

MINUTES OF THE 2009 ANNUAL MEETING Vermont Conference United Church of Christ

The 214th Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference United Church of Christ was held at Lyndon State College, Lyndonville, Vermont, May 28th through May 30th, 2009. The theme of the meeting was “Diving in: The Living Waters of the Vermont Conference.”

Plenary sessions were again intermingled with worship.

Plenary I

May 28, 2009

The evening session began with a Prelude played by the Conference Band *Awakening*. Rev. Michael Ford led the Call to Worship and the opening prayer.

Mr. Stan Amadon, Moderator called the meeting to order.

Mr. Amadon welcomed special guests – Rev. Felix Carrion and Rev. Dick Sparrow from the UCC National Staff for sharing this year’s celebration with us. Welcome also went to Daniello G. Balón, Phd, Director of Diversity and Equity for the Burlington School District.

He introduced the officers of the Conference: Himself as Moderator, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, Vice Moderator and Mr. David Damkot, Treasurer.

Mr. Amadon then introduced the Conference staff: Rev. Lynn Bujnak, Conference Minister; Rev. Pamela Lucas, Associate Conference Minister and Director of VAST; James Thomas, Business Manager and Stewardship Associate; Lynn Thomas, Administrative Assistant and Placement Secretary, and Sybil McShane, Resource Center and Communications Coordinator.

The Moderator then led the delegates and guests in the reading of the Covenant for Dialogue as follows:

“...speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way to him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament in which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

(Ephesians 4:15-16)

We covenant with one another to sustain a congregational culture in which we will communicate with integrity and mutual respect, and in which our creative energy – both individual and collective – will be free to flourish.

We *will repeat* in our own words what the other has said to confirm that we have understood them, and ask them to do the same if we feel we have not been understood.

We will *communicate directly* with each other, using the first person, using “I.”

We will try to make our meaning clear and *say what we mean* and *mean what we say*.

We will identify *merit* in another person’s idea or suggestion before we identify its *deficiencies*.

We will be willing to *inquire* into another person's reasons and reasoning.

We will *listen to understand*, but we don't necessarily have to agree.

We will not say *outside the meeting* what we are unwilling to say *inside the meeting*."

(Used by permission: River Run Communications)

It was announced that **Roberts Rules of Order** would be used during the plenary sessions.

A **Motion** was made to elect Jean Daley and Pat Heise as Scribes during the plenary sessions. This was passed.

Worship continued following the business session with the Rev. Felix Carrion giving the opening message and evening blessing.

A social time followed worship.

Plenary II

May 29, 2009

Following the Peacemakers' Breakfast, a brief worship was held with the Rev. Tracy Weatherhogg leading the call to worship and Pastor Robin Lunn giving the prayer of sending into the day.

Mr. Amadon called the meeting to order. He welcomed the youth who were attending this meeting. He noted that the Washington Association is the host for this meeting and members would be wearing red vests and should be contacted with any questions, etc.

Pastor Robin Lunn, Chair of the Worship Committee introduced the members: Ned Davis, Flowers and stage setting; Adam Jared Tavolaro, music and video; Tracy Weatherhogg, prayers and rituals.

Donna Wheeler from Lyndonville College was acknowledged and thanked for the efforts in making things go smoothly.

Speak Outs were then held.

- Rev. Mark Mendes spoke of Covenant Hills.
- Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer told of a NE Youth event to be held in Vermont June 24-27, 2010.
- Jeremy Scharuf spoke regarding discernment.
- Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen stated that a forum on Church and Evangelism is to be held June 16 from 10-3 at the Berlin Church.
- Chris Heintz gave the good news that the Pittsford Church will be 225 years old on October 25. A celebration is to be held and singer Don Eaton will perform.
- Carol Adams gave information regarding the UCC New England Woman's Celebration VIII to be held in Burlington March 12-14, 2010.
- Rev. Kathy Eddy promoted CD's of her music as well as Rev. Will Burhans CDs. She also asked for prayers of a family whose child had died by an over dose.
- Anita Belin spoke regarding single payer health care.

Rev. Lynn Bujnak reported on the State of the Conference. She referred to her time of the last 9 months likening it as a time of birth and rebirth and the members of the Conference as the midwives. She feels the Conference is in very good shape, and she has great hope for the VT Conference and its' Churches.

The official count was 230 voting members, thus a quorum was declared.

Mr. John Holme gave the Treasurer's Report. He thanked the Finance Committee for being so helpful during the calendar year. He stated that the 2009 budget that was approved in 2008 had been adjusted and reviewed these adjustments. He then reviewed the 2010 planned budget.

Mr. Jim Thomas did a power point presentation and stated that the 2008 finances were very good. The 2009 budget has been adjusted. The Per Capita will increase for 2010 to \$11.06. OCWM was down in April by 14% so changes were made to the budget. It was thought to reduce OCWM that is sent to national from 45 to 40%. There is a \$16,000 surplus. We are the only Conference in NE with a surplus. That's the good news. The bad news is that the current financial crisis has affected finances. The changes to the 2009 budget were being brought to the delegates to get affirmation.

Rev. Rona Kingsley then moved that Document F be approved. This was 2nd and passed with some discussion.

2009 AM 1: VOTED Recommendations by the Board of Directors Pertaining to the Current Year (2009) Budget

“That the division of undesignated Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission income for 2009 be adjusted to 60% for the Vermont Conference and 40% for the United Church of Christ beyond Vermont.”

The session ended and Rev. John Weatherhogg announced how to get to the various workshops as well as the location of the forums.

Plenary III

May 29, 2009 - Afternoon

Following lunch and forum/workshops Plenary III was called to order.

Speak outs were then held:

- Rev. Debbie Ingraham spoke and noted that a forum entitled “Brink of Changing Health” will be held June 3rd at the Burlington synagogue.
- The Warren Church will be holding its' fourth annual Pig Roast on July 5th.
- Stan Bonacha asked that folks say, “I love you” to the person next the them.
- Daehler Hayes of the UCC Cornerstone Fund told of the services this Fund provides.
- Frank Lapolnea from College Street spoke of the church's historic renovations.
- Carmen Lespote spoke of traveling to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to help with flood relief.
- Rufus Cashman invited folks to visit the Stewardship display.
- Bill Hunter spoke regarding the Prison Justice Group and asked for donations of backpacks for people coming out of prison.
- Rev. Will Burhans suggested that folks shop for books at Hopkins Bookstore instead of Barnes and Noble.
- Rev. David Andrews told of a group of clergy taking the ferry to Swan's Island, Maine to a retreat run by the Sisters and Brothers of Mercy

Following the speak outs the 2010 budget was presented by Mr. Jim Thomas. He referred to the recommendations by the Board of Directors pertaining to the 2010 Budget. These recommendations will be voted on at tomorrow's plenary session.

Mr. John LaRue then introduced the Uprooting Racism Task Force's guest speaker, Mr. Dan Balón. Mr. Balón spoke on diversity and ended his speech with the statement "We are diverse!" He asked for questions from the floor. When asked, "How do you engage cultural change?" he answered, "Listen!"

When Mr. Balón was finished Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno thanked him and presented him with a gift of Vermont products with the statement of "that's what we do best!"

The following resolutions were presented and voted on:

Rev. Bill Neil presented the resolution on Christian-Muslim dialogue submitted by the Department of Mission. There was no discussion and the motion was made to pass this resolution, seconded and passed.

AM209 2 Voted: Resolution on Christian-Muslim Dialogue

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ affirmed its relationship with the Muslim community at its 1989 General Synod calling upon "...all local congregations and regional judicatories of the United Church of Christ to actively engage in dialogue with the Muslim community in order to establish relationships of trust and cooperation and to participate in joint witness against injustice in our local communities and in the world." and

WHEREAS in October 2007, 138 Muslim leaders representing all denominations and schools of thought of Islam prepared and sent an invitation to the Christians of the world to enter into mutual faith study and friendship-building based on the core faith positions of both religions, namely, love of God and love of neighbor, in a document entitled "A Common Word Between Us and You," and

WHEREAS this invitation was received positively with answers of acceptance by the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Catholic papacy, and by many Protestant denominations including leaders of the United Church of Christ. In his letter of acceptance, UCC President Rev. John H. Thomas stated that: "Our Church is particularly eager to develop a process for deepening relationships and strengthening friendships and making new friends. As we see it, this means theological and textual discussion and dialogue, as well as relational and practical interaction." and

WHEREAS Dr. Peter Makari, Middle East and European Executive for Global Ministries, Co-Chair of the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and Co-Convener of the National Muslim-Christian Initiative in North America has stated: "This initiative of Muslim and Christian leaders sends a message to those in North America: We co-exist in vibrant communities where awareness and cooperation will be our common future together."

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ endorse and accept the invitation of UCC President John H. Thomas for UCC entities, seminaries, churches and others, to enter into mutual study and friendship building in response to the Muslim invitation: "A Common Word Between Us and You," by:

1. Encouraging churches and the Vermont Conference UCC to engage in Christian-Muslim study approaches and friendship-building activities, and
2. Calling on the Global Ministries Committee of the Vermont Conference Department of Mission to develop resources helpful to churches for Christian-Muslim study and friendship building.

Ms. Anita Belin presented the resolution regarding health care for all. Submitted by the Department of Mission. After some discussion the motion to accept this resolution was made. It was seconded and passed.

AM2009 3 Voted Resolution on Health Care for All

WHEREAS there are a minimum of 65,000 persons in the State of Vermont, of whom 3,500 are children, who have no health insurance and as such they are without access to adequate, affordable health care, and

WHEREAS the vast majority of the people who have lost their jobs have also been left without any help to pay for the cost of health care, and

WHEREAS an unknown number of people delay or avoid seeking medical services because of cost or lack of sufficient coverage until they are gravely ill. Then they go to an emergency department, where they are served at a great cost which is more than twice what it would have been had they sought help at the first sign of illness and

WHEREAS the cost of health care is rising exponentially, insurance premiums are increasing at warp speed, deductibles are being increased with each annual renewal of a policy and

WHEREAS the cost of prescription drugs increases annually, both in changes in retail prices and an increase in co-pay, frequently by 90%, and there are no controls or limits on these increases and

WHEREAS the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ resolved to support adequate health care for all in 2005, a goal which has still not been approached.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the assembled delegates to this Conference Annual Meeting return to their churches and associations and spur study, understanding and action within their communities to bring about a working system of health care for all, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Mission will make regular use of E-KIT to send action alerts to local churches and encourage members to contact their elected representatives, both in the state of Vermont and nationally by letter or toll free phone call to urge the passage of legislation necessary to reach the goals of guarantees of health care which is accessible, affordable, and adequate for all.

Mr. David Durfee then presented the list of nominees to be voted on tomorrow. He had them come forward and introduced each one.

Ms. Carley Murray presented the Ministerial Compensation Guidelines. She pointed out some changes and then made the motion that the Guidelines be accepted.

AM 2009 4 Voted That the Ministerial Compensation Guidelines be accepted as presented.

Plenary IV

May 29, 2009

Following dinner, Rev. Lucas opened the fourth plenary session by presenting the following Conference Family Celebrations:

New Calls to Settled Ministry in Vermont

On June 15, 2008, the Old Colony Association of the Massachusetts Conference ordained the Rev. Debbie Cipolletti. Debbie began her ministry at the First Congregational Church of West Brattleboro on August 4, 2008. She is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School.

On December 14, 2008, the Pacific Northwest Conference in at Veradale United Church of Christ in Spokane Valley, Washington ordained the Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer. He had begun his ministry as Associate Minister of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction on October 1st. He is a graduate of Eden Theological Seminary. The Champlain Association installed Ryan on April 19th.

On January 11, 2009, the Metropolitan Boston Association of the Massachusetts Conference ordained the Rev. Marissa Laviola. Marissa began her ministry at the First Congregational Church of Morrisville on January 19, 2009. She is a graduate of Boston University School of Theology. Her installation is scheduled for September 13th by the Northeast Association.

On January 18, 2009, the Southwest Conference in Scottsdale Arizona ordained the Rev. Judith Horgan. Judi began her ministry at the East Burke Congregational Church and the First Congregational Church of Lyndonville on February 2, 2009. She is a graduate of Claremont School of Theology. Her installation is scheduled for June 7th.

On June 8, 2008, the Rev. Dale Hindmarsh began his ministry at the First Congregational Church of Cornwall. The Addison Association installed him on November 9, 2008. Ordained in 1975, Dale's ministerial standing was transferred from the Oneida Association of the New York Conference.

On July 1, 2008, William Elwell began his ministry at the Federated Church of Bristol. William is a Licensed Local Pastor in the United Methodist Church.

On September 14, 2008, the Rev. Rob Noble was called as pastor of the Federated Church of Castleton. Ordained in 1982. For many years, Rob's day job has been in the secular world, while he has engaged in supply preaching and music ministry around the edges. The Southwest Association installed him on October 6, 2008

On September 15, 2008, the Rev. Howard Gunter, began his ministry at the Pittsfield Federated Church. Ordained in 1995 by the Evangelical Church Alliance, he had been serving as Associate Pastor of Care Ministries at the Arlington Assembly of God in Jacksonville, Florida.

On January 18, 2009, the Rev. Sami McRae was called as pastor of the First Congregational Church of Westminster. Ordained in 2002, she had earlier served the North Pomfret Congregational Church.

On February 23, 2009, the Rev. Carra Bradt began her ministry as Senior Pastor of the Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro. Ordained in 2002, she had been serving as Associate Minister of First Parish Congregational Church in Yarmouth, Maine.

On May 10, 2009, the Rev. Margaret Flad began her ministry at the North Pomfret Congregational Church. Ordained in 1997, she had been serving as Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Anniversaries

Representing 980 years of ministry, we give thanksgiving for each one who celebrates a significant milestone in 2009.

Ordained in 1989, the Rev. Alden Launer, Chaplain at Copley Hospital in Morrisville, the Rev. Gary Lewis, pastor of the Vergennes Congregational Church, the Rev. Robert Russell-Faling, and the Rev. Penny Rich Smith, pastor of the North Bennington Congregational Church - all celebrate their 20th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1984, the Rev. Ellen Bailey, the Rev. Harvey Bartlett, pastor of the Brownington Congregational Church and the United Church of Irasburg, the Rev. Christine Boardman, Interim Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Springfield Congregational Church, the Rev. Elizabeth Fisher, the Rev. Kaye Hult, pastor of the United Church of Bellows Falls, and the Rev. Jane Wilson, Interim Pastor of the Orford Congregational Church in New Hampshire - all celebrate their 25th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1979, the Rev. Stephen Berry, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Manchester, the Rev. Catherine Cadieux, the Rev. Jane Henderson, the Rev. Mary Lee-Clark, pastor of the Second Congregational Church of Bennington, the Rev. Anne Squire, and the Rev. Dereen Vanderlinde-Abernathy, pastor of First Congregational Church in Berlin – all celebrate their 30th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1974, the Rev. Bruce Bishop, pastor of the Jamaica Community Church, the Rev. William Nelson, the Rev. Charles Purinton, Jr., Chaplain with the Vermont Army National Guard, and the Rev. William Schutter, Interim Pastor of St. Johnsbury South Congregational Church – all celebrate their 35th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1969, the Rev. David Andrews, the Rev. Wayne Holsman, pastor of the Community Church of Hancock/Granville, and the Rev. Harry Peatt – all celebrate their 40th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1964, the Rev. Donald Ferrell and the Rev. Ward Wilson – celebrate their 45th anniversary of Ordination.

Ordained in 1959, the Rev. Lenard Rowell, Interim Pastor of the Richmond Congregational Church, and the Rev. Benjamin Thurber – celebrate their 50th anniversary of Ordination.

AND ordained in 1949, the Rev. Malcolm Crook and the Rev. Avery Post – are celebrating the 60th anniversary of their ordinations!

Recognition of Members in Discernment

Rhonda Myers, member of the Greensboro United Church of Christ and 2008 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School, will be ordained in the Greensboro Church on June 21st by the Northwest Association. On May 17th she received a call to serve the United Congregational Church of Torrington, Connecticut. Her ministry there begins on June 7th.

Brenda Egbert, member of the East Corinth Congregational Church, a member in discernment with the Grafton Orange Association Church and Ministry Committee, graduated from Andover Newton Theological School on May 17, 2009 and continues to work through the journey.

Christina Findley, member of the East Burke Congregational Church, graduated from Andover Newton Theological School on May 17, 2009 and continues to work through the journey. This winter and spring she has been serving as a short-term pastoral supply at the Lake Regions Parish.

The Windsor Orange Association Church and Ministry Committee received Robin Lunn, member of the North Pomfret Congregational Church, as a Member in Discernment on May 13, 2008. Robin is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School and coming into the United Church of Christ from the American Baptist Church. Robin serves as the licensed interim pastor of the Sharon Congregational Church.

The Ministerial Standing and Standards Committee received John Sanborn, member of Grace Congregational Church, as a Member in Discernment on September 2, 2008, on behalf of the Southwest Association. He is a student at Andover Newton Theological School and is serving as licensed Assistant Minister in the Vergennes Congregational Church.

The Ministerial Standing and Standards Committee received Amanda Beresford, member of the Second Congregational Church of Londonderry, as a Member in Discernment on October 7, 2008, on behalf of the Windham Union Association. She is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School. She and her husband, Drew, became parents of Cecelia on April 6, 2009. She is on maternity leave from Hospice Chaplaincy in Rutland. In her regrets for not being able to attend Annual Meeting, she reports “Cecilia and I are doing well. She has started smiling at me, which just melts my heart and forces me to forgive her for being such a terrible sleeper. This morning she even giggled in her sleep and it was like God dropped a little rainbow in my lap!”

The Ministerial Standing and Standards Committee received Laura Cadmus, member of the Barre Congregational Church, as a Member in Discernment on October 7, 2008, on behalf of the Washington Association. Laura is a student at Andover Newton Theological School. Presently she is providing sabbatical preaching coverage for her pastor, David Vanderlinde- Abernathy.

The Ministerial Standing and Standards Committee received Sally May, member of the Second Congregational United Church of Christ in Jeffersonville, as a Member in Discernment on January 6, 2009, on behalf of the Champlain Association. Sally is a student at Andover Newton Theological School.

Retirements

On August 31, 2008, the Rev. Lynda Hadley, retired from the Dummerston Congregational Church. Ordained in 1995, Lynda had previously served churches in the Minnesota Conference and the Grafton and Townshend Churches here in Vermont.

On December 31, 2008, the Rev. Chris Petrak, retired as pastor of the First Congregational Church of Newfane. He was ordained in 1969 by the Presbyterian Church USA. After serving churches in that denomination, he retired to South Newfane Vermont. WHERE - he come out of retirement to serve the Newfane Church back in 1998.

On December 31, 2008, the Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, retired as pastor of the Old Meeting House in East Montpelier. Ordained in 1998, Susan began her ministry there in 1997.

On January 4, 2009, the Rev. Douglas Moore, retired from the Norwich Congregational Church. He began his ministry there in 2001. Ordained in 1993; he had previously served the Sharon Congregational Church. But keeping in mind that the word "retirement" is not mentioned in scripture, Doug began an interim on March 1st in New Orleans. After Hurricane Katrina so badly damaged their facilities, Central UCC (a predominately African American Church) entered into a covenant to worship with St. Matthews (a predominately Caucasian church) in their facility. In this interim time, they are attempting to discern whether they will become one church or continue to be separate congregations worshipping together or apart.

On January 31, the Rev. Ward Wilson, retired – again - from the First Congregational Church of Newbury. Ordained in 1964, Ward previously served churches in Maine and Connecticut. In Vermont, he served the St. Albans Congregational Church and the Thetford Hill Congregation, retiring in 1995. He then did interims in the Upper Valley, and started another settled ministry in Newbury in 2005.

On June 30, 2009, the Rev. Peggy Tooker will retire from the Second Congregational United Church of Christ in Jeffersonville. Ordained in 2000, Jeffersonville has been her first and only church – maybe! Our understanding is that after moving into her new home, Peggy will take off to parts unknown and return whenever she feels like it!

Necrology

The Rev. Dr. Samuel W. Fogal died on July 5, 2008 after an extended illness. He was 71. Ordained in 1963, Sam served as Pastor of the Bethel United Church of Christ in Baltimore Maryland, and the First Congregational Church of Darien, Connecticut. He served on the Connecticut Conference staff as both Minister for the Department of Church Life and Leadership and as Area Conference Minister. In 1996, Sam arrived in Vermont to serve as Interim Conference Minister. He served three more interims in Connecticut and Rhode Island before serving as an Annuitant Visitor in Connecticut from 2006-2008. His wife, the Rev. Dr. Laurie Etter, his children, Timothy Fogal and Karin Fogal, a granddaughter Brianna and stepsons, Andrew and Christopher Etter, survive him. And all those whom his ministry touched through the years. A service of Celebration was held on July 12th.

Mary Archibald Carrier, wife of the Rev. Gaston Carrier, died on September 14, 2008 at the age of 88. She met Gaston at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. After graduation, Mary received her training as a psychiatric social worker at the Simmons School of Social Work in Boston. She spent 22 years at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont in Burlington, retired in 1985 as faculty emeritus. She was a founding member of the Committee on Temporary Shelter (or COTS). She is said to have never been a minister's wife – but always the wife of a minister – supporting Gaston's ministry in a variety of ways. Her husband, Gaston, four daughters, four grandchildren and a half brother survive her.

OUR OFFICE ALSO RECEIVED WORD OF THE DEATH OF

The Rev. Peter Clarke of England. He died on March 12, 2009 after a short illness. He had provided sabbatical coverage for Jim Todhunter in Norwich in the fall of 1982 and Sabbatical coverage at Bethany Church in Randolph from March through July of 1983.

Mr. Jim Thomas then read the names of the 2008 5 for 5 churches followed by the churches that met OCWM goals for 2008:

Churches that are 5 for 5:

- United Church of Bellows Falls
- Brandon Congregational Church
- Charlotte Congregational Church
- Danville Congregational Church
- United Church of Dorset & E. Rupert
- East Brookfield Congregational Church
- 1st Congregational Church, UCC, Fair Haven
- Greensboro United Church of Christ
- Jamaica Community Church
- Second Congregational Church, Jeffersonville
- First Congregational Church, Morrisville
- First Congregational Church of Newbury
- United Church of Northfield
- Pittsford Congregational Church UCC
- Richmond Congregational Church
- Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, Rutland
- Congregational Church of South Hero, UCC
- Wells River Congregational Church, UCC

Churches that met OCWM goals for 2008:

- United Church of Bellows Falls
- Second Congregational Church, Bennington
- Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro
- First Congregational Church, Brookfield
- Brownington Village Congregational Church
- Federated Church of Castleton
- United Church of Chelsea
- Danville Congregational Church, UCC
- First Congregational Church, Essex Junction
- Guilford Community Church

- First Congregational Church of Hartland
- United Church of Marshfield
- First Congregational Church of Newbury
- United Church of Newport
- First Congregational Church, UCC, Randolph Center
- Federated Church of Rochester
- First Congregational Church, UCC, Sharon
- First Congregational Church, Springfield
- First Congregational Church, Thetford
- United Church of Underhill
- Waitsfield United Church of Christ
- First Congregational Church of Weathersfield
- Westmore Community Church
- United Federated Church of Williamstown
- Williston Federated Church

Following this session the Installation service for Rev. Lynn Bujnak was held. The Oikos Jazz Band presented the music for the Prelude/Postlude and hymns. The Rev. Kathy Eddy wrote a special hymn “Bless This Ministry” which was played by her and sang by the Rev. Martha Peck, with the congregation joining in the chorus.

Rev. Richard Sparrow gave the Sermon and presentation of the Conference Minister’s Medallion as well as the Charge to the Conference was by the Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree, Connecticut Conference Minister.

Rev. Lucas and Rev. Bujnak led the service of Holy Communion.

Following the installation a welcoming reception was held.

Following the reception a late night Emergent Worship service was held in the Twilight Theatre.

Plenary V

May 30, 2009

Following the Peacemakers Breakfast, breakfast for Pastor’s conversations with Rev. Felix Carrion, and a brief opening worship, Mr. Amadon called the session to order.

Speak Outs were then held:

- Rev. Jerry Handspeaker reported on the VT Ecumenical Council and declaring, “all may be one.”
- Deb Perkins suggested that all churches should use the Covenant for Dialogue that opened the meeting. She said that on behalf of herself and Jerry Handspicker and the publishing company that the Conference was granted permission to use the Covenant for Dialog at their meetings in the future without having to request permission.
- Clarence Moore noted that there were only 6 youth present. He challenged each church to find one youth to attend next year’s meeting.
- Rev. Mary Nelson Abbott spoke about a national network for clergy in the 20-30-age bracket. They discuss issues that involve young clergy. There are 5 clergy in Vermont under 30 at the present time.
- David Durfee advised that in addition to 3 adult delegates from a church there could also be one youth delegate.

Rev. Lucas and Rev. Bujnak read the names and comments of the 2009 VAST graduates:

VAST

Vermont Academy of Spiritual Training

There are those among us who hunger to DIVE IN –

to break open the Word of scripture,

who yearn to deepen their spiritual identity,

who seek to enrich their understanding of Christian history and theology,

who want language with which to testify to their faith,

who are excited about being Church and how it all intersects with

becoming a fearless disciple of Jesus Christ in today's world.

There are those among us who answered that hunger by enrolling in this three-year program and who,

with but one class left in June, will graduate from VAST this year.

VAST HAS MADE A VAST DIFFERENCE IN THEM – FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

“VAST called me to explore my faith further – and to use that faith to make a difference in the world. I'm not sure what that may yet be – but I am open and curious!”

Interspersed with the names of the VAST Graduates you will hear reflections on what this experience has meant to the students – past and present.

“VAST has answered many of my questions – and left me with even more questions!”

Graduating from the Class held in North Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury –

Sharon Evans – a member of the United Church of Bakersfield and Fairfield

“I have learned so much about Christianity, the Bible and religion in general. But even more, I have learned about “me” and the many ways God can use me in God's world.”

Graduating from the Class held in the First Congregational Church in Manchester –

Jim Anderson – member of the First Congregational Church of Manchester

“VAST has provided me with the tools, the spiritual discipline, the grounding in the “basics” I need to follow God's calling.”

Sandra Wirstom – member of Wilmington Congregational Church

“I spent my life going through the motions without understanding anything about my faith. VAST has brought me knowledge, understanding and the ability to share my faith with others.”

Graduating from the Class held in The Richmond Congregational Church

Sally May – member of the Second Congregational Church of Jeffersonville

Next year a group of six from the Richmond Class who started together in 2007 will graduate. Over these years they have created a “church” much like the first church in ACTS – studying, eating, praying and communing together -

“Found! A group of kindred spirits! It accelerates joy in studying Jesus and the Bible. The rest of the story is found in seeking answers to all the long wondered questions.

There are openings in all three classes beginning in September of 2009. Registration forms and brochures are available in the Display Area.

“What have I learned in VAST? More knowledge about the Bible, Church History, and current theology. A chance to discuss ethical issues with others. And more importantly, a Christianity I can believe in – a thoughtful, intelligent faith.”

In addition, on the third Saturday of each month from September through June, in Randolph at the Conference Office there will be a morning session offered on United Church of Christ Identity, History and Polity – and in the afternoon there will be one semester of Preaching and one semester of Pastoral Care in a Congregational Context.

“I have increased my knowledge of scripture and have come to a deeper understanding of God’s word – and hopefully have become a more devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Each of these classes is a stand-alone registration – one, two or all...again registration forms are in the Display area.

“VAST has been the arena where my prayers have been answered. “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

The resolutions presented by the Board of Directors were then reviewed. There was some discussion regarding the 40-60 division of OCWM. A suggestion was made that it might be 50-50. This was not voted on.

It was noted that item #7 in the resolutions was for the adoption of the 2010 budget.

Motion made and seconded and passed to accept the resolutions.

2009 AM 5: Voted Resolutions by the Board of Directors Pertaining to 2010 Budget

1. The division of undesignated Basic Support for Our Church’s Wider Mission income for 2010 by 60% for the Vermont Conference and 40% for the United Church beyond Vermont.
2. That the Conference continue to encourage a Basic Support for Our Church’s Wider Mission goal for each church of an amount equal to 10% of the amount of each church’s budget for current expenses. Further, a recommended challenge goal is to increase that local church’s ratio percentage by 1% per year.
3. That the 2010 Vermont Per Capita be set at \$11.06. (Note: The association portion of Per Capita is in addition to the Conference amount.)
4. That the Board of Directors be authorized to adjust the 2010 operating budget as unforeseen circumstances require, within the spending limits established in the budget.
5. That the Board of Directors be authorized to take funds from the unrestricted reserves for any emergency deficit in 2010.
6. That the churches be encouraged to pay Basic Support for Our Church’s Wider Mission and Per Capita at least quarterly.
7. That the Conference adopt a 2010 Operating Budget of not more than \$778,447 in expense and not less than \$778,447 in income, with the goal of ending 2010 with a balanced budget.

It was announced that the installation offering was \$2,202.75, which will be sent to Dillard University

Next year's Annual Meeting will be held on June 3, 4 and 5 at Lyndonville.

Mr. Baley Cobb presented proposed amendments to the Bylaws, which had been submitted by the First Congregational Church of Newbury. He read the section that would be amended.

Amend Article VIII Meeting of the Conference, Paragraph 26. Delegates, subparagraph b. by changing the current wording, "When the Conference meets the voting delegates shall consist of (1) lay delegates chosen by each local church in the number specified, such lay delegates *to be elected annually to serve for a period of one year;*" to new wording, "When the Conference meets the voting delegates shall consist of (1) lay delegates chosen by each local church in the number specified, such delegates **to be chosen in the manner of each Local Church, with the Local Church informing the Conference of its selection;**"

There was considerable discussion during which a suggestion was made to eliminate the amendment. A vote was taken which resulted in 91 ayes and 52 nays. Because this was not a 2/3 vote the motion was not passed.

The original motion was voted on and there were 115 ayes and 23 nays. The motion passed.

AM 2009 6 Voted: Amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws of the VT Conference UCC

WHEREAS, The constitution and bylaws of the Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ, Article VII – Meetings of the Conference, section 26 – Delegates, subsection (b) states: "When the Conference meets the voting delegates shall consist of (1) lay delegates chosen by each local church in the number specified, such lay delegates to be elected annually to serve for a period of one year; (2) all active or retired ordained ministers in good standing within the United Church of Christ who are residents of Vermont and have membership in any Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ; (3) all officers, directors, members of Departments or Committees of the Conference, all Moderators of Associations of the United Church of Christ within Vermont, and all past President/Moderators of the Conference; (4) officially approved licensed and commissioned ministers; (5) students in care/members in discernment of the Conference or an Association of the Conference; (6) all current delegates to the General Synod." and

WHEREAS The Constitution of the United Church of Christ states in article V – Local Churches, section 18, states, "The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own affairs. Which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own constitution and bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit members in its own way and to provide for their discipline of dismissal; to call or dismiss its pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or personal property owned by it." And

WHEREAS also in Article VIII – Conference, section 50, of the same document, it is stated that: “When a Conference meets its voting membership includes lay delegates selected by and representing the Local Churches of that Conference, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when active as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers in its Association, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in its Associations.” And

WHEREAS in accordance with the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, the autonomy and authority of the Local Church, without interference from any Conference of Association, now or in the future, to retain and adopt their own methods of organization, is to be inviolate;

BE IT RESOLVED that article VIII - Meetings of the Conference, section 26 – Delegates, subsection (b) be amended to read: When the Conference meets the voting delegates shall consist of (1) lay delegates chosen by each Local Church in the number specified, such lay delegates to be chosen in the manner of each Local Church, with the Local Church informing the Conference of its selection; (2) all active or retired ordained ministers in good standing within the United Church of Christ who are residents of Vermont and have membership in any Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ; (3) all officers, directors, members of Departments or Committees of the Conference, all Moderators of Associations of the United Church of Christ within Vermont, and all Past Presidents/Moderators of the Conference; (4) officially approved licensed and commissioned minister; (5) students in care/members in discernment of the Conference or an Association of the Conference; (6) all current delegates to the General Synod.

Mr. Durfee presented the nominations to be acted upon. He noted that Clarence Moore and Susan Maginnis have been added to the Annual Meeting Committee and Mr. Paul Simpson has been added to the Finance Committee.

It was noted that Mr. Durfee seemed to be on several committees and boards and a suggestion was made that maybe he should remove his name from the Nominating Committee. He was agreeable to that and removed his name from this committee.

Mr. Durfee moved that the slate of nominations be approved. This was seconded and passed.

AM 2009 7 Voted That the Slate Presented by the Nominating Committee be Approved

Following this business, worship continued with Rev. Carrion giving the closing message.

At the end of the worship service Mr. Amadon led the commissioning of the elected leaders, after which he presented the gavel to the incoming Moderator, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno who in turn presented Mr. Amadon with a gift and thanks for the great work he did as Moderator.

Rev. Webster-Toleno then read the following Resolution of Thanks:

WHEREAS the 214th Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ convened at Lyndon State College May 28-30, 2009, and there worshipped, fellowshiped and conducted business; and

WHEREAS we celebrated our history and imagined our future in the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS so many of our family of faith contributed to the meeting through prayer, preparation, and participating that all might experience the extravagant welcome of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS we continue to adhere to the Covenant for Dialogue with one another which allows us to conduct the business of this Annual Meeting with integrity and mutual respect, accountability; and

WHEREAS we have been blessed with classically vernal weather in this corner of Vermont in the beauty of the Northeast Kingdom, we give thanks to our Creator even though it was impossible to know how to pack; and

WHEREAS we were blessed to share the visionary, prophetic gifts of those who joined us; and

WHEREAS we joyfully celebrated the installation of our earthly leader, Rev. Lynn Bujnak, whose ministry with us is only in its infancy and has already been such a blessing,

THEREFORE be it resolved that we, the delegates and visitors to the 214th Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ extend our gratitude to those who have shared their talents with us,

TO Lyndon State College and especially Donna Wheeler and her capable and friendly staff who have ably accommodated us with such grace and efficiency, anticipating so many of our needs, and have extended extravagant welcome to us once again this year.

TO the members of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Rev. Michael Ford, Chair; Mr. Stan Amadon, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, Rev. John Weatherhogg, Mr. Hal Drury, Mr. Ned Davis, Rev. Debbie Ingram, Rev. Kathy Clark, Ms. Robin Lunn, Rev. Mary Nelson Abbott, Mr. Clarence Moore, Ms. Lynn Thomas (staff representative), Rev. Lynn Bujnak (Conference Minister).

TO Rev. Dereen Vanderlinde-Abernathy, for her fine work coordinating registrations for this gathering.

TO the Board of Directors for their guidance and support, and especially to chair Rona Kinsley, whose detailed organization and gracious spirit have continued to guide our Conference through transition.

TO all Red Vesters who answered our questions and guided us to event venues with grace and warmth.

TO our distinguished visitors, Rev. Felix Carrion, of the Still Speaking Campaign, whose words both encouraged and challenged us and who helped us to dream new dreams, and Dr. Daniello Balon, Director of Diversity and Equity for the Burlington School District, whose light touch and direct, hopeful manner shed more good light on the topic of diversity.

TO the Worship Committee, visionary Robin Lunn, floral artist and commissioned minister of liturgical floral designs, Ned Davis, Adam Jared Tavolaro, music and video, Tracy Weatherhogg, prayers and rituals,

TO Awakening, the band that rocked and rolled and lifted us throughout our worship and meeting hours, and the marvelous choir, directed by Adam Tavolaro. Your gifts are rich indeed.

TO the participants in our Conference Minister's installation service: Oikos, Rev. Kathy Eddy and Rev. Martha Peck, whose music added such richness to the installation; the Reverends Dick Sparrow, Davida Foy Crabtree and Kekapa Lee, Pamela Lucas, and Felix Carrion.

TO our Parliamentarian Cindy Tolman, Scribes Jean Daley, and Pat Heise, who were on hand to ensure propriety, accuracy and a good record of our doings.

TO our Chaplains, the Reverends Marsh Hudson-Knapp, Barbara Purinton and Charlie Purinton, and our Nurse Carlie Murray who were available for both physical and spiritual well-being.

TO our outrageously gifted and giving Conference Staff: Revs. Lynn Bunjak and Pam Lucas, Lynn Thomas and Jim Thomas, and Sybil McShane, each of who does his or her job and then some with grace, aplomb, enthusiasm and skill.

AND with heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Moderator, Mr. Stan Amadon, whose years of teaching and coaching served him well as he kept us focused, organized, and deeply committed and connected to the identity and spirit of our Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ.

TO all of these folks we offer our thanks and gratitude, and in service I move this resolution.

2009 8 Voted To accept the Resolution of Thanks by Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno.

The 214th Annual Meeting concluded at the close of worship.

Jean A. Daley, Scribe
Pat Heise, Assistant Scribe