



C SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE

NEWS

UNITED CHURCH

Conference Ministers look to future in church growth, renewal and multicultural ministries

By Revs. Jane Heckles and Daniel Romero

Your Conference Ministers are involved daily in the administrative and pastoral responsibilities of our office. Particular to our Conference are the growth opportunities that arrive in many ways. A recent study done by the United Church of Christ Local Church Ministries revealed that the SCNC added more new churches than any other Conference since the birth of the UCC, 50 years ago (1957-2006). Ninety three churches were added to the rolls of our Conference during that period. Church growth and expansion has always been in the DNA of the SCNC. Today we continue that legacy. Along with our colleague Gary Roberts, Associate for Church Development and Renewal and the Board of Directors, we are about the task of identifying and reviewing locations where new ministries might be born. We are inheritors of the rich legacies of ministry and mission of congregations who are no longer able to sustain viable ministries. UCC congregations that have brought their ministries to an end often provide sites for new congregational development or financial resources. This year it is Moreno Valley where a new ministry will be born: **The Fiesta United Church of Christ**. We celebrate the ministry of the Rev. Cesar Gramajo who has been called by the Conference to initiate this new ministry. In the case of Moreno Valley, the process involved the confirmation of MV as a feasible location, recruitment of leadership, proposal writing for funding, budgeting, retiring a mortgage and in the case of Moreno Valley, preparing and

maintaining the facility.

The SCNC continues to financially support and nurture the ministries at the historic **Immanuel Church site in South Los Angeles, the Northwest Community Church in Las Vegas, the Marshallese Ministry of Orange County and the Centro Familiar Cristiano in North Hollywood**. The Board will also be developing criteria for considering which congregations might be identified as revitalization ministries.

The Board is also in the process of developing a partnership with the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries for the establishment of a **border ministry in San Ysidro, CA**, just north of the U.S. Mexican border, where we have a small facility. At this site we will provide orientation and first hand experiences in understanding and developing relationships across the border. Our relationship with brothers and sisters in the border region has taken on added importance given the debate taking place in this country over immigration. At last year's Annual Gathering, in response to the negativity displayed toward new immigrants, this Conference embraced a position of openness and commitment to new immigrants and will seek to advocate for just and comprehensive immigration reform. In addition, we continue to oppose any militarization or the building of walls at the border.

Congregations in the Conference are taking seriously their



Photo credit: Elsa M. J. Seifert

commitment to extending an extravagant welcome to all who seek a relationship with God. By so doing, our congregations are experiencing slow and steady growth. We pay tribute to those pastors and congregations who have reached out to the unchurched and seek to build bridges to a new generation of seekers. Where congregations experience the potential of revitalization, the Board of Directors will seek to work with them in efforts to reach out. To the extent that those congregations may be

facing cross cultural opportunities, our newest staff person, the Rev. Rosario Ibarra will be prepared to lead them through a process of developing a multicultural community of faith.

As a sign of our developing multicultural ministry, the delegates to this Annual Gathering will have before them a proposal to create the **SCNC Samoan Ministries**. After eight years of working to develop relationships and a place where Samoan congregations can be supported and nurtured, a dynamic fellowship has emerged that we seek to affirm in the form of a new partner in ministry and mission in this Conference. The mission statement and by-law change has been sent to each pastor and moderator of our congregations.

This has been a particularly exciting year for us but we believe that the best years of this Conference lay before it as we celebrate the past 50 years of the UCC and prepare to move into the future.

Moderator Deborah Harris welcomes all to the 2007 SCNC Annual Gathering

The 2007 SCNC Annual Gathering theme, *Salt and Light, Shiny Spicy Faith*, says a lot in many ways about our diverse denomination. We are not afraid to let our light shine especially in places where we see a need to address justice and equality. This year we invite our church families and friends to explore some of the spicy ways they can enhance their church while keeping their *light* burning with exuberance. The gathering begins on Friday, June 1. **Community Congregational Church in Chula Vista, California** is excited about the opportunity to host this event.



Deborah Harris, Moderator

Thursday, May 31st, the day before the actual Gathering begins, an organized Mexican Border Experience trip is planned for those interested. This will introduce the participants to some of the realities of life along the U.S.-Mexican border, more specifically San Diego/Tijuana.

Our keynote speaker is Rev. Randi J. Walker, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Church History at the Pacific School of Religion and author of *The Evolution of a UCC Style*. She will address us about our Conference and churches' future. I am in hopes that she will touch on some of the pertinent parts of our church history. It is only in looking back from where we came that we can have a sense of understanding/vision of where we are headed.

Developing Spicy Curriculum for Christian Education, Justice As Evangelism, Reaching our Latino Neighbors, Nav-

igating the UCC: Church Vitality Resources on the Internet and Why Be Ecumenical? are some of the workshops planned. Especially in the last year, *Global Warming* has become a household phrase and, because of its urgency, we are offering a workshop on this topic as well.

The Annual Gathering Planning Committee worked many hours to make the 2007 Gathering a special success by tying in with the 50th anniversary celebration of the United Church of Christ and decided on a logo that would tie in with the celebration. Thanks to The Rev. Dr. Jane E. Heck-

les for bringing our vision to reality. Special thanks and admiration to the committee: Jonah Bass, Liz Fo'isia, Rev. Sarah Halverson, Carmen Ivory, Carolyn Kelso, Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg, Taraur Ria, Annica Terrones, Rev. Mitchell Young, Sondra Ziegler, The Rev. Dr. Jane E. Heckles, The Rev. Daniel F. Romero, Jerry May, Loletta Barrett, and Virginia Arroyo.

I would like to thank the entire Conference for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Moderator. This has been an enlightening and very spiritual experience for me. I'm proud to be part of a domination that is not afraid to be in the trenches throughout the world battling for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Peace and spicy blessings,
Deborah Harris, Conference Moderator



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Conference Board of Directors moving ahead with new vision

By Janet K. Vandevender, Chair,
SCNC Board of Directors

“Understanding who we are dictates how we live.” So said conference minister Dan Romero in a recent sermon, “On the Road to Transformation.” The SCNC Board of Directors finds itself on that road, reaching ever forward, occasionally hitting a bump, correcting turns that have us not headed in the direction we intended, keeping before us the dream of being a multiracial, multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all conference of churches, held together with all of our differences by a covenant to seek to be God’s people in the United Church of Christ in southern California and Nevada.

You will be pleased to know that your board is a very dedicated band of folks who have added to their usual meeting schedule this year conference calls and between-meeting conversations to help us keep moving ahead. Last year we reported to you that we had adopted an ambitious plan for church development and revitalization. It is exciting to be able to report this year that we have taken many steps to set that plan into action.

What joy we feel to have decided to send representatives from eight congregations new to SCNC in the past two years to General Synod and the Pre-Synod Event for New Pastors!

Since July 2005, two churches have been started (**Immanuel Latino Ministry in Los Angeles** and **Festiva Cristiana del la Iglesia de Unida de Cristo in Moreno Valley**), three have received standing (**Immanuel Community UCC in Long Beach, Bloom in the Desert in Palm Springs, and Fairview Community Church in Costa Mesa**); and three are in care or are closely considering joining an SCNC Association (**Vida Nueva in Chula Vista, Comunidad Cristiano Emanuel in Perris and Refiners Fire in Long Beach**).

In February we held the first of an anticipated series of meetings for clergy and lay leaders on church vitality and growth. The two-day meeting held in Ontario CA was attended by 150 of our members and was held jointly with the Southwest Conference UCC.

Calling the Rev. Maria Rosario (Charo) Ibarra to serve as our conference pastoral assistant for building community in diversity has added program strength to our developing Latino ministries and their interface with the conference. Charo is teaching a Spanish language class and is also teaching UCC polity in Spanish.

Spanish and English are not the only languages in which UCC polity is being taught. The Rev. Sepulona Tanuvasa is available to Samoan pastors for teaching the practices and policies of the UCC. This is but one aspect of the mission of

Samoan Ministries on the SCNC, a ministry newly affirmed by the conference board. This new, deepened covenant between SCNC and the Samoan churches will strengthen the ministries of us all.

Last year conference minister Jane Heckles announced the availability of grants from the conference in several categories. We were delighted to fund \$28,000 in requests from churches all over the conference in the past year.

We have learned about churches who are struggling, we assisted as churches refinanced loans on their properties, we updated the safe church policy for the conference, and we appointed a task force to study clergy housing issues, as you asked us to do at last year’s annual gathering.

The staff have been remarkable this year. We were saddened at the decision by Jose Vazquez to accept another position after nearly ten years of providing administrative and financial accounting for us. We are grateful for the continued fine service of Virginia Arroyo, Loletta Barrett, Phil Jenkins, Elsa Seifert, Gary Roberts, Jane Heckles, and Dan Romero. And by your faithfulness, your seeking to know God’s will in these times, and your covenant with others across this conference, we are deeply moved. May we continue to recognize God’s many blessings and call to justice in the days ahead.

Graduates of the Certificate of Ministry Studies program become valuable assets to their local churches

By Carol Fujita, 2003 CMS graduate, DSF Trustee and
Central Association Conference Ministry Assistant

It was with great joy that the Certificate of Ministry Studies (CMS) program held a Service of Celebration for five graduating students on May 12, 2007, at the **Second Samoan Congregational United Church of Christ in Long Beach**. Four of the five students are UCC students: **Michael Barrett, Altadena Community UCC; Janie Ito, Hollywood Independent UCC; Chris Prelitz, Neighborhood Community Church, UCC; and Mareta Tagalao, Second Samoan Congregational UCC**. They participated in the graduation ceremony of Pacific School of Religion (PSR) on May 20 and are now alumni/ae of the seminary. They are part of the thirty-three CMS graduates in Southern California, three of whom have gone on to seminary. Congratulations, graduates!

The CMS program in Southern California, now in its sixth year, is administered by PSR’s partner in Claremont, Disciples Seminary Foundation (DSF). Dean Tamara Nichols Rodenberg is the administrator for the program and brings her passion for theological education for the laity as well as for students in seminary to the program. She has served in the mission field with Common Global Ministries

and is a supporter of ecumenical endeavors, reflected in the current makeup of the CMS class. Besides students from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, there are students from the Metropolitan Community Church, Unity Fellowship of Christ Church, and the Universal Unitarian Church. Joining the class in the fall will be United Methodists from a Tongan church, whose pastor is a CMS graduate from PSR’s Berkeley program and is now a Ph.D. candidate at Claremont School of Theology.

Continuing UCC students are **Douglas Lima, Samoan Community Christian Church of Los Angeles, and Fareti Tagalao, Malamalama Community Church**. Lay persons interested in deepening their theological understanding and getting practical information on strengthening their volunteer/paid work at their churches are encouraged to contact Disciples Seminary Foundation at info@dsf.edu or by calling (909) 624-0712.

The CMS class is a multicultural minicomunity of active church layleaders, people of faith who support one another through prayer and friendship, who grow through interactions across ethnic/racial lines and economic/social realities. The opportunity for theological growth and understanding of the body of Christ in such a diverse setting is priceless.

Retirement Housing Foundation continues to grow and to upgrade existing facilities

By Chris Ragon, Director for Public Relations

The mission of Retirement Housing Foundation, a national nonprofit organization, is to provide a range of housing options and services for older adults, economically disadvantaged families, and persons with disabilities, according to their needs, in an environment enhancing the quality of life as it relates to their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Retirement Housing Foundation is committed to serving its residents and their local communities.

Some highlights from 2006 include:

—Our mission continues to grow. We opened and dedicated Oak Knoll Villa, 61 apartments in San Antonio, TX, Northvale Village, 71 apartments in Houston, TX, and Ingle-side Manor, 88 apartments in Macon, GA. We acquired Hamilton Wade and Douglas House in Brockton, MA, preserving 242 units of affordable housing. We held groundbreaking ceremonies and construction starts on Fairfield Manor, 75 apartments in Columbus, GA, and Providence Place, 67 apartments in Salem, OR.

—In addition to new construction in calendar year 2006, we invested approximately \$9.9 million to upgrade and improve our existing properties. RHF continues to work with the conferences of the United Church of Christ, the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, and ecumenically with other churches, as well as cities, counties, states, service clubs, and national organizations. Since our founding in 1961, we have grown to become one of the nation’s largest nonprofit sponsors and managers of affordable housing for seniors, economically disadvantaged families and persons with disabilities.

California has the largest number of RHF communities in the United States, with 62 communities. Forty-six of our communities are located in the Southern California Nevada Conference representing 5,897 apartments, 232 assisted living units, 17 memory care units and 185 skilled nursing care beds.

We give special thanks to our national board of directors and local community board members, to our many generous donors and volunteers, to our national, regional, and local staff for helping to make our mission successful, and especially to our residents. You are the reason for our existence and success.

Chris Ragon may be contacted at 562-257-5131 or by email at chris.ragon@rhf.org. The website address is www.rhf.org. Rev. Laverne R. Joseph is President and CEO.

Disciples Seminary Foundation develops new communication materials and shares good news

By John Rodenberg, Director of Church Relations
and Development

Spring 2007

Greetings! It is a joy to be able to share with you some of the good news from DSF.

Student enrollment

In the 2006-07 school year, we have the following enrollment:

- 34 Master of Divinity (ordination track)
- 7 Master of Arts
- 8 Doctor of Philosophy
- 4 Doctor of Ministry
- 15 Certificate of Ministry Studies
- 4 Hispanic Certificate of Ministry Studies
- 12 Disciples History and Polity (on-line)

We anticipate about 10 will graduate this spring.

In particular, we have six active **UCC seminarians** and six **UCC Certificate of Ministry Studies** students.

Janie Ito was accepted into and is now completing Clinical Pastoral Education at Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles. This experience has whet her appetite to pursue further theological education.

We remain very grateful to Norman (Jack) Jackson and Carol Fujita for their service on the board. Their financial support and leadership has been a significant contribution to DSF.

This year, we have worked very hard to develop new interpretation materials to best communicate our ministry to the students. The new look represents the diverse community we serve.

Thank you for your partnership with us!

Wider Church Ministries continues to make big difference in our global outreach

By Margaret Jacoby, SCNC Representative to the Board

Wider Church Ministries (WCM), one of the **four Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ**. My last official activity will be to represent SCNC at the General Synod in June. Thank you for the opportunity to serve both the Conference and the wider church.

Many changes have taken place at the WCM offices. One of the most positive changes resulted when the Board established a Financial Development Leadership Team and created a new position. The new Executive for Financial Development is working diligently with the other Team members to implement the Financial Development Plan for WCM and create the appropriate strategies for improved donor relations, creation of an endowment fund for the Child Sponsorship Program, and identifying and engaging large-gift donors.

The Mission Education and Interpretation Office has worked diligently training individuals in both the UCC and DOC to be Mission and Mission Interpreters (MMIs). The work of the MMIs is to convey stories of mission and educate people in the local churches about the work of mission around the world. Anyone who is interested in the mission of the church is welcomed and encouraged to explore this training. There are several MMIs in the SCNC and each one of us would be glad to talk with you about this amazing experience. Contact Jan Aerie at the UCC offices in Cleveland or contact me for information.

Global Ministries is comprised of several **Area Offices** whose mission is to foster relations with our partner churches around the world and keep the whole church aware of concerns in the various regions. Those offices include Middle East and Europe; East Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; Southern Asia; and Africa. Your

gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) support this important work.

The **Mission Personnel Office** is charged with recruitment, training, assignment and support of long-term and short-term missionaries and volunteers to our partners in the world. Currently there are 60 fully-supported missionaries serving 29 countries. Seven short-term volunteer appointments were made between November, 2006 and April, 2007. Seventy People-to-People pilgrimages were facilitated in 2006 to areas such as Angola, Chile, Costa Rica, China, Haiti, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and others. There are 100 such pilgrimages scheduled for 2007.

Global Sharing of Resources provides oversight of the OGHS offering, develops additional financial resources, monitors and administers special funds like the Hurricane and Tsunami offerings, and coordinates international relief and sustainable development work.

National Disaster Ministries shares in the OGHS offering and provides "second responder" support in national disasters. Second responders come into a disaster area after the initial impact is addressed. For example, we are still working with partners in New York City to address health issues faced by relief workers on 9/11; we are continuing to support residents and churches impacted by the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes; and we continue to address the need for awareness about technological disasters.

Volunteer Ministries provides and coordinates long and short term volunteer opportunities in the U.S. and can place volunteers in areas needing disaster recovery skills. Mission trip opportunities in the U.S. range from working at various camp programs, building homes in New Orleans, Biloxi and Florida, UCC-related nursing homes, or anywhere there is a need. Check the website for details: www.ucc.org/min-

istries/volunteer.

Refugee Ministries coordinates sponsorship opportunities for local churches to engage in refugee resettlement and advocates for just immigration laws. During 2006, this office was assigned 246 cases of 691 persons who arrived in the US from places like Somalia, Iran, Vietnam, Russia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi, Congo and others. Fourteen local churches participated in welcoming some of those refugees into their communities.

Child Sponsorship Program has been in existence since the 1950s! 100 percent of your monthly support for a child is sent to the child being sponsored through the program. Administrative costs are underwritten by gifts to OCWM. It's easy to provide food, clothing, healthcare and in some cases, housing. The majority of monthly sponsorships are as little as \$25 and the highest is \$30. What a wonderful experience for a Sunday School Class, a Youth Group, a local church Congregation or an individual to sponsor a child. Don't just think about it—please go to the website and sign up: www.globalministries.org.

Health and Wholeness Advocacy (HWA), staffed by SCNC's own Mike Schuenemeyer, includes HIV/AIDS and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) concerns. The principal HIV/AIDS ministry is The United Church of Christ Aids Network (UCAN) which is building a network of people, congregations and organizations to educate and advocate in response to the pandemic. HWA provides resources and services on all global health issues.

I would be pleased and honored to visit your church, youth group, or other setting to share the wonderful stories and experiences. Thank you for allowing me to serve on your behalf. May God continue to bless the work of the wider church through each and every one of us.

UCC Pension Boards saving money on health plans for UCC employers while providing great care

By Rev. Art Cribbs, SCNC Representative to the Boards

Money is being saved in a most unlikely place: Health plans through the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ. According to Michael Downs, president and CEO, UCC church employers are saving \$10 million in health care costs this year because of a group purchasing coalition, changes in plan design, and investment performance. Over the past five years, the UCC health plan has cost approximately half the national trend of increased healthcare costs, adding up to big savings.

In April, the Pension Boards rolled out four **Target Annuitization Date (TAD) Funds** anticipated for 2015, 2020, 2025, and 2030. The new wellness program found on the Boards' Web site, www.UCCHealthyStewards.org, is really catching on with 1,450 active members. They will receive \$50 per quarter by earning a required number of wellness credits. Get healthy and get paid!

And there's more good news regarding **Ministerial Assistance** as the 2006 Christmas Offering exceeded the offering received in 2005, the only UCC designated offering to exceed the previous years total. 94 cents out of every dollar received from this offering goes to direct support for our members.

SCNC Chapter of the Coalition getting back on track with new programs

By Deb Buller and David Cavanaugh, co-coordinators

After a couple of years of relative inactivity, the Coalition for Lesbian/Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns has found new leadership in Co-Coordinators **Deb Buller and David Cavanaugh, both of First Congregational Church, Long Beach.**

The Coalition hosted a luncheon at the 2006 Annual Gathering, attended by approximately 40 persons where we had a discussion about the purpose and direction of our chapter. The Open and Affirming program, youth and young adults and increasing participation were goals that came out of that meeting. The Coalition partnered with the Conference Youth Program to send Deb Buller to a 2-day ASSIST (suicide prevention) workshop. The program focused on teen suicide among LGBT teens.

A fall mixer at **First Congregational Church, Long Beach** was attended by approximately 30 people. Our chapter met with the GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Affirming Disciples) regional group to develop our relationship and identify common goals. A joint BBQ was held at First Congregational Church, Long Beach on Saturday, May 19.

The Coalition participated in the "Out and Faithful" event at the Los Angeles LGBT Center. The event featured representatives of religious groups that welcome LGBT people. The group, in cooperation with **First Congregational Church, Long Beach** sponsored a performance of a self-written performance piece by the **Mentoring Youth Through Empowerment (MYTE)**, a group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning and supportive youth. And finally, we sent Roz Manley to the first ever gathering of Transgender religious persons at **Pacific School of Religion.**

Peppermint Ridge increases capacity for residents

By Tracy Mauser, Director of Development

For 48 years, Peppermint Ridge has provided loving homes and empowering support services for people with developmental disabilities. That tradition continued this last year, as we provided residential and support services to 95 adults with developmental disabilities. Our three community care homes and seven intermediate care facilities encouraged independence and personal growth for 90 people, offering medical care, recreation, social activities and training to help them lead productive lives.

In 2006, family members of a Ridge resident purchased a home in Corona so that Peppermint Ridge could serve four more residents with developmental disabilities. This home is expected to open sometime in 2007.

Five adults continue to live on their own in the community, receiving support and training through the Ridge's Very Independent Person (VIP) program.

The United Church of Christ continues to be an important partner for Peppermint Ridge. Contributions of more than \$16,000 in 2006 enabled the Ridge to provide support for our clients.

As always, residents enjoyed their annual camp at Pilgrim Pines. This event allows our clients to explore issues of faith in a fun, relaxed environment.

Our **Rejoicers choir** had the opportunity to perform at a number of congregations and were made to feel special at each one. Staff had the opportunity to share a bit about the work of the Ridge at the Annual Gathering of the SCNCUCC in 2006.

Peppermint Ridge could not thrive without the support of the UCC churches in the Southern California Nevada Conference. Thank you for your continued support.

Deadlines for SCNC News in 2007

Please send in any articles or call with information about events to (626) 798-8082 and ask Virginia for my phone number, or email to: eseifert@pacbell.net by the following dates:

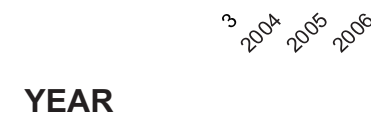
June 22	for Aug/Sept issue
August 17	for Oct/Nov issue
October 12	for Dec/Jan issue

Southern California Nevada Conference OCWM—Per Capita—Special Offerings Report 2006

CHURCH	OCWM 2006	Per Capita 2006	Special Offerings 2006	CHURCH	OCWM 2006	Per Capita 2006	Special Offerings 2006
ALPINE, COMMUNITY CHURCH	1,652.92	2,145.00	919.52	LOS ANGELES, HOLLYWOOD IND	5,147.00	882.00	1,050.50
ALTADENA, COMMUNITY	4,087.00	858.00	1,433.70	LOS ANGELES, LINCOLN MEMORIAL CONG CH	7,666.82	0.00	400.00
ARCADIA, CONG CH	0.00	0.00	409.00	LOS ANGELES, MT HOLLYWOOD CONG CH	2,500.00	998.25	0.00
ARVIN, UCC	4,000.00	847.00	695.00	LOS ANGELES, PILGRIM CONG CH	100.00	462.00	0.00
ATASCADERO, THE COMM CH	6,000.00	1,529.00	2,667.00	LOS ANGELES, SAMOAN COMM CHRISTIAN CH	900.00	500.00	300.00
BAKERSFIELD, 1ST CONG CH	24,500.00	3,107.00	2,676.05	LOS ANGELES, UNION CHURCH	4,944.00	1,199.00	758.00
BARSTOW, 1ST CONG CH	1,266.00	496.00	273.00	LOS ANGELES, WESTWOOD HILLS CHURCH	3,865.00	935.00	0.00
BARSTOW, MEXICAN CONG CH	340.00	110.00	0.00	MANHATTAN BEACH, COMM CH	24,000.00	7,821.00	0.00
BLOOMINGTON, CONGREGATIONAL	1,050.00	660.00	226.00	MENTONE, UCC	0.00	0.00	0.00
BREA, BREA CONGREGATIONAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	MOJAVE, COMM CONG	100.00	110.00	120.00
BUENA PARK, 1ST CONG	0.00	902.00	0.00	MONTEBELLO, PLYMOUTH CONG	12,000.00	1,848.00	4,480.00
CALIFORNIA CITY, COMM CHURCH	1,925.00	933.38	920.00	MURRIETA, UC VALLEY	3,000.00	1,221.00	0.00
CARLSBAD, PILGRIM UCC	10,000.00	3,300.00	8,621.75	NATIONAL CITY, FIRST SAMOAN CONG	0.00	0.00	0.00
CARSON, First Samoan Cong Chri Ch of Soma	0.00	0.00	0.00	NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CENTRO FAMILIAR CRISTIAN	0.00	0.00	0.00
CARSON, SAMOAN CONG OF SOUTH LA	8,000.00	8,000.00	400.00	NORTH LAS VEGAS, SAMOAN CONG CHRISTIAN CH	0.00	0.00	0.00
CHATSWORTH, CONG CH	0.00	0.00	0.00	NORTHBRIDGE, CONG CH	0.00	1,100.00	1,923.00
CHINO, CONGREGATIONAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	NORWALK, 1ST & ST. PAULS CHURCH	500.00	583.00	0.00
CHULA VISTA, COMM CONG CH	10,835.00	4,500.00	1,266.50	NORWALK, BETHANY CONG CH	0.00	0.00	0.00
CLAREMONT, UCC	60,000.00	13,674.00	11,287.00	OCEANSIDE, FIRST SAMOAN CONG CHRIS CHURCH	500.00	1,000.00	0.00
CORONA DEL MAR, COMM CH CONG	5,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	OCEANSIDE, FIRST SAMOAN REFORMED CH OF CHRI	0.00	0.00	0.00
CORONA DEL MAR, MARSHALLESE MIN OC	0.00	0.00	0.00	ONTARIO, BETHEL CONG CH	1,250.00	1,012.00	1,031.00
CORONA, 1ST CONG CH	1,250.00	953.48	2,553.42	OXNARD, FILIPINO COMM CH	500.00	0.00	0.00
COVINA, COMMUNITY CHURCH	1,150.00	671.00	243.00	OXNARD, FIRST SAMOAN CONGREGATIONAL	0.00	0.00	0.00
DIAMOND BAR CONG	4,500.00	999.96	1,794.45	PALM DESERT, UNITED CHURCH OF THE DESERT	330.00	0.00	0.00
ESCONDIDO, 1ST CONG	2,000.00	3,124.00	427.00	PALM SPRINGS, BLOOM IN THE DESERT MIN	3,000.00	374.00	805.00
FONTANA, COMM CH	349.25	192.50	0.00	PALOS VERDES ESTATES, NEIGHBORHOOD CH	42,000.00	11,165.00	4,377.00
FULLERTON, CONG CH	1,900.87	627.00	1,261.10	PASADENA, 1ST CONG	14,700.00	2,300.00	1,574.08
GLENDALE, 1ST CONG CH	2,045.00	1,302.00	549.00	PASO ROBLES, PLYMOUTH CONG	8,299.92	2,750.00	4,246.00
HACIENDA HEIGHTS, CONG CH	1,500.00	451.00	718.00	PERRIS, 1ST CONG CH	0.00	0.00	0.00
HARBOR CITY, FIRST SAMOAN CONG CHRISTIAN	1,000.00	1,320.00	0.00	POMONA, EL BUEN PASTOR	1,400.00	198.00	202.00
HEMET, PILGRIM CONG CH	0.00	1,435.08	799.00	POWAY, COMM CH	100.00	0.00	3,957.50
HENDERSON, COMM CH	2,225.00	1,408.00	475.00	QUARTZ HILL, CONG UCC MAYFLOWER GARDENS	0.00	0.00	0.00
HESPERIA, CONGREGATIONAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	RAMONA, 1ST CONG CH	2,000.00	5,720.00	4,237.55
HIGHLAND, CONG CH	0.00	0.00	220.00	REDLANDS, UCC	10,875.00	1,595.00	3,316.00
HUNTINGTON BEACH, FIRST SAMOAN	500.00	1,500.00	0.00	RIVERSIDE, 1ST CONG CH	5,000.00	3,377.01	2,534.16
INGLEWOOD, MORNINGSIDE UCC	2,000.00	1,200.00	386.00	SAN BERNARDINO, 1ST CONG	21,500.00	2,244.00	2,700.00
IRVINE, UCC	9,000.00	2,376.00	5,508.28	SAN DIEGO, CHINESE COMM	0.00	0.00	0.00
LA CANADA, CH OF THE LIGHTED WINDOW	14,960.36	2,013.00	2,064.00	SAN DIEGO, CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CONG	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
LA HABRA HEIGHTS, HILLCREST	4,768.00	0.00	1,843.00	SAN DIEGO, COMM CH PACIFIC BEACH	500.00	185.00	0.00
LA JOLLA, UNION CONG CH	4,000.00	2,079.00	3,083.72	SAN DIEGO, KENSINGTON COMM CH	8,253.78	3,000.00	9,828.45
LA MESA, UCC	9,000.00	2,000.04	6,508.70	SAN DIEGO, MISSION HILLS	9,500.00	1,950.00	17,248.82
LAGUNA BEACH, NEIGHBORHOOD CONG	6,125.00	1,501.50	3,836.00	SAN DIEGO, NEW CREATION UCC	0.00	0.00	295.00
LAGUNA NIGUEL, SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS	1,050.00	1,485.00	797.50	SAN DIEGO, OLA MO KERISO CONG CHRIS CH	2,000.00	200.00	0.00
LAKE SAN MARCOS, UC	2,500.00	2,475.00	6,763.00	SAN DIEGO, OLD TOWN COMM CH	0.00	0.00	0.00
LAKEWOOD, CROOS ROADS	2,450.00	1,140.75	562.00	SAN DIEGO, PARADISE HILLS UCC	375.00	1,320.00	220.00
LAKEWOOD, VAI OLE OLA CCC	2,000.00	1,700.00	0.00	SAN DIEGO, PIONEER OCEAN VIEW	4,856.00	1,500.00	2,450.00
LAS VEGAS, 1ST CONG	905.00	512.45	1,442.50	SAN DIEGO, UNIVERSITY CITY UNITED	12,500.00	3,080.00	3,553.29
LAS VEGAS, SAMOAN CONG CHRISTIAN CHURCH	0.00	0.00	0.00	SAN DIMAS, COMM CH	1,325.00	913.00	3,157.46
LAS VEGAS, NORTHWEST COMM CH	1,200.00	1,859.00	847.00	SAN LUIS OBISPO, CONG CH	4,000.00	3,348.00	1,486.21
LEMON GROVE, COMMUNITY CHURCH	100.00	385.00	0.00	SAN MARINO, CONG CH	6,000.00	638.00	3,676.05
LOMITA, OLA FOU UNITED SAMOAN CH OF AMERI	1,600.00	400.00	0.00	SANTA ANA, CH OF THE FOOTHILLS	1,749.00	1,020.00	490.00
LOMPOC, VALLEY OF THE FLOWERS	2,510.00	451.00	1,797.00	SANTA ANA, FIRST CONG CH	0.00	935.00	0.00
LONG BEACH, 1ST CONGREGATIONAL	15,665.00	5,102.83	6,814.12	SANTA ANA, SAMOAN CONG CHRIST CHURCH NEW	300.00	800.00	0.00
LONG BEACH, 2ND SAMOAN CONG CHURCH	2,700.00	792.00	0.00	SANTA BARBARA, 1ST CONG CH	12,000.00	1,584.00	4,444.00
LONG BEACH, 4TH SAMOAN CONG CHRISTIAN CH	1,000.00	500.00	0.00	SIMI VALLEY, Regional UCC of East Ventura	3,700.00	847.00	5,919.19
LONG BEACH, BAY SHORE CONGREGATIONAL	15,397.33	5,840.00	5,385.00	SUN CITY, UCC	0.00	0.00	1,551.75
LONG BEACH, IMMANUEL COMMUNITY CHURCH	0.00	0.00	0.00	TARZANA, GRACE HUNGARIAN REFORMED	0.00	759.00	0.00
LONG BEACH, LOS ALTOS UNITED CH	0.00	0.00	0.00	TEHACHAPI, COMM CONG CH	1,000.00	902.00	1,365.00
LONG BEACH, MALAMALAMA CONG CHURCH	0.00	869.00	0.00	TORRANCE, SEASIDE COMM CH	3,581.00	1,166.00	2,892.00
LONG BEACH, PETELI CHRISTIAN CHURCH	200.00	1,320.00	0.00	VENTURA, CHURCH FOOTHILLS	1,575.00	2,255.00	2,535.00
LONG BEACH, WOODRUFF COMM CH	2,000.00	176.00	1,095.00	VICTORVILLE, FALE OLE FAIIPU OMEA	0.00	0.00	0.00
LOS ALAMITOS, COMM CONG	2,987.50	1,078.00	1,606.70	VISTA, 1ST SAMOAN CONG CHRISTIAN CH OF OC	0.00	0.00	0.00
LOS ANGELES, ASHANTI	0.00	0.00	0.00	WOODLAND HILLS, COMM CH	800.00	0.00	6,470.11
LOS ANGELES, CONG CH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	1,000.00	850.00	500.00	YUCAIPA, CALIMESA COMM CH	0.00	0.00	0.00
LOS ANGELES, FILIPINO AMERICAN UCC	1,000.00	1,617.00	2,554.90				
LOS ANGELES, FIRST SAMOAN CH OF LA	1,000.00	880.00	1,000.00	TOTALS	515,886.75	174,944.23	200,823.03

THOUSANDS

THOUSANDS



So. Cal./Nev. Conf. OCWM



15th Consultation on Ministry in Daily Life Held in Cleveland

By Nancy S. DeNero

Nearly 70 ecumenical leaders in the “daily life ministry” movement came together from all over the country on April 13-15, to share successes and failures and to chart the course for the future. The UCC National Office was the gracious host for the 15th Annual Consultation for the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life. The theme was “Finding God at Work in Times of Change, a Conversation”, and in part was designed to steer the coalition into its next chapter, after a three year effort that has spawned a research proposal on Daily Life Ministry by a collaboration of five seminaries. We left re-energized, far less isolated in our respective work,

and ready to build anew.

Daily Life Ministry is a movement that began with theologian Rauschenbusch’ Social Gospel, and Pope John XXIII’s Vatican II, calling all people in Church on Sunday to take their values and faith into the world on Monday and through the week. DLM is known by many names—workplace spirituality, centered life, empowerment of the laity, and member mission, to name a few. In general it has grown organically, through independent ministries, workshops, and publications, with support from the church judicatories, but little implementation in the local church. The last three years CMDL has been focused on bringing “daily life ministry into the semi-

nary curriculum.

Many speakers were featured and small groups discussed workplace changes, the culture and the media, and equipping young people to live their ministries in their daily lives. Business and professional leaders discussed the spiritual resources that they count on as they navigate changes in their worlds.

If you have an interest in the Faith at Work movement or Daily Life Ministry, you can learn more at www.dailylifeministry.org. For more information you can also contact Nancy DeNero, Founding Director of Inside Out (forums advancing ethics and spirituality in work life) at nsdenero@earthlink.net.

Pacific School of Religion presents challenges of our diverse faiths

By Bill McKinney, President, Pacific School of Religion

PSR is in its second year of living with a new five-year strategic plan adopted by the board of trustees in 2005. We are beginning a series of “green” initiatives that will make us better stewards of our buildings and grounds. In addition, we have incorporated socially responsible investment principles into our endowment management and we are engaging the next phase of our efforts to dismantle institutional racism in the seminary and beyond.

The 2007 Earl Lectures theme was **All the Rivers of Paradise: Christian Responsibility in an Interfaith World**. Members of all the world’s religions now live in the same neighborhoods, profoundly affecting schools, markets, and the halls of government. And all the while the world bristles with the weapons and wars of religious intolerance. The Earl Lectures grappled with these challenges, informing our thinking about the place of Christianity among the world’s religions and changing our practice as we become profoundly involved with people of other faiths. It featured Mahmoud Mustafa Ayoub, professor of Islamic studies and comparative religion at Temple University, prominent CC leader Bernice Powell-Jackson, past president of the World Council of Churches for North America, Tat-siong Benny Liew, associate professor of New Testament at PSR, and Choan-Seng (C.S.) Song, distinguished professor of theology and Asian cultures at PSR.

Professor Mary Donovan Turner was appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean.

We welcomed three new faculty members to PSR: Dr. Tat-siong Benny Liew is Associate Professor of New Testament. Dr. Liew’s scholarly interests include literary theory, postcolonial studies, gender/sexuality studies, and ethnic

studies (particularly Asian American history and literature). He is most interested and invested in transdisciplinary study of the New Testament. Dr. Liew is also an ordained member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Dr. Inese Radzins is Assistant Professor of Theology and Swedenborgian Studies. Previously, she taught at the University of Latvia, Vanderbilt University, and Florida State University. An ordained minister in the Latvian Lutheran Church, her BA is from Washington University, her MDiv and STM from Yale Divinity School, and her PhD from Vanderbilt. Her dissertation was on Simone Weil’s theological appropriation of Plato, and her primary scholarly focus is on how theologians reinterpret and appropriate classical, biblical, and traditional sources. Dr. Mayra Rivera Rivera is Assistant Professor of Theology. Following her undergraduate degree at the University of Puerto Rico, she received her Master of Theological Studies and PhD degrees from Drew University. Her dissertation was titled “The Touch of Transcendence: A Latina Postcolonial Contribution to Philosophical Theology.” Among her other publications, she contributed to and co-edited the anthology *Postcolonial Theologies*.

Marjorie Wilkes moved from the Office of Institutional Advancement to the Office of the President, now serving as the Executive Assistant to the President. Joellynn Monahan serves as Admissions Counselor and Administrative Assistant in the Admissions Office. Kap Stann is PSR’s new Director of Marketing and Communications.

Sixty-one United Church of Christ students are currently enrolled at PSR, their studies enriched by one of the most diverse and talented theological faculties in the country. PSR’s curriculum includes courses on UCC history, polity and doctrine that are designed to help students prepare for ordination. Several UCC churches serve as field education sites for PSR students.

Southern California Ecumenical Council takes hard look at Christian unity and global warming

By Rev. Albert Cohen, Executive Director

This year’s annual celebration of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity featured the Rev. Dr. Jane E. Heckles preaching at First Baptist Church Glendale. Her sermon was well received and greatly appreciated. An ecumenical choir representing churches of Glendale sang, as did a youth choir from St. Sarkis Armenian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles. The Gene Boutillier Award for Distinguished Ecumenical Service was presented to the Rev. Dr. John George Huber of the Ecumenical Council of San Diego County. John, a Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor, has spent a long career studying, writing and being involved in promoting Christian unity.

Global warming is an ecumenical concern for people of

faith who see the world as God’s creation entrusted to our care. In recent months a chorus of warnings has emerged from the world scientific community and from political circles calling attention to the increased rate of climate change. We feel society is looking for leadership in this matter from those who profess a moral and ethical basis for their contributions to the community. The Conference is now exploring ways to focus on this issue and bring some recommendations to the congregations.

Conference representation on the SCEC Board includes Rev. Dr. Paul Lance (President for two years), Rev. Dagmar Grefe, Rev. Paul Kittlaus, Ms. Janet Vandevender, Dr. Suzanne Burger and Rev. Gene Boutillier. Rev. Albert Cohen is Executive Director. Reach this office by phone: 626-578-6371 or at scecl@scecl.net.

Council for Hispanic Ministries of the Pacific has renewed vision

By Lilia Enriquez, Interim President

The Council for Hispanic Ministries of the Pacific, which had been inactive for several years due to the changes in leadership, is now on track and moving ahead.

After the Mini Summit promoted by the National Council for Hispanic Ministries in Cleveland in September, 2006, there was a good representation from the Pacific region.

The group in attendance agreed to reactivate the Council for Hispanic Ministries of the Pacific. The conveners to plan a meeting were Rev. Dan Romero, Conference Minister of the Southern California Nevada Conference and Lilia Enriquez, Interim President of the CHMP.

An invitation was sent to all persons in the following conferences to attend a meeting: Northwest, Central Pacific, Northern California Nevada, Southern California Nevada and Hawaii. An invitation was also extended to the Southwest Conference which does not have an organized region. The meeting was to revitalize and reorganize with election of new officers and plan for the future of the Council for Hispanic Ministries of the Pacific.

This meeting was held on December 8-9, 2006 in Pasadena. We were fortunate to have a representation from all the conferences with the exception of the Pacific Northwest Conference. The following persons were in attendance:

Rev. Lynne Smouse Lopez (Central Pacific), Dr. Peter Barboza (Northern California Nevada), Rev. Charles Buck, Conference Minister (Hawaii), Ms. Liana Rowe and Rev. Randy Mayer (Southwest), and from Southern California Nevada Conference: Rev. Daniel Romero, Conference Minister, Rev. Hamleth Terrones, Rev. Haller Terrones, Pastor Mario Aguirre, Pastor Rosario Ibarra, Pastor Luis Ramirez, Mrs. Lilia Enriquez, Interim President of CHMP and Rev. Jane Heckles, Conference Minister.

Rev. Heckles together with Dr. Barboza shared the Mainstreaming Proposal from the Collegium of the United Church of Christ.

In two very productive days of discussing plans and setting goals for CHMP, we agreed that the areas of concern for CHMP at the present time are as follows:

Church Development, Pastoral and Lay Leadership Training, UCC Identity Training, Youth/Young Adult Leadership Training, Stewardship, Immigration Advocacy, Border Ministry, and Worker Justice.

From these, three priorities were chosen to begin the work of CHMP at this time:

1. Youth/Young Adult Leadership Training
2. Pastoral/Lay Leadership Training
3. Church Development

Committees were assigned with a convener for each of the priorities. These committees will begin their work as soon as possible. Until such time as CHMP can be organized in a more appropriate manner, Lilia Enriquez will continue as Interim President and Interim Treasurer.

Pilgrim Place Master Plan looks to expansion

By Bill Cunitz, President/CEO

Throughout this past year, Pilgrim Place stood at an important intersection in its history. Scanning the future and the rapidly changing world of senior living and support services, the Board of Directors, with support and insights from the Administration and current and prospective residents, took a few more steps down a "road less traveled" during 2006 to secure Pilgrim Place's preferred future.

Guiding our direction was the need to develop a new Master Site Plan for the City of Claremont. A multi-year process of discerning the long term care and institutional needs for our community has resulted in an emerging plan that includes a new Assisted Living Lodge, apartments for independent residents, a memory-support unit for the Health Center, a relocated Administration Building, Resident Activities Center, Exercise Center and remodeled dining and meeting rooms.

In true Pilgrim Place tradition, the Administration led the development of the initiative, but never more than a few paces in front of the Board of Directors, residents and members of the staff. Transparency and inclusive decision-making have long been core values of Pilgrim Place!

During much of 2006, a Master Site Planning Committee, comprised of residents, Board members and executive staff guided decisions of where, how much, and when and even why. On October 26, 2006, the Board of Directors unanimously and enthusiastically voted to approve the **Campus Redevelopment Proposal** that could include:

- Up to 14 units of additional assisted living at Brooks Court
- Up to 18 units of independent residential housing at Norton Garden and Brooks Court
- And other campus renovations/remodeling subject to approval from the City of

Claremont of the Pilgrim Place Master Plan, its implementation of a conditional use permit, to further refinement of financial feasibility and the placement of financing for the project not to exceed \$20,000,000 through a tax-exempt bond issue.

The Board of Directors' vote was stunning in its simplicity, singleness of spirit and complete lack of discussion! The groundwork for this historic moment had been years in the making, fueled by dialogue, research, negotiation, compromise and a clear understanding that this was the road Pilgrim Place must follow. Everyone was on board...and understood that the "road less traveled" was the path Pilgrim Place must follow to preserve its unique mission and intentional community.

With approximately another year of work and planning before we break ground in early 2008, I can guarantee that there will be more dialogue, new ideas about sustainable development, negotiation and understanding generated in coming months. That's as it should be. The implementation of this momentous Plan will indeed transform Pilgrim Place, move us much closer to ensuring the traditions pioneered by our founders and nurtured by thousands of others since 1915, will endure as we embrace a new vision for the 21st Century.

I am also grateful to report that all of our other benchmarks remained healthy during 2006: charitable giving increased by 12%, all our houses are full and last November's Festival generated big crowds and the highest revenue ever in our history to support our residents whose finances have been depleted!

We are especially thankful for the continuing support of the churches and many individuals from the Southern California Nevada Conference and the leadership provided by Diana Owings as your representative on our Board of Directors.



Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center continues to serve many youth and adults

By Gail Benson, Interim Executive Director

In 2006 Pilgrim Pines operated fulltime with a weekday outdoor education program & weekend retreats. There were a total of 11,493 guests for 280 nights. In camp language that is 30,339 camper days; with the kitchen serving 104,086 meals! Camp was busy in 2006!!

801 of the guests were from our conference churches; representing 42 churches. Camp sponsored events were well attended. Confirmation camp, planned and led by Rev. Joyce Kirk Moore, had 71 campers. 23 women gathered for the annual Women's Spirituality Retreat, planned and led by Sarah Halverson & Elsa Seifert, & 16 UCC churches attended family camps. The camp staff hosted 175 guests for Apple Pie Day and 71 persons attended the After Thanksgiving Weekend.

A very successful summer camp, planned and directed for a second year by Kirsten Sumpter and Amy Ensley, hosted 697 campers during the 5-week program. Combined revenue from all retreats, weekly outdoor education and summer camp was \$1,296,397.00.

While the camp staff was occupied with hosting guests, the Board of Directors was busy supporting the mission and work of the camp. Members took their responsibility very seriously and it is safe to say that "due diligence" was the operative phrase of the year. They met 8 times throughout the year as a board with individual committees meeting at separate times.

In addition to the important issues of camp management, great intention and time were given to the direction of the Capital Campaign. Rev. Gene Boutilier will coordinate the ongoing campaign program. As plans for building were beginning, donations continued to be made and new pledges were received.

The search committee continued its work throughout 2006 with the expectation of hiring a permanent Executive Director in 2007. This second year of transition has been one of maintenance of operations & improved financial stability. Through changes in staff, policies and practices, the ministry of Pilgrim Pines Camp & Conference Center is strong. This mountain top retreat continues to bring peace to the people.

Youth, Young Adults programs in motion

By Phillip Jenkins, Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries

- Western Regional Youth Event was held in June, 2006 and was hosted by the Rocky Mountain Conference in Colorado Springs (55 people attended from our Conference consisting of 42 youth and 13 adults).
- Conference Youth Ministries Camp (CYMC) was the senior high youth program for week 3 of summer camp at Pilgrim Pines.
- The fall event was held at Irvine UCC and this time the program was "A Fast That Lasts". This is the new program designed by the UCC and DOC that focuses on the problem of hunger in the world while the participants are fasting for 24 hours.
- Junior High JANboree and FEB Camp (for senior high youth) winter camps were held at Pilgrim Pines.
- Still to come this year (before the upcoming Annual Gathering) is Youth Uniting in Mission hosted by San Dimas Community Church.
- The youth and adults serving on the Roundtable continue their work dedicated to planning, leading, and participating in all of these Conference youth events.
- There have been no young adult events in the past year.

In my annual report last year, I wrote of my hope for becoming a "growing presence in the lives of our youth and young adults". Unfortunately that has not happened as I had envisioned. Although there were youth who were new at each event, the overall number in attendance has declined slightly. Yet there is change in the air. Recently the Conference Board of Directors approved a plan to increase the staffing for youth and young adult ministries. Implementation is in its early stages. Highlights of the plan include creating something new for youth that will represent the vast diversity present in our Conference, establishing working relationships amongst youth leaders (and strengthening existing ones), and to have dedicated staff time for young adult ministries. The obstacles and difficulties have not changed: other commitments, no familiarity, lack of interest, etc. Now there will be more resources and time dedicated to youth and young adult ministries.

The overall goal for youth and young adult ministries is to offer relevant, important, and exciting events so that people will want to make room in their busy schedules to be the body of Christ with their sisters and brothers in the wider church. I look forward to seeing more youth and young adults from our Conference gathered together in community!

UCC Local Church Ministries is full of resources

By Rev. Jane Quandt, SCNC representative on the Board of Local Church Ministries

Right now—and I mean right now—take this newspaper with you, walk over to your computer, and go to www.uccvitality.org. Got it? If so, you are now looking at a virtual (in this case literally "virtual") smorgasbord of resources that are designed to help your church in its ongoing quest for vitality. You'll need to register, but that will only take you about 2 minutes and then you're ready to go.

You can click on any tab you'd like, but I'd recommend the one that says, "**Ready, Set, Grow!**" and then select "Know Community and Culture." At the top of the page are the words, "Online Demographics Report." A few lines down you will see a link to a site where all you have to do is put in your zip code and you'll learn more about the people living in and around your church neighborhood than any "canvas" could possibly produce. For those of us interested in catering our ministries to the needs of the people around us that is invaluable information.

Obviously this is just one example of the resources that are available through the Church Vitality Initiative of the UCC Local Church Ministries. The site is full of ways to help your congregation discern its mission, consider its strengths, clarify its identity, and respond to the call of God

in its unique setting and giftedness. It is an exciting new resource for us to use.

One of the other major thrusts for Local Church Ministries this year related to helping us live into the new understanding of authorized ministries as voted at the last General Synod. As a new Manual is developed you will hear words like "discernment and formation", "alternate paths", "identity formation," and "readiness assessment." While this Manual is still just in the form of a "Paper" and a "Draft", Local Church Ministries staff, along with many other church leaders, has been working very hard to help us understand and implement the Pronouncement: "Ministry Issues: Forming and Preparing Pastoral Leaders for God's Church." Many of us have been waiting a very long time for this; the time may not be yet, but it is close at hand, and indeed it is already breaking in upon us.

The Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries, **Joe Malayang**, has announced his retirement, effective at the end of November. As the first Executive Minister under the new structure which was established in 2000, Joe has made very significant and long-lasting contributions to our beloved United Church of Christ. Many of us are proud of the fact that he headed over to Cleveland from Southern California and we can now be proud of the wonderful legacy he leaves behind. We wish him well in his retirement and thanks be to God for the gift of Joe Malayang.

Forum on Islam well attended in April

By Elsa M. J. Seifert

Many clergy and non-clergy people attended the lunch and open forum on Islam, featuring Dr. Amir Hussain, which was held at the Conference Offices on April 18. Dr. Hussain was clear and concise and painted a picture of Islam that does not appear in the mainstream media, but helped to bring understanding of the religion and its connectedness with many Christian beliefs.

Dr. Hussain is Associate Professor in the Department of Theology at Loyola Marymount University, where he teaches courses in world religions. His own particular specialty is the study of Islam, focusing on contemporary Muslim societies, specifically those in North America. Although born in Pakistan, Amir immigrated to Canada with his family when he was four years old. His academic degrees (BSC, MA, Ph.D.) are all from the University of Toronto where he received a number of awards, including the University's highest award for alumni service. Amir's Ph.D. dissertation was on Muslim Communities in Toronto. Prior to teaching at Loyola, Amir was on faculty at California State University at Northridge.

Dr. Hussain is familiar with the United Church of Christ and our desire to be in dialogue and community with persons of other faiths. His insights into the Islamic faith in North America can help us to better understand the global community of faith in



Photo credit: Elsa M. J. Seifert

Dr. Amir Hussain and Rev. Dan Romero at April forum.

which we live.

During the course of the forum participants were treated to information on the religious practices of Islam and its festivals, its literature and music, and other contributions to the West from Muslims, who now number seven million in the United States. He told some wonderful stories and showed a delightful video, part of a series produced by the Canada Broadcasting Company, which showed Muslim life in North America in a humorous way, called "Little Mosque on the Prairie". He noted that when he first moved to Toronto, there were nine mosques in the city, and when he left to come to the U.S. there were 35.

Amir gave each attendee an extensive bibliography, web site address list, and a copy of his book "Oil and Water" made available by UCC Pilgrim Press.

Church Development and Renewal on schedule and making progress in diversity of UCC churches

By Gary Roberts, Conference Associate for Church Development and Renewal

At the 2006 Annual Gathering, Janet Vandevender, Southern California Nevada Conference Board Chair, reported that the Board of Directors had adopted a plan for church development. Since then, we have taken our first steps in implementing that plan. Our plans were to:

1. Offer Church-Development Conferences for all churches' lay & ordained leadership: In February, the first of these conferences was held in Ontario, CA, with approximately 150 people attending. A similar conference is being planned for early 2008.

2. Develop leadership for New Church Starts: A process has been put in place and one person has been identified and trained for the planned 2007 new church start in Moreno Valley.

3. Plant new churches: The Strategic Plan called for one church in 2007. Fiesta Cristiana in Moreno Valley is in the final planning stages, and will start gathering a congregation soon.

4. Encourage existing churches to sponsor a new church, either on-site or in a separate location: There is preliminary interest from at least three SCNC churches to start a new church.

5. Encourage UCC affiliation by existing churches with similar theologies: As of this moment, there are three churches considering UCC affiliation in Southern California, two of which are currently on the campus of existing UCC churches.

As a result, the Strategic Plan for church development is on schedule to meet its five-year goals:

- New Churches > # Closures: In 2006-7, New Creation closed, and Fiesta Cristiana has been started.

- #Affiliations > # Withdrawals: In 2006-7, Fairview Community Church affiliated with Southern Association. No churches withdrew during this year.

- Average Membership begins increasing: There are hopeful signs: there is significant growth occurring in the UCC churches in Redlands, Riverside, and Pomona. Also, the new churches planted recently by SCNC (Centro Familiar in North

Hollywood, Northwest Community in Las Vegas, and Immanuel Latino Ministry in Los Angeles) continue to grow at 20-30% rates. Many other churches report going home from the Congregational Vitality event in February with better ideas about how to grow their congregation.

- Increasing Diversity in/of SCNC Churches: This is probably the most significant, and certainly the most challenging, of the Strategic Plan's goals. And it is actually two goals: increasing the diversity of SCNC churches, and increasing the diversity within SCNC churches.

We are making progress in the diversity of SCNC churches, because all of the church plants and new affiliates mentioned above are either O&A churches with significant GLBT membership and program or ethnic churches. Creation of a Samoan Ministries Table and similar planning to encourage development of Latino churches should help increase the numbers of these churches in SCNC.

Encouraging ethnic diversity within SCNC churches is a longer-term goal, but there are both plans and hopeful signs in this area as well. Rev. Rosario Ibarra has been hired as Pastoral Assistant for Building Community in Diversity, and part of her job description calls for creation of a discernment process for churches considering how to reach out to the diverse community around them.

In addition, there are a series of churches in the Conference creating multi-cultural campuses, where more than one UCC church shares the same property.

Finally, the SCNC Board continues to review and refine the Strategic Plan itself. This Spring, the Board has reviewed the financial plans required for implementing the Strategic Plan, and made a series of adjustments. The Board has also begun to consider ways to incorporate more development of existing churches into its Strategic Plan, and will continue to reevaluate the Strategic Plan in the future.



Photo credit: Elsa M. J. Seifert

11th Annual Tafesilafa'i

Pacific Islander Festival
August 2-4
Festival Theme:
Searching for success

Fun for the whole family
 Free Admission
Thursday and Friday 4pm-10pm
Saturday 8am-6pm

Marina Green Park, Long Beach, CA
 Food, Gifts, Singing, Dancing, Competitions

Contact: Second Samoan
 Congregational Church UCC
 Lulu—Event Coordinator 562-628-9282, ext. 106

SPEAKING PEACE

An experiential workshop
 in Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

Saturday, June 9, 9:30-4:00
Irvine United Congregational Church

4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine
Accessible from 405 freeway—
University exit
Or 5 freeway—Jeffrey exit

Lunch is included. Suggested contribution.
 Space is limited

Please register in advance
 with Terry LePage
 949-400-3379—

terry@opendoorcommunication.org

Also see www.cnvc.org

{Look for the NVC display at Annual Gathering}

AROUND THE CONFERENCE...

If you have an event you wish to share about, please send it to me by email at eseifert@pacbell.net and place SCNCNews item in the subject line.

- A correction: Rev. Heather Miner advises that there is a correction needed in her article from the April/May issue on the Vitality Conference on page 1: The second sentence should read: "Rev. Toro told a story about claiming land for God, the miracle of its being given, and the use and celebration of the gift. Rev. Nicholson spoke of creating a welcoming atmosphere in the building and worship with very practical suggestions."

- The Rev. Arthur Cribbs was installed as senior pastor at San Marino Congregational UCC on May 20 with a dinner reception following. Rev. Cribbs comes into the Central Association after faithfully serving Church of Christian Fellowship in San Diego.

- If you want to purchase a "God is still speaking your language" T-shirt (in 50 languages) contact Rev. Mitchell Young at Montebello Plymouth Congregational UCC by calling 323-721-5568 or emailing to mpccucc@yahoo.com

- Saturday, May 12 saw the Certificate of Ministry Studies graduates in a celebration at Second Samoan Congregational UCC in Long Beach. There was a formal graduation Ceremony for them in Oakland on May 20. (See Carol Fujita's report in this issue.)

- PAAM (Pacific Asian American Ministries) held a wonderful meeting with the theme of "Bridging the Cultures" on April 21 at Second Samoan Congregational UCC in Long Beach, with David Onoura as the keynote speaker.

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