

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008



The 142nd Annual Meeting of the
Community Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Benicia, California

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**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	Jon Dodson
Church Secretary	Maggie Hart

2007-2008 OFFICERS

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

2007-2008 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building and Grounds Ministry	Greg Cox
Christian Education Ministry	OPEN
Congregational Care (Diakonnate Ministry)	Hope Wingert Shelby Riddle
Social Outreach Ministry	Sarah Thompson
Stewardship Ministry	Carl Mason
Relational Growth (Welcome, Fellowship)	Gail Mason
Worship Ministry	Tim Mautz

Pastor's Report

The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk

The Stewardship Committee this year used the question "Can You Feel It?" as part of its annual campaign drive. Can you feel the life the vitality, the very presence of the Divine in our midst? Each day I arise and give thanks for Community Congregational! 2007-2008 was my first full year with you and I am starting to understand the ebb and flow of schedule and life here at Community Congregational Church.

I have said, "thank you," on a variety of occasions and in a variety of ways. Truthfully, I continue to think I have not yet adequately thanked you – all of you – for your willingness to step forward when asked, to step forward when you were needed and to step forward when you probably had a million and one things you would rather be doing.

In 2007/2008 we mourned the passing of several members: The Reverend David Burgess, Donald Stoner, and The Reverend Henry Childs. In the midst of our grief we celebrated their lives and rested secure in the knowledge that "in life and in death we belong to God."

This year we welcomed 15 new members, had one wedding and one baptism, celebrated worship for 52 weeks, had an amazing Bible Study on the Book of Isaiah and an even more amazing study for Lent, using Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's "The Last Week." We all got to know each other and our faith journeys better and we got to travel through the last week of Jesus' life. When I was in seminary we would all talk about our dream for Bible Studies and what we had hope for our church. Well, this year I got to experience one of my dreams in real life. Over a quarter of our adult membership attended this study group and participated fully in the discussion. WOW!!! Another dream I had while in seminary was to bring the word to life in worship. Through the outstanding performances of many we had drama in worship, and on Maundy Thursday we had a play and dinner.

As is the case with all church pastors, a substantial portion of my efforts, energy and time during any given month are spent on a wide variety of so-called "routine pastoral tasks." These tasks are a constant in my ministry, and while they are often anything but routine, they include:

- participating in church meetings, events and activities
- working with and supporting church committees and organizations
- planning and leading weekly worship
- preparing sermons, & Bible studies
- planning and executing preparations for special and seasonal events, activities and worship services
- home, hospital and nursing home visitation
- counseling and consultation of a variety of types
- preparing and officiating at weddings, baptisms, funerals and other rites of the church

From Thanksgiving Feast to game night, from Bible Study to Tents of Hope, From Holiday House to visiting our home-bound I have had a year that I will remember forever. For this I am very grateful.

I look forward to the coming year and the possibilities it holds for our congregation. This is a time for us to grow in our own spiritual development as individuals as well as a congregation. There will be plenty of times to pray and to serve in the coming months. May we do so with all the strength our Lord gives to us. Hear Paul's words to the church at Corinth:

*Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged
in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Corinthians 4:1*

With Many Blessings and Much Gratitude,
Respectfully submitted,

Reverend Renie Stamm-Kirk, Pastor

Music Ministry

Dr. Barbara Hamm

Make a Joyful Noise

During our July 4th festivities, which included a bluegrass band, a woman in our church made the comment to me with a big grin on her face that we were making a lot of noise up here and that she hoped it would be heard in the community around. It was a good kind of noise, the sounds of people making music and laughing and talking and eating together. The guitarist made a humorous comment about bluegrass music, that it's sort of a strange combination—singing happy songs about death!

And following our very lively July 6th worship service with multiple drums and all kinds of rhythm instruments, a little boy was heard to say that it was the first time he'd ever had fun in church. (It made me wonder if too many times in church we sing sad songs about heaven!) There are five Psalms that talk about making a joyful noise to the Lord: 66:1; 81:1; 95:1-2; 98:4-6; 100:1. In *four* of these Psalms the phrase occurs in the very first verse, and in two of them it's said twice—presumably to make sure we get it! The kind of “noise” we're talking about here is not the sound of discord but rather, in the context of the Psalms, the sound associated with praise and singing, with dancing and instruments, the very thing we were doing in that July 6th worship service. It is about worshipping God with unrestrained joy and exuberance, worship with the lid off!

We take those Psalms to heart here at CCC, praising God with all kinds of sounds, primary among them the sound of the congregation, singing on a given Sunday its full-throated, joyous expression of worship and praise to God. (By no means am I discounting the quiet, sad hymns of grief; we bring to God the totality of our human experience.) We bring the voices of our choirs: the Sanctuary Choir and the Celebration Singers, the Cherub Choir, and the Women and Girls' Chorus. We bring the sounds of instruments—of organ and piano and trumpet and clarinet and flute and violin and guitar and bass; the meditative sounds of our Taizé group; the at times rambunctious sounds of the jazz combo; the joyous and amazing offering of our intergenerational Christmas orchestra. And we haven't even mentioned yet the people who sing or play solos or duets or a harmony part with the choir or an improvised descant over the top of the congregational melody. It's a wonder we have room for anything else in the worship service—a concern that the pastor herself might have had on occasion!

Sometimes it's hard to tamp down. It's hard to keep the lid on. We want to honor those Psalms! And I hope that that little boy will have further occasion somewhere to say how much fun he had in church. For I share his excitement. There have been times on a Saturday evening when I have found it difficult to get to sleep as I anticipated an Easter or a Christmas service or a wonderful a cappella choir anthem or the music of our Taizé group or our jazz combo, or someone's beautiful solo or... That's really what gets me up in the morning—the prospect of accompanying congregational singing at conventions and annual meetings, of conducting workshops and hymn sings and Taizé services, of writing hymns and of doing all the other things I have been so immensely privileged to do at CCC and beyond. Make a joyful noise. Let 'er rip!

Youth and Children's Music Program

Leslie M. Blackie

Cherub Singers:

2008 saw the development of the newest choir – the Cherub Choir - for children ages 3-10. The Cherub Choir rehearsed once a month for 30 minutes and sang in the Christmas and Easter services as well as combining with the Celebration Singers to sing additional songs in both the Christmas and Easter services. The Cherub Choir was taught its songs by rote. The three girls brought to Women's History Month the song "Cinderella" by the Cheetah girls.

Celebration Singers:

The Celebration Singers are the youth choir for singers ages 11-15. They rehearsed twice a month for 45 minutes and participated in church services every month, usually singing during the intergenerational service. They started off the year singing at Reverend Renie's installation in September. October and November services included singing with additional instruments (flute in October and trumpet in November), adding complementary harmonies to the voices. The Advent season was very busy with participation in several services including the Christmas Eve pageant.

2008 saw a variety of contemporary music - "Walk This Lonely Road" by Green Day and "Make the World Turn Around" by Steve Miller on Youth Sunday - in addition to more traditional religious songs in January, April and June. On Palm Sunday the Celebration Singers led in the processional, and they sang two songs on Easter.

The Celebration singers sang 16 songs over the 2007-2008 year, five different songs in the Advent season, and two on Easter! They also sang with the adult choir during Advent, and the girls combined with the women for two other songs also during Advent. This year we have worked on singing 3-part songs as well as unison or songs in canon. Three of the boys now have tenor ranges and this has expanded the music that is available to us, and increased the complexity of the songs we are learning. The addition of Youth Minister Jon Dodson in attendance at rehearsals as well as singing with us in church has also increased the boys confidence and development of the "male sound".

In 2008-2009 I plan to continue the Cherub Choir (children's ages 3-10) and Celebration Singers (youth ages 11-16). 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 can sing together. I look forward to continuing to work with Barbara Hamm, music minister, Jon Dodson, youth minister and Reverend Renie as we attempt more ambitious combined projects of music and drama, as well as continuing to expand the musical education of the children and youth and their participation in worship services.

Director of Youth Ministries

Jonathan Dodson

The Youth Group at CCC has had a transformative year. Jay Smith, our previous Youth Minister, started the year with such things as helping the Youth Group initiate the painting of the youth group's room at the May 2007 lock-in. The youth also participated in a second lock-in in September.

In Advent the church formed a committee to search for a new Director of Youth Ministries. Joyous transitions in Jay's own life led to this vacancy and I would like it to be known that the entire church and my own gratitude is extended to Jay for all the amazing and compassionate work he has done with our youth.

From December through January Rev. Renie led the Youth Group until the search committee called me to the position of Director of Youth Ministries. My first Sunday was January 27, 2008, and I was called into covenant on Sunday, February 3rd.

Since January the Youth Group has grown from a core group of 7 to 10 members with a few additional youth joining us on occasion. We took 12 youth skiing and snowboarding in March, and we had 10 youth participate for Youth Sunday in April.

The Youth Group has met regularly on Sunday nights from 7 to 8:30 pm and they have also participated in numerous activities including the ski trip, Youth Sunday, the Asilomar Youth Leadership program, church work days, painting of our Tent of Hope for Darfur, performing skits in worship, and going to Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo as our end-of-the-year event!

In the past few months I have begun to build relationships with the youth and the church and I feel that this next year will be full of growth, excitement, and grace as we all deepen our faith together. I look forward to continuing with leading the Youth Group, to heading up the Sunday School program, and teaching Confirmation this next year.

In closing I want to lift up this church, all the volunteers who have spent their time and talents for the youth (especially Dale Olm, Leslie Blackie, Greg Cox, Debi Stanley, Mike Patterson, Liz Munnely, John Hanna, and Karen Hanna!), and finally the youth themselves. This church is truly a community that knows they are children of God and you are not afraid to be the light of the world!

Submitted in gratitude and with the peace of Christ.

Jonathan Dodson

Moderator

Shelby Riddle

This has been a truly amazing year for me. I was asked recently what I found to be the hardest part of my job as moderator. After some thought, I really could not say that anything was *hard*. There were many, many meetings to attend, issues to deal with, decisions to be made, and events to participate in. But, with the energy in our church, with the enthusiasm and involvement by our members in every aspect of our church life, I have found the position of moderator to be fun, interesting and very rewarding. It has been my pleasure and honor to be able to have been of service this year and I thank all of you for making our church the amazing place that it is.

Vice Moderator

Larry Schaffer

The Vice Moderator, by design does nothing, so she/he is available to fill in for the Moderator as needed, and is free to watch attentively and learn from others. What I have seen is that we are alive, and we are growing.

Every one of us needs to thank each other for getting the message out about who we are, and we need to thank each other for how we greet and treat “strangers” who worship among us. Each of you does so much for so little. Thank you. We need to thank each other for what we do at, and for this church, because it would be impossible for any one of us to thank each and every one of you. Each and every day, or week, or month there are so many who contribute not for the praise, but to give praise. It would be impossible to recognize all these cumulative efforts. They are needed, and are welcomed, and we are thankful.

While these reports are meant to look at the church year just concluded, I can not help but look forward to this coming year. The Council for 2008 - 2009 will have three new members, who are new to the church from the last two New Member Classes, and there may be a fourth in a few months. This all starts with you talking to others about our story so that they may become members and our voices multiplied. Thank you. And thank Pastor Renie for New Member Classes that provide an environment where discernment has allowed so many to hear that “*God Is Still Speaking.*”

Clerk

Karen Hanna

BIRTHS

None

DECEASED (Members)

The Reverend David Burgess

October 21, 2007

Donald Stoner

February 1, 2008

The Reverend Henry Childs

April 20, 2008

NON-MEMBER DEATHS

Tim Peeler

January 29, 2008

MEMORIAL SERVICES*The Reverend Renie Stamm-Kirk presiding*

The Rev. David Burgess

October 27, 2007

Donald Stoner

February 10, 2008

The Reverend Henry Childs

May 3, 2008

Tim Peeler

February 9, 2008

NEW MEMBERS**December 2, 2007**

Allison Stamm-Kirk

Eileen Eubank

Karen Hanna

John Hanna

Jeff Garrigues

Elizabeth Munnely

Mike Patterson

Jackie Lawrence

Lynn Lawrence

Larry McCown (Associate Member)

June 1, 2008

Debi Stanley

Dale Stanley

Jim Lessenger

Leslie Lessenger

Mickey Scott

BAPTISMS

Jeff Garrigues

December 2, 2007

WEDDINGSIris Garcia and Donovan Olech
(non-members)

March 29, 2008

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERS**105**

New Members

15

Deceased Members

3

Baptisms

1

Financial Secretary

Keith Read

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

Fiscal Year 2007-2008											
ITEM ("R:" = Restricted)	July	August	Sept.	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	TOTALS
Loose Offerings	412.01	647.45	1,169.75	401.87	1,155.96	2,277.46	452.77	1,485.22	1,431.73	986.72	\$13,824.69
Pledges: 2007-2008	7,052.00	6,457.00	16,183.00	5,736.00	9,771.00	7,738.00	7,532.00	6,154.00	8,878.00	5,378.00	\$99,355.00
Fundraisers: Auctions					2,205.00	270.00					\$4,730.00
<i>Pledges: 2006-2007 (Last Year)</i>	60.00										\$60.00
<i>Pledges: 2008-2009 (Next Year)</i>										5,040.00	\$5,540.00
Transfer from Vanguard Account									10,000.00		\$10,000.00
"Empires For Cash"	12.00	16.01	18.25	15.76	6.25	8.25	5.55		2.00		\$87.07
Cornerstone Int. Rebate								136.42			\$136.42
Misc. (Unrestricted)			240.04	220.00	25.00	490.00	175.00	-115.00		90.00	\$1,125.04
B&G - Building Use	3,790.00	1,729.00	4,225.00	55.00	1,979.00	4,470.00	530.00	2,125.00	4,715.00	570.00	\$29,438.00
B&G: Postage/Dumpster/Misc											\$15.60
Worship: Flowers					228.00	288.00		60.00	290.00		\$866.00
R: Mission/S.O. "POOL"	490.00	386.00	915.00	249.00	815.00	455.00	448.00	268.00	380.00	278.00	\$5,921.00
R: Mission - MONTHLY	196.05	630.00	409.50	240.00	312.00	1,648.00	150.00	469.00	593.00	387.53	\$7,967.58
R: Music Series				250.00		624.00				119.60	\$993.60
R: WITT: Weekend In The Trees	155.00	1,535.00	2,425.00								\$4,115.00
R: Memorials								1,220.00	980.00	25.00	\$2,250.00
R: B&G: New C.E. Flooring						4,000.00	224.85	67.50			\$4,292.35
R: Minister's Discretionary Fund				1,000.00	10.00			50.00	50.00	25.00	\$1,635.00
R: New Sound System					5,000.00	1,000.00		400.00		400.00	\$7,200.00
R: Barbara's New Hymnals			103.08								\$103.08
R: Youth: Ski Trip									926.00		\$926.00
R: C.E.: "Restricted Fund"										241.00	\$241.00
R: Pastor Renie's Installation		955.00	866.00								\$1,821.00
R: Music Fund (for B. Hamm)					200.00	20.00					\$220.00
R: Capital Improvements	550.67	514.24	592.75	549.63	602.55	652.11	686.19	268.00	690.02	381.00	\$6,155.68
R: Misc.				25.00						20.00	\$45.00
TOTALS	\$12,717.73	\$12,869.70	\$27,147.37	\$8,742.26	\$22,309.76	\$23,940.82	\$10,204.36	\$12,588.14	\$28,935.75	\$13,300.85	\$209,064.11

Prepared by Keith S. Read, Financial Secretary

Treasurer

Dale Olm

Community Congregational Church, UCC of Benicia
Balance Sheet (Summary of Financial Status)

	End of Last Fiscal Year	Current Value	Change in Value YTD	
Assets (Cash on Hand)	06/30/07	06/30/08		
Bank of America (Checking)	13,461	27,658	14,197	
Vanguard (Savings)	33,380	47,479	14,099	
Petty Cash	0	317	317	
TOTAL	46,841	75,454	28,613	
Liabilities, Restricted and Reserves (Owed or not-available)				
Cornerstone Loan	13,680	12,631	-1,049	Loan for furnace in CE Building
Outreach & Missions	6,139	7,070	931	Mission pool & contributions waiting for disbursement
Capital Improvement Fund	4,922	8,134	3,212	Parking lot repairs & major building improvements
New sound system	0	9,572	9,572	Replace sound system in sanctuary
Sabbatical Leave Set aside	0	4,000	4,000	Substitute minister during pastor's future sabbatical
Payroll Liabilities	0	1,292	1,292	Payroll taxes waiting to be paid
Other Restricted Accounts	19,569	16,510	-3,059	Other ministries and directed contributions
TOTAL	44,310	59,209	14,899	
RESERVES	2,531	16,245	13,714	Cash reserves

Community Congregational Church UCC of Benicia

2007-2008 Actual vs. Budget Income & Expense

prepared by Dale Olm, Treasurer

	<u>Jul '07 - Jun 08</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Income				
Loose Offering	13,824.69	8,727.96	5,096.73	158.4%
Pledges	103,217.92	101,941.92	1,276.00	101.25%
Use of Building	29,133.00	27,625.92	1,507.08	105.46%
Fundraisers	4,730.00	4,778.00	-48.00	99.0%
Other sources of funding	1,834.83	1,818.96	15.87	100.87%
Total Income	<u>152,740.44</u>	<u>144,892.76</u>	<u>7,847.68</u>	<u>105.42%</u>
Expense				
Building & Grounds	20,595.24	20,038.08	557.16	102.78%
Insurance - Property	4,961.00	5,085.96	-124.96	97.54%
Christian Education / Youth	448.05	520.00	-71.95	86.16%
Congregational Care (Diakonnate)	-58.44	67.00	-125.44	-87.22%
Music, Adult & Youth Choirs	1,928.65	2,176.92	-248.27	88.6%
Relational Growth	286.11	397.92	-111.81	71.9%
Stewardship	0.00	65.04	-65.04	0.0%
UCC Support / Outreach Ministry	3,530.00	3,500.00	30.00	100.86%
Worship	408.44	1,309.92	-901.48	31.18%
Other Committes & Ministries	835.50	645.00	190.50	129.54%
Council & Discretionary Funds	885.56	1,130.00	-244.44	78.37%
Other Expenses	1,497.96	837.96	660.00	178.76%
Office / Computer / Copier	4,649.91	4,628.04	21.87	100.47%
Staff	98,107.81	103,851.08	-5,743.27	94.47%
Hiring Expense	0.00	240.00	-240.00	0.0%
Total Expense	<u>138,075.79</u>	<u>144,492.92</u>	<u>-6,417.13</u>	<u>95.56%</u>
Net Income	<u><u>14,664.65</u></u>	<u><u>399.84</u></u>	<u><u>14,264.81</u></u>	<u><u>3,667.63%</u></u>

Comments & analysis:

Income figures differ from the Financial Secretary Report due to revenues received via electronic transfer, stock transfers, income from interest bearing accounts, and transfer of funds from restricted accounts into operating fund accounts.

Income for the operating budget exceeded expectations in the last fiscal quarter.

Operating expenses were lower than expected in the last fiscal quarter, resulting in a healthy, positive cash flow, allowing us to rebuild our reserves.

Building & Grounds

Greg Cox

The past year has been full of activity. The monthly Building and Grounds fellowship gatherings (a.k.a. work days) have continued with growing participation. Because of this generous giving of time we were able to complete many necessary repairs and improvements and also keep up with the ground maintenance. I want extend a special thanks to everyone who helped this past year. I'd also like to thank our friends from Genesis House in Vallejo. Genesis House is a long-term drug and alcohol rehabilitation center that provides community services and assists us with grounds maintenance.

Arloine and Donald continued to come daily to take care of the many unspoken tasks they did unselfishly even up to a week before Donald passed on. Angels do exist and one has gone home to heaven. I'm just beginning to understand how much effort is needed to take care of property the size of ours.

Our Chapel Update – Here's a partial list in no particular order of the past year's accomplishments. There's not enough room to list them all.

- Pew Cushions were purchased. Work has begun to re-glued and nailed.
- The outside corner roof was repair by an outside contractor.
- A ceiling fan and light was installed in the pastor's office.
- Flowers were planted in the front and in the pastor's small garden (a.k.a. The Lizard Garden) that was carved out of the hillside.
- The lower meadow area was weeded, pruned and cleared of brush. two large Yucca trees in the parking lot were removed.
- A new refrigerator was purchased and a member donated a freezer for our expanding fellowship events.
- We leased a new copy machine with expanded capabilities. A color laser printer was donated.
- Internet service was upgraded and we converted to AT&T universal voice mail and fax service.
- A new faucet was installed in the kitchen courtesy of Holiday House, making it easier to fill large pots in the sink.
- A diaper changing station was installed in the bathroom. New soap and paper towel dispensers were added in the kitchen.
- A pulley system was installed in the sanctuary for seasonal hangings and decorations.
- New shelves were added to the office, and a new secretary's chair was purchased.
- New flooring was installed in the main CE room. We used a product called Konnecto. It is water-proof and carries a 25-year warranty. Holiday House was very generous with a donation of \$4,000 towards the cost of replacement.
- The sprinkler system and various broken rails in the parking area were repaired. Potholes in the lot were filled.

Building use – Our facility continues to serve the community by providing a safe space where everyone is welcome no matter who you are. 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 – Owners Jackie & Terri are now in their 4th year, offering year-round classes. We have ongoing communication and yearly review of agreements.
- New Covenant CC Church (Samoan) – NCCC has cut back to using the building on Sunday afternoons only and will be seeking new accommodations in the fall.
- AA\NA\ALANON – Weekly meetings are posted on the church calendar in the Bridge.
- This year we have also hosted several memorials, a wedding, recitals a few concerts.

Growing our Chapel - The stewardship campaign was a huge success. Thank you all for supporting our plans for growing our church. We had a 600% increase in donations to the capital improvement fund. Capital improvements are dependent upon individual donations to the capital improvement fund. I was overwhelmed by the generosity this year. We now have a good start toward our plans for the upcoming year. Here are some of the possible projects I'd like to accomplish this year.

- Repair the parking lot rails.
- Change the irrigation system to drip and with automatic controls.
- New carpeting for the sanctuary and choir room
- Fellowship Hall flooring, wall coverings and kitchen remodeling.
- Lighting for the front garden and entrance to Fellowship Hall.
- Replace sanctuary lighting.

Building and Grounds fellowship will continue to be held on the 4th Saturday of each month through October 2008. They will resume again in January 2009. Please mark your calendars with these important fellowship events before your schedule gets busy. We must come together in this time of need to help in whatever ways we can. We have momentum going. Now it is time to pick up speed to continue our growth. Donations are always welcome and really can help to hire labor, rent equipment, or purchase plants, trees, benches, etc. Please let me know your ideas.

Fellowship time on our work days have been a time I look forward to monthly. From Milly's famous bean soup to Allison's tostada salad, or even a trip to our world famous "Taco Truck" we always take time to break bread together and learn a bit more about the gifts we all bring to the table. Please come join us.

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 the formal school year on June 1st. Teachers for the 2007 – 2008 year were Jonathan Dodson, Jay Smith, Susan Stofan and Dale Olm. Liz Munnely, Mike Patterson, Karen Hanna and John Hanna assisted as substitutes. On Sunday, June 1st, the Sunday School teachers and substitutes were recognized for their service, and graduates of elementary and middle schools were acknowledged. Katie Stamm-Kirk was presented with a NIV Adventure Bible.

We bade farewell to Jay Smith, our Youth Director since 2004, after he and his family relocated to Willowcreek in December. A search committee of adults and youth was assembled to hire a new Director of Youth Ministries. Thanks to Rev. Renie-Stamm-Kirk, Karen Hanna, Liz Munnely, Mike Patterson, Dale Olm, Susan Stofan, Lindsey Blackie and Sam Olm for their work. Jonathan Dodson, currently a student at Pacific School of Religion, was hired in February to carry on and expand the youth program that Jay developed.

We continued using a Bible-based, home-prepared curriculum this year and we were pleased with the flexibility and continuity that is allowed. All children and youth met as a group in a one-room school house environment for part of the year, and in the latter part of the year they were divided into two age groups after our initial worship gathering. Ages ranged from six to fifteen. Commercially available curricula were again examined, and it was decided to use a recently available new curriculum for the 2008-2009 school year that was developed by the Brethren and Mennonite churches with more recent input from the United Church of Christ. It is Bible-based and has a strong emphasis on social justice.

Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk led adult Bible studies classes during the year.

Congregational Care

Shelby Riddle

Our committee has been very busy this year, giving rides, bringing food, visiting homebound members, and calling by phone and in person on those unable to be out and about. It is a huge privilege to be a part of this large and dedicated group of caring individuals as well as getting to know and be of service to those most in need, which is its own reward. Thank you all for contributing your time and energy to this “in-reach” ministry.

Relational Growth

Gail Mason

During 2007-2008, two program areas functioned under the umbrella of Relational Growth Ministry:

Welcoming Ministry – concerned with communicating the good news of CCCUCC to visitors and persons in the community who might want to be a part of our community, and with incorporating new members into the life of the congregation; and

Fellowship Ministry – concerned with providing opportunities for members and friends to deepen their relationships with each other, usually by gathering around food.

Every Sunday, at the beginning of the worship service, we hear and confirm the words, *No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here.* Often we hear those words as beacons to those who might not yet be involved in the life of the congregation. We want visitors to know that they are welcome and valued here. But the words also apply to members and friends. We care about our spiritual journeys. We believe there is redemption in sharing our stories in community. Through sharing with one another, we are able to see our stories in a new light. We can see God where we may have missed God before. We can make sense of confusion. We can grow.

The Relational Growth Ministry sought to provide ways for members, friends, and visitors to:

- become more acquainted with each other;
- become more deeply involved with one another in the life of the church;
- share on personal levels with one another;
- become more aware of and to be more articulate about personal spiritual journeys;
- and simply to enjoy one another's company.

Relational Growth accomplishments during 2007-2008 include:

- a system for greeting new visitors and recognizing returning visitors
- weekly fellowship times following worship services
- special holiday gatherings
- pot lucks and fellowship dinners
- visitor pew inserts

Week after week, countless people made the Relational Growth ministry a vital part of the congregation - fellowship hosts, cooks, cleanup crews, donors, greeters, photographers, and every single member who shared a smile and a handshake.

Every single individual helps make CCCUCC this amazing, accepting, welcoming, nurturing community.

Thank you.

Social Outreach

Sarah Thompson

Our projects this year fall into three categories: 1) the Social Outreach Mission Program, in which we financially support 13 specific charities; 2) the Social Outreach Action Program, in which we combine our fundraising with a public action; and 3) the Social Outreach Learning Program, in which we provide education about specific issues facing our national and global neighbors.

The Social Outreach Mission Program:

The goals for giving for 2007-2008 were met with a combination of Social Outreach Mission Pool pledges and loose offerings (as you can see, we exceeded our planned donations to Planned Parenthood through loose offerings alone!) The following charities were given the following donations in 1/08:

Fisher House (July 07 Mission)	\$500
Planned Parenthood (August 07 Mission)	\$635
Foster a Dream (September 07 Mission)	\$500
Neighbors in Need (UCC – October 07 Mission)	\$1,000
Heifer Project (November 07 Mission)	\$1,000
CAC Christmas Giving Food Gifts (December 07 Mission)	\$1,000
Christmas Fund (UCC – December 07 Mission)	\$1,000

In addition, this church saw the biggest outpouring of generosity of my tenure here with the extravagant giving of gifts for our CAC families, many of whom we left in a state of shock at the sight of all of our presents. This cash value of these donations are difficult to pinpoint, as many fulfilled Christmas wishes and Christmas hopes that have no price tag.

At our August, 2008 meeting, we plan to send checks to the following charities:

Southern Poverty Law Center (January 08 Mission)	\$500
Food Bank of Contra Costa/Solano Counties (February 08 Mission)	\$500
One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC – March 08 Mission)	\$1,300
Nature Conservancy (April 08 Mission)	\$500
Affordable Housing Affiliation (May 08 Mission)	\$500
Strengthen the Church (June 08 Mission)	\$1,000

As of the financial balances of June, 2008, there was a surplus of funds (of about \$800) which indicates we should be able to meet these goals.

The Social Outreach Action Program:

The goals for giving for 2007-2008 were exceeded by donations which allowed us to create the Social Outreach Action Program. This program targeted using our surplus funds to do hands on mission work accompanied by special fund-raisers. In the spring of 2008 we had five projects: 1) Tent Day for Darfur Awareness; 2) Mother's Day Baskets for Women at the Christian Help Center; 3) Treats for Troops; 4) Wine Tasting for Myanmar Relief and 5) Car Wash and Change Jar for China Earthquake Relief.

Tent Day

On May 10 our congregation gathered to paint a tent as a social awareness project for the suffering currently happening in Darfur. We had educational outreach as well as special guests to help us grasp the gravity of the crisis in Sudan. We gathered funds in two ways: through the actual purchase of the tent and canvas squares (\$580 which went immediately to Darfur relief) and the funds gathered through the sales of shirts/food and drink. I will hopefully have an exact accounting of these fund in August.

Mothers Day Baskets

Social outreach gathered donations and spent \$300 in goodies/supplies for the baskets which were delivered on May 9. The Christian Help Center sent a warm thank-you for remembering their mothers who are facing many struggles.

Treats for Troops

Social Outreach spent \$400 on goodies/supplies in addition to direct donations. These were blessed and sent out at the end of June.

Wine Tasting for Myanmar

This event brought together donations from both our congregation and other community members (and raised about \$500 for Myanmar relief – I hope to have exact numbers in August). The Youth Group also donated about \$85 to the project.

Car Wash and Change for China

We can thank our youth for doing about 65% of the fund raising for this project. The raised over \$200 in their Service Auction Car Wash and donated about \$85 from their loose offerings to China relief. Change for China brought in \$47.32.

The Social Outreach Education Program:

We had three different programs in the Spring of 2008: 1) a showing of REEL BAD ARABS, a film by Jack Sheehan looking at media stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims; 2) a presentation on the problem of Child Labor by Sarah Thompson and Jonathan Dodson; and 3) a showing of IN WHOSE HONOR, a film by Jay Rosenstein looking at the cultural significance of using Native Americans as sports mascots.

Stewardship

Carl Mason

Annual Stewardship Campaign

The Stewardship Committee held the annual stewardship campaign in April and May 2008. The theme of the campaign was *Can You Feel It*, emphasizing the new vitality of our congregation.

The campaign had a multiple-group approach based on three categories of pledgers:

- Major pledgers were visited in their homes if the pledgers were agreeable and available;
- Active members who made substantial pledges last year and active new members received the “Pony Express” pledge books which included an appeal and detailed explanations of the various needs of the congregation;
- Less active members received an appeal letter with a stamped return envelope.

The result of this approach was an increase in total revenue over last year by 20% as follows:

Increase in Pledges 2008/2009

	Operations	Social Outreach	Capital Improvement
This Year	\$ 115,761	\$ 8,714	\$ 10,730
Last Year	\$ 104,913	\$ 5,844	\$ 2,784
Increase	\$ 10,849	\$ 2,870	\$ 7,946
Percent	10.3%	49.1%	285.4%

As can be seen, pledgers increased their giving to the Church Operations Fund by \$10,849, an increase of about 10%. An additional \$7,946, representing a 285% increase, was pledged to the Capital Improvement Fund, and an additional \$2,870, or 49%, increased the Social Outreach Fund. Most of the increase in church operations was used to cover increases in staff expenses due to inflation and insurance increases, and to cover expected reduction of revenue due to the loss of one of our major tenants, the New Covenant Church.

Fundraisers

In addition, there were two successful Service and Things Auction fundraisers held this year that brought in an additional \$5,000.

Budget

The Budget Committee continually monitored the budget during the year and suggested revisions that were approved during the mid-year congregational meeting. Fiscal year 2007-2008 was completed with a reserve which was designated for the Sabbatical Reserve.

Conclusion

We have all “felt it” this year – expanding ministries, increased community service, caring for our members, an improved physical condition of our church, and a vitality that has attracted new members. The new feeling is manifest not only through increased monetary pledges and gifts over the past year, but also through tremendous contributions by members of their time and talents.

Can you feel the difference?

Worship

Tim Mautz

The Worship Committee had a very good and busy year for 2007 - 2008. We started the year in July with "Home Coming Sunday" and Pastor Renie's installation service. Drama was added to the Sunday Services, especially during the Advent Season. Timmy Star, man-on-the-street reporter, provided us with the latest news on the arrival of Jesus each Sunday.

Easter Sunday Service was greatly enhanced by the observance of Lent, Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. But what really capped off Easter Sunday service for a great many congregants was the Adult Bible Study using the book "The Last Week" by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan. This study was outside the Worship Committee's purview, but it had a great impact on the Lenten services for those of us who attended the Bible study.

The Worship Committee ended the year with a very busy Pentecost Sunday service. We acknowledged the accomplishments of our youth and their promotion to the next higher grade levels and/or graduation. We welcomed several new members into the church and gave special recognition to our Christian Education leaders.

Of special note was the farewell to Jay Smith and recognition of his contributions to our church as the Youth Leader. Jay left an indelible mark on our youth. Under his guidance the children of our church provided some great intergenerational church services and dramas. However, we gained a new Youth Leader in Jon Dodson and look forward to the continuation of beautiful and entertaining contributions of our youth to our Sunday services.

This year we had greeters posted at the tables in the social room to welcome visitors and members alike. We provided new name tags and lanyards and encouraged everyone to wear them during church services and the social hour. Special thanks go to Chuck Hull and Eleanor Mortensen for always being there to welcome us to Sunday service. "Worship Bags" were created for children ten years of age and under. These bags included sticker sets, crayons and new color bulletins.

A new communion cloth, liturgical Christ candles and other candles needed for worship were purchased.

Of course, Sunday services just wouldn't be the same without the contributions of the choir and our Music Minister, Barbara Hamm. They make worship an experience for one and all. It is my personal opinion that they outdid themselves this year with their performances of such songs as "Let's Go Down to the River to Pray" and "Amazing Grace" done to the tune of the "House of the Rising Sun." I don't think I can ever get enough of hearing those two songs.

Special thanks and gratitude go out to all who participated - and continue to participate - in worship every Sunday. The committee could not do its job without these many volunteers who devote their time and talents to provide a warm and welcoming, as well as meaningful, worship experience:

Our Minister of Music, Barbara Hamm
The talented musicians who share their gifts each Sunday
The outstanding liturgists who bring the word to life

The many who participated in the various dramas presented in worship throughout the year
The countless individuals who participated behind the scenes to make the sure worship is a time of sacred praise each Sunday

- A special thanks to Peg Stone for providing and preparing the Communion elements
- A special thanks to the children who acted as acolytes and bell ringers each Sunday
- A special thanks to “Big Tim” for his Children’s Stories

As the Worship Committee chair, I would like to personally thank the committee members for their invaluable contributions throughout the year:

Chuck Hull
Nancy Gilman
Priscilla Lane
Hope Wingert
Peg Stone
Debbie Conway

Without these people, there would be no worship service. Thank you one and all.

The Worship Committee continues to look for ways to welcome newcomers and visitors to our worship services, while maintaining the rich liturgical traditions of our faith and church.

Constitution and By-laws Committee

Shelby Riddle

Several decades ago Helen Nelson, Arloine Stoner, and Steve Atkins were on the committee that presented us with the constitution and by-laws that we have been using ever since. The current committee has worked under the guiding words that if we could not improve upon any sentence, phrase or concept, then we should leave it as we found it. Our intent was to build upon the strong foundation laid by the people who came before us. We have added or made changes only as necessitated by our evolving church structure and society.

After six months of painstaking examination and scrutiny of the current constitution and by-laws, the committee has finally finished its task. The Council voted to allow the committee to present the new constitution and by-laws to the congregation at our June Congregational Meeting. Every member will receive a copy for review. The Congregation will then vote at the July 27th Annual Meeting whether to accept the prepared document as is, or make further changes.

I would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this exciting aspect of our congregational process.

Shelby Riddle
By-laws Chairperson

Holiday House

Holiday House Celebrates 50 Years

Three of the original members of Holiday House are still faithful participants today – Arloine Stoner, Helen Nelson, and its founder and leader, Jean Osborn. Although the homemade cherry pie socials, the pot lucks in people's homes, the hand-painted ties, the giant wheels of cheese, and the recipe sharing have waned, some things remain – joking together over lunch, enjoying each other's company, and creating items for the annual bazaar. The group also continues to send cards to church members to recognize birthdays and anniversaries, and to share in healing, sympathy, encouragement, and support.

CCCUCC enjoys the results of these women's efforts every week. Over its 50 years, the group has donated the choir chairs, the sanctuary carpet (twice), the dishes, the kitchen cupboards, the kitchen island counter, a refrigerator, a stove, the kitchen faucet, the light pole in the parking lot, and the outside railings. Their gifts funded the installation of the Jesus window and the Shepherd window, the CE building roof and floor, the Fellowship Hall ceiling and bathrooms, and the front sidewalk and retaining wall.

Holiday House 2008

Jackie Lawrence
Pam Martin
Helen Nelson
Jean Osborn
Arloine Stoner
Susan Stofan

Holiday House meets Thursday mornings at 10:30am. The group welcomes new members.

Feb thru Sep	1st, 3rd, and 5th Thursdays
October	every Thursday
Nov. thru Jan.	no meetings

Holiday House 1958

Bernice Bahrenburg
Freida Barkley
Evelyn Bobbitt
May Dykes
Sue Eash
Marion Garibaldi
Sigrid Gibb
Ruth Henkel
Esther Hudson
Myrtle Humbert
Mabel Kearns
Thelma Lippencot
Millie McElroy
Helen Nelson
Elva Pettit
Jean Osborn
Olive Rutherford
Laura Shaw
Elsa Starkweather
Dorothy Stone
Arloine Stoner
Myrtle Stoner
Agnes Ulman
Zilla Wood

Music Committee

Shelby Riddle

The Music Committee helped with three concerts this year. The Vallejo Chorale Society performed at our church in December and April. They were beautiful to listen to, and quite a treat for us. In June the wonderful male singers of Colla Voce came for a superb afternoon of music and humor. The proceeds of their concert went to the Solano Pride Center, and we were pleased to be able to support their cause by providing an amazing acoustical space in which they could perform.

We had a fantastic blue grass band come for our Fourth of July festivities in July of 2008. The next planned concert for this new fiscal year will be in November when the San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers, in combination with our own Benicia Celtic Band, will once again play at our church. Other concert ideas are welcomed. Please contact one of our committee members (Dean Gilman, Nancy Gilman, Kathleen Kravets, Shelby Riddle) if you have suggestions.

Nominating Committee Slate 2008/2009

Larry Schaffer

The Nominating Committee included Dale Olm, Jan Wong, and Larry Schaffer who extend heartfelt appreciation to all those who have given their time and talents to the church this past year. We are also very grateful to the individuals below for agreeing to serve next year as Council Officers or Standing Committee Chairs.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Term completion date</u>
Council Officers		
Moderator	Larry Schaffer	June 30, 2009
Vice Moderator	Carl Mason (Moves to Moderator 2009 - 2010)	June 30, 2009
Clerk	Mickey Scott	June 30, 2010
Financial Secretary	Eileen Eubank	June 30, 2010
Treasurer	Dale Olm	June 30, 2009
Council Standing Committee Chairs		
Building & Grounds	Greg Cox	June 30, 2010
Christian Education	Leslie Lessenger	June 30, 2009
Congregational Care	Shelby Riddle	June 30, 2009
Fellowship	Allison Stamm-Kirk	June 30, 2010
Social Outreach	Sarah Thompson	June 30, 2010
Stewardship	Kathleen Kravets	June 30, 2009
Welcome	Karen Hanna	June 30, 2009
Worship	Co-Chairs: Gail Mason & Priscilla Lane	June 30, 2010
Member-At-Large	Debbie Conway	June 30, 2009
Member-At-large	Tim Mautz	June 30, 2010

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

Larry Schaffer

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) consisting of Dale Olm, Jan Wong, Larry Schaffer, Laurie Read, and Priscilla Lane had monthly meetings from June of last year. Our final meeting was a potluck that Priscilla hosted, and as incoming PPRC Chair for 2008 -2009, Carl Mason attended.

We served as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership. Members of the congregation were encouraged to take any pastoral concern directly to Pastor Renie. If this was uncomfortable they could speak in confidence to any member of the PPRC. The committee functioned as liaisons, providing communication between the congregation and the pastor.

We respected the privacy of those congregants who so requested. All conversations were conducted in the strictest of confidence but discussed openly and honestly within the group. We felt honored to sit down and chat frankly with Pastor Renie, and to provide an environment that allowed her to do the same with us. We were privileged to have played this small part during Pastor Renie's first full year with us.

Community Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Benicia, California

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2008-2009

2008-2009 STAFF

Pastor	The Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk
Minister of Music	Dr. Barbara Hamm
Director of Youth Ministries	Jonathan Dodson

2008-2009 OFFICERS

Moderator	Larry Schaffer
Vice-Moderator	Carl Mason
Church Clerk	Mickey Scott
Financial Secretary	Eileen Eubank
Treasurer	Dale Olm

2008-2009 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building and Grounds Ministry	Greg Cox
Christian Education Ministry	Leslie Lessenger
Congregational Care	Shelby Riddle
Fellowship	Allison Stamm-Kirk
Social Outreach Ministry	Sarah Thompson
Stewardship Ministry	Kathleen Kravets
Welcome	Karen Hanna
Worship Ministry	Gail Mason & Priscilla Lane

Member-At-Large	Debbie Conway
Member-At-Large	Tim Mautz