October 2021 eNews

Clergy Appreciation

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

Ginny's Gems

Thank you, Clergy of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference!

October is Clergy Appreciation Month, which should be filled with lots of ways to say Thank You to our chaplains, pastors, campus ministers, retired clergy, interim and designated clergy, youth ministers, and members in discernment! I continue to be amazed at the ways God is using each of our ministers to serve our communities through the Covid pandemic.

Chaplains and other Specialty Ministers learned how to care for patients and family through phone calls and tablets instead of in-person; and chaplains have been the ones to comfort the hospital staff when their emotional, physical and spiritual exhaustion drains them. Campus Ministers create safe space for college students to vent, lament, and dream during the pandemic. THANK YOU!

Pastors, Associate Pastors, and other ministers in local churches have juggled technology demands of streaming with logistics of returning to in-person ministry while also providing a voice of justice in the community for those most affected by the
pandemic. And that doesn’t touch the worries of money, vision, and purpose that weigh heavily on their minds and spirits as well.

THANK YOU!

Retired Ministers offered wisdom and support to fellow clergy while also providing context to local churches and their community to inspire hope through the pandemic together. THANK YOU!

Members in Discernment have studied, dialogued, and sharpened their skills as God continues to shape their call to ministry. THANK YOU!

Lay people in rural churches held the church together when they were without a pastor by scheduling weekly ministers for worship and providing pastoral care to the members in the midst of the pandemic. God is nudging them to consider what it means to be a Lay Minister for their Church and community in their future (woohoo!). THANK YOU!

In a recent Convergence article, they report that 29% of all clergy have considered resigning from their position during the pandemic. This is not meant to scare churches or clergy but simply to identify the water in which we are all swimming (this data is comparable to the secular employment statistics as well).

What creative way will you thank the ministers in your congregation?

Here are a few suggestions I offer to us all:

- Love offering of money
- Gift card to a local restaurant
- Bookstore gift card (because ministers love to read!!!)
- A few extra days off beyond their vacation and continuing education time to rest
- Flowers on Sunday
- A card in the mail or email to say thank you!

The point is – just as Paul thanked his leaders in his letters to churches, our clergy need to know and feel that they are appreciated for the ministry they provide. So thank you. Thank you. THANK YOU!

Blessings,
Ginny

Communication Procedures During Sabbatical

1. Call or email the conference office as needed (2-3 day response)
   406.647.2040. jpenfield@mnwcucc.org

2. Email Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel for church questions and needs to ginny@mnwcucc.org
3. Email Rev. Lynne Spencer Smith regarding Conference administrative concerns or staff concerns

4. Email eNews material to Jennifer Penfield by the 10th of each month

5. In emergencies call the conference office. If no one is available at the office, a voice recording will provide a number to call

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Conference News

Send church news items to ucc@mnwcucc.org before the 10th of each month.

136th Conference Annual Meeting

November 18, 2021
6:00 pm - Fellowship Time (optional)
7:00 pm - Business Meeting

This year’s CAM is an abbreviated meeting to vote on the 2022 Budget and elections. Please see the official call letter for participation details.
Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference
United Church of Christ

October 11, 2021

To:  Pastors, Churches, Delegates, and Friends,
From: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith, Moderator

Pastors, please especially distribute to your MT-NWy UCC Delegates:
In accordance with Article VI of the by-laws of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Association and Conference of the United Church of Christ this is the official notice of the 139th Conference Annual Meeting which will be hosted virtually on Zoom, November 18, 2021. Pre-registration and final Zoom registrations will be required by November 12, after this date please contact the Conference office to register at ucc@mnwucc.org.

Delegates and visitors are invited for an optional time of fellowship and “happy hour” from 6:00 – 7:00 pm. This will be an opportunity to welcome Marc Stewart back from his sabbatical. The business meeting to receive reports, adopt a budget and elect officers will be held from 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Delegates should plan to be present at 7:00 pm.

A CAM informational packet with reports will be emailed in early November to each church, as well as made available on the website. Please email the Conference office at ucc@mnwucc.org if you would like to receive one hard copy for your church.

Pre-registration through Zoom will be required and can be found at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZtlc-GvrigEtBrirmzP1XyY1cUR7Dk2Wpfk.

Delegate Rules
A MT-NWy Conference UCC church is eligible to have three (3) lay delegates for its first one hundred (100) members or portion thereof, and a total of two (2) youth and/or young adults delegates (ages up to 25), and one (1) additional lay delegate for every one hundred (100) members or major fraction thereof, above the first one hundred (100) members, to a maximum of eight (8) lay delegates. It is recommended that local churches elect lay delegates and such alternates as they desire at the annual meeting or a duly called meeting of the congregation.

Each church should consult its bylaws regarding how delegates are elected or appointed. In the UCC delegates are free to vote their own conscience and faith. Other delegates include all authorized ministers of the MT-NWy Conference, including retired, plus members of the Board of Directors. These delegates do not count against a local church’s delegate allocation. Our Conference bylaws do not permit proxy voting.

In Christ’s Service,
Rev. Marc Stewart
Montana - N. Wyoming Conference
Conference Minister

Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith
Montana - N. Wyoming Conference
Conference Moderator

Global Ministries in Absarokee
On August 15, the Community Congregational Church of Absarokee was pleased to welcome Carol Shipley to our altar as pulpit supply in Meg Hatch's absence.

Carol is one of the UCC representative to the Common Global Ministries Board, and she is currently serving as co-chair. Global Ministries a the partnership of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church Disciples of Christ to serve in mission work together along with approximately 270 global partners.
Absarokee's Mission Committee had asked Carol to share her presentation about Global Ministries with the committee and the church. The Committee was able to visit with her before Sunday, giving Carol an opportunity to share specifics with us on the work of Global Ministries and providing us an opportunity to ask questions.

On Sunday, Carol carried most of the service, much as our normal pulpit supply, including prayers, offertory, and benediction. She even has a Children's Story ready – unfortunately we did not get to hear that as we did not have any children in attendance that day. Her presentation on her work with Global Ministries was excellent, informational, and uplifting. The photos she shared depicted a pilgrimage she made to the Dominican Republic on behalf of Global Ministries, and she provided other important information about the work we do with our partners in 70 countries across the globe.

In these times with so much need around the world, Global Ministries is able to step in quickly and provide targeted relief for many. We highly recommend inviting Carol to help your church with pulpit supply. It is well worth reaching out to her.

Absarokee Mission Committee
Thank you for those who participated in our recent boundary training partnership on Saturday, October 2. Please see below for another upcoming opportunity offered through Convergence.
Annual Reviews 2020
All clergy with standing in our Conference are required to submit a Clergy Annual Informational Review for 2020. If you have not completed this survey, please do so at the following link: www.mnwcucc.org/review 2020.

Church Membership
The Conference is required to keep documentation of church membership for all clergy with standing. Please provide a copy of your church membership certificate or a document provided from your church office.

If no membership documentation exists, please send the following information to Jennifer Penfield at jpenfield@mnwcucc.org and one will be created for you:

Minister Name
Church Name
Membership Start Date

Questions regarding the status of clergy reviews, boundary training or church membership on record can be inquired to the office.

Upcoming Courses

Learn from denominational experts and the team at Convergence about the need for and management of excellent boundaries. Each unit will contain specific learning objectives, reflections based on theological foundations, case studies, best practices and video interactions.

Register Here

Shared from the regional theological education academy of the Minnesota and Wisconsin conferences. Two upcoming course opportunities for clergy.
Get Ready to Get Ready: Advent Prep Series

Don’t let this Holy Season of preparation sneak up on you! Get ready to get ready for Jesus’ birth with our Advent lunchtime lecture & resourcing series.

For only $40

- Participate in 5 live lectures (Weds. 12:00–12:45 p.m. CST), Oct. 20–Nov. 17, with 5 different interpretive voices;
- Access records of these conversations (video and transcript);
- Engage in resources before and after the lectures to help deepen your learning;
- Join an online cohort of learners for sharing resources and having conversation on your own time.

This year, be prepared to help your church prepare for the birth of Christ!

Our goal for this series is to provide preachers and faith formation leaders with fresh perspectives on this year’s Advent texts (Year C of the Revised Common Lectionary). Over the lunchtime hour, we will connect you with a wide range of voices, offering scripture commentary rooted in their particular approach and background. Develop ideas for sermons, worship, and faith formation to enrich your

Grit and Grace: Creativity, Spirituality, and Justice Work

Writer/composer Amanda Udis-Kessler is pleased to offer the six-hour virtual workshop “Grit and Grace: Creativity, Spirituality, and Justice Work.”

For only $65:

- Gather in our online community to explore and renew the connections between creativity, faith, and social justice.
- Participate in the live Zoom workshop:
  - 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 22
  - 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 23
  - All times are Central
- Explore the additional resources provided to help you prepare for the weekend and integrate your learning after the weekend.

Optional-use pre-workshop materials will include essays on various ways of thinking about creativity, covering theology, sociology, ethics, spirituality, liturgy, and justice work, as well as practical writings and exercises designed to assist people with developing their creativity.
Congregation’s experience of Advent, and connect with colleagues doing the same prep!

Workshop time will include conversations, individual exercises, pair and small-group discussions, and creative opportunities supported with spiritual grounding practices. During the workshop as well as the weeks before and after, participants will build supportive community through conversations about creativity.

Register Here

Register Here

Ministry Partners

Intermountain

Intermountain provides the Montana-Northern Wyoming District with free Advent materials as a thank you for partnering in mission!

"The Montana-Northern Wyoming District and its churches have been amazing supporters of our shared ministry of bringing hope and healing to hurting children, and we hope that these materials will be a blessing to pastors and children’s volunteers," said Rev. Chris Haughee, Church Relations Director for Intermountain. This article will explain just what those materials are and how you can download them for free.

"Our Watchful Waiting" is Intermountain Ministry's first comprehensive Advent curriculum that will connect the congregation’s children to the lectionary readings that are part of the traditional Advent observance, as well as suggestions for how everyone can get in on the fun!

Our Watchful Waiting - Advent Curriculum with CFC 2021

Here's an overview of the curriculum, explaining what Rev. Chris and Rev. Sami Pack-Toner, chaplain, have prepared for each of the four weeks of Advent and Christmas Eve:

- The worship/liturgical element is mentioned first, before the lesson, suggesting ways to tie worship and education together for the children.*
  If you want to simply make these a part of your classroom or children’s education department, that is also an option! The curriculum has easy and fun ideas for setting the mood and engaging young people’s imaginations.
The object lesson leads each week, letting you know the object you need to gather and a suggested script for presenting the lesson to the children. This lesson time concludes with prayer.

Next is a game or activity which builds on the theme introduced in the object lesson.

This is followed by a song… an Advent standard, “Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus.” One verse is introduced each week, both the original words as well as some more kid-friendly and lectionary-themed words Rev. Chris wrote. If you are using the Candle Lighting Liturgy, you’ll find another point of connection here for the children and their families!

After the song, a snack… also connected to the day’s theme and with suggestions for continuing the conversation on the lesson through this relaxed time together.

Finally, a craft… again, related to the theme for that Sunday and not too complicated or involved so getting supplies won’t break the budget!

For those congregations that would like to participate, there is a tie-in to Intermountain’s Change for Children program, which involves getting collection cans to send home with families to gather loose change throughout the season.

We hope you will consider participating and sharing the mission of Intermountain with your children and families this Advent. It is a great way to reinforce the values of charity and compassion during a season where the world will be encouraging your children to be thinking primarily about themselves and what they want for Christmas.

Intermountain will provide cans and prayer cards, as well as a “Coordinator’s Instruction Sheet,” should you choose to bless the children of Intermountain by participating in Change for Children. Let them know and they will be happy to send these out to you!

You can contact the team at Intermountain by phone: 406-457-4804 or through contacting Teresa Meyer at teresam@intermountain.org!

* Also available from Intermountain are Candle Lighting Liturgies for Advent that further make this connection between the children’s experience and worship, and if you want those, just click this link: Candle Lighting Liturgies for Worship Advent 2021

Global Ministries
**Working with Faith, Joy, and Hope: A Virtual Pilgrimage to Ecuador with FEDICE**

Join us in mid-November for a virtual pilgrimage through Ecuador with our friends from the Ecumenical Foundation for Development, Integration, Training, and Education (FEDICE). Enjoy the natural beauty of Ecuador, learn about its history and culture, and join in the work and witness of FEDICE. FEDICE works with indigenous and rural communities by promoting human development, creating jobs, and improving family income. Registration is $25/person. Learn more and register here.

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**Congo Week begins Sunday!**

*Congo Week 2021* is October 17-23 and we hope you will join Global Ministries to learn more about Congo from partners and mission co-workers. This year we will learn about Congolese refugees and share opportunities to take action for peace with justice in Congo.

Looking for worship resources? You can find those here.

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**United Church of Christ News**
Pension Boards begins process to establish UCC credit union

In response to a 2017 General Synod resolution, the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ is taking steps to establish a UCC-affiliated credit union.

Cornerstone’s 2 new programs put money to work for creation care, racial justice

The United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund is offering two new ways for people to invest — and borrow — for social good.

Hans Holznagel | published Oct 12, 2021

UCC continues — and expands — its ways to be anti-racist

In 2020, a police officer murdered George Floyd — and interest in dismantling racism spiked in the United Church of Christ.

A year later, that interest is still high. And the UCC still offers four ways to become deliberately anti-racist.

Connie Larkman | published Oct 5, 2021

Take a tour of the new UCC national office space

The space is shaping up.

The United Church of Christ national setting is moving in early 2022, and General Minister and President John Dorhauer is inviting staffers and others interested to take a virtual tour of the new office space.

Resource Links
The Zachariah Walker
Racial Justice Symposium

White Supremacy, Racism, & the Christian Church: The Call to a Discipleship of Liberation and Justice
Sponsored by the Racial Justice Initiative of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

October 23-24, 2021

Featuring:

Saturday, October 23rd
9:00 am – 12:00 noon EST

The Rev. Dr. Drew Hart
Theology Professor, Author,
Church Anti-Racism Leader,
Social Change Practitioner
(Click here for more info)

Sunday, October 24th
2:00 – 5:00 pm EST

The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer
General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ,
Author, Speaker
(Click here for more info)

Join us Saturday, October 23rd, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and Sunday, October 24th, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., as our speakers discuss the church’s complicity and history with white supremacy and racism. Explore the entanglements of racism and white supremacy with western Christianity and discover creative anti-racist practices for churches and Christians committed to racial justice. Engage in opportunities for group discussion and Q & A with our speakers.

Weekend and daily registration options are available. For group rates see registration. For PSEC UCC clergy, this event is approved for 6 CEU hours of Diversity training (3 units per day). Register by clicking here.

*Scholarships are available if needed. Contact annecormier@comcast.net for more information.
Send calendar items to Conference office by the 10th of each month

October 21       Executive Committee meeting 10 am - noon

November 8      Marc Stewart returns from sabbatical

November 18     Conference Annual Meeting Business Meeting
              Fellowship Time 6 pm
              2022 Budget and Elections 7 - 9 pm

Montana - N.Wyoming Conference United Church of Christ

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