



Christian Education & Formation Newsletter

May 2017 News & Updates

During the first week in May, clergy and lay leaders who are passionate about faith formation for all ages gathered at the Pilgrim Pines Conference Center in Swanzey, New Hampshire for the 46th Annual New England Association of United Church Educators conference.

The event included worship, workshops, fellowship, and a central focus on two important and timely issues: racial justice and interfaith matters. Exploring the theme of "*Toward Common Ground: Living Faithfully in a Diverse World Community*", conference attendees had an opportunity to hear from leaders in the field, and to receive practical recommendations on approaches and resources they might use in their work with children, youth and adults.

Below are a few highlights from the conference.

Racial Justice

The Rev. Da Vita D. McCallister, Associate Conference Minister for Leadership and Vitality in the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, engaged participants in a lively keynote address and training session that provided insights on how to eradicate racism in our personal, inter-personal, institutional and cultural realms.

Faith Formation Resources on the Topic of Racial Justice

- [White Privilege: Let's Talk - A Resource for Transformational Dialogue](#) is an adult curriculum from the United Church of Christ that's designed to invite church members to engage in safe, meaningful, substantive, and bold conversations on race.
 - The [Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ YouTube Channel on Racial Justice](#) includes several resources on racism, including a series on the Inclusivity Spectrum.
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Interfaith

Heidi Hadsell, Ph.D., President of Hartford Seminary and Professor of Social Ethics, shared her deep commitment to interfaith dialogue and engagement, rooted in the belief that in today's religiously plural world, it is essential to understand and work with religions beyond one's own.

Interfaith/Intercultural Resources

- Dr. Hadsell serves on the board of Arigatou International, which developed [Learning to Live Together](#), an interfaith and intercultural programme for ethics education that contributes to nurturing ethical values in children and young people.
- Karen Nell Smith, Interfaith Engagement Program Director at the Brookfield Institute, discussed what it means to live in peace with our neighbors within a larger multi-faith society. Learn more about interfaith engagement programs at: <http://www.brookfieldinstitute.org/interfaith-groups>. Karen also recommended Donna Hicks book, [Dignity The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict](#).
- Phoebe Milliken, who leads the International Peacemaking Program at Hartford Seminary, offered resources for understanding other cultures using a model that looks at specific values and behaviors through a [high context/low context lens](#).

Faith Formation / Practical Theology

Dr. Courtney T. Goto, Assistant Professor of Religious Education at the Boston University School of Theology and a co-director of the Center for Practical Theology, discussed the intersections of power, privilege, and culture by leading attendees in a journaling exercise exploring their personal connection to the characters portrayed in the children's book, [Swimmy](#), by Leo Lionni.

Practical Theology Resources

- Dr. Goto has also published a book, [The Grace of Playing: Pedagogies for Leaning into God's New Creation](#) (2016), where she explains how we can create the conditions for revelatory experiencing by understanding it in light of playing; adults playing for the sake of faith.

Upcoming Events & Training Opportunities

Our Whole Lives Training



Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive, kindergarten through adult sexuality education curriculum series. It provides people of all ages with accurate information on sexual health, human development, sexual behavior, relationships, and personal skills in the supportive setting of their faith community. This workshop trains teachers in how to teach participants about sexuality in age-appropriate ways.

A local training event Training Educators to teach Human Sexuality to **Grades 7-9, 10-12** will be held **July 14-16, 2017** at The First Church, UCC, 1 Concord Street, Nashua, NH 03064. [Learn More >>](#)

"UCC: Is that for Me?" Confirmation Retreat 2017
Save the Date: September 29, 2017 - October 1, 2017



What does the United Church of Christ have to do with my life and my church? Do my beliefs and dreams fit with the UCC? What does the phrase "God is still

speaking" mean anyway? Come join us for a weekend retreat so that we can talk about questions like these! Youth from NH Confirmation classes will gather for worship, music, discussion, good food and games.

[Learn more >>](#)

Quick Links

- The [Association of United Church Educators](#) (AUCE). A membership organization, of and for lay and ordained, paid and volunteer pastors, educators, and youth workers, which has been providing advocacy and support for church education and educators in the United Church of Christ since 1971.
 - "[The Guide](#)" Called to Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers.
 - Working on your summer plans? Check out the [2017 VBS Comparison Chart](#) from Cokesbury or watch a replay of the March webinar *from Wisdom From the Field, VBS 2017*.
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Employment Opportunities

Local (New Hampshire): Visit the [Classifieds/Help Wanted](#) section of the NH Conference UCC website.

National: Willing to relocate? The [UCC Ministry Opportunities webpage](#) is a great source for Christian Education and Faith Formation openings nationwide. *(It also includes opportunities here in NH, including the current opening at the Lyme Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.)*

The Word of God

Then Peter began to speak to them, "Truly, I understand that God shows no partiality." Acts 10:34 (NRSV)

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