

Off Court Street



Winter 2018

the newsletter of **united campus
ministry**
at ohio university

*The mission of UCM is to engage the Ohio University and Athens communities in spiritual growth,
work for social justice, and community service guided by socially progressive and interfaith values.*

GROWING TOGETHER ~ REV. EVAN YOUNG

Here in the afterglow of our 50th anniversary celebration, I feel lifted up by the hope we embody together. And, to be honest, a little daunted by the task ahead.

I'm lifted up because of what UCM's 50 years as a social justice nonprofit has meant to Ohio University and southeastern Ohio, thanks to the collective inspiration and dedication of our staff, student interns, volunteers, and especially our donors. Like many campus ministries, UCM has been a powerful agent of change, growth, and exploration of vocation for hundreds of interns, volunteers, and the student body at large. We've been involved in the transformation of our campus—from the founding of the Women's Studies program, to leadership in the University Interfaith Association, to powerful collaborations with Residential Housing, the office of the Vice Provost (now Vice President) for Diversity and Inclusion, and the Dean of Students. Unlike many campus ministries, though, UCM's work has gone beyond the campus and into the wider community, spawning agencies and initiatives that have transformed our community—from Rural Action to the Birth Circle, from Open Doors to the Immigrant Rights Coalition, from My Sister's Place to the AIDS Resource Center. And UCM has been the hub around which the progressive community of our town has revolved, a source of support, encouragement, resources, organizing clout, inspiration, comfort, empowerment, advocacy, and conscience. In a world increasingly devoted to only values that can be measured in dollars, UCM has kept our campus and community focused on more compelling and eternal values—service, relationship, equality, justice, interdependence. For fifty years UCM has been doing the work of building this kind of community—people who are



SAVE THE DATE!
March 20, 2019
Social Justice Awards
6:00-8:00 at UCM

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connected and empowered by the multifaceted relationships they have with one another, and who carry that empowerment into the public and political spheres to drive real social innovation and transformation.

The work continues today. Our two weekly free meals, Thursday Supper and Saturday Lunch, serve thousands of free meals each year, to people who need the food (and the compassionate community spirit in which we prepare and serve and share it), while engaging hundreds of student volunteers in the kind of action and reflection that turns hearts and hands toward the work of building a more just society. Our Better Together campaign engages students, campus, and community in educational, service, and community-building work that builds relationships across faith divides, celebrates and welcomes all faith and philosophi-(cont. p. 3)

FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ~ LACEY ROGERS

For those of you I haven't met (hope we meet soon!), I became the Assistant Director of UCM almost a year ago—and what a year it has been! While this is a new role to me, UCM has been an important part of my life ever since I became aware of the organization my freshman year of college, in 2006. Early on UCM served as a place where I first found my activism roots through involvement in student organizations such as Open Doors and Empowering Women of Ohio. As part of my undergraduate degree in Women's and Gender Studies, I would again be reunited with UCM via Melissa Wales, for my internship class where I would help raise money for those impacted by HIV/AIDS through working with the Athens AIDS Taskforce, then housed at UCM. From there I always seemed to find my way back to UCM—whether it was attending regular programming such as a Girlfriend's Guide to Activism or the annual 9/11 Peace Walk, an event focused on whatever topic or subject of activism or social justice was at the forefront that year, or to lend my cooking or photography skills for a UCM program or event. Eventually UCM and Athens realized they were possibly never going to get rid of me and Melissa asked me to be an intern for the Thursday Supper/Saturday Lunch Meal Program (2012-2015) and to be on the board (2010-2012) ... or so that's how I like to think the story goes....

Let me share a little about my background, and some of what I've done so far in my role as Assistant Director. I am originally from Cincinnati and have been in the Athens area since 2006. I earned degrees in Commercial Photography and Women's and Gender Studies in 2011, then spent a year working as an AmeriCorps VISTA in Athens. After that I completed Master's programs in Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling (2014), followed by Public Administration (2016). As a Voinovich School student, I spent what seemed like countless hours studying the inner workings of the nonprofit world, and I am happy to bring this knowledge of nonprofit management, fundraising, grant-writing, mission/vision work, budgeting, and more to UCM. As a WGSS student I learned about the ideological side of feminism, systems of oppression and seemingly all the things they didn't want you to know in high school, and this strengthened my desire to continue to work to improve the lives of those who come from various points of disadvantage. As a counselor, I gained useful listening and empathetic skills that still come in handy whether supervising interns, handling an emerging incident, or understanding the mental health concerns of our meal patrons.

As a going on 13-year resident of Athens I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to work for a community and organization that has given so much to me. When I came back to the free meals again for the first time and was greeted with hugs, kind words, and excitement about my new role from many familiar meal attendees, it felt like I had never left. I believe UCM has offered many programs that are essential to the Athens community, and has the potential to do many new and great things in the future. As one of the organizers for the PRISM LGBT Youth Art Program that began in January 2018, I'm glad that UCM



UCM Interns at the 9/11 Interfaith Peace Walk - Saraya,

was quick to see the value in providing safe spaces for LGBT youth and opportunities for them to express themselves, and was enthusiastic about becoming a partner and a fiscal agent. I'm also grateful for UCM's support of my role as a board member for the Athens Community Relations Commission, and its willingness to host a Food for Thought Program focused on making Athens a more inclusive space for international community members and students. Important cultural exchanges and ideas came out of this event, including a possible monthly international dinner program where different international groups share recipes and foods from their cultures with those in attendance, and then share the meal together in an atmosphere of fellowship in which everyone gets to know one another and form long-lasting friendships and connections. There's a lot to look forward to in this new role, and I'm excited to give back and to use my talents to enhance UCM as we move forward into the next 50 years together!

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Hi, I'm Christopher Quolke and I'm the current Chair of the Board of Directors for UCM. I'm glad to have the opportunity to share with you some of what the Board has been doing this year. As a group, we're working on several projects that will help to support the daily operations of UCM, striving for ways to enhance the overall impact that UCM has within our community and to guarantee the long-term financial stability of the ministry.

On November 17th we commemorated 50 years of campus ministry with the Justice Jubilee—Board members helped to plan the event, bring people together for the celebration, and collect cash and in-kind donations from local individuals and businesses.

We're also working with the staff and interns on a strategic planning process that will set long-range goals and shorter-term objectives that will help define the organization's trajectory as we move into our next half-century. We've dug into UCM's rich history of transformative work on campus and in the community, to ensure that the future goals we set honor and align with the pathway that has brought us this far. We've identified four strategic areas we want to focus on: communication strategies and outcomes, financial security, use of technology to enhance operations, and UCM's identity and role as a social justice incubator within the community.

We're always looking to build the capacity and diversity of our Board by recruiting people with a passion for the community-building, justice-seeking, transformative work UCM is called to do. If this description fits you or someone you know who has gifts and talents to share, I'd love to talk with you about serving on the Board of Directors—just stop in, or send an email to me (cq1875@gmail.com) so we can set up a time to meet.

I am very proud of the work that UCM does within the community and the passion that drives those who serve to step up and contribute what they have to the larger good. As a Higher Education professional, I have always felt that diversity and inclusion efforts that failed to address faith and belief were only partially addressing the needs of learners to help create a pluralistic society in our intersectional world. The time I have spent at UCM, with staff and interns and volunteers, has further convinced me of the importance of educating about and empowering the religious, secular, and spiritual identities of students and others as one means of driving our community toward a more inclusive and interdependent future. I wish everyone the best during these troubled times, and I hope that through our collective effort we can outshine the looming darkness that threatens us all. Namaste.

GROWING TOGETHER (from p. 1)—

cal worldviews, and expresses common values, building resiliency into our community in a world and a time when that is sorely needed. As a founding presence and source of continued leadership in our local southeast Ohio chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice, UCM engages in education, activism, and organizing that supports people of color in their quest for justice and involves people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and gender identities in teaching about and undermining white supremacist culture, systemic racism, and all the intersectional systems of oppression that hold us back from the Beloved Community we seek. All while remaining the hub, source of solace and support, and pastoral presence for progressive Athens.

What's daunting is how we'll be able to continue this work. While our financial support from local congregations is growing, our denominational support is continuing a decades-long trend of decline. While longtime supporters like you outdo themselves each year in the generosity of your gifts, we lack the national brand and infrastructure that would lead newcomers to us who might wholeheartedly support us, if they only knew about us. And while we serve the Ohio University community, we're not in any sense funded under their budget—a fact that too many people don't recognize.

I know you're already doing a lot to help. I want to ask you to do one more thing. When you're done reading this newsletter, hand it off to someone you know who's never heard of us. Have a conversation with them about why you support us, and suggest that they might want to do the same. Or have them contact us—we'd love to meet them and invite them to partner with us in transforming the world. I know how generously and whole-heartedly you support us, and I hesitate to ask for more. But I think this is a small ask, and as we embark on our next 50 years, it may be the most significant gift you can give us—reaching out to more people committed to the same things you believe in. So, for the Beloved Community—pass it on!

THANK YOU!

As always, we could not do what we do without the generous and ongoing support of our Sustainer Circle, donors, and others who give to UCM...

Special thanks to

Cutler Scholars Program, Devil's Kettle Pints for a Purpose, Fulbright Pre-Academic Orientation, Interfraternity Council, Kleinpenny Educational Fund, and Southeast Ohio Woods.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT our FREE MEAL PROGRAMS:

Athens Civitan Club for home-cooked dishes and volunteers on fifth Thursdays; Avalanche Pizza for pizza on first Thursdays; Donations of food: Athens Food Rescue, CFI Donation Station, OU LGBT Center; Volunteer organizations including: Athens Community Relations Commission, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Appalachian Hellbetties, Black Student Communications Caucus, Black Student Cultural Programming Board, CDLC, Christ Lutheran Church, Copperheads, CSLC, Cutler Scholars, Delta Sigma Theta, First Presbyterian Church, Fulbright Scholars, GIVE at OU, Lambda Pi, Med group, Minority Assoc of Pre-Health Students, Ohio Women in Business, Orthodox group, Phi Delta Theta, Student Alumni Board, Schey Sales Center, Barb Harrison service group.

AND THANKS TO THESE DONORS TO THE JUSTICE JUBILEE:

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