

September 2019

Daring to Share



Neighbors In Need
[October 6 Materials](#)

Worship Resources
[Global Partners Resources](#)

Closer Connections
[Be a Global Mission Church](#)

UNITE! at Purdue U. next summer
[2020 National Youth Event](#)

General Synod 33 in 2021
["Kansas City, here I come"](#)

- God-seeds: White Privilege
- Mission Priorities
 - MAC "Daring to Share"
 - Completing Camp Season
 - Divestment Task Force
 - Center for Rural Ministry
- Global Ministry co-chair
- UCM Annual Dinner
- Climate Strike WEBinar
- Calendar Items
- Social Media links



God-seeds, reflections from Marc Stewart



justify the positions that we have, to justify privilege we have, in order to situate our privilege.

--Michele Goodwin, Amicus, podcast Aug 3, 2019

As a recovering racist and misogynist, I need and value connections that may be richer views and perspectives of the world than afforded by my privileged white male background. It is a true gift when a person from a different place in life than me chooses to share their experiences and wisdom. I had a taste of this when driving our [UCC Summer Community of Service](#) interns in June, and they shared some of their favorite music. I was also reminded that an individual's experience and wisdom is theirs to share as they feel comfortable sharing, and not ours to probe or retell for them. Mid-summer, I was challenged by a sensitive pastor about the sin of telling and interpreting another person's story without their permission. I sincerely apologized to the person I had presumed upon. And I repented by doing some deep inner inquiry, because I realized that in my enthusiasm for the other person's story, I never even stopped to consider that it was not mine to share. Someone else even pushed harder into this person's privacy than I had. A witness to all this responded: "the person better get used to it, because that it is what we do it in Montana." And with that, I realized I had become complacent in my recovery from the effects of white privilege.

Mayflower UCC is perhaps the latest of our churches to be offering a "white privilege" study group. We might wonder why to consider white privilege when Montana has the lowest [Black population](#) of any state and ranks 5th in states with the highest percentage of [White population](#). Consider that Montana has the highest number of hate groups per population than any other state, with [7 hate groups](#) currently tracked by the Southern Law Poverty Center, and Montana also ranks 5th in percentage of [Native American population](#).

Apart from these demographics, consider that there is more to God's world than "our own kin" and that "welcoming all, not matter who they are and where they are on life's journey" is nothing less than our Gospel mandate. For the sake of the Gospel, yes even

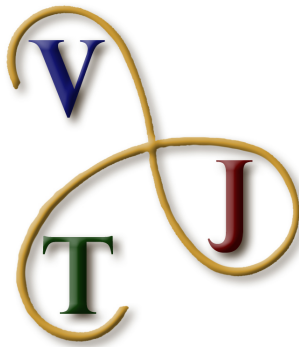


for the sake of redemption, we have to get beyond our world view. This does not mean that it is ever appropriate to probe other people's stories with little consciousness for their safety and comfort.

"Amicus With Dahlia Lithwick" provides an excellent [podcast](#) on a view beyond the

powerful exposés of white and male privilege that I have heard. I encourage everyone to listen to the interview, and would be so appreciative to [hear your thoughts](#) about it.

FYI: I will be joining with my Council of Conference Minister colleagues for a few days of [Immigration and Border Issues](#) advocacy in Washington DC, September 24-26. We had been considering some action down on the southern border, but were advised by the UCC Justice and Witness staff that we would be more effective in coming to Washington DC to speak to our congressional delegations.

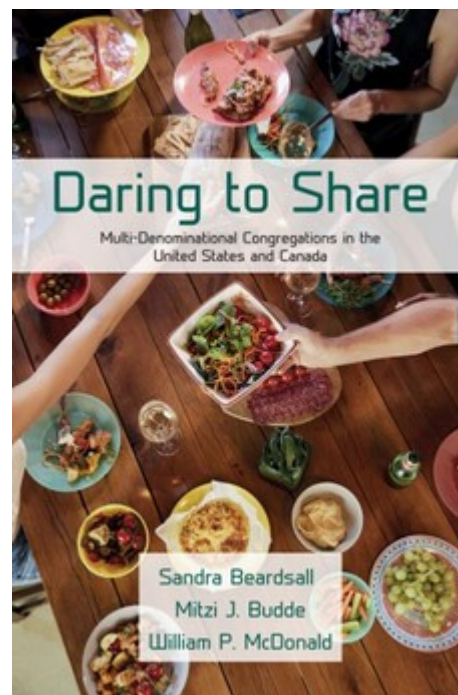


The Three Mission Priorities of the MT-NWy Conference UCC:

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

“What does the Lord
require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with
your God?”

--Micah 6: 8 [NRSV]



Conference Minister, Marc Stewart, now serves as vice-president of the [Montana](#)

Our Unity in Jesus by Educating & Advocating for Justice and Compassion, in Our Communities and Our World."

There is a lot connecting our Conference ministry and mission with the MAC. The MAC Connect! workshop day this year is designed to help, particularly our rural ministries, focus on faith and church life in ecumenical ways. The authors of "[Daring to Share: Multi-Denominational Congregations in the United States and Canada](#)" will keynote our [October 12 MAC Connect!](#) gathering at Hope Lutheran Church in Bozeman. There will also be a panel of rural church pastors in thriving ecumenical parish settings. The cost is \$35 to attend in person, or \$20 to connect in by zoom. Register at www.macmt.org.

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

By mid-September, the last of our camp staff, that would be Nate Podgany, will be done at Camp Mimanagish. This has been an excellent program year, and, for the most part, the facilities were in the best condition ever. The kitchen, staffed by Jonna Mandeville and assistant Dilynn Wise, provided healthy and substantial meals all summer long. Camp Director, Allison Sanchez Claudio, along with our four summer interns, Meaza, Dan, Olivia, and Soma, established a safe and hospitable camp experience. Program Director, Trudi Downer, provided a curriculum on "Breaking Down Walls" that worked well in every camp. Weekly Program Leaders for youth, Lynne Spencer Smith, Cheryl Stewart, and Tracy Heilman fostered the best in their staff and campers. These people have done the finest ministry in assuring a transformative faith experience for our campers.

As the Conference looks to divest from Camp Mimanagish, the Board of Directors has named a task force to explore options: Aaron Blakeslee, Doug McClelland, Pam Peterson, Lynne Spencer Smith, along with Terri Goodsell and Marc Stewart. The US Forest Service has reversed a statement from last April, so now we know that we need to sell to a non-profit organization that is able to continue a camp, or sell off the buildings for removal. The Mimanagish Divestment Task Force will be charged with informing the Board of Directors by November 1, 2019 whether it is feasible for the divestment of Mimanagish to be accomplished before the beginning of a 2020 camp season. Meanwhile, the task force will be assessing the value of the facilities and equipment, creating a prospectus about the camp facilities, and publicizing its availability. Progress reports will be made as this work continues.

3. The Conference will offer transformative experiences and have

During the Conference Annual Meeting, our coach to the Conference, Rev. Dr. Felix Villanueva, led delegates and visitors in a brainstorm session to name some priorities for mission. Among the concerns bubbling up was an interest in creating a Center for Rural Ministry Development. It is not that we are lack rural congregations, but we recognize that we are less present now than ever before. Rural churches have closed in Plentywood, Medicine Lake, Glasgow, and Power in recent years. A number of other rural churches are hanging on by just a few families, such as Froid, Ballantine, and Molt. The seminary and lay-training models of finding pastors is a struggle for all our part-time churches, especially Baker, Buffalo, and Colstrip. The extreme part-time ministry in some churches effects their ability to stay connected with the Conference, such as with Hardin, Custer, and Butte. In some other town settings, there are thriving ministries, such as Absarokee, Columbus, Big Timber, Worden, Broadus, Fairfield, Savage. What are your [thoughts](#) about rural ministries?



**Carol Shipley with now-retired
Associate General Minister, Rev. Jim
Moos**

**Carol is now the new co-chair of our
Common Global Ministries**

My six-year term on the [United Church of Christ Board](#) concluded at [General Synod 32](#) in June. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the entire denomination as one of the 36 elected at-large members of the UCCB; additionally, it has been a gift to have befriended and worked with so many of the leaders and staff of the United Church of Christ. I sometimes would ask myself how it could be that I was blessed to have had this opportunity, how it was my call to serve. I think it is better to not ask “why” but to concentrate on the “thanks” to the many that have supported and encouraged me within my congregation and this conference. Of course, I thank God for every blessing this opportunity has bestowed upon me. I remember receiving a phone call back in 1993 from Conference Minister John Schaeffer asking if I would be willing to serve as a delegate to General Synod. That St. Louis Synod became my introduction to involvement on the denomination level. Prior to my second Synod as a delegate, John called again and asked if he could submit my name to serve as a committee chair. I guess you could say, once again, I answered the call, but that

committee. That was a 6-year term, and I was blessed to be elected as the chair for the last biennium of that term for the 2009 General Synod. So, I express my gratitude to John for his encouragement and “asks”. Thanks to my pastors and friends of this conference for all of your prayers and support all of these years.

So, in the last six years I have learned so much about our denomination, about the challenges we face as a people of faith living into God’s word, and the ways we change to meet those challenges. All of this has enhanced my faith journey. I would be remiss if I did not mention what it has meant to me to serve on the UCCB these past four years with Doug McClelland also on the Board. He has contributed greatly with his wisdom, experience, and heart to the work done by the Board. Besides that, he has become a dear and trusted friend. Thank you, Doug! Our conference has been very fortunate to have two people serving on the board, representing not the conference, but all of the settings of the UCC across the denomination.

Lastly, a truly rich blessing for me was to be appointed as one of the members of the UCCB to serve on the [Common Global Ministries Board](#), which I have done for a four year term. This has been a very fulfilling responsibility. I was able to participate in a pilgrimage to the [Dominican Republic](#) last year as a board member; yes, a life changing experience! Now, two additional blessings:

1) I have been appointed by the new UCCB chair to serve another 4-year term on Global Ministries as a member-at-large. Additionally, I have been named as the co-chair for this next biennium, serving with my Disciples friend, Deborah DeWitt. I look forward to this new responsibility and adventure.

2) I hope that the Montana North Wyoming Conference will consider it a blessing that I am available to share the word of the work we do through CGM in our world. I have prepared a pulpit supply version that includes an overview of CGM and some of my personal experiences with our partners in the Dominican Republic. I also have a version that is more of a program that would be appropriate for a mission-focused program or for a youth educational program. The latter is longer and includes more information and photos from my pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic. I am willing to come to the churches in our conference to do either of these options. If you have interest, please feel free to contact me at shipleigh@bresnan.net or 406-868-9138.

**Religious Understanding in an Age of
Polarization**

**United Campus Ministry Annual Dinner
September 24th, 2019**



Organization will take place September 24th in the Glacier Room in the Student Union Building at the main campus of Montana State University Billings (1500 University Dr) at 5:30 p.m.

The evening will feature our keynote speaker, Dr. Dan Edelman, Chancellor of Montana State University Billings. Dr. Edelman will discuss what he has learned about life at MSUB and other academic settings that can help us negotiate religious differences. We will also share stories about UCM from students and Rev. Dwight Welch.

The evening includes a no-host bar, dinner, and silent and live auctions. Tickets are \$50 and can be pre-purchased by sending a check to UCM at MSUB at 1500 University Dr Billings MT 59101. MSUB students admitted without charge. Churches, individuals, businesses, and individuals can purchase a table of 6 for \$400 and to receive recognition. A sponsorship of \$500 or \$1000 will result in additional recognition including a table to raise awareness of your organization.

United Campus Ministry is an ecumenical Christian ministry on the campus of Montana State University Billings which represents the American Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ.



The Climate Strike

Faith for the Future

**A Creation Justice Webinar
in Preparation for
September 20th**




UCC Webinar on Faith Communities and the Upcoming Climate Strike

The next [UCC Creation Justice Webinar](#) will focus on the upcoming global climate strike on September 20th. Already, the strike is shaping up to be one of the largest mobilizations in the history of the climate justice movement. The UCC Council for Climate Justice is a national co-sponsor of this strike which is taking place in over


webinar is on September 10th at 1 pm ET, but sign-up even if you cannot make it, so that the video recording can be sent to you. [Register now!](#)

(Hyperlink:) <http://bit.ly/FaithForFuture>



All Eight of the UCC's Western Region Conferences and their Conference Ministers have joined the movement.

They're wondering...

Will YOUR church  ?

The "b1" cloud based phone and WEB application is soon ready to roll out. This has been a project of the West Region Conferences and Kombi software company.

Check out "b1" features and support videos at www.b14ucc.com.



Prayer Concerns

We keep members and communities of [Ballantine UCC](#) and [Worden Bethlehem UCC](#) in our prayers as these communities suffered significant crop and building damages in an August 11 hail and wind storm. Over \$1000 has been sent by conference churches to help Ballantine UCC respond to local mobile home residents who suffered broken windows. The needs are ongoing and so funding is still appropriate as temporary plywood window coverings on mobile homes are replaced with windows.



August 30 - Sept 2 [Geography of Grace Retreat](#), Mimanagish

August 30 - Sept 2 [Fishing Camp](#), Mimanagish

September 5 - 8 [Yoga and Wellness Camp](#), Mimanagish

September 3 Fitness Review Team, 1 - 7 pm, Billings office

September 5 Mimanagish Divestment Task Force, 9:30 - 11:30 am

September 8 Marc preaching at [First Church Billings](#)

September 15 Marc preaching at [Molt UCC](#)

September 15 - 19 [Camp Closing](#) work

September 24 Central Area clergy cluster, Billings office 10 am

September 24 [United Campus Ministry](#) Annual Dinner, MSUB, 5:30 pm

September 24 - 26 Marc in [Washington DC](#) for Immigration and Border
Advocacy with Council of Conference Ministers

September 27 [Rocky Mountain College](#) Board of Trustees, Marc

September 27 - 28 Church and Ministry Commission, Billings office

September 28 [Safe Church Policy](#) workshop and [OWL Curriculum](#) workshop at
[First UCC Billings](#), [Amy Johnson UCC Our Whole Lives Coordinator](#)

September 30 Committee for Outdoor Ministries, 7 pm

October 3-5 Conference Board of Directors, Chico Hot Springs

October 13 [Buffalo Union UCC](#) **135th Anniversary Celebration service**

October 13 [UCC Access and Disabilities Sunday](#)

October 22 **Central Area clergy cluster, Billings office, 10 am**

November 3 **Daylight Saving Time ends**

November 3 **Installation at [Mayflower UCC](#) with Rev. Amy Carter**



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 CONFERENCE WEB SITE

www.mnwcucc.org

and our MIMANAGISH WEB SITE

www.mimanagish.org

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

[Click here!](#)

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

"Another Voice" community television series features some of our Billings area clergy and Conference Minister [Click here!](#)
