SOC staff retreat via Zoom

SOC Annual Gathering plans announced

Southern Conference United Church of Christ e-Newsletter / September 3, 2020

photo and graphics by C. L. Stumb

Plans for virtual meeting include business sessions, worship and workshops for both Conference and Associations

submitted by Rev. John T. Myers (D.Min.)
Associate Conference Minister (EVA)

The Conference along with the leadership of ENCA, WNCA and EVA are in the process of planning for our first ever joint virtual gathering. This gathering will occur on October 16-17, 2020 and will combine the annual meetings of the Southern Conference and each Association.

Southern Conference Annual Gathering Call Letter

Preliminary schedule of events will be the following:

- Day 1, October 16, 2020, 10am-12pm, Southern Conference, opening worship, Conference Business
- Day 1, October 16, 2020, 1pm until meeting adjournment, Associations meet for business session
- Day 2, October 17, 2020, 10am-2pm, Southern Conference-workshops, closing worship

The Southern Conference along with each association are working to finalize their agendas for their portion of each session. The combined and detailed schedule of events is in progress and will be shared with everyone soon.

Information needed for both Southern Conference Gathering and Association meetings will be found on the soc-ucc.org under each assoc tab and under soc annual meeting tab for the Southern Conference as it is put out.
Get on board with special training to navigate virtual meeting platform

Because this is our first Joint Virtual Annual Meeting, we are providing many training opportunities before our meeting so that we have a seamless joint annual gathering with business meetings and workshops. These training opportunities will give us all an opportunity to connect on zoom, practice breaking out into different workshop and meeting spaces and practice voting. All that we have done in past meetings in person will be accomplished virtually. Again, our goal is to ensure that everyone that is attending, voting, and sharing is very familiar and comfortable with the technology prior to the meeting.

Training and connecting periods will be the following:

9/11/2020, 9/12/2020 5-6pm both days/ Zoom Meeting ID 434 093 3027
9/18/2020, 9/19/2020 5-6pm both days/ Zoom Meeting ID 434 093 3027
9/25/2020, 9/26/2020, 5-6pm both days/ Zoom Meeting ID 434 093 3027

Additionally, meeting rehearsals are scheduled for the following days:
10/3/2020, 10/10/2020. Please mark your calendars

Finally, the Southern Conference is requesting that all attendees, clergy, delegates, board members avail themselves of all the training to ensure that you are ready to operate in a virtual environment.

Topic: SOC Gathering and Association Meetings Training
The link for connecting to "training" Zoom meeting is:

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/4340933027
Meeting ID: 434 093 3027
One tap mobile
+13126266799,,4340933027# US (Chicago)
+16468769923,,4340933027# US (New York)

Dial by your location
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 434 093 3027
Find your local number: https://zoom.us/u/tVBXwMfr

Conference is planning fall schedule of webinars

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Next Webinar . . .

Topic: Adolescent Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
Webinar Date and Time: Sept. 10, 2020, 6:00 pm (Eastern Time)

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

https://zoom.us/j/98490761632?pwd=KzJ1bVo1a0thamZYMVIKZEVWR21hdz09

Passcode: 588555

Or iPhone one-tap:
US: +16468769923,,98490761632#,,,,0#,588555# or +13017158592,,98490761632#,,,,0#,588555#

Or Telephone:
Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
US: +1 646 876 9923 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799
Webinar ID: 984 9076 1632
Passcode: 588555
International numbers available: https://zoom.us/u/abbL1Cg4PH

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

Powerpoint slides from last week's webinar available for viewing or download

Beyond Bullying: Helping our Youth Cope Creatively with Toxic Stress
Webinar Date and Time: August 27th from 6 to 7pm.
Presenter: Paul Smokowski, Ph.D., M.S.W., C.P., LCSW-A
Research Director, North Carolina Youth Violence Prevention Center
Download Beyond Bullying slides here

Resources from the National Church

Building Church Differently
Three Power packed webinars with topics / Sept. 17, 24, Oct. 1
- Repurposing Resources for Vision
- Faith Based Entrepreneurs in Our Midst
- Worship Through Technology
- Partners in Project
Download flyer

2020 UCC Stewardship Materials

The Beloved, Love Stewardship Theme Materials include even more graphics for social media so that you can have a strong virtual component to your campaign. We also provide a "how-to" campaign resources document so that you can get the most out of these materials as you raise funds for your congregation. Poster, giving chart, envelopes and letterhead also included.

View materials / order

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.

To add names, submit by e-mail to editor: stumb@boone.net
Please include 1) name, 2) e-mail address, 3) church or other affiliation, and 4) role in church, agency, etc. (i.e. council president). #4 category is optional.

Southern Conference UCC Voter Empowerment Campaign

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

We are re-initiating our SOC Justice Coalition for the purposes of this Voter Empowerment project. This project is a direct result of our work around Racial, Social and Economic Justice and the Southern Regional Strategy (SRS). This strategy is uniting the efforts of several UCC conferences including South East, Florida and Central Atlantic. What the strategy has first focused on is voter empowerment.

Please see the attached plan with goals, objectives and timelines for the project. We have about two months before the national election to ensure that all of our congregations are registered, ready and vote!

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.

New Emmanuel UCC, Charlotte, N.C. plans 120th Year Virtual Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, September 13th @ 11:00 am.

Also, Annual Fall Revival will follow on Monday, September 14th - Wednesday, September 16th @ 7:00 pm nightly. Further details can be found on the attached flyer.

Southern Conference is among 13 conferences receiving support from United Church Funds grants

New York, August 10, 2020 -- United Church Funds (UCF) today announced
that Brown Endowment grants of over $100,000 have been awarded so far this year to 13 United Church of Christ (UCC) conferences. These grants will allow conference recipients to implement support programs and leadership development for authorized ministers who are addressing and responding to the crisis and trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and protests for racial justice.

Charles Buck, UCF President & CEO, said, "From the grant proposals we have received, it’s clear that churches and pastors are not excluded from the disruption and stress caused by the pandemic and recent racial upheaval. They need long-term support to continue leading their congregations in a healthy and sustainable way. United Church Funds is pleased that the Brown Endowment Fund that we administer is helping churches and faith leaders recover from the impact of COVID-19, and elevating churches’ role in addressing systemic racism."

The UCC conferences receiving grants are Central Atlantic, Florida, Illinois South, Indiana-Kentucky, Kansas-Oklahoma, Missouri Mid-South, Northern California Nevada, New York, Penn Northeast, Penn West, South Central, Southern and Southwest.

Nearly all of the proposals cited the significant toll on parish clergy and institutional chaplains as they have had to set up an operational remote worship and pastoral care in a short time, deal with the increased workload and minister to grieving families and church members. In addition, several conferences have witnessed increased racial tension in their communities, and they see a heightened need to support pastors as they navigate the stresses of lifting up a prophetic voice while receiving threats for speaking out against racism.

Read more

The work of Racial Equity and Social Justice is Ongoing. Engage!

Rev. LaShauna Austria is offering several opportunities to engage in conversations, reading groups & workshops. Please take advantage of these offerings as they are designed to further the work of Racial Equity & Social Justice. Feel free to share this message with others and encourage participation from those in your church & network.

Submitted by Rev. LaShauna Austria
Southern Conference Minister for Racial Equity and Justice

1) We’ve launched a 21 Day Intro to Race & Racism. This is for folks who are new to

Read more
conversations about race and racism. This is a self-guided introduction to colonization, the history of race and skims the surface of systemic racism. [Download Syllabus]

2) Christians and Racial Equity is a 5 session workshop series designed to give a foundational understanding of race and racism. It is not too late to join for the last three sessions. [Download session descriptions] - [Register HERE]

3) Watch Party: WHITE SAVIOR Racism in the American Church -- (THIS) Saturday 9/5 from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM. [Register HERE]

4) Part II of this discussion about the book Tears We Cannot Stop by Michael Eric Dyson. Dyson’s sermon addresses ways that those regarded as white respond when confronted with the reality about whiteness and argues that if we are to make real progress, we must face difficult truths. [REGISTER for PART II Book Discussion: Tears We Cannot Stop]

OMG, we [as church members of High Country UCC] are 18

[Reflections from the perspective of C. L. “Curly” Stumb, High Country UCC member]

Vilas, N.C. - As an 18 year old spiritual family, we [church members] couldn't let this rite of passage moment slip by without a party, and so we created one. With COVID-19 still hovering over our lives in a major way, we demonstrated that we could be responsible at our present age. So the pool party was without a pool, but we almost had a hurricane and did have pool noodles. The noodles reminded us to social distance and expressed an extravagant welcome on the lawn. Bernie and crew rose early to pack a smoker with Boston butts, and then chopped, and chopped, and chopped and chopped. We wore masks with smiles and reminders to vote. We zoomed in on real faces and welcomed an escape from virtual community. Ocracoke mission trippers experienced a reunion of sorts. Their return on March 15 marked the beginning of virtual worship. Wow. We - as a church - are coming of age amidst COVID-19. That might require some further reflection.

[Visit High Country UCC on Facebook, and view 18th Anniversary and other services]
On Wednesday afternoon, September 2, Heather Burns was transported to the Hospice House in Winston-Salem for care.

Keep Heather in your prayers, and her husband, Rev. Mark Burns, pastor of Mt. Zion UCC, China Grove, NC. Cards can be sent to Rev. Mark Burns, 203 Frontier Circle, China Grove, NC 28023.

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In the sure and certain hope of resurrection through Jesus Christ, the Reverend William John Campbell, passed to life eternal on Saturday, August 29, 2020.

Rev. Campbell was a graduate of Lancaster Theological Seminary. During his 43 years of ministry, he served Hedrick's Grove UCC in Lexington, First Reformed UCC in High Point, and Mt. Zion UCC in China Grove. Campbell also served in many leadership and volunteer positions in the UCC, including positions on the WNCA Board of Directors and as President of the Johns River Valley Camp Board of Trustees.

Visitation is scheduled from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2020 at Warlick Funeral Home in Lincolnton. A family graveside service will be held at St. Matthews United Church of Christ (UCC) Cemetery, followed by a Celebration of Life at Mt. Zion UCC in the spring.

Condolences may be sent to the family:
Mrs. Doris Shaw Campbell, 113 Frontier Circle, China Grove, NC 28023

Memorials may be made to Mt. Zion United Church of Christ, 1415 South Main Street, China Grove, N.C. 28023

View Online Obituary

JRVC river clean-up on New River
photo by C. L. Stumb
Blowing Rock Conference Center offers Labor Day Weekend Special

submitted by Ted Wilson, Executive Director

BLOWING ROCK - In honor of all of you who have supported our holy grounds over the years, we want to extend a special offer just for you. Over the long Labor Day weekend (from Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 7), we want to welcome "Family" and Friends of Blowing Rock Conference Center to stay at reduced rates.

Follow the link below to reserve your room or cottage today! You may pay at check-in.
https://forms.gle/Lhm9zA4jxTsQawdw9
You may also contact us at 828-295-7813

Come spend Labor Day weekend at your place in the mountains! We’d love to see you.

Johns River Valley Camp offers lodging as vacation destination

COLLETTSVILLE - Have you planned a Fall getaway for your family or small group? Johns River Valley Camp offers an ideal, COVID-safe environment for a Fall vacation. Our setting provides a beautiful place to enjoy the changing of the seasons. Contact Phil Hardy at phardy.jrvc@gmail.com for rates and availability. Church leaders please ask about our special church rates.

Women’s Voices

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

Betty Griffin, CWSC Retiring President
bbg9@bellsouth.net

Gwen Mitchell-Green, new CWSC President Elect
Darcell.Knight@gmail.com

2020 Church Women Calendar

September 12, 2020 (Saturday)
Fall Enrichment - EVA-CW (Postponed until further notice)
2021

June 2021 (TBD)
CWSC Summer Conference

October 15-17, 2021
Southern Region Women's Retreat - Live Oak, Florida

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

Rev. Karen Richardson Dunn
facilitator for the Southern Conference
Creation Justice Team
e-mail contact: krichdunn@gmail.com

Next Environmental Justice Webinar:
Children and Youth Speak: Your Vote Matters
Saturday, September 19, 2020 03:00 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

by Brooks Berndt
UCC Minister for Environmental Justice

With the climate crisis and the struggle against inequality, the younger generations have served as today’s prophets in provoking a global reckoning of the dire situation faced. As the November 3rd elections approach, children and youth are raising their voices again with a moral urgency as they awaken us to how much is at stake. This webinar will present children and youth from ages 10 to 18 who have a message and perspective that needs to be heard before those older than them vote.

Register now to hear their urgent message to voters.

Jockey’s Ridge State Park, Nags Head, N.C. / photo by C. L. Stumb
September 8, 1:00 pm
Authorized ministers (local church pastors, specialized ministers, and retired ministers) in the Western NC Association are invited to a scheduled Zoom gathering -- to check in, share resources, find support -- with the Association's ACM, Rev. Colleen Samson (D.Min.). Contact Rev. Samson for Zoom link.

September 12, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
WNCA Board meets via Zoom

September 13, 3:00 pm
WNCA has scheduled the ordination of Cheri Dennis / (virtual connection to be announced)

September 13, 11:00 am
New Emmanuel Congregational UCC, Charlotte, NC to celebrate 120th Year Virtual Anniversary. Further details can be found on the attached flyer.

September 14 - 16 (Monday - Wednesday), 7:00 pm nightly
New Emmanuel Congregational UCC, Charlotte, NC invites all to Annual Fall Revival. Further details can be found on the attached flyer.

Sep 19, 2020 (Saturday), 3:00 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)
UCC Environmental Justice Webinar: Children and Youth Speak: Your Vote Matters
Read more / register

October 5-7
Tenth Annual UCC Retired Servants' Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center has been cancelled. A Zoom check-in for past participants is being planned, where details will also be shared for a re-gathering (hopefully) in 2021.

October 15-16, 2020, Thursday-Friday
HOMEGROWN: NC Women's Preaching Festival (via Zoom)
Theme: Preach Like Pauli
This year's Homegrown Festival will feature opportunities to learn, commune, and recharge with each. We'll focus on preaching on justice and mercy. The legacy of preacher, lawyer, writer Rev. Pauli Murray will provide inspiration for our time together. We'll feature a variety of workshops. More information coming soon. Speakers will include Donyelle McCray, Homiletics professor, Yale Divinity School and more.
Info: ncwomenpreaching.com

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

July 11-18, 2021
General Synod 33 of the United Church of Christ to be a virtual experience, themed "Rooted in Love, Special Edition." read more

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
Rhapsody of the Seas

Turn my heart to your decrees, and not to selfish gain.

--- Psalm 119:36

Lectionary Reading: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost / September 6, 2020 / Psalm 119:33-40

Photo by C. L. Stumb

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