

PACIFIC CURRENTS

God knows us in the brilliant glittering of our souls

By Mary Susan Gast

The Apostle Paul sweeps into the lives of the Christians at Corinth on a cresting wave of grace, to speak of love with poetry and wonder. "Love is patient, love is kind, and envies no one. Love is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in what is right."

As Paul puts it while contrasting and comparing love with all the other [and perhaps more popular] spiritual practices of his day, "even if I speak in tongues, or have power to see into the future, or possess secret knowledge—if I don't have love, 'I am none the better of it.'"

Even if I do all the right things,

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he goes on, like giving away my possessions or becoming a martyr, if I'm not driven by love, my actions mean nothing. Without love at the core, there is no generosity of spirit—just grandstanding, showiness.

"If someone loves God, that person is known by God," Paul



states. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you," The Almighty says to the reluctant Jeremiah, while trying to convince Jeremiah that he is, indeed, prophet material. When God says, "I know you," it means two things: "I have chosen you" and "I watch over you."

God knows us. God has chosen us. God watches over us. We may be, like Jeremiah, somewhat unenthusiastic about the implications of that knowledge. Nonetheless, we are, like Paul, fully known.

How are we known, as the United Church of Christ in Northern California Nevada? How are we known? We are called by a name: the United Church of Christ. Each one of those capital-

ized words is significant. We unite as autonomous congregations "in covenant with God and one another...genuinely seek[ing] one another's welfare" [Louis Gunnemann, *Uniting and United*, p. 46], called by Jesus Christ, so that we can do together what we could not accomplish individually. So that we can reach beyond ourselves and what we can know personally to be a network of grace across the globe. So that we can be and become a

UNITED: companions to one another, enhancing our shared characteristics and rejoicing in our very real diversity;

CHURCH, [Denomination]: having a common—or maybe a superbly uncommon—denominator, of CHRIST, who is Love,

pulsing at the heart of us, giving life to our body.

As we approach our Annual Meeting, it is good to remind ourselves that God knows us all in the brilliant glittering of our souls and in the dank and musty heaviness of our spirits. The Author of Life knows us, calls us, as individuals and as a church, and watches over us. God knows what we're doing.

Try that last statement with different intonations. You can say it matter-of-factly; you can say it with bewilderment; and it doesn't matter. It's still true. God knows what we're doing. And if we do all things but do not have love, we are nothing. *With* love, though, we are *Something*.

Northern California Nevada Conference calendar year giving

Our Church's Wider Mission

Fellowship Dues

No.	City	Name	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Livermore	United Christian Church DOC	0	581	43	0	0	0
2	Berkeley	New Spirit Comm Church UCC DOC MCC	4,119	4,195	4,580	0	0	0
3	Stockton	First Christian Church DOC	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	San Jose	United Disciples Fellowship DOC	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	San Bruno	Satauro O Le Fa'aolataga UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	San Jose	Epenesa Fou Cong'l Church UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Sacramento	Christian Cathedral UCC	0	200	0	0	0	0
8	Fremont	Fua Ole Sinapi UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Vacaville	Amistad UCC	439	676	610	0	120	120
10	Alameda	First Congregational UCC	11,000	10,175	11,500	1,136	1,136	1,136
11	San Mateo	Kalavaria Reformed CCCSA UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Albany	Beautiful Christian UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Stockton	First Samoan UCC	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Alameda	Original Founders 1st Samoan UCC	475	475	500	304	350	350
18	Oakland	Faith Community UCC	500	0	550	0	0	0
20	Alturas	Federated Church UCC	500	0	0	368	480	400
30	Angels Camp	Union Cong'l UCC	0	2,500	938	712	1,246	640
40	Antioch	First Congregational UCC	1,600	1,000	500	1,376	1,232	1,144
60	Auburn	First Congregational UCC	11,000	10,000	10,000	3,088	2,320	2,504
65	Auburn	New Faith Church UCC	0	0	0	320	0	0
70	Belmont	Congregational Church UCC	9,500	10,000	13,559	774	838	1,213
80	Belvedere-Tiburon	Community Congregational UCC	0	0	1,000	1,192	1,448	1,232
90	Benicia	Community Congregational UCC	4,315	5,105	4,750	888	888	1,176
110	Berkeley	Chinese Community UCC	9,817	8,000	6,000	1,112	1,024	834
120	Berkeley	First Congregational UCC	67,867	66,500	66,350	5,632	5,720	5,704
130	Berkeley	New Fellowship UCC	100	0	0	200	0	200
140	Berkeley	South Berkeley Community UCC	1,346	842	0	938	536	536
155	Shingle Springs	Congregational Fellowship UCC	805	889	698	0	176	400
160	Campbell	Congregational UCC	7,500	7,375	7,500	1,040	1,000	1,000
181	Cedarville	Surprise Valley Community UCC	1,026	1,026	1,074	258	258	252
190	Chico	Congregational Church UCC	0	500	500	592	632	1,842
200	Clarksburg	Community UCC	0	300	600	880	912	896
210	Cloverdale	United Church of Cloverdale UCC	825	6,600	3,600	1,104	1,072	1,096
235	Daly City	First Samoan Cong'l Christian UCC	300	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000
240	Danville	Danville Congregational Church UCC	5,294	5,070	6,500	1,688	1,744	1,616
270	El Cerrito	Mira Vista UCC	4,500	3,600	900	952	704	480
280	El Cerrito	Sycamore Congregational UCC	2,400	2,400	2,400	872	872	768
300	Elk Grove	Elk Grove Congregational UCC	0	0	0	710	500	1,000
320	Eureka	First Congregational UCC	492	468	542	636	587	693
330	Fairfax	Community Church UCC	4,800	5,200	5,548	432	432	504
355	Foster City	Island United Church	0	1,000	1,000	392	392	0
370	Fremont	First Congregational UCC	5,600	6,605	5,800	1,032	1,056	1,032
372	Fremont	Filipino-American UCC	748	0	0	0	800	0
375	Fremont	Niles Cong'l UCC	5,170	2,340	3,120	1,872	1,872	1,912
380	Fresno	College Community Cong'l UCC	1,566	10,367	7,955	1,680	1,696	1,704