



Unique "Share Fair" Will Inspire Annual Meeting Attendees

by Tisha Brown

**Looking for new ideas?
Seeking inspiration for your
congregation's next outreach effort?
Needing a boost of encouragement?**



Then check out the first of its kind **Share Fair** at this year's Conference Annual Meeting.

I am thrilled to announce that 21 congregations from throughout the state representing a wide range of ministries will share their stories about how they are transforming lives, changing our world and shifting from maintenance to mission. When you visit the Share Fair you will encounter **examples of creative and innovative approaches** to faith formation for all ages, ideas for community engagement and justice ministries, examples of alternative worship services, a significant shift in governance and an alternative approach to ministry staffing.

Everyone attending Annual Meeting is encouraged to make time to walk through the Share Fair to collect ideas, engage with folks from around the state and share your own story of creative ministry in your context. Sharing stories and resources throughout the conference is one of the key components of the Shift Initiative. The diversity and creativity of ministry taking place around our state is inspiring and encouraging. I believe it illustrates the idea that we have within us and among us virtually everything we need to navigate this time of rapid change and to be the church in our communities in fresh and innovative ways.

The Share Fair will take place at **Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 10... [Read on>](#)**

Sharing Our Stories Connects and Inspires Us

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Church Spotlight



[Salem UCC, Plymouth](#)

This church in the Northeast Association is led by pastor Jim Hoppert. The church's

Hello! My name is **Rachel Payden** and I have had the privilege of working with the Wisconsin Conference staff since September of 2016 as the "**Curator of Innovative Stories**". The focus of my work has been to connect with past and present Lay Academy students to ask them to share personal stories about their communities of faith. We are creating a communication web to share, inspire and provide hope where it is needed!



Specifically, we asked Lay Academy participants to **share what their church has done that makes them the most proud** and/or to share what significant changes have taken place in their congregational life recently. The list of mission-based work that is taking place around the conference is truly incredible! In addition to the great mission stories, I have also noticed a recurring theme of ministry, a theme of relationships, connection, community-building! You'll see it in these quotes from Lay Academy students...

[Read on>](#)

Help Invite the UCC to Milwaukee for General Synod 2019!

Wisconsin will be hosting General Synod, the biannual gathering of the entire United Church of Christ, in Milwaukee, June 21-25, 2019. **We would love it if you would help our delegates to this year's General Synod extend a warm Wisconsin welcome to our brothers and sisters in Christ around the country.**

Here's what we'd like you to do:

- Create a 5x7 invitation to General Synod from your congregation to the wider United Church of Christ. Have fun with this! Get creative!
 - Feature a photo or drawing of yourselves, your church building, and/or your ministry at work in the world.
 - Include something that makes your congregation a unique expression of the UCC.
- Every invitation **MUST** include these words: On behalf of the Wisconsin Conference, the people of _____ UCC invite you to join us in Milwaukee for General Synod, June 21-25, 2019.
- Send at least 15 copies of your invitation to the conference office - 4459 Gray Rd., DeForest, WI 53532 - no later than Monday, June 12, 2017, or send them with your delegates to annual meeting in Green Lake.

Let's bring a warm Wisconsin invitation to UCC'ers at this year's General Synod! Questions? Contact Tisha Brown, **tbrown@wcucc.org** or 608-846-7880.

Janesville UCC Becomes Immigrant Welcoming Congregation

A UCC News Story

First Congregational UCC, Janesville, "is taking courageous

mission statement, "sharing faith, lifting up, reaching out, and growing together," guides the work of the congregation in their community and world.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

Check the Conference **calendar** for upcoming events.

Administrative Assistant/ Secretary Sought

Immanuel United Church of Christ in Neenah has a job opening for an administrative assistant/secretary. Interested people can **[email the church](#)** or call (920) 722-0381.

Trinity UCC, Brookfield, has several sound system items available for a congregation seeking to augment their sanctuary sound system. A free will offering is suggested, however a church's needs will be considered. **Download flyer.** **Inquiries: [email Pat Matthews](#).**

UCC Clergy and Friends Brewers Game June 22, 2017

Chef David Gaeth and Tim Perkins invite you to gather for prayer (and fellowship) at Miller Park on June 22nd at 1:10, when the Brewers "faithfully" play against the

steps to practice a faith that is welcoming in an environment where it is not often the popular choice given the political currents," said Janesville UCC's pastor, the Rev. Tanya Sadagopan. "As the only UCC church in town, it is the progressive Christian voice in Rock County and is making a big difference in Janesville and beyond."



Sadagopan, who's been the pastor less than two years, noted that the crisis in Syria was the catalyst. In 2015, when images of the body of a little boy face down on the beach appeared in the news, the church outreach committee decided the congregation needed to do something. They decided to step out with who they are in response to immigrants and refugees. Their faith made that very clear.

"This is not a political issue," said Sonja Bagley, chair of the Janesville UCC Outreach Ministry, "but a matter of following the teachings of one God through discipleship and service." In February the congregation voted to become an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation after a year of discernment. And now it is moving to put that decision into practice in its community.

[Read the full story>](#)

Join the Southeast Association at Pridefest

The Southeast Association (SEA) of the Wisconsin Conference UCC invites you to join them at Pridefest this year. Milwaukee Pridefest is the nation's largest LGBTQ+ festival with permanent festival grounds. Last year over 300 people visited the



SEA's Open and Affirming booth. Those present last year share this note as reported on the SEA's Pridefest web page: "Most of them (booth visitors) did not know that there are Christian churches who accept, welcome, affirm, and love them as they are. As volunteers shared the message of God's unconditional love we heard stories of wanting to belong to a faith community."

Consider getting involved in this important justice effort by volunteering for a shift at the ONA booth. [More info is available here>](#)

Heading to General Synod in Baltimore?

If you're going to General Synod in Baltimore in June as a visitor, we'd love to have you **join us on stage when we formally invite the UCC to Wisconsin** for General Synod 2019. Please email [Lisa Hart](#) if you're planning to be in Baltimore, so we can give you

Pirates of Pittsburgh.
[More info>](#)

The Parish Paper

Check out this great resource of monthly articles [here!](#)

Quick Links

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Got News?

Let us know! If you have something you'd like considered for publication in *Wisconsin Conference Life*, email [Nola](#) at the Wisconsin Conference.

details about our presentation, and connect you with the Wisconsin delegates and staff who will be there. (Please bring a red shirt if you're coming.)

Annual Meeting Early Registration Deadline is Sunday!

SHIFT: Our Unfolding Story
June 9-11, 2017



SHIFT: Our Unfolding Story

Sign up for Annual Meeting before the price increases. Attend the entire meeting, or attend Saturday only and still take in the Share Fair, workshops, Discipleship Walk and keynote by Rev. Everett Mitchell. Full meeting info available at wcucc.org/annualmeeting.

[Registration](#)

[Download Brochure](#)

Annual Meeting Workshop Features Author of "Becoming Transparent"

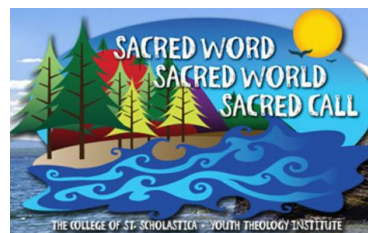
"Becoming Trans-Parent, One Family's Journey of Gender Transition" is a collection of poems by Annette Langlois Grunseth that shares one parent's experience of an adult child transitioning from son to daughter. The book's narrative poems explain changing avatars, using bathrooms, selecting clothing, grieving, passing as a woman, job discrimination, unique health issues, what happens to marriage and family, along with the joy that comes from seeing a child transition into living an authentic life. Annette and John Grunseth will talk about their experiences in this journey.

Workshop co-leader Joey Hoover-Simon will talk about her family's experience at the intersection of family and faith with a transgender child. The workshop is titled Transgender Stories.

Find all Annual Meeting Workshop info [here](#)>

Summer Opportunity for HS Youth to Enrich Their Faith

The **Sacred Word, Sacred World, Sacred Call - Youth Theology Institute**, July 7-16, at the College of St. Scholastica is designed for rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors as a place to engage with



their faith, discover theological resources to deepen their thinking and understanding of the Bible, explore Christian spirituality, and begin to learn how to listen for their life's calling. The Institute uses broad Christian theology and spirituality to provide youth with a transformative experience of God and Her movements in their lives.

The Youth Theology Institute is made possible by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., which exists to support the causes of religion, education and community development, and enrich the religious lives of American Christians. [More info>](#)

Strengthen the Church Offering Upcoming



Strengthen the Church (STC) is a special mission offering to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Half of this offering stays in the Wisconsin Conference, with the other half going to support wider church ministries. In Wisconsin, STC supports pastor and congregational care through programs like Communities of Practice and Lay Academy, and the work of the Associate Conference Ministers with congregations.

At the national level, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

Most congregations will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 2017. All UCC churches that have given to the Strengthen the Church offering in the past four years should receive a supply of worship bulletins and offering envelopes in their automatic shipment. **Resources are also available on the UCC website** at ucc.org/stc. Here are direct links to the STC worship bulletin and poster:

[STC Worship Bulletin](#)

[STC Poster](#)

Conference Transitions

Searching Churches

- **The Crossing Campus Ministry** in Madison is seeking an interim Executive Director
- **First Congregational UCC** in Plymouth seeks a full time pastor
- **Bethlehem UCC** in Kiel seeks a full time pastor
- **St. Paul's UCC** in Wausau seeks a full time Director of Faith Formation/Visitation Provider

To see the above postings and all searching churches, [click here](#).

- **Middleton Community Church** is also searching for a full time Faith Formation Director. [Email the church](#) for more information.

New Calls

- **Bill Rettig** who has been serving as interim pastor at First

- **Rev. Rota**, who has been serving as interim pastor at First Congregational UCC in Boscobel, has been called as their designated pastor, effective May 1, 2017.
- **Jack Kraaz** has been called as interim pastor at Grace UCC in Kohler, effective April 23, 2017.

Installations and Ordinations

- **Rev. Doris Ruben** was installed at Ebenezer UCC in Stratford on May 7, 2017.

Good Tidings

- **Rev. Charles Rota** celebrated his 100th birthday on April 17, 2017!

The Conference Transitions feature appears monthly in the Wisconsin Conference Life. Please share your transition information, including church anniversaries, with the newsletter editor by emailing Nola.

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The Wisconsin Conference UCC is an [Open and Affirming Conference](#).

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