

August 2017

A few weeks ago, over the 4th of July weekend, I was honored to be one of over 700 voting delegates at the United Church of Christ General Synod, held this year in Baltimore, Maryland. It was my third time going to this national gathering. General Synod is where the denomination votes for its leadership and charts our shared direction forward. Even on the national level we practice congregational polity to insure equitable representation and governance that is focused and accountable. I have come to see that this is very important work with very real consequences.



At the end of each Synod I have come away in awe and wonder at the effectiveness of the process. It shouldn't work! We are from different parts of the country, different races, politically diverse and span the full spectrum of theological understanding and expression. Yet, Synod is where I see God's love manifest tangibly among a vastly diverse group. "Many parts, one body." This is why I love the UCC so much. The spiritual glue seems to be that we are truly seeking to unify as one collective force with the sole purpose of making God's love and justice real in the world. Somehow, we are able to do this even while maintaining our distinct expressions, theologies, and worship styles. For five days we discuss the state of the church, we vote for our national leaders, deliberate new ways of improving and adapting the way our denomination functions. We vote on resolutions that address a variety of critical social justice issues in our country and the world. We certainly don't agree on everything, but civil debate and respectful listening are given space to thrive. Each voice is valued and encouraged, as we trust each other to discern God's movement through the Holy Spirit. And it works!

For complete information about our work at General Synod go to <http://synod.uccpages.org>

What impressed me the most this year was the vote to affirm the UCC's rearticulated and revised statement of purpose, vision and mission. After a two-year examination involving deep research, meaningful conversation, multiple surveys and spiritual discernment from all corners of the denomination, what emerged was a clear focus on the love of God and love of neighbors. Rev. John Dorhauer, UCC general minister and president, presented us with a clear and meaningful call to love and justice. It's spelled out on the next page...

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
 OF CHRIST**



PURPOSE:

*To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength
 and our neighbor as ourselves.*

VISION:

*United in Christ's love,
 a just world for all.*

MISSION:

*United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace,
 we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.*

"We all bear responsibility for living out our shared mission. We will not achieve our full potential — nor maintain our full capacity for health, vitality, and relevance — without a clear sense of missional purpose and calling. This effort to identify that was a critical step in the direction of our future health and vitality — but it will only matter if we can all find common cause in this and commit fully, with passion, and without reserve to its undertaking."

Rev. John Dorhauer,
 UCC general minister and president



Every UCC congregation is encouraged to live out the purpose, vision and mission through the lens of
[Three Great Loves of the UCC:](#)



- Love of Children
- Love of Neighbor
- Love of Creation

This is how we work in unity to help create a just world for all. Every UCC church will do, or is already doing this work uniquely in the context of each community. Under this broad umbrella, distinctiveness becomes united to the whole and can be collectively focused. Personally, I think the elegance, simplicity and flexibility has great potential for the United Church of Christ. How does **TriCon** love children, neighbor and creation?
What stories can we tell?

In faith and hope, Bob



MARKERS ALONG THE JOURNEY

Transition Team Updates & Comments

REFLECTIONS from Jean

Five months in, it's nice to no longer be strangers to each other, nor to the Evolve 2017 transition process! But just to refresh, the ultimate goal of *Evolve 2017* is to discern together who God is calling TriCon to become, *and* the pastoral leader who can best partner with the membership to live into this call. This kind of group discernment takes some time, and TriCon is following the transition plan faithfully.

You might wonder what happens when congregations do *not* give this much time and attention in between ministers to discern the call of God upon their future. In some cases, such a congregation continues the course of the *past* as its default setting. This may mean that its purpose is no more clear or memorable than it was and not particularly connected to the times or its surrounding community. Plus, without being conscious of these dynamics, said congregation could expect the new minister to act like the former and be shocked by changes he or she proposes, OR in contrast, call a minister who is quite the opposite in style or priorities from the former, but from a more reactionary than reflective position. Simply going for maintenance or, alternatively, pursuing a radically different future without prayerful discernment can also provoke unnecessary conflict.

In other cases, congregations that have not been used to or comfortable with *spiritual* discernment, having not cultivated prayer practices that intentionally seek God's wisdom, are more likely to negotiate and lobby with each other on the kind of minister they each

From The Transition Team

The Transition Team hopes that your summer has been going well. We thank all the committees that have worked overtime this summer helping us gather information for the completion of the Church Profile, the document that will serve as the basis for calling our next Senior Minister. All input is greatly appreciated.

We hope that you have picked up the wonderful booklet, *Rest, Reflect, Renew*, produced by the Christian Education Committee. Its generous sharing of various spiritual practices within our congregation leads us to a connection to each other, and the opportunity to find the Spirit within ourselves. Contributors have shared their experiences of running, reading, meditating and much else: our means of connecting with the Spirit are as myriad as the members of our congregation.

And what, you ask, is the Transition Team doing talking to you about Spirit? As our process of *Evolve 2017* moves forward, we will be asking the congregation to come together to begin to identify our Spiritual Gifts, the special divine abilities bestowed on each of us by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's ministry. In the narrowest sense, Spiritual Gift is a theological term for the extraordinary graces given to individual Christians for the good of others. Another way to look at it is to ask yourself what gives you fulfillment and joy? We have individual gifts and corporate gifts, as a congregation as a whole.

The next step after this will be to discern how these gifts best serve God: What is God

want and on the direction for the church that they as individuals personally prefer. While in our congregational way of being, it is certainly important to hear as many voices and viewpoints as possible during the transition, simply determining what the majority desires leaves such a congregation feeling empty, and can be another source of unhealthy conflict.

The scenarios I have just outlined remind me of Jesus' teaching about the wide gate and the easy road versus the narrow and harder way that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14). TriCon has elected the better way for this transition.

So in our quest to hear God's call for today and for the minister who matches this, it behooves us to revisit elements of the past, such as TriCon's guiding statements of purpose, faith, mission, and welcome, and allow the best and relevant features of them to contribute to the present discernment. (For future reference, you'll find TriCon's general purpose, per its bylaws, printed here on this page below.) In addition, the way to life compels us to nurture our corporate spiritual health as the Body of Christ. (You'll find that Charity Tremblay's column, also on this page, reiterates this theme.) Surprises and conflicts inevitably arise, but when a congregation follows the road Jesus recommends, even these moments give life and growth.

Happy to walk this way with you!
Jean

TriCon's by-laws state:

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God; to preach, teach and live the gospel of Jesus Christ; to experience Christian fellowship and unity within the church and the church universal; to celebrate the sacraments; to render loving service toward all of God's creation; to work for righteousness, justice and peace.

calling us to be? And to discern that, we hope that the church members and the congregation will continue to open up to self-examination. Find the Spirit within!

August 10th is the next opportunity to gather with fellow members and friends, enjoy a summery dessert and share your particular spiritual practices, or your experience in trying various practices. Or just to come, eat and listen. All are welcome.

The sermons of June 25th through July 16th focused on Spiritual Gifts. You can listen to, or read, them on our website. Be inspired!

We plan on sharing our findings to date and celebrating our Spiritual Gifts on Sunday, September 24th.

As always, we welcome ANY input from ANYone. And we thank you for giving us the gift of doing this work for our church.

Yours faithfully,
The Transition Team
Jane Turner Michael, Chair
Nick Bruning
Cindy Schweppe
Andrew Thut
Charity Tremblay

**LOOKING
AHEAD**

RE:flect

Spiritual Discernment
in Community.



**Sign up for August 10th
Summer Reflection Social!**

Fall 2017 Season 3

RE:discover

Who we are now - September

Who our neighbors are - October

Who God is calling us to become - November



Summer Worship

SUMMER SERVICES IN OUR AIR-CONDITIONED PARISH HALL

Come and worship with us this summer. We have a number of comfortable chairs with arms for those who may find the folding chairs a little challenging - we're saving a seat for you!



Due to construction at West Concord Union Church this summer, the members of WCUC will be worshipping with us on Sundays, August 6 and 13.

AUGUST WORSHIP

August 6	Service at 10:00 a.m.	Rev. Dr. Jean Vandergrift preaching
August 13	Service at 10:00 a.m.	Rev. Hannah Brown preaching
Our regular summer services will continue on:		
August 20	Service at 10:00 a.m.	Rev. Dr. Jean Vandergrift preaching
August 27	Service at 10:00 a.m.	Rev. Robert Brown preaching

The Transition Team invites you to a:
SUMMER REFLECTIONS SOCIAL

What: Dessert and Conversation
When: Thursday, August 10, 7:00 p.m.
Where: TriCon Parish Hall

Everyone welcome. Please sign up on the TriCon website or call the church office. Families welcome. Supervised activities will be provided for children.



CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM BEGINS THIS FALL



Beginning in mid September, Confirmation Program will be offered to **SOPHOMORES** in High School.

We are very excited to begin a renewed program that seeks to engage students in exploring the relevance of faith and spirituality in the real world. We will meet twice a month from October through May.

Also, **EXPERIENCED MENTORS** have agreed to mentor **STUDENT GROUPS** rather than the former 1to1 model. Groups will be formed and **assigned** to mentors in September.

For further inquiries or discussion please contact Rev. Bob Brown, Suzanne Giles, or David Hart.



WELCOME TO TRICON!

Whether you are just visiting, looking to find a church home or still feeling your way after several visits, we encourage you to pick up brochures and other information in the parish hall or the church entry, and to come for refreshments in the parish hall following the service.

You are welcome to participate in any of our church programs and activities and to sign up your children for Church School or youth programs. For more information, contact Christian Education Director, Carrie O'Brien or Youth Leader, Nick Bruning. Call the church office if you have any questions.

The deadline for the September Newsletter is August 15.

ATTENTION MEN OF THE CHURCH Join the Anchor Group

The Anchor Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 a.m. in the church parlor. The Anchor Group is a group for men of all ages who discuss and share issues of religion and spirituality in light of contemporary culture. Any questions, email Greg Howes at howes2012@gmail.com.

SERMONS ON LINE

You can HEAR SERMONS on line by going to www.triconchurch.org

OR

Facebook.com and search *Trinitarian Congregational Church*

CAREGIVERS GROUP

The TriCon Caregivers Group is an opportunity for parishioners and friends in caregiving roles to come together to share accomplishments and failures, joys and sorrows, laughter and hope, as well as information about caring for others and ourselves.

If the role of caregiver is part of your life, please consider joining the TriCon Caregivers Group. **We will meet on Wednesday, August 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the church parlor.** Call the church office (978 369-4837) for more information.

KRIPALU RETREAT

Friday, October 6 – Sunday, October 8

Everyone is welcome, couples, singles, families, young and young at heart!

For more than 40 years, Kripalu has been teaching skills for optimal living through education for the whole person: body, mind, heart, and spirit. Kripalu is the largest and most established retreat center for yoga, health, and holistic living in North America.

For more information about Kripalu, go to Kripalu.org or contact Susan Stumpf at sjstumpf@comcast.net or 508-397-1805. Group lodging discount for 4 or more participants.

SILENCE IN THE STORM: A WEEKLY MEDITATION GROUP

Meditation Group resumes in September on:
Mondays, 10 A.M.-11:30 A.M.
in the Church Parlor

For more information, please contact Liz Crowell at Lbenema@gmail.com or 781-608-4765.



47TH ANNUAL ANTIQUÉ SHOW & SALE

Friday, November 3
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 4
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

See the September and October Newsletters for opportunities to volunteer during this All-Church event.

LIFE CHANGES



With Sympathy

Sincere sympathy to the family of our long-time member, Bob Baldrige, who died on July 17. See the September Newsletter for more information on a service being planned for the fall.

Heartfelt condolences to C.C. Donelan and her family. C.C.'s father, Richard Charles Marquardt, died on July 18. A service was held in PA on July 26.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Carol and Gautam Gupta and their family. Carol's mother, Rose Marie Klute, died on July 20. A service was held on July 25 in York, NE.



ANNOUNCING THE 2017
Al Filipov Peace & Justice Forum
Sunday, September 17 at 4:00 p.m.

The next Filipov Forum speaker and recipient of the *Al Filipov Peace and Justice Award* is **Michael Murphy, co-founder of MASS Design Group**, a non-profit architectural and research firm. MASS Design Group's mission is to "research, build, and advocate for architecture that promotes justice and human dignity". With innovative and ground breaking strategies, MASS Design is creating new solutions for housing, health care and education in countries throughout the Americas and Africa.

MASS Design projects include a birthing center in Malawi with rooms clustered around open green courtyards and a Cholera Center in Haiti with natural ventilation and its own wastewater treatment plant and a state-of-the-art hospital in Rwanda built with help from local workers.

MASS Design has also worked locally with Dr. Jim O'Connell of Boston Health Care for the Homeless, a past recipient of the *Al Filipov Peace & Justice Award*.

The Forum will be held on **Sunday, September 17 at 4 p.m.** We hope you will plan to attend and will look at both Michael Murphy's TED TALK "Architecture that's Built to Heal" and the MASS Design Group website massdesigngroup.org to learn more about Mr. Murphy.

The Forum honors the memory of Al Filipov, a beloved member of our church who died in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Al believed in the power of the individual to make a difference in the world. The Filipov Award is given each year to an individual who embodies Al's spirit and commitment to justice and peace.

Open Table - JULY/AUGUST 2017

Cereal - all kinds!



One of the most requested items at the Open Table food pantry is cereal. Let's fill the pantry shelves this summer with nutritious cereal of all types for our friends and neighbors.

Helping Our Neighbors Locally and Globally



Serving Over 300 Guests Weekly



ITEMS OF INTEREST

ATTENTION PARENTS

A Service Opportunity for Families



Parents often tell us that they wish they could get their kids involved in service projects but there tend to be age restrictions that make this problematic. We have a great project that can involve even the youngest children in a meaningful way.

Every week, the food we collect for Open Table needs to be delivered to the Food Pantry on Everett Street just around the corner from the church. As of August 8th, the delivery day/time will be Tuesdays, between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

The project can be as simple or as expanded as you wish - from simply transporting the donations, to keeping track of the number and reporting back to the congregation in the newsletter, to helping select our "item of the month", to making posters of the items needed, to talking to the other children and/or the congregation about donating food.

Since the items are non-perishable, if you have to skip a week, that's okay or even better, if several families want to take this on, we can set up a rotating schedule. Please call Judy Walpole at the church office -978-369-4837 or email jwalpole@triconchurch.org for more information or to volunteer.

Seeking Search Committee Members

As TriCon evolves toward the future with a new ministerial team, the Diaconate is looking for individuals to serve on the Search Committee to nominate our next settled Senior Minister. According to our by-laws, members are nominated by the Diaconate and voted on at a Congregational Meeting (which will be held this October).

This committee will work closely with the Transition Team in the fall while the Church Profile is compiled. They will move forward into the winter while the Profile is reviewed by the congregation.

As we voted on last December 11, Rev. Brown will have the first opportunity to submit his Ministerial Profile for consideration by this committee, should he choose to answer TriCon's call. Pending a "positive recommendation from the Search Committee, the congregation will vote on calling Rev. Brown to be our settled Senior Minister."

If you are interested in serving your faith, are able to commit time to frequent meetings, can make a commitment to confidentiality, openness, and building consensus, please consider the Search Committee.

Please contact Leslie Mahoney leslie@mahoneyarhcitects.com if you are interested or have questions.

USHERS/GREETERS AND COFFEE SERVERS NEEDED

In August, we put together schedules for the fall for ushers/greeters and coffee servers – two easy ways to participate in the life of the church and get to know more of your fellow parishioners.

New volunteers are always needed. You do not have to be an official member to usher/greet or serve coffee. Please call the church office or email Judy Walpole at jwalpole@triconchurch.org if you would like to volunteer.

Ushers are asked to come a few minutes early, hand out bulletins, greet arriving worshippers, take up the offering and stay a few minutes after the service to straighten up the pews. Complete instructions are provided and each week, there is an experienced head usher to give direction, as needed. Children are always welcome to participate with their family before going to class and – a popular bonus - they get to ring the church bell!

Coffee servers are asked to leave church during the last hymn and pour the coffee, which the sexton will have ready. He also does all the clean-up. Children are always welcome to participate with their family and – another popular bonus – they get first dibs on the munchkins!

You Tube
Subscribe
TriConChurch Concord

TriCon has a YouTube channel.
Search "TriConChurch Concord"
and SUBSCRIBE!

Your Generous Mission Dollars at Work MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT



For more information
on how you can help,
visit
www.endfamilyhomelessness.net

The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness (ANEFH) was formed in response to the worsening low income housing and homelessness crisis in MA and is committed to eliminating the root causes and adverse consequences of family homelessness through public education and advocacy. Based in Concord and Acton, the Network also includes congregations, organizations and individuals from many surrounding communities.

FACTS:

- * ~200k families in MA qualify for emergency assistance (EA).
- * Families of 3 or more with income of >\$18k qualify for EA.
- * 42k families applied for housing assistance in the last year, compared to 33k the previous year.
- * 90k families (less than 1/2 of the 200k families in need) have housing vouchers. If all 200k families had housing vouchers, \$2.4M would be needed.
- * MA is the 6th lowest in the nation for housing production and this shortage is driving up prices.

TRICON
OUTREACH

Learn more at:
triconchurch.org/missions-outreach



Members of the TriCon Mission Committee, Beth Knauss, Dale Ryder and Heidi Harring, in front of the new convection at Open Table paid for by the generosity of TriCon Church.

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

**The Church Office
will be open
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**



There may be staff available in the afternoons on many days or, due to vacations and shortened staffing, there may be also be days in the summer when the office is closed, so it is always better to call before coming in. Thank you.



With summer vacations at hand, please notify the church office at 978 369-4837 of any pastoral care situations or

hospitalizations (be sure to give us your room number if you do call). Anyone entering a hospital who desires pastoral care and has not notified the church office must indicate a "congregational affiliation" as part of their hospital admission intake interview if they would like a pastoral visit.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Lavender colored OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2017 are now available in the parish hall. Please take as many or as few as you need. If you use cash, kindly put your name on the envelope.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to donate flowers for a Sunday service in 2017, you may sign up on the flower chart in the parish hall or online.



REMINDER: FIND IT ON OUR WEBSITE TRICONCHURCH.ORG

If you have recycled your paper copy of this Newsletter and then remember an article you wanted to save or are looking for a date you forgot to put on your calendar, you can always find it on our website. Past and current newsletters are available there as well as a complete calendar of church events and lots of other important information about the church - check it out!

ON-LINE GIVING AVAILABLE AT TRICON

We are able to accept on-line donations and payments via our website - **Triconchurch.org**. On the homepage, you will see "Click here to make donations and pledge payments". You will have the option of transferring funds from your bank account or using a credit card. You can make a one-time payment or set up recurring ones. If you have any questions, please call or email Judy or Amy at the church office: (jwalpole@triconchurch.org or abruning@triconchurch.org).

TRICON'S QR CODE



This QR code automatically opens a special webpage on

mobile devices (phones, iPads, etc.) that's designed for smaller screens. You can scan the code with your phone to make the process of giving to the church that much simpler.



Counting Our Blessings

Church Finances 101

Where Our Budget is Spent by Category:

Worship = 24%

Obviously, our clergy spend a significant amount of their time planning and leading worship – the UCC estimates that the average sermon take about 20 hours to research and prepare and since ours are well above average, we know that many more hours are spent on that part of the service alone! Then there are the other parts - prayers, dedications, quotes, rituals, carefully written and selected.

Our Music Director consults with the clergy on the scripture and sermon topic and works with them collegially on hymns and other musical selections chosen to make a unified meaningful worship experience. Vickie also selects music for the choir, rehearses it with them and arranges for and coordinates with guest musicians. The order of service is prepared and copied by the office staff. The sexton cleans and arranges the sanctuary. Ushers and greeters and liturgists need to be recruited and instructed. Worship supplies: candles, tapers, hymnals, special bulletins, communion cups must be purchased and periodically the sanctuary needs painting and refurbishing.

Outreach = 26%

In addition to our commitment to give a percentage (currently 18%) of our pledges directly to mission, additional funds are raised by special offerings, directed gifts and the Antique Show. We also offer our facilities rent-free to a number of the agencies we support and at a reduced rent to other non-profits. Staff time is spent processing donations and meeting with representatives of mission organizations. Our Youth Leader spends a great deal of time researching, planning and leading the annual mission trip and the office staff does the extensive administrative work it requires. Likewise, our Christian Education Director plans, coordinates and leads the Seeker's mission trip.

Christian Education = 20%

The Christian Education budget includes curriculum for the church school classes, Confirmation materials and Advent and Lenten small group booklets and resources. Also included are the majority of the Christian Education Director's salary, a portion of the Youth Leader's and the compensation paid to the nursery caregivers. There are also church school materials and snacks for the youth group!

Caring and Community = 19%

Pastoral Care is a significant portion of the clergy's work week. The Caregivers Group and frequent contact and check-ins with the many members of our large parish are coordinated by the administrative staff and our Membership Director. Coffee hours, new member coffees, fellowship events are hosted. The Caring Connection sends notes and flowers to shut-ins, provides meals to those in need and holds the annual birthday party for those over 80.

Property = 11%

In addition to the obvious expenses of our large facility – heat, water, sewer, electricity, snow removal, lawn maintenance, trash removal, recycling – we have maintenance contracts for our copiers, elevators, fire alarm and sprinklers & HVAC equipment. A cleaning service supplements the work done by our Sexton, who also spends a considerable amount of time setting up and breaking down rooms for various activities. The Business Manager arranges annual inspections, coordinates special projects and deals with our tenants and other building users and renters.

