

## **RECLAIMING THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HEALING**

### Administrative Affirmation and Administrative Action

#### **BACKGROUND**

**General Synod XXI in Columbus, Ohio, 1997, passed the following resolution:**

***“HEALTH*** is harmony with self and others, the environment, and with God – a continuum of physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well being. ***Health Ministry*** is the promotion of healing and health as wholeness as a mission of a faith community to its members and the community it serves. Health partners are many, both paid and volunteer, laity and clergy, all are committed to sharing the compassionate love and grace of Jesus Christ through the health and healing ministries of the UCC.

The **health minister/parish nurse** serves as a member of the ministry team of the local church, working in partnership with pastors and lay ministers. The **health minister** (a person having a health care background that may or may not be a parish nurse) facilitates the promotion of health and healing via health education programs, spiritual care, referrals to appropriate health care providers, and providing for support groups and personal health counseling. The **parish nurse**, a registered professional nurse that senses a special calling to local church ministry, promotes health and wholeness through the practice of nursing as defined by the Nurse Practice Act in the jurisdiction in which he/she practices. Parish nurses function as health counselors, resource persons, spiritual caregivers, health educators, small group facilitators, and coordinators of health ministry volunteers – all done from a faith perspective and context.”

The following churches within the Northern California Nevada Conference already have established Health Ministry / Parish Nurse programs:

Parkside Community Church - Sacramento, CA (est. 1996)

1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church UCC – Auburn, CA (est. 2002)

Eden UCC – Hayward, CA (est.2002)

1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church UCC – Murphys, CA (est. 2002)

**ADMINISTRATIVE AFFIRMATION TO BE VOTED**

The Northern California Nevada Conference affirms the resolution of General Synod XXI, “Reclaiming the Church’s Ministry of Health and Healing” and encourages local congregations to develop/include in their mission a commitment to health and wholeness, engage health and wholeness issues through ongoing health cabinet/health ministry teams, and to consider the implementation of a health ministry/parish nurse program;

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TO BE VOTED**

The Northern California Nevada Conference:

1. joins with the United Church of Christ National ministries, in conjunction with conferences, seminaries, local congregations, and government agencies to begin and/or continue to develop resources that support the development and enrichment of health ministry programs in local churches;
2. calls upon our local churches to establish or designate a network to address health and human service issues confronting members and their communities;
3. calls upon our local churches to recognize health ministry and parish nursing as a specialized ministry;
4. requests the national UCC office of Parish Life and Leadership to recognize and consider including health ministry/parish nursing in the listing of specific church-related ministries qualifying for commissioned ministry, and to consider developing guidelines and educational standards to be included in the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry*.

**FISCAL IMPACT**—minimal

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