

# NEWSLETTER

The Chautauqua United Church of Christ Society, Inc.

Fall 2011

Visit us at [www.cuccs.org](http://www.cuccs.org)

## **LAVERNE GILL COMPLETES TERM AS CHAPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR**

After five years of service The Rev. Ms. LaVerne Gill retired as Chaplain Administrator at the close of the 2011 Chautauqua season. We want to recognize LaVerne's service and contributions during her tenure.

Her administrative skills are excellent, and she helped the Society to regularize many of its procedures. In addition, her emphasis on diversity in selecting Chaplains of the Week moved the Society toward greater inclusiveness. Her work has sensitized the Board to the need for greater racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in both program and personnel.

Her presence and participation also received recognition from the wider Chautauqua community as she helped to heighten awareness of the absence of diversity, and the many benefits that a multi-cultural presence can bring to a community.

We wish LaVerne and Tepper the very best as they continue their ministries in other venues.

## **RON COLE-TURNER NAMED CHAPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR**

By recommendation of the Personnel Committee and vote of the Board of Directors, the Rev. Dr. Ron Cole-Turner was elected as the Chautauqua UCC Society's new Chaplain Administrator. A graduate of Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary, Ron is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

He has served as pastor and campus minister, taught theology and ethics at Memphis Theological Seminary, and is currently at Pittsburgh Seminary where he teaches theology and ethics, does research and writing on the interface of theology and technology, and speaks at conferences and churches on theological perspectives concerning such developments in science and technology as stem cell research and human enhancement. He is the author or editor of seven books as well as the popular baptism hymn, "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise."

Ron will be accompanied by his wife Rebecca, a retreat leader and spiritual director who has taught at Slippery Rock University and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In addition, she holds certification in spiritual formation and direction from both Pittsburgh

and San Francisco Theological Seminaries.

Ron and Rebecca have been coming to Chautauqua since 1998, when Ron served as Religion Department lecturer on "Religion and Biotechnology." In 2001, he was the morning amphitheater speaker on genetic modification of future children.

Their academic calendars leave Ron and Rebecca relatively free to schedule their summers, leaving Ron free to serve as Chaplain Administrator. We extend a heartfelt welcome to them and look forward to their time among us.

## **A REFLECTION FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

The Rev. Ms. LaVerne Gill was the first African American to serve in a major leadership role in any denominational house at Chautauqua. In the bulletin for Week 9, her final week of service, LaVerne wrote an article titled, "A Bitter Sweet Farewell," in which she recognized by name the many individuals who supported her and expressed appreciation for her work.

However, her letter also touched on unfortunate incidents of unkindness and inhospitable treatment that she experienced during her five-year tenure; and it is appropriate that we recognize them as well.

Such acts are unbecoming to the espoused nature of enlightenment and civil dialogue that typifies the Chautauqua community. It is important that such behavior be firmly condemned and never defended, excused, or tolerated.

Such acts were hurtful not only to LaVerne and Tepper, but offended our Board and Staff. The Chautauqua UCC Society Board of Directors supported LaVerne in her ministry, and she is to be commended for helping the larger Chautauqua community to move in a direction of greater diversity.

+ Bruno D. Schroeder

## **A MESSAGE FROM RON COLE-TURNER**

My thanks go first of all to the Board of the Chautauqua UCC Society, and especially to Stephen Lipman and the members of the Personnel Committee, for their confidence in asking me to serve as the next Chaplain-Administrator. Thanks, too, to Bruno Schroeder, our board president, for his help in advising me on how to get started with this new and exciting opportunity.

And my special thanks go to LaVerne Gill for her invaluable service to the Society over the past five years. She has been most gracious and helpful in providing detailed notes and transition instructions.

My first task is to launch the 2012 Chaplain-of-the-Week selection process. To do that, I re-worked the Society website. There's still a lot to do, but please take a look at [www.cuccs.org](http://www.cuccs.org) (our new website address). One advantage of the new site is that I will be able to make changes as we go along. For example, right now the site is designed to pitch the Chaplain of the Week opportunity. In December, we'll switch this so that membership and 2012 housing are highlighted. As we move toward summer, we'll feature the summer season and add photos.

If you click on the 2012 Chaplain of the Week Application, you will see that it has been redesigned. I hope these changes help us to develop a strong and diverse pool of outstanding candidates, and that those selected will truly enrich our experience of Chautauqua next summer.

As winter settles in around us, Rebecca and I are already thinking about what lies ahead for all of us next summer. We look forward to welcoming you to the Mayflower or the Reformed Church House. Until then, feel free to offer suggestions or comments by writing to me at [uccchaplain@gmail.com](mailto:uccchaplain@gmail.com) or calling 412-760-2263.

### **BOARD MEMBERS RETIRE**

**Bev Grunden** served as Secretary of the Board of Directors for most of her six-year term. In addition to keeping minutes, she maintained an up-to-date Roster of Board Members and Staff.

**Pat Hanberry** served at various times as Chair of the Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee and most recently as Vice-President of the Board. As the donor of one of her kidneys to LaVerne Gill, she set a high standard for service for our Board!

**Arlene Lyon** served on the Board twice, most recently as a member of the Class of 2013. She retired early due to health reasons. She was Chair of the Housekeeping and Decorating Committee and is known to Chautauquans as a member of the Wardrobe Department for the Chautauqua Theater Company and seamstress *extraordinaire*.

All three deserve our praise for a job well done, and thanks for their commitment to volunteer service.

### **NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED**

Three new members were elected to the Board at the August 21 Annual Meeting of the Society.

**Ian Oliver** is Pastor of the University Church and Senior Associate Chaplain for Protestant Life

at Yale University. He was a UCC/DOC missionary in India from 1990-96 and served as Chaplain at Bucknell University from 1996-2008. He was a Chaplain of the Week in the early 2000's and has returned for a week every summer since.

**Evadne Giannini**, a 4<sup>th</sup> generation "Chautauquan" and owner of HospitalityGreen LLC, and has won national and state awards for her work in sustainable environmental practices for business and industry. HospitalityGreen conducted an environmental assessment for the Society in 2009, many recommendations of which have been implemented throughout our properties.

**Peggy O'Connor** is a third career minister who worked in the publishing industry for 15 years before earning a masters degree in social work. She has been a psychotherapist for 17 years. Seven years ago she received her master of divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology; and is currently interim pastor at Pawtucket Congregational Church in Lowell, MA.

### **APPEAL FOR DONATIONS FOR KIRSTEN ENGSTROM SCULPTURES**

During the past season, two sculptures by Mayville artist Kirsten Engstrom have been on loan to the Society and stood on our properties. Similar works are located at other locations on the Institution's grounds

The Board has agreed to purchase both sculptures, and seeks donations to assist with their purchase. The total cost is \$1,600. If you are interested in assisting, please communicate with Society treasurer John Rodgers at [jrrucc@gmail.net](mailto:jrrucc@gmail.net). Contributions in any amount are welcome. Kirsten's work can be seen on line by searching her name.

### **HOST/HOSTESSES RETIRE**

The Society's gratitude is extended to two host couples who ended their terms of service in August.

**Jim and Barb Domer** of Dover, Ohio have served for the past 8 years, first in the Reformed Church House, then the Mayflower. Jim fills the role of "Mr. Fixit" whenever he is on site. Barb has been faithful in arranging for flowers for Sunday worship in Randall Chapel whenever she is on the grounds. Both Jim and Barb have been participants in every Work Weekend since their involvement with Chautauqua UCC began, and intend to continue doing so.

**Warren and Shirley Thomas** of Williamsville, NY have served for the past 6 years. Like the Domers, they have served in both the Reformed Church House and the Mayflower. Both were familiar faces on the front pew at morning worship when Shirley was not singing in the choir. Warren concurrently served as Facilities

Manager, overseeing our buildings and organizing and coordinating our Work Weekends.

We are delighted that both couples intend to continue their involvement in the Society.

### FACILITIES REPORT

Again this year, we had three successful work weekends, two for opening in June and one to close in September. In all, a total of 45 Society members participated, along with six who came early for Week 1 to help us get ready. At the fall weekend, 15 hard-working members completed a long list of routine items, including cleaning, repairs, painting, room preparation, etc.

Noteworthy was the success of Jack deVille, our Alaskan pancake maker, who mastered our new carpet shampooer to transform the very dirty dining room carpet into almost new appearance.

We continue to replace the remaining old, two-faucet sinks with modern, single-faucet units. This year we also installed new sinks in rooms 41 and 45. In the spring, we plan to replace those in rooms 42, 43 and 44, thus completing the updating of all sinks in the Mayflower. There are still five needed in the Reformed Church House.

All 24 Mayflower guest rooms now have ceiling fans—very welcome this summer of warmer-than-usual weather. On the other hand, baseboard heat was added to the host apartment, for comfort during cold weather. Peeling wallpaper was removed and replaced in Room 31 of the Mayflower. Next year we will do room 47. And a donated bunk-bed has transformed room 31 into a quad for families with two children.

Finally, an exit light was installed in the Mayflower living room. All 13 of our exit lights are now energy-saving, long-life LED units.

At Headquarters, the old wallpaper was removed from the small bedroom and the room painted linen white to match the rest of the building.

The deteriorated light fixtures were removed from beside the main door, and new fixtures hung. And the old, now-unused paint shed was removed from behind the building.

The spring 2012 work weekend dates are June 1-3 and June 15-17. Mark the dates on your Blackberry—or your paper-berry!

+ Warren Thomas, Facilities Manager

### MEMBERSHIP FEES INCREASE FOR 2012

By vote of the Board of Directors, membership fees will increase for 2012. The new fees, which will be reflected in January's housing mailing, are \$40 for an individual membership, and \$80 for a family.

### NEWS OF THE GREVATTS

Passing through New England in June, I visited Barry and Mary Lou Grevatt at their New Hampshire home. While Barry struggles with speech—and especially reading—his recovery is little less than astonishing. He is physically active engaging as ever; and Mary Lou's tender care for him does not flag. But they miss Chautauqua something fierce, and send affectionate greetings to all their Society friends.

+ Don Skinner, Editor



Barry and Mary Lou Grevatt at home in New Hampshire.

### A REMINDER: MAKE USE OF THE HELP

Next time you come to stay in our facilities, take advantage of our bag-carriers. They are there for your safety—especially our older members; and your tips help to support the young people serving us.

+ Ruth Becker, Registrar

The Newsletter of the Chautauqua United Church of Christ Society, Inc. is published in the fall and spring of each year, and is distributed to all members in good standing with the Society.

Editor: Don Skinner

18 Wilson Avenue, Meadville, Pa 16335

Tel: 814.333.1786. Email: [dskinner@zoominternet.net](mailto:dskinner@zoominternet.net)

