



## Conference joins amicus briefs on church taxation, minimum sentencing

The Massachusetts Conference, acting through the Board of Directors, recently signed on to two amicus briefs filed in state Supreme Judicial Court cases.

The first, initiated by the Massachusetts Council of Churches, involves the decision of the Attleboro Tax Assessors to charge property tax on portions of the Shrine of LaSalette that they felt were not used for worship or religious education. The Shrine has appealed that decision. The brief warned that giving local tax officials the right to define what is and is not a religious use of property is improper, and could have a huge impact on local churches, mosques and synagogues.

The Conference also joined 40 other organizations in calling on the state's highest court to recognize constitutional exceptions to mandatory minimum drug sentencing laws. The Board voted to join the brief based on last year's Annual Meeting vote in favor of a resolution that called for Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in Massachusetts.

Read about these cases at [macucc.org/news](http://macucc.org/news).



## May 15: Year of Discernment Sunday

The boards of directors of the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences have called for a Year of Discernment into the question of whether the three conferences should merge or federate in some way that allows them to do more work together.

They have asked that all UCC churches in those states have a conversation on or around Pentecost Sunday – either in small groups, or as a whole church. Discussion resources are at: [macucc.org/rimact](http://macucc.org/rimact).

They are also asking that everyone in local churches take a survey on the topic at: [www.research.net/r/RIMACT](http://www.research.net/r/RIMACT).

## Upcoming Events

### 217th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference

June 17 - 18

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Are you feeling tired? Burnt out? Isolated?

Come together with folks from other churches for inspiration, rejuvenation and common action! Annual Meeting will feature one of the best preachers in the UCC, fabulous music, stories of bold faith, and opportunities to share ideas and passions with people from hundreds of congregations. Child care and youth programs available.



Keynote preacher The Rev. Otis Moss III

Find a complete list of Conference events at: [macucc.org/events](http://macucc.org/events).

Rooted in the grace of God, the mission of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ is to nurture local church vitality and the covenant among our churches to make God's love and justice real.