



CT CONFERENCE UCC

Pastor Barbara and Sue Barker attended the Spring Session of the Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ's 2007 Annual Meeting. About 400 gathered at Silver Lake Conference Center to elect Conference officers, attend workshops, hear Eco-Justice Ministries Executive Director, the Rev. Peter Sawtell, and worship "Silver Lake style" to the accompaniment of drums and guitars. For many it was a first visit to Silver Lake which celebrates its fiftieth season hosting the Conference's outdoor ministry program this year in Sharon, CT.

The Rev. Peter Sawtell's keynote address, *Touch the Earth Lightly*, is available online at the Conference website (in both webpage and PDF versions). View it at http://www.ctucc.org/resources/20070512_toucheearthlightly.html

FAREWELL TO CHRIS GLAS

After 10 years of service to the children and families of Mystic Congregational Church as its Director of Children's Ministries, Chris will be leaving her position to pursue other opportunities. Please join us in extending our appreciation and good wishes to her at a reception following the Children's Day 10:00 a.m. service on June 10, 2007. Ice cream sundaes will be served.

Questions? Please contact Sue Skogerboe, Children's Ministry Committee Chair at xxx-xxxx.

ORGAN, VOICES & HANDBELLS IN HARMONY

Sunday, June 3, 2007 4:00 p.m.
Harkness Chapel, Connecticut College

Handbell and vocal choirs from Noank Baptist, North Stonington Congregational, St. Luke Lutheran Church and United Methodist from Gales Ferry will present anthems and hymns incorporating organ, voices and handbells. Enjoy the richness of sound complete with audience participation. Organists for the event will be Jesse Glaude, Mike Noonan and John Anthony.

Admission is free. A free will offering will go to the Roberta Bitgood Scholarship Fund to assist aspiring organists.

From the Interim Senior Pastor

This past Sunday we considered a reading from John's Gospel (17:20-26) and used the metaphor of the family as a way to understand the idea of unity and the church. We know that families are a cooperative effort—not always in synch or in harmony, not always agreeing on everything. A family includes a diversity of age, abilities, political, socio-economic views and opinions. In spite of their diversity, however, a family is a whole unit, a unit that tries to work together and that tries to share a common purpose. A family is a constantly changing system that hopes for wholeness and health and is a system shaped and guided by love. Jesus prayed for unity grounded in God's love and as he prayed he was teaching the disciples (and us) about the importance of Christian unity. Jesus prayed for us to be one with each other (verse 22). He prayed for us to be one with God (verse 21). Jesus believed and prayed that such unity would help the world know God's salvation and God's love (verse 23).

The phrase from John's text, "that they may all be one," is the motto of the United Church of Christ, the denomination to which this church has belonged since a vote by the Mystic Congregational Church's members in 1966. The UCC prides itself on being a "uniting church as well as a united church" and we strive for unity even as we acknowledge our diversity. The UCC, from its inception in 1957, stands firmly planted in the world; it strives to hold onto both the traditions of the past and to remain alive with hope for the future. We strive to be a denomination that celebrates unity in the essentials of the faith while also celebrating diversity in non-essentials. Just like a family, we recognize as a church that unity requires mutual effort, mutual understanding and mutual agreement about what is essential and what is non-essential.

Mystic Congregational Church continues to hold fast to the idea that it's important for this church to be a unified whole. This church wants to be a healthy family system, a group of followers of Jesus Christ striving together, perhaps not always seeing eye to eye, but trying for unity all the same.

Mystic Congregational Church's mission statement says that we are "to joyfully bring the Christian principles of faith, hope and love to all through quality worship, education, fellowship and outreach". This church is a place where we come together as people of God committed to one another. We commit to work together to be the best people of God we can be. We come together in unity knowing we do not all agree on everything yet committed to journey in unity as we continue to explore God's mystery together. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are each called to demonstrate the unity of love first within ourselves and then with our fellow human beings. As Christians empowered by the Holy Spirit, we go out into the world to help others break down the barriers that keep us apart. As people of God, we continue to strive for the goal of unity in God's love.

Pastor Barbara