Report of the Interim Conference Minister

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree

In this, likely my only opportunity to report to the Florida Conference, I wish to express my gratitude for your warm reception of my presence as your Interim Conference Minister. I thank you for your spirit, your engagement with one another in shared ministry and your eagerness to find new ways to be bold to go into God’s new future. I give thanks for your Conference Staff, whose dedication to you and your ministries is beyond your imagining. Together, you are a blessing!

In the six months I have been with you, my major foci have been:

» Getting acquainted with as broad a spectrum of churches and authorized ministers as possible
» Seeing that all policies and procedures are updated and clear
» Working with other staff to give the best support we can to churches and pastors in their times of need
» Upgrading and integrating our communications, launching the biweekly e-Celebrate and acquiring a new phone system and new computers
» Discovering gifted people to serve in a variety of ways in our common life and work
» Supporting the Regional Youth Ministers in planning the Southern Regional Youth Event for June 12-15 in St. Pete
» Receiving the legacy gift of University Congregational Church UCC/Orlando and ensuring all goes smoothly in the transition in ownership and responsibility to your Conference

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Report of the Moderator
Conference Board of Directors

Susan Cheney
Member, Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda

This has been an interesting and challenging year for the Board of Directors and for the Conference. We are a strong and resilient Conference. We understand the covenant that is placed before us to foster, encourage and equip leaders within our congregations.

The following items highlight the work of the Board of Directors for 2013:

» Supported and participated in the May Spring Gathering in Orlando, welcoming Rev. Cameron Trimble as the keynote speaker. We also bid farewell to Rev. Kent Siladi as he ended his term as the Florida Conference Minister.
» Contracted with Rev. Dr. Bill Wealand to serve a short term as Acting Conference Minister while a search committee worked to hire an Interim Conference Minister.
» Approved an Interim Conference Minister Search Committee as well as a “settled” Conference Minister Search Committee.
» Contracted with Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree to serve as Interim Conference Minister.
» Provided guidance and supported efforts to streamline the Conference budget to meet all ministry needs.
» Provided support to the various ministries and programming of the Conference, including Disaster Ministry, Ministry to the Aging and Youth Ministry.
» Provided support and endorsed the first Fall Gathering of the Conference. The Board has directed that the Conference gather twice each year (spring and fall) to share in fellowship and receive reports from Conference leadership. The two-meeting format is experimental and after a period of two–three years each gathering will be evaluated as to its effectiveness to provide opportunities for our delegates to be together. A decision as to whether to continue the two gathering per year format will be voted upon by the Board of Directors (as per the bylaws).
» Presented a 2014 budget for the 2013 Fall Gathering, which was passed by the delegates.

continued on page 2
I believe that the churches of this Conference largely appreciate our ministries – when they know about them. Yet all too often we hear from people when we visit with them, “I had no idea this is what the Conference did!” or “Why didn’t we know about this?” I encourage every authorized minister and lay leader to invite others in your churches and ministries to sign up for e-Celebrate and to offer mission moments on Sunday mornings highlighting our UCC wider mission and ministries.

The financial challenges are serious. Your former Conference Minister, the Rev. Kent J. Siladi, did an excellent job of getting the finances in order and of leading you in crafting a vision for your future, a vision that you have been excited about.

I think you need to remember that a Conference is not the churches of this Conference largely appreciate our ministries – when they know about them. Yet all too often we hear from people when we visit with them, “I had no idea this is what the Conference did!” or “Why didn’t we know about this?” I encourage every authorized minister and lay leader to invite others in your churches and ministries to sign up for e-Celebrate and to offer mission moments on Sunday mornings highlighting our UCC wider mission and ministries.

I think you need to remember that a Conference is not the Conference office and overseeing the staff

Facing into the difficult financial constraints of the Conference resulting from the steep decline in OCWM giving

It has been my joy (most of the time!) to serve as your Interim Conference Minister and to do all I can to prepare the way for your next leader. I know this work well and know that there are many things an Interim CM can do that your settled leader will not have time for so I’ve tried to focus on those. In the end, I hope it will prove helpful to you as you boldly go into your new era, led by the Holy Spirit and your new Conference Minister.
## OFFICERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moderator</th>
<th>Susan Cheney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Moderator</td>
<td>Rev. Eileen Norrington</td>
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<td>Member, Hope UCC/Rockledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Rev. John Allen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Member, UCC at The Villages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Valerie Thomison</td>
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CLASS 2014

### Under 150

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lay Man</th>
<th>Ed Pritchett</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Congregational Church/Orange City</td>
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<td>Lay Woman</td>
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<td>Key Biscayne Community Church/Miami</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
<td>Rev. Mark Goforth</td>
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<td>Community UCC/Lake Park</td>
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### 151 – 250

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lay Man</th>
<th>John Beisenherz (unable to fulfill term)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christ Congregational/ Miami</td>
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<td>Sammie Hartwell</td>
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<td>Rev. Phil Garrison</td>
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<td>St. Andrew UCC/Sarasota</td>
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### 251 – 500

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<tr>
<td>Lay Woman</td>
<td>Margaret Mahoney</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Church by the Sea/Bal Harbour</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
<td>Rev. Guillermo Marquez-Sterling</td>
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### 501+

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<tr>
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<td>Lay Woman</td>
<td>Peg Hulit (unable to fulfill term)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sanibel Congregational UCC</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographically</td>
<td>Les Solymossy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Pensacola Beach Community UCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>At Large</td>
<td>Dr. Ron Nutter</td>
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<td>United Church of Gainesville</td>
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<td>At Large</td>
<td>Robert Kolterman</td>
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<td>Florida UCC</td>
<td>Susan DiAmicis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Union Congregational Church/West Palm Beach</td>
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<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>Kimberly Watson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Longwood Hills Congregational Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Ms. Chandler Brun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>First Congregational Church/Winter Park</td>
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## Spring Gathering 2013
Professional Staff
Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree – Interim Conference Minister
Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove – Eastern Regional Minister
Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund – Western Regional Minister
Rev. Dr. William Wealand – Disaster Response & Recovery Ministry
Rev. Linn Possell – Older Adult Ministry

Support Staff
Candy Younglove – Assistant to the Interim Conference Minister
Beth Shedden – Financial Assistant
David Cyril – Administrative Assistant
Jeanne Haemmelmann -- Webmaster

Youth Ministers
Rev. Dr. Sheila Guillaume – Southeast Regional Youth Minister
Michael Cain – Consultant
Jeanne Haemmelmann – Gulf Coast Regional Youth Minister

Conference Minister Search Team
Rev. Dr. Bruce Havens (Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville) - Co-chair
Ed Pritchett (First Congregational Church/Orange City) - Co-chair
Mary Nutter (United Church of Gainesville)
Terry Crawford (Fort Myers Congregational Church)
Rev. Dr. Joaquin Willis (Church of the Open Door Congregational/Miami)
Rev. Dr. Guillermo Marquez-Sterling (Coral Gables Congregational Church)
Rev. Bill Klossner (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)
Rev. Dr. Kathy Rooke (Faith Family UCC/Tampa)
Rev. Vonshelle Beneby (member, UCC New Smyrna Beach)
Rev. Eileen Norrington (Conference Vice Moderator, ex-officio; member, Hope UCC/Rockledge)
Susan Cheney (Conference Moderator, ex-officio; member, Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)
Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree (Interim Conference Minister, resource and advisor)

Interim Conference Minister Search Team
Rev. Dr. Keith Haemmelmann (Pass-a-Grille Beach Community UCC/St. Pete Beach) - Co-chair
William Clarke (Church of the Open Door Congregational/ Miami) - Co-chair
Rev. Dr. Casey Baggott (Community Church/Vero Beach)
Sammie Hartwell (UCC/New Smyrna Beach)
Bob Harris (United Community Church/Sun City Center)
Rev. Eileen Norrington (Conference Vice Moderator, ex-officio; member, Hope UCC/Rockledge)
Susan Cheney (Conference Moderator, ex-officio; member, Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)

Nominating Committee
Rev. Bonnie Lipton, Chair (Designated Pastor, Church of the Isles/Indian Rocks Beach)
Dory Lingo (Church of the Open Door Congregational/ Miami)
Dyanne Edds (Hope UCC/Rockledge)
Rev. Dr. Jim Boler (member, Fort Myers Congregational Church)
Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Frantz (member, Miami Beach Community Church)

Help Us Spread the Good News
Want your friends to share in hearing the good news of what the churches of the Florida Conference are doing?
Please provide info about links to this Annual Report and current and recent issues of Celebrate Florida in your Sunday church bulletins, in your newsletter and on your website.
Visit www. uccfla.org/uccfla/Celebrate Florida.html

We are out-of-the-box people (Coral Gables Congregational Church)
Florida Conference Mission Statement

We declare that all we are and have are gifts from God.

God, who called the worlds into being, also calls the Church into being through Jesus Christ and enlivens it through the Holy Spirit.

Accepting the “Body of Christ” as a biblical image of the Church, our Conference strives with God’s help to incarnate Christ’s love in the world.

Florida Conference Vision Statement and Strategic Goals

Vision Statement
Called by the Still Speaking God, sent by Jesus Christ and transformed by the Holy Spirit, the United Church of Christ in Florida seeks to carry out the Gospel mandate to love God and love neighbor.

Goals

Goal: It is the primary goal of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ to encourage, help foster and equip local congregations to become more vital and faithful communities in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ.

Goal: The Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ will provide opportunities for leadership development which will include (but not be limited to): pastoral excellence cohort groups, online courses devoted to leadership training and Conference events which will foster agile and adaptive leadership for our time.

Goal: The Conference will develop programming in conjunction with the Center for Progressive Renewal that equips revitalization in local congregations. The New Church start committee will also work with the Center for Progressive Renewal in developing new church starts and exploring church multiplications with existing congregations.

Goal: The Conference will encourage and foster a climate of engagement with local communities so that each church in the Conference will be able to identify its commitment to the local community (area) in which the church is located. It will provide resources to help a church engage in ministries in its public life.

Goal: The Conference will create a new technological infrastructure that will equip congregational vitality, leadership development and public life ministries; 8-10 video centers will be established to help achieve this goal.

Goal: The Conference will be a participant in promoting region-wide collaboration with the three other UCC Conferences (South Central, Southeastern, Southern) in the Southern region.
Reports of the Regional Ministers

Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove
Eastern Regional Minister

It has been interesting to listen as I’ve been introduced in various local church settings. Sometimes, as I’m being introduced in various settings around the Conference, I’m referred to as “our Associate Conference Minister” or the “Regional Association Minister” or the “Conference Minister for our area.”

I usually see it in light of the transitional period in which we find ourselves and look for some opportunity to give out the correct title along with a loving dose of humor added. I might say something like “in the UCC we have an affinity for long titles and sometimes even I get confused, but according to the Conference directory I am the Eastern Regional Minister.” That usually gets a laugh, but at some point before I leave that setting I always get the question, “What do you do?”

Here are some examples of what I do as a Regional Minister:

“Being present to and building relationships with the churches and clergy of the Region, serving as a liaison to them on behalf of the whole Florida Conference.” This is an on-going, integral part of all that I do, be it one-on-one counseling with clergy, participation in clergy groups, training events, staffing of the search and call process, worship attendance/participation, participating -- insofar as possible -- in ecclesiastical councils, pastoral installations, ordinations and other ceremonial events within the Region. In addition, I also help staff the Florida Conference Spring and Fall Gathering planning committees.

“Offering, in conjunction with other staff and leaders in the Region, opportunities for networking; program development; leadership training; new church development; justice work and mission engagement.” We as staff work together to help equip and empower others to use their gifts and to provide leadership whenever appropriate and possible. Together we: help plan and implement leadership development events within the Region; help churches to network around common mission and community outreach initiatives as well as work with wider church staff and staff from The Center for Progressive Renewal to provide educational opportunities/resources focused on church growth and vitality.

“Assisting and supporting clergy and churches in crisis and transition (search and call) to sustain or restore vitality.” The loss of pastoral leadership through resignation or retirement is a major transition in the life of a congregation. A healthy interim period is essential to the long term health and ministry of a local church. My work with the congregation begins when the pastor announces her/his intentions to leave and continues through the call and installation of the new pastor. During those unfortunate times of conflict in a local church, I may be invited to work with the church as they seek a path that leads to resolution. There are also times when I am asked to walk with a pastor and his/her family as they seek to navigate the waters of some personal crisis.

No two churches are alike; our lay members, clergy and Conference staff are so gifted and diverse. I am grateful for the opportunity, in the midst of these challenging times, to be able to work with such gifted and dedicated people as we “go boldly” into the future.

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund
Western Regional Minister

As a Regional Minister I encounter lay leaders and pastors who are resilient in the face of tremendous challenges and opportunities for transformation. Since January of 2013, I’ve traveled from Pensacola Beach to Marco Island to Ocala and Korea for the World Council of Churches and back! The UCC Youth Delegate to WCC Assembly was Haley Knapp from the Florida Conference, and a special grant allowed me to accompany her to experience the global, ecumenical church. In the summer of 2013 I assisted delegates from our Conference at the 29th General Synod of the UCC in Long Beach, where we celebrated and discerned God’s Vision for the UCC. At Synod it was exciting to help one of our youth delegates coordinate a spontaneous young adult gathering that brought together over 40 youth from around the country to create a new network of support.

My primary focus this first year has been on establishing relationships with local congregations in the Western Region through preaching and conversations with lay leaders. From my time of deep listening, here are three big takeaways: churches want more connection to the UCC, churches want to better utilize technology and the UCC is one of the best kept secrets in Florida.

Much of my time as a Regional Minister is spent providing support to local church search committees, offering guidance and resources to congregations in transition and supporting the work of the Church & Ministry Committee. As an ONA consultant, it’s been exciting to support the newly formed Open and Affirming Ministry Team as they coordinate their first event at the 2014 Spring Gathering and to support a new Environmental Justice Team for the Conference. I also helped coordinate Church Vitality Events with The Center for Progressive Renewal (held...
at First Congregational Church/Winter Park and Faith UCC/Dunedin) that inspired our churches to try something new: coffee hour on the church lawn, treating visitors as guests and putting into practice “if you’re not going to die, give it a try.”

In the past year we’ve said goodbye to Kent Siladi as our Conference Minister, welcomed Bill Wealand as Acting Conference Minister and now benefit from the leadership of Davida Foy Crabtree as our Interim Conference Minister. It’s been a pleasure working with them, and I continue to be grateful for my colleague Raymond Hargrove. We have an excellent team on the Conference staff, and I am thankful to our local congregations for generously supporting our work through gifts to OCWM.

Participating in press conference as part of a special delegation in Seoul meeting with Korean Christians who are part of an emerging Open and Affirming movement.

Spring 2013 Annual Gathering — May 2-4
First Congregational Church/Winter Park and Renaissance Orlando/SeaWorld
Members of Planning Committee Rick Carson (Pass-a-Grille Beach Community UCC/St. Pete Beach), Chair
Rev. Karen Curtis-Weakley (New Hope UCC/DeLand)
Dyanne Edds (Hope UCC/Rockledge)
Sammie Hartwell (UCC/New Smyrna Beach)
Rev. Bob Melhorn (Altamonte Chapel Community UCC/Altamonte Springs)
Ed and Jo Pritchett (First Congregational Church/Orange City)
Rev. Talia Raymond (First Congregational Church/Winter Park
Rev. Glennyce Grindstaff (CrossRoads Community UCC/Melbourne)
Moderator Susan Cheney (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)
Conference Minister Rev. Kent Siladi
Western Regional Minister Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund
Candy Younglove (Assistant to the Conference Minister)

Fall 2013 Annual Gathering — November 9
Embassy Suites, Orlando/Lake Buena Vista South
Members of Planning Committee
Sammie Hartwell (UCC/New Smyrna Beach), Co-Chair
Terry Waldron-Wilkinson (Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville), Co-Chair
Jan Steinberg (First Church of North Miami Congregational)
Pastor Donna Cooney (UCC/St. Augustine)
Bert Perry (New Hope UCC/DeLand)
Moderator Susan Cheney (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)
Interim Conference Minister Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree
Eastern Regional Minister Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove
Candy Younglove (Assistant to the Conference Minister)

Spring 2014 Annual Gathering — May 17
Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville
Members of Planning Committee
Sammie Hartwell (UCC/New Smyrna Beach), Co-Chair
Terry Waldron-Wilkinson (Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville), Co-Chair

Rev. Dr. Bruce Havens (Arlington Congregational Church/ Jacksonville)
Moderator Susan Cheney (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda)
Interim Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
Eastern Regional Minister Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove
Candy Younglove (Assistant to the Conference Minister)
With my term now expiring, this is my final report as chair of the Florida Conference Budget and Finance Committee. It has been my pleasure to have served on this committee for seven years, the last three as chair with a seat on the Conference Board of Directors, its Executive Committee and the Endowment Corporation Board. Perhaps I am old fashioned, but I’ve always believed that part of a minister’s Calling was to serve the Larger Church, not just their local church, and that I have faithfully tried to do.

I am also old fashioned in believing that every local church has a responsibility to faithfully support the work of its conference and denomination through its OCWM and Per Capita giving. After all, it is through our United Church connections that we are each deemed a not-for-profit corporation and that many of us obtain our property insurance. It is through our United Church connections that ministers are licensed to perform marriages, receive health insurance coverage and can participate in a pension program. It is through our United Church connections that local churches receive help in filling a pulpit vacancy and that ministers are offered opportunities for continuing education, fellowship and personal support when needed. Surely these benefits warrant the generous and regular support of each local church and the advocacy of every local church minister.

All of us, therefore, ought applaud those ministers and local churches that were faithfully “old fashioned” in 2013. From the church with 32 members (New Vision Congregational Church/Fernandina Beach Yulee) which gave almost $120 per member ($3,400), to the church of 513 members (Coral Gables Congregational Church) which gave $163 per member ($75,000), there were some wonderful examples. Unfortunately, not enough of us were exemplary:

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**Florida Conference UCC Balance Sheet**

**As of December 31, 2013**

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<th>ASSETS</th>
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<td>Checking/Savings</td>
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<td>1102 Conference Minister Demand Loan</td>
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<td><strong>Total Accounts Receivable</strong></td>
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<td>1502 · Equipment</td>
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<td>1599 · Accumulated Depreciation</td>
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<td><strong>Total Fixed Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1800 · UCF Board Restricted Funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801 · St. Petersburg 1st Fund</td>
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<td>1806 · Jackson Interfaith Fund</td>
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<td><strong>Total Other Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>2,857,299.49</td>
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| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | |
| **Liabilities** | | |
| **Current Liabilities** | | |
| 2110 Retirement | | |
| 2200 · Pass Through Funds | | |
| 2201 · OCWM National | | |
| **Total Other Liabilities** | | |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES** | | |
| **CURRENT Liabilities** | | |
| **TOTAL Liabilities** | | |
| **EQUITY** | | |
2013 ended with a fourth net deficit in a row:

2010 $78,950
2011 $70,000
2012 $78,750
2013 $72,554

With our national economy having recovered from the housing and financial collapse of 2008, it had been my belief that we would see that recovery in member giving to local churches and in local church giving to OCWM. We did not. Though we kept expenses under budget by $11,000, projected income fell short by $84,000, most of which were shortfalls in OCWM and Per Capita giving.

So our continuing challenge is not on the expenditure side of the ledger but on the faithful giving of each and every local church, on a monthly basis if possible, to help keep our Florida family of UCC churches faithful to one another and strong.

Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Rev. Jim Kvetko, Chair (Miami Shores Congregational Church)
Rev. Don Wilson (Venice UCC)
Rev. Gaye Bosley-Mitchell (member, Coral Gables Congregational Church)
Amy Luek (First UCC/Orlando)
Sherian Bullier (Port Orange UCC)
Rev. A. Bertram Miller (member, Church by the Sea/Bal Harbour)

Treasurer’s Report

OCWM and PER CAPITA INCOME continued to decline in 2013.
Five years ago, in 2009, OCWM and PER CAPITA Income was $818,978.
It appears we will have another deficit in 2014.
Expenses connected with acquiring the University Church/Orlando have not been included in these figures.
Florida Conference UCC
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan - Dec 12</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 13</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$ Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 · OCWM</td>
<td>410,912.99</td>
<td>392,447.34</td>
<td>421,800.00</td>
<td>-29,352.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>4XXX OCWM National</td>
<td>103,531.09</td>
<td>99,071.28</td>
<td>106,300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4001 · Per Capita Assessments</td>
<td>264,291.38</td>
<td>268,719.06</td>
<td>281,400.00</td>
<td>-12,680.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>4002 · Other Contributions</td>
<td>1,000.95</td>
<td>771.60</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>-4,228.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>4003 · Youth Events &amp; Trips</td>
<td>17,891.25</td>
<td>18,308.75</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
<td>-1,691.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>4004 · Program Ministry and Services</td>
<td>12,060.76</td>
<td>1,340.00</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>-3,660.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4005 · Conference Gatherings</td>
<td>38,414.51</td>
<td>46,339.76</td>
<td>65,000.00</td>
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<td>4009 · Investment Income</td>
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<td>4010 · Friends of the Conference</td>
<td>10,056.62</td>
<td>11,643.29</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>869,582.34</td>
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<td>932,500.00</td>
<td>-83,831.07</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan - Dec 12</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 13</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$ Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000.01 · 04 · Salaries &amp; Benefits</td>
<td>635,572.50</td>
<td>512,418.37</td>
<td>498,000.00</td>
<td>14,418.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>5006 · Professional Fees</td>
<td>6,304.73</td>
<td>5,349.53</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>3,349.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>5010 · Program Ministry &amp; Services</td>
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<td>8,000.00</td>
<td>-5,987.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>5011 · Youth Events &amp; Trip</td>
<td>16,432.89</td>
<td>16,403.09</td>
<td>18,000.00</td>
<td>-1,691.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>5012 · Church &amp; Ministry Committee</td>
<td>7,733.66</td>
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<td>1,925.46</td>
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<td>5013 · New Church Support</td>
<td>51,036.00</td>
<td>37,301.00</td>
<td>51,500.00</td>
<td>-14,199.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>5014 · Travel</td>
<td>32,386.48</td>
<td>30,393.82</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
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<td>5015 · Board Meetings</td>
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<td>14,172.13</td>
<td>12,000.00</td>
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<td>5016 · Other Meetings</td>
<td>51,741.92</td>
<td>99,450.65</td>
<td>78,000.00</td>
<td>21,450.65</td>
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<td>5017 Educational Resources</td>
<td>1,357.94</td>
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<td>5018 · Vehicle Expenses</td>
<td>18,023.31</td>
<td>3,907.83</td>
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<td>5019 · Meals</td>
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<td>6,928.25</td>
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<td>5030 · Rent</td>
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<td>5031 · Office Expenses</td>
<td>13,703.78</td>
<td>16,135.50</td>
<td>12,000.00</td>
<td>4,135.50</td>
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<td>5032 · Shipping &amp; Postage</td>
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<td>5033 · Telephone</td>
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<td>5034 · Information Technology</td>
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<td>5035 · Repairs &amp; Maintenance</td>
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<td>5037 · Insurance</td>
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<td>42,612.46</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td>1,079,549.07</td>
<td>987,523.10</td>
<td>998,800.00</td>
<td>-11,276.90</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan - Dec 12</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 13</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$ Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income</strong></td>
<td>-209,966.73</td>
<td>-138,854.17</td>
<td>-66,300.00</td>
<td>-72,554.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Released Restrictions**

| 4998 · Donor Restricted Releases | 55,976.00 | 13,176.00 | 13,176.00 | 0.00 | 100.0% |
| 4999 · Board Restricted Releases | 78,750.00 | 53,124.00 | 53,124.00 | 0.00 | 100.0% |
| **Total Released Restrictions** | 134,726.00 | 66,300.00 | 66,300.00 | 0.00 |          |

**Net(After Balance Sheet Transfers)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan - Dec 12</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 13</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$ Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-75,240.73</td>
<td>-72,554.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-72,554.17</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This has been a year of significant changes for the Endowment Fund Corporation (EFC) with both challenges and successes. The creation and adoption of a new set of bylaws for the EFC was very important. It has moved its work from rules and regulations where meeting notices were to be given by either personal contact or telegram to embrace the changed laws of Florida as well as technological advances. The EFC has also adopted carefully crafted statements which include a Gift Acceptance policy, a statement of Fund Raising Guidelines and a statement Differentiating the Assets and Responsibilities of the Conference and the Corporation.

It was a significant year of growth in the EFC invested resources with a change from $2,559,743 to $2,944,652, which accounted for a growth of approximately 13.3%.

University Congregational Church/Orlando closed and gave its property to the Conference [see article on page 20]. Ownership of this property by the Conference provides it with many exciting possibilities. The EFC agreed to provide an interest-bearing loan to the Conference in the amount of $76,823.17 for the purpose of paying off the loan and covering the closing and inspection costs. The interest rate was set at 4.75%, accruable for no more than two years to a balloon payment of the loan and accrued interest at that time. In addition, the EFC approved a line of credit to the Conference would be repaid to the EFC. The investment is extremely safe because the property has been estimated to be valued between $550,000-$800,000.

Unfortunately, Hope Unites/Orlando also closed and returned its property and associated liabilities to the EFC. Expenses to maintain and protect the property totaled $2,413. The remaining mortgage was $312,000 as well as an existing loan from the national UCC Fund of $38,234. The property was sold for $165,000; after closing costs and Realtor fees the EFC received $148,000 with a net loss to the EFC of $204,647.

The former new church start in DeLand (New Hope UCC) decided that they do not want to place their church on the site which the EFC had purchased many years ago – when land values were high -- for $150,000. Another church has signed a contract to purchase the land for $125,000; the sale will close by the end of October 2014, when that church is confident it will have raised the total resources needed. The EFC will only face $2,000 in closing costs. The EFC had expected to experience a very significant loss on the sale; however, with the saving of about $7,000 in Realtor charges and the sale price of $125,000, the loss is not nearly as much as was expected.

After many years the Davie property has been determined to be inappropriate for a new church start. An unacceptable level of arsenic has been determined in one of 12 soil samples, common for that part of Florida. A new Realtor has been designated to work on the sale and new tests for arsenic are underway. The eventual sale should yield a substantial gain in resources and may recoup more than the losses incurred on the previous two properties mentioned in this report.

The EFC and the Conference have been working with Trinity Congregational UCC/Winter Haven. The congregation had dwindled in membership and could no longer make payments to the EFC on its significant loan. With a change in church leadership, the EFC has agreed that the church can postpone making payments on the loan’s principal through the end of August 2014. Interest is accruing at $550 each month until they can pay off the loan and the accrued interest in full. The EFC is encouraged by the rapid growth in the membership of the church and the church’s work to eliminate its debt with the EFC [see article on page 18].

During the coming year the EFC is focusing on resolving all of its long standing property challenges, completing a strategic plan for the future and finishing the development of needed additional policies, including investment and spending policies.
Church & Ministry Committee

The Committee:
- met as a full board twice; the Regional Committees met monthly
- approved four individuals for ordination pending an Ecclesiastical Council and a call
- approved four individuals for Privilege of Call pending an Ecclesiastical Council
- approved one individual for Commission Minister standing pending an Ecclesiastical Council
- conducted one Standing Review and removed standing from the minister. We voted to proceed to a Standing Review on another minister and it is in process
- granted scholarships, funding for projects and programs from the Wilson Fund (a bequeath specified only for ministerial training)

Western Regional Church & Ministry Team
Class of 2014
Hardric McMillon (Emmanuel UCC/Sebring)
Rev. Thomas Brenner (member, Sanibel Congregational, UCC)
Rev. Phil White – Chair (Fort Myers Congregational)
Rev. Gloria Van Houten – MID Liaison (First Congregational UCC/Sarasota)
Rev. Jeanette Sherrill – MID Liaison (Trinity UCC/St. Petersburg)
Rev. Graciela Flores – Scribe (member, First United Church of Tampa)

Class of 2016
Rev. Vincent Amlin (United Church of Gainesville)
Martha Synnott (Church of the Isles/Indian Rocks Beach)
Joseph P. Ebbing (Faith Family UCC/Tampa)

Ex-Officio
Rev. Clarice Mitchell (Hope UCC/Rockledge), Chair of Committee on Church & Ministry

Southeast Regional Church & Ministry Team
Class of 2016
Rev. Harold Thompson (Miami Beach Community Church)
Rev. Georgia Hillesland (Boynton Beach Congregational Church)
Rev. David Schnepf (Jensen Beach Community Church)
Suzanne Lewis (First Congregational Church/Fort Lauderdale)

Class of 2014
Andrea Burt – Chair (Plymouth Congregational Church/Miami)
Josef Spencer (Coral Gables Congregational Church)
Rev. Phyllis Parthemar – Scribe (Union Congregational Church/West Palm Beach)
Rev. Gregorio Marin (member, Coral Gables Congregational Church)
Sumner Hutcheson III – MID Liaison (Church of the Open Door Congregational/Miami)

Ex-Officio
Susan Cheney (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda), Moderator
Rev. Clarice Mitchell (Hope UCC/Rockledge) Chair of Committee on Church & Ministry

Northeast Regional Church & Ministry Team
Class of 2016
Jo Pritchett – Scribe (First Congregational Church/Orange City)

Ex-Officio
Rev. Karen Curtis-Weakley (New Hope UCC/Deland)
Rev. Vonshele Beneby (member, UCC/New Smyrna Beach)

Class of 2014
Rev. Tim Woodard -- Chair (Riviera UCC/Palm Bay)
Ms. Jan Bates (Crossroads UCC/Melbourne)
David Heald (Union Congregational Church/Holly Hill)
Rev. Scott Elliott – MID Liaison (Riviera UCC/Palm Bay)
(unable to complete term)
Stephen Heath (Union Congregational Church/Holly Hill)
Rev. Linda Girouex (Riverside UCC/Jacksonville)
Steven Case (Windermere Union Church)

Ex-Officio
Lynn Blevins (First UCC/Orlando), Conference Registrar
Susan Cheney (Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda), Moderator
Rev. Clarice Mitchell (Hope UCC/Rockledge) Chair of Committee on Church & Ministry

Staff
Rev. Dr. Davida Crabtree, Interim Conference Minister
Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove, Eastern Conference Minister
Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, Western Conference Minister

Members of the Conference Minister Search Team receive input from Fall 2013 Gathering delegates
**MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT**

James Andrews, Lakewood UCC/St. Petersburg ......................................................... University of South Florida
Allison Baker, Windermere Union UCC ................................................................. Chicago Theological Seminary
Ian Beason, Longwood Hills Congregational Church .............................................. Asbury Theological Seminary
Lynn Blevins, First UCC/Orlando ............................................................................ Methodist Theological School
Sandra Cencebaugh, First UCC/Hollywood ......................................................... Florida International University
Donna Cooney, UCC/St. Augustine ........................................................................ Florida Center for Theological Studies
Cynthia Drew, Coral Gables Congregational UCC .................................................. Chicago Theological Seminary
Jenny Gragg, Plymouth Congregational Church/Miami ........................................ Princeton University — Approved for Ordination pending a Call
Zach Graves, United Church of Gainesville ............................................................. Graduated from Candler School of Theology
Rick Harrell, First Congregational UCC/Sarasota .................................................... Bethel Seminary
Cynthia Lee, Miami Beach Community Church ....................................................... Eden Theological Seminary
Elizabeth LeSeuer, Coral Gables Congregational UCC ......................................... Eden Theological Seminary
John D. Letson, First Congregational Church/Fort Lauderdale ................................ Florida Center for Theological Studies
Sara Martz, The Community Church of Vero Beach ............................................... Asbury Theological Seminary
Pamela McCorry, Union Congregational Church/West Palm Beach ...................... Drew University Theological School
...........................................................................................................................................
Elizabeth Miles, United Church in Tallahassee ....................................................... Florida Center for Theological Studies, Emory
David Morse, First Congregational Church/Fort Lauderdale ....................................
Pamela Oliveira, Naples UCC ....................................................................................
Amy Rovell-Rix, United Church of Gainesville ........................................................
Twila Rhodes, The Community Church Vero Beach ................................................ Chicago Theological Seminary
Sheri Slusher, Longwood Hills Congregational Church ..........................................
Greg Smith, Naples UCC ............................................................................................
Ronald A. Thompson, Naples UCC ......................................................................... Lexington Theological Seminary
Estrella (Star) Valino, Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville ....................
Terri Vincent, Coral Gables Congregational UCC .................................................
Sonja Williams, Faith UCC/Tamarac ....................................................................
Pierce Withers, United Church in Tallahassee ...................................................... Andover Newton Theological
Yosladis Izquiero-Yglesias, Coral Gables Congregational Church ..............................

*New since Fall Gathering 2013

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**ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION**

**25 Years**

Virginia Doherty
Stephen S.J. Hall
Priscilla Felisky Whitehead
Gregory Ryan

**50 Years**

Armand Leroy Weller
Gene Robert Thursby
Robert Albert McWaid
Donald Edward Steedly
Lloyd Ashley Larsen
Brady Albert Seeley
Merle Renner Dech

---

**2014 Church Anniversaries**

**25 Years**

Emmanuel UCC/Sebring

**50 Years**

CrossRoads Community Church/Melbourne
Congregational Church of Boca Raton
Hope UCC/Rockledge

**100 Years**

Edgewater Union Church
Union Congregational Church/Holly Hill
A Tale of Two Searches

Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove
Eastern Regional Minister

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…" You may recognize that as the beginning of the opening line from Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*. That sentence, for me, describes a period of anxiety that is simultaneously balanced by assurance, a time of challenge that is simultaneously balanced by opportunity. It describes, for me, a time much like the one in which we live and serve as Christ’s disciples.

I get to witness this dichotomy play out time and time again as I walk with congregations through pastoral transitions, which is one facet of my ministry as a Regional Minister. Allow me to share just two brief examples: the first relates to the search for an Interim and the second the search for “Settled Pastor.”

The Council and members of the Miami Lakes Congregational Church Interim search committee, at the beginning of their process, had the usual concerns about the value and role of the Interim as well the perception that this could be a real opportunity to “save” money. The leadership and I had some long conversations about the role and value of the Interim, especially as related to what a church can potentially “lose” in an effort to “save money.” They made the decision, to their credit and after prayerful consideration, to call a full-time Interim. It has proven to be the right decision for this church and they are on their way to becoming a healthier congregation that is excited about the future with a new Pastor.

When it came time for the UCC/New Smyrna Beach to search for a new Pastor, part of their “new reality” was that they could no longer afford a full-time Pastor. This new reality presented them with an opportunity to explore anew issues of identity, mission as well as finances as they tried to “re-vision” the future with a Pastor who is less than “full-time.” Their committee put a great deal of time and energy into the process. Initially we had anticipated that the pool of candidates would be very small. However, they actually received a surprisingly high number of ministerial profiles. They are now in the process of extending the call to a candidate about whom they are very excited. I was talking with one of the search committee members shortly after they had selected their candidate, and the member shared how they really “didn’t know much about what the Conference and wider church do until now.” Part of my response was that “this is one example of our covenantal relationship in action.”
During the past year some wonderful and exciting events and activities have been taking place. We have received the generous gift of time and talent from more than 100 volunteers who helped to restore flood damaged homes in the Panhandle of our state. The volunteers came from great distances -- one group from Canada. One of our tool trailers was towed to the area to supply the volunteers with the equipment needed for their restoration work.

We held a group of workshops focusing on Human Caused Disasters in four locations around the state, a similar group of workshops introducing people to the Red Cross Ready Rating program. The Ready Rating program assists congregations to identify the extent to which adequate preparations have been made for future disasters and provides a “next steps” guide to help congregations move forward in this effort.

Congregations continue to receive gifts of items used to create emergency kits and have used them to make flood clean-up bucket kits, hygiene kits, baby kits and school kits -- all of which have been used to help people impacted by disasters. Some of the kits are at deployment stations where they are ready for use as needed.

A recent workshop introduced a very helpful program titled “Map Your Neighborhood,” which guides people through a well-designed process to organize people in a neighborhood to help each other immediately following a disaster. At the same workshop a new communication tool was described which makes it possible for congregations to connect using a social media named “Group Me” to communicate with each other in preparation for disasters and most importantly to identify needs, places where help is needed and to send “I’m OK” messages to the church.

Our group of trained volunteer Disaster Responders continues to grow with five new members added during the past year. Please contact me for additional information about any of these programs or about the Disaster Responder available to assist your congregation (Bwealand@uccfla.org or 352/406-4484).

Regional Disaster Ministry Coordinating Groups

Southwest
Rev. Alan Coe, Mayflower Congregational/Naples
Rev. Bill Klossner, Congregational UCC/Punta Gorda
John Rohde, Fort Myers Congregational UCC
Diane Schroeder, Naples UCC

Northwest
Rev. Nancy Dahlberg, United Church in Tallahassee
Rev. Phil Garrison, St. Andrew UCC/Sarasota
Patricia McGee, St. Andrew UCC/Sarasota
Dana Knapp, First Congregational UCC/Ocala
Jackie Rehm, Faith Family Community UCC/Tampa
Russell Ripstein, Congregational UCC/Bradenton
Barbara Shaver, First Congregational UCC/Sarasota

Northeast
Bruce Arthur, UCC/New Smyrna Beach
Sandra Coar, Arlington Congregational Church/Jacksonville
Michael Grindstaff, CrossRoads UCC/Melbourne
Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove, Regional Conference Minister

David Heald, Union Congregational UCC/Holly Hill
Rev. Steve Heath, Union Congregational UCC/Holly Hill
Vicky Horn, First Congregational Church/Orange City
Todd Johnston, Union Congregational UCC/Holly Hill
Michelle LaMoia, UCC/New Smyrna Beach
Rev. Robert Melhorn, Altamonte Chapel UCC/Altamonte Springs
Bert Perry, New Hope UCC/DeLand
Mary Joe Searl, First Congregational UCC/Winter Park
Rev. Dr. Bill Wassner, Port Orange UCC
Bob Wood, Union Congregational UCC/Holly Hill

Southeast
LM Sandy Cencebaugh, First UCC/Hollywood
Rev. William Koch (member), Church by the Sea/Bal Harbour
Dalton Nickerson, First Church of North Miami Congregational
Nancy Nyren, Boynton Beach Congregational Church
Rev. Dr. Roy Nyren, Boynton Beach Congregational Church
Youth Ministry

Michael Cain
Northeast Region Youth Minister

Jeanne Haemmelmann
Gulf Coast Region Youth Minister

Rev. Dr. Sheila Guillaume
Southeast Region Youth Minister

• April 2013: Northeast Region Youth event at Hope UCC/Rockledge with 50 youth and leaders from eight churches gathered for games, a program, worship, lunch and a Mission 4/1 Earth event making 60 oyster mats to be used in the Indian River Lagoon, which will filter 20,000 gallons of water (L)

• May 2013: Conference Spring Gathering Youth Ministry workshop with youth, young adults and youth leaders in attendance

• August 2013: Southeast Youth Mission Trip to Lake City with youth participation from each Conference region; partnering with Disaster Ministry and the United Way and receiving local news coverage

• October 2013: Youth Workshop at Church of the Open Door Congregational/Miami’s annual community outreach event

• October 2013: All-Conference Fall retreat weekend (#Empowered) with 90+ youth and adults at The Community Church of Vero Beach, with extreme games and culminating with CCOVB’s C2 “non-traditional” Sunday worship service

• January 2014: Annual Conference-wide weekend Walk on Water Youth Event at Union Congregational Church/West Palm Beach with best attendance in recent years; talent show, beach worship and baptism (Top)

• March 2014: Annual Peace River Canoe and Camping Trip with over 180 youth and adults from 14 congregations participating and learning about the Beatitudes (Below)

• On-going planning for Southern Regional Youth Event (June 2014) to be held at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg

• January & April 2014: First “CERT”-ification School for Youth & Family Ministry held in Florida with eight participants

• May 2013: Bridges of Hope trip to Turkey with 12 young adults on an interfaith immersion trip
Afters the Spring Gathering in May 2013, our women gathered in June at the International Palms Resort in Cocoa Beach to begin planning next year’s annual meeting. With the passing of several women and resignation of others, vacancies had to be filled. The focus for this year was hunger.

- Meetings of the executive board worked on the revision of the by-laws and plans for future events.
- Florida hosted the Southern Regional Conference at Camp Weed & Conference Center in Live Oak October 18-20. The theme, Connecting Lives in Changing Times, centered upon the scripture in Isaiah 43:19a: “Be alert, be present, I am about to do something brand new. I am bursting out!! Don’t you see it?” The keynote speaker was Rev. Sandra Gourdet, Area Executive for African Global Ministries. Our service project was hygiene kits; women brought the required supplies and assembled over 250 kits, which were shipped to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. Sunday’s offering was split between Mercy Home Orphanage for Girls in Kenya, Global Ministries and OCWM. There were about 125 women in attendance from the 10 states which comprise the Southern Region of the UCC.

- The winter months had the ladies working on the 2014 Annual Meeting that was to be held in March.
- Regional annual meetings included: January 18 - Gold Coast Region at First UCC/Hollywood; January 25 - Southwest Region at Pilgrim UCC/Port Charlotte; February 8 - Central West Coast at Trinity UCC/St. Petersburg; February 15 - Central East Coast at Cocoa Beach Community Church.

- The Miami-Dade-Monroe Region held an all-day workshop on February 1 at First UCC/Hollywood called Café Chocolat! It was a rewarding time of meeting new friends, and we learned about the sweetness and bitterness of chocolate just as the Bible tells the sweet and bitter times of Jesus.

- March 7-9: the 87th Annual Meeting of Florida UCC Women was held at the International Palms Resort in Cocoa Beach with “Nourishing Your Spirit for Life’s Journey” as the theme. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk (founding director of the Center for African-American Theological Studies). Six presenters addressed topics which included at-risk teens and the juvenile justice system, childhood hunger and poverty in Florida, Reading for Renewal and ministering to one another. Dry goods were brought in by the attendees for the Central Brevard Sharing Center along with a donation of $200 (from part of Sunday’s worship offering).

**Officers for 2014-2015**
- President - Susan DiAmicis (Union Congregational Church/West Palm Beach)
- 1st Vice President - Patsy McDowell (Church of the Open Door Congregational/Miami)
- 2nd Vice President - Laverne Goforth (Community UCC/Lake Park)
- Recording Secretary - Carol Shores (Lakewood UCC/St. Petersburg)
- Treasurer - Barb Coons (Fort Myers Congregational Church)
- Historian - Barbara Smith (Hope UCC/Rockledge)
- Spiritual Life - Pastor Sandy Cencebaugh (First UCC/Hollywood)
- Mission Study - Rhea Taie-Tehrani (Miami Shores Community Church)
- Reading for Renewal - Terri Crawford (Fort Myers Congregational Church)
- Social Concerns/Community Outreach - Bert Perry (New Hope UCC/DeLand)

**Regional Representatives**
- Miami-Dade/Monroe Counties - Open
- Gold Coast - Camille Moite (Faith UCC/Tamarac)
- St. Johns - Open
- Central East Coast - Dyanne Edds (Hope UCC/Rockledge)
- Southwest - Judith Wilson (Pilgrim UCC/Port Charlotte)
- Central West Coast - Eleanor Rouse (Trinity UCC/St. Petersburg)
MINISTERIAL CHANGES IN THE FLORIDA CONFERENCE
(since our 2013 Annual Gathering)

Clergy New to Florida
Gregory Ryan (4/29/13)........... All Faiths UCC/Ridge Manor
Andrew White.............................. Retired
Shelly Ann Wilson....................... United Church of Gainesville
Shawn Garvey............. First Congregational Church/Winter Park
Dawson Taylor.............................. Naples UCC
Wes Bixby............................. First Congregational UCC/Sarasota
Timothy Shirley............. United Community Church/Sun City Center
Camille Gianaris............... Pilgrims' UCC/Florida Park
Bruce Turner............................ Riviera UCC/Palm Bay;
........................................ Hospice of St. Francis
Nancy Zuckerman............... Miami Lakes Congregational;
........................................ Catholic Hospice
John Von Lackum........................ Retired

Ordinations
Donna Cooney............................... UCC/St. Augustine
Paul Werner........................ First United Church of Tampa
Robin Bird............................. First UCC/Orlando
Maria Anderson................ Coral Gables Congregational UCC

Licensure
Lynn Blevins.............................. First UCC/Orlando
........................................ (serving All Faiths UCC/Ridge Manor)
Greg Smith................... United Church of Marco Island
Paul Werner..................... Trinity Congregational UCC/Winter Haven
Cynthia Lee............................. Miami Beach Community Church

Privilege of Call
Nancy Zuckerman
Robert Cemillan Lopez
Mairolet Vega

Retired
Merle Dech (4/28/13)........... All Faiths UCC/Ridge Manor
John Von Lackum........................ Indiana/Kentucky Conference
Virginia Doherty............... Indian River City United Methodist Church
Sally Brown.
Tom Niblock................ Plymouth Congregational Church/Miami
Jim Mory....................... Faith Congregational Church/Port St. Lucie
Jeffrey Frantz............... Miami Lakes Congregational Church
Karen Barker-Duncan..... First Congregational Church/Winter Park

IN MEMORY
Paul Olm-Stoelting.................. August 15, 2013
James Watkins..................... September 19, 2013
Bradford Purdy.................... September 23, 2013
William E. Jacobs................ September 30, 2013
Harold Simones..................... December 5, 2013
David Rees........................ December 14, 2013
William Heinrich................ December 25, 2013
Dolphus J. Allen Jr............ March 4, 2014
Ruth Richardson................ March 9, 2014
Judy Montgomery................ March 16, 2014

A New Day for Trinity

REV. DR. SARAH LUND
WESTERN REGIONAL MINISTER

The Moderator of Trinity Congregational UCC in Winter Haven called the Conference with concerns about his church. He knew that something needed to change, but he wasn’t sure how or where to begin. Working together with the Florida Conference, we found a way forward.

The church called Paul Werner to serve as their Supply Minister, and on Paul’s first Sunday there were 13 people in worship. Now, over six months later, they worship with over 65 people. Paul says that the congregation loves their church and they are willing to “try anything.” The church leadership reached out to the Conference for support, and together we discerned new possibilities for Trinity. The leadership team has attended Vitality Day events sponsored by the Florida Conference with The Center for Progressive Renewal and they have a renewed sense of purpose and hopeful future.

Rev. Phil White (Fort Myers Congregational Church), chair of the Western Regional Church & Ministry Committee, says, “Trinity UCC in Winter Haven was a congregation whose potential was waiting for the right catalyst of energy, leadership and vision. They now have a covenant for ministry that enables the congregation to offer visitors hope and joy in their life together.”

KEEP CURRENT WITH THE UCC IN FLORIDA...
VISIT WWW.UCCFLA.ORG
I am honored to serve on the United Church Board. This Board oversees the work of our United Church of Christ nationally and internationally, hears reports from our covenant partners, manages our resources and directs the work of our officers and staff. The board consists of 36 elected members along with 16 ex-officio members including our Collegium officers, six Conference Ministers and others representing our partner agencies. This single Board reflects the plan for unified governance that was implemented by action of the General Synod.

The Board gathers twice each year in Cleveland for several intense days of reports and decision-making. Each member serves on at least one working committee and one “ministry committee.” The working committees consist of budget, governance, endowment and development committees and a committee that plans the General Synod. The “ministry committees” receive specific information on the work of the three major divisions of the mission work of our denomination: Local Church; Wider Church and Justice and Witness Ministry.

As one of the members of the former Executive Council who carried over into the new Board structure, I serve as a member of the Executive Committee and chair the Development Committee that is charged with overseeing fundraising efforts and the ongoing task of faithful stewardship. Recognizing that faithful stewardship of the resources God has given us is a prime responsibility for all of us, Board members gave over $100,000 of their personal resources to the work of the wider church -- a gift in addition to their support of their local congregations and a reflection of the belief that good governance begins with commitment.

As a Board, we took concrete steps to balance a budget that did not reflect our income. The sad fact is that fewer resources are available. Local congregations send fewer dollars to their Conferences, Conferences utilize a larger percentage of these dollars and send fewer dollars on to the work of the national church. This leads to budget shortfalls. The Board has implemented a plan to reduce our national budget by over two million dollars in the coming year and to bring the draw we take from our endowment into line with what is commonly accepted practice -- into the range of 4-5% annually. The impact of this budget cut is significant since the entire 2014 approved budget for the national church is just in excess of 25 million dollars.

During our most recent meeting, we heard an exciting report on the plans for General Synod 30 in Cleveland and accepted the invitation of the Central Atlantic Conference to host General Synod 31 in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. We also approved a proposed “Memorandum of Understanding” with the Boy Scouts of America in an attempt to clarify their policies concerning gay scouts and scout leaders. We heard detailed reports from the Executives of our Affiliated and Associated Ministries, including the United Church Funds, the Council for Health and Human Services Ministries and the Pension Boards.

In their reports, the members of our Collegium of Officers -- General Minister and President Geoffrey Black, Local Church Executive Ben Guess, Wider Church Executive Jim Moos and Justice and Witness Executive Linda Jaramillo -- reflected on the “Bold, Inspirational Goals” we have set for our shared ministry as the United Church of Christ. These goals are:

**Bold, Public Voice** The UCC is a bold, widely-known and respected public voice of Christianity in service of God’s ever-unfolding mission.

**Welcoming, Reachable Congregations** There is a welcoming UCC community of faith that is accessible to all -- no matter who they are or where they are on life’s journey.

**Engaged Discipleship** Every UCC person is well-equipped to be growing in faith, be theologically conversant and be active in the global mission of the church.

**Excellent, Diverse Leaders** The UCC has a wealth of prepared, excellent leaders that reflect the diversity of God’s beloved community.

It is clear to me that our leaders are committed to a full partnership with all of us as we continue to do the work of love and caring in every setting of the church.

I thank you for the privilege of serving, and while under the new Board structure I no longer “represent” Florida, I am a proud member of the Florida Conference serving the wider church. I welcome your comments or questions. You can reach me at rpatte@naplesucc.org. To learn more about the work of the Board and our wider church, please visit ucc.org.
A Church’s Closing Becomes a Legacy Gift That Will Keep on Giving

When Rev. Brenda Adcock was called in October 2011 to be part-time Pastor at University Congregational Church/Orlando, the 45-50 individuals attending Sunday service were barely able to support the church financially despite rental income from the Teach-time Academy, the Saturday Night Life ministry and a Hispanic congregation. Newspaper ads, a redesigned church website, new book group and Bible study and weeknight Taize-type prayer service generated little positive response. Still, a popular food pantry established in 2010 was growing and serving an average of 95 families per month and the church building and grounds were maintained and enhanced.

Then in April 2013 the Saturday Night Life congregation gave notice that it would be leaving for space elsewhere, resulting in the departure from the church – of infants to the 40-somethings, numbering about 75 individuals -- of what could have been the next generation of UCC members. In addition, rental dollars from the school decreased as the economic downturn resulted in government cutbacks and impacted tuition payments. As members died, moved away or otherwise became inactive, normal monthly church obligations could not be met, and average Sunday service attendance dwindled to about two dozen. It became apparent to Church Council, Moderator Trudi Driscoll and Pastor Brenda that counsel from the Florida Conference was needed.

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, Western Regional Conference Minister, met with Church Council in September. From that meeting -- with Rev. Sarah’s spiritual and succinct business guidance – Council was made aware of options that might be open to the church. Another meeting followed with Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree (Interim Conference Minister) and Rev. Dr. Bill Wealand (Committee Chair for Conference Center Relocation) sharing information and ideas with Conference input and encouragement. Through an exchange of questions and answers, Council was able to focus on possible choices. Members of the congregation were urged to remain faithful stewards and continue their financial support until a decision was made, which they did.

With the support of the Conference and with Rev. Sarah in attendance, an all-congregation meeting was held to update the membership about the situation with a visioning discussion regarding the options that the Council felt were most viable for the property and the congregation. Through the discussion it became clear that either merging with another UCC church (which could absorb their financial debt) and/or a yoked ministry were not financially feasible. At an all-church meeting in January (the regular annual meeting) and after discussion and input, the vote – with sadness, but stark realism – was unanimous: the decision was made to “dissolve completely and that the property, along with the financial obligation (if they were willing to assume them) would go to the Florida Conference, United Church of Christ.”

Several other congregational meetings were necessary for the dissolution vote. According to Moderator Trudi, throughout the entire process “the entire congregation, never felt alone or that we were walking a path without the support of the Florida Conference. We could never say enough positive things in support of Dr. Sarah or Dr. Davida — both of whom in their own way fed us spiritually along the journey as well as being there when the business senses needed tending to.” She adds appreciation for the “constant presence at each all-church meeting of a member of the Florida Conference staff in the most spiritual and helpful ways. We never felt alone.” Advice from the Conference attorney provided support and Dr. Davida checked the fine points for the transfer of property and debt.

With the freeing of the congregation from insurmountable debt and spiritual decline and allowing for the growth of other UCC congregations and the Conference through the transference of the church property, members of University Congregational pray that, by their example, the next step for their beloved church building is the growth, expansion and betterment of the United Church of Christ in Florida.

The Conference Board voted to receive the property and pay off its debts. The Conference is putting together a team to look at the property and imagine its future, with creative input from our churches and its members. Perhaps a new bilingual Hispanic church? Perhaps Conference offices and gathering/meeting space with lifelong learning elements? Maybe a space for disaster response crews? How about meditation and labyrinth gardens? Solar panels? Green roof? A nursery school for both community service and a revenue stream? Practice space for musicians? Sell and invest to support new or renewing churches? A center for a greater Orlando day camp? Turn the front two acres into a community garden? The legacy gift of University’s property isn’t just its monetary value but all the imagining it has prompted. A gift that will keep on giving!