

The

# Education Connection



Fall 2001

Association of United Church Educators

## Greetings from Your New Editor

I am pleased and honored to have been asked to serve as the editor of *The Education Connection*. I hope that by keeping in close contact with as many of you as possible, we can continue to make this publication a useful resource for your work as Christian educators.

This means that **you have a standing invitation to contact me** with your comments, concerns, and ideas for articles, reviews, and interviews that will be of importance to you and the people you serve in your particular setting. You will find the information for reaching me in the list of phone numbers and addresses on the back page as well as on our website -- [www.AUCE-Educators.org](http://www.AUCE-Educators.org).

In this issue, we're focusing on how to make committee work more meaningful and purposeful through a spiritual approach. Inside, we offer an interview with **Karen-Marie Yust** who has just had a book published on the subject. We also feature an article by **Elsa Marshall** who used the topic of spirituality in committee work in her UCC Certification paper. We hope you will gain some new and encouraging insights from these two perspectives.

Once again, I look forward to hearing from you and hope that you may find some words of assistance and inspiration within.

- Debbie Gline Allen

For more AUCE updates,  
check our website:  
[www.AUCE-Educators.org](http://www.AUCE-Educators.org)

## What's Inside . . .

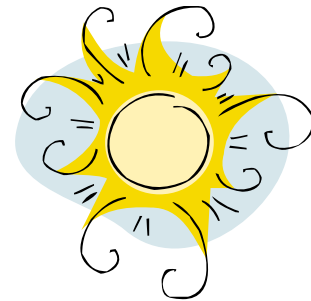
Spirituality in Committee Work

AUCE at General Synod

AUCE National Event Information

Welcome New Members!

AUCE Regional News



### Noon Day Brightness: A Message from the AUCE Chair

By Gini King

Have you noticed that the sun comes up a bit later every day and the afternoon shadows are getting longer? The sun is telling us that summer is over and the days are getting shorter. All the children (and teachers) are back to school and the church program season moves into full swing — ready or not. To be honest, I am having a hard time shifting gears from summer sunshine to fall activities. I don't like letting go of the brightness of these long days.

For AUCE change is coming about with people leaving the Coordinating Committee and new people joining. With this change comes the

Continued on page 5

# An Interview With Karen-Marie Yust

Author of *Attentive To God: Spirituality in the Church Committee*

*Karen-Marie Yust is assistant professor of Christian education at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is also on the AUCE Coordinating Committee serving as the ACCE (Association of Christian Church Educators) representative to AUCE. Her new book, Attentive to God: Spirituality in the Church Committee, has just been published and is available from Chalice Press. I called Karen-Marie and talked with her about the book and her experiences creating spirituality in committees:*

**Educational Connection:** What inspired you to write this book?

**Karen-Marie Yust:** In my eleven years in parish ministry, I was very aware of the attitudes of the people on the committees I worked with. Many on the Christian education committees were exhausted mothers who volunteer to serve because of their sense of obligation. Thus, they are not happy, have eighteen other things they feel they should be doing instead, and consider the meetings drudgery. I knew they needed a way out of this. We needed to start identifying their gifts and finding opportunities to use them. I wanted them to look upon their committee as a place for nurture, a place for doing important work, and a place for doing ministry.

**EC:** Why does committee work need spirituality?

**KMY:** I see committee work as a process of visioning and discerning, whereby we may move ahead to enact God's will. God needs to be part of our work or else we end up being like any other non-profit organization. It is our job to discern what God wishes for the world. Our culture teaches us to be competitive, individualized, and fosters "me first" attitudes. God helps us to move outside that perspective.

**EC:** What are some of the elements that help to make a committee meeting more spiritual?

**KMY:** There are at least three things I can talk about.

Drawing scripture into the conversation is important. Scripture seems to have become an overlooked resource, yet the Bible has something to say to all of our decisions — it's just not always obvious. For example, there are a number of scriptures that could be looked at when a church discusses the issue of Christian education for all ages. A question to ask when choosing scriptures to discuss is, "How can we use these stories to help others understand this issue?" It is also important to allow these scriptures to speak to us spiritually and poetically, not just literally. People are eager to hear relevance from scripture.

Another element that helps committee work become more spiritual is prayer and silence. Time to reflect is critical when in the process of making a decision.

And thirdly, listening carefully — to the scripture AND to one another. We need to honor each other's opinions even though we may not agree with everything each person has to say. We need to make space for people to talk and listen. This can work most effectively when we're not interrupting our own listening by thinking about what we want to say next. The emphasis here is

on the committee as a community, not as a collective of individuals. In this way it is easier to remember that God is present, rather than getting caught up in thinking that what I say and think is mine.

**EC:** Do you have any interesting stories you'd like to share about the process of compiling information for this book?

**KMY:** In one of the Christian education committees I worked with, the process worked so well for them that they wanted to spend more committee time working with the scriptures and discerning God's will. Many of the committee members were Sunday School teachers in a New England church that offered Sunday School the same hour as worship, so they missed worship on a regular basis and really wanted that time for growth.



## Karen-Marie Yust Interview

(Cont'd.)

Humor was always helpful. Sometimes someone would say, "This is probably what God wants, *but . . .*" And then we would have the opportunity to discuss our human feelings and reactions in relation to the divine. Another time we were discussing Jesus' willingness to lay down his life for his friends and our response to that. Someone responded, "But that's not intended for lay people, that's just for clergy to follow." Obviously, another teaching moment came from that discussion!

**EC:** Is there anything else you want folks to know about this book?

**KMY:** Three things. Most people assume the process will take a lot of time out of the committee meeting. I only used ten to fifteen minutes. In fact, I used the fifteen minutes allotted for my pastor's report to spend time working with scripture, and assimilated my business items into the rest of the agenda. I worked with the moderator before the meeting to determine which issue needed the most spiritual focus. Then we would insert the Pastor's Report just before that issue on the agenda.

Second, it is critical that you don't become attached to the scripture you choose for the focus. If someone disagrees with the appropriateness of the scripture choice, or comes up with a better one, it is important not to let your ego get in the way. The fact that the clergy or CE staff person chose the scripture cannot interfere with the process of deciding what God is calling the committee to do. When necessary, allow yourself to say, "Maybe that's not what God is saying here."

Finally, because every group is different, do not feel compelled to do something that is awkward or doesn't fit the personalities of your committee. The best resources will be the ones that you find on your own. It is my dream that people will use this process in their own way, to change the way people think about how they go about church business. The most important thing is to remember God's presence.

I invite and encourage everyone to respond to this book, to tell me about the resources they write themselves, and to give me a call to brainstorm a bit.

*Karen-Marie Yust can be reached by phone at her office (317-931-2348) or by e-mail ([kmyust@cts.edu](mailto:kmyust@cts.edu)).*

## The Christian Education Committee as a Small Group Ministry

By Elsa M. Marshall

After reading several books from the Alban Institute and Pilgrim Press about small group ministry and transforming church boards, I let the idea of "nurturing committee members to live out their faith" percolate within me for a summer. After much prayer for insight and inspiration, I met with the chair of my Christian education committee several times to discuss my thoughts and reflections. As she began to see promise for the committee and for herself, she took a position of support for implementation. She wrote a letter supporting "a trial period" of this new idea that was mailed to every committee member, along with my written reflection, two months before we began.

At the next monthly meeting of the committee, discussion was held for input and concerns. There were both! The committee agreed to give it a try. The next month, I resourced materials from *The Inviting Word* and *Liturgy of Learning* (from the Partners in Education United Church of Christ book) to implement the new worship approach. I created a very colorful worship center from fabric, candles, and items that represented our Bible study. I welcomed everyone, and we began by lighting our candle and reflecting on the day in silence as a Mozart CD played quietly in the background. Then I offered a prayer, and we did a Bible study from the lectionary text of the day.

Following the Bible study, we went around the table and each committee member shared joys and concerns. We prayed for God's presence in our work and in our lives. We then went through our meeting with the new Christian Education Committee agenda. We closed our meeting offering the Prayers of the People by praying the joys and concerns shared at the opening of the meeting, as well as anything that developed during the meeting that needed to be included. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

We have continued to use that same format each month. This year the committee membership has taken responsibility for the Bible study and opening prayer. (Originally, there was resistance to their taking on that responsibility.) The committee has changed its members completely since we began using this way of "being" the Christian Education Committee of Maple Street Church. There is now no collective memory that remembers doing our committee meetings any other way!

This form of "being" and "doing" the work of the The The committee of the church has changed and transformed many things about our work and life together. Members minister to each other. In the sharing of joys and concerns we learn many things about each other, our families, our lives. We've become connected. Committee members pray for each other. When we are together or they see each other, they ask each other about things that have been shared and have been raised up in prayer.

Continued on page 5

## Reports From General Synod 23

### AUCE Speaks Out!

By Betsy Woodward

Imagine a crowd of 8,000 people in the Kansas City Convention Center for General Synod. Surrounded by a long paper prayer chain created during the AUCE-ACCE workshop are four of your national AUCE representatives — Ruth Hainsworth, Marc Stewart, Candi Cain-Borgman, and Betsy Woodward. Here are the words spoken:

“We are AUCE, the Association of United Church Educators, your link to Christian Education. We bring you a visual reminder of the prayerful hearts, minds, and spirits of a learning, growing people created during the AUCE-ACCE workshop on Saturday. AUCE, the Association of United Church Educators, promotes the best in Christian Education for today and tomorrow. Christian Education is the heart of our churches. We call for your support, encouragement, and fair compensation for Church Educators and Youth Workers in your local church. Find out more about AUCE and our website, and visit our booth.”

“Speakouts” at General Synod are specifically designed for visitors and those who have “Voice Without Vote” status. “Speakouts” are one-minute opportunities during the business session where these people can express concerns on a topic. There were only five UCC “Speakouts” offered during each business session. We captured the spot because Candi Cain-Borgman waited in line for two hours. Thanks, Candi!

*Betsy Woodward is the Director of Christian Education at the Congregational Church of San Mateo, CA and is the West-West representative on the AUCE Coordinating Committee.*

### AUCE Included In Synod Resolution During Committee Process

By Ruth Hainsworth

The Committee process of General Synod is where the rubber hits the road in terms of the gritty business of thinking through and prayerfully acting on many of the resolutions brought to each General Synod. Some of the resolutions are referred directly to the Plenary sessions of Synod for action. Others are referred directly to the implementing bodies for action. However, the vast majority of resolutions are referred to the committees of the General Synod. These committees are composed of, and chaired by, voting delegates. It is in the committees that wording is reviewed, the intent of the resolution in its implementation is examined, and the decision to recommend passage or defeat is made.

This year, as a voting delegate from the Board of Directors of Wider Church Ministries, I was able to actively advocate for AUCE in the Committee Process. I was assigned by the luck of the draw to the committee considering the resolution entitled, “Health Effects and Impacts of Tobacco on Children, Teenagers, and Their Families.” This resolution was submitted by Justice and Witness Ministries. Its intent was to encourage discussion and education regarding the impacts of tobacco products on the health of children, youth, and families at all levels of the church, but especially at the local church level. One part of the resolution called for Justice and Witness to convene a gathering of specifically named groups within the United Church of Christ to work on this initiative. The list included the UCC Parish Nurse Network, the UCC Physicians’ Network, the UCC Health Task Force, and the Interministry Health Table. As a voting delegate, I was able to advocate for, and have the Committee approve, the inclusion of the Association of United Church Educators and the Council of Youth and Young Adult Ministries in this list of groups. The amended resolution was recommended for approval by the Committee, and it was subsequently approved by vote of the General Synod. Additionally, I was able to speak for the resolution from the floor of Synod, during which I offered my concern that the one resolution dealing directly with the children and youth of our churches was the very last item of business voted on by the General Synod. It was an exciting moment!

Having seen and experienced the importance of General Synod resolutions first hand, I am putting together a group of AUCE members from across the country who are interested in working on a resolution for General Synod 24, which will take place in Minneapolis in 2003. The resolution is in the very earliest stages of development, and will focus on the need for conferences, associations, and local churches to recognize the essential nature of Christian Education in the life of the church, and to actively support its development in whatever ways necessary, especially via appropriate funding. Anyone interested in working on this initiative should contact me directly at Newman Congregational Church (401-434-4742) or via email: [mrsh1121@aol.com](mailto:mrsh1121@aol.com).

*Ruth Hainsworth is the Commissioned Minister of Christian Education at Newman Congregational Church, UCC in Rumford, RI, as well as the New England Representative on the AUCE Coordinating Committee.*

### News from West Central: Missionary Visits Public Schools

By Marc Stewart

Nathan Knoll, a mission partner in India, was visiting churches in the Black Hills Association of the South Dakota Conference last fall. In addition to the coffees, worship services, and mission programs offered through local congregations, Nathan visited local elementary and middle schools. Nathan excited the children by telling stories about his life growing up and teaching in India.

One school arranged an assembly of students, another school arranged class visits. The assembly of third graders met in the period before recess. At the end of assembly the asked if they could forgo with recess in order to hear more and ask more questions about life in India! Itinerating mission visitors are wonderful resources for local schools, too.

### News from the West- West Region

By Betsy Woodward

The Northern California Nevada Conference Resource library is now housed at the Congregational Church of San Mateo, CA and is being organized by NCN AUCE.

Betsy Woodward, Director of Christian Education at the Congregational Church of San Mateo, is currently participating in the process of becoming a Commissioned Minister of Christian Education. Please keep her in your prayers!

## AUCE Chair Message (Continued from page 1)

process of letting go — letting go of people who have brought noonday brightness to the mission and ministry of AUCE. This fall we say good-bye to three people who have served on the coordinating committee of AUCE for many years. They are Linn Bartling, Treasurer-Membership Secretary; Kim Parks, Newsletter Editor; Sandra Rooney, World Board/Wider Church Ministries Representative; and two Regional Representatives: Lois Gibson and Melinda Campbell.

Linn Bartling and I first worked together in 1988 when we were the AUCE United Church of Christ team planning the national event in Atlanta with the ACCE Disciples of Christ team. Linn was the one who kept things on track so we could complete the tasks at hand. This was the precious leadership gift she willingly gave to AUCE as Treasurer-Membership secretary.

*The Education Connection* AUCE Newsletter has become an increasingly informative and attractive newsletter with Kim Parks as editor. Quietly Kim has been able to create a network of writers and contributors from across the country with timely and practical articles. Her compassion and understanding of people always gave guidance to the work of the Coordinating Committee.

Sandra Rooney is the one who kept us informed of international and world programs, educational resources and church school activities. I am sure that it is because of her articles, reports, workshops, and personal responses that so many of our churches are now actively involved with world ministries and multicultural programs. Sandra has made a difference in the educational ministries of our churches and in the work and commitments of AUCE.

Lois Gibson of the Great Lakes Region has served her region over many years with a clear voice of cooperation and faithfulness. She has also represented AUCE at the planning meetings of Children and the Church conferences and continues to do this.

Melinda Campbell of the Western East Region served for a few years and brought her love of the church and education to our meetings adding that special spark of enthusiasm.

**Thank you Linn, Kim, Sandra, Lois and Melinda** for all your years of service with AUCE. God has given each of you so many gifts; you have shared them with us generously. In joyful chorus we celebrate your presence with us.

New to the Coordinating Committee will be Susan Gaffney as Treasurer-Membership secretary, Debbie Gline Allen as newsletter editor, and Jan Aerie from Wider Church Ministries. Representing the Great Lakes Region is Judie Foust, and Sandra Edwards is representing the Western East Region. We look forward to their unique contributions to AUCE and working together for the future of AUCE. The first opportunity to work together as a team will be at the end of October when the Coordinating Committee has its annual meeting. Betsy Woodward is making arrangements for our meeting at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. We will have an opportunity to be in conversation with some of the faculty on the future of Christian Education and multicultural ministries.

We invite you to be in conversation with us and send your thoughts, comments and suggestions for AUCE. You can contact your Regional Representative (see the back page of this newsletter and the AUCE website (AUCE-educators.org) for names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of your Regional Representatives. You can also e-mail me at giniking@maineline.net. Let us know what you want, need or dream about for AUCE.

## Christian Education Committee

(Continued from page 1)

The intimacy of our sharing has created a commitment to each other. It has given us access to each other's lives in real ways not practiced in our old committee meeting style. We are no longer a committee or board, but a church family of friends living out the Gospel in our servant-leadership in Christian education to the church, and in Christian love and fellowship with each other. Acts of kindness and love are given and received.

An example of this is when Tammy, one of our committee members and a working mother, shared the struggle and guilt she encountered in finding good child-care for her daughter after school. Another member of our committee, Donna, was worried about this concern. At our next Christian Education meeting during "joys and concerns," Donna told us that after praying for guidance, she decided she would leave her part time job to help Tammy out. She is still helping with Tammy's daughter's care and needs, and is so loved that the child calls her "Aunt Donna."

This change in approach has led to new insights and understandings. When our committee meets, there is the realization that we are not making the decisions, but that we are discerning what God is calling us to do. It has formed our members into a small group ministry that shares, in faith, their understanding of the Bible stories and their own stories. The committee has implemented some very creative ways to handle the "work" of the committee so that our meetings contain Bible study, sharing, prayer, AND still end on time. I recommend this way of "being" a church board to every committee in the church.

*Elsa Marshall is a Certified Christian Educator in the UCC who is Director of the Massachusetts Conference Resource and Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry for Maple Street Cong. Church in Danvers, MA.*

# Invite a Friend

## Our Goal -- Each AUCE Member recruit one new AUCE Member

AUCE and Worship and Education Ministries mailed a packet of materials to over 1,800 educators, youth workers and pastors last month. Have you received your packet? It is full of helpful and timely materials: Common Lot, Certification for Church Educators, Resource Center Gathering, and AUCE information.

Ask your next door educator, youth worker and pastor if they have received their packet.

- √ See if they have read *The Education Connection* newsletter.
- √ Talk to them about coming to the AUCE National Event and 30th Anniversary, Feb. 7-8, 2002.
- √ Ask them to contribute program ideas to the AUCE website.
- √ Tell them about the publication, *The Professional Church Educator's Guide for Educators, Youth Workers and Local Congregations*.
- √ **Invite them to become a member of AUCE.**

## Membership Form

### Association of United Church Educators

TITLE (circle one) Ms. Miss Mrs. Mr. Rev. Dr.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH/AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member (Welcome!)

Renewal (Thanks!)

- \_\_\_ \$40 regular member
- \_\_\_ \$50 educator couple
- \_\_\_ \$25 full-time student or retired



Send check and this form to:  
 Susan Gaffney  
 8612 Gutierrez Road NE1  
 Albuquerque, NM 87111  
 Make checks payable to **AUCE**.

#### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
 Region \_\_\_\_\_

## **NURTURING OUR AUCE ROOTS**

A Time to Celebrate Thirty Years

with

**The Rev. John Thomas**

General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ

and

**Valerie Tutson**

Storyteller

**February 7-8, 2002**

Maritime Institute of Technology

Baltimore, Maryland

### **HELPING US TELL OUR AUCE STORIES**

**Valerie Tutson** is a noted storyteller who grew up in the United Church of Christ in Milford, CT. She has appeared around the world at storytelling festivals offering myths, folk tales, historical pieces, and Bible stories. She is also a teacher of storytelling.

### **HELPING US TO REFLECT ON OUR PAST**

**Jim Boler** is past editor of our newsletter and past Chair of AUCE. Jim had a hand in the development of AUCE. He currently serves as Minister for Educational Development in Florida Conference, UCC.

**Pat Goldberg** is the former national UCC Minister for Education in the Family, and overseer of the Church Educator's Certification process.

### **HELPING US WORSHIP**

John Thomas, Valerie Tutson, Candi Cain-Borgman and the Worship Team

### **LOCATION**

The Maritime Institute of Technology (410-859-5700) is located near the Baltimore/Washington International Airport at 5700 Hammonds Ferry Road, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090. The Institute offers double rooms. There are a few single rooms available for an additional fee of \$35. There is free shuttle service from the airport to the Maritime Institute.

### **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

The registration fee includes overnight stay, three meals, a party, and costs associated with the program. All meals are buffet style to accommodate special diets.

\$150 for current AUCE members

\$190 for nonmembers (This fee includes AUCE membership or membership renewal.)

\$75 for commuters

\$25 additional fee for registrations received after December 15, 2001

Mail your registration fee (check payable to: AUCE) along with your name, address, phone & fax #s, e-mail address, roommate choice, & any special need requests to: AUCE 2002 Event, c/o Linn Bartling, 10410 Aboite Rd., Roanoke, IN 46783.

### **QUESTIONS?**

E-mail Linn Bartling at [LTS3@aol.com](mailto:LTS3@aol.com)

#### **Welcome New Members!**

**Debra Adams**

Reading, MA

**Karen S. Albanese**

Torrington, CT

**Linda Allen**

New Canaan, CT

**Marylou Anderson**

Sarasota, FL

**Marjorie A. Baltz**

Easton, PA

**Leslie Bourdon MacDonald**

Little Compton, RI

**Joanne Buss**

Rockford, IL

**Susan Chase**

Little Compton, RI

**Arthur Clyde**

Cleveland, OH

**Carol Cyr**

Southington, CT

**Heather Eaton**

Kensington, CT

**Patricia Farley**

Wolfeboro, NH

**James Fother**

Sarasota, FL

**Sandie Hunter**

Naperville, IL

**Peter Larsen**

Cambridge, MA

**David Martin**

Hudson, MA

**Patricia Mullen**

Ft. Wayne, IN

**Sharry Nyberg**

Bellingham, WA

**Donna L. Papenhausen**

Bradenton, FL

**Derek Parker**

Richmond, IN

**Cynthia Phillips**

Voluntown, CT

**Barbara Rathbun**

Ft. Wayne, IN

**Ellie Sanders**

Evansville, IN

**William T. Vibert**

Unionville, CT

**Amy E. Wellard**

Bellevue, OH

**Shirley Weyrauch**

Orrville, OH

# The Education Connection

---

If you have any suggestions for newsletter themes, articles, or other news of interest to AUCE members, please contact the **Editor**:

Debbie Gline Allen  
35 Frost Road  
Derry, NH 03038  
allens@mediaone.net

Please send address changes or corrections to the **Membership Treasurer**:

Susan Gaffney,  
8612 Gutierrez Rd. NE1  
Albuquerque, NM 87111  
susyg@earthlink.net

## Your Regional Representatives

### Western West

Betsy Woodward  
San Mateo, CA  
650-343-3694  
betsdce@home.com

### West Central

Marc Ian Stewart  
Rapid City, SD  
605-388-0811  
mstew3258@aol.com

### Great Lakes

Judie Foust  
Peoria Heights, IL  
309-685-7649  
commin1@juno.com

### Mid-Atlantic

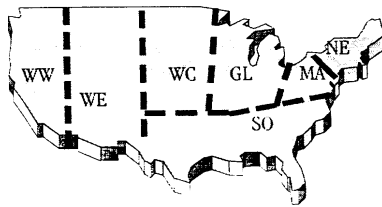
Candi Cain-Borgman  
Emmaus, PA  
215-257-6460  
ststeph@bellatlantic.net

### New England

Ruth Hainsworth  
East Providence, RI  
401-434-4742  
mrsh1121@aol.com

### Western East

Sandy Vasel Edwards  
Paonia, CO  
970527-7006  
svedwards@compuserve.com



### Southern

K. Ray Hill  
919-231-3072  
Raleigh, NC  
GKRayHill@worldnet.att.net

---

## The Education Connection

Association of United Church Educators  
P.O. Box 114  
East Derry, NH 03041

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage PAID  
East Derry, NH 03041  
Permit No. 1



Fall 2001 issue