What if we flowed with change instead of actively resisting it?

written by Rev. Sara Wilcox
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These are wildly chaotic times where the known continues to escape us. What was once predictable can’t be counted on. The future is unplannable. Before this virus came to make a home among us and our communities, churches faced unprecedented changes in attendance and giving. Already facing a new dimension of what church would need to be, we were thrust into overdrive as we sought to maintain what has been and is.

Hiring a consultant. Creating a strategic plan. These aren't the times for doing the things we've done before or been told to do and for which we couldn't find the resources. We are in a time where collective consciousness will be more important than individual survival. This isn't because survival doesn't matter. It's because survival won't be possible without collective consciousness.

The good news is we have sages already helping us see how to engage bravely and boldly in these times. They are rooted in transformation: committed to movement and aware that two steps forward may sometimes put us three steps back. They celebrate failure: pushing us away from linear understanding to see the cycles all around us and live out of hope. They dream of a world that looks like the Beloved Kingdom we proclaim as Christians.

In her book *Emergent Strategy*, activist, author and teacher, Adrienne Maree Brown
explores the nature of change and how we can more consciously work in its midst. So much of our action is about creating a plan and ignoring the change around us as we seek to activate the plan. What if we flowed with the change instead of actively resisting it?

Because a foundation of the Christian Faith is change, it's worth exploring why change is so complicated for us. Brown reminds us that "Transformation doesn't happen in a linear way, at least not one we can always track. It happens in cycles, convergences, and explosions." If change feels chaotic it is because change is chaotic!

If in this moment you are paralyzed with the question of how the institution will survive, you may seek to better steward your energy moving forward. This isn't to say don't pay the bills or apply for a grant but it is to say our buildings and institutions may meet major demands for change. What if we flowed with it? What if we asked what was possible if we dreamed differently?

You are called to the Jesus movement as a disciple of Christ. Brown writes, "Sometimes it is hard to see that ongoing movement work is always in the soul of new and rapid growth."

The ways of Jesus are the soul of change that is all around us. How will we allow ourselves a new way of being? How will we allow for a new way of seeing? How will we help birth liberation from the ways of living that have oppressed others and failed God's Creation?

As Brown notes: emergent strategy is "relational, adaptive, fractal, interdependent, decentralized, [and] transformative." It's a way of being that is the path forward for those of us who claim Jesus. How will you engage this strategy in this time and this moment as God births new liberation all around us? Our paths will be different but together our gifts and visions will move forward the Beloved Community and the Kin-dom Of God for which we so deeply pray and work.

The Rev. Sara Wilcox pastors Land of the Sky UCC in Asheville, NC. She lives there with her partner, Jeff and two girls Anna (14) and Ella (11.) In April, she underwent open heart surgery to correct a congenital heart condition. Supported by her family, friends, and congregation, she took six weeks of medical leave, completing a 3000 piece puzzle (among many) and watching a lot of Netflix while she was healing. She currently is in cardiac rehab where she is pushing her limits on the treadmill, doing intervals as she grows her capacity for jogging. She is grateful for prayers from our Conference and across the UCC, and the healing hands of our loving and gracious God, a skilled surgeon, and countless medical professionals who have helped her along the way. She has always proclaimed God is Still Speaking and after this surgery she proclaims, "God Still has work for me!"

Southern Conference Summer Closing

The Southern Conference staff will be observing its annual summer leave from July 4 thru August 3, 2020. Should you have an Association issue that requires attention which cannot wait until the end of the leave, please...
contact those below according to your Association.

The phone messages at the Conference office will continue to be checked throughout this time. Should you need to get in touch with the Conference office, leave a detailed message at 336-222-8771 and the appropriate person will return your call.

WNCA:
Rev. William Vanderberg----704-622-9792---blackberry48@gmail.com
Rev. Jim Luck----336-740-5780----jrluckjr@gmail.com (not available July 5-12)
Rev. Barbara Rathbun----828-891-9405----bmrathbun@bellsouth.net

EVA:
Rev. Ernest Hamlin 757-380-0472 ernestham@verizon.net
(We apologize for printing this name incorrectly in the 7-2-20 e-News edition)

ENCA:
Rev. Gary Leath 336-213-6357 vankess39@yahoo.com

Southern Conference UCC Voter Empowerment Campaign

coordinated by Rev. John Myers (D.Min.)

Mission: To prepare all congregations to participate fully in upcoming local, state and national elections.

Goals:

- Achieve 100 percent voter registration of all members of the Southern Conference congregations.
- Achieve complete voter education of all members of Southern Conference congregations.
- Joining and Utilizing UCC "Our Faith Our Vote" Resources.

Find links for SOC Zoom Webinars...Educating, Equipping and Empowering Series

Resources and links for previously aired webinars can be found on the Southern Conference web site.

Annual Gathering save the Date

A Virtual, Unified Southern Conference Annual Gathering...has ENCA, EVA, and WNCA joining together to have Association Meetings and the Southern Conference Annual Gathering over two days, October 16-17, 2020.

Look for additional information and training in the coming months on how this never done before event will unfold. See you there!

Subscribe to SOC e-News / add names here

ALL persons are invited and welcome to receive the Southern Conference e-News. Churches may submit names, or share this invitation with their members for individuals to self-subscribe.
Community UCC in Raleigh calls Rev. Lacey Brown

Rev. Lacey Brown was called by unanimous vote on Sunday, February 9 to be the next pastor of Community UCC in Raleigh. Her first Sunday was May 10.

Lacey grew up in Fort Myers, Florida. She attended Flagler College in St. Augustine, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in religion and philosophy. A short while later, she felt called to ministry and decided to pursue a master of divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. After securing her M.Div. in 2012, she served as a chaplain resident on the oncology unit at Gwinnett Medical Center. In 2013, she was hired by Central Congregational UCC. Lacey was on staff there for seven years and was eventually promoted to Acting Senior Minister.

In addition to working full time, Lacey is in school to earn a Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. Lacey loves the outdoors and has a passion for running. She moved to Raleigh with her partner, Jordyne Krumroy, and their pug-mix, Rocky. They are excited to be near Jordyne's family in Greensboro, NC.

CUCC will have a service of installation for Rev. Lacey on Sunday, July 26 at 10:30am over Zoom. If you'd like to attend, please email the church office office.cucc@gmail.com for more information.

Catawba Clergy Network offers *Thriving in Ministry Program*

**Join a Clergy Community of Practice:** The Catawba Clergy Network (CCN), through its Lilly-funded Thriving in Ministry program, will begin a new year of clergy cohorts in September. In these small discussion groups, also called "Communities of Practice" (COPs), ministers meet monthly for mutual learning and support - essential in times like these.

Last year, seventy pastors in North Carolina and Virginia joined these groups. Many also received CCN grants to support their self-care and help them thrive. From feedback we're receiving, participation in cohorts is making a meaningful difference in clergy wellbeing.

If you're interested in joining a clergy cohort this fall or in facilitating a small group, or if you want to learn more about COPs and CCN resources, contact Rev. Betty Morton at: bjmortona19@catawba.edu.
Ecclesiastical Councils Zoom during Pandemic

Written by Rev. Colleen Samson (D.Min.)

The Western North Carolina Association held its first virtual Ecclesiastical Council on Zoom for two Members-in-Discernment. Rev. Jim Luck and Rev. Tamara Franks, co-chairs of the WNCA Committee on Ministry, worked diligently to facilitate this important step in the life of these candidates in the UCC.

Several months ago, the WNCA COM updated their Ecclesiastical Policy. The policy was widely distributed and can be found on the WNCA webpage. Notice was given to clergy and churches 45 days ahead of the Ecclesiastical Council, and each church was asked to send delegates to the Council based on the number of delegates allowed for the WNCA annual meeting.

Here is how the meeting was conducted.

* Each candidate was interviewed separately.
* The COM secretary asked those attending the meeting to register via the chat box with their name and the name of the church they were representing. The names of those on the phone were recorded aloud.
* The candidate and those attending the meeting were introduced to the candidate by one of the COM co-chairs, explaining that the candidate has been examined by the COM and the COM recommended the candidate for ordination.
* The COM co-chair talked about the Marks of Ministry, and asked those attending to base their questions on the Marks.
* The candidate gave a short introduction about their call to ministry, and their current work.
* The local church pastor and the MID advisor spoke about their work with the candidate.
* Others attending the zoom meeting from the candidate's local church were given an opportunity to talk about the candidates work in the church.
* The call was opened for delegates and others to ask the candidate questions.
* When the questioning session was finished, the candidate was put in a zoom room while the delegates discussed whether to approve the candidate for ordination pending a call.
* The COM secretary recorded the vote through the raise hand option. Those on the phone voted by voice.
* The candidate was brought back in the zoom call, congratulated, and given next steps.
Read below FINAL update for DISCOVER 2020 program

**Virtually: July 5-10**
**Virtually: July 12-17**

**Can register as an individual or as a group**
[www.catawba.edu/discover](http://www.catawba.edu/discover)

ASHEBORO, N.C. -- Middle and High School Students are invited to join us for Virtual Discover 2020 as we explore God's vision for us and for the world. Due to recent trends with COVID-19 all our sessions will now be online using Zoom to facilitate small group discussions, theological reflection, crafts, worship, and games. Participants will receive a box with all the items they need to participate. Please register by June 30 to ensure you get your supplies on time. For questions please contact samartin12@catawba.edu.

Johns River Valley Camp offers lodging as vacation destination

COLLETTSVILLE, N.C. -- Did you cancel a summer vacation due to COVID-19 concerns? Are you still hesitant to go near crowds? We might have a place for you to travel this summer.

As many of you know, we felt compelled to cancel our summer camping schedule for the summer of 2020. While we are saddened by the need to make such a decision, we are looking for the bright spots. Our unique location in the remote and scenic Johns River Valley makes it possible to offer you a safe space to travel this summer.

Contact Phil Hardy at 336-266-1617 or phardy.jrvc@gmail.com to learn about rates, open dates and to begin planning your family's vacation.

***This event has been re-scheduled***

Johns River Valley Camp is launching a "Connect" program for Middle and Senior High youth.

*Caring for planet Earth, our shared home*
*Re-scheduled for September 25-27 - Cost / $120.00 in 2020 with Brooks Berndt, UCC Environmental Justice Minister*
Each year we will turn our thoughts to our connections to the Creator, to Creation and to one another. With minds for justice we will ask in what ways we are connected, what those connections mean and what they require of us?

This weekend will concentrate on being good stewards of the Earth and encountering God in Creation. Saturday will include a bike trip on the Virginia Creeper Trail. Read more

Women's Voices

"Jessie" by Cantey C. Kellener - in honor of Grace Carr / Blowing Rock Library / photo by C. L. Stumb

Betty Griffin, CWSC President
bbg9@bellsouth.net

2020 Church Women Calendar

SAVE THE DATES!

2020 and 2021 Church Women of the Southern Conference Summer Conferences: Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) our traditional Summer Conference (June 18-20, 2020) has been postponed until June 2021. We will still have our Annual Business meeting for this year via Conference Call (see below).

September 12, 2020 (Saturday)
Fall Enrichment - EVA-CW

June 2021
2021 CWSC Summer Conference

October 15-17, 2021
Southern Region Women's Retreat - Live Oak, Florida
July 22-25
United Church of Christ's National Youth Event postponed until 2022.

September 25-27 (Re-scheduled from original date of May 15-17)
Johns River Valley Camp will welcome Rev. Brooks Berndt, Environmental Justice Minister of the United Church of Christ. "Connect: Caring for Planet Earth; Our Shared Home" will invite Middle and Senior High Youth to reflect upon their connection to Creation and their role in providing it care. Cost will be $120 and will include meals, lodging and a bicycle trip on the Virginia Creeper Trail. Read more / Register

October 5-7
Please save the date for the Tenth Annual UCC Retired Servants' Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center

October 16-17
Virtual United Southern Conference Annual Gathering combining meetings of EVA ENCA, and WNCA together with the Southern Conference
Tentative schedule:
- Friday, October 16 - SOC Annual Gathering is called together in the AM
- Friday, October 16 - Associations meet separately in the PM
- Saturday, October 17 - SOC continues Annual Gathering with business and workshops

Summer, 2021
General Synod 33 of the United Church of Christ to be a virtual experience

June 27-30, 2022
Due to the unforeseeable impact of COVID-19 on the health, social, and physical distancing behaviors of the world, National Youth Event (NYE) at Purdue University is postponed until June 27-30, 2022.