

On the Way

April 29, 2011

CENTRAL PACIFIC CONFERENCE * UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Extravagant Grace * Generous Hearts * Renewed World*

Bright Sunday, Pentecost, and Holy Humor

from "Holy Humor Sunday," an in ministry project written during my D.Min. work at San Francisco Theological Seminary – February 2003 wj

It wasn't my idea. That's the best place to start. In fact, I think I scoffed when Jerry first suggested it. Holy Humor Sunday? What's that? You can't be serious! But Jerry is not a woman who takes "no" for an answer when she wants a "yes." Jerry was a member of the search committee that called me to Kirkland, and she's always quick with a word of encouragement. She likes to pass out humorous clippings, cartoons and jokes, to brighten up the day. I don't know the "hows" or "whens", but Jerry started receiving a mailing called "*The Joyful Noiseletter*" published by The Fellowship of Merry Christians. At first, the newsletter was a way to dress up local church communications and add a bit of levity for the reader. In 1988, two years after their birth, "*observing that the celebration of Easter has been sorely neglected in Western Christianity, the Fellowship of Merry Christians began to encourage churches and prayer groups to celebrate April as Holy Humor month.*" (Holy Humor, Cal & Rose Samra, Guideposts, 1996) Included in their effort was a call to renew the tradition of "Bright Week." This is the way the history is presented:

For centuries Christians of all denominations were known as 'Easter people' in the societies in which they lived. And Easter was the principal festival on the church calendar. There was an ongoing celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from Easter Sunday to the following Sunday. Greek Christians called it 'Bright Week.' It was a time for laughter and humor and practical jokes. Because Christmas has become increasingly secularized, many churches are giving fresh attention to Easter, and resurrecting old Eastertide traditions."

(The Joyful Noiseletter, March 2002)

I didn't know any of this when Jerry first approached me. She gave me a photocopy of an article from the newsletter. The title read "*Church Attendance Rises on Holy Humor Sunday.*" (The Joyful Noiseletter, April 1999) The article didn't have much theological depth. It suggested taking a playful approach to worship, including balloons, jokes, and lots of "joyful hilarity" springing from the resurrection of Jesus. I already knew a little something about the importance of playfulness in worship.

I remember the first worship services when I arrived at Kirkland Congregational Church. The silver-haired remnant congregation longed for the days when the church was full of children. There weren't many children to call forward for "The Young in Spirit." It was my habit to invite the adults to join in the Bible School / Church Camp motion songs I sometimes shared with the children. The 70 & 80 year-olds joined in the motions of "Peace Like a River." I chuckled as we pointed to the air and jumped on one foot, "I've got joy like a fountain... and it springs like a fountain!" When we finished there was laughter and warmth in the sanctuary, and the congregation remembered again what it meant to feel God's presence.

Jesus pointed the way. He said, "Except that you become as children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Matthew 18:3) He knew that we had to let go of our fears. How many times have I heard church members, and not just from my own congregation, proclaim, "I got more out of the children's time than I did out of the sermon?" When are we going to listen? Why does worship have to be boring? Why can't we laugh and enjoy God's love together?

It was too late in the spring to start planning a Holy Humor worship for the "low attendance" Sunday right after Easter, as suggested in the article. But Pentecost was coming up and that would be a perfect opportunity to "humor" Jerry and her insistent request. After all, since Pentecost is the birthday of the church, it was a natural for a party. I had already introduced bubbles into the Pentecost celebration in an earlier congregation, to go along with the traditional red balloons and birthday cupcakes. All we'd have to do it crank it up a few notches to hit the hilarity level. I proposed we plan a Holy Humor Sunday for Pentecost. Jerry accepted, and I was committed!

** NOTE I share this with you in this midst of this first week of Easter. This is only the beginning of the story of our experience with "Holy Humor." Holy Humor Sunday became one of our most popular celebrations. Let me know if you'd like to hear more. The story reminds me that good ideas don't always come from careful strategic planning. More often, creative experiences result from being open to the Spirit speaking, in all different places, through all different people. May each of us be open to the surprise of the Spirit as we follow Jesus "On the Way."

CPC Spring Assembly ** IMAGINE WHAT'S POSSIBLE! **

Gather with others from the Central Pacific Conference and UCC President Geoffrey Black as together, we *Imagine What's Possible* for our present and future life together.

Spring Assembly * May 20-21 * Highland UCC, Portland OR

Environmental Author and Activist Kathleen Dean Moore to speak at Lake Oswego UCC – Sunday, May 1st, 2011

Lake Oswego United Church of Christ (LOUCC) has designated Sunday, May 1, 2011 as Celebrate the Earth Sunday. Special activities will commemorate the first anniversary of the congregation's decision to become an Earthwise Congregation, including a celebratory worship service at 10:30am followed by a local, organic potluck lunch.

Highlighting the day's celebration is a lecture at 1:00 p.m. by nationally-recognized author and activist Kathleen Deane Moore. Moore is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Oregon State University where she teaches courses in environmental thought and ethics. The author will emphasize her theme of hope in the climate crisis, drawing on her books "Wild Comfort: The Solace of Nature" and "Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril." Moore's lecture concludes the church's five-part 2010-11 Arts and Lectures Series based on the theme "God is Still Speaking." Doors open at noon, and a freewill offering will be taken at the door. For more information please contact Lake Oswego United Church of Christ, [503.635.4348](tel:503.635.4348), or email the church at office@loucc.org, or visit our website at www.loucc.org. You may also contact Reverend Jennie Ott at pastor@loucc.org.

A Wild Hap and a Winged Heart – Martha Gallagher in Concert

Saturday, April 30th, 2011.* 7:00 PM. * Admission \$10.00 * Proceeds benefit SW Hope Hillsdale Community Church UCC * 6948 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland, OR 97219
To learn more, call 503-246-5474 or visit www.hillsdaleucc.org

Martha Gallagher is Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, Jean Redpath, all rolled into one! She's a treasure; her music lifts up the spirit and reminds us why we're here. – Todd Moe, North Country Public Radio

Celebration! Lynne Smouse Lopez Honored for 15 years at Ainsworth UCC

You are invited to join the members of Ainsworth UCC in a reception honoring our Pastor, the Rev. Lynne Smouse Lopez. For 15 years of service and ministry with our congregation.
May 15, 2011 - 11:30 AM (following 10:00 AM worship)
Ainsworth United Church of Christ, 2941 NE Ainsworth, Portland

Jack Brown to Perform in Concert May 15th at 1st Cong. UCC, Boise, ID

BOISE, ID, April 27, 2011 – Jack Brown, local singer, songwriter and acoustic guitarist will perform in concert at 7 p.m., Sunday, May 15, at Boise First Congregational United Church of Christ. No admission will be charged, but donations for a free-will offering will be accepted. Boise First Congregational United Church of Christ is located at 2201 Woodlawn Ave., Boise.

Brown writes, sings and plays music that reflects everything from his Mississippi Gulf Coast and New Orleans upbringing to his current Idaho life. He's an award-winning local songwriter and will perform original tunes spanning folk, blues, jazz, country and pop genres.

Jack tours the country every summer, playing festivals, house concerts, churches and other venues. Recent and upcoming gigs include the nationally-broadcast Midnight Special/Folkstage radio show from Chicago (August 2010), Living Traditions Concert Series in California (coming October 2011), and various Folk Alliance conferences.

A portion of the proceeds from the concert and CD sales will benefit Pilgrim Cove Camp in McCall, Idaho. Visit the camp's website to learn more <http://www.pilgrimcovecamp.org>. Visit Brown's website at <http://www.jackbrownmusic.com> for more information. Visit Boise First's website at <http://boisefirstucc.org>. Questions? Contact: Julie Stutts 208-388-5336 or stuttswoman@gmail.com

CPC Women's Annual Meeting, May 19th in Portland, OR ~ Nancy Klingeman

The CPC Women's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, beginning at noon. The gathering will be held at Highland Christian Center, 7600 Glisan St., Portland, OR. The church phone number is 503-287-9567. Please make reservations by Friday, May 12th, 2010. Our speaker will be Rania Ayoub, Public Relations Director of the Muslim Educational Trust. She'll give a presentation on "Between Women," a group involving interfaith potluck meals to promote understanding and good will among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Cost will be \$10 for registration which includes lunch. There will be a short worship service after the meal, followed by Rania's presentation. Also, that morning the Rev. Anne Smith Educational Loan/Grant committee will have its yearly meeting.

News from the CPC Board of Directors

Actions from March 19, 2011

- Approved a proposal that the new Camp Director position at Camp Adams be shared with the Central Pacific Conference. The primary responsibility of the Director will continue to be the management of Camp Adams, but new position will also include responsibilities as CPC staff to the Educational Ministry Task Force. This job description is expected to increase pool of candidates for the new Camp Director position by creating a job description that would be attractive to Christian Educators (ordained or lay). Two of the 6 goals in the VISION: 2015 strategic plan the CPC created by a task force in 2005 are: 1) Biblical and Theological Literacy and 2) Ministry with Children, Youth, and Young Adults. Primary responsibility for these goals was assigned to the Local Church Ministry Team. That responsibility (except for “Young Adults”) has been shifted to the Education Ministry Task Force. The connection between the work of managing the camp and supporting the work of the EMTF would be of great benefit to the CPC and could attract candidates that would not be interested in a pure Camp Manager job. The CPC will contribute \$10,000/year to the pay package at Camp Adams in 2012 and 2013. The funds will come from undesignated gifts to the CPC that are held in one of our Dedicated Funds.
- Approved a motion to delegate the search and hiring process to Walter John Boris as Conference Minister with responsibility for overseeing the new employee. He will select a consultative team for the process. Plans are to have a new Director in place by January 1, 2012.
- Received a report about Multnomah Education Service Division (“Outdoor School”) and Camp Adams. The MESD has been in the driver’s seat during our relationship with the “Outdoor School.” We receive 31% of our income from MESD. But MESD dictates a rate/camper to Camp Adams, considerably less than other clients pay. The Board approved a motion affirming their support for the Camp Director to negotiate appropriate rates with MESD and all other non-UCC clients.
- Received a report from the Wider Church Ministry Team including a Draft Partnership Proposal / Mission Statement between the CPC and the Northwest Mindanano Jurisdiction of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The Board approved a motion to recommend to Spring Assembly endorsement of the concept of partnership as defined in the Mission Statement.

Actions from April 26, 2011

- Approved Conference Minister Objectives for May 2011 – May 2012
 - Approved Job Description for Outdoor Ministries Director, Camp Adams & CPC
 - Approved Covenants Ministry Team policy for *The Ecclesiastical Council and the Ordination Examination in the Central Pacific Conference* (see at end of this issue of *On the Way*).
 - Approved proposed 2012 budgets for CPC and Camp Adams which are now recommended to the Spring Assembly.
 - Approved a slate of nominations for CPC Board and Ministry Teams, now recommended to the Spring Assembly.
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Bishop Yvette Flunder Will Speak at First Cong. UCC, Portland, OR

Oliver Lectures return to First Congregational UCC After several years of pastoral leadership transitions, we are pleased to announce the revival of the Oliver Lectureship. And what a —revival□ it will be!!!! Our guest is: **Bishop Yvette Flunder** This provocative black, female, gay preacher founded the City of Refuge UCC in response to the homophobic backlash at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco. The church, located in the South of Market St. Area of San Francisco, is about uniting a gospel ministry with a strong social gospel witness. Refuge offers case management and housing to the homeless, comprehensive medical and social services for HIV and AIDS affected and infected, along with a host of recovery programs. Its ministry is aimed at those marginalized by traditional Christianity.

Bishop Flunder was consecrated Bishop for a multi-denomination fellowship of 110 leaders and 56 churches from all parts of the United States, Mexico and Africa. Yvette Flunder is a powerful and inspiring speaker/preacher and will address us both Saturday evening May 14 and at worship Sunday, May 15. The title of her lecture is: The Church Unusual vs the Church as Usual. The event will begin at 7:00 PM. Contact the church for free lecture tickets. A reception will follow the Saturday evening program and a luncheon after worship on Sunday. Save the dates and pass the word!!

First Cong. UCC * 1126 SW Park Ave. Portland, OR 503-228-7219

Ainsworth in the City – Silent Auction, Dinner & Dance

Saturday, June 4th, 2011 ~ Lynne Smouse Lopez

The celebration is sponsored by the congregation of **Ainsworth United Church of Christ (AUCC)** www.ainsworthucc.com and our 2011 partner organization, **Leadership & Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School**. AUCC activities include justice advocacy and social action in the greater Portland area and the global community, support of community issues and promotion of interfaith understanding. In its fifth year of operation, Leadership & Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School (LÊP High) is a small, 300 student college-prep high school offering a rigorous curriculum, extensive academic support and hands-on learning to help every student achieve excellence. For more information contact: www.lephigh.org or (503) 254-2537 *Proceeds from the Ainsworth in the City weekend will help support the mission and ministry of both AUCC and LÊP High.*

Silent Auction, Dinner & Dance * Saturday, June 4, 2011, 6:30 – 10:00pm

Crown Plaze, Belmont Ballroom, 1441 NE 2nd Avenue, Portland, OR.

An evening of delicious food, dancing to music by Dan Gaynor and Friends, a silent and oral auction, and 50/50 \$1 per ticket raffle. Join us for this fun and festive evening and take jhome a treasure or two, or more from our wonderful choice of interesting and enticing auction items. Cost is \$60 per person, \$560 for a table of ten. Order your tickets by calling the Ainsworth office, (505) 284-8767 or online at www.ainsworth.com.

Family Fun Festival * Saturday, June 25, 9:00am – 3:00pm

Ainsworth United Church of Christ,, 2941 NE Ainsworth

On Saturday we roll out the welcome mat in the neighborhood and host a family fun day at Ainsworth. The day includes BBQ, fun activities for children and adults alike, jewelry, plant, rummage and book sales that aren't to be missed, and events sure to please and send you home smiling. All are welcome!

Gay Pride - You are Invited to Portland Pride & Boise Pride ~ Joyce Liljeholm

Once again, our conference subcommittee will take care of parade and booth registration for the Portland Pride festival (June 18 and 19), so that all UCC churches can participate as one group. We are also supporting the Boise Idaho Pride (June 18). Lee Hipsher (hootlee@imt.net) will be the contact for Boise First's Pride organizing this year. If you cannot get to Portland or Boise, we hope you will consider bringing the UCC message to a Pride event nearest you.

We hope a number of our churches will march with their church's banner in Portland. We expect we will again have enough people marching to carry placards for all O & A identified congregations (even those not able to send people to march in the parade).

We expect the parade line-up to be at NW 13th and Davis.

The Pride Northwest website [www.pridenw.org] states that the Portland parade will step off at 11:30 AM. It will be an individual decision, whether to come line up at 10:45 AM, or come as soon as your worship ends, and join us as close to the start of the parade as you can. Look for the UCC banner and join us. The GLBT Concerns Committee invites you to a brief pre-parade service at 9:30 am. It will be hosted, once again, by Portland First Congregational UCC, located at 1126 SW Park across from the Portland Art Museum.

Volunteers are needed to staff the UCC booth at the Portland Pride Festival at Waterfront Park. The booth area is open June 18 and 19 (Saturday and Sunday) from noon to 6 PM. It is a fun way to let everyone know they are welcome at UCC churches. E-mail Joyce Liljeholm at jliljehom@gmail.com to volunteer for the booth. Please contact Lee Hipsher at hootlee@imt.net to help in Boise.

We encourage you to put a Save the Date in your May Newsletter. For Portland Pride, watch www.pridenw.org for a June 1 posting of our UCC booth assignment and the parade route and line-up location. For Boise, watch for details to be posted at www.boisepride.org Thank you for your support and commitment to this important witness.

From: Joyce Liljeholm, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Concerns and the Church

Mark Your Calendars Now for the 2012 Portland, OR CROP Walk ~ Ron MacKenzie

2 p.m., Sunday, April 29, 2012 (Day of Event Registration, 1:30 p.m.)

The Portland CROP Hunger Walk will start and finish on SW Park Avenue and SW Market Street., in front of Portland State University. The course is 2.7 miles and will take walkers along the picturesque waterfront and park blocks. Please use public transportation or car pool to site because there is very limited parking. This is an interfaith event and all are welcome.

Seventy-five percent of the funds raised will go to Church World Service's international relief and development programs. Fifteen percent will go to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Northeast Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial and ten percent to Oregon Food Bank-West.

Contact Ron MacKenzie, Coordinator, at ron.w.mackenzie@gmail.com for more information. Please "like" the Portland CROP Hunger Walk Facebook Fan Page to keep posted regarding important dates leading up to the event and to network with participants:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Portland-CROP-Hunger-Walk/285521963133>

Hillsdale Community Church Seeking Children and Youth Program Coordinator

Position: Part-time Children and Youth Program Coordinator

Hours: Average of 10 hours per week, including Sunday morning worship.

Summary

Hillsdale Community Church – United Church of Christ is seeking a Children and Youth Program Coordinator who will work with a team of staff and volunteers to oversee community-building and mission activities for and with children, youth and families in a progressive, Open and Affirming Christian setting. \$575-\$625/month DOE.

Duties

Fellowship Building

- Schedule, coordinate and attend occasional fellowship opportunities for elementary children, parents and families.
- Schedule, coordinate and lead monthly mission or fellowship opportunities for middle and high school youth.

Scheduling and Training

- Work with volunteers to recruit and schedule teachers for three Sunday School classes
- Recruit and schedule child care providers for special events
- Assist teachers with use of curriculum
- Schedule and coordinate occasional trainings or workshops for teachers and parents on topics of interest or importance

Mission and Outreach

- Research opportunities for service for children and youth
- Coordinate and lead (or arrange for leadership of) a yearly mission trip for middle and high school age youth

Communication and Administration

- Write a monthly update for the church newsletter
- Communicate with families with children about upcoming events
- Follow-up with first time visitors whose families include children or youth.
- Check in with regular attenders following a period of absence
- Meet weekly with the Senior Pastor
- Communicate with Office Administrator about building usage
- Coordinate activities within a budget

Bachelors degree in education preferred

Experience working with children and youth

Desire to work with a team in a progressive Christian setting

Enthusiasm, sense of humor, organizational skills

Clean background check

Valid driver license

Please send letter of interest with current resume and three references to

Personnel Committee

Hillsdale Community Church - UCC

6948 SW Capitol Hwy

Portland OR 97219

Applications accepted until Friday May 13, 2011

“Flamingo Insurance” from the Youth at Forest Grove UCC ~ Audrey Ouellette

Looking for an entertaining fund raiser for your youth? Check the story below for the details. The flamingos seem to be taking on a life of their own!

http://www.portlandtribune.com/news/story.php?story_id=130023670902698500

Music Camp at Pilgrim Cove Camp – 2011 ~ Ginni Neil

A weekend music workshop at Pilgrim Cove Camp on Payette Lake at McCall planned by First Congregational United Church of Christ in Boise is where you will want to be September 16-18, 2011. Vocal, English handbell musicians, and instrumentalists (at any level) are invited to come join the fun. Everyone is welcome. Bring a musical friend. Families are welcome, even if all don't join workshops.

Pilgrim Cove Camp, situated on Payette Lake, McCall offers striking views of the surrounding Idaho forest, the lake and shoreline. If you aren't familiar with the camp, check us out at pilgrimcovecamp.org. Chimes, hand bells, and all music are provided. Simply bring your individual instruments if you are an instrumentalist.

After registration sign-in, the weekend begins with dinner and get-acquainted fellowship. Weather permitting, the evening closes with a sing-along and S'-more's by the lake. Breakfast is served at 8 a.m. The Saturday schedule will be rehearsals with your director after breakfast until 11 a.m. Lunch is served at noon. At 1:30 p.m., additional rehearsals are scheduled until 4 p.m. Breaks are at the discretion of each director. At 6 p.m., dinner is served. Because the purpose of this weekend is to have fun, expect to have time to enjoy the lake, a walk along trails or just rest with good conversation during the two days. If you have personal watercraft (kayaks etc.) feel free to bring them for your use. Remember that temperatures can be cool this time of year.

Seth McMullen, vocal director at Eagle High School and Randy Coryell, musician extraordinaire will direct the vocal workshops; Paula Weitemier, hand bell director at Boise First and Don Thoen, bells at Mountain Home, will direct bell workshops. Introductory and intermediate hand bell sessions will be available for those who are interested. Ron Klinko, from McCall will be the instrumental director.

For those who are willing to share, we always enjoy a Talent Show on Saturday evening with impromptu music and skits at camp. Sunday morning after breakfast, the group gathers at the McCall Community Church where Pastor Charlotte Havlicek welcomes the community. The Music Camp participants provide the Sunday service. A brownbag lunch will constitute the final meal of the weekend, so those who need to depart shortly after noon can do so.

September evenings in the mountains are chilly so be sure to bring a warm coat, flashlight and comfortable clothing. Bring a warm sleeping bag (or equivalent) for the bunk beds, towels and personal needs. If you're brave, bring your swimming suit.

Every effort will be made to honor accommodation requests. Singles will be housed in the larger bunk rooms of Leahy or Creech. Couples or singles with youth will have access to the cabins. We eagerly look forward to your being a part of the 2011 Pilgrim Cove Music Camp. Early registrations and payment will be greatly appreciated. You will find important information about travel to the camp and facilities at this site, www.pilgrimcovecamp.org ., or call Ginni Neil, (208-345-9576) for further information.

Ginni Neil, c/o Boise First, 2201 Woodlawn Ave., Boise, ID 83702 or vbneil418@msn.com

Souperbowl Sunday?? ~ Waltrina Middleton, UCC Local Church Ministries

Here is a great opportunity for youth to take on hunger!

Learn more by visiting the following site: <http://souperbowl.org/news/?cats%5B0%5D=fb&id=115>

The link is also shared on the United Church of Christ Youth Facebook page. Are your youth following us on Facebook? It's the perfect way to keep up to date on what's happening with Youth in the UCC!

Waltrina Middleton, Local Church Ministries *Minister for Youth Advocacy and Leadership Formation*
Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team * middletonw@ucc.org * [216-736-3871](tel:216-736-3871)

Follow us on Twitter!

<http://twitter.com/TheUCCYouth>

Give us face time on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Church-of-Christ-Youth/166319843412522>

Pastoral Counselor Available

Rev. Catherine Alder is a UCC minister, starting a pastoral counseling practice in Portland, Oregon. She has been a therapist for over 20 years working at the Pastoral Counseling Center in West Hartford, Connecticut, and out in school systems. Her work has been with individuals, couples, families and groups. In the public schools, her focus was with students who are failing or in crisis. She has dealt with many clients with a range of issues such as: relationships, divorce, depression, anxiety, premarital, grief, trauma, sexual abuse, school behavioral crisis and failing grades, and a desire to grow. She brings all of her degrees to what she gives in counseling. She has a deep belief that people can find their way and use their inner resources to heal as they are truly heard. Catherine has also served a number of churches on the east coast as senior pastor, interim, associate, and youth pastor. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Oregon, and is a Fellow of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. She has an office at 2100 NE Broadway, Portland, Oregon and is accepting clients at this time. Contact her at: 503-490-8414. Catherine Alder, *L.C.S.W., M.F.T., M. Div.*

Please Pray For These Friends

John Boonstra is our pastor at Bethel UCC in White Salmon, WA. His wife, Vicky Stifter, is our pastor across the Columbia at Riverside Community UCC in Hood River, OR. John's father Chuck Boonstra, died on April 3rd in Hood River. Chuck was also a minister. He served churches, first in the Reformed Church in America, and later in the Presbyterian Church USA. Please hold John and Vicky and their family in your prayers as they celebrate Chuck's life.

Portland Area Clergy Cluster – Thursday, May 15th – Waverly Heights

Thursday May 5th, 12:00 noon at Waverly Heights Congregational United Church of Christ, 3300 SE Woodward St., Portland, Oregon.

The Ecclesiastical Council and the Ordination Examination in the Central Pacific Conference

Policy Statement on the Ecclesiastical Council and the Ordination Examination

Authorization for ordination in the Central Pacific Conference (CPC) will consist of two steps.

1) The Member in Discernment (MID), in consultation with the Covenants Ministry Team (CMT) and her/his local church, will schedule an Ecclesiastical Council, inviting the participation of the clergy and churches of the CPC. *The EC will engage in an examination of the candidate in order to satisfy itself as to the preparedness and fitness of the candidate for ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.* (MOM, sec. 3, p. 11). A vote of the EC recommending ordination is required before a candidate can advance to an Ordination Examination.

2) After receiving a vote of recommendation from the EC, the CMT will conduct an Ordination Examination. On completion of the Examination, the CMT votes whether or not to authorize ordination pending an approved call.

The Board of Directors of the Central Pacific Conference formally approved this policy in a conference phone call on Tuesday, April 26th, 2011.

Background:

The Covenants Ministry Team (UCC Committee on Ministry) of the CPC approved a proposal to reverse the traditional order of the Ecclesiastical Council and the Ordination Examination for Members in Discernment requesting ordination. (3/21/09) The CMT reported its decision to the Board of Directors (11/4/09) stating:

"We have been struggling with ways to make the Ecclesiastical Councils more meaningful for candidates and participants from congregations. The problem has been that most frequently the candidate's local church is the only one represented. We value the opportunity for the candidates to be heard and questioned by their peers. We have come to the conclusion that the way we traditionally do Ecclesiastical Councils doesn't always work well. After discussion, we decided that the Ecclesiastical Council (EC) would take place in the local church before the final interview with the Covenants Ministry Team (CMT). The candidate for ordination would then come before us having had the practice of presenting their paper and engaging in a discussion about it. The EC may make a recommendation to the CMT that the person be ordained, but the final decision would be made by Covenants Ministry Team following the EC."

The conversation about lack of attendance at Ecclesiastical Councils in the CPC began in November, 2007. After consulting with the UCC's Parish Life and Leadership, it was clear that Associations and Conferences are dealing with this challenge in a variety of ways. The model presented in the UCC's Manual on Ministry (MOM) calls for the Committee on Ministry (COM) to meet with the candidate for an Ordination Examination. *"The purpose of the ordination examination is to determine the preparedness and fitness of the candidate for ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ."* (MOM sec. 3, p. 6). If the COM affirms that the candidate meets the requirements for ordination, the candidate is recommended to an Ecclesiastical Council composed of Conference clergy and lay delegates. *"On completion of the examination, the*

Ecclesiastical Council votes whether or not to authorize ordination pending an approved call.” (MOM sec. 3, p. 11) This model defines the current process in much of the UCC. But in some places, alternative models have been adapted. The Pacific Northwest Conference eliminated Ecclesiastical Councils in their ordination process. The Conference Committee on Ministry, with clergy and lay participation from 10-12 different churches, was seen as a much more representational body than an Ecclesiastical Council with representation from only a few churches. In addition, because the Committee on Ministry was accustomed to dealing with issues of authorization for ministry, they were better prepared to objectively evaluate a candidate's fitness for ministry.

In the CPC, the Conference serves as the authorizing Association. The Manual on Ministry does leave room for a Conference to approve an alternative process: *“Each [Association] must determine its policy regarding whether a person is a ‘candidate approved for ordination pending an approved call’ upon the decision by the [Association] Committee on the Ministry or upon the decision by the [Association] Ecclesiastical Council.”* (MOM sec. 3, p. 10)

During conversation in the CMT preceding the new policy, concern was raised about eliminating the opportunity for members of our churches, especially the home church of the candidate, to enter into a conversation with the candidate about their preparation for ministry. Another important point was the acknowledgement that no-one had any memory of any Ecclesiastical Council in the CPC voting "NO" on a candidate. That meant that, in reality, the Covenants Ministry Team was the authorizing body.

Reflecting on these issues, a subcommittee of the CMT recommended flipping the order of the events. The new process maintains the opportunity for church members and clergy to gather with the candidate for conversation. This conversation affirms the traditional role of the Ecclesiastical Council in examining a candidate for ordination. A requirement that the EC vote to recommend a candidate for ordination to the CMT before that candidate can advance to an Ordination Examination maintains the authority of the Ecclesiastical Council, on behalf of the wider church. The Ecclesiastical Council also has an educational function for many of our members who haven't considered the question of preparation for ministry.

The reversed order is intended to provide a more affirming experience for candidates who have a small group in attendance at their Ecclesiastical Council. This sometimes occurs in smaller churches, in rural locations, or when the candidate isn't well known by members of the local congregation. Whatever the participation, the EC can still fulfill the function of examination, education, and affirmation. It can also serve as a valuable warm-up for the Ordination Examination with the Covenants Ministry Team. The CMT will then make the final decision authorizing the candidate for ordination pending an approved call.

Check the Health Coverage Tax Credit from the IRS

Under a new federal health care law, many small businesses (including churches) may be eligible for a refundable tax credit. For tax exempt employers like churches that do not pay taxes, a credit of up to 25 percent, of the cost of providing health insurance for their employees. Businesses that have fewer than 25 employees, pay average annual wages below \$50,000, and pay for most of their employees' health coverage may qualify for this tax credit. A broad range of employers meets the eligibility requirements, including religious institutions that provide coverage through denominational organizations and employers that cover their workers through multi-employer health plans. This credit is worth up to 25 percent of a small business's premium costs in 2010 and in each of 2011, 2012 and 2013. In 2014, this rate increases to 35 percent.

For more information: <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=187948,00.html>

Celebrate Bill Greene's 50th Anniversary of Ministry with Hubbard UCC

Our congregation cordially invites you to celebrate with us on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, in ministry, of our beloved pastor Earl (Bill) Greene. The celebration will take place May 1, 2011, 2:00 at the Hubbard United Church of Christ. The church is located at 2nd and H streets - just east of the fire station. Plan to be entertained, fed, and participate in fellowship with kindred hearts. We look forward to spending a joyful afternoon with you.

Sincerely, Leslie Ulven * RSVP: leslieu100@yahoo.com

A Personal Note

The last 6 weeks have been filled with preparation and participation for CPC Ministry Teams and meetings of the Personnel Committee and the Board of Directors. I preached at UCC Nampa, ID on March 27th, and participated in an Ecclesiastical Council for Beth Rogers and 1st Cong. UCC, Eugene. On April 16th, I again participated in the Micronesian Song Fest. Much of my time has been spent with critical administrative responsibilities, including preparing documents for the continuing work of the CPC including 1) CM % of Time Review 2) CM Objectives 3) Camp Adams Outdoor Ministries Director job description 4) CPC 2012 proposed budget 5) budget background narrative and 6) Ecclesiastical Council policy statement.

Delegates to our Spring Assembly, May 20th and 21st will have clean budgets to consider. The Board and the Ministry Teams of the CPC have been working hard to carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the whole Conference. My thanks to all have shared their wisdom, time, and energy.

Yours in Christ, walter john

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