

# UCC WISE CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

by the UCC Mental Health Network  
and the Penn Northeast Conference of the UCC



**SATURDAY**  
**MAY 16, 2020**  
**Jordan United Church of Christ**  
**ALLENTOWN, PA**

*“Do not fear;  
for I have  
redeemed you;  
I have called you  
by name,  
you are mine.”  
Isa. 43:1*



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**W.I.S.E**

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# WISE CONGREGATIONS for MENTAL HEALTH

You are invited to attend the UCC WISE Conference on Mental Health to be held at Jordan UCC, Allentown, PA on Saturday, May 16. It is offered by the UCC Mental Health Network and the Penn Northeast Conference of the UCC. While we know that 1 out of 5 people are directly affected by mental health challenges, we also know that we can be a resource in responding to these challenges.

We hope you will attend the UCC WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) Mental Health Conference. At the conference, you will:

- Understand and address mental health concerns,
- Learn how your congregation can support your members living with mental health challenges and their families,
- Appreciate how to reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness in our society, in our congregations and in ourselves.

Do not fear; for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name,  
you are mine.” Isa. 43:1

Isaiah reminds us to live not in fear, but in the personal, renewing relationship with the loving presence of God. Affirming this faith, we meet to address a part of our experience which is sometimes painful and which also often leads to a deeper appreciation of the gift that we call life.

At the Conference, we will:

- Hear personal stories from persons affected by mental health challenges;
- Receive practical steps for a congregation to become WISE;
- Participate in 2 of the 7 enriching and educative workshops;
- Share with one another, meeting new people with a common interest; and
- Be encouraged to engage in a mental health ministry.

We are grateful to the United Church of Christ and the Penn Northeast Conference of the UCC, which have in part financially supported this day long conference, and the hospitality of the Jordan UCC.

Our hope is that this 7th UCC WISE Conference will continue to be a vanguard as we break the silence around mental illness, to be communities of hope to those who are left on the margins, and embody the welcome, inclusion, support and engagement as followers of Jesus.

We look forward to meeting you in Allentown!

Rev. Alan Johnson on behalf of the UCC, Mental Health Network

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister of the UCC Penn Northeast Conference

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## Schedule at a Glance

### Saturday, May 16, 2020

- 8:00 am Register/Continental Breakfast
- 8:30–8:45 am Welcome and Gathering Worship
- 8:45–9:30 am Keynote by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund
- 9:40–10:30 am Becoming a WISE Congregation by Rev. Amy Petre Hill
- 10:30–11:00 am Break
- 11:00–11:45 am CORE Groups
- 12:00–1:00 pm Lunch
- 1:00–2:00 pm Workshops
- 2:00–2:15 pm Break
- 2:15–3:15 pm Repeat of Workshops
- 3:30–4:00 pm The Basics: by Robin Kempster
- 4:00–4:30 pm Church Teams: Commitments/ Next Steps
- 4:30–5:00 pm Closing and Worship

## Planning Team

**Rev. Jack Abel**, Senior Director of Spiritual Care, Caron Treatment Centers, Wernersville, PA

**Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates**, Conference Minister, UCC Penn Northeast, PA

**Rev. Candi Cain-Borgman**, pastor, Cedar United Church of Christ, Allentown, PA

**Jeff Carlton**, Lay-leader, Trinity UCC, Bethlehem, PA

**Rev. Alan Johnson**, Mental Health Advocate, member of UCC Mental Health Network, Boulder, CO

**Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe**, Pastor, Living Table UCC, member of UCC Mental Health Network, MN

**Robin Kempster**, Parish Nurse First Congregational Church of Berkeley, member of UCC Mental Health Network, CA

**Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma**, Senior Pastor, St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Westminster, MD

**Rev. Teresa Martin, Pastor**, St. John's United Church of Christ, Coopersburg, PA

**Rev. Megan Snell, Pastor**, The Nahant Village Church UCC, member of UCC Mental Health Network, MA

# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

<b>Registration Questions?</b>	<b>Conference Questions?</b>
Debbie Cowen, CMP	Rev Alan Johnson
djcowen@msn.com	revalan2004@comcast.net

## WISE CONGREGATIONS for MENTAL HEALTH

### WISE Keynote Speaker



**Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice**  
*The Power of Personal Story and Breaking the Silence on Mental Illness*

Sarah is passionate about loving God, her family, and being part of faith communities. Her personal mission is to partner with others to share God's healing and hope. She is an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has served as pastor to churches in Brooklyn, NY, Minneapolis, MN, and New Smyrna Beach, FL. Sarah also served as Regional Minister for the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ where she worked with congregations on vitality and renewal. After serving Christian Theological Seminary as Vice President for Advancement, Pastor Sarah was called in January of 2018 to serve as senior pastor of First Congregational UCC of Indianapolis, IN and called in April of 2018 to serve on the national staff of the UCC in the role of Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice.

Sarah's formal education includes degrees from Trinity University (BA), Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv), Rutgers University (MSW), and McCormick Theological Seminary (DMin). Sarah received the Princeton Engle Preaching Prize in 2002 for excellence in preaching and the Bob and Joyce Dell Award for Mental Health Education from the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network in 2015 for "her outstanding authorship and leadership in breaking the silence about mental illness in family and in church and offering healing and hope." She is the author of the widely regarded book "Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness, Family and Church" (Chalice Press, 2014) and blogs at sarahgriffithlund.com. You can contact Sarah at lunds@ucc.org.

### WISE Featured Speakers



**Rev. Amy Petré Hill**  
*How to Become a WISE Congregation for Mental Health: Inspiring Stories & Practical Advice*

Learn how to become a WISE Congregation: a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged church offering radical belonging with those living with mental health challenges, brain differences, and substance use disorders. Using a ten-step approach, we will cover the history of the WISE Congregation program, discuss the opportunities for spiritual and membership growth through WISE certification, and share practical advice on how to overcome common challenges and emerge a WISE Congregation on Mental Health.

**Rev. Amy Petré Hill** is the Minister of Mental Health and Inclusion at Mountain View United Church in Aurora, Colorado, and the first UCC minister ordained to mental health ministry in a congregation. She previously worked as a disability rights attorney, spiritual advisor to the Voices for Veterans Mental Health Council of Eastern Colorado, and chaplain intern at a Colorado state psychiatric hospital. She is a certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, NAMI Group Facilitator, Soul Shop for Congregations trainer, and currently serves on the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network Board.



**Robin Kempster**  
*The Basics: How One Church Started and Grew a Mental Health Ministry, and Voted to Become a WISE Congregation for Mental Health*  
The church voted to become a WISE Congregation for Mental Health in February, 2019.

**Robin Kempster** is the Parish Nurse at First Church Berkeley, UCC in California. She started the Mental Health Ministry at the church and has encouraged others to join together and to be active participants. The goals of the ministry are to include all members and friends in the life of the church, to provide opportunities to reduce stigma for those with mental health challenges, to share our stories, and to educate ourselves around mental health issues. Robin is on the Board of Directors of the UCC Mental Health Network. She enjoys the piano and portrait photography.

### WISE Conference Chaplain



**Reverend Shernell Edney Stilley** currently serves as the Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Vitality in the New York Conference. Her programmatic responsibilities include: Faith Reconciliation, Community Re-Discovery, Social Justice Empowerment, Revitalization Strategies, and Oversight of New Church Start programs. Other responsibilities include resource person for local church Open and Affirming (ONA) processes, Our Whole Lives (OWL) Education, and how to become a Welcoming Inclusive Supportive Engaged (WISE) Congregation. She is presently a member of the United Church of Christ Board of Directors and the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network (UCCMHN).

## WISE CONGREGATIONS for MENTAL HEALTH

### WISE Workshops—1:00-2:00 pm

#### **Addiction: Crisis and Call**

**Rev. Jack Abel and Rev. Erica Poellot**

How can leaders and community members respond to substance use concerns within and around their context of ministry? This workshop is offered in response to mental health challenges involving substance use and misuse. Participants will come to understand substance use and acute use disorders as psychobiosocial experience frequently accompanied by trauma and struggle. Multiple pathways to healing exist. Harm reduction is one of those; recovery movements that emphasize total abstinence also contribute to the landscape of thoughtful response. We will consider how expansive and compassionate stances support an integrative approach that can engage and support people in all stages of change.

#### **Historic Trauma and Mental Health in the LGBT People of Color FAITH Leadership Community**

**Bishop Allyson D. N. Abrams**

Many acts of today's church has created "Faith on the margins" for LGBT leaders in the churches of today. The church and community must do an evaluation and gain insight on the impact of historic trauma on LGBT faith leaders created by the evangelical message. Racism, heterosexism, education, and privilege has impacted the black church leaders as well as the African American, Latin X, and other people of color faith communities. Mental health, discrimination, and being placed on a historic cross of trauma, leaves a person of faith marginalized. Wellness in the church cannot come until we deal with these issues.

#### **Hispanic/Latinx Mental Health Challenges**

**Jon Gilbert Martinez**

A brief introduction to the various challenges such as education, access to healthcare, citizenship status or lack of, beliefs, and language barriers that the Hispanic/Latinx Community faces when dealing with mental health.

#### **What Helps You When a Loved One is Living with a Mental Illness, and Starting a Mental Health Spiritual Support Group**

**Rev. Alan Johnson**

This workshop will engage participants in ways that we can understand, relate, and deal with the experiences that we have when a loved one is living with a mental health challenge. Many of us are impacted by the mental illness of our loved one. We need understanding and information, to learn about resources, find support, practice ways to take care of ourselves, and how to sort through the varied emotions which arise such as confusion, helplessness, support, and hope. One resource which will be offered is how to start a spiritual support group for mental health in your congregation.

#### **"Take your Candle, Run to the Darkness" The Impact of Childhood Trauma and the Mitigating Role of the Local Church**

**Dr. Vicki K. Harvey**

This workshop will explore the depth of the break in trust and identity when trauma hits children in the heart of their innocence. We will examine ways in which the church can become a new womb, surrounding the child and their also-traumatized circle (parents, teachers, siblings, caregivers) with practical and spiritual support. The goal is to experience a stable and loving space to rest, grow, and eventually find a way forward.

#### **Meeting the Needs of Veterans as the United Church of Christ**

**Rev. Megan Snell and CPT Nicole Battaglia**

In this workshop we will explore how congregations can address the needs of veterans (of all ages/ demographics) in our communities, particularly as it may relate to veterans with mental health conditions. We will hear about the concerns and experiences of veterans and some of the ways congregations can rise up to be supportive and engaged.

#### **Suicide: Prevention, Intervention, Postvention**

**Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe**

This workshop will examine the role congregations can play in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. We will discuss all aspects of suicide including signs and symptoms of a person who is at risk, how to respond to someone who may be suicidal, and how a congregation can respond after suicide. We will also look at some of the theological questions and common beliefs around suicide.

**Workshops Repeat: 2:15–3:15 pm**

#### **Conference Musician—Rev. Kirk Moore**



Rev. Kirk Moore, Conference Music Director for our WISE conference, is a therapeutic musician, playing live therapeutic music at the bedside to help create a healing environment. Kirk is the pastor of St. Paul's UCC in Downers Grove, IL and a member of the UCC Mental

Health Network Board of Directors. He lives in Wheaton, IL.

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## WISE Workshop Leaders



**Rev. Jack Abel** is an ordained UCC chaplain and faith leader in long-term recovery who serves as the “Senior Director of Spiritual Care” for Caron Treatment Centers, headquartered in Wernersville, PA. He holds both a Master of Divinity and an MBA, and serves on the board of directors of the UCC Mental Health Network.



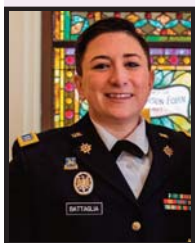
**Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe** is the pastor of Living Table United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, MN. She’s a favored conference presenter on topics related to mental health, suicide, and congregations. Previously, she served as clinical chaplain at the state psychiatric hospital in New Hampshire where she worked with patients, staff, clergy, and churches to increase understanding and welcome of persons living with severe and persistent symptoms of mental illness. She also served on the New Hampshire State Suicide Prevention Council.



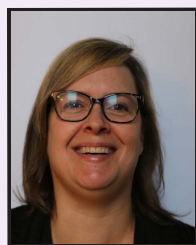
**Bishop Allyson Nelson Abrams** is the founder, prelate, and pastor of Empowerment Liberation Cathedral, located in Washington, DC and Lanham, MD Bishop Abrams is the first woman pastor in the Zion Progress Baptist’s 55-year history, and the youngest African American woman named Senior Pastor by a Baptist congregation. Bishop Adams served as a Police Chaplain for the Detroit Public School System and is a former Vice President of the South Oakland County NAACP. She earned her BSME in Mechanical Engineering from Howard University and she had earned a Masters and Doctorate of Divinity degrees, with an emphasis in Worship, from the United Theological Seminary, of Dayton, OH.



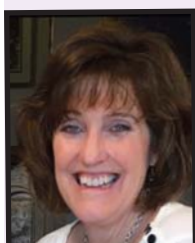
**Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez** holds a Master of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL. A Chicano and Tejano, who now resides in Chicagoland. Gilbert is a member in discernment with the Chicago Metropolitan Association-Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ. Currently, he serves as the Digital Outreach Minister at San Lucas UCC-Chicago along with doing pulpit supply. He has completed the Mental Health First Aid course and is a new board member of the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network.



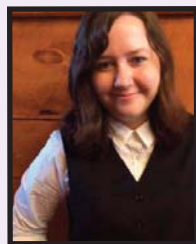
**CPT Nicole Battaglia** is an intelligence officer in the Massachusetts Army National Guard and a veteran. She works full time in the MA Army National Guard's security office and is finishing her masters in Security Studies next fall. CPT Battaglia is also a DOD certified Victim Advocate (advocates for and navigates processes with survivors of sexual assault in the military). She is passionate about improving the lives of veterans, particularly those from marginalized communities.



**Erica Poellot** is the Director of Faith in Harm Reduction at National Harm Reduction Coalition. As a faith leader in long-term recovery, Erica founded Faith in Harm Reduction to co-create a justice movement which connects people who use drugs, people who trade sex, and communities of faith through the development of harm reduction centered spiritual resources, ritual support, and spiritual care. With joint MDiv/MSW degrees from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in NYC, Erica also works as the Senior Ministry Innovator at Judson Memorial Church in NYC and coordinates the Overdose and Drug Use Ministries for the National setting of the United Church of Christ.



**Dr. Vicki Harvey** is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Brea, California. She has worked for decades with traumatized families. Through both adoption, hosting, and fostering, Vicki and her husband have brought traumatized children into their family. They are currently fostering two brothers, twelve and six years old. Vicki credits the holding womb of the Diamond Bar United Church of Christ for the larger welcome, nurturing environment, and tenacity of spirit for making this tough work possible. She currently serves on the UCC Mental Health Board of Directors.



**Rev. Megan Snell** is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, currently serving in the Boston metro area. She also lives with chronic mental illness. Megan is a doctoral student at the Pacific School of Religion, studying the intersection of mental illness and the Christian community. She holds an MDiv from Andover Newton Theological School. Megan writes, teaches, and preaches regularly on the topics of mental health, mental illness, and faith. She also serves as Co-Moderator of the UCC's 2030 Clergy Network. She and her wife, CPT Nicole Battaglia, share their home with three rescue dogs.



**Rev. Alan Johnson** is an ordained UCC clergy who retired as chaplain at The Children’s Hospital (TCH), Denver. He had been pastor for 14 years in churches in Connecticut and New York City, been on national staff of United Church of Christ for 16 years, and now for 10 years he has volunteered in the field of mental health. He is a co-founder of the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness and serves as Chair of the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network.

**CONFERENCE LOCATION**  
**Jordan United Church of Christ**  
1837 Church Road  
Allentown, PA 18104  
Phone: 610-395-2218



**Jordan United Church of Christ**  
[click here for church website](#)

[Click here for directions/map to Jordan UCC](#)

*The church is at the intersection of Route 309 and Walbert Avenue*

**Registration Fees**

**Regular Rate**  
**\$45**

**Student Rate**  
**\$20**

**Cultural Competence**

Attendance at and completion of this event will qualify as completion of the triennial Cultural Competency training.

*If you have need for a certificate of completion, please check the box on your registration form.*

**Local Hotel Options with Discounts**



**Four Points by Sheraton Allentown Lehigh Valley**

3712 Hamilton Boulevard  
Allentown, PA 18103

**Discounted Price:** \$139 per night

**To make reservations:** call 610-437-9100 and use code: PNC/Penn Northeast Conference



**Holiday Inn Allentown**

4325 Hamilton Boulevard  
Allentown, PA 18103

**Discounted Price:** \$189.00

**To make reservations:** call 610-366-1600 and use code: UCC.

Or [click here](#) and follow the instructions below:

- In the top right corner, click "Book Now"
- Enter the dates of your requested stay (May 15-17, 2020)
- The group code UCC will show in the appropriate box
- Click "Check Availability," and the available room types with group rate of \$189 will display

**Additional hotel reservations sites include:**

Priceline.com  
Expedia.com  
Booking.com

**Financial Assistance Available:**

Scholarship dollars are available for persons in need of assistance.

Please contact: [revjack@caron.org](mailto:revjack@caron.org)

**REGISTER NOW—Click Here**

## WISE CONGREGATIONS for MENTAL HEALTH

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION and POLICIES

#### Payment and Receipts

- ◆ MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express credit cards are accepted.
- ◆ Pre-payment in full by check or valid credit card is required to qualify for discounted fees. In cases where cards are initially declined, the prevailing fee at the time of approval will be due and charged.
- ◆ Receipts confirming registration will be sent via email.
- ◆ Please verify the accuracy of your receipt and contact the conference planner immediately with any change (djcowen@msn.com)
- ◆ In the event that a registrant is entitled to a refund for his/her registration fee, it will be processed via the same method it was paid. For example, if payment was made by credit card, the refund will be processed as a credit to your credit card account.

#### Services for People with Disabilities

If you require specific aids or services to attend the conference, please mark the appropriate boxes on the registration form or contact the conference office if you need to register by phone. Please allow adequate time for arrangements to be made. If you are traveling with a personal care attendant (PCA) or personal assistant (PA) and he/she will attend the full meeting with you, please have them register for the conference so that we may include them as an attendee and plan accordingly (seating, name badge, food functions.)

*Not all workshops may have full services for interpreting and Assisted Listening Services (ALS). Specific session rooms may be assigned with interpreters and assisted listening services.*

**Hotel Rooms:** You are responsible for making your own hotel reservation. Several ADA rooms may be available at the hotels listed on page 6. Please request your ADA room when making reservations.

#### How to Register

- ◆ Scholarship dollars are available for persons in need of assistance. Contact: revjack@caron.org
- ◆ Web—[click here to register online](#)
- ◆ Mail—100 Park Ave West, #1001, Denver, CO 80205
- ◆ Phone registrations are accepted if necessary. 303-886-7137

Payment must accompany registration in order for our office to process your registration. Be sure to fully complete the registration form — the information requested is important in processing your registration. Early and on-site registration fees will be applied based on the date registration is received in full at the registration office. MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express credit cards are accepted. Make checks payable to “the Planners Client Meetings”.

#### Cancellation

- ◆ Requests for refunds must be in writing: e-mail: djcowen@msn.com
- ◆ Deadline for full refund less \$10 processing fee—May 9, 2020
- ◆ **After May 9, no refunds will be made.**
- ◆ There will be no form of refund for "no shows" unless considered a special exception.
- ◆ Special exceptions such as family and health emergencies will be handled on a one-on-one basis.
- ◆ The schedule and speakers are subject to change; committee reserves the right to make changes as needed without penalty.

#### Consent to Use Photographic Images

Registration and attendance at the 2020 WISE Congregations for Mental Health constitutes permission by the registrant to use and distribute attendee's image or voice in photographs, videotapes, electronic reproductions and audiotapes of such events and activities. By registering for the WISE Conference, you grant permission for your photograph to be taken and/or video and sound recordings to be used in future marketing materials.

#### Dates to Remember

**May 9:** No registration refunds after this date  
**May 16:** WISE Conference begins at 8 a.m.

[Click Link For:](#)  
**WISE Conference Registration**  
**UCC Mental Health Network**  
**Hotel Information**

**WISE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM, Regular Fee \$45 -- Student Fee \$20**  
**WISE Congregations for Mental Health, May 16, 2020 | Allentown, PA**

**SECTION A**

First name for badge \_\_\_\_\_  
First name \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation or Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B**

**Included in conference fee:** Registration fee includes: all sessions, refreshment breaks, continental breakfast, and lunch.

**Check Appropriate Price:**

**Regular Rate** # \_\_\_\_\_ people x \$45 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL**

**Student Rate** # \_\_\_\_\_ people x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL**

**Grand Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION C**

- ♦ **Cultural Competence:** Attendance at and completion of this event will qualify as completion of the triennial Cultural Competency training. Do you require a certificate of completion?  Yes  No
- ♦ Do you require the assistance of an interpreter to attend the conference?  Yes  No
  - ♦ If yes, please indicate the interpretation type needed (ASL, Signed Exact English, or oral) \_\_\_\_\_
- ♦ When attending this conference, what other specific aids or services might be required to insure your full participation (Assistive Listening Device, electronic files for screen reader, other)? \_\_\_\_\_
- ♦ Do you require large print for the program and handouts?  Yes  No

*Specific sessions/rooms may be assigned with interpreters and assisted listening services. Please allow adequate time for arrangements to be made. Every effort will be made to accommodate advance requests; on-site requests cannot be guaranteed. Reasonable accommodations will be provided during meeting sessions. Please contact revalan2004@comcast.net with any questions.*

**SECTION D**

Payment Method:  MasterCard  Visa  Discover  Amex

Check **Make Checks Payable to “the Planners Client Meetings”**

Print Name on Card/Check \_\_\_\_\_

Check/Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. Code \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I hereby authorize the registration office to charge my credit card accordingly if I miscalculated fees. I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to all registration policies outlined herein.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: the Planners Client Meetings, 100 Park Ave West, #1001, Denver, CO 80205**