



Star Gathering I Gazette

News on Star Gathering UCC I Conference Volume 2: February 2013

Accomplished and Thought-Provoking Theologians to join Star Gathering I in 2013

Star Island is a religious and educational conference center, and the Star Gathering conference is a UCC (United Church of Christ) conference. You don't have to be a UCC member or even an active church-goer to attend our conference (we welcome everyone!) but for those who come to the island for spiritual renewal and engagement, we provide an educational program each morning and a series of worship services throughout the day and week. This year we welcome two tremendous ministers to our island community.



The Rev. Dr. Ginny McDaniel will be our conference minister and lead our morning worship services. Granddaughter of a Congregational minister, Ginny received her Masters of Divinity at Andover Newton Theological School in 1993 and a Doctorate of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary in 2010. She has served congregations in Massachusetts and Florida, and is currently Senior Minister of First Congregational Church in Granby, CT. Ginny looks forward to returning to Star Island: the location where she received a call to pursue ordained ministry while attending a UCC family conference more than 20 years ago.



The Rev. Dr. J. Mary Luti is currently Visiting Professor of Christian History and Worship at Andover Newton Theological School. Mary has served in many capacities at Andover Newton, including teaching the History of Christianity, serving as Associate Dean for Academic Programs, and was appointed the first Director of Wilson Chapel. In 2000, Mary was called as Senior Minister of First Church in Cambridge, UCC, its first female pastor in 375 years of continuing congregational life.

We will be taking a closer look at the early church with Mary as she leads our program entitled **"Jesus Was A Christian (And Other Myth-Understandings about the Early Church)"**. In recent years, new studies of Christian origins have been altering our old Sunday School picture of the early Christian Church. In this year's program, we'll take a look at some things we thought we knew about early Christianity and contrast them with some of these newer findings. Some of the topics we'll discuss together include: How Jewish was Jesus? How diverse was the early church in thought and practice? Was the early church really persecuted? How did the church spread and succeed in becoming the religion of an empire? And in every case we will ask (and try to answer) the all-important question, What does any of this have to do with me and the Christian Church today? *We look forward to worshipping and learning with Ginny, Mary and all of you this summer.*

Star Island Vocab Words of the Month:

- ★ **Newton Center:** The name of a multi-purpose building on island, used for our program, fellowship hour, and other activities
- ★ **Pelican:** A member of Star Island's summer staff

IMPORTANT DEADLINES FOR OUR CONFERENCE:

- ★ May 15, 2013: Registration Deadline for GREEN DOT families to qualify for \$2000 cap / \$1600 for single parent families. Deadline for former Pelicans to receive 50% discount (click [here](#) for more details on these discounts)
- ★ June 1, 2013: deadline for Star Island Corporation (SIC) Scholarship (*You must be registered for the conference before applying)
- ★ June 26, 2013: deadline for Star Island UCC Scholarship (* You must be registered for the conference before applying)
- ★ **July 27 – August 3, 2013: Star Gathering I Conference**



Shoalers of the month: The Woolley Family

When you hear someone say "an old Shoaler", it doesn't necessarily mean the person is old (aged), but that the person has spent many summers on Star Island. The expression couldn't be more fitting for the Woolley family, whose youthful picture above defies the fact they have spent a total of 95 summers on island!

Mark and Crista (the parents in the photo) met in the 1985 UCC I Youth Conference. After Youth, they both spent 4 years working as Pelicans (see vocab word below). Just as Crista and Mark served the Star Island conferee community as Pelicans, they have also served our UCC community. Mark served as the president of our conference board (SIUCC) and also served on the Star Island Board (SIC). Crista served as the registrar for our conference for a number of years.

Star Island is a vital part of their children's lives as well: both Bryan and Kyla were baptized on Star Island, and the Woolley's mainland home is covered in stars – a reminder of summer days on the island. Even the family pet has an island-feeling moniker: Shoals! Mark and Crista say their favorite part is the chance to get away from the craziness of the mainland, and welcome the slower pace of Star for a week - it centers them for the rest of the year. Crista adds, "We love the chance to see our family - those by blood and those we have claimed as our own." Mark and Crista add, "The kids love the freedom we give them on Star, as we know lots of folks are looking out for them, they are not going to run in front of a car, and they are never really very far from us on a small island." Bryan says what he likes best is the freedom he gets and hanging out with family and friends. Kyla says what she likes best is hanging out with family. We encourage YOUR family to come to the island and create your own life-long memories.