

## The Annual Haystack Award



This award symbolizes the social action and social service dimensions of mission. Its name is taken from the setting where the first groups of missionaries made their decision to go into the mission field. In 1806, five young students of Williams College, after

praying together under a haystack during a thunderstorm, committed themselves to spreading Christianity overseas.

The purpose of the Award is to encourage participation in charitable mission outreach and social justice ministry. In a variety of ways churches are inspired to engage in local and global mission. Our aim is to recognize the exemplary initiatives currently underway in churches throughout the Conference, express appreciation and offer incentives for new initiatives.

Nominations for the Haystack Award must be submitted by Sept. 25 each year. Any individual, group and/or institution affiliated with the Massachusetts Conference is eligible for consideration.

## Barnes Grants

Through a generous bequest by Arthur & Sidney Barnes, the Conference has funds to be distributed over the next few years.

This grant money is available to help start or fund mission and justice projects throughout the Massachusetts Conference.

For more information on this grant or for an application, contact the Framingham office located at 1 Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702; email [methotk@macucc.org](mailto:methotk@macucc.org); or call 508-875-5233.

## What Can We Do For YOU?

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**For more information on  
mission and justice issues, please visit  
the MACUCC website at:  
[www.macucc.org/mj](http://www.macucc.org/mj)**

## Mission & Justice Commission Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ



What does God require of you?  
To do justice, love kindness, and  
walk humbly with your God.  
~Micah 6:8~

The Mission & Justice  
Commission is here  
to work for YOU!

Task Teams of the MA Conference UCC address the many mission and justice issues we all face. Some of those issues and programs include:

### ❖ Homelessness

At Annual Meeting 2002, The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ passed a Resolution to End Homelessness in Massachusetts. Out of this call to action the Task Team to End Homelessness was created with the mission to help families and individuals who are without a home. We are called to work together with other organizations and faith communities to help end this crisis by providing direct services to those in need, while at the same time helping to create the public will towards ending homelessness rather than managing it. We welcome new members!

### ❖ Environmental Ministries

Environmental Ministries' mission is to empower and inspire congregations in the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ to support the integrity of creation, protect the health of humans, and embrace the spirit of justice. Towards this goal, EM offers opportunities for discussion groups, workshops, and worship resources to bring attention to the environmental problems facing all of God's creations. In 2008, EM joined forces with 350.org to get the word out regarding climate change. Over 43 Massachusetts churches rang their bells 350 times by the 350th day of the year to bear witness to the climate catastrophe that is affecting the planet and its creatures.

### ❖ Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice brings together a new movement in the faith community and law enforcement with a Biblical and indigenous

framework for a new/old approach to righting wrongs. It recognizes that the harm of an offense is primarily an injury to human relationships and our Covenant with God, and, secondarily, a violation of secular law. In the process of Restorative Justice volunteers explore what victims and offenders need for justice to restore them and their communities to right relationship based on shared values and goals.

### ❖ Race and Justice

This task force offers conversation and consultation for churches striving to embody the beloved community, the legacy of those who responded to support the Amistad captives, and the still speaking action of Sacred Conversations on Race.

### ❖ Open & Affirming

Open and Affirming (ONA) churches are congregations in the United Church of Christ which publicly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people into their full life and ministry. The 185th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference adopted the first Open and Affirming resolution within the United Church of Christ in 1984. The resolution was submitted to General Synod XV, which adopted it the following year. The Open and Affirming Task Force is available to provide guidance and assistance to local churches exploring this issue, and is available for workshops, consultation, inquiries and referrals.

### ❖ Mission Partnership

The Mission Partnership Committee currently oversees two global partnerships:

- **Covenantal Partnership with the Pentecostal Church of Chile** – The committee has been the caretakers of our covenant with the Pentecostal Church of Chile. This year there is a delegation of clergy traveling to Chile to discuss with a group of Chilean clergy many of the major

theological issues affecting both of our denominations. Again another group of youth and adults will travel to Chile in 2010 to visit the Centro de Shalom in the Andes mountains. Here they will study peacemaking skills, learn ways to support our environment as a world process, and help with the continuing building of the Center.

- **South African Partnership** – The 'My Church to Your Church' or I3L program started by Jan and Ruth Ann Hall is also connected to Partnership Committee. Through I3L, the Halls have linked churches here in the Mass Conference to churches in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The hope is for paired churches to continue to have an active relationship, sharing ideas, prayers and more.
- **Additionally** – The committee also offers their expertise in partnerships and mission trips to any Mass Conference churches wishing to or already engaging in mission delegations. They are willing to meet with churches to aid them with all aspects of their planning and implementation.

### ❖ Jubilee/Economic Justice

While all of our task forces wrestle with some aspect of creating a more just, humane world, Jubilee Justice focuses its efforts on *economic* justice issues. Though it has many activities, its three main ministries are (1) participation in the international Jubilee campaign to cancel the crippling debts of poor and developing countries; (2) promoting Fair Trade products through our partnership with Equal Exchange; and (3) sponsoring an annual consciousness-raising delegation to poor and developing countries of the global south.



*Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ  
Made possible by your church's contributions to Our  
Church's Wider Mission and fellowship dues.*