



THE PACIFIC

the oldest continuously published newspaper in California

Founded in 1851

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CONFERENCE



December/January 2009

Powell Jackson to keynote Annual Gathering

This year's theme: Bearing one another's burdens and encouraging each other

"We encourage all churches to start planning and praying for our Conference's Annual Gathering at Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove May 28-31," co-moderators Erin Dimond and Kevin Manz announced.

"In these times of challenge and change and hope, we all need to come together as progressive Christians to bear one another's burdens and encourage each other — that's why we chose this theme."

Keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Bernice Powell Jackson is the president of the World Council of Churches for North America. She served on the UCC national staff for 20 years, most recently as one

of the five officers of the church and as head of Justice and Witness Ministries.

During the 1980s, she was director of the Bishop Tutu Scholarship Fund in the US, where she worked closely with the archbishop. She has worked for more than three decades on civil rights, human rights and justice issues and is a much-sought-after preacher.

The new NCNC bylaws change



Bernice Powell Jackson

the title of this annual event from "meeting" to "gathering" because attendees do so much more than meet. They worship, sing, play on the beach, learn, share, pray, create, all at one of the most beautiful places in the world. (Check out <www.vistasilomar.com>.

Anyone can come! Members, friends, young, and old, lay and ordained.

There will be some business to do, including votes on the Goal Budget and on any proposed administrative actions or issues of concern. To submit proposals consult the guidelines posted on the NCNC website www.ncncc.org. Each church has at least three voting delegates, one of whom must

be a youth or young adult (ages 13-25.) Consult the Conference director, now online at <www.ncncc.org>, for specifics.

Joy Davis continues as registrar. Registration forms are in this issue of The Pacific and online at <www.ncncc.org>; You may register over the phone with Davis in the Conference office also.

Asilomar's costs have gone up, and the planning group has set these policies and prices: Children under 3 come free; children (3-12), youth (13-17) and young adults (18-25) are at cost, and youth chaperones are at cost.

Churches are encouraged to pay for pastors, delegates and youth to attend, in the church

budget or with fundraisers. There is limited scholarship help.

There is no charge for either the children's program (ages 3-12 — infants and toddlers cannot be accommodated) or the youth program (ages 13-17 or older if still in high school). Persons in-care are subsidized by the Conference and pay the youth rate.

All others share in the cost of Annual Gathering; a registration fee is folded into the room cost. Registration fees for those staying off-site include a grounds fee that Asilomar requires, plus a share of the cost of Annual Gathering.

Look for more info on the Conference website or contact Davis at 510-247-8995.

Churches address election propositions in new ways

Commentary

by Deborah Streeter

This election changed how we do church.

Across the Conference, churches engaged in politics in completely new ways: "No on 8" signs hung over church doors. Ministers and lay people wrote to their local paper and held press conferences. In sermons and classes we talked about why and how Christians might be called to vote on the various propositions. (Churches may not endorse candidates, but are free, thanks to the First Amendment, to speak out on, and fund, propositions.) We even formed Facebook groups.

"Proud American, Disappointed Californian" was the Facebook group Kyle Lovett of Eden UCC, Hayward promoted Nov. 5 after the election of Barack Obama and the passage of Proposition 8, which prohibits same-gender marriage in California.

"It feels like we are living in Biblical times, such extremes of good and bad," Lovett said the day after the election. "People are



First Congregational UCC, Alameda hung this sign over their front door, eliciting much positive response. They took it down election day when they were a polling place.

calling the church and coming by asking how we can live in the tension of the two, how to hold paradox and ambiguity in the midst of such passion. People are turning to their churches in this time."

Writing this piece Nov. 10, I can't predict the news or mood of readers in early December when you read your Pacific. But I know after reading lots of church newsletters and talking with many folks that this election was historic not just for our nation, but for our NCNC churches.

After First Congregational

UCC, Alameda, hung a "No on 8" sign over their front door, a letter appeared in a local blog; "I grew up in a very religious, right-wing environment and haven't had any desire to go to church since I got out of there, but I must admit that seeing that big Vote No on Prop. 8 banner on First Congregational Church, which is about four blocks from my house, always puts a smile on my face. Let's hear it for diversity and tolerance! If I ever did decide to go back to church, First Congregational would be at the top of my list."

Alameda's Laura Rose recounts, "One of our youth had a friend comment on her 'No on 8' button, and then say, 'Hey did you see the church with the sign?' Our high school youth said, 'Yes, it is my church,' and got to talk to her classmate about FCCA."

Many church councils, social action boards and even whole congregations went on record in opposition to Proposition 8, as did the Conference Council. Conference Minister Mary Susan Gast and her Southern California Nevada Conference Minister counterpart

Jane Fisler Hoffman wrote letters and held press conference to try to counter the prevailing idea that all churches supported Prop. 8.

In a feature story Nov. 2, the Sacramento Bee contrasted a local Catholic priest urging member to vote for Prop. 8 with Sierra Arden UCC's pastor Ginny Curinga. "She told members at the 10 a.m. service that the measure is a civil rights issue. 'It has angered me so much to hear the propaganda about Proposition 8,' said Curinga. We need to stand up and vote against this kind of hatred.' Afterward, many members thanked her for her message."

On Election Night churches held parties with big screen TV and popcorn. "I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be on Tuesday evening Nov. 4 than at church," wrote David Grishaw-Jones of First Congregational UCC, Santa Cruz.

On that night, "I need the companionship of hopeful hearts and the determination of a faith community. I need this community to weep with me when bigotry prevails . . . to work with me to make a better world possible. I also need you to sing with me, dance with me, break bread with me. I need you to remind me that hope is not just possible; hope is our destiny, our calling, our promised land."

And on Wednesday morning the historic work of the church **See ELECTION, Page B8**

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PACIFIC CURRENTS

Writing the Vision From the Editor

“There’s a difference between welcome and invitation. In both cases, the door is open. But when we welcome we’re inside the door making people feel at home. And when we invite, we’re probably outside the door beckoning people in.

“We may be shy about sharing our own faith experience, but we have a banquet to invite people to with plenty of room at the table. The Bible suggests we keep our ideas open about who might receive invitations. Can we imagine the many ways we might offer that invitation to make it open but compelling?”

That’s from a sermon Phil Porter, commissioned minister of art and communication at First Congregational UCC, Berkeley, preached in October.

Our Conference was one of three chosen by the national setting to get some special “church coaching” on how to be more inviting and welcoming. Eleven NCNC churches in the first phase are getting training by a national consultant and the support of an NCNC-trained coach. From Chico to Fresno, La Selva Beach to San Francisco, we are learning how to stand farther outside the door and beckon people in to the feast. Ask your associate Conference minister about the program and how you might be part of the second phase, as church or coach.

I hope the UCNews and The Pacific can help you beckon folks in. Each church gets free extra copies of each issue. They’re all on line <ucc.org/ucnews> and <ncncc.org/pacific>. I get 30 extra copies a month and try to spread them around. Share these stories of extravagant welcome and bold invitation with visitors, those who’ve already made it through the door. And when you’re outside the door, at work or school or the cafe, use our news to tell friends those stories and invite them to the feast.

Advent is a great time to welcome and invite, extravagantly.



Deborah Streeter

New NCNC Partners in Education

By Barbara Broadbent,
Associate conference minister for education

The number of trained Christian education consultants in our Conference just tripled!

Partners in Education, a program of the national setting of the UCC, helps local churches plan and provide effective teaching ministries through area workshops and consultation requests from local churches and groups of churches.

Our now six partners have all been trained at the national level and are committed to the teaching ministries of the church.

They have information and continue to learn about United Church of Christ resources, including:

- Resources published by United Church of Christ instrumentalities and groups.
- Pilgrim Press and United Church Press books.
- Curricula developed by the United Church of Christ.

All are available to help local congregations with ministries of



Front row from left: Eileen Altman, Maryann Coole; back row from left: Laura Barnes, Barbara Broadbent, Betsy Woodward, Barbara Essex

education by offering free workshops to help leaders in congregations plan and develop vibrant ministries of education.

Our new Partners in Education are Eileen Altman, associate minister at First Congregational UCC, Palo Alto, working with educational and outreach ministries; Laura Barnes, associate minister of Danville Community UCC, where she is responsible for Christian education and youth ministry; Maryann Coole, church school coordinator at First Congregational

UCC, San Jose, and Barbara Essex, minister and director of pastoral services at Pacific School of Religion and the author of numerous books published by Pilgrim Press.

Continuing Partners are Barbara Broadbent, commissioned associate Conference minister for education ministries, NCNC, and Betsy Woodward,

commissioned minister of Christian education with the Congregational Church of San Mateo, UCC, and an education consultant for the Western Region of the United Church of Christ.

Contact Broadbent at <bbroadbent@ncncc.org> or 510-247-8996 for more information or to schedule a workshop with one of the partners.

For more information on the program, visit <<http://www.ucc.org/education/partners/>>.

Women’s Network Winter Retreat Jan 30 - Feb 1 at Mercy Center

All NCNC women are invited to this year’s winter retreat at Mercy Center in Burlingame, where keynote speaker Patricia Evans will address “Thin Places: Where the Divine and Ordinary Meet.”

What is a thin place? Thin places are those places in life where the dividing line between the holy and the ordinary is hard to see and more easily felt to the point that the ordinary becomes holy and the holy becomes ordinary.

Evans is senior minister of the First Christian Church, Albany, OR. Before serving this congregation she was pastor of the First Christian Church, Selma, CA for 14 years.

Throughout her years in Selma she was also an active leader in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Northern California and Nevada and served a term as Regional Moderator, Church Camp director, retreat leader, key-

noter, and chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee several times.

The retreat begins with dinner Friday night through lunch

Sunday. Saturday work-

shops include: Build Body Confidence by Finding Your Style; Dancing into the In-Between; Discovering What’s Truly Important: Reflecting on “Eat, Pray, Love” by Elizabeth Gilbert; The Thin Within—Living in the thin place within the human heart, and Life-landscape Book.

Registration forms and more

their ministerial standing.

The UCC history session will be part of a new four-part UCC Ministry Institute. The Ministry Institute is intended for everyone—lay or ordained—who wants to learn more about preparation for ministry and expectations of ministers in the UCC. Taking part in all four sessions, over the course of a year, on UCC history, theology, polity and ministry and completing the work will help those who

seek UCC ministerial standing.

Look for more information about Church Day and registration in your Constant Contact emails and on line after Jan. 1.

Contact Barbara if you want to help on Church Day - <bbroadbent@ncncc.org> 510-247-8996.

For the Ministry Institutes, see Page B6, and contact Deborah Streeter for information. <dstreeter@ncncc.org> 831-624-6072.



Women’s Network fall retreat day included Curran Reichert, host pastor, Melinda McLain, Sister Judy Donovan and Susan Meeter, keynote speaker. Photo Alexandra Childs

Church Day March 21 to focus on leadership

How to be a moderator? Who can help us develop small group ministry? How can our church get more excited about mission? How can youth learn to interpret progressive Christianity to their peers?

These are some of the workshops to be offered at a Conference-wide Church Day, March 21, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., at Community UCC, Orinda. (All are invited, but actually, there will be a similar “eastside” Church Day in the Central Valley Oct. 3.)

Inspired by the successful Forums for the Future of a year ago, this event will offer three sets of workshops in three different areas (nine choices in all):

- How can your church find a faithful and efficient structure?;
- Faith development and small groups;
- Getting outside the church door: Mission.

Coordinated by the Overview Board for Faith Enhancement and Leadership Development and staffed by Barbara Broadbent, the

day will begin with Bible study and will include programs for children and youth. Churches are urged to send teams of folks to take advantage of all the offerings.

At the same time there will be two parallel all-day offerings: a boundaries training for pastors and a program on UCC History.

Six contact hours of boundaries training are required every three years for pastors to maintain

There is only one God; deal with it

By Mary Susan Gast

You and I worship the same God. As do Anne Lamott, Ann Coulter, the Ayatollah, and my neighbor Larry Grossman. I make this assertion because I wholeheartedly believe that there is only one Supreme Being, Who dreamed up the cosmos and loved us into existence.

Maybe you saw the clip of a pastor in Iowa who, in late October, was offering serious prayer that the outcome of the presidential election would favor his candidate. The pastor laid it on the line to the Almighty, saying, "What's at stake is Your reputation..." The minister made the case that there are a whole lot of people "praying to their God, whether it's Hindu, Buddha...Allah" for the victory of the other candidate, and if they win everyone is "gonna think that their God is bigger than You."

The prayer cranked up Stephen Colbert who exploded into supportive bombast after airing the video, extracting the message, "I'm pretty sure we're packing the biggest God" and hyping the no-

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tice that we are entering into "the final round of a centuries-long God-off to be decided by who wins Pennsylvania."

All of which seems to imply that a belief in multiple deities duking it out for supremacy is poised to trump Christianity's historic attachment to monotheism.

I was raised by monotheists, so the notion that there is really only ONE God came to me early in my life. It was the theologian and philosopher Paul Ricoeur, though, who directed my soul to the more flamboyant applications of the principle. He insisted that we Christians and Jews and Muslims



trip over our tenets if we exclaim with the prophet Malachi "Has not one God created us?" (2: 10) while simultaneously assuring ourselves that the One God is actually our sole and respective property and/or Creator and doesn't hang with the people we disapprove of or disagree with.

Ricoeur further warned us monotheists against nurturing the antithetical notion that there's one God for the Christians and some other God for the Muslims and a whole bevy of other gods for the polytheists. This was his doctrine of radical monotheism. To paraphrase crassly: There's one God; deal with it.

Deal with it. Consider the implications. Do more than speculate about it. Make friends with it. Pal around with it. What would it mean to our lives and our world if we passionately embraced the conviction that all people have sprung from the same Source of Life? If we reveled in the understanding that none of us is ever left out of God's care or treated with divine indifference? If we totally aban-

doned the self-serving expediency of being theoretical monotheists while congratulating ourselves on backing the winner in the battle of the Gods?

What if there is only One God? One God, Who creates, redeems and sustains us, no matter what names we utter in invocation. Incandescent with love, aflame with justice, yearning for the peace and well-being of all the earth; barreling toward us, crushing mountains, raising valley floors, causing earth tremors as the foundations of everyday politics and economics are rattled, sloshing through the spilled waters of the upended rivers of pain and woe, in rushing wild exuberance just to be with us, to be in touch with us, to break through to us, despite our resistance, our stubbornness, our arrogance, our beaten-down spirits, our debilitating pain.

What if we believed to the core that all human beings worship the same God? What if it's true? What if it is, in the language of the season, Good News for all the people?

O Holy One, You are the God of justice,
You God of justice, shine forth!
Justice will return to those who are children of God's heart,
And who walk in God's ways
Your steadfast love, O Holy One, supports me.
When the cares of my heart are many,
Your consolations cheer my soul.

Psalms 94: 1, 15, 18b-21a, 22-23, Redemption Songs, Mary Susan Gast, (c) 2002; used by permission

Can unjust powers be allied with You,
Framing misery by statute,
Banding together against the fullness of life...?

No! The Almighty is my stronghold,
My God is the rock in Whom I take refuge.
For it is God Who reigns,
The God of justice and recourse for the oppressed.

Almaden Valley UCC, San Jose, voted to be Open and Affirming on Oct. 19.

Jackie Brown has been hired as interim minister at Pioneer UCC, Sacramento, as of Nov. 20.

Chinese Congregational UCC, San Francisco, celebrated its 135th anniversary Oct. 19.

Denise Cordova was installed by the Sacramento Valley Association as pastor of Light of the Soul UCC, Reno this fall.

Shelley Dieterle and Jeff Kauffman

are proud parents of Sebastian Francis Dieterle Kauffman, born Sept. 4.

Clyde Dodder will be named minister emeritus by First Congregational UCC, Palo Alto Jan. 25.

Janet Dorman begins as interim minister at First Congregational UCC, San Rafael, on Nov. 23.

Stephanie Bingham Doss and Bryan Doss welcomed new daughter Jocelyn Reinhart Doss on Oct. 28.

Faith Community UCC, Oakland, will celebrate its 10th anniversary Dec. 7.

Marijke Fakaslieiki has resigned from Church World Service.

Arlan Fick died July in Sioux Falls, S.D.. He

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES

served St. John's UCC, Woodland, from 1978-1983, and Hillcrest Congregational UCC, Pleasant Hill, from 1984-1992. Condolences to his family may be sent to his spouse, Leilani Fick, 25272 182nd St., Spirit Lake IA 51360.

Filipino-American Evangelical UCC, Fremont, celebrated its 10th anniversary in September.

First Congregational UCC, Auburn, voted to be Open and Affirming Oct. 12.

Karl Fung has been called as pastor of Chinese Congregational UCC, Berkeley, to begin in February.

Melissa and Libby Gardner-McBride were married on Oct. 26.

Bet Hannon and Va Nee Van Vleck were married Sept. 27 in Fresno with Stephanie Doss officiating.

Ardith Hayes and Ruth Ann Clark were married by Susan Meeter at Mira Vista UCC, El Cerrito, Sept. 21.

Imani Community UCC, Sacramento,

celebrated its first anniversary in September.

Keith Inouye is resigning from United Japanese Christian UCC/UMC, Clovis, as of Dec. 31. He is being transferred to Wesley United Methodist, San Jose.

Kyle Lovett has been hired by First Congregational UCC, Santa Cruz, as interim associate minister.

Kristen Marshall (UMC) was recently appointed as associate pastor at United Japanese Christian UCC/UMN, Clovis.

Virginia Maslo, who served as pastor of First Congregational UCC, Rio Vista, died in August in Colorado, where she had been serving an interim pastorate in Prospect Valley.

Garnet McClure celebrated her 10th anniversary at Congregational UCC, Fremont, in Sept.

Valerie McEntee will be ordained by the Golden Gate Association Nov. 15 in a four-way covenant with her home church, Congregational UCC, San Mateo, the association, and San Francisco Night Ministry.

Susan Meeter was installed by the Bay Association as pastor at Mira Vista UCC, El Cerrito, Oct. 19.

Dennis Montzingo celebrated the 25th anniversary

of his ordination and his 20th year at Community UCC, Clarksburg, Aug. 17.

Yolanda Moreno has been called as transitional minister by First Christian, Disciples of Christ, Watsonville, starting Dec. 1.

Randall Mullins has begun his service at First Congregational UCC, Redwood City, as chaplain.

Lynice Pinkard will be installed by the Bay Association as senior pastor at First Congregational UCC, Oakland, Nov. 9.

Robert Shively has been hired as interim minister at Fairfax Community Church, beginning Nov. 16

Shannon and Heather Dillashaw Spencer, recently of First Congregational UCC, Santa Cruz welcomed baby Abigail Dillashaw Spencer on Sept. 30 in Asheville, N.C., where Shannon is now associate pastor of First UCC.

Michael Schiefelbein and Steve Klinkerman were married Oct. 27 in Modesto with Jack Dawson officiating.

Carol Walton began as designated term minister at Faith UCC, Sacramento, Oct. 15.

Felicity Wright has resigned from Arlington Community UCC, Kensington, as of Oct. 26.

Dec. 3
Lectio Divina, So. Alameda County Clergy Bible Study, 2 - 3:30 p.m., Eden UCC, 21455 Birch St, Hayward

Dec. 10
Lectio Divina, see Dec. 3

Dec. 10
Golden Gate Assoc. Board of Directors, St. John's UCC, San Francisco, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Faith Burgess, 650-591-0994

Dec. 12
Committee on Ministry, Hillcrest Congregational UCC, Pleasant Hill; Section A: 8:30 a.m., Carmelle Knudsen, <carmelle.k@earthlink.net> and James Kosko <egcc_pastor@yahoo.com>, co-chairs; Mary Evelyn Arnold, scheduler <mearnold@vom.com> Section B: 9 a.m., Melinda V. McLain <revmelinda@earthlink.net> and Lois Mueller <revlois@sbcglobal.net>, co-chairs; Aisa King scheduler <gertrudeaisaking@yahoo.com>

Dec. 17
So. Alameda County UCC Clergy Christmas Potluck & Playful Gift Exchange, Noon to 2 p.m., United Church of Hayward, 30540 Mission Blvd, Hayward

Jan. 5
Financial Development Team, 1-3 p.m., Conference office

Jan. 7
Lectio Divina, see Dec. 3

Jan. 10
NCNC Council Meeting, 10 a.m., location to be determined. For more information, contact Tony Lewis, <tlewis@exelana.com>

Jan. 14
Lectio Divina, see Dec. 3

Jan. 15
Brief description of any proposals for the Annual Gathering are due at the Conference office; <office@ncncucc.org>. Check <www.ncncucc.org> under Annual Gathering for guidelines for proposal submission.

Jan. 14
Golden Gate Assoc. Board of Directors, St. John's UCC, San Francisco, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Faith Burgess, 650-591-0994

Jan. 16
Committee on Ministry, Hillcrest Congregational UCC, Pleasant Hill; See Dec. 12.

Jan. 17
Committee on Ministry, Section D Retreat, Community Church of Mill Valley UCC, 8 Olive Street, Mill Valley

Jan. 17-19
Mid Winter Camp at Camp Tuolumne Trails, for middle school youth and adult leaders. Ecumenical retreat with DOC. Camp Tuolumne Trails is a brand new camp in the Sierra Foothills. Registration forms at <www.ncncucc.org>, mail to: Camp Registrar, 21425 Birch St, Hayward CA, 94541, or fax to 510.247.8992. For more information, contact Rev. Sara Steen, Director of Outdoor Ministries, <sara@ncncucc.org>, 510-918-0751.

See CALENDAR on Page B6

CONFERENCE NOTES

Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ Annual Gathering May 28-31 Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove CA

All registrants complete this section

Name: _____ Name: _____
 Please list birthdates of persons 25 and under, and check the box if out of high school:
 Name: _____ Birthdate _____ out of HS
 Name: _____ Birthdate _____ out of HS
 Home Address: _____

 Phone _____ Email _____
 Name of Church _____ City where church is located _____

Use each person's initials to indicate category. (Check *all* that apply)

Voting:

	Minister with NCNC standing		Local Church Delegate
	Board of Directors member		Association Moderator
	Youth or Young Adult Delegate (ages 13-25)		

Non-voting:

	Minister without NCNC standing		Local Church Layperson
	Non-voting Youth Participant (ages 13-17)		UCC Person in Care
	Non-voting Youth (ages 13-17) <i>NOT PARTICIPATING</i> in the youth program		

Special needs:

	ASL interpretation needed
	Children's Program: ages 3 to 12, no charge to attend
	I'd like to be an Annual Meeting volunteer!

Register by phone – no forms needed!! Call the registrar, Joy Davis, at 510-247-8995 between 9 am and 5 pm weekdays and register by phone. You can send a check or pay with a credit card right on the phone.

PLEASE NOTE: Asilomar expects us to know who is on campus and in the rooms at all times. If you will be checking in to your room late, checking out early, adding or subtracting a person in your room, or unable to attend please let us know as soon as possible so that we may avoid paying penalties. Call 510-247-8995; during Annual Meeting the message will refer you to a cell phone number.

**Mail completed registration forms to:
 NCNC UCC, 2145 Birch St.,
 Hayward CA 94541-2131
 or fax to 510-247-8992 or email information
 to Joy@ncnccucc.org or
 call Joy at 510-247-8995**

Complete this section if you are staying on campus at Asilomar

Fee calculation (room, meals, and registration package)

Thursday night Friday night Saturday night

# of people	# of nights	price per night	Room total
	x	x	=

Special Interest Meal Surcharge

_____ PAAM Friday lunch # _____ Earth Stewards Friday Dinner
 # _____ PSR Saturday Breakfast # _____ Women's Network Saturday Lunch

# of people	# of special meals	surcharge per meal	total
	x	X \$2	= \$

Donation to Annual Meeting Scholarship Fund: <i>(any amount is appreciated)</i>	\$
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Full Participation Discount (staying all three nights) Adults \$30 per person # of adults	= <\$ >
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Child, Youth, Young Adult, Youth Chaperone, and Person in Care prices have already been substantially discounted, so no further discount is available.

Total Fees	\$
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Minimum \$100 per person deposit to register; balance in full is due by April 30, 2009

Mail completed registration forms to: **NCNC UCC, attn. Joy, 21425 Birch St., Hayward CA 94541-2131**
 Or fax to 510-247-8992 Or email information to Joy@ncnccucc.org Or call Joy at 510-247-8995

Special Needs and Requests

____ Wheelchair access needed, NO stairs, grab bars in bathrooms
 ____ First Floor room needed; may include a few stairs
 ____ Second floor room preferred ____ Crib needed ____ Separate beds
 ____ Vegetarian meals needed ____ Box lunch on Sunday
 Roommate, if not on this form: _____
 Other needs or requests: _____

Room Rates Per Person Per Night

Prices include registration, housing, and meals

Adults (over 18)	per person
Standard single room	\$250 per night
Historic single room	\$210 per night
Standard double room	\$178 per night
Historic double room	\$160 per night
Cottages (no child price, must meet minimum)	\$150 per night
3 or 4 person dorm room	\$145 per night
Youth chaperone (dorm room)	\$95 per night
Young adult, ages 18-25 (dorm room)	\$95 per night
Person in care of UCC (dorm room)	\$80 per night
Children and Youth (under 18)	per person
Child or youth (ages 3 - 17)	\$80 per night
Infant under 3 years	Free

***Reserve your room early to
 get the specific room
 you want!!***

**We must release unreserved rooms
 by MARCH 20**

Rooms will be available after March 20 due to cancellations, or if Asilomar has additional rooms available, but cannot be guaranteed. Call to check room availability.

Cancellation Policy

Unlike single hotel reservations, we must pay for all rooms reserved whether they are used or not. Therefore, we have the following cancellation fees and policies:

**\$25 cancellation fee before March 20
 \$50 cancellation fee after March 20
 After May 10, no refund unless room can be re-sold
 No show – no refund**

New to Annual Gathering? FAQs about registration

Historic, Standard, Cottage, or Dorm rooms: what's the difference?

Historic rooms are in the oldest buildings. They are preferred by people who want to be close to Merrill Hall and the Crocker Dining room. They also cost less than the standard single or double rooms. Historic rooms sell out early. *Dorm rooms* house three or four people. The dorm price applies to families with children over 3. (Little ones under 3 stay free, so do not count toward the dorm room minimum.) *Cottages and Suites* have a living room and/or kitchen, and are nice for a group of 3 to 7 adults: no child price is available. *Standard rooms* are more apt to have one or two special amenities, such as a balcony, fireplace, or a nice view. They are farther from the center of Asilomar, giving you the opportunity for some healthy exercise to help combat the effects of Asilomar's delicious meals. If walking a distance is an issue for you, Asilomar provides an excellent shuttle service free of charge.

Room Requests

Asilomar has a wide variety of rooms, beds and amenities. Historic rooms have fewer amenities. Most rooms have two single or two double beds, but a few rooms have one queen size bed. There are beautiful forest views, meadow views, and dunes views, as well as some ocean views. Ocean views are more likely to be on the second floor. Some rooms have a fireplace or a balcony. Depending on what rooms Asilomar assigns us, we may not have the specific room, building, or amenity you want, but feel free to ask and we'll do our best to accommodate you.

Roommates

Please make roommate requests when you register. If you want to share a room, but do not have a roommate, we'll assign you one. If your requested roommate does not register by April 1, we'll need to assign you to a different roommate.

Roommates must choose the same type of room (historic or standard). If your roommate is not staying as long as you are, you will need to pay for a single room on the night or nights you are alone.

Special interest meals and Sunday box lunches

We ask Asilomar for a separate, smaller dining room on Friday and Saturday for special interest meals. On Friday, PAAM—Pacific Asian American Ministries—has a lunch gathering, and the Earth Stewards group has a dinner gathering. Saturday morning, folks who have a connection to Pacific School of Religion gather for breakfast. The Women's Network has their luncheon on Saturday. All are welcome to attend any of these special interest meals. There is a \$2 fee to cover the cost of the separate room set up and table service. You will need an admission ticket in addition to your meal ticket for these meals. No extra fee or admission ticket will be needed for this year's Open and Affirming dinner on Saturday evening. It will be in the main dining room and everyone is welcome, though seating is limited to the first 450 or so, depending on the set-up. All youth and chaperones are invited to attend. Anyone staying off campus will still need to purchase a meal ticket to attend these meals.

Some people prefer or need to start their drive home immediately after worship on Sunday. For no additional charge, you may order a box lunch which you pick up at breakfast time on Sunday. A sit down lunch is also available for those that do not need to rush off. Box lunches MUST be ordered at least two weeks in advance and can be ordered with registration. If you miss the deadline for ordering a box lunch, there is also the option of taking a regular lunch "to go" at lunchtime. Box lunches are not ordered for any other day, but "to go" meals are always available.

Complete this section if you are *not* staying on campus at Asilomar

*Conference Registration and Day Use Fees (mandatory)
Meals (optional)*

	Adult over 25	UCC Person in Care	Y/YA age 13-25	Child age 3 - 12
Thursday	Registration \$25.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$ 5.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$10.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$10.00 Dinner \$13.00
Friday	Registration \$75.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 PAAM Lunch \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00 Earth Steward's Dinner \$19.00	Registration \$ 5.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 PAAM Lunch \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00 Earth Steward's Dinner \$19.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 PAAM Lunch \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00 Earth Steward's Dinner \$19.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$7.00 Lunch \$7.50 PAAM Lunch \$9.50 Dinner \$13.00 Earth Steward's Dinner \$15.00
Saturday	Registration \$75.00 Breakfast \$8.00 PSR Breakfast \$10.00 Lunch \$10.00 Women's Network Luncheon \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$ 5.00 Breakfast \$8.00 PSR Breakfast \$10.00 Lunch \$10.00 Women's Network Luncheon \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$8.00 PSR Breakfast \$10.00 Lunch \$10.00 Women's Network Luncheon \$12.00 Dinner \$17.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$7.00 PSR Breakfast \$9.00 Lunch \$7.50 Women's Network Luncheon \$9.50 Dinner \$13.00
Sunday	Registration \$25.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 Box Lunch \$10.00	Registration \$ 5.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 Box Lunch \$10.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$8.00 Lunch \$10.00 Box Lunch \$10.00	Registration \$10.00 Breakfast \$7.00 Lunch \$7.50 Box Lunch \$7.50

Highlight or circle the applicable fees for each person listed on this form. Total: \$ _____

Children under 3 are free for both registration and meals, but please list their names and ages.

For Credit Card Payment:

Please Charge to my MasterCard or VISA

Amount Authorized: \$ _____ Exp Date (mm/yy) ___ / ___

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Three Digit security code found on back of card: _____

Billing Address: _____

Signature: _____

**Mail completed registration forms to: NCNC UCC,
2145 Birch St., Hayward CA 94541-2131
or fax to 510-247-8992 or email information
to Joy@ncncucc.org or call Joy at 510-247-8995**

Children and youth

Children of any age are welcome at Annual Meeting, but no child care is provided for children under 3. We have a wonderful children's program at Annual Meeting for children ages 3 through 12. We also have a fantastic youth program for youth ages 13 through their senior year in high school. Unfortunately, we are charged an adult price for 18 year olds, even if they are still in high school, so they much pay a higher rate.

Cost

The price reflects what Asilomar charges us for rooms, meals, and meeting rooms. Asilomar's prices are per person, not per room, although the prices are lower per person when there are two or three people in a room. In addition to the room charges, the package includes a registration fee that covers the cost of putting on Annual Meeting. For those that are staying off campus, the registration fee also includes a day-use fee that Asilomar charges us per person. Many churches help their delegates with the cost of attending Annual Meeting. NCNC also has scholarships available for those in need—call or email the Registrar. We have included an automatic scholarship for all youth, young adults, youth chaperones, and UCC Persons in Care, so no further scholarship is available on those packages.

CONFERENCE NOTES

CALENDAR

Northern California Nevada Conference
**WOMEN PARTNERS
 OF CLERGY
 ANNUAL RETREAT**
 Friday - Sunday, January 9-11, 2009

*At beautiful
 Ralston White
 Retreat,
 at the foot
 of Mount Tamalpais in
 Mill Valley, California*



Come and enjoy:
*making and renewing friendships
 stimulating, reflective program
 casual, relaxing atmosphere
 delicious family-style meals
 Swedish or Reiki massage
 (optional)*

Cost: \$250
 (massage extra)
 Friday after dinner through Sunday lunch
1st time?
Come for 1/2 price! Newcomers: \$125
 Financial assistance available
**For more information & to register,
 go to www.ncncucc.org**

Actions of the Committee on Ministry

Sept. 23
Taken into Care in preparation for Ordained Ministry:
 George Kyles, City of Refuge UCC, San Francisco
 Sonsiris Tamayo, First Congregational UCC, Oakland

Transfer of Ministerial Standing:
 Rachel Ciupek-Reed to Central Association, Southern California
 Nevada Conference

Ministerial Standing Dropped:
 Erasto Arenas, by letter of resignation

Oct. 17
Licensed for Ministry:
 Edward Suniaa, First Samoan Congregational UCC, Santa Rosa


Taken into Care in preparation for Ordained Ministry:
 Kate Dalton, Community Congregational UCC, Tiburon
 Edward Suniaa, First Samoan Congregational UCC, Santa Rosa

Retired Status Granted:
 Marilyn Corvin
 Skip Holliday

Transfer of Ministerial Standing:
 Elena Larssen to Minnesota Conference

THE PACIFIC 2009 DEADLINES

<p>February/March Jan. 1</p> <p>April/May Feb. 25</p> <p>June/July May 7</p> <p>Aug/Sept. July 2</p> <p>Oct./Nov. Sept. 10</p> <p>Dec/Jan. Oct. 29</p>	<p>We publish with UCNews six times a year. We welcome ideas, letters, short articles. We may have to edit for content and space. Plan ahead. <pacific@ncncucc.org></p> <p>We also print a special issue just for Annual Gathering at Asilomar May 28-31. This issue includes Annual Reports from all staff, chairs and groups. These reports are due Feb. 15 to <pacific@ncncucc.org> 300 words in WORD format, please. Other Annual Gathering news etc. deadline April 16.</p>
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2009 Earl Lectures and Leadership Conference at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California

The 2009 Earl Lectures return to the PSR campus for the first time since 1949 and feature exciting speakers like Jay Bakker (son of Jim and Tammy Faye), pictured here, and other speakers and scholars on the theme of "Emerging Expressions of Faithfulness." The focus of the three days of public lectures and workshops will be on what is emerging inside, alongside, and even outside the familiar institutions and expressions of Christianity in North America. (Fee for workshops: \$99 through January 15, \$125 afterwards.) Join us for this exploration of popular culture, generational change, and religious innovation!

January 27-29, 2009

To register, visit psr.edu/earlleagues or call 510/849-8218 or 800/999-0528, ext. 8218.

pacifc school of rellgion a tradition of boldness

Northern California Nevada Conference Ministry Institutes 2008 – Pilot Program

**ALL ARE WELCOME, LAY OR CLERGY
 NO COST — COME LEARN MORE!**
 Four all day sessions on
 UCC Ministry, History, Polity and Theology

Sat. Feb. 7: Ministry in the UCC
 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Conference Office, Hayward

Sat. March 21: UCC History
 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Orinda Community Church
 (part of Church Day)

Thurs. May 28: UCC Faith, Polity and Practice
 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Asilomar Conference Grounds
 (before Annual Gathering)

Sat. Oct. 3: UCC Theology
 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Central Valley Church TBA
 (part of Church Day)

For more information:
 Rev. Deborah Streeter, associate Conference minister and Adjunct Faculty, Pacific School of Religion, <dstreeter@ncncucc.org> 831-624-6072

Continued from Page B3

- Jan. 21**
 Southern Alameda County UCC
 Clergy Lunch, noon to 2 p.m.,
 followed by Lection Divina, 2
 -3:30 pm, United Church of
 Hayward, 30540 Mission Blvd,
 Hayward
- Jan. 23**
 Committee on Ministry, Hillcrest
 Congregational UCC, Pleas-
 ant Hill; See Dec. 12.
- Jan. 26**
 Earl Lectures 2009 Kickoff Lecture,
 Bade Museum, Professor
 Christine Hastorf of UC Berke-
 ley's Anthropology Department
 will deliver a lecture on a topic
 relating to archaeology and
 ritual in the Andes. For more
 information, go to <psr.edu>
- Jan. 27-29**
 109th Earl Lectures, 2009, "Be-
 hold...a New Thing." Pacific
 School of Religion. For more
 information, go to <psr.edu>
- Jan. 30 – Feb. 1**
 NCNC Women's Network/Disciples
 of Christ sponsored, 2009
 Winter Weekend Retreat at
 Mercy Center, Burlingame.
 Theme: Thin Places, Spiritual
 Geography for Our Lives.
 Keynoter: Rev. Patty Ev-
 ans. Registrar: Anne Lowe,
 209-545-5175, <annelowe@comcast.net>
- Feb. 4**
 Lectio Divina, see Dec. 3
- Feb. 7**
 NCNC Council Meeting, 10 a.m.,
 location to be determined.
 For more information, contact
 Tony Lewis, <tlewis@exelana.com>
- Feb. 14-16**
 Feb Camp at Monte Toyon, high
 school youth and adult lead-
 ers. Registration forms at
 <www.ncncucc.org>, mail to:
 Camp Registrar, 21425 Birch
 St, Hayward CA, 94541, or fax
 to 510.247.8992. For more
 information, contact Sara
 Steen, director of outdoor min-
 istries, <sara@ncncucc.org>,
 510.918.0751.
- Feb. 27-March 1**
 YYA Ministries Regional Focus
 Group, location TBD, contact
 Adam Blons, <ablons@fccb.org>

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*NCNCUCC churches get
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DIVING INTO THE DEEP

Money and the church: Change, challenge, abundance

Editor's note: NCNC churches and the Conference are in the midst of stewardship drives. Development director Ron Buford has educated and inspired more than half our churches in his Rhythm of Abundance seminars this summer. The Conference staff stands ready to serve, inspire and advise on church finances in these challenging times. Below are excerpts from communications by three Conference leaders to the churches this fall. Please contact them for more advice and inspiration! For more information, contact:

Mary Susan Gast: <msgast@ncncc.org>, David Bergman-Hill: <david@ncncc.org>, Ron Buford: <ron@ncncc.org>

Hope and change

From Conference Minister Mary Susan Gast's letter to the churches:

Times of hope are always times of change. Times of change are not always times of hope.

The upheaval in the world economy, with the attendant aftershocks of food shortages and inadequate health care, the wild plummeting of the housing market, the alarm bells of global warming, the menacing growl of wars ongoing and commencing, all tell us that we are living in a time of change. . .

So it is with hope — not audacity — that I write to you today, in this time of change and fiscal turbulence, about your financial support of the ministries of the wider church through UCC SHARE.

Each of us looks to our local church for hope in times of change. It is in our gathered congregations that we seek and find the stronghold of our lives, the steadfast love that overwhelms our fears.

As a Conference we are a congregation of congregations, a ministry of ministers, in covenant with God and one another to “journey together, in our diversity, for justice, peace and healing . . . to be the body of Christ” (NCNC Covenant) That call to be the body of Christ will not change, and it will bring hope. To your church, to your denomination, to God's creation. Your gifts through UCC SHARE allow us do together what we could not accomplish individually, to reach beyond ourselves and what we can know personally to be a network of grace across the globe.

May we continue to support one another's ministries through change and in hope,



Mary Susan Gast

UCC Share—how churches support the Conference and wider church

By David Bergman-Hill

Until about three years ago, there were two streams of financial support to the wider church. One was based on the number of members, Fellowship Dues, a set amount per member. The other stream was a “free will” offering, OCWM — Our Church's Wider Mission. Both streams of giving supported the associations, Conference and national setting of the church. It became increasingly complicated and confusing to interpret what went where and why.

So, a new and hopefully simpler program was introduced. The new program combines the two streams of giving into one stream, UCC SHARE.

Based on the affirmations that every congregation in the Northern California Nevada Conference is a valued member of the United Church of Christ, and that each member congregation shares in the UCC's witness and work, the appeal was based on the Biblical concept of a tithe.

Churches currently giving 10 percent or more of their income to the wider UCC were encouraged to maintain or increase their tithe. Those giving less than 10 percent were asked to increase by 1 percent annually. And those who had not been contributing were asked to begin. In the same way that many local churches encourage members to tithe (10 percent) their family budget to the local church, the local church is encouraged to tithe to the wider church.

This November we sent a letter to every church challenging them to increase their 2009 UCC SHARE giving, adding 1 percent or 2 percent of their 2009 Budget to what they gave in 2008. If we're all able to pull together and accomplish this goal, it would help insure that our staff is paid the minimum of Conference guidelines (a justice issue raised at the last two Annual Gatherings) and to continue programs to support churches and pastors.

The Conference budget is voted on every year at Annual Gathering by the churches and can be viewed on line at <www.ncncc.org>.



David Bergman-Hill

Move with the rhythm of abundance

Note: In his ‘Rhythm of Abundance’ seminars this summer Ron Buford urged churches to be “Spiritually 5 for 5” — worshipping, connecting, learning, serving and giving.

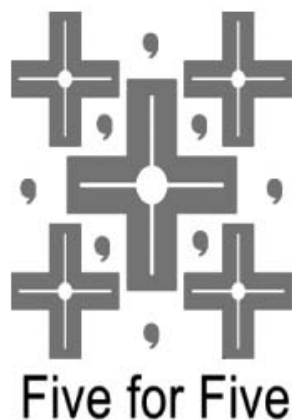
He showed us tools and worksheets, all available at the Rhythm of Abundance section of <www.ncncc.org>. There Ron says, in part:

“Many ancient spiritual journeys, including Judeo-Christian traditions call upon adherents to return to God the “first fruits” of human labor or investment. Such spiritual discipline reminds us that everything we acquire in life, even life itself, comes from God, belongs to God, and will ultimately return to God.

“Such spirituality, properly practiced, reminds each of us of our important responsibility as stewards or managers of God's gifts that flow through us while we live on the earth. That is why we call it ‘stewardship.’

“We acknowledge this ‘rhythm of abundance’ by returning the first and finest product of our labor to God. This is the basis of tithing, the spiritual practice of retuning the first tenth of our income, investment increase, and even enlarging our capacity to forgive one another as boundlessly as God forgives us.

“Whether we tithe, surpass the tithe, or give in some other way, good stewardship does not stop with giving. Good stewardship also calls us to ensure that the gifts we bring are properly managed, invested, put to work and shared with those most in need who live among us . . . and those living far away.”



Tips to increase giving

Ron Buford, development director and David Bergman-Hill, associate Conference minister for stewardship and finance, added these suggestions for local churches:

- Encourage electronic giving through StillspeakingMoney, an automated giving service. Visit the Rhythm of Abundance section at <www.ncncc.org> to get started. This will steady and perhaps even increase your income.

- Consider introducing the Spiritual 5 for 5 program to increase engagement in all aspects of church life, including giving.

- Organize discussion groups that encourage people to share their feelings about what is happening in this time of economic uncertainty; close it with affirming prayers and testimonies.

- Pay close attention to all leadership communication. Consciously and consistently preach, teach, write and speak hope and promise befitting the United Church of Christ as a people of possibility, rather than perpetuating the messages of doom and gloom that fill the public media. Your behavior is your most effective communication.



Ron Buford

DIVING INTO THE DEEP

Our Tents of Hope on the move to Washington and Africa

Editors note: As we go to press, many NCNCers are at the Tents of Hope Gathering in Washington, DC, along with tents painted by over 20 NCNC churches, now displayed on the Capitol Mall. In a project started by United UCC, Petaluma's Tim Nonn just over a year ago, churches, schools and community groups from across the nation have brought their hundreds of tents too. The project raises awareness in support of education, advocacy and fundraising for humanitarian assistance for the people of Darfur, Sudan. Below are some reflections on this powerful movement. See <www.tentsofhope.org> for more stories and photos.

Tim Nonn, United UCC, Petaluma: "The tent is a symbol of our solidarity with the uprooted people of Darfur, Sudan. It is a visible sign of our commitment to transform suffering into hope through compassion.

"By placing the tents in our communities, we are saying to the people of Darfur, 'You have a place on this earth.' The tent is sacred ground because it ties our destiny to the destiny of the people of Darfur.

"The tent connects us as one human family on the journey toward ending genocide and creating a peaceful and just world. With this sense of solidarity, we will



Norm Luecke in front of the tent painted by his First Congregational UCC, Martinez, with US Capitol in the distance. More NCNC "Tenters" Jack Dawson, Drew Nettinga, Jo Siders, and (far right) Susie Claxton, flanking Kwame Reed, associate conference minister for the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, who said to the gathering, "Today we are all Darfuris."



never give up until the people of Darfur are able to safely return to their homes."

Drew Nettinga, Community UCC, San Lorenzo: "We've had a full first day at the Tents of Hope Gathering on the Capitol Mall. Within the sight of the Capitol, a city of over 300 tents is growing. In addition, there are 10 unpainted tents which the public will be invited to paint tomorrow afternoon.

"The artwork is absolutely stunning. All are representative of the solidarity people in this country feel toward their Darfuri sisters and brothers. In addition to the setting up of tents, there was

a demonstration in front of the Sudanese Embassy. Between 300-400 people attended and signed an arrest warrant for Omar Al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, accused of crimes against humanity for the genocide against Darfuris.

"Representing the NCNC are Susie Claxton of Niles Congregational UCC, Fremont; Jo Siders from First Congregational UCC, Murphys; Jack and Pamela Dawson from United UCC/DOC, Lodi; Nonn; Norm Luecke from First Congregational UCC, Martinez; Karen Kamaguchi and others from Congregational UCC, Danville, and me.

"Tomorrow morning there's

a special breakfast for UCC and DOC tenters. There will also be various self-guided activities on the Mall and workshops and panel discussions at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation. At dusk, there will be a special tent-lighting ceremony, followed by a benefit concert.

"Sunday activities will include an Interfaith Worship Service which will explore the moral choice between being a bystander or an upstander to genocide.

"This weekend is also being observed by Jews as the anniversary of Kristalnacht. The Tents of Hope Rally festivities will include blessings the tents, rally speakers

and musical performers.

"Once the weekend is over, the Darfur Peace and Development Organization will see to the shipping of the tents to Darfuri refugee camps in Chad to be used as classrooms."

Norm Luecke: "I am so excited to be able to participate in the Gathering of Tents in Washington. I've never been there before and to be able to go there not just as a sightseer but as an advocate for such an important cause and a participant in this event makes my trip feel like an honor.

"While I am gone, on Nov. 9, our church will include prayers for the people of Darfur as part of Interfaith Weekend of Prayer and Action for Sudan. By that time we will have a new president-elect and some new faces in Congress so the timing couldn't be better to let them all know that the people of our nation would like to see this crisis become a higher priority on their agendas."

Jo Siders: "I was blessed Nov. 2 in church by the Murphys congregation for this journey — with the kids who painted and Cynthia Restivo who heard me preach the Tent story and took the idea forward. Very moving.

"The whole congregation raised their arms and formed a tent over me — WOW! This was definitely a first!"

Election

Continued from Page B1

continued. Churches across the Conference immediately organized vigils and marches on the theme of "standing on the side of love." Wendy Taylor of Ladera UCC, Portola Valley urged people "If your heart needs the balm of Gilead, go stand with others."

Several ministers reported people calling in both joy and sorrow at the results. A member of College Ave. Congregational UCC, Modesto, called not so much to be consoled as to console the pastor, and recent newlywed, Michael Schiefelbein. They came up with the idea of a candlelight vigil that night with other community groups in a local park. "We just want to sing and pray and share time together," Schiefelbein said.

In the lead-up to the election the Modesto church had helped to organize a program "Seven Straight Nights" where seven different local interfaith congregations held public forums seven consecutive nights on topics like Why Marriage Matters, The Texts of Terror: the Bible in Context and That's So Gay: A Game Show for Youth (where the audience tried to guess which youth was gay.)

Ross Johnson, a youth member

of Cloverdale UCC wrote on his Facebook page that he guessed he was no longer equal in America, as a gay young man. Many NCNC youth wrote him right back in support and affirmation. Conference Council president Tony Lewis also wrote, saying "Yes, it hurts. But at least we had a chance to take a stand against Prop. 8 on behalf of the church."

Janice Steele, pastor of Imani UCC, Sacramento wrote after the election, "I remain hopeful and committed to the Gospel of love and inclusion. We must continue to move forward, knowing that change is inevitable!"

"We must extend the olive branch of peace and reconciliation; continue to practice radical hospitality to those who disagree with us and cannot see beyond their own agendas.

"This is not the time to put up walls and barriers that separate and isolate us from one another. Through your lamenting, see the glass half full, not half empty. Know that your loving relationships are honored by God and the commitments that you made to one another, with or without a marriage license, is a covenant between you, your partner and God."

On Nov. 1, in the worship service at First Congregational



Barack Obama wore his UCC comma pin when he spoke at UCC General Synod in Hartford June 2007. Photo George Conklin

UCC, Murphys, Tami Chestnut read a statement against Prop. 8, inspired by her nephew Owen Stephens, who grew up in that church and is still active in the Conference camping program. Owen had written her and others urging a no vote and had added a personal note:

"Since June, I have now married 79 couples in my capacity as a San Francisco Deputy Marriage Commissioner for the State of California. Some of the couples have been opposite sex, and some have been same sex couples. They have all been incredibly happy and also incredibly supportive of each other.

"Each day when I enter City

Hall and marry as many as fifteen couples in a row, often in groups of three at a time, my heart warms to bursting when the other couples and their entourages stick around and cheer every couple in the group, no matter who they are or that they met just minutes before.

"This weekend I am marrying at least three more couples

before the election, including my best friend in the world to his partner, and other close friends who I have known for years.

"They are getting married for two reasons, one because they love each other very much, and also because they fear that this may be their only chance and that we will take their right away. Could you imagine that being that case for your marriage? It isn't fair."

As we go to press, the Conference Council has filed a writ with the State Supreme Court against Prop. 8 as denying our religious rights.

On Nov. 9 the folks at Filipino-American UCC, Sunnyvale prayed, "Thank you God for the

non-violent election this week, and for the new president you have anointed to lead our nation."

Several NCNC churches also organized in support of Prop. 2, on behalf of farm animals, and against Prop. 4, limiting abortion rights for minors.

Members of Community UCC, San Lorenzo, placed "voting pledge cards" in the plate Oct. 26, pledging to "Vote Out Poverty" by urging elected officials to work to cut in half the number of Americans living in poverty and support the UN Millennium Development goals to end extreme global poverty. The cards were sent to Washington by pastor Drew Nettinga, who was proud that 75 percent of the congregation signed the cards.

Churches were of course careful only to speak out on issues, not to endorse any candidates, in order to protect their tax exempt status. But just a few hung up this picture of Barack Obama speaking in 2007 at the UCC General Synod in Hartford, wearing his comma pin.

Our own George Conklin took that picture. He also took the pictures of the first UCC General Synod 50 years ago.

We were part of history then, and today we are again.