



August 2021

Dear AUCE Members,

By the time you read this message, I'll be on a much-needed vacation. I hope that you are enjoying your summer and are having a chance to regroup, take some vacation time, and find some spiritual renewal after a very intense 16 months of pandemic. I know that we are not out of the woods yet, but this summer offers us a chance for a reprieve. Jesus knew the importance of getting away to regroup and restore his energy. To quote Dr. Wes Bergen, "Be like Jesus. Get Away. Rest. If you don't succeed, try again."

Like many of you, I spent the first couple of weeks of July engaged in Zoom meetings and webinars during the UCC General Synod 33. It was very impressive to see this national event move to a totally online format. There were a few glitches, but overall this was a hugely successful undertaking! I really enjoyed the opportunity to see so many faces and names close-up and to "meet" people from across the country in the small group settings that Zoom provides with breakout rooms. And once again, I came away with tremendous gratitude for the UCC and all that we are able to accomplish in areas of ministry, social justice, and mission around the world.

Each time I hear Traci Blackmon, Karen Georgia Thompson, and John Dorhauer speak, I am grateful for their prophetic leadership and spiritual wisdom. John's State of the Church address was particularly moving for me and I commend it to you if you have not had a chance to hear it: <https://www.ucc.org/john-dorhauer-we-are-a-denomination-on-the-move/>. He spoke of the pandemic of Covid, but also mentioned two other pandemics that we are facing: the pandemic of racism and white supremacy, and the pandemic of climate change. He called us to be a church at the intersection of love and justice. I hear this as a clear call to those of us who work in faith formation with children, youth, and adults to do what we can to educate our congregations about these issues and to encourage involvement to put an end to these dual pandemics. If you need help finding resources and curriculum on becoming an anti-racist and examining white privilege, or on environmental justice and care for our earth, AUCE has you covered! Check out the resources page on our website (<https://www.auce-ucc.org/complete-resource-list>) for lots of helpful links to support you in your ministries.

Dealing with all three pandemics at once is daunting. My wish for each one of you this summer, is that you are able to take some time to rest and find restoration for the work ahead. May the words of Steve Garnaas-Holmes be a blessing and an inspiration:

Child of earth, may you find within you  
the humility of the grass,  
the wisdom of the river,  
patience of the mountain,  
the generosity of the trees.

May you see with eyes of gratitude  
the peace of the sunrise within you,

the beauty of the blossoming earth,  
the joy of the bird on the wing.

May the fresh breeze of hope bless you,  
the earth's steadfastness sustain you,  
and the mystery of all living things enfold you.

May each moment of your life be a new day dawning,  
and the sun and moon and stars  
dance around you  
and in you  
every day of your life.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes  
Unfolding Light  
[www.unfoldinglight.net](http://www.unfoldinglight.net)  
July 16, 2021

With gratitude for all that you are and all that you do,

*Julie Warborough*

Chair  
Association of United Church Educators