

**PACIFIC CURRENTS**

# NCNC at heart of General Synod actions, leadership, worship

More than 60 NCNCers attended the 25th General Synod in Atlanta July 1-5.

Besides the nine voting delegates representing NCNC and reps from covenanted and special ministries, many others led music, worship, stood at booths, led committees and workshops, spoke at meals, hosted gatherings and simply took part.

Just a few snapshots and comments: (Many more stories could be told and more people recognized.)

- Shelley Dieterle, Adam Blons and Elena Larsson convened a group of clergy in their 20s and 30s.

- Jinx Allen and Tom Angus of Beneficio Coffee, along with Mike Lodewyk and Shanya Luther served gallons of free sample coffee on the Exhibit Floor.

When the proposed Fair Trade resolution came to the floor suggesting that churches only buy products from Equal Exchange, delegates overwhelmingly voted to include all "fairly traded products" and spoke movingly of how the whole UCC should support a wide variety of small companies like Beneficio. Some NCNC work behind the scenes helped effect these changes.

- Roy Mosley led the committee that recommended 18 pages of comprehensive by-law changes and then he explained it all to the assembly.

- Each Conference can nominate three women to be recognized at the Honored Lay Women's Lun-



Attending General Synod wasn't just about hearings and voting. Visitors also got to meet celebrities like the "bouncers" from the UCC TV ad, and new UCC friend Sponge Bob Square Pants. Above, Kyle Lovett, Deborah Streeter and Mary Susan Gast with the bouncers. Right, Tom Angus and Jinx Allen of Beneficio Coffee with Sponge Bob.



cheon. From NCNC Joy Davis and Becky Anton attended, and Belva Davis was also named but could not attend. Mary Susan Gast wrote the litany program based on women in the Bible.

- Janice Timm, minister of music at United, Cloverdale, was one of five national UCC educators awarded the Excellence in Teaching award. She was the first-ever music educator to win this award. (See story this page.)

- Patsy Finster used a "Speak Out" minute to talk to the assembly about the advocacy and support work of a group of ministers who are veterans of Vietnam and other recent conflicts, including her husband David Finster.

- Kathryn Schreiber, Lois Mueller and Kristi Denham came

on their own, with support from their churches; then Schreiber and Mueller took a Civil Rights Road Trip. Denham previously served Central UCC in Atlanta.

- Sharon MacArthur was elected chair of the Executive Council. Yvette Flunder was elected chair of the Justice and Witness Board, succeeding Rose Lee.

- Kevin Manz was elected assistant moderator for the next Synod.

- NCNC members elected to covenanted ministry boards include: Caitlin Attias, Office of General Ministries; Jason King, Justice and Witness; and Kenna Lehmann to Local Church Ministries.

- Joe Thomas was elected chair

of the General Synod Nominating Committee.

- Hugo Steensma and Faye Morrison stood at the booth of the new Environmental Steering Committee and led a workshop.

- Kyle Lovett, MacArthur Flournoy and Deborah Streeter took part in special training before Synod began from the LGBT Concerns Caucus on how to engage in one-on-one conversations about marriage, in support of the marriage equality resolution. Mary Susan Gast spoke on the floor against the resolution that marriage is only between one man and one woman, citing biblical inconsistencies.

- Micki Carter reported and edited in the United Church News Press Room, and her husband

Mike Venturino sang in the all-Synod choir.

- Tony Lewis served as an American sign Language interpreter.

"I got to see the church I know and love in action and speaking the truth." — Jinx Allen after the Fair Trade vote.

"I already supported our denomination, but attending General Synod increased my commitment seven-fold." Hugo Steensma, whose environmental education and action resolution passed.

At <ncnuc.org> you can read the final Synod Wrap-up, including texts of all resolutions, as amended and adopted by General Synod, day-by-day coverage and Synod-related news and commentary, an online order form for the General Synod Wrap-up DVD, a Letter from Atlanta by Rev. Mary Susan Gast, online Marriage Equality Resources, and photos of our Northern California Nevada Conference delegates and their families. Beneficio coffee has more Synod photos at <ismorethanfairtrade.com>.

Start planning to attend General Synod 26 in Hartford in June 2007. This will be the 50th anniversary of the UCC.

## United, Cloverdale teacher is honored at Synod

Janice Timm, minister of music at United, Cloverdale, received an "Excellence in Teaching" award at the Local Church Ministries banquet at General Synod. Nominated by her pastor, Rev. Lynda Burris, she was the first-ever music educator to receive this award.

Timm showed up at United one Sunday in 1988, having recently moved to the area. She didn't know the congregation had been seeking someone to start a children's choir with no success. The then pastor, Gayle Madison Waring, had begun regularly praying for someone to "walk in the door." Janice was that prayer answered and more.

17 years later, the church has a vital and exciting music ministry including preschool, children, youth, adult, and bell choirs. In a small community where school funding for music programs has been severely cut or eliminated, the children and youth choirs have

been open at no charge to all in the Cloverdale community. 1/3 of the members of children's and youth choirs come from unchurched families, and many families have joined the congregation as a result.

Choir rehearsals are "teaching moments" that go beyond learning to read music, to play percussion instruments, and to sing. "I learned the Bible from Janice," said one choir member. Teaching a confirmation class, Lynda was amazed at the students' depth of biblical knowledge. "Oh, we learned all about that in choir," (while rehearsing for the musical Godspell,) the students told her.

Lois Dille's son has cerebral palsy. Janice invited him to join the choir. "You can't be serious," his mother said. "He can't talk." "He can make noise, can't he? Making music isn't about talking, it's about making noise!"

Lois says, "Janice gave our family a very special gift. She was

able to see beyond our son's disability — to his ability to make others smile. And we were able to see our son have the opportunity to shine."

Rev. Burris notes, "We're a small church and a small community who've been given a huge gift through the teaching ministry of

Janice Timm. I could think of no better way to say 'thank you,' to celebrate her 17 years of service to the United Church of Christ than to honor her at General Synod this July."

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