

PACIFIC CURRENTS

NCNC churches embody extravagant welcome at SF Pride

Flunder offers keynote speech

Members of at least 10 Northern California Nevada Conference churches marched, spoke and sang at the June 27 San Francisco Pride Parade.

The "United in Spirit" contingent has been a regular feature of the parade for more than 15 years.

"People worship at their own church and then high-tail it over to San Francisco," said organizer Rev. Kyle Lovett of St. John's, San Francisco.

"Two churches even changed their hour of worship to get there sooner.

"We share communion just before stepping off — reminding ourselves of the witness we give to God's inclusive, radical welcome to all God's children.

"This year our signs, created by First Congregational, San Francisco, and distributed among the contingent of marchers, had a big red comma and 'God is Still Speaking' on one side and 'Come Have



Rev. Wilfried Glabach of First UCC, San Francisco, waves from his VW bug in the "United in Spirit" contingent in the June 27 Pride Parade. Ken Tipton, right, in stole, and other church members made the "comma" signs on the car inviting all people to the communion table.

Communion with Us!' on the other side — an allusion to the turning away of some communicants by

some Roman Catholic bishops." This year's United in Spirit group included members from

Arlington Community, Kensington; Chalice Christian (Disciples of Christ), San Carlos; Eden, Hayward; First Congregational, Oakland; First Congregational, San Francisco; Ladera Community, Portola Valley; Mira Vista, El Cerrito; Orinda Community, Orinda; Congregational, Belmont; and St. John's, San Francisco.

"I want to help create more diversity at Pride and greater spiritual presence, especially among people of color," said Zwazzi Sowo, a member at City of Refuge, San Francisco, who is also on the Pride Parade board of directors.

"This year we were very proud to have Bishop Flunder of our church as a keynoter on the Main Stage and a choir from our church led by Allowyn Price singing.

"At the Soul of Pride stage, Refuge Choir Director Charlene Moore was a headliner."

Rev. Kathryn Schreiber of United, Hayward, described her congregation's experience. "We walked with the masses down Market toward the booths carry-

ing our new UCH, UCC banner, as well as waving a sign and wearing pins saying, 'Justice for Gwen' — as we've been very involved in offering support for Gwen Araujo, a neighbor who was murdered for being transgendered.

"Our commitment to Gwen turned out to be ever so healing at the parade. Folks saw the Gwen images, our church banner, and these church ladies wearing rainbow stoles and came up to ask why we cared about her.

"One young gal approached me and asked who Gwen was. As I told her this tragic story she began to cry. Folks from our congregation comforted her and gave her a 'Justice for Gwen' pin to wear.

"Goes to show that the ministry of Gay Pride can happen anywhere, anytime."

Contact Kyle at <kyle.lovett@mindspring.com> and Zwazzi at <zwazzi@courageolive.org>.

Let The Pacific know if your churches takes part in other community Pride events.

The 'More Than Fair Trade' coffee project to benefit OCWM

"Our coffee is more than fair trade. We also give 20 percent of the profit back to the farmers and 10 percent to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)."

Pioneer, Sacramento, members Tom Angus and Jinxi Allen vow, "We want our coffee business to be ethical and Christian."

Angus and Allen have worked in the import-export business for years. Longtime United Church of Christ members, they were moved by the UCC Statement of Faith phrase "to accept the cost and joy of discipleship."

"You can make that incredible statement on Sunday, but in most companies, it's back to business as usual by Wednesday. We wanted to walk the walk," says Tom.



When a devastating fire in Nicaragua killed many of their close coffee-farmer friends, Allen and Angus decided to go out on their own and formed Beneficio Coffee. Their commitment is for family farms to get not only the approved fair trade rate, but also part of the profits.

"Farmers need to keep their land and provide education and health care for their families."

The NCNC Board of Directors

approved a letter of introduction and encouragement for Beneficio to use with NCNC congregations. Already they have provided a Sunday's coffee, dessert and information at NCNC churches in Martinez, Lodi, Almaden Valley, Squaw Valley, Fairfax, San Lorenzo, Hayward and Sacramento.

They will also be providing the coffee at Chocolate Fest, the annual October community fundraiser at Congregational, Belmont.

Individuals and other organizations can also order coffee or invite them for a presentation. For more information, contact Allen and Angus at <beneficiocoffee@ismorethanfairtrade.com>.



Pioneer UCC, Sacramento members Tom Angus and Jinxi Allen hold two of the 700 bags of Beneficio Coffee which they sold at Annual Meeting and donated 100% of profits to OCWM.

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