macucc.org/communication

Having a church sign outside your doors is no longer enough to convey your message to people. Churches must use digital communication in order to attract, educate, and inspire. The Conference offers online resources, videos, audio recordings, advice, workshops, and resources on:

- Church use of social media
- Building church websites
- Communicating identity
The churches and people of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ have a very long history of looking at the world and prayerfully working to make it a better place. We offer support, resources, and the tools to connect with others in the Conference working on the same issues, including these:

- Climate Action
- Racial Justice
- Homelessness
- Interfaith Action and Ecumenism
- LGBT Concerns
- Restorative Justice
- Innocence Commission
- Israel Palestine
- Chile Partnership
- Disaster Resource
- Hispanic Ministries
- Immigration and Refugee Concerns
- Interfaith Action and Ecumenism
- Chile Partnership
- Disaster Resource
- Hispanic Ministries
- Immigration and Refugee Concerns

Generosity is a gift of the spirit. Inspiring generosity is one of the most important tasks of the church as we seek to make God’s love and justice real for everyone. This is best accomplished by a year-round cycle. We provide advice and resources to help you inspire your congregation to new levels of generosity, through:

- Annual giving
- Planned giving
- Capital campaigns
- Endowment Policies

Facility space that is conducive to relaxed conversation, contemplation, and community, as well as to providing a productive working environment is available to churches at our Edwards House, Framingham location. The building houses 7 bedrooms, 6 baths, a living room, and lounge for day or overnight meetings or retreats.
JIM ANTAL RETIRES

“When we picture Jim, we think about bow ties. We think about that incredibly engaging smile of his. We think about that head that moves in constant motion. We think about this outstanding leader, not only in the Conference, but in the entire United Church of Christ.

~Kent Siladi, CT Conference Minister

The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, who was called by Annual Meeting in June 2006 to be Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference, is set to retire July 1, 2018. As Minister and President, Jim has connected congregations and pastors to resources and opportunities, has served as a prophetic voice in the Conference, has provided leadership in ecumenical and interfaith relations, has brought the work and witness of the UCC to the public square, and has sought to identify and promote strategies and practices that will enlarge the witness of the UCC in Massachusetts.

In addition, Jim’s leadership in the areas of the environment and climate change is noteworthy. He is the national spokesman for climate change for the United Church of Christ, is a political activist on the issue, and has spoken at gatherings of both religious leaders and scientists on the topic. He authored the resolution to divest from fossil fuel companies that was passed by the UCC’s Synod in July 2013 – a new UCC first. He has also engaged the spiritual discipline of civil disobedience numerous times, even being jailed for three days for protesting the Keystone XL pipeline. Most recently, he has authored the book Climate Church, Climate World.

At a recent retirement celebration, The Rev. Corey Sanderson, Chair of the Conference Board of Directors and pastor of Second Congregational Church, UCC, Greenfield, spoke on his first meeting with Jim and how it affected his faith:

I first met Jim when I was invited to join the Board of Directors. I was nervous. The room was filled with gifted, creative, faithful church leaders and I felt out of place. But the first thing that happened was Jim sought me out. He made it a point to reach out and connect to me in the meeting and also afterward. Then Jim continued to welcome me and he made me feel at home in the larger conference. Jim affirmed me and continually thanked me for my thoughts and my contributions. Jim encouraged me…. Then Jim equipped me and taught me how to think about church in a completely different way that still felt somehow still so natural. Then Jim sent me out with a set of faithful values to live my life…. What I discovered is that Jim modeled church in the best sense of the word. I noticed what Jim did for me he did for everyone else too. If you take a moment, and think about your personal story with Jim you will find the exact same thing, seeking you out and welcoming you in, affirming you and encouraging you, equipping you and then sending you out. And for Jim, none of this came about from some leadership gleaned from a book but an honest expression of his faith and values….He models to us what it means to be church.

It seems our best retirement gift is to “Be like Jim.”

A TOAST TO JIM ANTAL

“Here’s to more adaptive leadership, here’s to more climate change rabble rousing, here’s to more contemplative deep dives into Jesus mandate, more faith miles on the bike, more grounded time with grandchildren and family, more horizontal dream casting, more provoking of the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the stirring of the Holy Spirit. Here’s to you beloved Jim Antal. With our blessing. Amen.” ~ Wendy Vander Hart, Associate Conference Minister

JUSTICE AND WITNESS FUND NAMED FOR JIM ANTAL

Whether he is taking a knee or sitting in, Minister and President Jim Antal is and has always been devoted to a more just world. During a discussion with Jim regarding funding, he pointed out that when money grows short, it is justice initiatives that often suffer. And to that point Jim concluded by saying, “Money should not constrain us when it comes to doing justice.”

In recognition and in honor of Jim, the Board of Directors has voted unanimously to rename the Justice and Witness Fund to the Jim Antal Fund for Justice and Witness Ministries. The Jim Antal Fund will continue to have the same goal of promoting Christian witness and justice-oriented action throughout the Massachusetts Conference. It will underwrite programming and staffing to help our churches respond to God’s call to “do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8).

Learn more here: www.macucc.org/specialfundsatthecucc