

ANNUAL REPORT

2006 - 2007



The 141st Annual Meeting of the
Community Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
Benicia, California

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LEADERSHIP TEAM 2007-2008	back cover

**Community Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Benicia, California**

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2006-2007

2006-2007 STAFF**Pastors**

7/06 – 1/07

The Rev. S. Kay Wellington

2/07 - 4/07

The Rev. Ray Welles

4/07 - present

The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk

Minister of Music

Dr. Barbara Hamm

Youth Minister

Jay Smith

Church Secretary

07-06 – 08/06

Cora Martin

08/06 - present

Jean Blanchard

2006-2007 OFFICERS**Moderator**

Dale Olm

Vice-Moderator**Church Clerk**

Shelby Riddle

Financial Secretary

Keith Read

Treasurer

Sheryl Sindt

2006-2007 COMMITTEE CHAIRS**Building and Grounds Ministry**

Greg Cox

Christian Education Ministry

Dale Olm

Diakonate Ministry**Fellowship Ministry****Social Outreach Ministry**

Jett Thomas

Stewardship Ministry

Carl Mason

Welcome Ministry**Worship Ministry**

07/06 – 10/06

Hope Wingert

11/06 – 06/07

Tim Mautz

Pastor's Report
The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk

On April 15th 2007, Community Congregational United Church of Christ called me to be their 38th Pastor and their first full time pastor in over 30 years and I feel blessed.

The Rev. Roger Straw stated in his 2004-2005 final annual report when writing about his departure from Community Congregational, that you needed to create an “inviting vacuum” for your new Pastor. I am thrilled and delighted to report that you all have done just that. An “inviting vacuum” is exactly what I have felt in my first three months at Community Congregational, a church with a warm handshake and a welcoming heart.

In the upcoming year Community Congregational is embarking on another leg of its journey. This is not a new story to tell, but rather the retelling and remembering of your roots; a community church on the hill, open to all, where we believe and live into the vision that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here” - a place of “radical hospitality”.

We are reminded that in the Bible, hospitality is not primarily associated with how we treat friends, neighbors, members of our own faith or other insiders. Hospitality is aimed at the stranger, the outsider; in fact, the word often used in the New Testament is *philoxenia* which in Greek means the love of strangers and aliens. In the ancient world, the practice of hospitality meant graciously receiving an alienated person into one’s land, home, or community and providing directly for that person’s needs. Having experienced the welcome my family and I received in Community Congregational’s “inviting vacuum,” as well as witnessing how welcoming you are to the visitor, the stranger among us, I know that this is a place of “radical hospitality.” Community Congregational is equipped with fine lay leadership in the Church Council, Congregational Care, Youth Ministry, Christian Education, Worship Committee, Buildings and Grounds, Hospitality and Fellowship and many other teams, to live into these gospel imperatives. The Music Ministry in this church, both adult and young people, also answers the call to be inviting and this is a ministry where I particularly feel that each Sunday in Worship I am fed.

What an exciting time to be here! Community Congregational has had an exciting year, and has shown its ability to be church, to remain solid and stable even in interim times, to have vision of what it means to be church in the world and stay true to that vision. You have been generous in your giving this year, Thank you for your generosity! When we offer our time, talents, and treasures together, you’ll be amazed how God can use them beyond what we can imagine.

I am grateful to the Pastoral Search Team, for its honesty throughout the process and its vision of tomorrow for this church. I feel blessed to be called by both this congregation and God to be part of Community Congregational’s story — part of your rich and beautiful tapestry woven to answer God’s call. THANKS BE TO GOD!

Minister of Music
Barbara Hamm

LET IT SHINE

The motto for this year's Synod in celebration of the UCC's fiftieth anniversary, "Let It Shine," is an imperative that we here at CCC take seriously. Jesus said to let our light shine—so that others can clearly see God's light through us. In the physical universe, light comes, essentially, from stars that convert their energies into heat and light, literally giving their "lives" to the making of all other forms of life, creating a thing of beauty in the process, shining for all to see. Jesus said we are to be like that—light for the world, with God's light shining through us so that others might see God.

That is what we are called to do here at CCC. Our musicians burn their God-given energies to make music with vocal cords and instruments, creating sounds that speak both of God and to God, enabling us to offer God our worship and thanksgiving. I am beyond grateful that my feet have been set in the path of music ministry, in which I take supreme delight. I am so grateful for all those who serve here with me, tuning strings and voices to the harmonies of joy. For the Sanctuary Choir and their weekly commitment to making music for most of the year, I give thanks. This past year we have sung in just about every genre and style of music there is, both accompanied and unaccompanied, from Bach chorales to gospel, from the sweetly melodic to the highly dissonant. I am also grateful for the Women and Girls' Chorus, which has tackled some pretty tough pieces (really too difficult for a church this size, but not knowing that, we do them anyway), and for the spirited, generous commitment of time and energy expended by Leslie Blackie in directing the Celebration Singers, the Christmas Pageant, and our fledgling Cherub Choir (bring us more cherubs, folks!).

I appreciate immensely all the instrumentalists who play the music of Taizé and the indigenous music of other cultures sprinkled throughout the *New Century Hymnal*; the annual intergenerational Christmas Orchestra; the jazz combo's playing arrangements of spirituals and carols using the flavors and musical idioms of jazz and blues; the vocal and instrumental soloists; the drum circle facilitators; the dancers; the guest musicians who bring a different sound; the hymnwriters and composers whose texts and tunes we sing (mine among them); and, finally and most particularly, this congregation, which listens and receives and lifts its robust voice in praise of the one whose light shines in and through us.

A star, having shone for billions of years and expended all its accumulated energy, finally blasts itself to bits—literally—in one last blazing burst of self-immolation, seeding interstellar space with the heavier elements that combine to make up the universe as we know it. Some months ago came news of one such gigantic supernova, the biggest yet known to scientists, that exploded 288 million years ago or thereabouts, whose light has just now reached Earth. Talk about letting your light shine! The UCC has shone for fifty years, steadily accumulating faithful followers around that nucleus of folks who first combined to commit their vision to concrete action, CCC numbered among them! Like Tennyson's Ulysses, who disdains "To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!" ("Ulysses," 1842), let us shine until we are all used up, seeding our world with compassion and hope, creating a thing of beauty in the process, shining for all to see. May it ever be so.

Refrain
Let It Shine

♩ = 120 Unison

D D/C# Bm Bm/A G D Em A

Let it shine, let it shine, the light of the world that shows the way; let it

D D/C# Bm Bm/A G A D *Fine*

shine, let it shine, and show us peace to - day.

G D/F# Em A D G D A

1. The church bears wit - ness to God's grace, its mis - sion crys - tal clear: to
 2. When love re - plac - es hu - man greed, a last - ing peace will come as
 3. Now let us give our - selves to God with - in this war - torn world, and

G D F# Bm Em G/B Asus4 A *D.C.*

show the world God's hu - man face, a world that God holds dear:
 hands reach out to hu - man need from hearts no long - er numb.
 work till jus - tice walks a - broad with flags of peace un - furled.

WORDS and MUSIC: Barbara Hamm © 2007

LET IT SHINE
8.6.8.6.Ref.

"Let It Shine," the motto adopted by the United Church of Christ to celebrate its fifty-year anniversary, was the genesis of this hymn. The commitment to working for peace and justice in the world is a hallmark of the UCC. The hymn refers directly to John's Gospel, 1:1-9, while bearing echoes of I Jn. 1:5; 3:16-18; 4:7-12, 19-21.

Celebration Singers

Leslie M. Blackie

The year of 2006-2007 saw regular attendance and performance of 12 children. I was assisted by Barbara Hamm – without whose support, musical ability and playing of the piano the choir would not have happened.

Over this past year we have worked on reading music, notations and dynamics. We worked on singing in parts as well as singing in rounds and unison. We have worked on vocal placement and sound production, too, as we worked with a wide variety of ages, musical ability and willingness to try new things! Musically, we have addressed new complexity in the songs – singing 2 and 3 part songs as well as learning to sing in chords with each part holding their own notes. Each year the participants in the choir are able to tackle harder and harder pieces as the singers develop alto and tenor ranges.

Over this past year we sang 1-2 songs every month, with a lot of intense effort during Advent and Easter seasons as well as the Christmas concert. We actually performed 20 different songs in the year 2006-2007! The regular rehearsals twice a month really helped with the choir being able to contribute in church so often. Continuing in the tradition from last year of “snippet solos,” most of the singers had the opportunity to sing a duet or solo within the choir anthem.

The Christmas Eve (early service) Christmas Pageant included music sung during the Advent season and at the Christmas concert. All the participants had lines to say as well, and the Christmas story was told with a modern to Biblical connection of the Christmas story.

Our church sent 7 singers to the Children’s Festival in April. They had memorized 5 songs in preparation for the festival. The singers worked all day with 150 other singers from 3-8th grades, and then sang a concert at the end of the day. It was a lot of work, and a new experience to sing in a group of 150 instead of 12.

In the Spring I started rehearsing the newest addition to the music ministry – the Cherub Choir made up of 3-7 year olds. They sang on Easter Sunday. The Cherub Choir rehearses once a month.

Next year I will continue to develop our 2 choirs: the Cherub Choir, for children ages 3-7, and the Celebration Singers, (the youth choir) for youth 11- 15. Interested children can sing in both the Cherub Choir and the Celebration Singers, just as interested youth can sing in the Celebration Singers and the Sanctuary Choir. We will continue to have some intergenerational pieces as well, when all the choirs will join together. I look forward to working more with Jay Smith, youth minister, as we attempt more ambitious combined projects of music and drama presented by the youth for the Church.

**Youth Minister
W. Jay Smith**

This is the third year-end report I have prepared as the Youth Minister for the Community Congregational Church of Benicia. During that time, thanks to your support, the Youth Group has been reestablished after languishing for several years. Now, with the addition of The Reverend Renie's enthusiastic support for the youth, I expect we will hit a new stride and grow in new and exciting ways.

The Youth Group has met regularly on Sunday nights from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. In addition, we have held several Saturday night "lock-in"/sleep-overs, presented our third play to the congregation in November 2006 and participated in various church and community service projects. The latter included wrapping Christmas present collection boxes for families identified by the Community Action Council, serving dinner at the Reynaissance Family Center, a homeless shelter in Vallejo, and initiating a painting project in the Youth Group Room.

I also instructed a Confirmation Class which included Adam Olm, Janelle and Jennifer Diethelm, Kelsey Sass, Natalie Parsons and Samantha Majors. Each of these young people was introduced to the church through the Youth Group, thanks in large part to the evangelism of Samantha Majors and Lindsay Blackie. Their participation in the Youth Group, as well as Sunday School activities, changed the teaching dynamics in the class as the Blackie's were already familiar with much of the material being covered. Interestingly, the message that resonated from the Confirmation Class experience was that "We are children of God and, as such, we are the present-day light of the world." Obviously, that message comes from no less authority than Jesus. In talking about this message with the class, we discussed the great opportunity and the great responsibility that comes with accepting a relationship with Jesus and his over-arching message "to love your neighbor as yourself."

One other important observation about this past year was the emergence of youth leaders. Sam Olm, who was confirmed as part of the 2005 Confirmation Class, served as my assistant this year and was a tremendous asset. Lindsay Blackie also participated in several of the Confirmation Classes and became a member of the adult choir in 2007. Zander Martinez also participated in several Confirmation Classes.

Another activity in which the Youth Group participated, which required greater attention, was the church work days. Participation in a work day was required for all of the Confirmation Class participants and worked enthusiastically. Many of the youth are involved in weekend activities outside of the church, but I will continue to encourage participation in the church work days. We also started a Sunday night trash pick-up on the property in cooperation with Facilities Ministry. This will continue on a weekly basis.

Submitted in the spirit of peace and love.

**Moderator
Dale Olm**

What a year it has been has been!

We went from a deficit budget to not only solvency, but the means to call a FULL time pastor.

We experimented with a modification of our church government in an attempt to streamline business and allow more concentration on ministries. It allowed us to free up personal resources so that the Search Committee could fulfill its charge. It allowed us to identify what matters to us and where we need to work harder. We are going back to the old form, however, for 2007 – 2008. The benefits were outweighed by some difficulties and after Rev. Stamm-Kirk gets to know us and our strengths and weaknesses, we will be revisiting restructuring Council, re-inventing ministries and reviewing and revising our Constitution and By-Laws.

We said goodbye to our longtime (8 years!) church secretary, Cora Martin, and welcomed our new church secretary, Jean Blanchard. In the process we created a personnel committee (see separate report).

In the last 12 months, we have had an interim minister, a transitional minister, interim-interim pulpit supply, and then came our greatest accomplishment: after a two- year interim, and a year of active search, we, the congregation of the Community Congregational United Church of Christ, called The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk to be our minister on April 15th, 2007, and welcomed her wife, Allison, and daughter, Katie to our family. Fulfilling a commitment that we envisioned and dreamed of two years ago, The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk is the first full time pastor that this congregation has called in almost 30 years. We can refer to ourselves as a full time church once again.

There are smiles everywhere you look.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for being who you are, doing what you've done and envisioning what we can be. It has been an honor working with you all as Moderator and seeing your dedication of time and talents to this great community.

Vice Moderator
No Report

Clerk
Shelby Riddle

Withdrawal:

The Rev. Mary Susan Gast and The Rev. Roger Straw <i>To Fairfield Suisun United Church of Christ Congregational</i>	Sept. 5, 2006
The Rev. Howard Fuller <i>To UCC Church in Claremont</i>	April 16, 2007

Deceased:

Catherine (Kay) Louise Yokum	January 25, 2007
Molly Saunders	January 17, 2007
Lora Curtis Lafky (non-member)	May 27, 2007

Memorial Services:

Catherine (Kay) Yokum <i>The Rev. Henry Childs presiding</i>	Feb. 3, 2007
Lora Lafky <i>The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk presiding</i>	June 12, 2007

NEW MEMBERS:

The Reverend Renie Stamm-Kirk	June 3, 2007
Shelby Riddle	June 3, 2007
By Confirmation:	June 3, 2007

Adam Olm
Samantha Majors
Natalie Parsons
Jennifer Diethelm
Janelle Diethelm
Kelsey Sass

Baptisms:

Samantha Majors	June 3, 2007
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Total Active Members**92**

New Members:	8
Deceased Members:	2
Baptisms:	1

Report of the Financial Secretary

Keith Read

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BANK OF AMERICA INCOME/DEPOSITS SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2006-2007											
ITEM ("R." = Restricted)	July	August	Sept.	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	TOTALS
Loose Offerings	994.00	220.00	498.00	209.01	268.00	542.55	212.67	227.00	324.98	735.35	\$5,821.58
Pledges	5,019.50	9,127.50	4,882.50	7,832.00	7,782.50	8,002.50	9,115.73	6,927.50	6,242.50	6,460.00	\$85,211.65
Fundraisers: Auctions				2,738.00	40.00						\$6,019.00
Pledges: 2007-2008											\$4,920.00
"Empties For Cash"										2.00	\$7.00
Cornerstone Int. Rebate								147.65			\$147.65
Misc. (Unrestricted)	151.00								120.00		\$271.00
NCNUCC M-H Grant			900.00				900.00				\$1,800.00
B&G - Building Use	2,110.00	2,260.00	1,725.00	2,615.00	1,795.00	2,560.00	2,295.10	1,935.00	615.00	2,550.00	\$24,931.10
B&G: Postage/Dumpster/Misc	6.60	64.00							100.00	188.00	\$385.46
Worship: Flowers									268.00	8.00	\$276.00
Pastor Renie's Gift @ Call											\$105.00
R: Mission/S.O. "POOL"	775.00	550.00	305.00	315.00	750.00	265.00	305.00	480.00	309.00	245.00	\$5,179.00
R: Mission - MONTHLY	85.00	320.00	101.00	438.00	172.00	1,307.00	179.00	246.00	235.00	382.79	\$5,210.57
R: Music Series						491.00			1,377.86		\$1,868.86
R: WITT: Weekend In The Trees	380.00	210.00	1,605.00								\$2,195.00
R: Memorials				25.00			25.00	790.00	50.00		\$890.00
R: Memorials: Chairs		257.39									\$257.39
R: Interim Minister C.E. Conf			700.00								\$700.00
R: Pastor Wellington's Gift						1,140.00		5.00			\$1,145.00
R: Cora Martin's Retirement	10.00	915.00	120.00								\$1,045.00
R: Music C.E. Fund	650.00	50.00									\$700.00
R: Capital Improvements	513.71	227.57	475.73	232.51	231.80	229.98	492.63	571.97	2,273.93	550.98	\$6,262.35
R: Misc.					175.00						\$175.00
TOTALS	\$10,694.81	\$14,201.46	\$11,312.23	\$14,404.52	\$11,214.30	\$14,538.03	\$13,525.13	\$11,330.12	\$11,816.27	\$10,910.00	\$155,523.61

Prepared by Keith S. Read, Financial Secretary

Report of the Treasurer
Sheryl Sindt

Community Congregational United Church of Christ				
Benicia, CA				
Proposed Budget FY2006/2007				
<u>Summary</u>				
	Approved 2006/07 Budget Jul '06	Budget as Revised Jan '07	Actual @ 6/30/07	Variance from Revised Budget
SOURCES OF FUNDING				
Pledges	\$89,180	\$88,753	\$88,892	\$139
Loose Offering	7,000	5,358	5,822	\$463
Use of Building	26,133	\$26,133	\$24,931	-\$1,201
Fundraisers	3,445	4,778	6,019	\$1,241
Other	580	\$573	\$1,022	\$449
Total Funding Sources	\$126,337	\$125,594	\$126,686	\$1,091
EXPENSES				
Building & Grounds	\$13,517	\$13,517	\$12,666	-\$851
Insurance	4,788	4,788	4,868	\$80
Christian Education / Youth	1,050	1,050	0	-\$1,050
UCC Support	3,390	3,390	3,390	\$0
Worship	796	796	1,060	\$264
Music & Youth Choir	1,302	1,302	886	-\$416
Office Expense	3,727	3,727	3,954	\$227
Staff	74,885	74,886	76,357	\$1,471
Search Committee	5,280	5,280	0	-\$5,280
Other Expenses	6,203	6,203	7,050	\$847
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$114,939	\$114,940	\$110,232	-\$4,707
(Excess) Deficit	(\$11,399)	(\$10,655)	(\$16,453)	(\$5,799)

Community Congregational United Church of Christ				
Benicia, CA				
Proposed Budget FY2006/2007				
Detail				
	2006/07 Revised Budget	Budget as Revised Jan '07	Actual @ 6/30/07	Variance from Revised Budget
SOURCES OF FUNDING				
Pledges	\$88,753	88,753	88,892	139
Loose Offering	\$5,358	5,358	5,822	463
Use of Building Happy Hearts	\$19,200	19,200	17,600	(1,600)
Use of Building (Other)	\$6,933	6,933	7,331	399
Fundraisers	\$4,778	4,778	6,019	1,241
Interest (Vanguard)	\$573	573	1,022	449
Other	\$7	0	7	7
Total Funding Sources	\$125,601	\$125,594	\$126,693	\$1,098
EXPENSES				
Building & Grounds				
Cornerstone Loan Payoff	\$2,184	2,184	2,184	0
Maint.	\$4,405	4,405	3,912	(493)
Utilities	\$6,928	6,928	6,571	(358)
Insurance	\$4,788	4,788	4,868	80
B&G Total	\$18,305	\$18,305	\$17,534	-\$771
Christian Education / Youth				
Christian Education	\$800	800	0	(800)
Youth Group	\$150	150	0	(150)
Confirmations	\$100	100	0	(100)
C.E. Total	\$1,050	\$1,050	\$0	-\$1,050
UCC Support				
UCC Share (Formerly OCWM)	\$2,500	2,500	2,500	0
UCC Dues UCC Share	\$890	890	890	0
UCC Total	\$3,390	\$3,390	\$3,390	\$0
Worship				
Pulpit Supply		0	0	0
Substitute Minister	\$250	250	250	0
Other Expenses	\$546	546	810	264
Worship Total	\$796	\$796	\$1,060	\$264
Music & Youth Choir				
Music Copyright License	\$406	406	431	25
Sheet Music	\$211	211	0	(211)
Guest Musicians	\$320	320	220	(100)
Seminar / Staff Training	\$65	65	235	170
Youth Choir / Festival	\$300	300	0	(300)
Music Total	\$1,302	\$1,302	\$886	-\$416

Community Congregational United Church of Christ				
Benicia, CA				
Proposed Budget FY2006/2007				
Detail				
	2006/07 Revised Budget	Budget as Revised Jan '07	Actual @ 6/30/07	Variance from Revised Budget
Office / Computer / Copy Machine				
Copier (Lease, copies & maintenance)	\$2,659	2,659	2,632	(27)
Office supplies, computer, copy machine	\$1,069	1,069	1,322	254
Computer / Internet Fees	\$0	0	0	0
Office Total	\$3,727	\$3,727	\$3,954	\$227
Staff				
Pastor Salary & Housing	\$35,458	35,458	33,938	(1,520)
Pastor Benefits	\$5,143	5,143	7,136	1,994
Pastor Expenses	\$777	777	854	77
Sabbatical Set-aside	\$0	0	0	
Minister of Music (52 wks)	\$11,209	11,209	11,855	646
Secretary	\$9,041	9,041	9,325	284
Custodian	\$3,600	3,600	3,600	0
Worker's Comp	\$576	576	566	(10)
Youth Minister	\$9,082	9,083	9,083	(0)
Youth Minister Expenses	\$0	0	0	0
Staff Total	\$74,885	\$74,886	\$76,357	\$1,471
Search Committee	\$5,280	5,280	0	(5,280)
Diakonnate	\$0	0	0	0
Fellowship	\$200	200	0	(200)
Stewardship	\$107	107	0	(107)
Welcome Ministry (Church Growth)	\$60	60	0	(60)
Council Discretionary Fund	\$55	55	55	0
Asilomar Delegates (UCC Ann. Mtg.)	\$800	800	798	(2)
Solano County Property Tax	\$1,996	1,996	1,996	0
Bank Fees	\$631	631	723	92
Child Care	\$1,608	1,608	1,820	211
Camp Scholarships	\$0	0	0	0
Weekend In the Trees	\$531	531	676	145
Minister's Discretionary	\$0	0	0	0
Other Expenses	\$215	215	983	768
	\$11,483	\$11,483	\$7,050	-\$4,433
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$114,939	\$114,940	\$110,232	-\$4,707
(Excess) Deficit	(\$10,663)	(\$10,655)	(\$16,460)	(\$5,806)

Building & Grounds Greg Cox

FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BENICIA,

Another year has gone by and slowly we are seeing a wonderful transformation. The monthly beautification gatherings (work days) have really made a difference in the way the church looks and feels. I express a special thanks to Arloine and Donald Stoner for their constant dedication to keeping the property clean and safe for everyone. God Bless.

Our Chapel Update – I thank everyone who participated in our beatification gatherings by helping physically or assisting in other ways, most especially I thank the loyal gang with whom I've spent many Saturdays enjoying tacos and great conversation. We have had a year filled with accomplishments. A few that I remember most fondly are below:

Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall – The street side of the sanctuary has been planted with flowers and 2 new native trees. The bushes and trees on the side have been pruned and everything mulched. Trailing rosemary plants will soon cover the retaining wall in front.

- Concrete curbs on the drive now exist in place of the old railroad ties, complements of Holiday House.
- The Reverend Renie's office has been painted. The choir room has been cleaned and organized.
- New tables and chairs were purchased for fellowship events.
- A recycling program for ink and toner cartridges has been established providing some additional revenue for the church as well as preserving the environment. Thanks to Jean Blanchard for her help with this.

C. E. Building - A new retaining wall was built around the play area. The fence was repaired. Ground cover was planted and mulch was added between the buildings. The irrigation system was extended for future planting. Happy Hearts has been repainting the rooms they use and expect to complete all by the end of summer. The carpets and windows were cleaned.

Parking area - The sprinkler system and broken rails in the parking area were repaired. Potholes in the lot were filled. A new basketball hoop was installed in the upper lot.

Church beautification gatherings will continue to be held on the 4th Saturday of each month through October 2007, then resume in January, 2008. Please mark your calendars with these important fellowship events before your schedule gets too busy. We need everyone to help in what ever way they can to continue our growth. Donations are also welcome and really can help to hire labor, rent equipment, or purchase plants, trees, benches, etc. Please let me know your ideas.

Building use – As part of our social outreach to the community we continue to support the following groups by extending the use of our facilities:

- Happy Hearts – New owners, Jackie Mulliken and Terri Howerton, are now into their 3rd year offering year-round classes.
- New Covenant CC Church (Samoan) – New Covenant holds choir practice Saturday PMs and celebrates Worship Sunday afternoons.

- AA/NA/ALANON– Weekly meeting times are posted on the church calendar in the Bridge, on the large bulletin board outside the main door and are available on tri-fold flyers in the Fellowship Hall.

Growing our Chapel - What's planned for the upcoming year(s)?

Thank you all so much for your generous pledges to the Capital Improvement Fund. We now have a good financial start toward our plans for the coming year. Capital improvement plans are dependent upon individual donations to this fund. The current budget, i.e. 2006-2007, provides for maintenance requirements only. We currently have about \$2000.00 in that fund and pledges of \$4500.00 for 2006-2007. We still have a way to go to meet our goals for improvements and long term maintenance. Listed below are a few of the plans for the upcoming year(s):

- ⇒ Fellowship Hall flooring, wall coverings (\$12,000)
- ⇒ New carpeting for the sanctuary and choir room (\$5000)
- ⇒ Walkways, benches, irrigation and lighting for the front garden (\$4000)
- ⇒ Side exit door in sanctuary (\$1000)
- ⇒ Parking lot repairs (\$20,000 to \$80,000)
- ⇒ Pew cushions have been approved and will be ordered this month.

Please consider a donation towards one of the above projects.

I look forward to serving another year as the Building and Grounds steward. Please let me know your ideas for our continued growth in the community.

Christian Education Dale Olm

Sunday School finished its academic year on May 27th. Teachers for the 2006–2007 year were Jay Smith, Susan Stofan and Dale Olm. Liz Munnely, Mike Patterson, Karen Hanna and John Hanna assisted as substitutes

All children and youths met as a group in a one-room-schoolhouse environment. Ages ranged from five to fourteen. We experimented with a Bible-based, home-prepared curriculum this year and were much pleased with the flexibility and continuity that it allowed. We plan on continuing this teaching model for the 2007–2008 school year.

The middle school youth and one high school student were excused this Spring from Sunday School to attend Confirmation Classes with Jay Smith. Sam Olm helped Jay as a teaching assistant with the confirmation studies.

Adult classes met after Worship service in the Fall under the direction of Tim Mautz.

On Sunday, June 3rd, during Worship, the Sunday School teachers and substitutes were recognized for their service, various graduates were acknowledged, and we welcomed six new members into the church from the Confirmation Class: Natalie Parsons, Samantha Majors, Kelsey Sass, Adam Olm, Jennifer Diethelm and Jannelle Diethelm. Two youths were presented with NIV Adventure Bibles.

Holiday House
Jean Osborn

Holiday House has been sewing and stuffing, yarning and crafting for 48 years. We have decreased in membership from 22 members to about 6. We have purchased stoves, refrigerators, carpets, dishes, lighting and many other things for the church. This year we added new trim where the old railroad ties had rotted.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us in fellowship and creating. Lunch is either a sack lunch or a special lunch created by Susan Stofan. Meetings are the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursdays, 10:30 till 3:00. November's Holiday House Bazaar and Luncheon was fun, colorful and all we expected. The Bazaar is usually the first Sunday in November.

Hospitality Ministry

Dale Olm

As part of the trial council reorganization, the scope of several constitutional committees was combined into a ministry tentatively named "Hospitality Ministry" (as in the Christian hospitality of offering welcome and providing helping hands). Details of the scope of the new ministry were left out deliberately until input from the congregation could be obtained and integrated.

It was my intention to help organize the new ministry; interested parties actually met once, but it soon became obvious that the duties of the former committees were too varied to combine into one group.

Fellowship Hour continued to thrive through of the efforts of volunteers who signed up when the list was passed periodically through the congregation. We rarely missed a Sunday. Thanks to all who shared their culinary hospitality with us. Potlucks, such as the Halloween Party, auctions and the Stewardship Kickoff were organized by the committees and groups that sponsored them.

Our interim minister, The Rev. Kay Wellington, and our transition minister, The Rev. Ray Welles, provided us with pastoral care. They were assisted with their duties by many folk especially Chuck Hull, Janet Murrell, Penny Taylor and Hope Wingert. The Rev. Henry Childs stepped in during our interim-interim to lead the memorial service for our beloved Kay Yokum. The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk got to work immediately and began calling on folks the day after we called her to be our full time minister! Another long time attendee of our church, Lora Lafky, also passed away this spring. The Rev. Stamm-Kirk led her memorial service.

We started an E-mail prayer chain, to bring our Joys and Concerns to friends and members who could not be present for Sunday worship and to enable us to continue to hold them in our thoughts and prayers during the week. Initially lay-led, The Rev. Renie is now creating the weekly mailings.

Two adults and six youths were welcomed as members of the Church on June 3rd. The Reverend Renie Stamm-Kirk (called on April 15, 2007 as our new pastor), and Shelby Riddle (an active participant in our church life since 1997), became our newest adult members. Natalie Parsons, Samantha Majors, Kelsey Sass, Adam Olm, Jennifer Diethelm and Jannelle Diethelm became our newest youth members.

Our venerable cake sculptress, Jean Osborn provided us with memorable cakes for our Minister of Music, Barbara Hamm's 10 year anniversary (a piano), Secretary Cora Martin's retirement (a computer), interim minister The Rev. Kay Wellington's retirement (a Big Red Comma), transition minister The Rev. Ray Welles' farewell (a well), UCC's 50th birthday and Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk's Candidating Sunday (a frog, statedly because Katie Stamm-Kirk loves frogs, but we prefer to regard it as a symbol that we are prepared to leap forward into the future). Thanks, Jean, for all the years of sharing your talent.

New name tags debuted on Candidating Sunday in honor of Pastor Renie Stamm-Kirk. Thanks to Gail Mason for printing out all the tags. These tags allow people the option of pin, clip or lanyard. Overall, they have been well received.

In preparation for the congregational meeting to call our new pastor, Gail Mason created an Excel database of active and inactive members and friends of the church. Input from Clerk Shelby Riddle, Financial Secretary Keith Read and Secretary Jean Blanchard were invaluable. It is anticipated that this information will be moved into a dedicated database program in the future.

Finally, our web site is alive and well. A lot of new content has been added, including slide shows; other areas have been updated. Its use as an archive of church history is under development. The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk, with over 2 decades of information technology and website design, is hard at work modernizing the look and feel of our site. We were complimented by several candidates during the pastoral search on the usefulness of our website for aiding them in getting them getting to know us. Thanks to all the past and present webmasters for their efforts.

Pastoral Search Committee
Larry Schaffer, Chairperson

Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk was called as our 38th pastor in April, our first full-time pastor in over thirty years. What an amazing journey.

The Church Council selected members for the Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) who were enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the church and who represented a cross-section of our congregation. No matter what question a candidate asked whether it pertained to our history, congregation, choir, budget, physical plant, mission, social outreach, or the community, the PSC could answer. Members were young and old (both by age and by length of membership), conservative and liberal, women and men and were committed to meet at least twice a month until a pastor was called.

The PSC's first meeting was April 3, 2006. Subsequently, officers were elected, members completed questionnaires, the Local Church Information Form and our Church Profile were submitted to the NCNV Conference UCC, church references were selected, and 53 candidate profiles were read, discussed and rated. 16 of the 53 candidates were selected to receive and respond to 6 E-mailed questions, and, from those, 6 were chosen for video conference interviews, and 3 for neutral pulpit sermons followed by lunch, one-on-one interviews and a tour of our facilities. During the search process, we worked very closely with The Rev. Drew Nettinga, Associate Conference Minister, Bay Association; and, also, with Barbara Broadbent, Search & Call Coordinator for the NCNC, UCC.

It was a challenging spiritual journey for the PSC to seek the pastor God wanted to lead our congregation. Through this process we were blessed to discover many outstanding individuals who were faithfully serving God. However, we believe that God's perfect timing led us to The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk. The PSC was unanimous in its recommendation and in its enthusiasm for The Rev. Renie. On April 15th she was called by you, commenced serving as our pastor April 16th, was ordained May 12th, became a member June 3rd and will be installed September 23rd.

When Pastor Renie was called, so were her partner Allison, and their daughter, Katie. Without their support and understanding, Renie could not have accepted our call, and we would not have this gifted minister.

I thank Gail, Jan, Debbie, Dale, Lynn, Carl, Laurie, Sheryl and Sara for their individual and collective contributions to the PSC. And we thank you for your strong vote of call for Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk.

Pastoral Search Committee

Larry Schaffer, Chair
Jan Wong, Corresponding Secretary
Dale Olm, Ex Officio
Carl Mason, Alternate
Sheryl Sindt

Gail Mason, Recording Secretary
Debbie Conway
Lynn Martinez
Laurie Read
Sara Thompson

Music Committee
Shelby Riddle, Chairperson

Our small church concert series is now in its third year. This year we held a Benicia Celtic Band Concert, a Mother's Day Concert and a Voena Concert, produced jointly with Social Outreach. The first two concerts generated enough money to allow us to continue the series for next year. The goal of our series is to provide a less expensive concert-going experience for the community, in a near-perfect acoustical environment (our own church!).

In addition to our official committee projects our Benicia Celtic Band performed at the Arts in the Park in the First Street Park, donating \$200 from this event to the CCC in June. We will also be performing at the Benicia Public Library in September.

Finally, members of our church and music committee continue to play Taizé for the Pleasant Hill community of churches once a month, as well as at the Berkeley UCC in June for the past two years. We enjoy sharing this style of worship with others, in full, hour long Taizé services.

Social Outreach Jett Thomas

The high point of our Social Outreach year was the superb singing of VOENA at our May 19 sellout Benefit Concert for the Heifer Project, Dave Burgess remarked the next day in church, "Last night I felt the angels were singing, and I was so affected I wanted to get out of my wheelchair." Our special thanks to Rhonda Hicks, of Red Dragonfly Production, whose patience and persistence made this evening happen.

Another high point: Welcome, Pastor Renie! At our May 1 meeting we had a pastor in attendance for the first time in two years. Hooray! At the June 12 meeting she returned with suggestions, answers and her trusty laptop. The future looks bright.

Finances:

This year 15 pledges of \$6,600 were designated to the Social Outreach program, supporting 13 specific charities. As pledge payments are received, they are placed in a "Mission Pool" account. Each Sunday, members and friends who do not choose to pledge support for the whole year's program make gifts to the charity of that month by means of Social Outreach pew envelopes. These "plate offering" are placed in separate accounts for each charity. Twice each year we are informed by the Finance Officer, as to the amounts in each of these accounts and can then decide gift amounts to each charity. In February 2007, we made the following decisions:

Southern Poverty Law Center	\$500
Planned Parenthood	\$500
Housing for Emancipated Youth (HEY)	\$500
Neighbors in Need (UCC)	\$850
CAC Christmas Giving	\$950
Veterans of the Cross Christmas Fund (UCC)	\$1,000

We are pleased to report that each of the above six gifts met 100% of our goals.

At our August, 2007 meeting, we will decide gift amounts to Heifer Project and the following six charities featured January through June.

Charity and Goal:

Heifer Project	\$1,000
Food Bank of Contra Cost and Solano Counties	\$500
Puente de la Costa Sur	\$500
One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC)	\$1,300
Doctors Without Borders	\$600
Affordable Housing Affiliation	\$500
Strengthen the Church	\$800

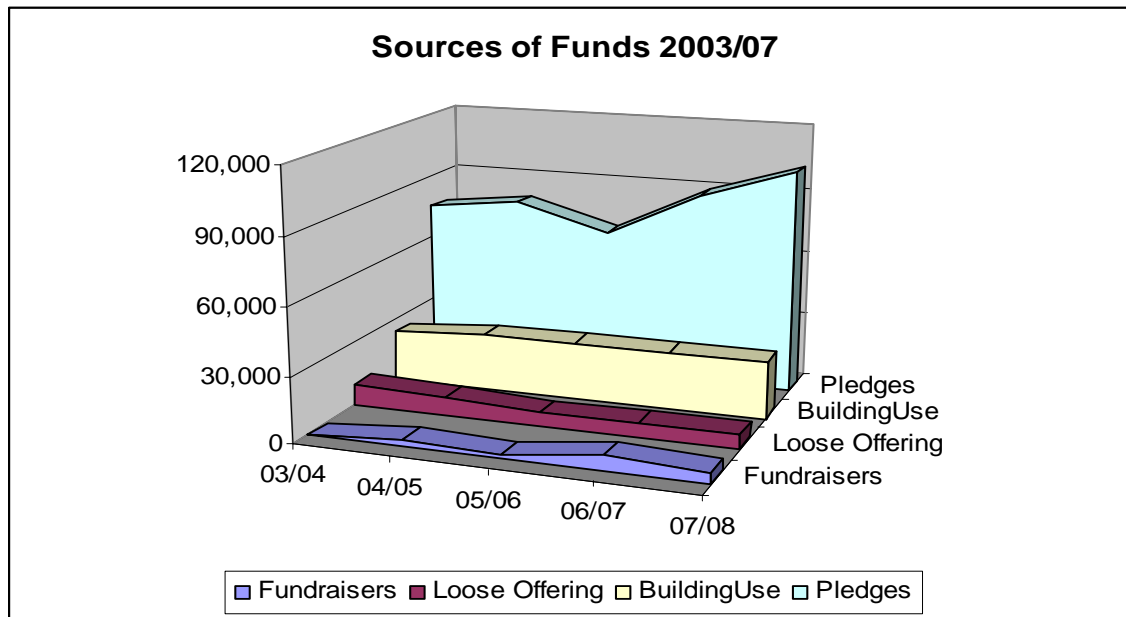
As of this writing, June 19, 2007, we do not know the amounts of money available, but we should be able to make substantial gifts to each, hopefully 100% of goal. The Heifer Project, of course, will be way over goal, thanks to the successful VOENA concert. Our half of the ticket sales amounted to \$1,213.78.

One last financial note: Our report from Stewardship shows \$7,634 pledged for Social Outreach for 2007-2008, a 15% increase over the \$6,600 pledged for this current year.

THANK YOU for your gifts of time, money and goods to the Social Outreach program. A very special thank you to my five colleagues (now six): David Burgess, Rhonda Hicks, Pam Martin, Chol  McGraw and Pastor Renie Stamm-Kirk. I am delighted that this entire Social Outreach Mission team will return next year under the leadership of Chairperson, Sarah Thompson. AMEN!

Stewardship Carl Mason

The generosity of this congregation and its willingness to give to fulfill the needs and dreams of this church was again confirmed by the pledges received this year. As shown below, the average pledge increased by 15% over the prior year. Pledges have increased an average of 49% in the past two years:



The increase enabled us to hire a full-time minister for the first time in 30 years and to begin depletion of the maintenance backlog. We have established a Capital Improvement Fund, placing it on the pledge cards enabling members to make specific pledges towards long-term capital improvement. In addition to the pledges shown on the graph, the CIF has received direct pledges of \$4,774.00!

Total Church Operations Funds

	Pledges	Loose Offering	Building Use	Fundraisers	Capital Improvement	Total
03/04	75,389	9,997	23,270	95		108,751
04/05	80,000	8,500	26,300	2,867		117,667
05/06	68,703	6,808	26,270	2,020		103,801
06/07	89,180	7,000	26,133	6,933		129,246
07/08	102,575	7,000	26,133	4,778	4,774	145,260

Due to the timing in the hiring of a full-time minister we were able to end the year in a positive cash position. This has raised our financial position to a level of stability ending several years of negative cash flow. We can all feel proud of our accomplishments of the past two years, financial and spiritual, knowing we are responsible for the new sense of energy and hope we are experiencing for the future of our church.

Last year we planted an apple tree in front of the church in recognition of the efforts of the Stewardship Campaign. Have you looked at the Stewardship Tree lately? It is bearing fruit! This tree, our pledges of time, talent, and treasure, are also bearing fruit - fruit which will be the church of our hopes and dreams

Welcome Ministry
Dale Olm

The Welcome ministry chair was vacant in 2006 – 2007.

Thanks to Eleanor Mortensen for assisting Pastor Kay Wellington and The Rev. Ray Welles as needed, with new members and other functions of Welcome.

Thank you to Chuck Hull and Debbie Conway of the Worship Committee for assuming responsibility for ushers and greeters.

Worship – July, 2006 - October, 2006

Hope Wingert

I was asked to write an account of the Worship Committee's activity during the months of July through late October, when Tim Mautz became the chairman of the committee. Quite frankly, I couldn't recall much about the workings of Worship, so I went to my file folder to find some notes to jog my memory. I'd handed over the important stuff to Tim, and to my dismay, found that I'd also tossed out most of the other papers. Then I remembered my personal journal, which I keep quite sporadically. Sure enough, there were a few references to my work at church, and I thought it appropriate to share them for the record.

From Sept. 23, 2006: Spent lots and lots of hours doing a worship service at church on Sept. 20th (our minister and musician were both at the church retreat). Wrote a "sermon" (more like an essay), several drafts of it. Devised the order of worship, all by myself. Larry Schaffer and Chris Frances helped me with the music at church that Sunday—no piano or guitar, simply a cappella voices and drums. I even hand wrote the bulletin (one side of an 8"x11" piece of paper). We printed 20—optimistically, thinking we'd be lucky to have a dozen people in attendance. (There were actually 27 people there!) I'm writing this down because I invested hours of my normal work week for this project. Hours that usually go towards lampshade making, hours that were pretty much donated, quietly, in service to God.

As I read this I remembered that during the past August and September, the Worship Committee provided "pulpit supply" for at least 7 services. Our budget was limited, so we asked the congregation to help by volunteering to fill in for Pastor Kay. As the committee's facilitator, I was thrilled to have so many people come forth and volunteer.

Rob Kravets spoke to us about Science and God, and he even provided the children's story time himself (I think with hand puppets?). Tim Mautz braved 100 degree plus weather, in a suit and tie, to wrestle with that particular Sunday's scripture (he finally agreed to take off the coat at least!). Jay Smith spoke about something near and dear to his heart, revealing more of himself than most of us are willing to, at the same time inspiring us to risk the same. And of course, the Rev. Henry Childs presided at two Sunday services during the late summer while Pastor Kay was away. Henry has willingly volunteered whenever needed, and our congregation loved having him in the pulpit, particularly during that time of transition. I recall that Dale Olm also stepped forward to provide children's story time (Big Tim was taking some time off), sharing a bag of goodies to enhance his message (and the kids' interest).

What I remember is that all of these services were well attended, in spite of the fact that it was summer worship. I took this as a sign of support for everyone trying to keep worship going, and I thank you all for showing up. As the summer ended and school began, ingathering activities began anew for Fall 2006. During this season Tim Mautz stepped forward to take on leadership of the committee. Tim provided another Sunday of pulpit supply, and began to plan worship with Kay and Barbara each week.

From my journal on January 22, 2007: This morning at church I was moved to tears a few times. Shanti Betz played guitar and sang her own original songs. Some lyrics: "I painted bright colors on a wall to make me smile, I planted flowers under my window to smell heaven's scent." The choir sang "Christ Be Our Light" and we sang the chorus. Sarah Thompson did the children's time and the adult message, based on scripture "The meek shall inherit the earth". It was a powerful, revealing, and brave attempt to get people to understand that Bible passage in a new way. She succeeded brilliantly. After the service I talked to a young couple who, along with their two children, shared the

pew with me. (The kids are friends and schoolmates of Audry and Lydia.) They were afraid that their kids' activities bothered me, and I assured them that we need MORE of this sort of activity. I loved sitting with them because it reminded me of when I was their age, and my kids were little. I left church a better person than I was when I entered.

I work at home, and my hours are flexible. Others have more hectic schedules, yet found the time (late nights, early mornings, weekends) to do exactly what I did that week in September. I suspect that we do it for the same reason. We feel called to help in whatever form is necessary. This I know to be true: Worship at CCC couldn't have continued during those months without all of us. That is the most important thing about my time facilitating Worship.

Worship - November, 2006 - July, 2007
Timothy E. Mautz, Chairperson

I took over the chairmanship of the Worship Committee in November of 2006. One week later our interim pastor, Kay Wellington, submitted her resignation effective the 31st of December, 2006. I scrambled to learn the duties of the Worship Committee and its chairperson. The church closed out the calendar year of 2006 with a moving Christmas Eve Service and subsequently joyous New Year's service.

In January of 2007, the Worship Committee was able to fill the pulpit with lay members of the congregation and ordained guest ministers. Communion services were not interrupted.

In February, a temporary minister, The Rev. Ray Welles, was hired until a permanent minister was called to serve the church. The Rev. Wells fulfilled his duties admirably. He brought a fresh perspective to our worship service which was well received by the congregation. Ray served the church until the middle of April when a new permanent minister, Renie Stamm-Kirk, was called.

Special plans were made for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter services. A soup and bread supper was held on Maundy Thursday with a brief service afterward. Gail Mason and Susan Stofan hosted the supper. The church was open all day on Good Friday. An Easter egg hunt was conducted after morning services Easter morning. Dale Olm conducted the hiding of the eggs and the subsequent hunt. Priscilla Lane and Nancy Gilman coordinated the Easter lily donations and distribution of the flowers.

April 15th began Pastor Renie's duties as the permanent minister. She has been leading the Worship Committee and the congregation with a firm, but gentle style that is well received. Under Renie's leadership the committee has begun instituting some minor changes to the worship service. The committee expects to make additional changes throughout the coming year as we and Pastor Renie, see fit. We are always seeking new ways to improve upon what we have and add variety to the services.

The Worship Committee Chair thanks Chuck Hall, Debbie Conway, Priscilla Lane, Nancy Gilman and Barbara Hamm and the choir for their invaluable services to the committee and the congregation. The Chair also thanks the youth of our church for their contributions of lighting the candles and ringing the bell at the beginning of services. The chair also thanks the liturgists for their contributions during the services. And thank you, Jean Blanchard, for your help with the Liturgist's list and reminding the chair of things he should be doing.

**Community Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Benicia, California**

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2007-2008

2007-2008 STAFF

Pastor	The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk
Minister of Music	Dr. Barbara Hamm
Youth Minister	Jay Smith

2007-2008 OFFICERS

Moderator	Shelby Riddle
Vice-Moderator	Larry Schaffer
Church Clerk	
Financial Secretary	Keith Read
Treasurer	Dale Olm

2007-2008 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building and Grounds Ministry	Greg Cox
Christian Education Ministry	
Diakonate Ministry	Hope Wingert
Fellowship Ministry	Gail Mason
Social Outreach Ministry	Sarah Thompson
Stewardship Ministry	Carl Mason
Welcome Ministry	Gail Mason
Worship Ministry	Tim Mautz