



**Widening the Welcome 2012:
Inclusion for All
A National Gathering**

Thursday, November 1-Saturday November 3, 2012

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

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Welcome!

We are glad that you are here at the Third National Conference, Widening the Welcome 2012: Inclusion for All. The momentum has continued this year as we have put energy and time in providing a conference that is intended to feed the spirit, mind and body. We have outstanding leaders who will bring their insights, wisdom, and experience.

As the statistic has it, one out of four people in our congregations are affected by a disability or mental health challenge. That includes all of us who have been on the planning team. We are embodying the maxim, *"nothing about us without us."*

The biblical word to us is *"Practice hospitality."* (Romans 12:13b) We gather to affirm and encourage congregations in this ministry of hospitality. It means including and engaging with people who are living with disabilities or mental health challenges. As Bob Molsberry, who will be leading us several times at the Conference, has written, *"The principle of radical inclusion is the unifying thread for all of scripture and the key to understanding the gospel."*

As in past conferences, 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 UCC leaders and local practitioners, we believe you will find affirmation of what you are

committed to in your ministry as well as learn about new avenues of inclusion. We hope you will find support, encouragement, and inspiration. While many of us are solo voices in our community, we have found that our voices have become stronger as we find more colleagues to be with on this journey of inclusion.

Especially this year as we welcome the five conferences that have received Conference Inclusion Team grants for the year of 2012, we look forward to learn about how to expand our awareness about inclusion.

We pray that through your own willingness to be open in the presentations, to listen deeply to others in the workshops, and even be adventurous in your sharing, you will be empowered to continue on your own calling/ministry for inclusion. Engage in those unexpected conversations at meals, in the hallways, wherever you might be for there the Spirit may speak, too.

Be the blessing you also offer each other.

Alan Johnson

Chair, UCC Mental Illness Network

Peggy (Dunn) Davis and

Jeanne Tyler

Co-Chairs, UCC Disabilities Ministries

***There is a Quiet Room
open to all for meditation,
reflection, and prayer.***

***Room location:
Sleeping Room 272, 2nd Fl.
Open Thurs 8:00 a.m.
through Sat 3:30 p.m.***

2012 Conference Planning Team

Carol Ahrens, Freeport, IL
Peter Bauer, San Antonio, TX
Barbara Baylor, Cleveland, OH
Lynda Bigler, Humboldt, IA
Gunnar Cerda, Delaware, OH
Peggy Dunn, Bowdoinham, ME
Jeffrey Hamilton, Lancaster, PA
Alan Johnson, Boulder, CO
Rachael Keefe, Manchester, NH
Rita Mathis, Decatur, GA
Norma Mengel, St. Paul, MN
Bob Molsberry, Columbus, OH
Kirk Moore, Warrenville, IL
Kevin Pettit, Boulder, CO
Craig Rennebohm, Seattle, WA
Karl Shallowhorn, Amherst, NY
Marie Siroky, Indianapolis, IN
Mary Alice Suter, Springfield, IL
Leslie Taylor, Columbus, OH

Chaplains for the Conference

Gunnar Cerda
Rachael Keefe

Webmaster and Music Director

Kirk Moore

Conference Office/Planner Summit Meetings, Inc.

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

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

Workshop Track Information

The schedule includes 18 workshop sessions. Some workshops will be repeated. *Denotes a workshop that will repeat. NEW for 2012! The workshops have been divided into three different tracks. The three tracks and the workshops included within that track are as follows:

Track 1: Pastoral Care and Counseling

This track will provide a focused learning experience for pastoral care providers – whether they are clergy or lay. To be truly welcoming professionals in ministry, we must develop the understanding and skills needed to provide care. Workshops will address three different themes linked by the desire to provide quality pastoral care and counseling. Each workshop is a “stand alone” workshop, and you are encouraged to attend all three to return to your places of ministry equipped to better understand and care for individuals and families in need.

Workshops included in Track 1:

1. Empowerment and Resistance: Models and Strategies for Clergy and Faith-Based Professionals in Pastoral Care and Counseling with Jason Hayes*
2. Workshop to address Persons and Families Facing Mental Illness with Jeffrey Hamilton and Peter Bauer*
3. Pastoral Care and Counseling with/for Persons in Grief, Loss, Recent Diagnoses, Trauma with Bob Albers*

Track 2: Accessible to All and Mental Health Ministry

These workshops will give the practical and applied steps to make accessibility an on going process in your congregation. The focus will be on the UCC Accessible to All mandates. We will look at a range of issues involved in fulfilling and implementing it, from looking at the church facility through a lens of accessibility, through attitudes about all forms of disability. Encouragement and practical steps to the development of teams for Inclusion and Mental Health Ministry will be provided.

Workshops included in Track 2:

4. Follow up to Keynote Address: Focus on inclusion, primary work with folks with Developmental Disabilities with Bill Gaventa
5. Becoming A2A: From Theory to Practice with Peggy Dunn and Kevin Pettit*
6. The Architecture and Design of Inclusion: Principles of Universal Design with L. Scott Lissner
7. Organizing a Congregational Mental Health Team Workshop with Craig Rennebohm*

Track 3: Consumers, Family, and Peers

This track will provide a multi-faceted perspective on what it means to be differently-abled in the church. As Paul stated in his letter to the people of Corinth, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." We all have gifts to offer and this track's workshops will address this theme. Each workshop will provide attendees with a true appreciation of what should be considered when being welcoming of others.

Workshops included in Track 3:

8. Created in God's Image: Finding self-acceptance in recovery with Rachael Keefe
9. Congregations Providing Spiritual Support Group with Alan Johnson
10. Finding a Connection with God: 12 Steps/Addiction with Karl Shallowhorn
11. People of Color, Mental Illnesses and the Church with Leslie Taylor
12. Hospitality, Faith and Disabilities with Ben Anderson
13. Panel: Empowerment, Gifts, Community beyond Disabilities with members of the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board of Directors

THURSDAY, November 1, 2012

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration—Griswold Foyer

4:15-5:30 p.m.

Welcome and Opening Worship—Griswold AB
Welcome by Peggy Dunn and Alan Johnson, UCC
DM leads worship. **Lynda Bigler**, preaching, "I Don't
Feel No Ways Tired!" 2 Timothy 4:1c-4

5:45-7:00 p.m. **Opening Banquet**—Griswold CD
Welcome and Grace by Host Conference
Minister, Bob Molsberry, Overview of the
Conference, Words from David Schoen, CORE
Groups

7:15-8:00 p.m. **Plenary Experience**—Griswold AB
“**Practicing Inclusion: Four Practices.**” Practices
of Hospitality: Practices of Neighboring; Practicing
“Side by Side” relationships; and Practicing Listening,
Coordinated by Craig Rennebohm.

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: — Chase
- Core group 2: — McGregor
- Core group 3: — Morrison
- Core group 4: — Stansbury
- Core group 5: — Wright
- Core group 6: — Adams
- Core group 7: — Griswold AB
- Core group 8: — Griswold AB
- Core group 9: — Griswold CD
- Core group 10: — Griswold CD

FRIDAY, November 2, 2012

7:00-8:15 a.m. **Breakfast**— Griswold CD

7:30-10:00 a.m. **Registration**—Griswold Foyer

8:30-9:00 a.m. **Morning Devotions**—Karl Shallowhorn, Griswold AB

9:00-10:00 a.m. **Plenary Keynote**—Griswold AB
“Widening the Welcome: Improving Practice and
Preaching through Inclusion.”
Bill Gaventa

10:00-10:30 a.m. **Break**—Griswold Foyer

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Workshops 1—see room assignments below

- 1. Follow up to Keynote Address: Focus on inclusion, primary work with folks with Developmental Disabilities**—Chase Room
In ministries with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with disabilities are sometimes put on the “receiving” end of ministry. In exploring the vast diversity of inclusive ministries and resources, this workshop will also look at ways that people with disabilities are also called to serve. Finding ways to do that can be one of the keys to opening doors, hearts, and minds.
Bill Gaventa
- 2. Pastoral Care and Counseling with/for Persons in Grief, Loss, Recent Diagnoses, Trauma**—McGregor Room
This workshop will focus on crisis experiences occasioned by grief, trauma and related human events that create disruption in the lives of people. An attempt will be made to identify the dynamics that are operative in such situations. The theological resources and care giving skills will be lifted up featuring the unique approach that the faith community can employ in establishing and widening the horizons of ministry in order to carry out the mission with which we have been entrusted.
Bob Albers
- 3. Becoming A2A: From Theory to Practice**—Griswold AB
*Becoming an **Accessible to All (A2A)** church is a process, unique for each church, which has common elements shared by all churches. Peggy Dunn and Kevin Pettit will consider briefly the motivations behind the UCC A2A mandate and present a thorough demonstration of how the call to become A2A has been implemented differently in local churches. In this workshop, specific examples and lessons learned by churches and inclusion teams will be presented to help you forecast how your church might become A2A.*
Peggy Dunn and Kevin Pettit
- 4. Organizing a Congregational Mental Health Team Workshop**—Wright Room
Learn practical steps for building a mental health ministry beginning with care and support of children and families, and becoming a caring congregation supportive of wellness with individuals recovering from trauma, mental illness, substance use or facing

issues of aging. Participants will receive Mental Health Ministry: A Toolkit for Congregations, and additional resources provided by Pathways to Promise, a national interfaith mental health resource organization.

Craig Rennebohm

5. Created in God's Image: Finding Self Acceptance in Recovery

—Stansbury Room

This workshop will explore how faith can significantly impact recovery, especially in terms of self-acceptance and self-worth. Many people in recovery from illness, accident, or addiction understand themselves to be "broken" or "damaged" and somehow worth less than others who seem to be whole. Understanding what it means to be created in God's image can foster courage and strength along the path to recovery. Participants will be invited to share spiritual practices that affirm personal value and to try out some self-affirmation activities.

Rachael Keefe

6. Hospitality, Faith and Disabilities —Morrison Room

This will be an interactive presentation with attendees. The presentation will be about Ben's s life growing up with a disability and how he went to a special school for children with disabilities in the 1950's. He will relate how he struggled with his faith as a child asking questions about who he is. He will talk about how he wanted to become somebody other than what people thought he was and how he felt trapped in that situation. He will talk about how there were people in his life that helped him to become what he dreamed he could do. He will talk about how you can welcome every person into your church and community whether or not they have a disability.

Ben Anderson

12:15-1:45 p.m.

Luncheon—Griswold CD

Plenary Keynote: "Beyond Disabilities, Diagnoses and Disorders: Prophetic Resistance to the Language of Normalcy." **Jason Hays**

1:45-3:00 p.m.

Sabbath Break—Griswold AB

3:00-4:30 p.m.

Workshops 2—see room assignments below

1. *Workshop to address Persons and Families Facing Mental Illness*—Morrison Room

This workshop will provide an opportunity to understand mental illness in three ways: Clinically – symptoms and indication of the more common mental illness; Community – how does these illnesses affect a persons relationship to a faith community and the development of their own faith; and Family – how to support families as they address these needs of their loved ones. The workshop will include “take away” resources for your use and opportunities to imagine ways to minister. The leaders of this workshop will also be available throughout the conference to provide consultation regarding situations you may be addressing in your ministry in this area.

Jeffrey Hamilton

2. *Pastoral Care and Counseling with/for Persons in Grief, Loss, Recent Diagnoses, Trauma*—McGregor Room

This workshop will focus on crisis experiences occasioned by grief, trauma and related human events that create disruption in the lives of people. An attempt will be made to identify the dynamics that are operative in such situations. The theological resources and care giving skills will be lifted up featuring the unique approach that the faith community can employ in establishing and widening the horizons of ministry in order to carry out the mission with which we have been entrusted.

Bob Albers

3. *Empowerment and Resistance: Models and Strategies for Clergy and Faith-Based Professionals in Pastoral Care and Counseling*—Chase Room

In this workshop we'll consider the operative models of “disability” and “disorder” that influence our work in pastoral care and counseling. Do our models and strategies in care and counseling facilitate empowerment for all? Do they encourage resistance to discourses that exclude and subjugate persons? We'll seek to assess the ways our clinical and theological assumptions about care and counseling may cause unintended harm, and how we, as “helping professionals,” often (unintentionally) participate in de-humanizing systems that limit human flourishing. We'll conclude by exploring new, emerging clinical and pastoral approaches that value resistance to these de-humanizing systems, and that make

power and privilege within the therapeutic/pastoral relationship transparent and negotiated.

Jason Hayes

4. *Finding a Connection with God: 12 Steps/Addiction* —

Stansbury Room

For many living with addiction, a connection with a Higher Power has been severed. This workshop will explore how 12 Step programs help people in recovery discover the God within through personal testimony and shared experience.

Karl Shallowhorn

5. *People of Color, Mental Illnesses and the Church* —

Griswold AB

Mental illness affects one in five Americans at some point in our lifetime. African-Americans and other people of color are no exception. Unfortunately, lack of understanding and the perceived stigmas associated with mental illness sometimes keeps many of us from seeking help. The church can be a place of radical hospitality when we understand the dynamics of culture and the resilience of communities of color.

Leslie Taylor

6. *Panel: Empowerment, Gifts, Community beyond Disabilities with members of the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board of Directors*—Wright Room

From the inside of experience, what do persons with disabilities have to teach temporarily-abled-bodied congregation members about living in the interdependent community of the church and the world? An open-ended and participatory conversation facilitated by some of the UCC DM board.

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: — Chase

Core group 2: — McGregor

Core group 3: — Morrison

Core group 4: — Stansbury

Core group 5: — Wright

Core group 6: — Adams

Core group 7: — Griswold AB
Core group 8: — Griswold AB
Core group 9: — Griswold CD
Core group 10: — Griswold CD

- 6:00-7:30 p.m.** **Dinner**— Griswold CD
- 7:30-8:30 p.m.** **Presentation by Bob Molsberry and Panel:
Conference Inclusion Teams!**—Griswold AB
- 8:45-9:15 p.m.** **Evening Vespers**—Rita Mathis & Kirk Moore—
Griswold AB
- 9:15-10:15 p.m.** **Hospitality Suite**—Worthington Ballroom
Hosted by United Church Homes, Inc. (UCH)

SATURDAY, November 3, 2012

- 7:00-8:15 a.m.** **Breakfast**— Griswold CD
- 7:30-10:00 a.m.** **Registration**—Griswold Foyer
- 8:30-9:00 a.m.** **Morning Devotions**—Mary Alice Suter—Griswold
AB
- 9:00-10:00 a.m.** **Plenary Keynote**— Griswold AB
"Accept that you are Accepted: Widening the
Inclusive Welcome"
Bob Albers
- 10:00-10:30 a.m.** **Break**—Griswold Foyer
- 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** **Workshops 3**—see room assignments below
1. ***Becoming A2A: From Theory to Practice***—Griswold AB
*Becoming an Accessible to All (A2A) church is a process, unique for each church, which has common elements shared by all churches. Peggy Dunn and Kevin Pettit will consider briefly the motivations behind the UCC A2A mandate and present a thorough demonstration of how the call to become A2A has been implemented differently in local churches. In this workshop, specific examples and lessons learned by churches and inclusion teams will be presented to help you forecast how your church might become A2A. **Peggy Dunn and Kevin Pettit***

2. Workshop to address Persons and Families Facing Mental Illness—Morrison Room

This workshop will provide an opportunity to understand mental illness in three ways: Clinically – symptoms and indication of the more common mental illness; Community – how does these illnesses affect a persons relationship to a faith community and the development of their own faith; and Family – how to support families as they address these needs of their loved ones. The workshop will include “take away” resources for your use and opportunities to imagine ways to minister. The leaders of this workshop will also be available throughout the conference to provide consultation regarding situations you may be addressing in your ministry in this area.

Jeffrey Hamilton

3. Empowerment and Resistance: Models and Strategies for Clergy and Faith-Based Professionals in Pastoral Care and Counseling—Chase Room

In this workshop we'll consider the operative models of “disability” and “disorder” that influence our work in pastoral care and counseling. Do our models and strategies in care and counseling facilitate empowerment for all? Do they encourage resistance to discourses that exclude and subjugate persons? We'll seek to assess the ways our clinical and theological assumptions about care and counseling may cause unintended harm, and how we, as “helping professionals,” often (unintentionally) participate in de-humanizing systems that limit human flourishing. We'll conclude by exploring new, emerging clinical and pastoral approaches that value resistance to these de-humanizing systems, and that make power and privilege within the therapeutic/pastoral relationship transparent and negotiated.

Jason Hayes

4. Organizing a Congregational Mental Health Team Workshop—Wright Room

*Learn practical steps for building a mental health ministry beginning with care and support of children and families, and becoming a caring congregation supportive of wellness with individuals recovering from trauma, mental illness, substance use or facing issues of aging. Participants will receive Mental Health Ministry: A Toolkit for Congregations, and additional resources provided by Pathways to Promise, a national interfaith mental health resource organization. **Craig Rennebohm***

5. **Congregations Providing Spiritual Support Groups** —
Stansbury Room

*Come and learn about the guidelines, the rituals, and a format and bring your experiences! What can you offer/provide for spiritual support for persons and families who are affected by mental health challenges? We will look at one such group from a local UCC church: **A Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health and Wellness**. We will share ideas for how to start one in your congregation.*

Alan Johnson

6. **The Architecture and Design of Inclusion: Principles of Universal Design** —McGregor Room

We have all been influenced by how spaces are organized: A circle encourages discussion, neat rows for instruction, lighting to encourage interaction or contemplation. Each arrangement we pick makes implicit assumptions about who is participating, their physical and sensory abilities, their cultural referents and how they make meaning. The principles of Universal Design were originally developed as a mindset or approach to conceiving, designing and building spaces that would be, understandable, comfortable, safe and inviting to as many potential users as possible. Originating in architecture the principles extend to how we organize the physical elements within a space and the social experiences that occur there. After a brief introduction to the seven principles of Universal Design, Scott will lead a discussion driven by the participants. The focus will be on practical ways to meet the goals of inclusion in the short and long run - every day decisions about spaces and programs, the occasional opportunity when purchasing furniture and equipment, infrequent opportunities presented by renovations and the rare chance represented by building a new space. How can you use the built, virtual and social environments to widen your congregation's welcome?

L. Scott Lissner

12:00-1:45 p.m.

Luncheon Presentation—Griswold CD

“Always Let Your Life Be a Reflection of the Sunflower Inside You!” **Barbara Baylor**

Closing Worship, **coordinated by Bob Molsberry**

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

*Hope begins in the dark,
The stubborn hope
That if you just show up and
Try to do the right thing,
The dawn will come.
You wait and watch and work:
You don't give up -- Anne Lamont*

Keynote Speakers

Bob Albers is Distinguished Visiting Professor of Pastoral Theology at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. He has been a parish pastor prior to the three decades teaching pastoral theology. His book *Shame: A Faith Perspective* received an award from the Academy of Pastoral Clergy as one of the top ten books for pastors in 1995. He was the editor of *The Journal of Ministry and Recovery* and is an editor of the recently published book, *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and their Families*.

Barbara T. Baylor has served on the national staff of the United Church of Christ for fifteen years as the Minister for Health Care Justice, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM). She provides leadership and guidance in identifying and understanding the political landscape of health care reform as well as emerging and unresolved social and political ideologies related to this issue. She assists the church in all its settings to encourage an understanding of health and health care as issues of social and economic justice. She has over 25 years of experience working in public health to provide leadership, empowerment and capacity building programs that focus on health care justice, community wellness, health promotion, disease prevention and the reduction of health disparities. Barbara is co-liaison for the UCC Disabilities Ministries and the Mental Illness Network.

Lynda Bigler, is the pastor of The Congregational UCC in Humboldt, IA. She is the first woman in Humboldt County to be President of the local Ministerial Association. Visually impaired since birth, Lynda has served on various committees for people with Disabilities including the Interfaith Disability Network of Oregon and the Disability Advisory Services Council of Multnomah County, Oregon. She is currently a member of the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board, UCC Local Church Ministries Board, the Iowa Conf. NW Association Advisory Board, and BHA Educational Consultants, LLC Board.

Bill Gaventa serves as Director of Community and Congregational Support at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, and a Associate Professor, Pediatrics, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He is a graduate of Stetson University in Florida and Union Theological Seminary, New York City. He served as Editor of the *Journal of Religion Disability, and Health* and has served as Executive Secretary for the Religion and Spirituality Division of the AAIDD (American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities). He received both the Service Award and a Presidential Award from the AAIDD (formerly AAMR), and, in 2008, the COMISS Medal from the Congress on Ministries in Specialized Settings.

Featured Speakers

Ben Anderson was born with cerebral palsy and was diagnosed with an IQ in the low 60's at the age of 3 ½. He was put into special education class at the age of 12 through high school and graduated in 1972. He began a nonprofit organization in 1978 called Break Through Inc. that provides rehabilitation awareness and inclusion training on the subject of persons with disabilities. In 1992, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stout with a Bachelor of Science Degree in vocational rehabilitation with an emphasis on community based rehabilitation, and in 2006, he was appointed by the Governor of Wisconsin to the Rehabilitation Council. His first book was *Breaking Through* and his second book, *IQ of 63, So What?: Going Beyond Everybody Else's Expectations* is being used as a textbook at two universities.

Jeffrey Hamilton

Jason Hays is a pastoral counselor and associate pastor at First Congregational UCC in Boulder CO. Prior to beginning his clinical practice in Narrative Pastoral Psychotherapy, he served as a pastor at Christ Church of the Deaf in Baltimore, MD and campus minister at Gallaudet University. Jason is a PhD Candidate in Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling at Brite Divinity School, and is adjunct faculty in Pastoral Care and Counseling at Lexington Theological Seminary.

Rachael Keefe was ordained in the UCC in 1992 and is currently serving as clinical chaplain at New Hampshire Hospital, the state psychiatric facility. She is the author of two devotional books, *Negotiating the Shadows: Daily Meditations for Lent* and *A Circle in the Dark: Daily Meditations for Advent*. More information on these books and a link to her blog, "Write Out of Left Field" can be found at: keefe-sanborne.com. When not working or writing, Rachael enjoys spending time at the beach with her spouse.

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.

Rita Mathis is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She has been working with her church in Decatur, GA to develop programs to help both reduce stigma for people who have mental illnesses and provide services. She specializes in conducting trainings related to Anger Management, Healthy Relationships and Incest. Rita Mathis has been in the mental health field for over twenty years and is very passionate about using her gifts to positively impact people's lives

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, swimming and triathlon events.

Kirk Moore is the pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Downers Grove, Illinois. He's a writer and a songleader too! Kirk serves as the web administrator for Widening the Welcome. You can catch up with Kirk on his blog, (kirkmoore.co) on Twitter, (@kirkmoore) Google+ (gplus.to/kirkmoore) and yes, even on Facebook. Kirk, wife Cassie, and their three children live in Warrenville, IL.

Kevin Pettit is a member of the First Congregational Church in Boulder and a graduate of the Iliff School of Theology. He is working to become a minister in the UCC, commissioned to work with churches and associations in the Rocky Mountain Conference to help them learn to offer a more genuine welcome to

visitors and members who might have a disability or an impairing condition that limits their experience of church in some way. He hopes to help churches consider carefully the process of becoming A2A, or Accessible to All, and aid these churches as they become more truly an embodiment of Christ's body.

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 workshop on Organizing a Congregational Mental Health Team. Craig has recently taken on the role of Executive Director of Pathways to Promise, a national multi-faith resource for mental health ministry.

Karl Shallowhorn is a NY State Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor and is currently a Senior Counselor at Horizon Health Services in Buffalo, NY. He is a member of Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC and has served in a variety of capacities including Moderator and Deacon. In 2008 he was a recipient of the Erie County Disabilities Employment Recognition Award. Karl also serves on the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association of Erie County. He is the author of *Working on Wellness: A Practical Guide to Mental Health* and blogs at: <http://workingonwellnessbuffalo.blogspot.com>.

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.

Leslie Taylor is a UCC clergy person currently serving at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. One of her responsibilities at MTSO is serving as the Disabilities Services Coordinator. Leslie is a member of AHEAD (Association of Higher Education and Disabilities) and of the Ohio Conference Inclusion Team. Leslie has served local churches and in non-profit settings as well as serving in the national setting of the UCC for 10 years. Leslie comes to this work because her brother, uncle, grandmother and biological father live or lived with mental illness.

Conference Chaplains

Gunnar Cerda is Ordained in the United Church of Christ and has served as the Pastor of two UCC congregations. He is currently the Manager of Pastoral Care (Chaplain) for Grady Memorial Hospital in Delaware, Ohio. He is also the Chair of the Central Southeast Ohio Association Inclusion Team and a delegate for General Synod. Gunnar lives in Delaware, Ohio with his wife Beth and two teenage children, Benjamin (with Aspergers Syndrome) and Rachael.

Rachael Keefe (information listed above under “Featured Leaders”)

Chairs of the Hosting Organizations

Peggy Wolfe Dunn serves as the current co-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 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.

United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries - a brief history

United Church of Christ Response to the Gospel of Inclusion

The United Church of Christ, with its long history of concern for “the least of these,” has been aware of the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities for decades and has been actively promoting this welcome in strategies and resolutions. One of our pioneers in this field, the Reverend Harold Wilke, was present when President George H.W. Bush signed the A.D.A. in 1990. Having been born without arms, Harold Wilke received the souvenir pen from President Bush with his toes. “*Move [us],*” he said in the blessing prayer that he delivered at the ceremony, “*to discard those old beliefs and attitudes that limit and diminish those among us with disabilities.*”

Over the past 55 years, the United Church of Christ General Synod has passed at least fifteen different resolutions on various aspects of disability inclusion, including congregational welcome, authorization for ministry, reducing stigma for persons with mental illness, expanded medical care and insurance coverage, affirmation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, access at General Synod itself, and national structures and initiatives designed to help congregations in their efforts to become more welcoming.

Another pioneer in this movement, the Reverend Virginia Kreyer, who lived with severe cerebral palsy, started the first “Task Force on the Handicapped” in the New York Metropolitan Association in 1971. This task force later blossomed into a denomination-wide task force now known as the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries (UCC DM). 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,” she 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 Mental Illness Network (UCC MIN) began in 1992 with a grant from the then American Missionary Association of the United Church of Christ through the work of Nanette Roberts. She asked early leaders in this network, the Revs. Bob Dell and Ellen Hiatt 1) to have an exhibit at the 1993 General Synod in St Louis, and 2) to start a newsletter. The Mental Illness Network was born as a response to the need for families and others to communicate among themselves about their experiences as families.

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)”.

Notice that these ministries were initiated through the perceived needs and the gifts and passions of involved individuals. National structures, some minimal funding, and formal resolutions of the United Church of Christ came along later, but the impetus and energy have bubbled up from the grass roots. This is a reflection of the polity of the United Church of Christ, which recognizes and authorizes the autonomy (within covenant) of the local settings of the church.

UCC DM and UCC MIN have struggled over the last couple of decades to find an effective role in the church. They have advocated for greater protection for persons with disabilities and mental illness through our UCC Pension and Insurance programs, and have maintained a presence at General Synod gatherings and through UCC publications. They have also produced an exhaustive online resource and guide for local congregations entitled, *“Any Body, Everybody, Christ’s Body.”* Working in partnership, the UCC MIN and the UCC DM have offered now three national conferences, *“Widening the Welcome: Inclusion for All.”*

One of the new strategies as of 2012 has been to offer a grant to UCC Conferences to develop Conference Inclusion Teams. The first 5 conferences that have received these grants are Florida, Southwest, Ohio, Rocky Mountain, and California Nevada Northern. We will hear from these conference teams at the **Widening the Welcome 2012: Inclusion for All.**

United Church Homes - A History of Caring!

Comfort. Friendship. Celebration. These are the hallmarks of United Church Homes communities – campuses that have inspired journeys of the spirit for residents and team members alike for nearly a century.

Today, United Church Homes is one of the largest providers of senior living, serving more than 4,000 residents in 67 communities. We value residents spiritually, physically and emotionally, and we respect their engagement in the life of our communities, including decisions about their care. This is our passion. This is our calling.

Since 1916, when Matthew and Jane Smith bequeathed 168 acres of farmland in Holland, Ohio, to the Toledo Classis of the Reformed Church to create places of “fair haven” for seniors, United Church Homes has been an innovator in person-centered care. As a faith-based outreach of the United Church of Christ, our heritage is one of inclusion, innovation, and continued spiritual growth. Here, life’s journeys continue and residents are celebrated not only for all they are but all they might yet be.

As the years have passed, United Church Homes has faced the inevitable changes and challenges, but one thing remains the same: our communities continue to celebrate the spirit of seniors by providing a uniquely holistic approach. They are places of exceptional care for the whole person.

We are United Church Homes and we invite you to learn more about our comprehensive model of senior living. **Discover** how you can celebrate the spirit with us by visiting <http://www.unitedchurchhomes.org/communities/>

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Meeting Space

