



The Rev. Dr. Mary Susan Gast
Conference Minister

October 2007

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Enclosed is a draft of the proposed new Bylaws of the Northern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ—of which you are a valued member.

Church bylaws are theological documents, as well as means of legal incorporation. Constitutions and bylaws say who we are and describe our connections to one another within our church community, locally and throughout the denomination. Bylaws explain who is a member of this particular body, and what it means to be a member. Bylaws record how we've agreed to conduct ourselves and organize our mission. Healthy bylaws connect us, set a tone and a direction for us, and keep us moving and growing. They form a framework for ministry and a safety net if we teeter off the edge of our charted course.

The members of the Bylaws Task Group present this draft document as bylaws that are not so much "revised" or "changed" but "renewed." We ask that you read through this draft of the Bylaws as a document in itself, reflecting on how it accomplishes or falls short of the purposes alluded to above. We invite you to discuss the proposed Bylaws with others in your local church or Association or anywhere in the Conference.

The discussion began at this year's Annual Meeting. A few minor edits were made as a result of those conversations. We now want to extend the conversations and ask that you send your reactions, questions, and suggestions to the Conference Office by the end of the calendar year. Send a letter or a memo to us in Hayward, or send an email message to bylaws@ncncucc.org.

In January 2008, the Bylaws Task Group will meet to review the proposed Bylaws and the comments received, make any adjustments that seem appropriate, and then send the draft Bylaws the Conference Board of Directors for final approval. The Board of Directors will distribute the version to be voted on at the 2008 Conference Annual Meeting to all member churches and authorized ministers. It will also be posted on the Conference website.

If you wish to compare the proposed Bylaws with those currently in effect, a comparison of the two documents is also included in this mailing. The comparison papers note:

- overall changes in the organization of the Conference
- elements that are new
- things that appear in the current Bylaws but will more appropriately and effectively be included in the Standing Rules of the Annual Meeting or of the Conference Council (currently the Board of Directors)
- items from the current Bylaws that have been omitted on the bases of being unnecessary, redundant, or of a degree of specificity that encumbers movement or indicates an attitude of mistrust
- changes in the conceptualization of the ministries of the Conference.

Both the current and proposed Bylaws are on-line on the Conference website.

Current Bylaws: <http://www.ncncucc.org/docsandresources/BYLAWS.pdf>

Proposed Bylaws: <http://www.ncncucc.org/docsandresources/Bylaws2007-10-02-NR.pdf>

We look forward to hearing from you as we develop Bylaws that can keep us focused and directed toward the holy destination we seek as we meander, amble, stride, lurch, roll, and otherwise “walk together in all God’s ways—known or to be known by us.”

Yours in the service of Jesus Christ,

Rev. Mary Susan Gast,
for the Bylaws Task Group:

Tony Lewis
Rev. Kyle Lovett
Kevin Manz

Rev. Garnet McClure
John Meermans
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