

ONE CHURCH

ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared resurrection witness for Planet Earth during 50 great days of greening up, powering down, and shouting out for the environment! That's **Mission 4/1 Earth!**

“**Mission 4/1 Earth: 50 Great Days**” is about boldly living Jesus’ let-your-light-shine proclamation in the Sermon on the Mount: “That they may see your good works!” It is an opportunity to live out our faith — in unity, as one church — for the sake of our fragile planet Earth.

Launching on Easter Monday, April 1, 2013, and continuing through the great 50 days of Eastertide, UCC congregations, colleges, seminaries, camps and outdoor ministries, and health and human service agencies will join together in a shared mission campaign to:

- Offer more than **ONE MILLION HOURS** of engaged earth care, including clean up, advocacy, education, and behavioral changes that will impact the environment.

- Plant more than **100,000 TREES** locally and globally in partnership with the National Arbor Day Foundation and the UCC’s denominational partners around the world.

- Write and send more than **100,000 ADVOCACY LETTERS** on environmental concerns to elected officials and local and national newspapers.

Through **Mission 4/1 Earth**, we will inspire and aspire to what we can accomplish as ONE CHURCH.

JUSTICE IMMERSION CENTERS

God’s grace and generosity calls us to be courageous advocates for justice and peace. We are inspired through scriptures, the foundation of our justice faith formation that comes to life when we study issues, organize with communities, build networks, and advocate for just public policies. We are further inspired and moved beyond imagination in our justice immersion centers. The UCC’s centers provide transformational experiences that move participants to create social and spiritual change. The first life that we change is our own. We are then compelled to be human channels of God’s grace and peace in the world made real through the teachings and example of Christ Jesus.



Centro Romero in San Ysidro, Calif., exposes us to U.S./Mexican border issues including immigration policies and human trafficking; Franklinton Center at Bricks in Whitakers, N.C., in the heart of a food desert, reveals the tragedies of racism and poverty lingering in the South; the Pilgrim Firs Center located in northwest Washington state trains justice leaders to help churches and communities change their environmental impact; additional trainings are scheduled in various places across the country. The UCC’s Washington, D.C., office provides skills training and direct action by meeting with elected leaders on issues of national and international policy. Together we are listening for the still speaking God. Together we are changing lives!

YOUNG ADULTS IN MISSION



“I am still uncovering the ways in which the past year as a YASer [member of the UCC’s network of Young Adult Service Communities in UCC churches] has changed me,” writes

Andrew Keller a few months after completing service with Pilgrim UCC in Carlsbad, Calif., and beginning graduate school. Andrew, and others serving in the Young Adult Service Communities and Summer Communities of Service, experience vital congregations that blur boundaries between congregational life and the wider community. Young adults hone leadership skills for this life-giving mission that is church in the 21st century.

Another program for young adults in mission bridges “local” and “global” by serving a global partner, followed by service in the United States with people in similar life situations. Nicole Betteridge, a Global Ministries intern, learns confidence from new friends in Laos—confidence to accept simple acts of hospitality and love.

Julianna Nitz, serving in Jaffna, Sri Lanka affirms, “My heart has been broken with loss, and my heart has been bursting with joy. I have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, walked with the stranger and loved the orphan. I have taught so many and yet been taught by many more.” God’s mission changes lives.



God is still speaking,
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OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION



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Made possible by gifts to Our Church’s Wider Mission

WHAT IS OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION?



Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) funds the work we do in the Conferences and in the national and global church. OCWM funds are invested in

programs, resources, and tools needed to keep local UCC churches strong, effective, and growing.

OCWM helps provide pastoral placement and education for church leaders; worship materials and theological interpretation; resources and training for stewardship and fundraising; and so much more. We are one church—a united and uniting church. We are the United Church of Christ.

The ministry projects you'll read about in this brochure live the UCC's core values of continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives. Our call is to tell the good news of the Still-speaking God so that all who seek the healing love of Jesus Christ can hear.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

LEADERSHIP

The UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Ministry Team (MESA) is designed to support Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Licensed and Commissioned) in our denomination from the first inklings of their calling through a healthy retirement. MESA's ministry is a collaborative effort intertwined with Conferences, Associations, and Committees on Ministry.

When a person is moved from silence into exploration of a potential call to ministry, they become a Member in Discernment and the MESA ministry team provides the guidelines and procedures for their formation. Conference Committees on Ministry mentor Members in Discernment. When that individual is authorized and called into service as a pastor of a local church, MESA is there to provide support for continuing education and oversight.

If God's voice lingers in the silence and that pastor feels drawn to explore a new ministry setting, MESA supports the search and call process of the denomination, and offers support to ministers serving in specialized settings such as hospital and college chaplaincy. In 2012, we managed over 1,500 minister's profiles with over 200 engaged in active searches.

This holy work is never completed in isolation. It is dependent on God's presence moving through the church and calling forth leaders. Together we work across the church to form, equip and support faithful and effective authorized ministers for God's mission in the world.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

Congregational Vitality is found in hope-filled worship, nurturing faith, extravagant welcome, and visionary leadership. It is also found in bold local and global witness, inspiring generosity and life together in Christian partnership. We listen for God's still speaking voice in community, "turning our work into worship and our worship into work." We are transformed together.

UCC congregations are nourished by many resources provided by the UCC's Congregational Vitality Ministry. Whether it's a call to ministry, lay and pastoral leadership training through the Center for Progressive Renewal, funding new and renewing churches, or providing scholarly reflections for pastors found in Sermon Seeds, we serve to strengthen churches and leaders. Weekly Seeds bible studies, materials found in Worship Ways, and musical selections from Sing, Prayer and Praise or The New Century Hymnal guide us toward praise and thanksgiving. Last year, online readers of Sermon Seeds exceeded 49,000 and Worship Ways reached 39,000.



Together, we listen to ancient text for a continuing testament of the still speaking God, discerning ways of extravagant welcome for the stranger; and we respond in compassionate outreach to change lives.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

"My 16-year-old son has never really been that into church, but after National Youth Event (NYE), he said he wants to learn more about youth at General Synod..." a mother shares with joyful amazement. This is only one of a host of testimonies shared by parents, guardians, youth group leaders, pastors, and conference ministers who witnessed a transformative change in their youth after attending NYE 2012.



The UCC's Ministry for Youth is committed to leadership, spiritual formation, justice, service, and youth advocacy, and provides resources for

events like the National Youth Event and General Synod. Youth Ministry is made possible year-round through UCC regional- and conference-based gatherings and through partnerships with our UCC camps and centers across the country.

At the 2012 NYE event at Purdue University, over 2,600 youth brought more than 6,000 books which were given to a local literacy coalition. Young speakers give daily inspirational messages of hope. At General Synod, youth and young adults will partner with the UCC's Centro Romero to host a border immersion learning experience, demonstrating a global commitment to faith and justice.

We only need to tune into our youth to hear a still speaking God. Our youth are the future today—right now.