

May 2018

Spring to Joy



Open and Affirming webinars
[for O&A and non-O&A churches](#)

Today's UCC To Do list
[1 minute youtube video](#)

Sacred Conversations
[to end racism](#)

New: The Micah Chat
[Live ZOOM chat: May 17](#)

Korean Peninsula statements
[National Council of Churches](#)
[World Council of Churches](#)



- [God-seeds](#)
- [Our Three Mission Priorities](#)
- [Conference Annual Meeting](#)
- [Mimanagish News](#)
- [West Region Youth Event](#)
- [A Global View from Carol Shipley](#)
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God-seeds, reflections from Marc Stewart

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke



We have three "members-in-discernment" in the Montana - N.Wyoming Conference UCC: Laura Keating, Larry Meidinger, and Lisa Harmon. Members-in-discernment are people who especially know and live the energy expressed in Tagore's poem. Officially, members-in-discernment are those among us who are pursuing authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. Our Church and Ministry Commission meets regularly with members-in-discernment to explore their their path to authorized ministry. The Commission also assigns mentors to accompany them on their discernment journey.

Laura Keating is a member of First UCC Billings. Laura has preached, offered solos in worship, and leads a monthly "Spirituality on Tap" at a local brewery. She has accepted a dean's full-ride scholarship to Boston University School of Theology beginning this fall, with the hope of returning to this conference after completing her Master of Divinity in three years.

Larry Meidinger is a member of Butte UCC. Larry, too, has preached and offered solos in worship. He works at the Acadia Children's Hospital in Butte as cook, where he also offers Sunday worship to the children at Acadia.

Lisa Harmon is a member of First UCC Billings, where she serves as Minister for Healing and Community Transformation. As Mike Mulberry describes Lisa's ministry with the church, they are co-equals in ministry. Lisa is currently being authorized as a licensed minister on her path to ordination through the Church and Ministry Commission. You will see a lot of Lisa as she leads a round table at CAM and as she leads the Wellness and Yoga Camp at Mimanagish during the last week of June.

There are so many forms of service in our conference and churches. Of course, most service does not require ministerial authorization, but it truly is a joy to see these three ministries unfold among us. In service to answering their call to ministry, our "members-in-discernment" show a joy inspiring us to hope. We share in the joy that children are being blessed in worship, by the joy we hear of Larry's ministry at Acadia. We share in the joy that the downtown community in Billings is finding sacred space to meet, by the joy Lisa shares in welcoming others. We share in the joy that the intensive Master of Divinity journey being engaged by Laura is deepening this young adult's leadership in the UCC.

It is our joy to have three "members-in-discernment." Please know that it is our joy because we have also participated in "service." Churches do the service of forming

transformation.

You are invited to join Marc Stewart for a monthly conversation about church vitality and viability happening in our churches. Every third Thursday, from 3:30 - 4:30 pm, Marc will host a ZOOM chat for conversations. Join on May 17 by connection on our computer, tablet, or smart phone through this link:

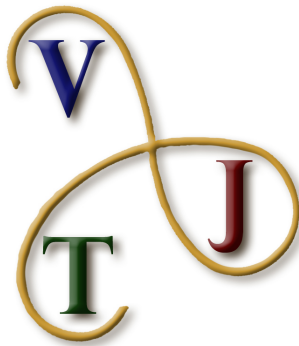
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/8013404215>

Or iPhone one-tap :

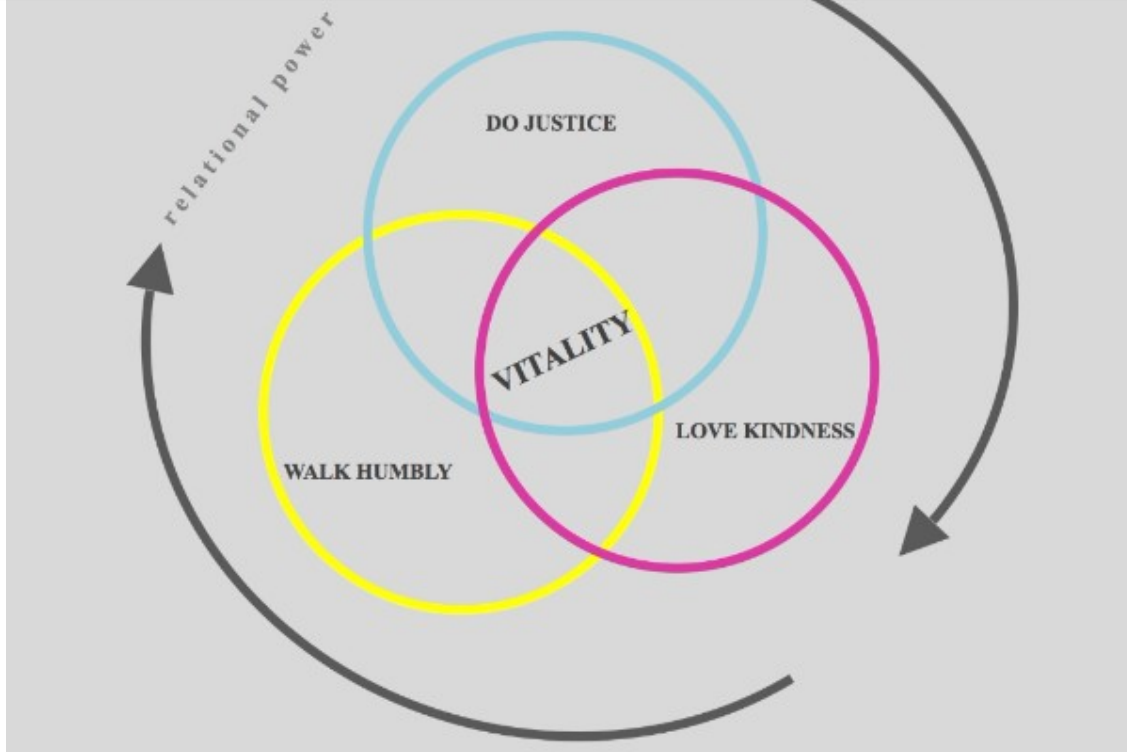
US: +16699006833,,8013404215# or +16465588656,,8013404215#

Or Telephone:

US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 801 340 4215



**The Three Mission Priorities of the
MT-NWy Conference UCC:**



**1.
All congregations
will be vital and
viable**



[Billings First Congregational Church](#) partnered with the Montana Voter Policy Institute to bring progressive Christian blogger and author, [John Pavlovitz](#), to Billings. The event drew over 250 people and showed the deep, spiritual hunger of so many people who have often been historically harmed by the church. Pavlovitz believes we need to “build a bigger table” through radical hospitality, total authenticity, true diversity, and agenda-free community. Once fired from his mega-church, Pavlovitz found the freedom to be the courageous, humorous, and wise disciple of Christ that is attracting people inside and outside the church. In keeping with the heart of the UCC, Billings First Congregational Church continues to offer [events in partnership](#) with the wider community to feed the deep spiritual hunger



Confirmation Sunday at Baker Community Church on April 29 included four youth, one who was also baptized. This was one of the largest attended services of the year, with 30 adults and children.

2. The Conference will be appropriately staffed and the staff will be justly compensated.

The Church and Ministry Commission and Board of Directors are recommending [updated Clergy Compensation Guidelines](#). These will be voted upon at CAM. The guidelines include a 2% increase over the 2015/16 guidelines, and new guidelines for part-time ministries.

3. The Conference will offer transformative experiences and have an active presence in places where we are not now present.

Mimanagish offers a place of transformation where lives are changed by the community and place that camp is. It is also the primary means by which the conference reaches out to places and people where we have not otherwise been present. Among the outreach possible this year, 8 children Ballantine UCC's meal program have heard about camp and would like to attend. They need scholarship support. If you have scholarship support available to add to the [Carlee Downer scholarship](#) fund, we will assure that these children can come to Mimanagish this summer.

Go quickly and tell...
CAM 2018
Great Falls MT
June 15-17, 2018



Our Conference Annual Meeting will be hosted by [First Congregational UCC Great Falls](#), June 15-17, 2018

[Letter of Call](#) to meeting has been emailed to pastors and moderators,

Pre-CAM Boundary Training led by [Holly Miller-Shank](#), Thursday 11 am - 5 pm

Friday

- * noon luncheon keynote with Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear, Church Vitality Minister with the Pacific NW Conference UCC
- * afternoon workshop offerings on being a viable church
 1. Church Vitality with Courtney Stange-Tregear
 2. New Pastoral Relations with Holly Miller-Shank
- * hearings on business: budget, Mimanagish, bylaw changes, compensation
- * fellowship evening event

Saturday

- * roundtable discussions during breakfast
- * morning business session, interspersed with video presentations from our conference churches
 1. vote on [Conference Bylaw change](#) to add youth/young adult delegates
 2. vote on national [UCC Constitution and Bylaw change](#) to designate one chief executive officer instead of a collegium of executives
 3. vote on [Clergy Compensation Guidelines](#)
 4. accept reports
 5. vote on budget
 6. vote on nominations and install leadership
- * luncheon keynote with Rev. Dwight Welch, MSU-Billings [campus minister](#)
- * Mimanagish engagement experience and workshops
- * evening banquet with keynote by [UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer](#)

Sunday

A written sermon will be provided to each church so that all pastors may attend the Sunday CAM worship experience with [Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer preaching](#)

post-CAM event

* meet and greet with John Dorhauer and Frank Bolden (chairperson of the United Church Board) at Rocky Mountain College "great hall" in Billings, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Every congregation is asked to create a 2-3 minute video clip (you can use someone's smart phone) after worship or during fellowship time where people respond to the question: What are you most excited about in your faith and/or in your church? Please email your clips to the conference office by May 15

to: ucc@mnwcucc.org



Mimanagish, our church conference camp and retreat center, is gearing up for its busiest, most diverse summer ever. See www.mimanagish.org for more details on all offerings and to register.

Calling Counselors: if you would like to spend some time in the mountains and have an impact on a child's life, be a camp counselor at Mimanagish this summer! We are looking for individuals sixteen years and older for camps grades 2-8. Checkout www.mimanagish.org for each camp's dates and the counselor application. See you at Mimanagish!

Carlee Downer Scholarship Fund: Sponsor a child, youth, or adult to attend Mimanagish by supporting the Carlee Downer scholarship fund. For those who need scholarship, please fill out the application form.

Full Moon dining hall deck collapsed under the weight of over 4 feet of snow this winter. First Church Billings had already offered to contribute to replacing the deck as its Mimanagish project. Additional funding would be welcome, as well as work crews for kick-off camp, May 18-20.



Camp Mimanagish Store

1. Give the gift of a full or partial Mimanagish Camp registration.
2. Give a donation to Mimanagish in honor of a love one. ([Donation link](#))
3. [New merchandise](#) for the 2018 Mimanagish season.

Over 400 youth from the 8 conferences of the West Region UCC will be attending, including 14 of ours led by Kim Harris.



A Global View

Carol Shipley,
UCC Global Ministries Board Member
First Congregational UCC, Great Falls

It was just a bed, a simple bed. Yet, to the people who were the recipients of one of these beds that we delivered to the individuals in the villages of San Pedro de Marcoris, these beds were a gift of luxury, comfort, and love. On this particular day of our Global Ministries pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic, we headed to the small, rural communities that our mission partners serve; we went with beds in tow. You and I would call them something just above the classification of a cot, a simple approximately 3 inch-thick mattress with a frame that folded like a single rollaway bed. Our partner mission organization, the Social Services of the Dominican Churches, organized our visit and does social work in many areas of the Dominican Republic.

Now, some background on these villages. For years, sugar cane production provided decent paying jobs for many Dominicans and Haitian immigrants. The demand for labor brought thousands of these immigrants to work for the cane companies. Fast forward to the late 20th century when these companies could no longer compete economically in the global market, and they sold off their land, leaving thousands unemployed. Both Dominicans and Haitians living there had to seek new opportunities and ways to make a living. To complicate things, Haitians, most that

country. Their lot in life has been difficult, or even disastrous. Our partners are working on social justice for these “citizen less” peoples, but in the mean time they are limited to lives of extreme poverty.

On our first stop that day, we arrived at a village with dirt streets and dilapidated houses. The first bed delivery was to a man, probably in his late 30s. He is suffering with severe complications from muscular dystrophy, no longer able to walk. Living in a shack with his parents, they all became homeless when fire gutted their dwelling. They still don’t have a home, but they had built a make-shift area in which to do cooking. He was sitting in a chair when we arrived with his new bed; tears streamed down his face as we did a group blessing for him and his parents that the love of God might bring them better days ahead. (Tears streamed down my face, too.)

The second bed was delivered to a blind man in another village. He was a Haitian former sugar cane worker who has survived only out of the generosity of his neighbors and our partners. It is difficult to describe in words the poverty and dilapidated structures of this village and the dwelling that this man called home. Again, we offered a blessing for him and his new bed, and we were each able to greet him personally. The look of gratitude on his unseeing face is a picture painted in my memory forever.

The last stop of the day was to visit an elderly couple in this same village who had received a bed from our partners the week prior. We walked to their dwelling, and they came out to greet us with smiles as broad and bright as the day’s sunshine. When asked about their twin-size bed, the little man reported that he had not yet used it because it was too clean and he didn’t want to dirty it. They then invited us into their home. We were hesitant and didn’t want to infringe on their privacy, but they insisted. This was an experience almost impossible to describe, yet it was comforting to accept their graciousness. Yes, the work we do with our partners through Global Ministries touches lives, even in the simplest ways. We make a difference when we work with our partners to do God’s work around the globe.

I serve on the Global Ministries Board which is the name for the work that the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) share with neighbors all over the world. We work with 290 partner churches, councils, and religious organizations and institutions in more than 70 countries worldwide. Global Ministries is currently focusing on our Caribbean Initiative “Embrace the Spirit.” As part of that focus, a small group of us board members were able to visit mission partners in one of our Initiative countries and witness first hand some of the work they do. Our pilgrimage took us to the Dominican Republic April 5-10th. It was an honor and humbling experience to learn about the work that our mission partners, along with our mission co-workers (the new term for our missionaries) are doing in this region of





*General Minister and
President of the United Church of Christ*

JOHN DORHAUER

*Prescott Hall
Rocky Mountain College*

Sunday - June 17, 2018

5:30 to 7:30 pm

*Appetizers and Drinks
Please RSVP by June 1, 2018*

*Members and friends of UCC churches in the Montana
Northern-Wyoming Conference are invited to a reception honoring
John Dorhauer, the General Minister and President
of the United Church of Christ.*

campus on Sunday afternoon, June 17, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Appetizers, wine, beer and soft drinks will be served
and admission is free.

Seating is limited and attendees must RSVP by
June 1 to Jennifer Penfield at the Conference office by email
to jpenfield@mnwcucc.org or by phone at 406-656- 8688.

John will come to Billings directly from the Conference annual
meeting in Great Falls where he will deliver the key note address
and preach at the Sunday morning service on June 17.

The reception at Rocky will be an excellent opportunity
for UCC church members and friends to hear from John about
the ongoing work of the national church. Other speakers include
Frank Bolden, chair of the National UCC Board,
Marc Stewart, Conference Minister, Leslie Roche, Conference
board member and chair of the Outdoor Ministries Committee
and Doug McClelland, member of the UCC Board of Directors.

The reception is sponsored by the Montana-Northern Wyoming
Conference, the Office of the UCC General Minister and President,
and the UCC Pension Board. Please RSVP soon to attend.



May 1-3 [UCC Clergywomen Retreat](#), Carefree, AZ

May 5 [Rocky Mountain College](#) graduation

May 6 Marc with [University UCC](#) Missoula for Rev. Amy Carter's last Sunday

May 6 Marc with [Kalispell UCC](#)

May 10 Central area clergy gathering, led by Barbara Gulick, Billings office 10 am

May 13 Installation of Rev. Dr. Sheila Naismith at [Sheridan UCC](#), 11:30 am

May 17 Micah Chat with Marc Stewart by [ZOOM video call](#) 3:30 pm

May 17-18 [Camp Opening](#), Mimanagish

May 18-20 [Kick-off Camp](#), Mimanagish with Mike Reiter

May 25-28 [Family Camp](#), Mimanagish with Bill Hawk

May 25-28, [Geography of Grace](#), Mimanagish with Cathy Barker

May 31 Clergy Boundary Training offered through [ELCA](#) in Great Falls

June 1-3, [Women's Retreat](#), Mimanagish with Marcia Warner

June 8-10, [Men's Retreat](#), Mimanagish with Mike Downing

June 10-14 [Soul of Aging](#), Mimanagish with Cathy Barker

June 14-17 [Creative Arts Camp](#), Mimanagish with Virginia Bryan

June 11-15 [Creative Writing Camp](#), Mimanagish with Russell Rowland

June 17 "meet and greet" with John Dorhauer and Frank Bolden, Rocky

Mountain College, Prescott Great Hall, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

June 25-29 West Region [Youth Event](#)

June 25-July 10 Marc Stewart on vacation

June 28-July 1 [Yoga, Wellness, and Cleanse Retreat](#), Mimanagish with Lisa Harmon

June 28-July 1 [Our Whole Lives \(OWL\) Adult Program](#), Mimanagish with Ann Hanson

July 5-8 [Grandparents and Me Camp](#), Mimanagish with Trudy Downer

July 8-14 [Grades 9-12 Camp](#), Mimanagish with Lynne Spencer-Smith

July 14 [Seasoned Adults Retreat](#), Mimanagish with Marc Stewart

July 15-17 [Mini and Me Camp](#), Mimanagish with Missy Evans

July 17-21 [Grades 2-3 Camp](#), Mimanagish with Nicholas Knoblauch

July 22-28 [Grades 4-5 Camp](#), Mimanagish with Dwight Welch

July 29-Aug 4 [Grades 6-8 Camp](#), Mimanagish with Cheryl Stewart

Aug 7-9 [Mini and Me Science Inquiry](#), Mimanagish with Jenn Grace

Aug 10-12 [Fishing Camp](#), Mimanagish with Marc Stewart

Aug 12-18 [PRIDE Camp](#), Mimanagish with Bobbie Zenker

Sept 7-9 [Civic Action Retreat](#), Mimanagish with Tricia Decker

Sept 10-12 [Pastors Sept Spa Camp](#), Mimanagish with Pension Boards

Wellness Team

Sept 13-15 [Board of Directors](#) at Mimanagish



Did You Know...

Mimanagish Matters is our new monthly eNews all about Mimanagish. Mimanagish Matters comes out during the third week of the month. Email the Conference office [to subscribe](#).

Check out our NEW CONFERENCE WEB SITE

www.mnwcucc.org

and our NEW MIMANAGISH WEB SITE

www.mimanagish.org

We are on Facebook. Stay in touch and get all the latest news by liking our page.

[Click here!](#)

And check out our Camp MImanagish Facebook page. [Click here!](#)