

## Telling Our Stories

October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011

I am a 20+ year member of First Church. I was drawn to the church primarily because its philosophy was consistent with my sense of what it means to be a Christian and live a Christian life and because of the UCC's very strong allegiance with social justice.

Since the very beginning, I have been impressed with the many members of the congregation who have taken personal responsibility for ensuring that our church lives out its promise. This devotion to "making a difference to others" has been contagious. As a result, over the years I have taught Sunday school, served on the Finance Board and mentored a young mother in Hartford. I have always gotten more out of the experience than I put in.

Over the last year or so, God has been leading me to examine social injustice:

- through my job at a Foundation working with health systems, primarily for un-served and under-served populations in Connecticut, I observed the pain, suffering and despair associated with poor health and poverty;
- I saw a member of my immediate family have to make decisions between medicine and food as economic problems continued and public and private safety nets diminished;
- As part of a small group study here at church we discussed *Justice for the Poor* and were faced with the fact that justice does not exist for large populations in our world.

I knew I needed to do something, but I wasn't sure what or how to start.

Then came *Mission:1*. This UCC-wide initiative called for collecting food and writing letters to policy makers to encourage changes to U.S. practices related to addressing world hunger. It was a great fit with my search, since hunger is at the heart of much social injustice.

With the work of a great team leading the effort, First Church collected over 500 food items for the Simsbury food bank and served 225 meals to those without power during this latest storm. 76 letters were also written to Senators Lieberman and Blumenthal and to Representative Murphy, letters that have the potential to impact the systems and policies affecting hunger at home and across the globe.

I believe that God chose to use me for this work. I can't always provide as much financial support to the church's mission as I would like, but here was an opportunity for me to use my time and some organizational skills and experience to live out God's promise.

I am grateful for my greater understanding of these issues, for the dedicated people who worked on this with me, for the overwhelming generosity of our congregation and for the chance to make a small difference in the fight for justice.

- Carol Pollack