

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

In this 2016 year-end report, Associate Conference Minister East Marvin Silver and Assistant Minister for Social Justice & Witness Alex Vishio detail some of the Conference's major social justice activities over the course of the past year in light of those that were proposed in Alex's June 2015 year-end report. The text in red indicates activities proposed in that June 2015 report.

(1) Follow-up on implementation of the *Dismantling the New Jim Crow* resolution by joining various interdenominational, ecumenical, and multi-organizational alliances, such as the CAC already has with the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform and as certain of its pastors have with BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development), in an effort to create community change and to push for public policy and legislative reforms of the criminal justice system, of drug policy and drug laws, and of law enforcement procedures and protocols. In addition, follow through on the various recommendations listed under the heading "Institutional Capacity" of that resolution (or the likely "combined" resolution that is adopted by the General Synod) seems requisite. In this regard, begin to work with the newly formed UCC Criminal Justice Network and, because class considerations also play a part in such issues, with the newly formed UCC Economic Justice Movement as well.

Throughout the year, we have been working closely with national, state, and local partners to advance our resolution, *Dismantling the New Jim Crow*. Marvin took responsibility for developing a campaign effort with a clear set of goals and actions. We launched the campaign effort with a Conference-wide call to educate UCCers about the campaign and ways they can participate. Here is a brief list of our efforts since the launch:

- We created the [Central Atlantic Conference Criminal Justice Reform Network](#) – the Conference's grassroots advocacy network comprised of individual members and churches working to dismantle the New Jim Crow and advocating for a more just and humane criminal justice system that is free of racial bias and discrimination.
- We hosted Rev. Alexander Sharp, Project Director of [Clergy for a New Drug Policy](#), in November in our Catonsville offices for a conversation entitled, "The War on Drugs: A New Paradigm – Rehabilitation Not Incarceration." There were about a dozen or so of us in attendance. We discussed together the nefarious impact the so-called War on Drugs has had in contributing to mass incarceration and in creating a national "culture of punishment." We tried to do so within a theological framework and thereby clarified why the War on Drugs should be of profound concern to the church and people of faith. Sharp discussed with us an alternative vision as to how we as a nation can respond more effectively and humanely to the problem of drug abuse, a vision that includes transforming our drug laws, eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing,

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

promoting harm reduction, revising police forfeiture practices, and advancing clemency. He focused especially on a growing national movement by law enforcement to concentrate efforts on diversion and treatment and away from punishment.

- In the State of Maryland and in Baltimore especially, we have been actively engaged on a number of levels to help enact criminal justice and police accountability reform. We provided multiple testimony (including testimony from Rev. Dr. John Deckenback, CAC Conference Minister, Rev. Julius Jefferson, Senior Pastor – Heritage UCC [MD], and Rev. Guy Molock, Co-Pastor – Beloved Community Church [MD]) to the [Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council](#) (JRCC), a bipartisan attempt to reduce MD prison population; attended hearings of the [Public Safety and Policing Work Group](#); and participated in two coalitions to advance reform legislation in the MD General Assembly:
 - [Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform \(MAJR\)](#) is a bi-partisan, statewide alliance seeking legislative changes indispensable to bring Maryland into the 21st century with corrections policies that are evidence-based, humane, and effective. As a member of MAJR, we were able to win passage of a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill (92 pages), [The Justice Reinvestment Act](#) (HB 1312 / SB 1005). The bill passed the General Assembly (effective 4/06/16) and the Governor signed it (5/19/2016). It follows the reform recommendations of the JRCC. The efforts of MAJR, as well as of other reform organizations, played a key role in winning support for a more progressive version of the legislation. The next step for the criminal justice reform community is making sure the law is implemented according to our goals and to push for further reforms that were not included in the bill and that will improve the law.
 - In collaboration with the [Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability](#) (MCJPA), an alliance of Marylanders who are seeking police accountability through legislative change, we were able to win sweeping changes with respect to how police offices are trained and held accountable for misconduct. The police reform bill, which contained recommendations provided by a legislative work group created in 2015 after the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, was passed on 4/11/2016 in the final hour before the close of the General Assembly's session. Specific measures in the bill include changes in police oversight, training, and hiring practices. The bill also includes changes to the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights by extending the period of time residents can file a complaint against police and limiting the time an officer can take to retain an attorney for internal investigations from ten days to

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

five. Marvin especially looks forward to providing on-going leadership from a faith perspective in this coalition.

We also provided leadership, support, and (through the Mission, Vision, and Communication Working Group of the Conference Board) funding to the Potomac Association Social Action & Mission Committee to re-envision its financial support of social action mission, which has led to the creation of a small dollar [grant program](#) to fund ministry initiatives from Potomac Association churches and groups working to implement the CAC resolutions.

It should also be noted that throughout the Conference, churches and individual church members continue to work in various ways to combat racism and to dismantle the new Jim Crow. Several – individually or in groups – have read Prof. Alexander’s book, [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Obama](#), or watched her presentation on the subject [on-line](#). Many “Sacred Conversations on Race” have commenced throughout the Conference. In Summit, NJ, and in Annapolis, MD, for instance, the conversation has been conducted in conjunction with members of other denominations and faiths. In addition, some members of the Conference have contacted their local officials or met with state delegates, state senators, and congressional representatives seeking changes to laws that support the new Jim Crow. Others have participated in prison ministries or supported reentry programs.

In terms of economic matters and advocacy, Marvin, Alex, Rev. Ryan Sirmons (Pastor – UCC Annapolis [MD]), and Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear (former Pastor – Zion UCC Perry Hall [MD]) have participated in conference calls of the newly revitalized UCC Economic Justice League. Ryan and Courtney also authored a “Resolution of Support for Establishing Relationships between United Church of Christ Settings and Community Development Federal Credit Unions” that has been sponsored by the Chesapeake Association and that will hopefully be considered by the delegates to the 2017 UCC General Synod.

The CAC also supported [Working Matters in its Maryland Campaign for Paid Sick Days](#). This past legislative session, we came closer than ever to securing a victory for workers in the state who don’t have paid earned sick days. We were instrumentally in securing more than 40 UCC clergy signatures on a letter (of more than 100 MD clergy) to Speaker Busch and Senate Leader Miller. The [Healthy Working Families Act](#) passed the House with a solid majority but failed in the Senate when time ran out on the last day of session. We will try again next year to help pass this legislation.

Marvin and Alex also joined Rev. Graylan Hagler (Senior Pastor - Plymouth Congregational UCC [DC]) and other DC Clergy in a show of solidarity with [SEIU 32BJ](#) (DCA Airport Workers) in the launch of their strike at National Airport. The launch was part of a national effort by airport workers to demand a living wage and better working conditions. Alex also joined Graylan at a march and rally in

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

support of the members of [UFCW Local 400](#), whose jobs are threatened by a European corporate merger. Eight Giant Food grocery stores in the region are slated for potential sale as the result of a merger between Ahold and Delhaize, the European-based parent companies of Giant Food and Food Lion. We are grateful to Graylan for his prophetic leadership in the cause for workers' rights, as well as in a number of other important social justice causes.

Finally, the CAC has heeded the call of the UCC's Justice & Witness Ministries and has joined in a boycott against Wendy's until that hamburger chain commits to protecting the human rights of farmworkers by joining the Fair Food Program. Please conscientiously consider refraining from patronizing Wendy's restaurants until the boycott is lifted. For more information on the boycott, see http://www.ucc.org/boycott_wendys.

(2) *Follow-up on implementation of the [Change the Racially Demeaning Name, Mascot, and Imagery of the Washington National Football League Team](#), including follow through on letters to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and Washington owner Daniel Snyder, boycott games and merchandise, and support the Oneida Indian Nation's "Change the Mascot" campaign. In addition, we may want to consider collecting signatures for petitions to Mayor Bowser of DC, Governor Hogan of MD, and Governor McAuliffe of VA to have them pledge that the elimination of the team's racist name, mascot, and imagery is a non-negotiable item in any discussions of a new stadium and location.*

We have remained engaged on this issue, joining in various conference calls with our Native friends and allies to keep apprised of the Change the Name movement. The recent poll conducted by the Washington Post that purported to demonstrate that 90% of Native Americans were okay with the use of the "R" word is a travesty on so many levels. As we made clear to our friends and allies, we think the methodology of the poll is highly suspect (this has now been attested and confirmed [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#), among other places), but our critique goes beyond such methodological considerations: *for even if no one polled claimed to be offended, we would still stand with our Native friends and allies and fight on principle the use of the name/logo that is morally bankrupt.* The very use of a poll to decide morality is intrinsically problematic, in part because it wrongly puts the onus on the offended to prove the offense. Indeed, the Washington Post poll, we believe, is simply another wound inflicted on Native peoples - and we grieve for that.

The CAC also asked the national setting to join with the Oneida Indian Nation, one of our partners in the struggle to change the name and mascot of the Washington National Football League, in its [continuing attempt](#) to put pressure upon the NFL and its Washington franchise by sending letters to both Wembley Stadium and the BBC requesting that Washington not be allowed to play its "London game" the upcoming football season.

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

Finally, the CAC signed on to a national letter to ban the “R” name from California public schools – this was [enacted](#) at the end of 2015 and took effect a few months ago.

(3) *Follow-up on implementation of the resolution [A Call for The United Church of Christ to Take Actions toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#), including following through on its various political, economic, educational, and interreligious recommendations.*

The CAC was invited and agreed to partner with the national covenanted ministries (including Wider Church Ministries) in tracking and monitoring this resolution that was adopted last summer at General Synod. The resolution calls for several actions that require the attention of the various settings of the church.

The CAC, through its Board of Directors, also engaged in fruitful dialogue with the UCC Board of Directors, Pension Boards, and United Church Funds concerning implementation of the resolution’s calls.

In order to facilitate its own implementation of the resolution, we created the Central Atlantic Conference Palestine-Israel Network (CAC PIN) – the Conference's grassroots advocacy network comprised of individual members and churches working toward a just-peace in that conflict. We conducted a Conference-wide conference call on the resolution earlier this year. Members of CAC PIN will also lead a workshop on the implementation of the resolution at the Conference’s upcoming Annual Meeting.

We have also tried to mobilize UCC pastors and members throughout the Conference to advocate for the Palestinian civil society-led campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) and to oppose anti-BDS legislation in VA, MD, and Congress:

- Our efforts with Freedom to Boycott (F2B) in MD (of which the CAC is a member) led to a significant victory when the legislative session ended with no anti-BDS bill being introduced. More work needs to be done, though, to educate state lawmakers about the BDS movement and to win champions and supporters across the state.
- In VA, we joined F2B and mobilized our clergy to push back against anti-BDS legislation. Binding legislation was rejected after strong opposition from BDS advocates, but in its place a non-binding bill passed that condemns the movement but requires no state action on the issue. We expect the debate to continue in the 2017 session.

- Unfortunately, in NJ, the [Senate passed a bill banning pension investments with businesses boycotting Israel](#).

(4) Continue to work closely with and provide support to Rev. Ryan Sirmons of UCC Annapolis (MD) in his endeavors on our behalf with MILC (Maryland Interfaith Legislative Committee) and with Advocacy Action Afternoon in Annapolis.

We decided to forego an Advocacy Action Afternoon in Annapolis this year, though we were invited to participate in the Episcopal Church's Lobby Day in Annapolis.

MILC meetings this past year were attended by Ryan, Marvin, and Alex. Below is a detailing of the legislation that MILC successfully either advocated for or thwarted:

SB 758/HB 445 Food Stamp Program – Minimum Benefit – State Supplement

MILC supported this bill and it passed

- SB 758/HB 445 as amended would increase the Food Stamp Program (FSP) minimum monthly benefit from \$16 to \$30 for eligible households that include an individual who is at least 62 years of age.

HB 1389 Election Law – Qualification of Voters – Proof of Identity

MILC opposed this bill and it received an unfavorable report by Ways and Means

- HB 1389 would have required election judges to verify a voter's identity through current government-issued identification.

HB 1390 Election Law – Voter Registration and Absentee Voting – Proof of Citizenship

MILC opposed this bill and it was withdrawn after receiving an unfavorable report by Ways and Means

- HB 1390 would have required individuals registering to vote to demonstrate citizenship by providing current government-issued photo identification such as: a birth certificate, passport, naturalization documents, a Bureau of Indian Affairs card number, tribal treaty card number, or tribal enrollment number.

HB 1449 Food Stamp Program – Time Limit Waiver – Prohibition

MILC opposed this bill and it received an unfavorable report by Appropriations

- HB 1449 would have prohibited the State from applying for or implementing a federal waiver of the time limit on the receipt of benefits under the food stamp program by an individual who is an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) and does not meet all applicable work requirements.

(5) Work closely with and provide support to Rev. Amy Sens of Six:Eight UCC (Hampden, MD) in her endeavors on our behalf with the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council and Rev. Dr. John Deckenback (Conference Minister) in his endeavors on our behalf with its Ecumenical Leaders Group, especially regarding environmental matters.

In the autumn of 2015, in response to a request from the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council, a “Green Team” was organized. The Green Team is to work with similar teams from participating denominations on environmental/caring for creation initiatives in the central Maryland area. Environmental advocate and activist Rev. Amy Sens is the chair of this team. Soon after its creation, some of the Team’s members attended an environmental retreat at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, MD, hosted by Interfaith Power & Light.

One of the main goals of the Green Team is to encourage churches to educate their members and the wider community on energy consumption, climate change, and environmental justice; to use church resources like buildings and investments in environmentally responsible ways; and to advocate for a strong response to climate change in other areas of public life. Unfortunately, we did not accomplish as much as we hoped this past year in reaching that goal. We will regroup and try again. We also hope that such Green Teams can be started in other regions and Associations of the Conference.

(6) Encourage the drafting of a Chesapeake Association resolution advocating our moral obligation to source 40% of MD’s energy needs from renewable energy sources by 2025, as well as support the efforts of Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) and other environmental organizations in this regard.

While no such resolution was drafted, the CAC – with its allies at IPL – did advocate for two significant MD environmental bills closely aligned to the purpose of such a resolution:

1. Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act - Signed into law

The bipartisan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Reauthorization was signed by Governor Hogan even before Session ended. Maryland is now required to reduce its climate-disrupting pollution to 40% below 2006 levels by 2030.

2. Clean Energy Jobs Act - Passed but vetoed by the Governor

Maryland's renewable energy requirements received a boost from this critical piece of legislation that was passed on the last day of Session. The Renewable Portfolio Standard ("RPS") requirements have now increased and accelerated from 20% by 2022 to 25% by 2020. This legislation will incentivize 250 new MW

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

of solar and over 1,000 MW of other renewable energy while creating hundreds of clean energy jobs. The bill also calls for a study on ways to improve participation of women- and minority-owned clean energy businesses in this new sector. We will petition the MD legislature to override the governor's veto.

(7) If it is re-adopted by the delegates to the 2015 Annual Meeting, seek to implement the CAC's resolution *In Support of Legislation Authorizing Physician Assistance in Dying* by, among other things, putting that resolution in the proper form for submission to the 31st General Synod (2017) and sending it to the various governors of the CAC states and the mayor of DC, as well as continue to press for passage in Maryland and New Jersey of "Death-with-Dignity" Acts.

The resolution was re-adopted by the delegates to the 2015 CAC Annual Meeting. We will work on putting the resolution into proper form and garnering support for it throughout the denomination over the course of the upcoming summer and autumn (and probably the winter and spring as well) in hopes that it will be a viable resolution for General Synod 2017.

In addition, we provided oral and written testimony to both the MD House (Health and Government Operations & Judiciary Committees) and Senate (Judicial Proceedings Committee) concerning the Richard E. Israel and Roger "Pip" Moyer End-of-Life Option Act HB 404/SB 418. The Senate sponsor withdrew the bill after it became clear that it did not have the votes to receive a favorable report from the Senate committee. We will try again next year. Both Rev. Graylan Hagler and Alex participated in an Interfaith Religious Rally in Annapolis hosted by [Compassion & Choices](#) in support of the legislation. Alex also wrote a [commentary](#) on the issue for *Religion News Service*.

(8) Continue to provide support to the Racial Justice Network of the Potomac Association and to encourage and support such networks and working groups in the other Associations. Encourage the development of Association-wide social justice working groups, such as the Potomac Association's Social Action & Mission Committee and the newly formed Task Force for Social Justice of the New Jersey Association.

Throughout the year, the Potomac Association Racial Justice Working Group (PARJWG) continued its efforts to address racism in our churches and communities. In the autumn, it hosted two programmatic events on the theme of racism and white privilege: "The Cross We Bear" and "The Cross We Continue to Bear." At the second event, Rev. Graylan Hagler also discussed his [speaking tour](#) in Rochester, NY, concerning connections between the Palestinian struggle for justice and the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement, a tour conducted despite death threats. [Graylan will also be leading a workshop at Annual Meeting on the connections between the two movements in their common fight against racism.]

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

The PARJWG also is the original sponsor of a resolution to be considered at the Conference's 2016 Annual Meeting: "A Call for the Central Atlantic Conference to Address Clergy Compensation Inequalities and to Establish Priorities, Strategies, and Goals regarding the Pastoral Search and Call Process that Affirm the Ministries and that Seek to Increase Its Representation of Persons of Color, Women, and LGBTG Clergy." PARJWG will also host a roundtable discussion at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

This year, the PARJWG also became a formal Working Group of the Potomac Association Social Action & Missions Committee, a committee that is ably led by Anne Weissenborn.

In NJ, we are happy to report that a small group of UCCers, led by Rev. LL DuBreuil (Pastor – Faith UCC [Union, NJ]), is engaging in justice advocacy and educating state legislators about our Conference priorities through the New Jersey Social Justice Task Force. The spring NJ Association meeting focused on the issues of Dismantling the New Jim Crow and Mass Incarceration with a keynote from Frank Bolden (Vice-Chair of the UCC Board) and a presentation by State Senator Raymond Lesniak (D-NJ) on reform legislation he is planning to introduce in the state legislature.

At the Chesapeake Association spring meeting, Marvin and Alex preached on the issue of racism in our churches and communities and the urgent need for the Association to prioritize working on this issue. We were able to sign-up more than eight people who are interested in coming together to start a Racial Justice Working Group in that Association. The first meeting of this Planning Committee is later this month.

Marvin was invited by the Catoctin Board at its spring meeting to do a presentation. He discussed the importance of Building Justice Ministries in the Association. There was an engaging exploration and discussion of John 19:25-27 and of what it means to engage in Justice Advocacy as Christians (not as Republicans or Democrats, not as Progressives or Conservatives, etc.).

(9) *Work on supporting the drafting of a CAC resolution concerning adults survivors of child abuse; encourage and support Ms. Diane Champé, member of New Covenant Community UCC (Owings Mills, MD), as she continues her organizational, educational, and supportive work in this regard with assistance from New Covenant UCC and its pastor, Rev. Brian Murray, and Zion UCC (Perry Hall, MD) and its pastor, Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear.*

We are happy to report that the resolution, "Supporting Adult Survivors of Child

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

Abuse and Neglect,” will be presented for consideration by the delegates at the 2016 Annual Meeting. We are grateful to its author, Diane Champé, for her efforts in this regard, as well as for her efforts more generally in advocating for adult survivors. Diane is currently establishing a center for such survivors at New Covenant Community UCC, and we are also grateful for the support of and contributions to this initiative by its Pastor, Rev. Brian Murray.

(10) Continue to try to encourage the Potomac Association to explore the possibility of working with the Justice for Juniors Juvenile Recidivism Reduction Interfaith Project. This mentoring/tutoring program for young persons in the juvenile justice system in DC really fits quite well into the kind of work we are advocating as a Conference with respect to the *Dismantling the New Jim Crow* resolution.

We haven't been able as yet to make much headway with respect to participating in this particular program. Ms. Lois Carrigan, the President of the CAC Board of Directors, has encouraged us, however, to explore the possibility of establishing and providing a networking and information-sharing resource for prison, jail, and detention center ministries throughout the Conference. To this end, we have already begun to gather Conference-wide data concerning such ministries, and we anticipate giving more attention and energy to building this resource in the coming year.

Indeed, our Conference's commitment to ending mass incarceration in this country, as articulated in the *Dismantling the New Jim Crow* resolution, is explicitly concerned about re-integrating ex-felons into the life of their communities. We believe prison, jail, and detention center ministries can assist individuals in preparing to become full and flourishing members of their communities once they have been released, as well as help meet their needs, especially spiritual, during their period of incarceration/detention.

(11) With another presidential election at our doorstep, advocate for campaign finance reform and against gerrymandering and voter-suppression legislation and initiatives.

- In early February, the Maryland General Assembly overrode Governor Hogan's veto and restored the voting rights of over 44,000 Maryland citizens previously barred from voting because they are on probation or parole. The law went into effect on March 10, 2016. The CAC supported the effort to override the Governor's veto. Members wrote to their lawmakers, and Marvin and Alex attended a rally in Annapolis sponsored by Faith in Public Life in support of the override.

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

- We were also happy to learn that Governor McAuliffe signed an executive order on April 22nd [restoring the voting rights of 206,000 formerly incarcerated citizens](#). He said the action was aimed largely at rectifying Virginia's "long and sad history" of suppressing African-American voting power. [The VA GOP has now sued the Governor over the executive order](#).
- We collaborated with Justice & Witness Ministries (JWM) DC Office to promote and register UCCers to attend [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) (April 15th-18th) and to organize a UCC pre-event on April 15th (9am-2:30pm) on the theme, [Lift Every Voice: Our Faith, The Vote & Democracy](#), held at First Congregational UCC (DC). The event focused on educating and mobilizing UCC advocates attending EAD to demand Congress restore the Voting Rights Act, on connecting them with movements across the country challenging attacks on voting rights and access to the polls, and on building voter empowerment ministries in their churches and communities. We look forward to the on-going collaboration with JWM, and its DC office, around the implementation of the Conference's three resolutions, as well as other justice issues.

(12) **Begin Conference-wide discussions on the topic of reparations. Work on a CAC resolution that, among other things, requests the US government to issue a formal apology to and reparations (in the sense of an investment-driven Marshall plan for specified communities) for African- and Native Americans, as well as recommends some sort of national truth and reconciliation commissions and conversations.**

Not much headway was made here, except that it should be noted that the creation of a Racial Reconciliation Task Force was proposed in a bill this past MD legislative session. The bill did not become law but the CAC joined with the Episcopal Church in submitting written testimony for this bill.

(13) **Continue to solicit donations to the Restore Baltimore Fund, assist Heritage UCC (West Baltimore, MD) and its pastor, Rev. Julius Jefferson, in stocking that church's food pantry and in other services it may seek to provide to the community, and explore other ways we can help the impoverished and marginalized communities and neighborhoods of Baltimore.**

Rev. Jefferson has written, "We are deeply grateful to you, our sisters and brothers in the Central Atlantic Conference, for demonstrating such a compassionate spirit in sharing your blessings with us. Your generosity has enabled us to provide thousands of meals to mothers, fathers, children, widows, grandparents, and other needy persons who have reached out to Heritage for a helping hand. Although the need for food is increasing, our ability to address the need is seriously challenged. We are often forced to turn away people who are in

End-Year Report to the 2016 CAC Annual Meeting

desperate need of food. We would therefore appreciate your continuing assistance in replenishing and sustaining our pantry ministry. Donations can be delivered to the Conference office, Heritage UCC, or arrangements can be made for pickup. Checks can also be written out to the Conference with the notation 'Baltimore Fund.'"

It should be noted that the Chesapeake Association contributed as an offering over \$500 to the Baltimore Fund during the worship service at its spring meeting.

(14) **Continue to press for repeal of the death penalty in Delaware and support Rev. David Popham (Conference Associate Minister) in this regard.**

The CAC-UCC supported a bill that would have overturned the death penalty in Delaware. Marvin, Alex, David, Rev. Ellen Witko (Pastor – The People's Church of Dover UCC), and Rev. Dusty Pruitt (Pastor – Safe Harbor UCC [Milton, DE]) all participated in some degree or other in supporting the bill. Unfortunately, the bill was defeated in January, but a subsequent decision by a Superior Court judge puts the state's thirty-nine [currently pending](#) capital murder cases on hold until the state Supreme Court determines the constitutionality of Delaware's death penalty scheme. Alex also penned a newspaper op-ed against the death penalty on behalf of a coalition of Delaware clergy.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marvin Silver
Associate Conference Minister East
Central Atlantic Conference–United Church of Christ

Rev. Alex Vishio
Assistant Minister for Social Justice & Witness
Central Atlantic Conference–United Church of Christ