

God is still speaking,
ready, set, grow!

Times

the ucc...

NEW

New Ideas for New Churches

The Nehemiah Leadership Team

Volume One * Number 1

New Church Development: “The Trinity Model” Page 2

- **A Child Shall Lead Them: Page 4**
By Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis
- **Gathering Grounds for Kirkwood
United Church of Christ Page 5**
By Rev. Cameron Trimble
- **Now is the Time for New Church
Development in the United Church
of Christ Page 6**
By Rev. David Schoen

**NEW
TIMES :
New Ideas for
New Churches**

Rev. Cameron

Trimble: Co-Editor

*Director of the Nehemiah
Leadership Initiative*

Southeast Conference
of the United Church
of Christ

1330 West Peachtree St.,
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Office: 404-607-1993
Cell: 404-790-3348

www.secucc.org

Rev. Dave Ragan:

Co-Editor

*Minister for New Church
Development*

United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Ave East
Cleveland, OH 44115
Toll-free: 866-822-8224
ext. 3822

www.ucc.org/newchurch

New Times is a quarterly publication of the Evangelism Ministry, Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ, Rev. David Schoen, Minister and Team Leader; and the Nehemiah Leadership Initiative of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.



New Church Development “The Trinity Model”

Pastor Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.

My work with the United Church of Christ’s New Initiatives in Church Development Program several years ago gave me some insights that proved to be invaluable when it came to the process of new church development. My familiarity with the Churches in Transition Program here in the City of Chicago also provided me with invaluable glimpses into the things to do and things not to do list for new church development in the African-American community.

What I offer in this essay is just a glimpse of what has become our “model” at Trinity UCC (Chicago) in terms of new church development in the African-American community. We stumbled into “starting new churches” with the help of Tim Downs, the Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference of the

Development Program back in the 1970’s and 1980’s. The “old model” was either to start a Black church whose worship style was like the Congregational Church of New England or to start an “integrated church” whose worship style was like the Congregational Church of New England.

Reverend Downs plainly spoke the truth to us and told us that those churches were dying and would never be resurrected using “the old model” and the old understandings of African-American churches at the end of the 20th century and facing the 21st century.

Reverend Downs had (to buttress his arguments) the excellent example of the Reverend Dr. Cynthia L. Hale and the Ray of Hope Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) right there in Atlanta. Cynthia had started Ray of Hope from scratch and that congregation had grown to over 3,000 members

We sat down with the United Church of Christ national church team for new church starts, and we wrestled with the same issues for two years... There was no building. We needed a building, and we needed a building quickly!

United Church of Christ. Reverend Downs asked me if I would help him and the denomination start a new Black church in the City of Atlanta several years ago.

Reverend Paul Sadler (currently the Pastor of the Mount Zion Congregational United Church of Christ in Cleveland) was at the time the Secretary for New Church Development working for the Board for Homeland Ministries. His specialty was in Black church, Hispanic church and ethnic new church starts. Paul, Tim and I began to explore how we might best start a new church that had a chance not only of surviving, but of thriving. Reverend Downs quickly shared with us that “the old model” was not working.

That had also been my experience as I had argued with both the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ and with the denominational officials who ran the New Initiatives in Church

in record time! Cynthia simply utilized what W.E.B. DuBois taught us in 1903 when he laid out the three essential ingredients for any Black church — preaching, music and the Holy Spirit!

Tim Downs told Paul Sadler and me that what Cynthia had done is what he wanted. That is what we set about trying to do. All of us had discovered from our many years of experience in ministry that the key to new church starts and the key to church growth was leadership. We had to identify a leader who had a “heart” for doing the work required in building a congregation from scratch. We also had to find a leader who had a heart for preaching, who loved Black music and who was not “Holy Ghost shy” to use Dr. James Forbes’ language.

The first person we selected to be the Pastor of our new church start in Atlanta had already gone through a successful new church start process in the



United Church of Christ and he not only knew the importance of leadership, he also knew the importance of having a building. He wanted us to get him a building before he would say yes to accepting the pastorate. When we explained to him that is not how the United Church of Christ operates, he took his name out of consideration. We found new leadership, but the predictions of the first candidate proved to be accurate. Without a building, that church could not and did not grow.

Here in the state of Illinois, the Reverend Ozzie Earl Smith was the “northern example” of what Cynthia Hale had proved in the South. When Reverend Smith started his new church, the Covenant United Church of Christ, he had a building! He had a heart for passionate preaching. He had a genuine love for Black music (and all genres of music). He was not “Holy Ghost shy.” He broke every record possible in the area of new church development.

Within a few years, Reverend Smith had grown his congregation from zero members to a church that needed a new building and has subsequently constructed a new worship center while enjoying membership growth up to over 3,000 members!

When the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ approached us, Steve Gray literally said that he wanted to do the same thing in Indiana that we had done in Atlanta and in Illinois. The Conference wanted a Black church that cut across socioeconomic lines; that cut across educational lines of distinction; that ministered to persons with the highest degrees, terminal degrees and no degrees. They wanted a church with a strong preacher, good music and a church that would attract African Americans of every stripe.

We sat down with the United Church of Christ national church team for new church starts, and we wrestled with the same issues for two years in the developing of that new church start. There was no building. We needed a building, and we needed a building quickly!

We identified the leader. We got the strong leadership that is a prerequisite for new church starts and for church growth, and that Pastor and his people have been limping along slowly while waiting to get their own building. They have been worshipping in a school since their first service. They have discovered, however, what I have been saying to the denomination for thirty years — nobody Black wants to join a school!

We give thanks to God that they isolated a piece of property, identified the property, purchased the property, got the City of Gary, Indiana’s approval to construct a worship center on that property and broke ground on the first Sunday in May of 2007.

The Wisconsin Conference was the next to approach Trinity and ask us to do the same thing. As we have said all along, leadership is key! The Conference Minister and the team from the Wisconsin Conference said that they wanted a strong preacher. We found Rev. Wanda Washington, and she was identified as the person to lead that congregation from zero members to as many members as God would send their way. She was blessed as Reverend Ozzie Earl Smith was blessed here in Illinois. There was a building already in existence. A former UCC Euro-church had died because the community turned Black. The new Black congregation has been in existence now for a year, and we expect great things from that congregation just as we have seen in Indiana and in South Holland, Illinois.

The Michigan Conference has approached us about doing the same kind of new church start in Benton Harbor. The demographics of that community, however, make the possibilities a “hard sell” in terms of the kind of congregation we are looking to start.

We solicit your prayers as we continue this journey together. ■

We identified the leader. We got the strong leadership that is a prerequisite for new church starts and for church growth...



Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, pastor of Trinity UCC in Chicago, Illinois, has gifted the United Church of Christ with his sponsorship of numerous new church start projects throughout the nation.

A Child Shall Lead Them

By Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis

Six years ago when God Can Ministries moved our new church start to the Ford Heights community (a south suburb of Chicago, Illinois), we understood ourselves as a “Family First Church.” God Can Ministries’ mission statement begins with the words, “We are a family first church.” As a new church start, the majority of the congregants were family members to the senior pastor of God Can Ministries. The other members also began to gather (in smaller numbers by family or extended family). By the time our church located to Ford Heights we understood why God gave us this mission statement. Our church has grown by families who have come together to join one big family, and we continue our connection as we become one big extended family. Our belief is that God calls us to be family one to another. And that has truly been the case at God Can Ministries.

This year as we celebrate our seventh anniversary as a new church start, we celebrate one of our youth who is solely responsible for bringing her family to God Can Ministries. Breana Adams lives in the Ford Heights community. She came to God Can Ministries as a young ten-year-old seeking something better than the oppression, gangs, drugs, and poverty that surrounded her community. She came expressing a desire to do God’s will and ultimately move into a much better community. She came with hope and anticipation of God working in her life to do so.

Breana joined God Can Ministries and became very active in the local congregation. She was sincere about her service and her relationship with God, as she attended worship services, Bible study, youth ministry events, and joined the choir and praise dancers. Breana ultimately brought her mother and siblings to the church, and they joined the ministry. She encouraged her grandmother to join also, and then the rest is history. Breana’s family is the largest growing family in our congregation. She is a living example of how “little becomes much when you place it in the Master’s hands.” Because of Breana’s outreach, dedication, and service, we have over 30 members from the community and surrounding suburbs whose presence can be directly attributed to Breana’s ministry from 10 years of age to her present age of 16 years.

This year as we celebrate our seventh anniversary as a new church start, we celebrate one of our youth who is solely responsible for bringing her family to God Can Ministries.



Easter Sunday, 2007 at God Can Ministries

We, at God Can Ministries, continue to grow as an extended family. Our mission is to bring healing, hope, and wholeness within these families, communities, and society, with the love of God and Jesus Christ as our solid foundation. Indeed, Breana represents evangelism and service and is an example of the Bible verse that declares “A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.” ■

Senior Pastoral Staff:
Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis, *Senior Pastor*

Rev. Edward Smith Davis, *Executive Pastor*

Diana Bradie-Timberlake, *Assistant Pastor*

Rev. Susannah Davis is the pastor of Kirkwood UCC, a new church start in the Southeast Conference.

Gathering Grounds for Kirkwood United Church of Christ

By Rev. Cameron Trimble

One year ago, Rev. Susannah Davis took a leap of faith. As a successful and highly respected United Methodist Church pastor known for her talent in revitalizing churches, Rev. Davis had enjoyed years of serving in fulfilling, transformational ministries in the Atlanta area. But in 2005, Rev. Davis heard God calling her to a new adventure in church planting. If this were not enough, she then learned of “this crazy, amazing church” called the United Church of Christ. A vision was born.

In June of 2006, Rev. Davis met with Rev. Dr. Timothy Downs, Conference Minister, and Rev. Cameron Trimble, Associate Conference Minister for Church Development, in the Southeast Conference (SEC) office and told them that she had a dream of starting a church in Kirkwood, GA. She wanted this church to be deeply steeped in the values and identity of the United Church of Christ, a church which she understood to be committed to social justice, equality and radical hospitality. “Kirkwood needs the United Church of Christ, and the United Church of Christ needs the people of Kirkwood,” said Rev. Davis.

The church would start out of a coffee shop she bought located in the heart of old, historic Kirkwood, just outside of the city of Atlanta. The coffee shop provides a natural connection to the community and a place to gather for worship, Bible study and community activities. The coffee shop, named Gathering Grounds, would become the hub of the Kirkwood community, and Kirkwood United Church of Christ would be an extension of this gathering. Talk about an exciting vision!



In March of 2007, after completing extensive assessments and receiving the blessing of the SEC Board of Directors, Kirkwood United Church of Christ was born. Susannah had over 50 people in her first worship service, and participation has remained strong since then. This new church community has contributed in building a Habitat house, held an Easter sunrise service and egg hunt in a local park and hosted a booth at the annual Kirkwood community festival. Rev. Davis says, “I know that I have been called to serve, and I know that God expects me to be authentic, to be the person that God has created me to be. I believe that in and through the faithful denomination of the United Church of Christ, God is making a way. That is who God is. God is always making a way for us to draw closer, to share compassion and love with our sisters and brothers.”

Kirkwood United Church of Christ is making a way for many people in Kirkwood to connect to our God of radical welcome. If you would like to learn more about Kirkwood UCC or contact Rev. Susannah Davis, go to <http://www.kirkwooducc.com>. ■

Church Birthing Through Strong Leadership

Cesar and Lisa DePaz

Leadership is the key to successful new church starts. In the Massachusetts Conference, we are very fortunate to have a very gifted pastoral couple who have revolutionized our Hispanic ministries. Cesar and Lisa DePaz are a dynamic couple from Costa Rica. They first came to Massachusetts in 2000 and began their ministry by taking over a failed new church start in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston. The church was in a desperate situation having declined to three members.

Two years later, after hard work, dedication and exceptional leadership, the congregation grew to over 100 members. The key to Cesar and Lisa’s success was developing small or cell groups in neighborhoods where people were introduced to scripture and faith, brought to worship and developed into leaders. As Jamaica Plain grew, Lisa DePaz took over more and more of the pastoral duties, freeing Cesar to begin another new church start in Lowell. Today that church is growing rapidly.

Multiplication has been the hallmark of Cesar and Lisa’s ministry. Today, there is a monthly training of pastors and leaders and the ministry continues to grow. There are new church starts in East Boston and Springfield and more to come. ■

For more information about this exciting ministry, contact Rev. Paul Nickerson at NickersonP@MACUCC.org.



Now is the Time for New Church Development in the United Church of Christ

A Look at the Past and a Look to the Future

By David Schoen, Evangelism Minister and Team Leader, Local Church Ministries, A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ

Starting new congregations engages the whole church in Jesus Christ's call to go forth into the world with God's word of welcome, hope, faith and discipleship.

I think I have the best job in the United Church of Christ because I and the Evangelism Ministry Team have the opportunity to respond to all the people who are excited about the UCC, who are looking to start a new congregation, who want to be a UCC new church planter, and all the congregations that want to join the United Church of Christ.

God's Spirit is creating a new day among us and opening up new possibilities. This moment comes with an urgency and immediacy calling for our response. Now is the time to develop new churches in the United Church of Christ.

Our response to this opportunity and challenge in the United Church of Christ calls for a focused cooperative effort among congregations, associations, conferences, organizations, national ministries and seminaries to increase our capacity for planting and welcoming new congregations.

Four elements are necessary to increase our new church capacity:

1. Nurture a church culture that embraces and engages in New Church Development
2. Create systems that recognize, recruit, assess, train and coach new church planters
3. Encourage and empower Congregation Multiplication
4. Prepare for increased outreach and welcome of Affiliating Congregations

Starting new congregations engages the whole church in Jesus Christ's call to go forth into the world with God's word of welcome, hope, faith and discipleship. Together, through the vitality of existing congregations and the increase of new congregations, the witness and work of the whole church is built up and strengthened for the glory of God.

Now is the Time for Increased New Church Development • 250 New Congregations by 2011 and then 1,600 by 2021

Now is the time to develop and welcome 250 new congregations by 2011 and then over a 15-year period more than 1,600 new congregations by 2021. This strategy aims at growing our number of new congregations to 3% of our total number of congregations each year by 2021.

Why start new congregations? New congregations are most likely to reach out to new communities, new populations and new generations. Unlike 1957 when most of the new congregations were Euro-American, 70% of our new congregations today are communities of color, new immigrant communities and multi-racial/multicultural communities. New congregations are able to grow vital discipleship, giving and worship for the future. New congregations spread the ethos, witness and welcome of the United Church of Christ to people who are searching for a UCC congregation.

To find out what you, your congregation, your association and conference can do to increase new church development in the UCC, go to our new church website: www.ucc.org/newchurch. There you will find resources and suggestions for what you can do to increase new churches in the UCC.

Seven UCC conferences have affirmed that Now is the Time for New Church Development in the UCC and have committed to the Now is the Time Vision and Strategies to increase new congregations.

Now is the Time for individuals, congregations, associations, conferences, seminaries and national ministries to work together to increase New Church Development in the United Church of Christ! ■

Why start new congregations?



New Congregations make a difference in the life of the United Church of Christ. New congregations founded and welcomed in the United Church of Christ in the past fifty years contributed more than \$5,376,500 to Our Church's Wider Mission in 2005. The current UCC congregation with the largest membership and giving to OCWM was a new church in 1962. New churches make a difference in the UCC. Just imagine what our present, and future, could have been if within the past 50 years we had more than doubled the number of new churches. Now is the time to increase new congregations for our future mission of the United Church of Christ. Now is the time to secure and increase funding for new church development through the New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund, (which has also been called the New Church Endowment Fund).

New Churches spread the extravagant welcome of Jesus and the still speaking witness of the United Church of Christ. UCC conferences and national ministries affirm that the time is now to start 250 new churches by 2011 and 1,600 new congregations by 2021. This increase will double and then triple the number of new congregations planted and welcomed in the United Church of Christ.

Since 2000, Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ has funded 115 new congregations with \$4,973,266. In order to increase new churches in the United Church of Christ, we will need to increase the resources and funding for more congregations. The New Church Endowment Fund has been established to secure and increase future funding for new churches and new church leadership in the United Church of Christ. Without a secure endowed source for funds, the money that is now available may even decline.

Local Church Ministries Board Increases Endowment to \$4,000,000

As a sign of its support for new and renewing churches, the UCC's Local Church Ministries has transferred \$3,675,000 from previously unrestricted reserves to support its board-designated New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund. The action by LCM's board of directors came during its April board meeting in Cleveland and increases the endowment fund's principal from \$325,000 to \$4 million. The board action signifies a long-term fiduciary commitment by LCM to earmark a portion of its unrestricted dollars to secure and increase funding for new and renewing congregations.

The Rev. David Schoen, who leads the UCC's evangelism ministry in Cleveland, was ecstatic about the decision, especially since his request to the LCM's budget committee was for \$2 million less than the budget committee and full board eventually set aside.

"I've never wept for a good reason at a budget meeting," Schoen said. "To see the enthusiasm and encouragement of a financial budget committee, I wish we had taped it. They approached this decision, throughout, by staying focused on the mission of the church."

The Rev. Holly Miller, pastor of Grace UCC in Lebanon, PA, and vice-chair of LCM's budget committee, said, "We always ask local churches to base their budgets on the church's mission, so if our mission as Local Church Ministries is to support the building and rebuilding of active churches, we should really be basing our finances on those priorities. We felt this would be a way to sustain this [priority] in perpetuity."

Schoen said the credit for LCM's commitment to new and renewing churches rests with the Rev. José A. Malayang, LCM's executive minister who is retiring in November. "Joe is the greatest advocate for this," Schoen said, "and as he is culminating his ministry, this is something that he has been particularly passionate about."

Now is the Time to Support New Churches with Your Contribution to the New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund

Contributions to the New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund can be made online at www.ucc.org/newchurch, or through the UCC Fiftieth Anniversary Fund at <http://www.ucc.org/50/fund>.

At General Synod 26 in Hartford, CT, a "Tick-Tock Walk" will be held on Sat., June 23 at 11 AM in Bushnell Park, when sponsored walkers will raise awareness and funds for new church development. Information and registration forms are available at ucc.org/newchurch.

As King David said in his address to the leaders of Israel (1 Chronicles 29:1), "... the work is great. . ." It will only be accomplished if you, your church, and your conference see this not only as a priority, but if you join with those who have already made their generous gifts to this fund. We invite you to say through your gift that "Now is the time for New Church Development in the United Church of Christ." ■

"They approached this decision, throughout, by staying focused on the mission of the church."

**New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund
Supports Future Funding for New Church Development**

Resources in New Church Development

Please note: Our national and conference staffs have found these resources to be helpful in our ministries. We do not advocate or support all positions of the authors, especially if they are exclusive of women and minority peoples. If you have resources that you would like to suggest, email them to Rev. Dave Ragan at RaganD@ucc.org or Rev. Cameron Trimble at ctrimble@secucc.org.

WEBSITES

<http://ucc.org/newchurch> Our national UCC website offers a variety of information on resources available to new church starts, coaches and conferences.

<http://secucc.org> The Southeast Conference UCC website offers support to conferences interested in developing church planters and conference systems of accountability and support.

<http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/> A non-denominational website offering a wide variety of resources about church planting.

<http://www.coachnet.org/en/> A non-denominational website offering a wide variety of resources about coaching and networking.

BOOKS

A Guidebook for Planting New Congregations in the United Church of Christ, by Church Development and Renewal, Evangelism Team of LCM. Available online at <http://www.ucc.org/evangelism/planting.htm>

Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age, by Ed Stetzer. Published 2003 by Broadman and Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.

Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism, by Martha Grace Reese. Published 2006 by Chalice Press, St. Lewis, MO.

Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times, by H. Stanley Wood, editor. Published 2006 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI.

Developing a Vision for Ministry, by Aubrey Malphurs. Published 1999 by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI.

The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church, by Reggie McNeal. Published 2003 by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Solomon's Success: Four Essential Keys to Leadership by Kenneth Samuel. Published 2007 by Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH.

Church Planting in the African American Context by Hozell Francis. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI.

Growing Healthy Asian Churches by Peter Cha. Published 2006 by IVP Books, United Kingdom

New Church Planter Basic Training

Aug. 13-17

The Nehemiah Leadership Institute
at Emory University, Atlanta

Intensive training event: Learn
about the latest theories and tools
for church planting

General registration: \$550
Seminary credit: \$850
Housing: \$450

For more event information, or to donate
to the UCC New and Renewing Churches
(Challenge) Endowment Fund: ucc.org/newchurch

NOW IS THE TIME
FOR NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

A UCC New Church event sponsored by Evangelism Ministry Team, Local Church Ministries, UCC Southeast Conference, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and the Condliffe School of Theology.

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

700 Prospect Ave East, Cleveland, OH 44115

NOW FOR
IS NEW
THE CHURCH
TIME DEVELOPMENT