

## DIVING INTO THE DEEP

# A litany for PAAM Sunday April 27 throughout the UCC

*Editor's note: The 18th UCC General Synod passed a resolution designating the last Sunday of April as Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM) Sunday.*

PAAM NCNC invites all churches to celebrate PAAM Sunday on April 27.

### A Litany for PAAM Sunday

**Leader:** For creating this world into which we are born, and for giving us the opportunity to live our lives to the fullest.

**People:** We give you thanks, O God our Creator.

**Leader:** For leading peoples of diverse countries and cultures to this beautiful country called America.

**People:** We give thanks, O God of the heavens and the earth!

**Leader:** For the opportunities and responsibilities that come to us being a country of diversity.

**People:** We give thanks, O God who created diversity!

**Leader:** For the struggles and sacrifices of our immigrant ancestors who toiled so hard that succeeding generations might have a better life.

**People:** We give you thanks, O God of integrity and history!

**Leader:** For the gifts, faith, culture, and religious traditions of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Taiwanese, Hawaiian, Samoan, Micronesian and all other Pacific Islander and Asian peoples;

**People:** We give you thanks, O God of all!

**Leader:** For failing to appreciate fully the traditions and heritages from which we come and for failing to respond and be sensitive to people especially from Asian and the Pacific Islands;

**People:** To you we confess our sins of omissions, O God of struggle!

**All:** O God, we commit ourselves to:

- Care for the suffering of all God's people, especially for our neighbors of Asian and Pacific Island descent;
- Strive for a deeper spirituality as exemplified by the first generation of our Christian ancestors;
- Live for peace which comes from dedication to live with justice;
- Appreciate that true Christian harmony comes through a positive identity based upon pride in God's gift to us, our heritages both ethnic and Christian; and
- Sharing our unique talents in the concerns of others, all for the glory of your universal plan. Amen.



PAAM has been in existence for more than 30 years. Its goals are:

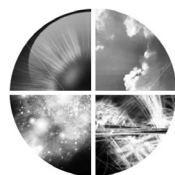
- To promote the well being of Pacific Islander and Asian Americans and their churches of the UCC.
  - Identify concerns of ethnic minority groups and implement strategies for developing solutions to such concerns.
  - Recognize and celebrate the unique insights and contributions of Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans as a way of enriching the life of the UCC.
  - Explore and develop a Pacific Islander & Asian American theology.
- Check out <paamncnc.com>.

## Bless our beautiful brains!

*Editor's note: Many churches celebrate Evolution Sunday in February on a date near the birth of Charles Darwin. Check out <http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/rel\_evolution\_sun.htm>*

*This year some churches on that Sunday also noted the Jan. 29 release of the UCC Pastoral Letter on Faith Engaging Science and Technology. For text and resources on the letter, check out <.ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive/science/>.*

*Rev. Kathryn Schreiber, United Church of Hayward, UCC, created a litany out of the Pastoral Letter. She also wrote this Blessing of Intelligence and invited worshippers to place their hands on their heads as they prayed together. She cites St. Jerome as an example of a "braniac Christian," as language scholar and Bible translator.*



*Faith engaging*  
**SCIENCE | RELIGION**

### A Blessing of Intelligence

Faith and Science Sunday Feb. 10

Brilliant, Illuminating One,  
O God of All Knowledge,  
today we ask You  
to bless our minds,  
and the minds of those  
we remember this day.

Bless our intelligence  
that we might use our thinking  
to do justice ethically,  
as we employ emerging  
scientific and technological developments.

Grant us kind exercise  
of all our thoughts,  
that we might think **with** You,  
of ideas that cast an inner peace  
and craft a common good.

We invite St. Jerome  
and all the Wise Ones

who have gone before  
to stand with us,  
as we affirm the beauty  
of mortal brains  
and the great goodness  
our wonderful ideas  
can generate.

Still Speaking God,  
Continue to call us  
into the Mystery  
that is You.

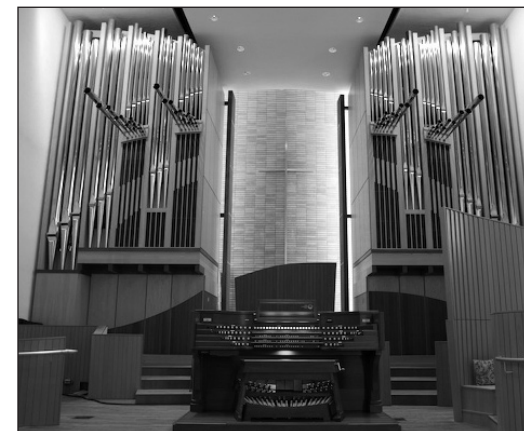
Keep awakening us to  
awe, understanding and faith.

And Holy One,  
Never cease engaging us  
in the smaller mysteries,  
that reveal dignity, healing and well-being for  
all creatures.

God bless our beautiful brains!  
Amen.

## Prayer for the divine melody of hope

*Several NCNC churches have dedicated new organs in the past year, after years of discernment and fundraising. Pictured is the new instrument at First UCC, Palo Alto. Below is a prayer that Conference Minister Mary Susan Gast offered as part of the service of dedication for the new organ at First UCC, Berkeley, in December. Both organs (and organists) offer moving glory to God - check them out!*



The new organ at First UCC, Palo Alto

We give You thanks for this divine melody of hope that weaves through the desperation of our lives, that hints at substance below the surface of tinsel-encrusted wishes for perfunctory merriness.

We give thanks for the oratorio of salvation, the cantata of deep joy that infuses all life as we anticipate the birth of Your greatest gift, O Author of Life, the arrival of One Who will, in total harmony with Your intentions, advocate for the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

In this season of celebration of the incarnation, of spirit become physical, we give thanks for an instrument of music that proclaims — and resounds with — the torrent of Your grace, O Holy One; that reverberates and pulses through our bodies so that we are seized and swept along with the cresting waves of Your fierce and tender love for all creation.

And we here gathered give thanks for this sanctuary that is dedicated to You, O Blessed One, a point of connection to you, Most High, a place of holiness, of vision, of wonder, of solace, and of openness to all who are within, without, and beyond this place. Amen