

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES AND OVERVIEW BOARDS

Continued from Page 10

Section D, Committee on the Ministry: Support, Review and Maintaining of Covenant for Member Congregations **Mary Richardson, chair** **Carol Manahan, staff**

We continue to work with congregations and covenant. We offer advice and listening to congregations on such varied topics as pastor-parish committees, power and conflict, by-laws, norms for congregational behavior, covenant check-ins for pastors and congregations in the first few years of a new ministry, and listening sessions.

Several long-time members of Section D have moved on to new ministries, and we are in the process of rebuilding our group to be able to respond to the churches that call us. We anticipate training teams in each association to visit churches for covenant check-ins and listening sessions. Let us know if you have questions or people to suggest. To churches that patiently wait for us to provide a listening team, we are thankful!

Covenant, the shared commitments and agreements that bring us together, deserve our attention whether relationships are new or old, smooth or in conflict. We recommend our great resources on the NCNC website, under "Documents and Resources," and then "Congregations in Covenant." These resources reflect many years of Section D's best thinking, and are always available. Thanks to all who have helped in our ministry this past year.

Disaster Response Ministry **Kevin M. Manz and Melinda V. McLain,** **co-chairs**

When the "big one" comes, will we be ready? Will we have put into place resiliency plans for our churches and non-profit organizations, preparedness plans for our families and ourselves AND will we have considered how we will be ready to respond to others? Your NCNC disaster response ministry is ready to help you prepare and to respond.

We continue to work with Francine Williams of the American Red Cross and others to devise "train the trainer" programs so that our faith community leaders can lead disaster preparedness training in the community and our preparedness will expand exponentially. If your congregation would like to have FREE preparedness training, contact Melinda to connect locally with the right ARC person.

Melinda is now the vice-president of Northern California VOAD (voluntary agencies aiding in disaster), the primary coalition of groups such as Red Cross, Salvation Army, government agencies such as OES and FEMA and faith-based groups from Tzu Chi to the Southern Baptists. The state organization is hoping to identify more county groups. If your church is interested collaborating in disaster ministry, check out: <www.nvoad.org>

The generosity of NCNC members and congregations continues to astound. Many congregations have sponsored work groups to help the Gulf Coast in its long recovery from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Mira Vista in El Cerrito is going again in May and other

congregations continue to partner with churches in New Orleans.

If you or your congregation would like to get connected with others who are interested in disaster response ministry, please send email to Kevin <kevinkmm1@netzero.net> or to Melinda <revmelinda@earthlink.net> and we will make sure you stay connected.

Overview Board for Justice and Witness Ministries **Allan Essex, chair, and** **Drew Nettinga, staff**

Thanks to the generosity of many of our Northern California Nevada Conference churches who participate in the Neighbors In Need offering, the Overview Board for Justice and Witness Ministries is able on a yearly basis to issue grants to support churches or ecumenical agencies who are ministering to our California neighbors in need.

This year, J&W was able to issue grants totaling \$20,000, a small amount in terms of what foundations are able to give, but significant nonetheless for this year's grantees. Below is a description of the ministries funded.

1. Creative Healing (\$3,000) - Rev. Beatrice T. Morris, Center for Social Ministry.

This grant enables Bea to continue her work with two creative writing groups, one of low-income women and the other of seniors, and provides workshops for women with HIV/AIDS in Richmond.

2. The Bridge Fellowship (\$4,000) - Rev. Pamela Tinnin, Pastor, Guerneville Community UCC.

This grant supports a new "street church" ministry of the Guerneville Community Church which began in November 2007. Sunday afternoon worship services on the Old Bridge in Guerneville are followed by a meal of soup, sandwiches and coffee, ministering primarily to the community of about 200-300 homeless people and other low-income residents of Guerneville.

3. Health Ministries of First Congregational Church of San Jose, UCC (\$1,000) - Jamie Schwiezer, RN, and Rev. Nancy Peters, associate minister.

This renewal grant helps support the FCCSJ Health Ministries Program begun in 2006 with special gifts and endowments from FCCSJ. Schwiezer is a parish nurse who chairs the six-member health ministries team. Some home visits are included in the ministry. They provide placement assistance for seniors in need of assisted living or nursing homes, and they publicize their programs through monthly FCCSJ newsletter articles.

4. Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES) (\$2,500) - Ellen Love.

For 12 years, WAGES has helped organize low-income women to start eco-friendly housecleaning business cooperatives, with groups currently operating in Oakland (expanded to Castro Valley and Fremont), Morgan Hill and Redwood City. WAGES incubates the businesses for the first two years, providing a paid business manager and training in business skills and financial literacy. Recruitment of new businesswomen is mostly by word of mouth. WAGES and their cooperatives work together to spread the word on eco-friendly cleaning products.

5. The Welcome Ministry (\$3,000) - Rev. Megan Rohrer, Director

The Welcome Ministry is an interfaith organization that feeds the minds, spirits, hearts and stomachs of its homeless and hungry friends in the Lower Tenderloin, Polk/Gultch district of San Francisco. Their unique ministry is focused on hospitality and individual care, building community and trust among those whom it serves. First Congregational, San Francisco is a founding member of The Welcome Ministry.

6. Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (\$3,500) - Rev. Sophia DeWitt, First Congregational UCC, Fresno.

FIRM serves the diverse refugee population of Fresno, whose primary populations include Hmong and others from Southeast Asia, as well as refugees from the former Soviet Union. FIRM provides a diverse array of supports to families as they begin to make their home in the United States. In the past couple of years, FIRM's focus has begun to intentionally shift to community organizing, understanding that people will never fully feel comfortable in this country unless they can express their own concerns and issues and rediscover the power they have to make change in their communities, power that has been stripped through the process of war, dislocation and dependency.

7. California Council of Churches (\$1,500) and California Church IMPACT (\$1,500) - Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, executive director.

The California Council of Churches serves as a prophetic witness to the Christian gospel for 51 Protestant and Orthodox judicatories in 21 denominations throughout California. The council provides educational resources for congregations on issues of concern to the faith community such as hunger, homelessness, health care, violence, civil rights, economic justice and religious liberty issues.

The mission of California Church IMPACT (sister organization to CCC) is to be a prophetic witness to the Gospel by advocating in the public policy arena for justice, equity and fairness in the treatment of all people, in particular those most vulnerable in our society.

The Overview Board for Justice and Witness Ministries' ability to continue to make these and similar grants depends on Conference churches ongoing participation in the Neighbors in Need offering, typically received on World Communion Sunday.

If your church receives the Neighbors in Need offering each year, thank you. If your church does not, please consider doing so.

Any questions about this and other activities of the Overview Board for Justice and Witness Ministries can be directed to any of the board members: C'Anna Bergman-Hill, Sophia DeWitt, Allan Essex, Doug Leich, Drew Nettinga, Bob Orr, Art Raab and Candace Thomas.

Outdoor Ministries Committee Report **Virginia Kaufman, chair**

The Outdoor Ministries Committee (OMC) plays an advisory role to the director of outdoor ministries for the Conference-wide youth and young-adult programs of the NCNC-UCC.

ANNUAL MEETING 2008