

July-August  
2009

*the Clarion!*  
First Congregational UCC  
Las Vegas, Nevada



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## From the Pastor

In the Las Vegas *Sun's* analysis of Sen. John Ensign's confession of an extra-marital affair, the commentator said that what Sen. Ensign really had was "a hypocrisy problem". That is, because he is widely known as a social values conservative the real issue is not that he had the affair (our social mores vis-à-vis politicians seem to be growing more lax about this) but rather that he was undercutting the values he professed to espouse.

Hypocrisy. We know a lot about this in the church. Seems like whenever someone wants to take a blast at organized religion they begin by exclaiming over all the hypocrites they experience who profess their faith but sure don't practice it in their relationships with other people – who "talk the talk" but definitely don't "walk the walk". Or, we point to those like the fictional Elmer Gantry or the all-too-real Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart as prime examples of those whose practice didn't jibe with their piety.

But as Jesus was wont to say, "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3) Concern over hypocrisy in the church begins with me – how am I acting in ways that contradict the faith which I profess?

Now, these may feel like fairly heavy questions for a summer column. But I've always felt that summertime – like Lent – is a good opportunity to take the time to be reflective about what it is my faith means to me. So, I invite you to use these July and August months to take out your faith (which means both your beliefs and your practices) and examine them – where do belief and practice coincide and where are there troubling differences? What would I change in my life so that no one could look at me and think, "there goes a hypocritical Christian"? What kind of an image of Christianity do I want to present to the world?

You know, back in the early days of Christianity non-believers used to look at the practices of those newly come to Christ and say in awe and wonder, "See those Christians, how they love one another!" Sometimes this was said mockingly and dismissively, but yet they kept coming back to the fact that genuine love was part-and-parcel of a new

  
*Love &  
Faithfulness*

meet  
together;

*Righteousness  
& Peace*



kiss  
each  
other.

Psalm 85:10

Christian's life-style.

What we seek to grow at First Congregational Church is authentic faith. Our faith becomes more and more real to us as we seek to authenticate it by our actions to those around us. We want people exclaiming, "See those FCC'ers – how they love – not just one another – but all those who come into our purview – and even more: all those throughout the world."

I hope your summer is a time of good and thoughtful reflection, and that each of us finds and puts into practice an authentic faith in the months ahead.

Peace,  
Dave

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### **In Our Concerns**

Betty Neiswender at Mission Pines Nursing and Rehabilitation Center  
Grace Dodd at Henderson Health Facility.  
The family of Hank Gilbertson on their loss.

As is our usual custom Ann and I will be in Hackensack, NJ, during July and August. I will attend the UCC's General Synod in Grand Rapids, MI, June 26-July 1, and then go on to the east coast from there. Ann and our granddaughter Meghan will join us on July 4. We return the Tuesday after Labor Day, September 8. We will be thinking about you and wishing all of you well during this time away. See another article in this *Clarion* for pulpit supply during that time. If there are pastoral care needs, David Krueger-Duncan of Northwest Community Church has agreed to provide that – contact Ann Beggs or Don Schmiedel if you would like some pastoral attention.

Good friends and members of our congregation will be in our pulpit during Pastor Dave's scheduled absence:

June 28 Rev. John Kohl.

July 5 - Rev. Tom Perl,  
12 - Rev. Kay Obenour,  
19 - Rev. Jerry Blankinship,  
26 - Dr. Leonard (Pat) Goodall.

August 2 - Tom Perl and Kay Obenour,  
9, 16, 23 - Rev. David Krueger-Duncan,  
30 - Susan Sledge.

September 6 - Al Horkay.

September Communion will be celebrated on the second Sunday of the month by Pastor Dave Pomeroy and we will further welcome Dave and Ann at our Congregators potluck following that service.

## **Spiritual & Parish Life**

Welcome to new members; Karen Plowden and Jeff and Vanessa Rice.

### **Care Group Attendance Review**

Attendance reports were distributed to all Board members to review and contact those members of the congregation that have not been in attendance the last few Sundays.

Thank you to Board member Sean McLean for his efforts in creating a new computer program to assist in tracking the attendance of our church members.

### **Lay Member Contacts**

Deborah Gaeding and Dick Stubrich report that they are making efforts to communicate with church visitors and prospective new members continue.

### **Pastor's Report**

Grace Dodd, Betty Neiswender and Ruth Hammond are under doctor's care.

Update on moving toward merger with Northwest – further discussion is delayed until the fall. However, it is recommended that members of our congregation attend some of the Northwest church services and get to know some of the members of that church.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Brochure**

Proposed form by Tom Perl's daughter – Bethany Perl has designed a new brochure to be used by our church. The board has approved the layout and will move forward with printing a small run. Vista Print will print 250 at a cost of \$150.00. Thank you

Bethany for your efforts!

**Fellowship Hour** for July - Deborah Gaeding has got this covered..

**Communion Set-up** for July and August - Sean McLean will check with his wife Lisa to see if she can take care of this.

**S&P Fund** - current balance is \$1,218.00. Steven Pederson will make announcement to the congregation at next Sunday's service reminding them of the need to support this fund.

**Disposal of many old hymnals** – This is an ongoing project and will be addressed at a later time.

### **New Business**

An "I Wish" form for the pews – Ann Pomeroy has presented an example of a form to be completed by visitors or members of the church. The purpose is to provide another avenue to communicate any interest in getting involved at the church or the need for a visit from the Pastor.

### **July/August meetings?**

Meetings will be limited to an "as needed" basis only. The meeting(s) will be called by co-chair Steven Pederson. The next scheduled Board meeting is September 20, 2009.

Ann Pomeroy, Co-Chair

## Trustees' Meeting

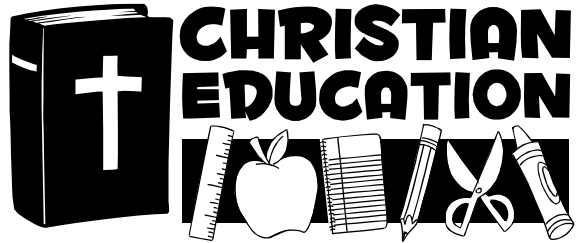
The Board of Trustees met on Sunday, June 7, 2009 to wrap up business before the summer break and plan ahead for the fall. The roof is fixed and paid for, thanks to the "Rainy Day Fund" and a gift and a loan from Northwest Community Church. That loan will be repaid over the next 5 months, in part, by a decrease in the rent paid by Northwest and an increase in the rent paid by the other three congregations that share our facility.

A master plan for the landscaping will be reviewed at the September meeting and presented to the Congregation in October. The planting will begin in October, but the ground rock has been spread as the "canvas" for the project and to make an immediate improvement in the appearance of the land that surrounds our church.

Al Horkay is acting as negotiator with a company that has expressed a desire to purchase a defined easement for the cell site on church property that would include the purchase of the current contract with Sprint.

The Trustees will not meet in July or August. The next scheduled meeting will be September 13<sup>th</sup>. Ideas and comments are always welcome and should be emailed to the board Chair, Neil Thomsen at [mntthomsen@aol.com](mailto:mnthomsen@aol.com) or sent to him via regular mail to the church.

Marty Perl, Secretary



## A Huge Thank You to Marjorie Branch

Marjorie Branch has been a powerful and significant leader in the Adult Education Class as she has led us through a study of a selection of sermons by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. Our consciousness has been raised about the lives of present day African Americans as we listened to the messages that Rev. Wright preached to that very large UCC congregation in Chicago, Illinois. In a strong effort to reach out to his community, Rev. Wright focused on the lives of Biblical Africans, and we learned about the world of our neighbors. Thank you Marjorie for your insightful and thoughtful leadership.

## Half a Dozen Reasons You Should Not Come to Adult Christian Education which meets at 9:00am in Gudmundsson Hall every Sunday morning.

1. You really don't need it, because you know everything the Bible teaches.
2. You really don't need it, because you went to Sunday School when you were younger.
3. You really don't need it, because you are old and will soon die.
4. You really don't need it, because you

are young and know everything.

5. You really don't need it, because you don't like the teacher/s.
6. You really don't need it, because . . .  
(Add your own reason/s).

### ABC Library

The shelves are constantly changing as people use the Library. We are delighted that you are adopting books, borrowing books, and contributing books. If you have not used the library yet, please check it out for some summer reading opportunities.

### Waving Goodbye to our Campers

OK campers, have a great time at Pilgrim Pines this summer. We look forward to hearing your stories when you return to church.

### Preschool and Elementary Christian Education

What fun it is on Sunday morning to have a table full of young children as we share Bible stories and learn more about how much God loves each of us. Our regular attenders include Elrie, Vishayla, Jamie, Bethany, Maddy and Kira. The class will be led by Lisa McLean in July and by Russ Smethers in August.

Kay Obenour,  
Superintendent

## Mission & Action

### BREAD RUN

Vons on Craig and M.L.K. is closing so our donated bread and desserts from there will no longer be available. Judy Hoffman from Northwest UCC Church filled in on Friday, June 5th. Judy was excited about the program. We need to put the church bank out on Sundays when bread is available. Whitney Elementary School is closed for the summer break so no bread will be distributed there until school starts again.

### FOOD PANTRY

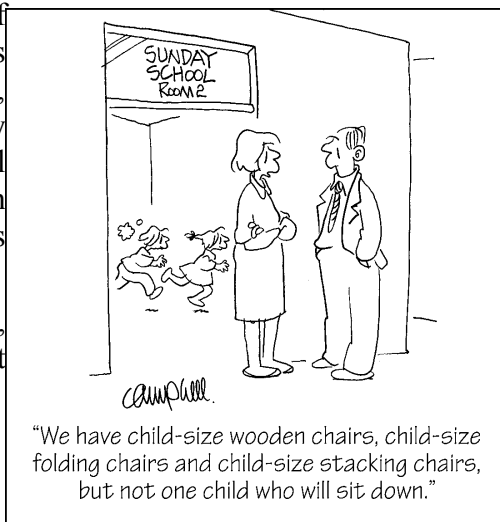
First Sunday cash donations seem to be doing well. A large donation of pizzas and ice cream was recently received.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING

The Beggs and the Pomeroy's attended. Jim reported a little of what went on. Our church youth group donated a good number of school bags to the conference collection.

There were over 1500 bags to be sent to Church World Services.

Jim talked to Stuart Cox about the petition they want to send to Harry Reid. It talks about mining practices in Nevada which affect the Colorado River and Uranium mining. We felt it was confusing and wordy. Jim will try to reword it.



## CROP WALK

Plans are coming along well. Dave Pomeroy attended the last meeting. Next meeting is in August. We did not feel we could buy everyone a tee shirt, however shirts will appear.

Eastern Association will meet at our church on November 7th. We will need to supply a meal. Northwest UCC and the Samoan Church will help.

We will not meet in July as several members will be out of town during July. Our next meeting will be August 2nd.

Jean Sitkiewitz, Secretary



## Annual Gathering

At the Annual Gathering of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, Gary Roberts reported that there were 14 new churches coming into existence who were seeking affiliation with the United Church of Christ. Four of those are in the Las Vegas area!

One, of course, we know quite well: the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa, led by Pastor Ailao Tofaeono, which will be seeking to affiliate with the Conference at the Eastern Association meeting on November 7 (this meeting will be held **at our church** -- look for more information in the fall *Clarions*).

The others are new and need our prayers

and active support. So, please pray for these new church starts and look for ways to be supportive of them:

Las Vegas UCC -- pastored by Ernie Luatt -- primarily serving the Filipino community in Las Vegas -- currently worshipping at the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Abundant Peace Church, LV -- pastored by Wilfred Moore -- a fellowship church for LGBT concerns seeking UCC affiliation.

Resurrection Faith Community, LV -- pastored by Pat Spearman -- a fellowship church for Northwest Las Vegas seeking UCC affiliation.

We hope to be welcoming all of these congregations into the Eastern Association and Conference in the near future.

Ann Beggs found a workshop on "change" filled to overflowing with new ideas for evolving churches. She is trying to bring that speaker to Las Vegas in the fall.

Among other items highlighted by our Interim Conference Minister, Jane Fisler Hoffman, are these:

**WORSHIP!** Wow. We had a marvelous worship planning team led by Rev. Susan Brecht (pastor in Atascadero--yes, folks at our geographic edges do take leadership roles!). Each worship was unique, creative, and 'just right' for the moment. There was laughter at the 'spot on' opening 'skit'; music from lively hip-bumping praise to organ and bells to Taize reflective; communion instituted in diverse languages from our community and served with coconut milk and grape juice; and beautiful, changing visual worship centers. The

Spirit was alive among us and we were blessed.

**SPEAKERS!** John Cobb challenged the UCC to take a focused and strategic leadership role in working with God for the salvation of the world (you can read it on the web; John McCullough from Church World Service told us some of his own journey and of the global ministries in which we share (on the web also); and Charles McCollough, our 'artist in residence' helped us root our thoughts about the changing world in the foundation of scripture. You can experience his work by buying or borrowing his book, *The Art of Parables*. Each of these special guests brought valuable gifts to our Gathering.

**SCHOOL KITS!** We could hardly believe our eyes---box after box, bunch after bunch of school kits were brought in by one volunteer after another and stacked in the chancel as a gift to God and God's children through Church World Service. Later other volunteers counted and boxed the kits and we were amazed to learn that almost 1100 were at the meeting, with another 400 or so sent by congregations directly to CWS before the meeting! (And if your church sent kits and hasn't told the Conference office, please do let us know!). Every pencil and crayon will be treasured by a child somewhere in the world. Thank you to every congregation that worked on the school kit project. And special thanks to the helping hands of residents of our UCC Retirement Housing Foundation residences who made almost 500 of the bags for use by our churches. [Hallelujah!](#)



## **A New Minister October, 1967 - June, 1969**

The members tried to make the grounds and the inside of the church building look nice for the new minister. Because of the Attic Sale that the Priscillas put on in April, 1967, they almost met the goal of earning enough to buy new carpeting. With additional donations, blue carpeting was bought for the sanctuary with blue-toned tiles in the aisles and the narthex. A pinecone Christmas wreath sale with wreaths made by members helped pay the cash-flow expenses and help with loans.

Rev. Paul and Kay Gaston came from Pacific Grove, CA, in Oct., 1967. Right away he got involved in the life of the church, community, and even in the state. Pastor Gaston was involved in the Strip Ministry, the Ministerial Assoc. (he was president in 1969), and several other socio-economic and social justice organizations.

The shared buildings and church school classes continued with St. Luke's Episcopal Church south a few blocks culminating with a combined service on Dec. 3, 1967. Their new building was done and most of the parish members moved to the new Episcopal Church. This meant that all of our church school classes were squeezed back into the sanctuary, balcony, choir-church school room, offices, and narthex.

Because Pastor Gaston encouraged more involvement of the church in socio-political affairs and social justice, in Dec. he started

a Forum Class that had speakers from many areas of the Las Vegas working and living community including a showgirl, the first African-American university professor in Las Vegas, a policeman, a state senator, several organizations, other ministers, etc.

Also in December David Rensch answered Don Schmiedel's ad in the newspaper for an organist. David came to church two Sundays before Christmas with his sister Anita Cochran (Stark) and her two teens, one organist and three singers for the price of one!!! Jean Cool remained as substitute organist. After our church had several little old ladies who thought they could still play hymns after not playing for 25+ years, it was a real joy again to get an organist who could really play!

The New Year brought continued and revived activities. Marge Roach and the other members of the Diaconate (Spiritual and Parish Life) started wearing tags emphasizing pews for Easter. With money from the Florence and Henry Wick Memorial from 1957 (remember?), Priscillas' Attic Sale, and many contributions from members and friends, there were pews installed during the week of Easter, 1968!!! There was also a record number of people for Easter with people sitting on chairs in the aisles, in back, and in the narthex.

The one thing that did not survive was the Strip Ministry because of lack of funding locally from the hotels, churches, and other organizations, and the conference and national United Church of Christ who decided to put the money to other projects.

With its special emphasis on suicide prevention and hotline and extended pastoral counseling, Rev. Rick Mawson was ahead of his time. The suicide hotline and various forms of a smaller Strip Ministry have survived.

Church School classes were moved around depending on the size of the Forum and the other classes. Some were even held outside when the weather allowed. Then Pastor Gaston found an empty duplex on 25th Street (Civic Center Drive-Eastern Avenue) just north of Owens Avenue on the west side of the street. The duplex was empty awaiting the widening of 25th Street. With some wiring, air conditioning, drapes, and a little furniture, it was used for a few classes until a new building was put on the slab.

"The slab" story is interesting. It was poured at the beginning of construction of the church building in 1965. After the steel structure was erected, the tilt panels were poured on site on the slab. When the panels were all poured and put up, the building was the tallest tilt-panel building west of the Mississippi River! "The slab" was left in place for use as a foundation for a new building when money was raised.

Fortunately the Glider Street church and property had been rented for a few months by the Methodist Church. They left and were replaced by the Vegas View Church of God in Christ who had a lease agreement with option to buy. The option was turned into a definite sale agreement in June, 1968. Finally First Congregational had enough income to pay a good deal of the debt and secure a loan to build the new building on

the slab.

The Couples Club decided to sponsor a genuine luau in the backyard of Cliff and Sandy Bakers' new house with new members Kazuo and Jeanette Matsuura in charge. Kazuo and his helpers did the kalua pig in the ground. Everyone enjoyed the luau and it made money!!!

Many people joined and of course many people moved but there was more gain than loss. The Forum grew but then started to get smaller and smaller. The attendance at church was starting to get smaller because people had many things to do. It was a sign of the times that the church members and minister didn't realize was happening. Pastor Gaston thought he was not being as effective as he could be and wasn't right for the church in Las Vegas because the Forum and attendance didn't continue to grow. We now know that 1965 was the peak of church attendance and then it slowly dropped off for the next several years for all churches all over the United States. Many people would be interested in a church, organization, or an activity for a short time and then move on.

Pastor Gaston and Kay decided to move to First Congregational Church in Mesa, AZ in June, 1969. Some people were shocked; some were almost angry! We were losing a very good preacher and minister AGAIN!!!

Before Pastor Gaston left, the new building was started on the slab, all the Boards and other activities were in good leadership, there was a good Pulpit Committee of 13 people led by Don Schmiedel, the Church School was in the good hands of Isabel

Holman and the many very good teachers. Ray Eicher was Moderator and Walt Martini was always on hand to help.

The Pulpit Committee very soon had a good lead on a new minister.

To pay for the moving expenses of the new minister from Colorado, the Couples Club had another luau in September, 1969, in Isabel and Gary Holman's backyard - kalua pig in the ground and all!!! The profits covered the moving expenses.

Also in September the Church School classes moved into the new building named Gudmundsson Hall. Money from the Gudmundsson Fund from 1962 plus contributions helped buy the furnishings. The Priscillas outfitted the entire kitchen. With the help of a couple of folding screens (Do you remember the old blue screen?), the classes could spread out. The youth classes and groups moved into the balcony with the added convenience of a newly recovered couch and chairs and a special showroom curtain from the Stardust Hotel obtained by Ted Tydlacka with sparkling gold stars on a light blue background that finally after several weeks stopped reeking of tobacco!

Next time: Another New Minister!!!

Grace Schmiedel, Historian



## July-August Weekly Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:00 AM FCC Adult Education Northwest Services 10:00 AM Northwest Coffee Hour 10:30 AM FCC Services 10:50 AM FCC Youth Education 11:30 AM FCC Coffee Hour 12:30 PM Samoan 3:00 PM Iglesia 7:00 PM Romanian	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM FCC Office    6:00 PM Samoan (sanc) 7:00 PM Iglesia	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Thrift Shop 10:30 AM Bread  6:30 PM Amer. Samoan (Hall) 6:30 PM Iglesia	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM FCC Office   7:00 PM – 9:00 PM Iglesia 7:00 PM NWC Bible Study	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Thrift Shop 10:30 AM Bread   8:00 PM NWC Choir 8:00 PM Romanian (Hall)	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM FCC Office    7:00 PM- 9:00 PM Iglesia	10:00 AM Amer. Samoan (hall)    4:00 PM FCC Cleaning

## July-August Special Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fathers Day 21	22	23	24	25	26 General Synod	27 General Synod
28 General Synod	29 General Synod	30 General Synod	July 1	July 2	July 3 7PM Pinochle	July 4 Independence Day
July 5 <b>11:30 AM Congregators</b> <b>11:45 AM Christian Ed.</b>	July 6	July 7	July 8	July 9	July 10	July 11
July 12	July 13	July 14	July 15	July 16	July 17 10:00 AM Food Pantry	July 18
July 19	July 20	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24	July 25
July 26	July 27	July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31	August 1
August 2 <b>11:30 AM Congregators</b> <b>11:45 Mission &amp; Action</b>	August 3	August 4	August 5	August 6	August 7 7PM Pinochle	August 8
August 9	August 10	August 11	August 12	August 13	August 14	August 15
August 16	August 17	August 18	August 19	August 20	August 21 10:00 AM Food Pantry <i>Clarion</i>	August 22
August 23	August 24 School Opens	August 25	August 26	August 27	August 28	August 29
August 30	August 31	September 1	September 2	September 3	September 4 7 PM Pinochle	September 5
September 6 <b>11:45 AM Christian Ed.</b> <b>Mission &amp; Action</b>	September 7 Labor Day	September 8	September 9	September 10	September 11	September 12

### July-August Birthdays

July 12 Kelsie Matsuura  
 July 13 Kazuo Matsuura  
 August 1 Carla Ann Orozco  
 August 1 Ray Sitkiewicz  
 August 7 Phillip A. Thomas  
 August 8 Harry Frink  
 August 15 Bob Bergsten  
 August 17 Sam Donovan  
 August 18 Jason Stubrich  
 August 18 Alice Berly  
 August 20 Jayne Warner  
 August 21 Al Horkay  
 August 24 Ferina Moenoa  
 August 26 Rachel Spiller  
 August 29 Judy Howarth

### July-August Liturgists

July 5 Marty Perl  
 12 Russ & Kira Smethers  
 19 Jean Sitkiewicz  
 26 Gina Eaton  
 Aug 2 The Preachers  
 9 Anita Stark  
 16 Jeff Rice  
 23 Marjorie Branch  
 30 Steve Pederson

### Tuesday 9:00am Breakfasts

July 7 Denny's - Charleston West  
 14 The Cannery on Craig  
 21 Arizona Charlies Decatur  
 28 Omelet House and More  
 Aug 4 Arizona Charlies Boulder  
 11 Arizona Charlies Decatur  
 18 The Cannery  
 25 Denny's - Charleston West



### Finances

	May	2009
Contributions:	\$4,998.25	\$25,525.05
Building Usage:	\$3,750.00	\$15,370.00
Other:	\$52.51	\$108.85
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$8,800.76</b>	<b>\$41,003.90</b>
Ministry:	\$872.57	\$2,268.65
Ops & Admin:	\$132.06	\$3,506.56
Utilities	\$531.01	\$3,554.47
Building & Grounds	\$363.39	\$3,432.47
Salaries:	\$6,313.85	\$29,354.07
<b>Total Expense:</b>	<b>\$8,212.88</b>	<b>\$42,116.22</b>
<b>Net:</b>	<b>\$587.88</b>	<b>-\$1,112.32</b>

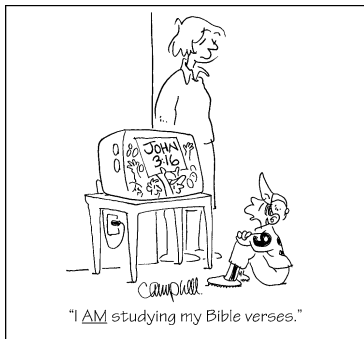
### Anniversaries

July 27 Ray & Jean Sitkiewicz  
 August 4 Marvin & Suzanne Rayno  
 August 10 Kevin & Jayne Warner  
 August 20 Kazuo & Jeanette Matsuura  
 August 21 Don & Grace Schmiedel  
 August 21 Leighton & Rachel Spiller

### Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9am to Noon

### Also --- Contact us by email or phone

Dave Pomeroy	Pastor	davepomeroy@ucclasvegas.org	360-5355
Marjorie Branch	Moderator	moderator@ucclasvegas.org	263-2373
Ann Beggs	Office Administrator	church@ucclasvegas.org	642-2220
Jim Beggs	Tech editor	clarion@ucclasvegas.org	382-9812



**Feedback:** Names, Birthdays, Comments are welcome.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday, Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_

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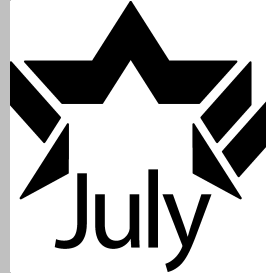
*First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ*  
1200 North Eastern Avenue Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Rev Dave Pomeroy, Minister  
Phone: 702 642-2220 FAX: 702 642-3642  
E-mail: church@ucciasvegas.org Web: www.ucciasvegas.org

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**July-August 2009 Issue**  
**Return Service Requested.**

*Adult Education~~~~~9:00 AM*  
*Sunday Service~~~~~10:30 AM*  
*Youth, Nursery~~~~~10:50 AM*  
*Coffee & Fellowship~ 11:30 AM*

**Men's & Women's Breakfast**  
9:00 am every Tuesday



**General Synod~~~~~June 26-30**  
**Pinochle~~~~~July 3**  
**Congregators~~~~~June 5**  
**Food Pantry~~~~~July 17**  
**Congregators~~~~~August 2**  
**Pinochle~~~~~August 7**  
**Food Pantry~~~~~August 21**  
**Clark County Schools Open~ ~**  
**~~~~~August 24**  
**Pinochle~~~~~September 4**  
**Congregators~ ~September 13**

**Special dates**

- Independence Day July 4
- Labor Day September 7