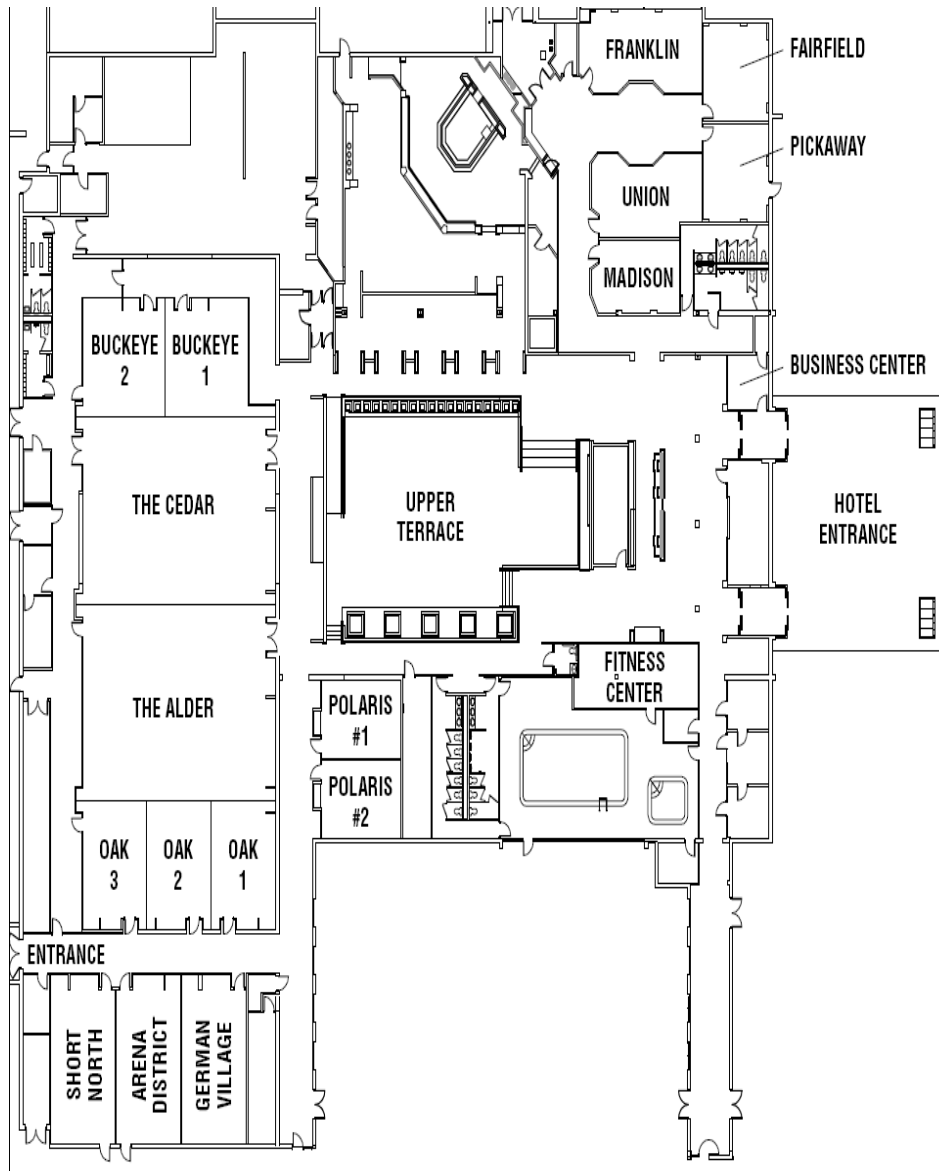


# MEETING SPACE AND FLOORS



## **WIDENING THE WELCOME II: INCLUSION FOR ALL A NATIONAL GATHERING**

**Thursday, September 29-Sunday October 2, 2011  
(Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>- Optional Day  
Attending Local Worship Services)**

**Sponsored by:  
the United Church of Christ  
Mental Illness Network and  
Disabilities Ministries**

# **CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

## Welcome!

We are glad that you are here at the Second National Conference, *Widening the Welcome II: Inclusion for All*. At the Conference last year, Geoffrey Black indicated that this is “a movement within a movement” and he vowed to encourage the participation of our congregations in this ministry of hospitality. We have been working to prepare for this year’s conference all year long.

We are bringing together an experienced group of leaders to engage you and your faith community in ways of widening your welcome. Our focus is on making that inclusion real in particular for those who are living with disabilities and/or brain disorders/mental illnesses and their families. We invite you to develop or expand your own Mental Health Ministry and continue on the journey to becoming an A2A, Accessible to All, church.

Along with national leaders, we hope you will find confirmation for what you are committed to in your ministry as well as learn about new avenues of inclusion. We intend there to be support, encouragement, and inspiration for you. While many of us are solo voices in our community, we hope our voices will grow stronger as we find more colleagues to be with on this journey of inclusion, especially for and with those who have been on the margins of their church’s life.

We pray that through your own willingness to be open and even adventurous in your sharing, you will receive renewal. Through the plenary sessions, the workshops, the CORE groups, our common worship and your own journaling and devotions, we pray that you will have the

opportunity to share yourself and your passion as well as receive the gifts that are offered. Let the Spirit come, even in those serendipitous conversations through these days. We believe you will experience many blessings and that you will continue to be a blessing to others in your ministry.

Grace and peace,

Peggy Wolfe Dunn,  
UCC Disability Ministries  
Alan Johnson,  
UCC Mental Illness Network  
*Chairs of the Hosting Organizations*

### **Conference Planning Team**

Peter Bauer, San Antonio, TX  
Barbara Baylor, Cleveland, OH  
Bob Dell, Sandwich, IL  
Peggy Dunn, Bowdoinham, ME  
Michelle Hintz, Cleveland, OH  
Alan Johnson, Boulder, CO  
Norma Mengel, St. Paul, MN  
Kirk Moore, Somonauk, IL  
Kelli Parrish Lucas, San Diego, CA  
Kevin Pettit, Boulder, CO  
CJ Siroky, Indianapolis, IN  
Mary Alice Suter, St. Louis, MO  
Terri Tyson, Kettering, OH

### **Chaplains for the Conference**

Gunnar Cerda  
Carol Ahrens

### **Webmaster and Music Director**

Kirk Moore

### **Conference Office/Planner**

#### **Summit Meetings, Inc.**

Debbie Cowen, CMP, President  
Caitlin Cowen, Account Executive  
Elizabeth Smith, Special Projects

## **NOTES**

# NOTES

There is a **Quiet Room**  
open to all for meditation, reflection, and prayer.  
Room location: Union 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Open Thurs 1:00 p.m. - Sat 1:00 p.m.

*Meeting room layouts are located on back cover of program. All rooms are located on the first floor of the hotel.*

## THURSDAY, SEPTMEBER 29, 2011

- 1:00-4:00 p.m.**      **Registration**—Upper Terrace
- 4:15-5:30 p.m.**      **Welcome and Opening Worship**—Alder Room  
Welcome by Peggy Dunn and Alan Johnson,  
Craig Rennebohm, preaching, “A Tale of Two  
Neighborhoods”
- 5:45-7:00 p.m.**      **Opening Banquet**—Cedar Room  
Welcome and Grace by Host Conference  
Minister, Bob Molsberry, Overview of the  
Conference, My Journal, CORE Groups,  
Introductions
- 7:15-8:00 p.m.**      **Plenary Keynote**—Alder Room  
**“Enlarge the Site of your Tent”**  
Carolyn Thompson, Keynote Speaker
- 8:15-9:15 p.m.**      **Core Groups 1**

There are 10 core groups with 10 people assigned in each group. The number of **your core group** is printed on your nametag. Please locate the group you have been assigned and join them in the following room:

- Core group 1: — German Village
- Core group 2: — Arena District
- Core group 3: — Short North
- Core group 4: — Oak I
- Core group 5: — Oak II
- Core group 6: — Oak III
- Core group 7: — Polaris I
- Core group 8: — Polaris II
- Core group 9: — Alder
- Core group 10: — Alder

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

## NOTES

- 7:00-8:15 a.m.**      **Breakfast**—Crosswoods Bar & Grill, 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- 7:30-10:00 a.m.**      **Registration**—Upper Terrace
- 8:30-9:00 a.m.**      **Morning Devotions**—Lynda Bigler, Alder Room
- 9:00-10:00 a.m.**      **Plenary Keynote**—Alder Room  
**"Witnessing Vulnerability: On Accessing the  
Compassionate Church" Part I**  
Tom Reynolds
- 10:00-10:30 a.m.**      **Break**—Upper Terrace
- 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**      **Workshops 1**—see room assignments below

- 1. *Responding to Serious Mental Health Issues across the Life Span***—Arena District  
*Families in our congregations face emotional and behavioral issues with children, experience trauma, bring to us the challenges of adolescents and young adults struggling with mental illness, drugs and alcohol, and turn to the church with the needs of aging parents. Learn how clergy and laity working together in mental health ministry can help people find community resources, maximize healing and recovery, and develop a faith adequate to serious mental health issues.*  
**Craig Rennebohm**
- 2. *Theological Underpinning of Disability Ministry***—Short North  
*How do we find strength in our vulnerability? Some biblical references to disability and their interpretations through the years have been very discouraging to people with disabilities. This workshop will explore theological concepts that celebrate the diversity of creation (including people with atypical bodies and minds), highlight the giftedness of each person, discuss the importance of community, look at healing and wholeness in some new life-giving ways, and challenge those of us on the margins to use our vantage point to critique the status quo.*  
**Carolyn Thompson and Peggy Dunn**

for leaders with disabilities to emerge. Following the signing into law of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush passed the signing pen to Dr. Wilke, who accepted it with his foot — because he was born without arms. Harold Wilke was noted for his unique role in delivering the blessing at the White House. “Move [us],” he said in the blessing prayer, “to discard those old beliefs and attitudes that limit and diminish those among us with disabilities.”

### **UCC Mental Illness Network**

In 1992 the Mental Illness Network (MIN) began with a grant from the then American Missionary Association of the United Church of Christ through the work of Nanette Roberts. She asked Bob Dell and Ellen Hiatt: 1) to have an exhibit at the 1993 General Synod, St Louis, and 2) to start a newsletter. We began as a response to the need for families and others to communicate among themselves about their experiences as families. It was not long before Norma and Jim Mengel, and Bryan Crousore came on board. Norma became Treasurer, and Bryan, as editor became an excellent voice for articles in the United Church News. Sharon Crousore was most valuable at Synod exhibits with her powerful way of engaging people in talk about mental illness. The Web site was one of the first to be developed and was accomplished through the volunteer work of our competent Web master, Alan Harris. The network relied upon Pathways to Promise for resources which local congregations could use. The first “Annual Gathering” as it was called was held just prior to the 1991 Synod. From the beginning the Network has been in partnership with UCC Disabilities Ministries.

At the 1999 Synod a significant resolution was passed. For the most part, this was due to the efforts of Norma Mengel as principal author, and who worked tirelessly to bring it through the resolution process and to the floor for vote. The resolution was entitled: “Calling the People of God to Justice for Persons with Serious Mental Illnesses (Brain Disorders)”.

The MIN has partnered with DM, in particular, as we have hosted the two Annual National Conferences. The Conferences are “Widening the Welcome: Inclusion for All.” The first conference was September 2010 in St. Louis and the second one is September 2011 in Columbus, OH. Bob Dell continued as chair of MIN for many years until he stepped down in 2009. Alan Johnson became the chair after Synod, 2009. We rejoice in all who have participated in these national conferences and we hope this “movement within a movement,” named by Geoffrey Black, will continue with your support and your prayers.

### **3. Transformative Experiences: The Redeeming Nature of Brain Disorders—German Village**

*Brain disorders can be traumatic, however there are many who use these experiences to develop or enhance their relationship with God. Join in this provocative discussion that will challenge the conventional wisdom that mental illness is full of despair, hopelessness, and is devoid of any spiritual center.*

**Karl Shallowhorn and Faith McCausland**

### **4. Living with Disabilities—Oak I**

*Through the sharing of stories of exclusion and inclusion, we will explore the creative tension of what it means to **be** the diverse body of Christ, and the process that individuals with disabilities, our gathering of friends and family members, and congregations and parishes are taking in **becoming** the inclusive body of Christ.*

**Christine Guth and Brett Webb-Mitchell**

### **5. Coming out to your Congregation: Clergy and Laity Living with Mental Illness/Brain Disorder or Disability—Oak II**

*How do you talk to your congregation about your disability or mental illness/brain disorder, or that of a family member? In this workshop, clergy, seminarians, and church leaders share their personal experiences and invite you into the discussion. (Including stories of what congregations are doing.)*

**CJ Siroky, Marie Siroky, Mary Alice Suter, Kelli Parrish Lucas**

### **6. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Our Churches—Alder**

*This presentation will address how Traumatic Brain Injury is experienced in the greater population, with emphasis upon the combat trauma population. We will also look at how TBI presents with other Mental Health conditions i.e. depression, substance abuse and specific interventions and resources available for those who suffer from TBI and their families.*

**Peter Bauer and Kevin Pettit**

**12:15-1:45 p.m.**

**Luncheon— Cedar**

**“From Cure to Community: Biblical Understandings to Challenge the Stigma of Disability”**

Christine Guth

**1:45-3:00 p.m. Sabbath Break/Movie Options**—Alder  
“Music Within,” Temple Grandin,” “Mary and Max,”  
and “Lars and the Real Girl.” (Decision to be made  
by attendees.)

**3:00-4:30 p.m. Workshops 2**—see room assignments below

**1. Organizing a Mental Health Ministry in the Local  
Congregation**—Arena District

*Clergy are often the first responders to a mental health crisis. A lay team can be of great assistance in helping do education in the congregation, provide welcome, offer spiritual support, give service and engage in advocacy. Churches opening their doors in mental health ministry are growing congregations. Learn how to gather a knowledgeable mental health team, drawing on individuals in your community who have life experience and training in children’s mental health, trauma, addictions, serious mental illness and aging. Participants will receive the Pathways to Promise Mental Health Ministry Toolkit.*

**Craig Rennebohm**

**2. Becoming Accessible to All (A2A)**—German Village

*Outlining a process for forming inclusion teams in Conferences and congregations to move the important work of accessibility forward. How are ONA and A2A linked? Can these two commitments to full inclusion be mutually enhanced in our congregations? If you are already engaged in this work, please come to share your successes and struggles and continuing needs. If you are not yet engaged in this work but want to be, come to be informed and challenged in an interactive setting.*

**Peggy Dunn**

**3. Where is God amidst Disability and Mental Illness?**—Short North

*This workshop will address questions asked by many about whether God ‘causes’ disability and/or mental illness and how we might more supportively think about God’s presence in the lives of people with challenges that often involve suffering from bodily pain, emotion duress, and communal exclusion.*

**Tom Reynolds**

**4. Current and Future Interventions for returning Veterans and their Families Suffering from PTSD**—Alder

*This workshop will address current and future interventions for the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, interventions and*

become Accessible to All (A2A). She has been affected by mental illness, substance abuse and acquired brain injury in her extended family.

**Alan Johnson** is the current chair of the UCC Mental Illness Network, the chair of his church’s Mental Health Ministry, and a founder of the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness (Boulder, CO). He worked in the national setting of the UCC from 1979-1995. He has been affected by mental illness, substance abuse, and suicide in his family and has recovered from a stroke.

**The Beginnings of the UCC Disabilities Ministries  
and the UCC Mental Illness Network**

***United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries***

The UCC Disabilities Ministries (DM) board recognizes Virginia Kreyer and Harold Wilke (see below) as its foreparents in bringing the concern for full inclusion of persons with disabilities into all phases of the life of the United Church of Christ. This work has been going on, sometimes quietly and other times not, since the 1970s. We recognize that we are a part of the liberation movement which swept the world in that decade. We are here for the long haul, and this generation of workers is as committed as the first. Join us!

The Reverend Virginia Kreyer has lived with severe cerebral palsy since birth. She knows firsthand about the needs, desires, and frustrations of persons with disabilities and their families. In her early teens, she decided to enter Christian work as her way to help make the world a better place in which to live. On November 9, 1971, Reverend Kreyer started the first Task Force on Disabilities in the New York Metropolitan Association, becoming the foreparent other of the disabilities ministries movement. As Consultant for Persons with Disabilities, she traveled over the country working with churches to educate about the needs and gifts of persons with disabilities.

“We finally have come to understand,” Virginia Kreyer said, “that we cannot be an inclusive church unless all people, regardless of their disability, color of their skin, or national origin are welcome in Christ’s Church. Let us give thanks for our individual uniqueness and for Christ who binds Christians together as different pieces of cloth are brought together to make a quilt.”

The Rev. Harold H. Wilke, also foreparent of UCC Disabilities Ministries, was a devoted minister, advocate for persons with disabilities, and pioneer. He was one of the first Americans with a serious disability to serve as a parish minister. His exemplary ministry within the UCC and the world forged a path

as drug addiction, to go on to help others. Karl has a Masters Degree in Student Personnel Administration from Buffalo State and in 2010 published *Working on Wellness: A Practical Guide to Mental Health*. In 2008 he was a recipient of the Erie County Disabilities Employment Recognition Award. Karl is a member of Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC and lives in Amherst, NY with his wife, two daughters and father.

**CJ Siroky** is trained as a Biochemist and worked several years helping to develop psychiatric medications. She became a consumer herself in 2001 after being diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder. In 2006, she became the leader of the Mental Health Awareness team at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, IN.

**Marie Siroky** is a graduate from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN. She served as Pastoral Associate to First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, IN, has served in many Chaplaincy roles and has been an advocate for those mental illness and brain disorders. She became familiar with stigmas in her work with those with HIV/AIDS starting in the mid-90's. CJ and Marie Siroky have been together over 20 years.

**Mary Alice Suter**, Masters in Divinity from Eden Theological Seminary, is a member at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Springfield, IL where she worked as a Christian Education Director. Mary Alice is a mental health consumer and advocate for those with brain disorders and disabilities.

**Brett Webb-Mitchell**, Presbyterian pastor, an advocate with people with disabilities, has written curricula relating to people with disabilities in faith communities, and was writer/consultant for the PCUSA's statement on inclusive congregations, "Living into the Body of Christ: Toward Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities." His latest book is *Beyond Accessibility*. He has served eight congregations; taught at Duke Divinity School; is Visiting Associate Professor at NC Central University; and is Director of the religious non-profit, School of the Pilgrim.

### **Chairs of the Hosting Organizations**

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**Peggy Wolfe Dunn** serves as the current chair of the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board. She is ordained in the UCC, is pastor of the Union Congregational Church UCC of South Bristol Maine and the Director of the Maine Conference Academy for Congregational Life and Leadership. She has a passion about inclusion, resourcing and encouraging congregations to

*resources available for those who suffer from PTSD and their families, how churches might be able to reach out and support those who suffer from PTSD and their families.*

**Peter Bauer**

5. ***The Neuropsychology of Autism Spectrum Disorders—Oak I***  
*What exactly is Autism? What is Asperger's Disorder? What is Pervasive Developmental Disorder? Are these merely different labels for the same disorder with slight variations in the presentation? This workshop will discuss these disorders from recent theoretical perspectives including information on several treatment methods.*

**Kim Johnson**

6. ***Incarceration and Mental Illness. Your mentally ill child/congregant/neighbor is now incarcerated. What to expect now?—Oak II***  
*At any given moment, half of the country's mentally ill are in jail or prison. Will you be able to continue to "widen the welcome" to include those who are arrested? Are you willing to extend the welcome to those who have "done time?" This workshop will prepare you to understand the workings (and differences between) jails and prisons, prepare you to make visits to parishioners who are incarcerated, and to think through how you might decide to support the return to community of anyone who has been recently released.*

**Ken Gilbert**

**4:45-5:45 p.m.**

**Core Groups 2**

There are 10 core groups with 10 people assigned in each group. The number of **your core group** is printed on your nametag. Please locate the group you have been assigned and join them in the following room:

Core group 1: — German Village  
Core group 2: — Arena District  
Core group 3: — Short North  
Core group 4: — Oak I  
Core group 5: — Oak II  
Core group 6: — Oak III  
Core group 7: — Polaris I  
Core group 8: — Polaris II  
Core group 9: — Alder  
Core group 10: — Alder

- 6:00-7:30 p.m.**      **Dinner**—Cedar
- 7:30-8:30 p.m.**      **Presentation by Bob Molsberry**  
**"Who Is Included?"** with Peggy Dunn, Alan Johnson  
and an open mic.—Alder
- 8:45-9:15 p.m.**      **Evening Vespers**—Kirk Moore—Alder
- 9:15-10:15 p.m.**      **Hospitality Suite**—Buckeye I-II  
Hosted by Methodist Theological School in Ohio

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## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2011

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- 7:00-8:15 a.m.**      **Breakfast**—Crosswoods Bar & Grill, 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- 7:30-10:00 a.m.**      **Registration**—Upper Terrace
- 8:30-9:00 a.m.**      **Morning Devotions**—Barbara Baylor—Alder
- 9:00-10:00 a.m.**      **Plenary Keynote**—Alder  
**"Witnessing Vulnerability: On Accessing the  
Compassionate Church" Part II**  
Tom Reynolds
- 10:00-10:30 a.m.**      **Break**—Upper Terrace
- 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** **Workshops 3**—see room assignments below
1. **Companionship Training: One to One Support for Healing and Recovery**—Arena District  
*Serious mental health issues often isolate individual and their families. We can share the journey with the practices of companionship – offering hospitality, being a neighbor, using a side by side approach, listening and supporting a person in taking next steps in their healing and recovery. Learn how to become a Sunday morning companion, a once a week congregational companion, or a community companion in meal programs, a shelter, mental health center or supported housing in your neighborhood.*  
**Craig Rennebohm**

treatments during seminary. She now leads a congregation in Buffalo, N.Y. and advocates within her church and community for the removal of the "mental disease stigma."

**Bob Molsberry** is Conference Minister for the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ. A wheelchair-user since a 1997 hit-and-run accident, Bob is the author of two books on adjusting to the culture of disability: *Blindsided by Grace: Entering the World of Disability* and *Tour de Faith: A Cyclist's Lessons for Living*. He is former vice chair for UCC Disabilities Ministries. Bob is an avid athlete and enjoys competing in marathon and triathlon events.

**Kirk Moore** is the pastor of Union Congregational United Church of Christ, in Somonauk, IL. He's a writer, song leader, and guitar teacher, too! Kirk serves as the web administrator for *Widening the Welcome*. You can catch up with Kirk on his blog, ([kirkogitation.com](http://kirkogitation.com)) on Twitter, (@kirkmoore) and yes, even on Facebook. Kirk, wife Cassie and their three children live in Warrenville, IL.

**Kelli Parrish Lucas, M.Div.**, has discerned that the issue of accessibility and our churches is part of her call to ministry. Kelli lives with all of the both/ands of having being born with disability, and acquiring disabilities, as well as a passion for exploring all the topics of disability ministries with others. Kelli completed research into the ecumenical responses to disability in addition to studying disability ministry/theology in seminary. Kelli has served as a chaplain in mental health facilities and is currently serving as a per diem hospice chaplain in San Diego County, CA.

**Kevin Pettit** is a survivor of a very severe TBI and is now completing the work required to become a Commissioned Minister of the United Church of Christ. As a Disabilities Inclusion Associate, he currently serves the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministry. Kevin hopes to spread the word about the "unseen epidemic" that are TBIs and, more generally, the consequences of all disabilities and, particularly, the need for churches to give a more honest "welcome" to people who happen to have disabilities.

**Craig Rennebohm** is a UCC pastor who has worked for the last 23 years on the streets with individuals who are homeless and struggling with serious mental illness, substance abuse issues and PTSD. He is the author of *Souls in the Hands of a Tender God*, and will be leading a series of three workshops on creating caring congregations.

**Karl Shallowhorn** is a NY State Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor and is currently a Counselor and Vocational Specialist at Horizon Health Services in Buffalo, NY. Having been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder at the age of 18, Karl has overcome both his mental illness, as well

justice, community wellness, health promotion, disease prevention and the reduction of health disparities.

**Lynda Bigler**, pastor, Congregational UCC, Humboldt, IA, had a career banking and became a full-time, stay-at-home mother. She served as Girl Scout leader and cookie sales committees; Cub Scout den leader; Boy Scout troop treasurer; alumni National Chair and Director of the Brown University Alumni Schools Committees, and the Disability Services Advisory Council of Multnomah County (Oregon). Visually impaired since birth, Lynda takes particular interest in accessibility in educational settings.

**Ken Gilbert, M.D.**, has supported village based health systems in eleven countries, served as medical director for a large state psychiatric hospital, and organized village development and AIDS education in Cote D'Ivoire. He has been a prison psychiatrist and now works with a large mental health provider for persons who are seriously and chronically ill and offers treatment for substance abuse. In Nov 2009 he suffered a massive brain bleed. Since then he has returned to employment as a psychiatrist.

**Kim Johnson** is a clinical neuropsychologist who specializes in understanding and evaluating the relationship between brain disorders and behavior. She works with neuropsychological evaluations and evaluates individuals four years old through senior adult for a wide range of learning problems, Autism Spectrum disorders, ADHD, mood disorders, dementias, brain injuries, strokes and various neuro-degenerative disorders. Her Doctorate degree was in Clinical Psychology and she completed two post-doctorate programs: a one-year program in school psychology and a two-year program in pediatric and adult neuropsychology.

**L. Scott Lissner**, American with Disability Act Coordinator, and the ADA Coordinator & 504 Compliance Officer for the Ohio State University. He is an associate of the John Glenn School of Public Policy and is a lecturer for the Moritz College of Law, the Knowlton School of Architecture and Disability Studies. He serves on the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, ADA-OHIO, the Columbus Advisory Committee on Disability Issues and as President Elect for the Association of Higher Education and Disability.

**Faith McCausland** has served as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ since 2005, graduating from Lancaster Theological Seminary with her Master's in 2003. She has also worked with diverse populations ranging from Men's Battering Groups/Domestic Violence to counseling women with alcohol/drug addictions and mental health diagnosis' in a mission setting. She has struggled with depression which culminated in hospitalization and ECT

2. ***Navigating the Murky Waters of Disability and Drug and Alcohol Dependency***—Oak II

*How do families (nuclear and church) safely navigate when disability and drug and alcohol dependency flow together? More often than we might like, life presents us with co-occurring challenges, made more complex by the love which ties us together. How can we be helpful to those we love in family or church community, respectful of ourselves and others at the same time? In this participatory workshop we will present a framework for exploring our experiences with these complicated and delicate situations.*

**Peggy Dunn and Ken Gilbert**

3. ***The Neuropsychology of Autism Spectrum Disorders***—Oak I

*What exactly is Autism? What is Asperger's Disorder? What is Pervasive Developmental Disorder? Are these merely different labels for the same disorder with slight variations in the presentation? This workshop will discuss these disorders from recent theoretical perspectives including information on several treatment methods.*

**Kim Johnson**

4. ***The ADA Regulations & Standards: What we can learn about spiritual community from secular laws***—Short North

*This past year has brought significant changes to the ADA regulations in employment, public accommodations and architectural standards. While most church activities fall outside the regulations there is much we can learn from the process. They inform our understanding of access to the community and set individual expectations for access. A short presentation will provide a context for a discussion of common barriers and effective solutions with an emphasis on questions and answers.*

**Scott Lissner**

5. ***Transformative Experiences: The Redeeming Nature of Brain Disorders***—German Village

*Brain disorders can be traumatic, however there are many who use these experiences to develop or enhance their relationship with God. Join in this provocative discussion that will challenge the conventional wisdom that mental illness is full of despair, hopelessness, and is devoid of any spiritual center.*

**Karl Shallowhorn and Faith McCausland**

6. **Coming out to your Congregation: Clergy and Laity Living with Mental Illness/Brain Disorder or Disability**—Alder  
*How do you talk to your congregation about your disability or mental illness/brain disorder, or that of a family member? In this workshop, clergy, seminarians, and church leaders share their personal experiences and invite you into the discussion. (Including stories of what congregations are doing.)*  
**CJ Siroky, Marie Siroky, Mary Alice Suter, Kelli Parrish Lucas**

**12:00-1:45 p.m.**      **Lunch**—Cedar  
“**A Church That Jesus Would Join**”, Ben Guess  
**Closing Worship and Communion.**

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## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2011**

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*On your own: Attending Local Worship Services and Lunch*

### **CD recording of sessions:**

All Plenary sessions and workshops will be recorded. All **full main conference registrants** will receive a coupon for a free CD in the registration packet. For additional orders or questions, please visit the **Florian Audio Visual** table located on the Upper Terrace

*Those who can sit in silence with their fellow men, women and children not knowing what to say but knowing that they should be there, can bring new life in a dying heart. Those who are not afraid to hold a hand in gratitude, to shed tears in grief, and to let a sigh of distress arise straight from the heart, can break through paralyzing boundaries and witness the birth of a new fellowship, the fellowship of the broken.—Henri Nouwen*

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## **Keynote Speakers**

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**J. Bennett Guess** is Executive Minister for Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ and a member of the UCC's five-person Collegium of Officers. He has worked on the UCC's national staff for 11 years and was a local church pastor for 12 years in Kentucky while emphasizing God's wide welcome.

**Christine Guth** is Program Director for Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet), a disability advocacy organization affiliated with Mennonites and

related denominations. She is a licensed minister with Mennonite Church USA and is a founder and leader of a thriving support group in Goshen, Indiana, for parents of children on the autism spectrum and a graduate of the Partners in Policymaking Academy of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. She is grateful for ongoing learning that comes from a personal journey through mental illness and from people she loves who teach her about living with diverse disabilities.

**Thomas E. Reynolds** is Associate Professor of Theology at Emmanuel College. Committed to an interdisciplinary and relational vision of theology, his teaching seeks to deepen Christian engagements with difference and promote compassionate justice. As a father with a son who is on the autism spectrum and has accompanying diagnoses of mental illness, he has become especially interested in opening up the way people of faith think about and welcome people with disabilities into community life. He is the author of *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*.

**Carolyn Thompson, M.Div.** from Episcopal Divinity School, has focused her energies on raising awareness and understanding of disability and access issues in congregations and larger church bodies. She retired last year from the Commission for Persons with Disabilities in Cambridge, MA and helped draft theological statements on disability for the Massachusetts and then the World Council of Churches (WCC), and is part of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) of the WCC. She has served on the Disabilities Ministries and the Wider Church Ministries Boards of the United Church of Christ (2003-2009). She has two grown daughters and is a person with a lifelong disability.

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## **Featured Leaders**

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**Peter E. Bauer** is a United Church of Christ Minister. He also serves as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist working for the South Texas Veterans Health Care System San Antonio, TX. Peter also serves as a Lieutenant Colonel, Medical Service Corps, Army Reserve.

**Barbara T. Baylor** is the Minister for Health Care Justice, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) of the UCC. She assists the UCC in all its settings to encourage an understanding of health and health care as issues of social and economic justice and is committed to quality, accessible and affordable health care for all. She has experience working in public health with many diverse groups, including the faith community, to provide leadership, empowerment and capacity building programs that focus on health care