



ConnTact

United Church News
God Is Still Speaking,

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“From Suffering into Hope through Christ”

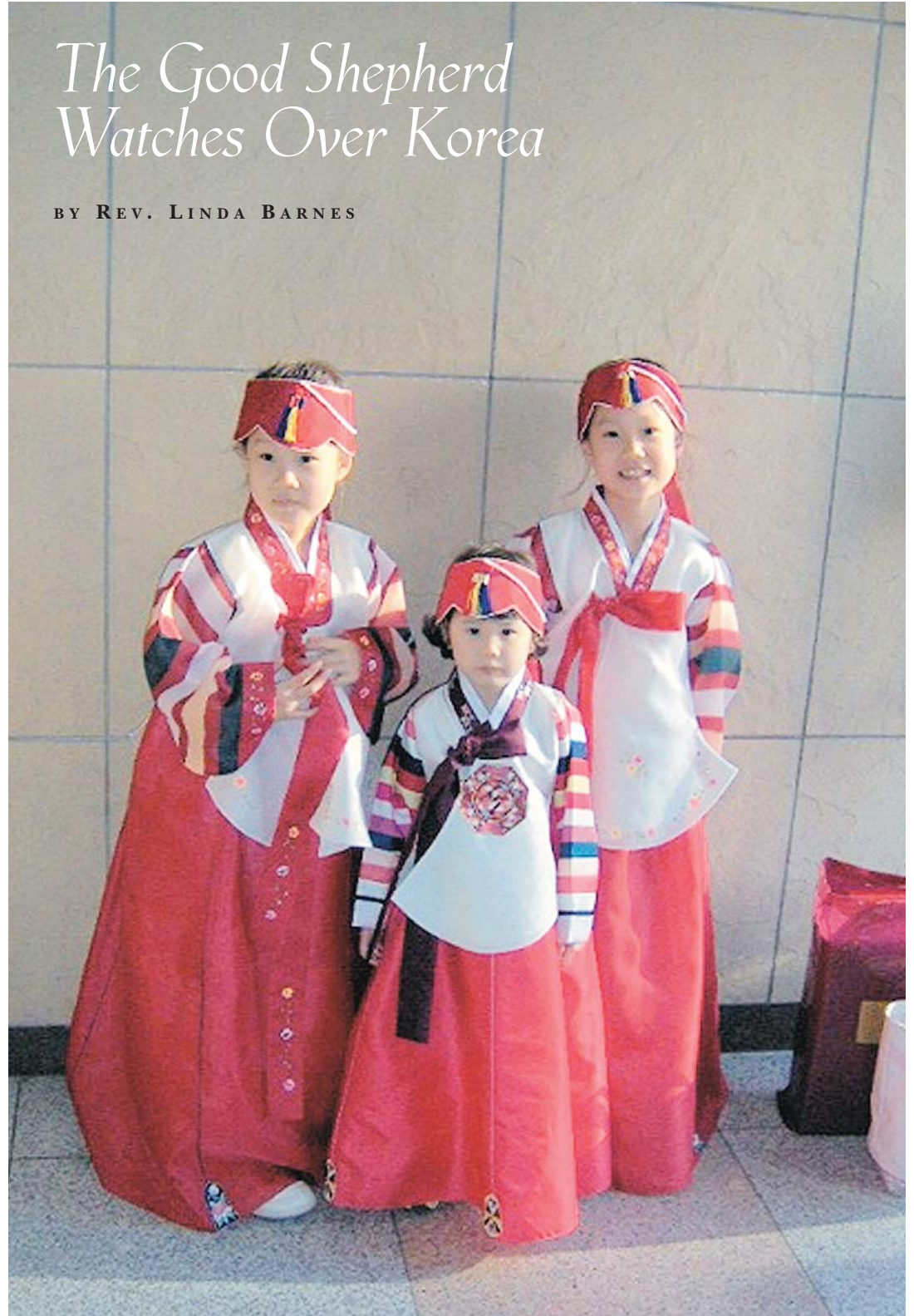
Jesus as the Good Shepherd is a favorite theme pictured in our partner churches in the Presbyterian Church Republic of Korea (PROK). Recently, I returned from bringing greetings to their annual spring meeting, as part of a four-person delegation from Connecticut.

The Dong Suwon Church in Suwon City hosted the meeting. Their recently dedicated building is the most imposing congregational facility I have ever visited. Along with the meeting rooms and offices one expects, they have both a cafeteria and a café where church members and visitors can relax, converse and find refreshment, an underground parking garage and a lovely sanctuary with the latest high-tech equipment tastefully built into the walls. In the hallway a row of clocks shows the time in each place the church has reached out in mission.

A tall, stained glass window of Jesus as the Good Shepherd rises above the city streets, providing the backdrop for an outdoor amphitheater where worship and festivities are held. An alcove in the reception area displays the congregation’s history—including photos of their three previous worship spaces, beginning with a simple garage, and the accordion that senior pastor Lee Chong Song played as he invited people to come to worship when they began as a mission church in 1982. Such Christian vision and accomplishment during these last decades of astonishing growth in South Korea surely inspire us all.

But faithful ministry takes many forms in many settings, here and around the world. Through two previous trips to Korea and hosting guests here, I’ve come to feel a personal connection with many of our PROK pastoral colleagues.

Continued on page 3



The Good Shepherd Watches Over Korea

BY REV. LINDA BARNES

That They May All Be One

A
2

The Spirit Is Moving in New Haven

A
3

Voices of Hope in Israel and Palestine

A
4



Upper left: Stained glass window at the Dong Suwon Church; **Above:** Three young girls in native costume at the Korean Folk Village; **Left:** Rev. Linda Barnes (second from left), Irene Choi (fifth from left) and Margie Kreitler (right) with some of our Korean hosts.

Synod is Coming!

Synod is Coming!



In a very short time now, 51 delegates and countless visitors from Connecticut will travel to Atlanta for the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. There we will worship, pray, engage in Bible study, debate important issues, vote a budget, and elect officers. We'll also be up on the stage on the last day, inviting everyone to

Connecticut's "extravagant welcome" for the UCC's 50th anniversary Synod in 2007 at Hartford's new convention center.

On several occasions, I have described Synod as being like a family reunion – where, in addition to those you expect to see, you get to see old friends you didn't even know you were related to, meet family members you've never encountered before, and recognize common ground in Christ even as you discover amazing diversity.

This year's Synod is apt to be like those that have gone before – except the context is different. For

Pray daily for the General Synod and its delegates, that all may discern the mind of Christ and the will of God.

the past 40 years or so, the UCC has been one of Christianity's best kept secrets. Now, with the advent of The Still Speaking Initiative, we have the attention of both the media and the public in a new way. (In March, there were over 40,000 hits to the "find a church" portion of the www.ucc.org website!) That's one part of the context.

The second part of the context is a polarized nation in which there is little appreciation for nuance, for dialogue, for diversity. The triumph of

talk radio's diatribes and a society in which major governmental leaders portray one set of values as the only truly Christian values are frightening to many, all across the political spectrum.

This Synod, then, will get more than the usual amount of public attention, especially because it will have before it a number of resolutions from a variety of vantage points on everything from same-gender marriage to whether divestment from stocks in certain companies can advance the cause of peace and justice in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

So with this column, I make a number of requests: first, pray daily for the General Synod and its delegates, that all may discern the mind of Christ and the will of God for our beloved Church in this challenging time; secondly, please don't believe everything you read in the public media; thirdly, please do use the www.ucc.org website both now and during Synod to keep up to date on matters before us and on actions taken; and fourthly, if you can join us in Atlanta, do come!

Synod is coming, and it's a great experience! Just wait until 2007!

"I Am UCC"

That They May All Be One

by Rev. Richard Dacey

I am a member of the United Church of Christ. Sometimes it's difficult for me to say that. There are many times when I disagree with others in our denomination about various issues and actions. Sometimes I get frustrated. Once in a while I get completely exasperated. But I am a member of the United Church of Christ and, God willing, I will be until the day I die.

Now why in heaven's name would I want to make a declaration like that? Why would I want to remain in a denomination where others don't necessarily mirror my ideology? Why not find a denomination where people talk and act and look and think like I do? Wouldn't that make sense?

Teenagers discover that grouping together in cliques gives them a sense of security and identity. The teenage clique clearly distinguishes "us" from "them" by sharing similar patterns of speech and behavior, dress and thought. If a member of a clique (even a "non-conformist" clique) shows signs of individuality, they may be perceived as a threat to the clique and risk ostracism.

We adults like to think that we've outgrown cliques. But the truth is we still find comfort in people who

talk and act and look and think like we do. And the groups we affiliate with tend to reflect that.

But the church is different. The church is not a clique. And I thank God that in our congregation we have active members who are card-carrying members of the A.C.L.U. and others who are lifelong members of the N.R.A. I thank God that we have introverts and extroverts,

Red Sox fans and Yankees fans, Republicans and Democrats, soldiers and pacifists, blue collar and white collar workers, people devoted to evangelism and people committed to social justice.

The people in our congregation come from an amazing variety of backgrounds and bring a remarkable diversity of perspectives to our common life. We have some passionate differences among us,

We have some passionate differences among us... But the source of our unity is infinitely stronger than our differences of speech, behavior, appearance, and thought... We are the United Church of Christ... Jesus Christ, who prayed that, with all our differences, we "would all be one."

whether the subject be local politics or the major moral and ethical questions of our time. And our diversity is even greater when we look beyond our congregation to the Wider Church with whom we're connected in covenant. It's no wonder that people say that UCC stands for Utterly Confused Christians!

But the source of our unity is infinitely stronger than our differences of speech, behavior, appear-

ance, and thought. We are the United Church of Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Savior and Lord, revealed to us in Scripture, made known to us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, who calls us not into a clique or a sect but into a community of living, growing, faithful disciples. Jesus Christ, who loves us and commands us to love. Jesus Christ, who prayed that, with all our differences, we "would all be one."

I'm a member of the United Church of Christ. Not *in spite* of my occasional frustrations and even exasperations, but *because* of them. Because I know that the Lord isn't done with me yet. Because I know that if I surround myself with people who talk and act and look and think like I do, I might fall for the vain delusion that I have "arrived" spiritually. Because being bound in covenant promise with people who talk and act and look and think in different ways challenges me to hear Christ's call in different ways. Because struggling with the rich diversity of

our denomination makes me a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

It's not always easy, but I'm profoundly grateful that by God's grace I may say it: I am a member of the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Richard Dacey is Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Cheshire.

Recent and Upcoming Pastoral Changes

NEW CALLS

Bartholomew, Bill from Interim Ministry to Pastor, Church of the Good Shepherd, Woodstock, May 2
Hoare, Kim from In-Care to Associate Pastor, First Church of Christ, Farmington, April 1
Maddox, Cindy from Associate Pastor, Asheville, NC to Pastor, King Street, United Church of Christ, May 15
Olsen, Sandra from Associate Pastor, First Church of Christ, Middletown to Pastor, First Church of Christ in New Haven, September 1
Peiffer, Karen from In-Care to Pastor, Broadview Community Church, Hartford, July 15
Watson, Margaret from Pastor, Frankfort, ME to Associate Pastor, United Church of Christ, Southbury, August 1

RESIGNATIONS

Gordon, Steve from Pastor, Newtown Congregational Church to Interim Ministry, April 7
Higgins, Linda from Pastor, First Congregational Church Andover, June 12
Hinchliff, MJ from Pastor, Ivoryton Congregational Church to Doctor of Ministry Program, Eden Seminary, St. Louis, MO, June 30
Moore, Robert from Pastor, Niantic Community Church, July 1

PILGRIMS AND PARISHES

EDITED BY JEAN HAMILTON

OUTREACH

Hartford

Asylum Hill Congregational Church collected outdated or unwanted CDs and cases for recycling. Each month, approximately 50 tons (!) of CDs become obsolete and are thrown in the trash.

Bolton

The children of the Congregational Church held bake sales through Lent and offered to do more chores around the house in order to earn money for the Tsunami Relief Effort.

Hebron

Gilead Congregational Church has challenged its members and youth to seek out and gather coins and bills found on the ground. In addition to using the money found there is the chance of adventure as they look for the coins. It is a helpful way to remember the many gifts God has placed in our lives.

STUDY

New Canaan

Congregational Church offered an opportunity for Small Group Leadership Training. The two-session course offered the fundamentals of small group leadership to assist in the development of small groups within the church community. The church also offered a series on Active Christian Parenting. The series looked at what it means to incorporate Christian values in parenting.

Westport

Saugatuck Congregational Church offered a course entitled "Mysticism & Twelve Step Spirituality." Surprisingly, to some, the spirituality of twelve step groups has much in common with Christian mysticism. This course examined the differences and similarities between the two. The Saugatuck church also had a "cocoa house" to chase away the winter blues. Music, fellowship and cocoa were offered to all.

Ridgefield

First Congregational Church held a Renewal of Baptism service. This service lifted up and honored the complete, encompassing and deeply formative claim of Baptism on our spirits. This service has been celebrated by the "Church" for centuries.

Tolland

The pastor of United Congregational Church spent part of his sabbatical leave "shadowing" some of his parishioners in their work life, or to paraphrase an old Native American adage, he "walked with them for a mile or two in their work shoes."

Woodstock

First Congregational Church is planning a series of discussions entitled "God is Still Speaking About Marriage." The discussions will look at marriage from a personal and cultural perspective, as well as looking at the current political debate.

FELLOWSHIP

Storrs

The Deacons of Congregational Church have adopted a "Secret Angel" program. Each deacon has a pewter angel to pass on to members of the church who are admired and appreciated for the work they do. The members may hold and cherish the angel for a while and then pass it along to another member they admire and appreciate.

Glastonbury

The Diversity Committee of First Church of Christ held an evening of song with members of Iglesia Cristiana Nueva Esperanza, New Hope Church of East Hartford.

Southbury

United Church of Christ has invited families to provide dinner and fellowship with the children at Chapman House in Waterbury. Chapman House is a safe house where children are taken for a short time when they are removed from a disruptive or unsafe environment at home. Families are encouraged to bring dinner, stay and eat and spend some social time with the children.

CLASSIFIEDS

Positions

NORTH CANAAN – The North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC seeks both a Sunday school and Youth Director. Depending upon the candidate, this can be a combined position or two separate positions, for a maximum of ten hours per week. This church is devoted to their young people; the candidate(s) should have experience with children and youth, enthusiasm, willingness to work in collaboration with others and love for God. • Contact: For job descriptions and further information, please call 860-824-7232. Resumes may be sent to the church: PO Box 306, Canaan, CT 06018; attn: Christian Education.

REDDING — First Church of Christ seeks an enthusiastic, creative, caring Christian Education Coordinator to oversee a high-energy Sunday School program. Responsibilities include supporting volunteer teachers, organizing a one-week Vacation Bible School and other seasonal programs. Experience in Christian Education and/or as a teacher is highly desirable, as is familiarity with the traditions of the United Church of Christ or Congregationalism. Avg. 15 hours/wk. • Contact: Ellen Cramer, Chair, Christian Education Committee, First Church of Christ Congregational, PO Box 1055, Redding Center, CT 06875; ecramer@optonline.net

SOUTHBURY — United Church of Christ Southbury seeks one or two people to expand the Ministry of Music in a growing church, building on a team ministry integrating music with worship and Christian Education. Choir Director 15 hrs/wk, Organist 12 hrs/wk. 3 manual Allen digital organ. Sunday service, holiday and special services. Practices 1 - 2 evenings per week. Music ministry consists of Senior, Junior and Bell Choirs. Variety of traditional and contemporary music. Compensation based on education and experience. • Contact: Music Search Committee, United Church of Christ, Southbury, 283 Main Street, North, Southbury, CT 06488; united.ch.christ@sbcglobal.net; or fax to 203-264-1283

TALCOTTVILLE – Talcottville Congregational Church seeks a part-time Music Director/Organist. This growing church is willing to give a Music Director/Organist support and freedom to grow and develop. • Contact: Talcottville Church, 860-649-0815, Monday – Friday, 9 to 1

Sell or Give

WATERBURY – Free. Bradbury upright piano. It is older and great for practice. • Contact Cynthia Merrick to arrange to pick up the piano. 203-757-0331.

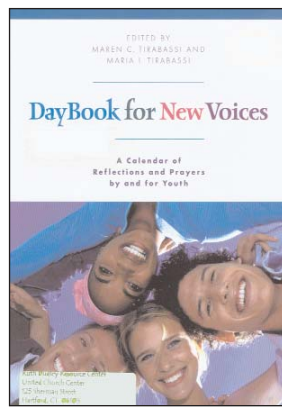
WOODBURIDGE – Free. 18 used, navy choir robes that have been dry-cleaned. • Contact: Carol at 203-389-2119

Look What's In the Resource Center

by Amy Beveridge,
Director, Ruth Dudley
Resource Center

New books, videos, and DVDs flow into the Ruth Dudley Resource Center with some regularity. Not everyone can stop by to see what's new, so it seems a good idea every now and then to do "show and tell" in ConnTact.

The items presented here were chosen to illustrate the diversity of materials we have to offer you in the Resource Center.



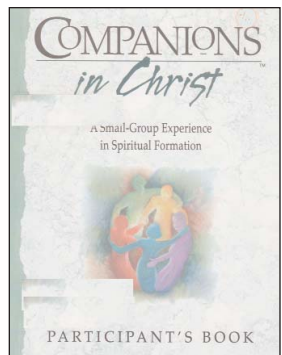
Daybook for New Voices: A Calendar of Reflections and Prayers by and for Youth
Maren C. Tirabassi and Maria I. Tirabassi, editors
Maren Tirabassi and her daughter, Maria, collaborated on this collection of poems, stories, and prayers, all written by young people. There is an entry for each day of the year, so the book may be used as a devotional guide or as a volume of worship resources. (from Pilgrim Press)



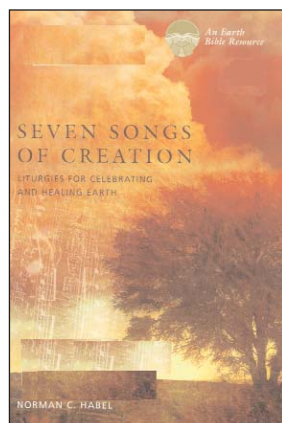
A Fast That Lasts: Hunger Retreat Kit
Many people have asked if the UCC has its own resource for a junior/senior high hunger retreat. The Disciples/UCC have recently published this guide that includes everything needed to plan and carry out a retreat that will both raise awareness of the root causes of hunger and raise money for hunger ministries.

Surviving Life's Jungle: Depending on Grace
Beth Miller

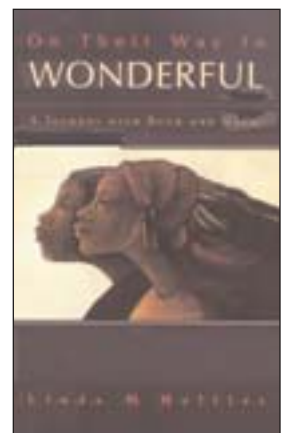
This resource is one title from a curriculum series produced by Abingdon Press just for today's junior high students. Each course includes seven sessions on subjects of importance to the age group, plus plans for a retreat. Several other titles from the series are included in the RDRC collection.



Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience
Companions in Christ is for small group, in-depth exploration of spiritual practices and disciplines. The book includes weekly readings from contemporary writers about spiritual formation, scripture readings, and questions for guiding discussion. (from Upper Room Books)



Seven Songs of Creation
Norman C. Habel
Spring and summer seem wonderful times to use these "liturgies for celebrating and healing the earth." Complete worship resources for the seven "songs" (sanctuary, earth, sky, waters, Sophia, life, and healing) are included in the volume, along with suggestions for images and symbols for decorating the worship space. (from Pilgrim Press)



On Their Way to Wonderful: A Journey with Ruth and Naomi
Linda H. Hollies
This Bible Study looks at multicultural, diversity, and racism issues in the Scriptures, as illustrated by the story of Ruth and Naomi. Study questions and suggestions for journal writing are included. (from Pilgrim Press)

More books on page 8

Voices of Hope in Israel and Palestine

by Rev. David W. Good

Eighteen of us have recently returned from our "Tree of Life Journey to Israel and Palestine." We were an interfaith group sponsored by The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, and on this journey we were pleased to have representation from the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Native American traditions. The "Tree of Life" is an ancient symbol that reminds us that each of our spiritual traditions is like a branch on the same tree, that we are interrelated and interdependent, drawing sustenance from the "ground of our being."

During our stay, we visited a number of groups working toward a just and peaceful resolution in the region, including the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, founded by Jeff Halper, a Jew; MACHSOM WATCH, a group that monitors human rights violations at the checkpoints; and the Bereaved Parents' Circle, a community of Jews, Christians and Muslims, all of whom have lost family members in the violence but have resolved to be a community of mutual support in support of justice and peace.

This journey also allowed us to spend time in the West Bank, specifically in the communities of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour. We visited people in their homes and their places of business and attended their schools, including Bethlehem University and a Greek Orthodox School in Beit Sahour. We were disheartened to learn that in 10 years not one U.S. Congressional delegation has visited Bethlehem University, despite the fact that such delegations have made numerous visits to hear the Israeli perspective. No wonder there is such a disparity in our country's financial support!

Since our return, we have been asked whether there is reason for hope there. While we heard many discouraging stories, and while everyday there is more than sufficient evidence to lead us to despair of any peaceful resolution, there are several individuals who give us hope.

After our stay in Jerusalem and Beit Sahour, we journeyed toward the Galilee, stopping along the way to visit with a Muslim man, Ibrahim Khalil. Ibrahim is an olive farmer who lives south of Nablus in the West Bank community of Issawiye. Last January, a group of Jewish settlers drilled holes and inserted poison in hundreds of his 300-year old olive trees, killing them all. Worse, his son was run over and killed by a Jewish settler, who did not even stop to call for assistance. The child's mother suffers terribly from Post Traumatic Shock Syndrome, having been an eyewitness to this tragedy.

Our church helped finance the replanting of Ibrahim's trees, and during our "Tree of Life Journey" we hoped to see the tiny saplings he planted. When we met Ibrahim, he was observing Ramadan and so was unable to offer us coffee and refreshments, but he welcomed us warmly into his home and introduced us to his family.

We learned that in college he had majored in English literature. He spoke clearly but softly and sadly about his situation. He said it would not be possible to visit the olive groves, because just the night before settlers had destroyed 400 more of his trees. He shared that members of his family and neighbors had been attacked by the settlers' guard dogs. The only time he was able to work in the olive groves was during the Jewish holidays, when the settlers were otherwise engaged. Despite this situation, Ibrahim spoke of his desire for a peaceful resolution and shared with us that he had joined the Bereaved Parents' Circle.

Most of those with whom we met understand that we're all like branches and leaves in the same Tree of Life, intimately related and mutually dependent.

After visiting Ibrahim Khalil, we then traveled toward Ibillin and the educational institute known as Mar Elias, founded by an extraordinary man, Elias Chacour, a priest in the Melkite Christian Tradition.

Elias is maybe 63 years of age and has a long white beard that juts out as if to say, "I'm going forward, no matter what." As a Palestinian Christian living as a citizen within the State of Israel, it is very difficult, indeed, illegal, for him to visit the occupied territories of the West Bank. He remembers when he was eight years old, Jewish soldiers and then Jewish settlers came and occupied his hometown of Byram, in the northern part of Galilee in the late 1940's. All his family and neighbors were brutally forced into exile.

As a child, he himself was unfairly branded a "terrorist" by the Israeli authorities as an excuse for their repressive measures. Elias was sent off to a boarding school and eventually was ordained a Christian priest. Now he is the charismatic leader of an interfaith school that has representation from the Christian, Muslim, Druze, and Jewish populations. He refers to his students as the "living stones" on which a new civilization might be built. Speaking to our group, he admonished us to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people, but not if we were driven by hate, saying there was already more than enough hatred in the Land of Promise. He said he was persuaded that God was neither Jewish, nor Christian, nor Muslim, and urged us all to reaffirm our "common humanity."

Rami Elhanan is a Jewish business man, a graphic designer. Members of his family were survivors of Auschwitz and came to the State of Israel as refugees seeking a home free of the anti-Semitism that had so dominated much of the rest of the world. As a young man, Rami served in the Israeli military, but

on September 4, 1997 he came to a crossroads in his life. Smadar, his 14-year old daughter, was killed by a suicide bomber.

He said, "I do not forgive, and I do not forget, and yet I am an intelligent man and I came to see the desperation that leads to such terrible acts of violence." He saw that his daughter was a victim not only of a suicide bomber, but also the victim of the State of Israel itself and its oppressive measures towards the Palestinian people – the violations of human rights, detentions without trial, the 30-foot "security fence" being built in the occupied territories, the killing of innocent people by the Israeli military.

Rami spoke of a "two state solution," with the Israeli withdrawal from all or most of the settlements, and the creation of Palestinian state coexisting with Israel along the 1967 borders. He said, "I believe that we don't have to surrender to our basest instincts. We don't have to act from burning hatred and uncontrol-

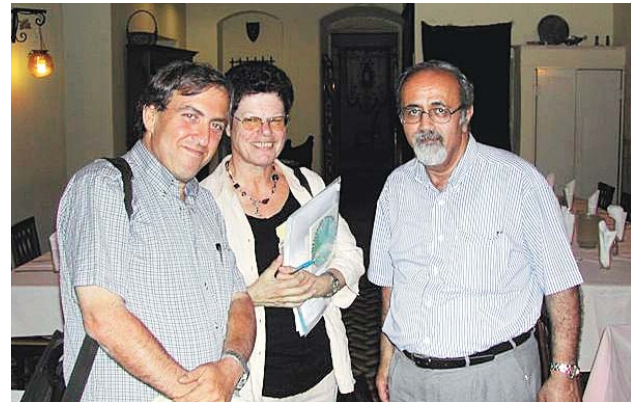
lable storms of emotion; it is possible to function according to common sense. After all we are human beings, not animals. We lost our children, not our heads. We must maintain the hope that there are other possibilities. Both sides must make every effort to enter a dialogue in order to prevent more tragedies."

He urged us to amplify his voice. A member of our group asked how we can be critical of the State of Israel without appearing to be "anti-Semitic." He leaned forward in his chair and said, "There's nothing Jewish about the occupation. There's nothing Jewish about the demolition of Palestinian homes. There's nothing Jewish about the violation of human rights."

Rami and his wife also are members of the Bereaved Parents' Circle. Interestingly, we had learned from Ibrahim Khalil that when his wife was in need of medical attention but was short of the necessary financial resources, they received help from a fellow member of the Parents' Circle – this Jewish man by the name of Rami Elhanan.

These are the people and this is the kind of cross-cultural, trans-national, meta-religious friendship that gives hope in this conflict. Are Rami, Ibrahim, and Elias exceptions? While certainly they are exceptional individuals, I have come to believe that they are actually in the majority, albeit a silent majority. Most of those with whom we met understand that we're all like branches and leaves in the same Tree of Life, intimately related and mutually dependent. Or, as the Native American member of our journey said in several of our prayers – "mitakuye oyasín" – which means "all my relations." That's the wisdom that gives me hope.

David W. Good is the Senior Minister of the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme.



PHOTOS, FROM TOP: From left to right: Rami Elhanan, a Jewish Member of the Bereaved Parents' Circle whose daughter Smadar was killed by a suicide bomber; Ronni Ammerman, a Jewish member of MACHSOM WATCH, a group that monitors human rights violations at the checkpoints; and Bernard Sabella, a Palestinian Christian who works with Middle Eastern Council of Churches and teaches at Bethlehem University.

Our group volunteering some time to help with the olive harvest.

Ibrahim Khalil with his son. Ibrahim is a Muslim member of the Bereaved Parents Circle. His other son was run over and killed by a settler and 300 of his 300 year old trees were poisoned and killed by settlers. Through the sale of Palestinian olive oil, we financed the replanting of those 300 trees.

Elias Chacour (left) and Rev. David W. Good. Chacour is a Palestinian Christian and founder of Mar Elias, a school that has Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Druze students.

21 Years in Conference Ministry

by Rev. Carole Carlson

In 1994, ten years after I became one of the Conference Ministers in New Hampshire, I made an appointment to drive to Norwich, Vermont for a meeting with retired UCC President, Dr. Avery D. Post. I was seeking his feedback as I sought to discern whether God was continuing to call me to Conference Ministry.

Avery Post had become a friend and a valued mentor during an earlier period when I chaired the board of the UCC Coordinating Center for Women (1981-84). Avery placed high priority on women's issues and women's leadership in the UCC, and he always attended our Board meetings. He was an important counselor during the spring/summer of 1984 as I prayed about leaving parish ministry in Denver and moving across the country to accept the call from The New Hampshire Conference. As a former Conference Minister in Massachusetts, he knew first-hand about the joys and challenges of New England Conference Ministry. Among other things, he kept reminding me to listen to God...while also pointing out the importance for the UCC of installing a second woman Conference Minister. I did accept that call, and I have never regretted it, although the journey was different than the one I anticipated in 1960 when I began seminary.

During what I think of as that "ten-year checkup," Avery challenged me to begin envisioning my next phase of ministry as one that would focus on "mentoring clergy." I ended up staying in New Hampshire for another six years. However, that Vermont conversation "opened the door" for my acceptance in 2000 of a brand new position in Connecticut, with the long title "Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns."

I often describe my job as engaging in "mutual, prayerful discernment" with pastors...particularly around Search and Call processes. I treasure the privilege I have been given of offering support to our faithful clergy. I cherish the prayer times I have had with many of you as we sought together to be open to Christ's Spirit.

Reaching age 67 and moving into retirement, I now realize that it has been a particular privilege to serve in a ministry setting where my own experience and the particular job description came together in remarkable ways. Whether I am working with ecclesiastical concerns or "Search and Call" challenges or interim ministry issues or boundary training, everything I do is related to the ultimate goal of encouraging and strengthening the ministry of our pastoral leaders.

The greatest joy—as Avery might have predicted—has come from the many ministry opportunities that involve that word "mentoring." I often describe my job as engaging in "mutual, prayerful discernment" with pastors...particularly around Search and Call processes. I treasure the privilege I have been given of offering support to our faithful cler-

gy. I cherish the prayer times I have had with many of you as we sought together to be open to Christ's Spirit.

We are always changed by new situations. In my 21 years of Conference Ministry, I have worked with wonderful colleagues and learned more than I ever imagined. But the most profound change has been spiritual. I leave with the absolute conviction that the faith community must be a place where we "honor" God by honoring the ones God created, namely one another. We are assaulted every day by words, images, and acts that are cruel, violent, hate-filled, and demeaning. The Church of Jesus Christ simply cannot be another place where people experience cruelty—neither laity nor clergy.

Jesus Christ healed those who were taunted by his society, and he respectfully included them in his community. As the Body of Christ, God calls us to do the same...by simply treating one another well. And because my portfolio with you has focused on pastors, I leave by urging you to "honor" those who minister on your behalf—with your words and your actions. Respect your pastors, compensate them justly, and pray for them. I particularly urge you to pray for and with your pastor(s). You and your congregation will be changed!

Rev. Carole Carlson officially retires on June 30. Carole has been an inspiration to her Conference colleagues and will be missed by her many friends among the clergy and congregations of our local churches. Thank you, Carole, for your faithful service, wise counsel and generous friendship! A celebration of her life's ministry will take place on Sunday, June 5 from 3 to 5 at First Church of Christ, Congregational, 2183 Main Street in Glastonbury.

Remembering Graham Davidson

by Rev. Richard Taber

Lay, Male, WASP - but not insulated! In such a way did Graham Davidson identify himself in response to questions on his Application Form to serve as a Consultant to Congregations. When asked to "describe your experience with conflict and conflict management," he wrote: "part of a two-member team that has raised 5 children without losing anybody or breaking communications!"

Graham was indeed an exemplar of male, lay (with a sense of humor) leadership, serving his local church in Salisbury with great effectiveness. He was a member of the search committee that called the present Pastor, served as a Deacon and chair of the Deacons, and for more than a decade was elected again and again as Moderator.

He was truly a moderator, in the sense that when issues were brewing, Graham would really listen to those holding one view and then to those holding the opposing view. Both "sides" often

moderated their positions and common ground was found. The legacy of his leadership is evident in many ways, including a centennial garden, a magnificent piano in the Meeting House and a fund to make fine music available to the community, free of charge.

Graham's ministry extended beyond the church and into the community where he served on numerous environmental organizations that promote good stewardship of God's creation. He devoted his skills to build up the Church of Jesus Christ beyond the local community, a process begun while living in Manhattan, where he served as Trustee and Chair of the Trustees at The New York Theological Seminary. He also served the Connecticut Conference as a member of the Board of Trustees, playing a vital role in by-law revisions, and as Moderator of the Conference.

His skills at conflict resolution were well utilized as a Consultant to Congregations. In this capacity he worked with Rev. Hannah Howe, who writes, "Graham was truly the role model for lay ministry. I appreciated his passion and commitment to the working of the church, and the way his faith was reflected in everything he did."

Graham embodied hope and a positive outlook. "His signature phrase 'What I like about this is...' reflected his desire to find the positive even in the midst of frustrating and upsetting circumstances," said his daughter, Leslie. He hoped that his death and his research into esophageal cancer would benefit others.

We are reminded that we are not promised an easy life. But we are promised that we will not suffer alone. At age 78, Graham died in the presence of his family (and golden retriever), with his faith in God and in the resurrection of His son, Jesus Christ, intact.

As Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree said at his memorial service, "The best way to honor him is to not allow God's world to be destroyed, not to allow violence to take over our world. Each of us, in our own way, can make a difference. Stand where you need to stand for what is right." That's what Graham did.

Rev. Richard Taber is Pastor of the Congregational Church of Salisbury.

The Spirit Is Moving in New Haven

by Jim Morgan

God with us - are doing a new thing, that in a very real way we will be experimenting with a new way to be church," said Rev. Allie Perry, a member at CCY. With the working name of Shalom UCC, members "are clear that this is the continuation of the UCC congregation (and before that Congregational) that has been resident at Yale for 248 years," added Perry, who is also an adjunct faculty member at Andover Newton Theological School and Yale Divinity School. Rev. Kent Siladi, South Central Regional Minister, emphasized that Yale's decision does not affect the UCC's relationship with Yale Divinity School.

At a congregational meeting on April 10, CCY members voted to remain in covenant relationship with each other and the UCC, amending their by-laws and changing their name, at least for now, to Shalom United Church of Christ, effective May 15 at 11:59 pm. Shalom is committed to continuing its historic witness to issues of justice and peace and frequent leadership position in the New Haven community and throughout the Wider Church.

In 1989, CCY was one of the first congregations in the Connecticut Conference to become an "Open and Affirming" Church. A resolution from the church in 2000 was adopted by the Conference and the UCC General Synod, and led to the creation of the Conference's Colombia Partnership Committee. Conference Minister, Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree, said CCY has been important "as a

The unilateral and non-negotiable decision by Yale University to sever its Battell Chapel's historic relationship with the United Church of Christ has led to what some Church of Christ in Yale (CCY) members are calling an "old church re-start."

"It all feels very exciting and does feel like we - and

sign of God's promise of justice and peace, of solidarity between the privileged and the less so, of the responsiveness of the Church of Jesus Christ to the ever-changing universe of knowledge and scholarship."

A farewell service was scheduled for May 15, at which the church would release its pastors from their responsibilities and ask blessings for church members who will continue to worship at non-denominational Christian services at

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth...

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Isaiah 43:19

Battell Chapel, those who are moving to other UCC congregations and those who will form Shalom UCC. A membership mailing was to be sent shortly after the service, asking people to declare their intentions. Those who do not declare will continue to be included as members of Shalom UCC. Perry said CCY has an active core membership of 40-50 people, with average Sunday attendance of 100. Special occasions, such as this past Easter, can bring as many as 250-300 people to worship services at Battell Chapel.

An initial budget of \$25,000 and a slate of eight officers and council members was voted on and approved at Shalom's first annual meeting on May 1. Work continues on a mission statement and covenant. Current plans call for Shalom UCC to rent space in a downtown church (still to be negotiated) and operate initially without a pastor or paid staff. The congregation will take responsibility for leading worship, including "shared or communal reflection on Scripture" as the sermon. Services will be on Sunday afternoons, which is meant to encourage participation by UCC divinity students and even other UCC clergy with Sunday morning commitments.

"We have a very clear sense that we are being called into and liberated for a new way to be church," said Perry.

The Good Shepherd Watches Over Korea *Continued from page 1*

I'm grateful for their generous hospitality and value their friendship. Those who hosted our group travels in 2001 and Sacred Journey 2002 have earned a special place in our hearts. Lee Kyung Rim is pastor of the Ha San Woon Community Church, which has an active partnership with First Church Windsor. Their church building and all the small traditional houses around it have been turned to rubble to make way for city development. The church members who lived around the church now find themselves and their worship space in tall city apartment buildings, as they plan for a new church building. Our prayers are with them.

Currently, 10 Connecticut UCC congregations are paired with PROK congregations, with other Korean churches available to be partners. As Irene Choi and I signed (on your behalf) a five year

renewal of our Connecticut Conference-Kyung-Ki Presbytery partnership, we continue to hold one another in prayer, to witness to the presence of Christ, to work together for justice, to foster global understanding and peace as we continue building community with our PROK brothers and sisters in Christ.

Irene, an active member of the Korean Partnership Committee, is a member at First Church Glastonbury, a congregation that recently began a new partnership covenant with the Chawal Church in Korea. Margie Kreidler, also part of our delegation, is Director of Caring Ministries at the Glastonbury Church. Shinni Stone joined our group after helping organize a worship service, dinner and slide show celebrating ten years of partnership between the Mystic Church and their sister church, Dong Bu Son Lin.

We are grateful to Pastor Ho Jun Chang who leads the Korean churches worshiping in West Harford and Storrs. He brings leadership and insight to our partnership and helps facilitate communication between Connecticut and Korea. In gratitude for missionaries who brought Christianity there 100 years ago, he is preaching and living the Gospel here with us. He also helped lead a vibrant Sacred Journey 2004 with Korean and state youth at Silver Lake last summer. Urged on by the enthusiasm of these participants, the Partnership Committee is working on leadership and travel arrangements for Sacred Journey 2006, when our youth will travel once again to our sisters and brothers in Korea.

Rev. Linda Barnes is Pastor of the Franklin Congregational Church, UCC and Chair of the Korean Partnership Committee of the Connecticut Conference.

• United Church News •

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EVENTS

Joseph Gramley, Multi-percussionist, in Concert •

Thursday, June 16, 7:30 PM • South Church, 90 Main Street, New Britain • Joseph Gramley presents a global, eclectic percussion repertory that is challenging but accessible, always enhanced by his magnetic stage presence. The concert will be preceded by South Church's annual Strawberry Festival beginning at 6 PM. • Cost: Tickets for the Strawberry Festival are \$3.50 for adults, \$1.50 for children. The concert will have a free will offering. • Contact: Music Series Office at 860-223-7555

Make A Difference: A Course for Those Who Minister •

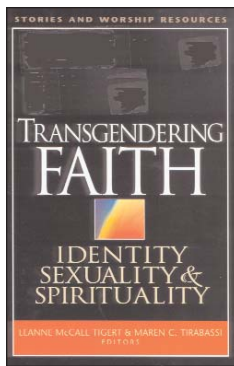
Monday, August 22 through Wednesday, August 24 • Wisdom House in Litchfield, CT • The interfaith organization Mastery Foundation will offer this course for both ordained and lay persons who are committed to a ministry in their faith community or to an outreach ministry. • Contact: Rev. Eileen Epperson at 860-482-8685; or Eppervesce@aol.com; www.masteryfoundation.org

Beyond Sunday Mornings: Everyday Faith Decisions •

Saturday, September 24, 8:30 AM to 1 PM • J.P. Webster Library, First Church of Christ Congregational, 12 South Main Street, West Hartford • Save the date for the second annual Adult Education Event co-sponsored by CAUCE, the J.P. Webster Library and The Ruth Dudley Resource Center. • Cost: \$10, including lunch • Contact: Amy Beveridge at 860-233-5564 or toll-free at (866) 367-2822; or amyb@ctucc.org

Look What's In the Resource Center

continued from page 4

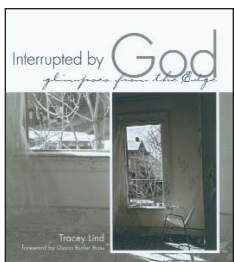


Connecting Threads (video series) Global Ministries (a common ministry of the Disciples and the United Church of Christ) has been issuing a series of videos that highlight each of the major areas of the world where the Church is engaged in ministry. The RDRC has videos about Southern Asia, the Middle East and Europe, East Asia/Pacific, and Africa. The videos are between 15 and 20 minutes in length and are suitable for many age groups. Study guides are included.

Transgendering Faith: Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality

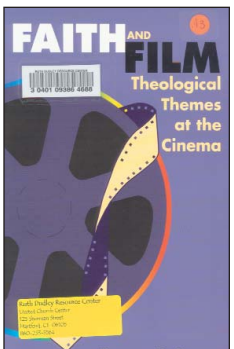
Leanne McCall Tigert and Maren C. Tirabassi, editors

This book contains multiple resources to help churches reach out to transgendered persons. There are articles to give basic understanding of transgender issues. The second section provides stories from transgendered persons, describing both the pain and joy they have experienced. And finally, there are worship resources and Bible studies for church use. (from Pilgrim Press)



Interrupted by God: Glimpses from the Edge

Tracey Lind
The author is both an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church and a photographer. She uses her black-and-white photographs of people and common objects as illustrations for her essays on finding God in the everyday. A good book for meditation. (from Pilgrim Press)



Faith and Film: Theological Themes at the Cinema

Bryan P. Stone
In this adult education guide, each phrase of the Apostle's Creed is illustrated by a commercially produced movie. (For example, the film "Oh God" is viewed when the group studies the phrase, "God, the Father Almighty.") Each chapter gives background reading about the phrase and the film, plus study questions for small group discussion. (from Chalice Press)

The Faithful Fight for Equity in Health Care

by Rev. Judith Cooke

Committed to addressing the inequities in Connecticut's health care system, some 200 people of faith and health care advocates gathered in Hartford on April 8 for a Health Care Summit at Capital Community College. The event was coordinated by the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice (ICEJ), which works to create systemic changes to build a more just and equitable society. ICEJ is made up of more than 40 Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations, including 10 United Church of Christ churches in the Hartford area.

At the Summit, experts spoke about the tragic inequities in the current system and growing disparities in the state, which have an increasingly negative impact on health care. For example, persons living in poor, urban areas have higher rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, infant mortality and tuberculosis. Furthermore, these disparities extend racially, with African-Americans and Latinos having higher incidence of disease and less access to health care services.

Using demographic maps to document the growing problems, Myron Orfield, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School, showed how growth patterns of the state are leading to a health care crisis. As the wealth of the state moves out of urban areas, the poor are being "left behind on an iceberg that is melting," said Orfield.

Moved by their faith and holding fast to the belief that God intends health and wholeness for all people, the members of ICEJ are working to change these disturb-

ing trends. The coalition's first step is educating people about this alarming situation and motivating them to help change the health care system. The coalition is also following several legislative bills closely; these bills would protect and expand public health care programs, promote a wiser use of resources, and establish universal health care. ICEJ already has been active and effective in fighting for justice and equity in health care in Connecticut. Last year, when the state threatened to cut the HUSKY (Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth) program, which provides coverage for many uninsured children, the coalition helped prevent 87,000 families from losing health care insurance for their children.

(As ConnTact goes to press, state Democratic leaders announced that Gov. M. Jodi Rell had agreed to extend the HUSKY program for adults for two more years as part of ongoing budget talks. The reported agreement would cover about 13,000 "working poor" adults who had been in danger of losing their health insurance when a three-month extension expires on June 30. In the absence of a final budget agreement, the governor's office would not confirm any concessions on the HUSKY plan.)

On September 29, ICEJ will reconvene on this subject to decide which specific solutions they will work to implement. Gretchen Vivier, Director of Health Care for All and a UCC member of ICEJ, said "This Summit has provided people of faith with an exciting opportunity to work towards a just and equitable health care system. Participants not only learned about health care policy issues, but they also saw that they can and must work for systemic change. They were eager to take these new insights back to their congregations, realizing that if we all work together we can really make a difference. And the first step is easy – learn about the issues and tell others."

Rev. Judith Cooke is Associate Pastor at Church of Christ, Congregational in Newington.