



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

## **History Outline**

January 1, 2012

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE



**KEY:**

MOD: Moderator.

M=members.

T=type of minister.

p=permanent.

i=interim.

s=interim sabbatical.

il=interim illness

L= Licentiate (Pastors without full ministerial status)

s=supply (temporary for services only)

pt=part time.

CCBS= Congregational Church Building Society.

CCC= Community Congregational Church of Benicia

COT=Chairman of Trustees

FCC=First Congregational Church.

Compiled by: James E. Lessenger, MD - [agbook@lessenger.net](mailto:agbook@lessenger.net)

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1846			Benicia planned by Robert Semple and G. Mariano Vallejo.	
1847			Benicia founded. First survey map	
1848			Gold discovered at Sutter's Mill	
1849			Gold Rush Benicia Barracks and Quartermaster depot founded. 10 Apr: Presbyterian Church of Benicia becomes the first Protestant church in CA. Meets in a temporary building.	
1850			California statehood Presbyterian Church and school buildings constructed.	
1851			Benicia Arsenal founded. The Arsenal, Barracks, and Depot operated independently until 1922.	
1852			Benicia Capitol of California	Young Ladies Seminary founded in Benicia by Mary Atkins, an Oberlin graduate.
1853			Church bell cast at Pacific Mail Works.	
1854				American Congregation Union formed

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1855				
1856				
1857				
1858				
1859				
1860				
1861			Presbyterian Church disintegrates over slavery.	
1862				
1863				
1864				
1865			October: Rev. Justin P. Moore begins pastoral work in Benicia to organize the church.  Gathers the remnants of the Presbyterian Church.	
1866		<b>FOUNDING</b>	5 June, 17 members, meeting in Sagis Hall, later Rüeiger's Hall.	
	19	Justin Payson Moore  Founding minister	Constitution: "The Congregational Society of Benicia."  First President: C.T. Mills	Rev. and Mrs. C.T. Mills purchase the Young Ladies Seminary in Benicia for \$5,000, renamed Mills College.
1867	26	Justin P. Moore	25 May: Capt. Samuel P. Smith to Josephine Dimpfel by Rev. Moore at the Bride's parent's home. First wedding	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			in the church. President: C. T. Mills.	
1868	25	Charles H. Pope Was also principal of the ladies seminary.	Rev. Rouse, temporary. New church constructed: \$6800 for property, furnishings, and building. \$4,200 raised locally. \$800 loan from the CCBS (see 1962). \$1600 from other churches in the area. 10 Dec: New sanctuary dedicated. Bell installed. The pews, still in use, were purchased from the defunct Presbyterian Church. They were brought around the Horn during the Gold Rush. Paid for by pew rentals of \$20 to \$60 between 1870 and 1872. President: C. T. Mills.	
1869	34	Charles H. Pope	Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge Jr. minister of the Presbyterian Church decamps to San Francisco, congregation folds into the Congregational Church. President: C. T. Mills.	
1870	33	Charles H. Pope	Ladies sewing circle started by: Mrs. Jane Tarbox and Mrs. Deborah Sanborn.	
1871	30	Charles H. Pope		21 Jan: C.H. Pope dismissed from church. Mills College moves to Oakland.

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
		William Ladd Jones		
1872	33	William Ladd Jones		
1873	42	William Ladd Jones		
1874	45	none		
1875	32	M. B. Starr	Furnace installed.	
1876	38	T. Vandrey		
1877	57	John A. Banfield		
1878	58	J. B. Thrall Ordained in Benicia	Ida Hyde: Organist 1878 to 1898.	
1879	58	L. Dickerman		
1880	58	Samuel H. Willey, D.D. Helped found the University of California		
1881	70	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1882	67	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1883	69	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1884	68	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1885	66	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1886	72	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1887	57	Samuel H.		

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
		Willey, D.D.		
1888	63	Samuel H. Willey, D.D.		
1889	40	Edward F. Dinsmore		
1890	48	Edward F. Dinsmore		
1891	47	Charles W. Hill		
1892	53	Charles W. Hill		
1893	60	Charles W. Hill	Free reading room was the start of the Benicia Library.	
1894	39	James B. Orr		
1895	69	Samuel Weyler Was born in Russia of German Jewish parents.	Social Hall constructed.  Stained glass windows added.  Otto Miller, Sunday School Superintendent 1895 to 1900. Edith Johnston Secretary.	
1896	79	Samuel Weyler Founder of Benicia High School, in J Street Church Social Hall.	Electric lights installed in the church for \$45.91.  30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.	
1897	82	Samuel Weyler	\$33.79 borrowed from Miss Watkins at 6% interest.	
1898	75	Samuel Weyler Died in office. The congregation purchased a plot in the City cemetery.	COT: A. S. Parritt. \$100.00 and \$800.00 borrowed from Miss. Watkins.	



Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
		James C. McInnes	Articles of incorporation: "The First Congregational Church of Benicia."	
1899	73	Burton M. Palmer		
1900	76	Burton M. Palmer		
1901	73	Burton M. Palmer		
1902	95	Burton M. Palmer Married organist, Mable McKay Palmer.	Christian Endeavor Youth group, 1902 to 1910. Mrs. Thomas McKay, president of the Ladies Sewing Circle 1900 to 1903.	
1903	101	Burton M. Palmer	Large central "Jesus Window" added.	
1904	82	Benjamin St. John	Mrs. Rosa Maupin: Church Clerk. Mrs. Helen "Grandma" Willis joins.	
1905	96	Benjamin St. John		
1906	89	Benjamin St. John		
1907	70	Benjamin St. John		
1908	67	Benjamin St. John	Walter Clark, treasurer 1908 to 1918.	
1909	73	Benjamin St. John	Mrs. Sara Boeknoogan, organist 1909 to 1922.	
1910	81	Benjamin St. John		
1911	67	Benjamin St. John		

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1912	70	Benjamin St. John		
1913	78	Benjamin St. John		
1914	66	Benjamin St. John		
1915	52	Benjamin St. John		
1916	50	Charles Atkins	Methodist Episcopal Church stops meeting. Last entry in record book.	
1917	69	Charles Atkins Ordained in the church. Married member Irma Rankin.	Girls Club started by G.B. Frantz.	
1918	79	La Rue C. Watson		
1919	67	La Rue C. Watson	Methodist Church closes and the congregation folds into the FCC. Methodists sell their building.	
1920	58	none		
1921	65	Elmer O. Chapel		
1922	75	Elmer O. Chapel	22 July, 7pm: Steeple of J Street sanctuary is hit by lightning and destroyed.	
1923	75	T. Davis Preston		
1924	50	T. Davis Preston		
1925	52	T. Davis Preston	\$400 loan from the CCBS \$800 loan from the CCBS Both to purchase a parsonage.	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			(see 1962). Church remodel led by Mrs. Etta Sanborn Blanchard.	
1926	52	Horton Richard Colbert		
1927	67	Horton Richard Colbert	Vacation Bible School started.	
1928	56	Ernest William Houlding Ordained in the Church.	Earliest Church Bulletin in the Church files.	
1929	56	Ernest William Houlding	Name unofficially changed to Community Congregational Church to reflect the fact that the Methodists, Quakers and other groups joined in recent years.	
1930	57	Ernest William Houlding		
1931	55	Ernest William Houlding		
1932	55	Ernest William Houlding		
1933	69	Ernest William Houlding		
1934	53	Ernest William Houlding		
1935	43	Alden W. Read		
1936	50	Wilfred I. Orr		
1937	80	Wilfred I. Orr		
1938	82	Arthur Raymond Flick		
1939	86	Arthur Raymond Flick		

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1940	48	Isaac Fleming Part-time minister, weekend services only.		
1941	51	Isaac Fleming	COT: P. W. Polley Coal shed modified into a bathroom.	
1942	57	Isaac Fleming	COT: P. W. Polley. Church parsonage sold for \$3000.00. Ladies Sewing Circle joins the Red Cross, gives blood, and wraps bandages. Helen Jensen, Organist.	
1943	57	Isaac Fleming	COT: P. W. Polley	
1944	85	Elmo D. Wolfe	MOD: 17 July: Port Chicago explosion causes damage to windows and sanctuary, including cracks in the Jesus Window. Received \$550.00 for damage to windows. Sanctuary is rearranged, pews refinished. New parsonage on Highland purchased. La Beta Byerrum is Church Historian.	
1945	125	Elmo D. Wolfe	MOD: Received \$162.19 from Navy for damage to windows.	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			Paid H. Dombrink \$569.38 for repairs to windows.	
1946	141	Elmo D. Wolfe	MOD: Emerson Stoner 80 <sup>th</sup> anniversary Homecoming dinner. Boy Scout and Brownie troops organized. Church building repainted.	
1947	167	Elmo D. Wolfe	MOD: Emerson Stoner Parsonage on Highland sold for \$1983. Parsonage at 60 Wingfield purchased for \$2303.00.	
1948	167	Arthur Raymond Flick And other part time ministers.	MOD: Enoch Crozer Amendment to Articles of Incorporation: "That the Corporation shall have perpetual existence."	Conservative Congregational Christian Convention formed. Splinter group.
1949	182	Carl Theodore Gustafson	MOD:	
1950	201	Carl Theodore Gustafson	MOD: Bank of America loans being paid off.	
1951	205	Carl Theodore Gustafson	MOD: Enoch Crozer	
1952	208	Carl Theodore Gustafson	MOD: Frank Bernardo.	
1953	198	Carl Theodore Gustafson	MOD: Bert McGuirk	
1954	211	Charles F. Huddleston	MOD: Bert McGuirk	
1955	224	Charles F. Huddleston	MOD: Walter H. Rutherford	Splinter group: National Association of Congregational

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
				Christian Churches
1956	257	Charles F. Huddleston	<p>MOD: Gaylord Yocom</p> <p>Vote to move the church:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Yes=25</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No=1</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Abstain=1</p> <p>Initiation of campaign to move.</p> <p>The “Old Chapman Place” was purchased for \$14,000. 3.5 acres in block 59 between M and N streets and West 2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> streets. (See 1968 and 1972).</p> <p>One document calls it the “Robinson Place.”</p> <p>The Conference Board of Homeland Ministries loaned the money with 4.5% interest and a donation of interest back when the loan is paid.</p> <p>There is a mention of “legal papers” going to the Pacific School of Religion.</p> <p>Used organ purchased and reconditioned.</p> <p>123 children in Sunday School.</p>	
1957	208	Charles F. Huddleston	MOD: Walter Woodward	General Council merges with Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the Church of Christ. An amalgam of the: Congregational Church Christian Church Evangelical

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
				Church Reform Church.  However, the entry of the Congregational churches into the UCC waits until a series of lawsuits from individuals and congregations are adjudicated in 1962.
1958	221	Alan Pembroke	MOD: Gerald Mayo  Quitclaim from City of Benicia to CCC for alley in Block 59.	
		Arthur Raymond Flick		
		Albert S. Phillips		
1959	229	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: Gerald Mayo	
1960	239	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: Tony Silva  Budget: \$12,188.	
1961	202	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: Anthony Silva.  15 Jan: Congregation votes to become part of the United Church of Christ.  21 Jan: New Constitution and Bylaws. Complete reorganization of the governance of the Church.  Announcement of Arsenal closing.	
1962	206	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: C. G. Carlson  Families start leaving as the Arsenal deactivates.	Lawsuits blocking the consolidation of the Congregational Churches into the UCC are finally adjudicated

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			<p>Architect bill: \$3,469.46</p> <p>New Church construction:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">\$73,245</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Andrew F. Siri, Siri Construction</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Clive, Zerkle and Agee, Architects.</p> <p>21 Jan: Groundbreaking</p> <p>7 Oct: Dedication</p> <p>13 Oct: First wedding in new church.</p> <p>\$13,400 loan from Board of Home Missions and CCBS pays off \$500 1868 and \$400 1925 loan from CCBS and provides money for improvements. Remaining money is for construction.</p> <p>31 Jan: Deed of trust for 2<sup>nd</sup> St. property for loan of \$40,000 from Bank of America.</p> <p>\$3,400 loan from CCBS.</p> <p>23 Sep: Religions education building is dedicated by children.</p> <p>7 Oct: New sanctuary is dedicated.</p>	<p>in the Federal Appeals Courts.</p> <p>16 May: Consolidation of the Northern California Congregational Conference and the Northern California Synod of Evangelical and Reformed Church into the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ.</p>
1963	209	Albert S. Phillips	<p>MOD: Tony Mittnacht</p> <p>The 1925 and 1868 loans from the CCBS are reconveyed.</p> <p>The church starts adding UCC to documents, etc.</p>	



Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1964	176	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: Tony Mitnacht Sale of the J Street property for \$8,000.	
1965	145	Albert S. Phillips	MOD: William O'Brien Sale of lots 9 & 13, block 59, for \$12,500. Benicia Industrial Park opens.	
1966	127	Alan P. Farr is interim pastor.	MOD: William O'Brien 2 Oct: Centennial celebration \$350 note to Northern California Conference UCC. Rededication of the church bell.	
		Philip H. Oliver 30 Oct: Ordained and Installed.		
1967	117	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: Bert McGuirk Note to NCC, UCC paid in full.	
1968	113	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: Robert Hinshaw \$10,000 loan from the Board of Homeland Ministries paid off, \$3,400 loan remains. "Contemporary" worship services initiated.	
1969	112	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: William O'Brien Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation: "The Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia." Humble Refinery comes on	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			line.	
1970	96	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: Mike Davenport	
1971	96	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: Harold Bartke	
1972	83	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: Harold Bartke Loans from CCBS for \$3,400 and \$10,000	
1973	96	Philip H. Oliver	MOD: James N. Stewart	
1974	96	Steven de Haas 1/6/74 to 1/7/78	MOD: James N. Stewart	
1975	90	Steven de Haas	MOD: Annalee Jones Subdivision of church property. Lots 10 and 14 sold for \$31,000.	
1976	85	Steven de Haas	MOD: Annalee Jones 1962, \$3,400 loan from CCBS is paid off.	
1977	84	Steven de Haas Last full-time pastor until Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk	MOD: Alice Francis \$40,000 Bank of America loan is paid off.	
1978	76	Howard S. Fuller 1/78 to 6/78 Interim, he was wanted as the minister, so he stepped down during the search process.	MOD: Arloine Stoner	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
		Stephen L. Gillmore (i) 6/5/78 to 11/1/78		
		Dr. Howard S. Fuller 11/6/78 to 1/31/88	Howard Spaulding Fuller	
1979	76	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Arloine Stoner Abandoned portion of N Street is quitclaimed from the City to CCC.	
1980	102	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Buster Byerrum	
1981	115	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Buster Byerrum	
1982	110	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Robert Francis.	
1983	119	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Carol E. Hall Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation: Non-profit and upon dissolution the property belongs to the Northern CA Conference of UCC.	
1984	130	Dr. Howard S. Fuller. Rev. Fuller was asked to leave the church for "preaching from the pulpit," i.e. his ideas were too liberal for the	MOD: Carolyn Henderson	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			congregation.	
		Faye Orton (s) 8/84 to 11/84		
1985	141	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Carolyn Henderson	
1986	140	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Carolyn Henderson	
1987	140	Dr. Howard S. Fuller	MOD: Bill Reid	
1988	144	Daniel L. Hatch (i) 2/88 to 8/89	MOD: Bill Reid Fiscal year changed to July 1 from January 1.	
1989	145	James Duncan Riddell	MOD: Steven Krutilek 9/3/89 Ordained 11/17/89 Installed	
1990	124	James Duncan Riddell	MOD: Steven Krutilek	
1991	134	James Duncan Riddell	MOD: Susan Stofan	
1992	123	James Duncan Riddell	MOD: Keith Reid	
1993	111	James Duncan Riddell	MOD: Carolyn Osada At the annual meeting, Open and Affirming motion is passed, Yes=19, No=6. Estate fund committee purchases baptismal font and communion table.	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
1994	108	Jacqueline Brown (i) 9/16/94 to 11/26/95	MOD: Vacant Members start to quit, citing the Open and Affirming vote.	
1995	102	Katherine Ann Hammell (was called but left for medical reasons) 12/17/95 to 11/96	MOD: Susan Stofan 4/14/96 Installed	
1996	100	Peggy Betholtz (i) 12/3/96 to 1/5/97	MOD: Charles Hull	
1997	93	Lee Cruise (i) 1/97 to 7/20/97	MOD: Keith Read	
		Roger D. Straw		
1998	109	Roger D. Straw	MOD: Mel Hurst	
1999	124	Roger D. Straw	MOD: Jan Wong Internet homepage established	
2000	140	Roger D. Straw Youth minister: Alexandra Childs July 2000 to Jan 2002	MOD: JoAnn Rambo and David McCafferty	
2001	147	Roger D. Straw Youth minister: Alexandra Childs July 2000 to Jan	MOD: Carl Mason	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
		2002		
2002	155	Roger D. Straw Frank Jagger (s) (9/15/02) Youth minister: Alexandra Childs July 2000 to Jan 2002	MOD: Kathleen Kravets	
2003	156	Roger D. Straw	MOD: Carl Mason	
2004	155	Roger D. Straw	MOD: Dale Olm reVision program recommends: Full time pastor, youth pastor, signage on Military St., community events, and cushions on the pews.	
2005	152	S. Kay Wellington (i)	MOD: Dale Olm	
2006	92	S. Kay Wellington (i)	MOD: Dale Olm Membership decrease was not really from 152 to 92, the rolls were brought up-to-date.	
2007	92	S. Kay Wellington (i)	MOD: Shelby Riddle Facebook account established.	
		Ray Wells (i)		
		Renie Stamm- Kirk First full-time pastor since 1977	Called: 15 Apr Ordained: 12 May Installed: 23 Sept	
2008	105	Renie Stamm- Kirk	MOD: Larry Schaffer Stephen's Ministry started.	

Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Benicia, California  
HISTORY OUTLINE

Year	M	Minister	Occurrences in Church and town	Occurrences in the denomination
			Constitution and bylaws revised.	
		Wr'ner Wilcox (il)		
2009	113	Renie Stamm-Kirk	MOD: Carl Mason Archives reorganized	
2010	124	Renie Stamm-Kirk	MOD: Dale Stanley	
2011	138	Renie Stamm-Kirk	MOD: Shelby Riddle Futuring process to settle on the future course of the Church.	
2012		Renie Stamm-Kirk	MOD:	