

Message of Gratitude by Carol Shipley

My six-year term on the United Church of Christ Board concluded at General Synod 32 in June. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the entire denomination as one of the 36 elected at-large members of the UCCB; additionally, it has been a gift to have befriended and worked with so many of the leaders and staff of the United Church of Christ. I sometimes would ask myself how it could be that I was blessed to have had this opportunity, how it was my call to serve. I think it is better to not ask “why” but to concentrate on the “thanks” to the many that have supported and encouraged me within my congregation and this conference. Of course, I thank God for every blessing this opportunity has bestowed upon me. I remember receiving a phone call back in 1993 from Conference Minister John Schaeffer asking if I would be willing to serve as a delegate to General Synod. That St. Louis Synod became my introduction to involvement on the denomination level. Prior to my second Synod as a delegate, John called again and asked if he could submit my name to serve as a committee chair. I guess you could say, once again, I answered the call, but that wasn’t the last call. John called once again, it must have been in late 2002, and suggested that he would like to recommend me to serve on the UCC nominating committee. That was a 6 year term, and I was blessed to be elected as the chair for the last biennium of that term for the 2009 General Synod. So, I express my gratitude to John for his encouragement and “asks”. Thanks to my pastors and friends of this conference for all of your prayers and support all of these years.

So, in the last six years I have learned so much about our denomination, about the challenges we face as a people of faith living into God’s word, and the ways we change to meet those challenges. All of this has enhanced my faith journey. I would be remiss if I did not mention what it has meant to me to serve on the UCCB these past four years with Doug McClelland also on the Board. He has contributed greatly with his wisdom, experience, and heart to the work done by the Board. Besides that, he has become a dear and trusted friend. Thank you, Doug! Our conference has been very fortunate to have two people serving on the board, representing not the conference, but all of the settings of the UCC across the denomination.

Lastly, a truly rich blessing for me was to be appointed as one of the members of the UCCB to serve on the Common Global Ministries Board, which I have done for a four year term. This has been a very fulfilling responsibility. I was able to participate in a pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic last year as a board member; yes, a life changing experience! Now, two additional blessings: 1) I have been appointed by the new UCCB chair to serve another 4-year term on Global Ministries as a member-at-large. Additionally, I have been named as the co-chair for this next biennium, serving with my Disciples friend, Deborah DeWitt. I look forward to this new responsibility and adventure. 2) I hope that the Montana North Wyoming

Conference will consider it a blessing that I am available to share the word of the work we do through CGM in our world. I have prepared a pulpit supply version that includes an overview of CGM and some of my personal experiences with our partners in the Dominican Republic. I also have a version that is more of a program that would be appropriate for a mission-focused program or for a youth educational program. The latter is longer and includes more information and photos from my pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic. I am willing to come to the churches in our conference to do either of these options. If you have interest, please feel free to contact me at [shipley@bresnan.net](mailto:shipley@bresnan.net) or 406-868-9138.