



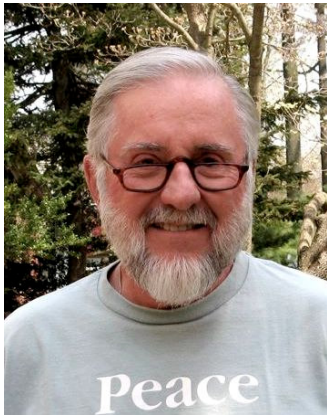
# CROSSROADS

## NEWS OF UU COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Volume 7, No. 2

Spring 2008

### General Assembly 2008



#### **The Rev. Dr. Ralph Mero UUSCM Community Minister of the Year, 2008**

Former UUA Director of Church Staff Finances, Ralph Mero, will be awarded the UUSCM Community Minister of the Year Award, in recognition of his never ending support for the creation of sustainable Unitarian Universalist community ministries. The presentation will occur at the UUSCM Annual Meeting at the 2008 UUA General Assembly in Florida, Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 8 am – 9:30 am (see SCM newsletter/website/exhibit booth for location).

Serving on the prophetic edge of ministry, Mero committed his life to living Unitarian Universalist values as a political activist in a variety of settings. A graduate (1965) of Meadville Lombard Theological School, Mero began his ministry in the parish, serving a small church near Seattle, WA. After six years in parish ministry, he moved into community ministry as a regional director for Planned Parenthood, and thereafter held several health care administration and counseling positions in the Seattle area. It was during this time that he developed the “Seattle Model” of community ministry, acting as the bridge between the local Unitarian Universalist congregation and his community ministry in the larger world.

His years as a minister watching people suffer with cancer or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome led him to work for the right-to-die for terminally ill patients. In 1988, he began developing local chapters of a right-to-die organization throughout the Pacific Northwest, which led to the passage of the country's first death with dignity law enacted in Oregon. He was founder and executive director of Compassion in Dying before moving to New England in 1996 to take the position of Director of Church Staff Finances for the UUA.

Mero’s breadth of compassion and commitment to the welfare of all ministers and their families is renowned. By the time of his retirement in 2008, his strong advocacy and organizing skills helped to bring about greater financial security for all ministers through (a) the creation of a new retirement plan for church staff, (b) an Association-wide “fair compensation” program for all staff of UU congregations, and, (c) a UUA health plan for congregation staff and community ministers.

His advocacy and counseling specifically for and about community ministry has never faded, even as he addressed larger systems issues affecting all ministers. What may not be so obvious is that when community ministers found themselves in financial trouble or other moments of distress, many turned to Mero for compassionate listening and problem-solving. He sustained many a community minister in their most difficult moments, offering tangible wisdom and guidance. The profession of Unitarian Universalist Community Ministry, as a calling and viable livelihood, owes its success, in no small part, to the contributions of The Rev. Dr. Ralph Mero.

## Community Ministry Gatherings at General Assembly 2008

### Community Ministry Workshops & Annual Membership Meeting

We hope to see you at our Community Ministry Workshops in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Invite members of your congregation to attend as well!

**Tending the Fire VI. 1:30 p.m. Thursday, June 26.** Come hear compassionate and prophetic stories of UU ministries in places of pain and triumph beyond parish walls. Revs. Dale Lantz, Barbara Meyers, Elizabeth Putnam, and Don Robinson. **Convention Center 301-302**

### Making Affiliations Work: Community Ministry & Congregations.

**3:15 p.m. Friday, June 27.** Join community and parish colleagues for an engaged conversation on emerging best practices for congregational affiliation. Revs. Maddie Sifantus, Deborah Holder, Barbara Meyers, Howell Lind, and Connie Yost. **Convention Center 317-318**

### UUSCM ANNUAL MEETING & BREAKFAST. 7:30-9:30a.m. Saturday, June 28.

Come visit with members and friends, greet Community Minister of the Year recipient Ralph Mero, and hear the latest news about community ministry. Food service begins at 7:30; meeting starts at 8am.

**Embassy Suites, 1100 SE 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Salon D.** The hotel is on the GA shuttle route and a short walk from the Convention Center. **Pre-registration required by June 20. \$20 payable to "SCM" mailed to:**

**James Cavanaugh, SCM Treasurer  
3790 Dawn Mar Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17111-2030**

**UUSCM Exhibit Booth** – Visit with old and new colleagues in the Exhibit Hall as we celebrate the launch of the new website and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1988 Community Ministry Covenant.

**Full-color poster-sized copies of the covenant suitable for framing will be available for sale!**

**Advertise your ministry while staffing the booth.** Space is limited so don't delay! To sign up for your time slot, contact SCM Membership Director, Brian Clougherty at [bclougherty@uuma.org](mailto:bclougherty@uuma.org).

**Display Your Ministry!** One benefit of membership is display space in the Exhibit Hall at GA. If you're unable to attend GA, send Brian one copy of a brochure along with business cards. Materials received by June 20th will be displayed at GA. Mail to: Brian Clougherty, 112 Monticello Ave., Durham, NC 27707. Questions? Send email inquiry to: [bclougherty@uuma.org](mailto:bclougherty@uuma.org).

## UUSCM Chapter Coordinators Explore A Grassroots Vision for Community Ministry

Over the winter, Rev. Dale Lantz, UUSCM Vice-President and Chair of the District Working Group, has been conducting interviews with those SCM members actively engaged in building a grassroots community ministry network. Below are some of the emerging issues currently being explored among district coordinators. If you share a passion for engaging these questions, please join us at the Annual Membership Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale where we'll continue to imagine "the power of organization and the organization of power."

- Considering the wide array of prophetic and pastoral community ministries, what areas of common interest and concern are best addressed together at the local level?

- How can we address the creative tensions between our congregational relationships and our ministries out in the world? In what ways can we bring our professional experience with preventable social suffering into the privatized world of congregational life?
- What do specialized community ministries have to offer to districts and clusters across our association that will help strengthen congregations and deepen the spiritual life of Unitarian Universalists?
- What is the place of lay ministry within Universalist Unitarianism? What, if anything, do credentialed lay ministers need to learn that fellowshipped community ministers do not? What models currently exist for credentialing lay ministries, i.e. parish nurses. What theologically-grounded models can be retrieved from our Universalist heritage?

## **Community Ministry Affiliation - MFC RULE 13; Section D**

In January 2008, the UUA Board of Trustees accepted proposed changes from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) which affect community ministers in preliminary fellowship. These changes to the UUA By-Laws will be on the Final Agenda to be voted on by the Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale. MFC Rule 13 outlines the revised requirements for renewal of preliminary fellowship. Rule 13, Section D states, *All ministers serving community ministry settings must during Preliminary Fellowship receive affiliation with a UUA or CUC member congregation. Affiliation involves a formal connection to a congregation and recognition of the community minister as performing a ministry. Affiliation should include a vote of the Board and having a covenanted relationship with the congregation's minister(s), if there is one.* See [http://www.uua.org/documents/mfc/rules\\_policies.pdf](http://www.uua.org/documents/mfc/rules_policies.pdf).

### ***Specific to community ministers are these requirements:***

- For community-based ministers, all Committees on Ministry must include members of a congregation and appropriate representation from the institution or agency being served by the minister. If the minister is not employed by an institution or agency, then composition of the Committee on Ministry must be approved by the Ministerial Development Director.
- A letter from a congregation stating that the minister has affiliated with that congregation. [The "letter" must be sent with renewal forms. The UUSCM leadership will engage newly appointed community minister representatives serving the MFC in the creation of a "universal" affiliation form for congregational use. Be advised you can still apply for a waiver. A remaining concern is the need for an institutionally-supported, multi-year public education campaign to prepare congregational leaders].
- All ministers serving community settings must during Preliminary Fellowship receive affiliation with a UUA or CUC member congregation. Affiliation involves a formal connection to a congregation and recognition of the community minister as performing a ministry. Affiliation should include a vote of the Board and having a covenanted relationship with the congregation's minister(s), if there is one.

Please note that the proper term is "affiliation" not endorsement. Community ministers who already have an endorsement agreement with their congregation might consider updating their agreement to show affiliation as the correct term. Community ministers in final fellowship are no longer *required* to have a formal affiliation with a UU congregation, but should consider the many benefits of affiliation for both the Community Minister and the local congregation. You might also consider bringing the information in this article to your local chapter of the UUMA, as many ministers, both parish and community, are unaware of the updated requirements.

# UUSCM Annual Report

*We, as people living in a world that is both dying and seeking to be reborn, who are shaken to our very roots by the massiveness and depth of planetary and human suffering, are empowered by a driving passion to bear witness to that suffering, participate in its transformation and affirm the inherent glory of life.*

*Preamble to the 1988 Community Ministry Covenant  
UU Society for Community Ministries*

## Dear SCM Members and Friends,

On behalf of the members of the Board of the UU Society for Community Ministries (SCM) and in this, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Community Ministry Proclamation, I'm pleased to share with you highlights of the past year and invite you into future endeavors we might accomplish together as the next generation of Unitarian Universalist community ministers.

- Advocacy on behalf of community ministry to the UU Minister's Association (UUMA) and UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). Initiated an ongoing process of revising both the UUMA Guidelines and MFC Rule and policy changes.
- Development of regional SCM chapters for the purpose of mutual support, education, and advocacy of UU community ministry. SCM members organized community ministry presentations at four district annual meetings this year (Heartland, Metro New York, Joseph Priestly, and Thomas Jefferson). Additionally, both the Northeast and Pacific Northwest held or are planning regional meetings this spring.
- Renovation of the SCM website ([www.uuscm.org](http://www.uuscm.org)) including the capacity for tax deductible on-line donations in support of SCM mission and activities. Targeted launch date is May 1, 2008.
- Collaborated with MPL intern Robin Tanner in the creation and dissemination of the first ever Community Ministry research project.
- Active and sustained engagement with the Professional Leadership Coordinating Council (PLCC) representing community ministry interests with other UUA professional organizations (UUMA, LREDA, Musicians Network, Administrators, Retired Ministers and Partners, Association of Interim Ministers).
- Other ongoing and new activities of the Board and active members included the launch of Community Ministry Sunday in congregations, identifying the needs of non-ordained SCM members, serving the Editorial Committee of *Called to Community*, and creating a comprehensive fundraising plan.

Twenty years ago, community ministry pioneers set out together forging a path to ministry that many others followed and will continue to follow in coming decades. According to David Pettee, UUA Credentialing Director, 35-40% of those currently training for the ministry express a call to community-based ministry (*Religious Leader*, Winter 2008). Other denominations are reporting similar trends. A current Vanderbilt Divinity School survey lists 17 extra-parochial ministerial specialties. Another study funded by the Lilly Endowment reveals up to 35% of the 900 mainline pastors surveyed voluntarily left the parish responding to a call to community-based ministries (*Pastors in Transition, Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, 2005). This spring, the Reverend Beth Miller, Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership (MPL), initiated the first phase of a systemic analysis of community ministry from seminary through final fellowship. Additionally, the UUA Association Sunday Funding Options survey included support for the creation of a certification program for lay spiritual leaders.

As the UUA professional organization for ordained and lay community ministries, SCM began implementing one of several localization strategies last fall designed to forge effective partnerships between the Board and nascent SCM chapters and their leadership. One important objective of SCM's chapter development strategy is increasing awareness and recognition of community ministries among congregational and district leaders. In collaboration with other community ministry stakeholders, I can imagine a multi-year public education campaign. A second objective of the chapter development strategy is providing mutual peer and professional support during this time of institution-wide adaptation to recent Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) rule changes (see Rule 13 article elsewhere in this issue of *Crossroads*). At present, twelve chapters are in varying stages of development and we're hoping more members will become actively engaged in the coming year. The Nominating Committee has provided a most exciting slate of new Board members whose experience and skills, combined with those of the present leadership, will no doubt provide SCM the highly integrated strategic leadership necessary to lead us into the next generation of Unitarian Universalist community ministry.

Reflecting on this past year's activities, I'm grateful for the many new and enduring relationships that have been a source of strength and guidance this first year as President of SCM. The Revs. Jeanne Lloyd and Maddie Sifantus continue to be steadfast companions to the second generation of leadership. This year we bid a fond farewell to Roger Brewin and welcomed the Rev. Connie Yost as the new Publications Director and in June, three new Board members will step into positions vacated by beloved and outgoing Board stalwarts – the Revs. Kate Bortner (Nominations), Sarah Voss (Secretary), and Kurt Kuhwald, (Education Director). We honor their many years of service to the mission of SCM, its membership, and abiding commitment to the Unitarian Universalist community ministry.

This is indeed an auspicious year for community ministry. I'm excited by new opportunities and confident that with your continued support, generosity of spirit, and creative energy - all surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses - we can fulfill what "they dreamed be ours to do!"

*With gratitude,*

**The Reverend Deborah Holder**  
**President, UU Society of Community Ministries**

## **Benefits of UUSCM Membership: Service, Education & Advocacy**

*Institutionalized cross-sector representation and advocacy of community ministry interests include:*

- A voice on the Professional Leadership Coordinating Council and with the UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group.
- A network of mutual support (see District Chapters in this issue).
- A new and exciting website promoting Community Ministry; check it out at [www.uuscm.org](http://www.uuscm.org)
- The UUSCM List-Serve for networking, sharing ideas, processing happenings, exploring issues and connecting with peers.
- A Good Offices Person providing individual support when your way is rough or your stress is high.
- Annual workshops at General Assembly raising awareness and providing helpful information about community ministry to congregational leaders and UUSCM members.
- Visibility at our GA booth (We raise Community Ministry awareness to over 4,000 UU's and help you display *your* ministries – see article in this newsletter.)
- Regional face to face gatherings including district annual meetings and workshops.
- *Crossroads* newsletter.
- UUSCM activist leadership

## Membership News - Database Updates & Online Renewals

Along with a recently mailed ballot for electing UUSCM leadership, you will find a Membership Renewal form displaying your information as it appears in the database. Please verify, correct, and enhance and return to Brian Clougherty, UUSCM Membership Director along with your check. Or, you may pay electronically by credit card on the new website at [www.uuscm.org](http://www.uuscm.org).

Regular membership dues remain the same at \$75/year and are payable at the start of our UUSCM fiscal year, July 1, 2008. To request the economic hardship rate of \$37.50 or student membership rate of \$22.50, follow the directions on the renewal form.

**Remember - Ballots must be postmarked by June 1st. Dues are payable by July 1<sup>st</sup>**

**This is our first newsletter available by email in Word or PDF. If you would prefer to receive your newsletter by EMAIL ONLY, be sure to check that box on your MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL form.**

## Community Ministry Milestones

**The Rev. Kate Bortner** recently retired from 22 years as the city of York, PA's Crime Prevention Coordinator. She represented the Police Department in founding the York County Hispanic Coalition and Mediation Services for Conflict Resolution; training the first bilingual, bicultural mediation team in York County; York City Police in Preschool reading program; Crime Prevention Puppet Troop; and The Interfaith Alliance. She also represented the City of York on York United Against Drugs, The Interagency Task Force on Civil Tension, York County Community Against Racism, the Healing York Initiative, Annual Homicide Survivors Memorial Service, Annual Victims Rights March and Candlelight Vigil (23rd this year) and the weekly Safe York television show. Among her awards are the Human Relations Commission Award and an African-American Love Feast honoree. At her retirement ceremony, York Mayor Brenner said. "Kate ... established positive relationships...this was a passion and her passion was contagious."

**Ellen Dionna** is in private practice providing Spiritual Guidance and Direction in the York, PA area. She will be taking part in the Central PA's area meeting of folks from Spiritual Directors International in May. She is also leading a workshop on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, *Heartsounds*, which involves exercises in opening the heart, listening to its intuitive wisdom, and seeing with the heart as one "takes soundings" in spiritual practice.

**The Rev. Rudra Vilus Dundzila**, Chicago, Illinois, received preliminary fellowship. His article "Baltic Lithuanian Religion and Romuva" was published in the academic journal *Tyr: Myth, Culture, Tradition*. He has been serving as the junior executive officer for the former UUA affiliate *Collegium: An Association for Liberal Religious Studies*.

**The Rev. Dr. Dorothy Emerson** has completed the *Global Literacy Project: Weaving Our U\*U Global Village Network*, now available online at [www.icuuw.com](http://www.icuuw.com). She has been traveling to various district

meetings to introduce the project, and reports that it's a wonderful experience to connect with all these different UUs--truly a great opportunity for a community minister!

**The Rev. Debra W. Haffner** has a new book published by Newmarket Press in April, *What Every 21st Century Parent Needs to Know*. For more information, visit [www.21stcenturyparent.com](http://www.21stcenturyparent.com).

**The Rev. William L. Holden** developed a workshop on the topic of "elevator speeches." In the workshop, he gives the background of the three liberal prophets prior to buzz sessions. He writes, "I have adjusted my elevator speech after each of the three times that I have done this. My elevator speech is "Unitarian Universalism is a non-creedal method for growing a religious identity grounded in one's personal integrity and grounded in a passionate commitment for the potential for the dignity and worth of all people."

**Maury Merkin** reports that his ministry is one of contemplative spiritual companionship in which he helps individuals and groups explore their sense of the holy -- of what is of the highest importance in their lives. He is participating as an associate in the Spiritual Guidance Program of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.

**Elizabeth Putnam** will be ordained into Unitarian Universalist Ministry on June 8th, 2008 at the Fourth Universalist Society in New York. Elizabeth is a community minister who currently serves as a chaplain resident at the Veteran Affairs Hospital in Manhattan, and she intends for chaplaincy to be her primary ministry in the future

**The Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons**, Portland, Oregon, is pleased to announce that daughter Iyara was born to Joseph and Aimee Santos-Lyons on April 9th. Mom and Baby are well. Pictures and stories at [www.radicalhapa.typepad.com](http://www.radicalhapa.typepad.com).

**The Rev. Margie King Saphier**, who was a Hospice Chaplain as well as Affiliate Minister at United First Parish Church for 5 years (2000 -2005), has been serving as Associate Minister for Pastoral Care at First Parish in Concord, MA for the past two and a half years. During this time, Margie also attended the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Direction, and offers spiritual direction to interested individuals.

**The Rev. Marcia Schekel**, Chaplain at Providence Hospice in Portland, Oregon, received her Preliminary Fellowship first year renewal. At the end of April she met with the Association of Professional Chaplains for her final interview for board certification.

**The Rev. Maddie Sifantus** writes that it is with both sadness and joy that she announced her resignation from the Board of the Golden Tones and as its Founding Director effective August 31, 2008. Through a long discernment process, she realized that it was time for her to move on both personally and professionally. She is confident that the organization will benefit from this change in leadership as they continue to develop and implement the strategic vision and mission of the Golden Tones. Maddie looks forward to discovering what the Third Age of her life will hold. Taking some well-deserved time off is her first priority, and she is looking forward to spending time with her new grandson who will be born in May. Maddie's car accident a few years ago taught her that life is precious and can be over so quickly. She will concentrate on regaining her health and discerning her next call to ministry.

## **CROSSROADS**

The Society for Community Ministries  
c/o Brian Clougherty, Director of Membership  
112 Monticello Avenue  
Durham, NC 27707

### **Check Out the Updated SCM Website**

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the MAY 1 launch of our updated and redesigned website!! Our initial goals were to modernize our online presence and better support our membership. We believe that this new website will:

- √ Increase the usefulness of the website by placing important information right at members' fingertips;
- √ Streamline the membership fee collection process by offering an online payment option via Paypal;
- √ Update the site's style to communicate clearly who we are as an organization in 2008 and beyond.

We anticipate additions to our new website as we grow as an organization. The URL of the re-designed website remains the same: <http://www.uuscm.org/>

**You should have already received your Official SCM Ballot and Membership Renewal.**

**Ballots must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2008 to be valid. Please return TODAY.**

**Dues are due by July 1. Renew online at [www.uuscm.org](http://www.uuscm.org) or by mail. Thank you!**