Tribute to those Celebrating a 50th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Richard N. Slater, Associate Conference Minister, New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ provides a reflection on the Ordained Ministry of Authorized Ministers Celebrating a 50th Ordination Anniversary

The Rev. Carol Atwood-Lyon was ordained to Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ on June 18, 1971, by the Northern New Jersey Association of the Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ. Carol received her theological education at Princeton Theological Seminary, which awarded her the Master of Divinity degree. During her 50 years of Ordained Ministry Carol has served as Minister of Christian Education, Minister of Church Growth and Evangelism, Associate Minister, Interim Minister, Solo Pastor, Co-Pastor (with her husband), Senior Pastor in a multiple staff setting, and Acting Associate Conference Minister. Carol served congregations in the Vermont, Ohio, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire Conferences, and then served on Conference staff in the Massachusetts Conference. In 2009 Carol retired from active Christian ministry, hearing a new call from God to enter into Sabbath.

Carol initially attended seminary thinking she might become a religious education teacher, but along the way she was encouraged to consider ordination to pastoral ministry. This was a time when there were few women in ministry, and most churches were not open to considering a woman as their pastor. However, her Association supported her, and ordained her to “serve when and where you can,’ an unusual expectation that became her mantra. Carol notes, “For the first fourteen years of my ministry…I was often the first and only woman in ministry in the area. This “distinction” carried with it an awesome sense of responsibility, not only to serve my parishes effectively, faithfully, and well, but to be . . . a catalyst to open doors for women who would be called to ministry in the future. It was a wonderful day when I no longer carried that burden alone and was able to abandon it altogether!” An article about Carol in the NH Union Leader article noted that she is a contemplative, drawing upon silence and listening for God’s voice to give her the strength she has needed to be an effective minister.
Thank you, Carol, for 50 years of faithful Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ.

The Rev. John Buttrick was ordained to Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ on April 24, 1971 in Newtown, CT. John received his theological education at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA, which awarded him the Master of Divinity degree in 1971. John served congregations in the Connecticut and New Hampshire Conferences, and then accepted the position of Association Minister in the Illinois Conference, serving pastors and congregations as well as becoming staff support to Illinois Maya Ministries, a partnership with the Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico.

John has been recognized with awards and citations in several of the communities he has served for significant contributions to students, school staff, and community. His pastoral ministry has been marked by an engagement with the significant social issues of the time, as well as compassionate acts of caring for the vulnerable. He was appointed Welfare Officer in one town, developed a safe space for unpopular youth in another, worked to build relationships with the African American and Hispanic communities in still another, and with Bridges for Peace hosted two visitors from Russia in the context of the Cold War in an effort to gain better understanding of one another.

In 2008 John retired to New Hampshire and became what he terms a ‘refocused minister.’ Their passion for justice led Faye and John to live for three months in the occupied Palestinian territory as volunteers for the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel, and later to serve as Global Ministries Long-term Volunteers working for Kairos Palestine monitoring ‘incitement against Palestine and its partners. Since then, John and Faye have given some 50 presentations on life in Palestine to churches and community organizations.

John describes himself as a ‘lecturer, writer, poet, preacher,’ carrying into our time the biblical witness for social justice. I know that I am not alone in looking forward to his essays in the Concord Monitor on issues such as the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, violence and gun control, and social justice.

Thank you, John, for your 50 years of faithful witness and ministry in the United Church of Christ.

The Rev. Benjamin C. L. Crosby was ordained to Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ on June 27, 1971, by the Washington-North Idaho Conference UCC. Ben received his theological education at United Theological Seminary of the Twin
cities, which awarded him the Master of Divinity degree in 1971, served as pastor to several congregations in the Minnesota Conference, as Staff to Minnesota FoodShare and the Council for American Indian Ministry, before coming to New Hampshire in 1990 to serve as Conference Minister and Missioner. As Conference Minister, Ben oversaw the construction of the new Conference Center on Sheep Davis Road, and was a key player in establishing the Global Mission Partnership between the NH Conference and the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. The Ukama partnership held great meaning for Ben. He wrote, “In the context of life in southern Africa, Ukama embraces friendship with or without material benefits from either party . . . is unconditional . . . has no time limit . . . embraces the joys, the successes, the achievements, the pains, the suffering, the failures, the concerns, the problem of the others. In many ways, I see this as a wonderful metaphor for the church. I believe that we are called to be present and supportive of one another as we seek to live out the Gospel faithfully.” Another person with insight into the development of this relationship commented, Ben “was a wonderful ambassador from NHCUCC to Zimbabwe, bringing grace and sensitivity into the relationship.” A scholarship in Ben’s honor has been established with our Common Global Ministries to provide support to Zimbabwean students preparing for ordained ministry.

Ben, thank you for your years of ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

**The Rev. Clyde Powell** was ordained in October 1971 by the Naugatuck Valley Association of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. Clyde received his theological education at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA, and served several congregations of the Connecticut and New Hampshire Conferences. He brought to his ministry an ability to interact with people of all ages, especially young children and teenagers. His children’s sermons often involved a song and guitar, a true hit with both the young and the old. He served as a dean of various summer conferences at the Silver Lake Conference Center, a ministry of the Connecticut Conference. Described as compassionate and caring, his ministry led to significant growth in the churches he served.

Clyde, thank you for your years of ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.