



# Fairfax Community Church Interaction

May 2009

## Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event
Fri. May 1	6:00 p.m.	<b>Women's Group.</b> Potluck dinner at Margaret Randall's house.
Sun. May 3	10:30 a.m.	<b>Sunday Morning celebration.</b> Please join us!
Sun. May 3	12:00. p.m.	<b>Congregational Meeting.</b> Potluck lunch. Please bring something to share.
Sun. May 10	10:30 a.m.	<b>Sunday Morning celebration.</b> Please join us!
Sun. May 17	10:30 a.m.	<b>Sunday Morning celebration.</b> Please join us!
Sun. May 24	10:30 a.m.	<b>Sunday Morning celebration.</b> Please join us!
Sun. May 31	10:30 a.m.	<b>Sunday Morning celebration.</b> Please join us!

## Pastor's Palette

In his book "Good to Great", Jim Collins writes about transforming good organizations into great ones. While his focus is on businesses, other organizations, including "Church Extension" of the National Christian Church Disciples of Christ, have taken his ideas to faith based organizations. There are interesting ideas that resonate with churches in transition – like our own Fairfax Community Church.

Collins' 3 areas re-interpreted for churches (see diagram):

- 1) our Passion
- 2) our "Best At"
- 3) our Resource Engine





To understand these three areas think of your own personal life. What are you passionate about - what really gets your heart pumping? And then think about what you are really good at – what others may pay you a compliment for doing? And third, what resources do you have in terms of making a living?

We can use the example of Tiger Woods: There is no question the professional golfer is passionate about golf. From an early age he wanted to be on a golf course and loved practicing. Secondly, he is arguable the best at playing golf in the world. He has found his niche in life – he loves it and is good at it. Third, even before he was winning tournaments, he found a way through sponsorships and family support to pay for what he could be best at and what he was clearly passionate about.

And, these three principles also apply to our church.

Our Passion – what is it that really gets the community talking and doing stuff? Time flies when we do this – we all anticipate it with great excitement. We believe in it and are willing to sacrifice other things in order to focus on it.

Our Best At – what do we do that we are really proud of and do really well? It is the ministries and programs that make us unique in our context/setting/neighborhood. This is the purpose to which we feel “called” – the ministry we were created for!

Our Resource Engine – what makes it possible to do what we do? This is more than money in the bank. This is also about human resources and generosity of time and talent, leadership

abilities in volunteer positions and paid staff, and even our building.

For a church self aware we would be able to not only answer each question, but gauge the relative size of each circle, and most importantly, how they each overlap. The more each circle overlaps the others, the better and more vital the congregation.

Church interpreters of Collin’s work add one more circle – the big one on the outside of the diagram. This is our context – the city, area, neighborhood that surrounds us. This circle is mentioned in the above definitions. It represents the real people who live within 12 miles of FCC - their age, education, spiritual needs, employment, income, and more.

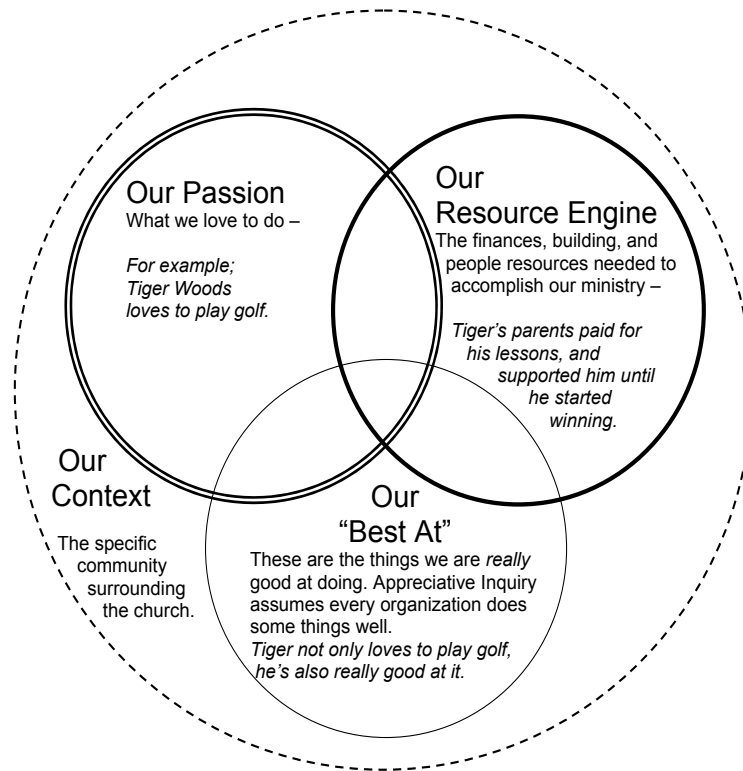
The way this outer circle intersects the other three is very important. This is where our ministry meets the communities need. An example (offbeat – I admit) of circles not intersecting would be if we were passionate about knitting heavy sweaters – for example. But we lived in a hot desert that never got colder than 78 degrees. Our ministry passion and ‘best at’ would not make much sense in that context – nor would we be vital.

What I like best is that Collins work is not a marketing strategy. This framework for church vitality focuses optimistically on what really is happening in the spiritual lives of the community. It assesses those passions, abilities and resources in terms of the community where they now exist and lifts up, by what of intersecting circles, the real vitality of a faith community.

So – how would you answer each questions? How big, or small, do you think our circles are? By the way, a smaller circle has a harder time intersecting all the other circles. This is the real gift of this diagram – it can be an honest visualization of our real community.

Blessing to you –

*Robert*



## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**SUNDAY, MAY 3**

We will be gathering as a congregation following the service May 3<sup>rd</sup> to take stock of our Interim Search Process. We'll have a chance to see what we've uncovered so far through our house meetings and the questionnaire. There's been a great response with at least 70% of our active members returning their questionnaires. Do we see areas of consensus? Are there areas of complete disagreement? There will be an opportunity for clarifying our vision of who we are at this time and what we're called to be as well as the kind of person we want to lead us.

We will gather in Burgher Hall immediately after the service, prepare our plates and nosh through our community conversation. Tim will be our coffee hour host that day. If anyone feels inspired to provide a little extra sustenance, please call him. We will all be grateful!

There will be a sign-up sheet at the meeting for the Marin Organizing Committee sponsored Northern California Economic Conference on Sunday afternoon, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Please see the flyer and article in this Interaction and plan to join in this important event

See you May 3<sup>rd</sup>!

**Note:** Over the years, and now again in our house meetings, I have had the opportunity to hear different members talk about why they joined Fairfax Community Church and what keeps them coming back. Hearing members tell their stories of how they came to our church has always deeply touched me. These are our stories of longing ... of searching for spirituality, for community, for meaning. Each story is unique to the individuals involved.

Hearing why our member not only came but then stayed in our community over the years makes me appreciate all the more this wonderful, caring, creative, spirituality freeing community we have and makes want to hug each and everyone one of you and thank you for being here. Although it is hard to define, we truly have something special here.

I thought it might be nice to have some of these stories written down so that everyone in the congregation could share in this experience. Since I suggested it, I thought it would be fitting for me to be the first 'guinea pig'. I'm hoping for more volunteers for upcoming issues of the Interaction. So... here is my story of why I am here.



## **Why I love FCC**

### **Searching**

Before I came to FCC, I was involved in a variety of different spiritual traditions. I was raised a Lutheran. Went to Baptist 'tent meetings' with friends when I was a teenager. Attended Catholic midnight mass while in college. I married a Jewish man and

participated in Jewish religious celebrations over the years while also celebrating Christmas and Easter in a church near my home. I've enjoyed going out to Spirit Rock and learning about Buddhism. After I divorced, I started looking for a church I could call my own, but knew it would be difficult to belong to a church that felt it was THE only spiritual path, because having been exposed to many different spiritual beliefs, I no longer felt there was only one path, exclusive of all others.

Added to that, from my teenage years forward, I had always had friends who were gay. I knew I wouldn't join a church that considered gay people 'sinners' who were required to denounce who they, at essence, were in order to join.

Because of these two things, I thought it would be very hard, if not impossible to find a church I would feel comfortable joining. Over several years, I checked out numerous churches. Some felt too restrictive or too dogmatic. Some didn't feel restrictive, but I didn't feel any spiritual connection while I was there. Finally, one Sunday, I stopped by FCC - the church CLOSEST TO MY HOUSE, but the one nearby church I somehow had not checked out in all of my years of looking.

### **Finding**

It felt like coming home. Instead of offering definitive spiritual answers, spiritual questions were encouraged. Other religions are also held in high regard. The United Church of Christ (the parent organization over FCC) not only encouraged gay people to join the church, but also had gay clergy. Not only that, but when I was in church, in our beautiful sanctuary. I felt very spiritually connected.

### **Staying**

I've now been a member for around eight years. I joined because the church provided me what I was looking for spiritually, but there are so many other things I've received by being

here. I've been encouraged to grow in so many ways. I given two reflections. I was a member of the choir. After awhile, I joined with Lynn for a couple of years as co-moderator and have been on many other committees. In doing these things, I learned a lot, got to know individual members of the congregation better and had a lot of fun. Now, I'm learning to be an editor by doing our monthly newsletter.

There have been many opportunities to express my creativity, but my favorite is being on hospitality where I set up the altar. I love going into the worship closet and feeling inspired by all of the colorful altar clothes to create a beautiful altar on Sunday. ( I also love seeing the creative altars other people come up with!)

But the main thing I've been blessed with by being a member here has been being a member of this community. We have such a great group of people here. Creative. Spiritual. Focused on helping our community (we are small but mighty!) And, so caring, as I found out last year when I had some medical problems. Thank you all for being here. I look forward to continuing to be among you all as we explore Progressive Christianity and find our new minister.

My love to you all,

**Nancy Finston**



## **ON THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING ECONOMICS**

**Submitted by Lynn Bauer.**

I believe – fervently – that **we can't hope to change the world, even the world right outside our church doors, if we don't understand economics.** As voters, we won't get good government until we understand how American capitalism works — things like the role of government in regulating markets, the effects of our tax structure on us personally and on the economy, the laws and loopholes affecting financial institutions and other large corporations. It's become quite clear in this current financial meltdown that ignorance is not bliss! We abdicated our responsibility to educate ourselves and hold our public officials accountable, and now we are reaping the 'rewards'.

Going further, **as Christians we have an added obligation – our responsibility to our neighbor.** Recognizing our interconnectedness, we might ask ourselves, who is our neighbor? What is our moral obligation to those outside our families and congregation and even outside our country? How can our laws and institutions be reformed to be more equitable, respectful and compassionate, as well as protective of the environment?

The good news is that learning about economics can be both interesting and empowering. A few years ago, I was able to attend a two-day conference on economics through MOC with nationally renowned economists as presenters and leaders. Much to my surprise, I found it fascinating! What I learned helped me understand so much about American society and politics. I've found I can follow current economic developments and think about how they fit in with my values, both as a citizen and as a person of faith. More concretely, that kind of knowledge has been critical in bringing about changes right here in Marin. Because of the

Marin Organizing Committee's research, arming us with relevant knowledge, and its advocacy through our relationships with county officials, the full county budget is now available on-line and open budget sessions allowing citizen input are being held before the annual budget is developed.

In order to increase our effectiveness, MOC needs a wider group of people who have some understanding of local and regional economics. To that end, **MOC** is sponsoring a mini version of that **economic conference** I attended and I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to learn, inter-act, think and talk about our current economic situation, locally and at the state and national levels.

***Please see the following flyer and plan to attend the Economic Conference May 17.***

***We will have a sign-up sheet at the Congregational Meeting on May***



## **UPDATE FROM SARA!**

Hello dear ones!

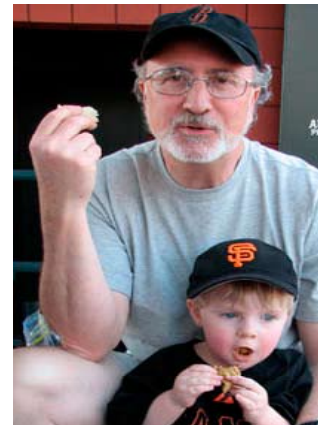
I hope you are all well and content. My life has been very full since October 5<sup>th</sup> – in great part full of being with grandchildren; I've attended some births as a doula; have led a retreat and attended one; and have been studying with my Buddhist Chaplaincy Training group, which has been just wonderful. As a result of that work, I decided to apply for a one-year residency chaplaincy training, called CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). I have been accepted for this training at UCSF hospital in San Francisco. I am quite thrilled with this opportunity to study at one of the top hospitals in the country. Once I have finished the residency, I will be eligible to apply to be a board-certified chaplain. I hope then to be a chaplain at a hospital or

hospice. I am grateful to have had the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training to help my discernment process. The instructors are compassionate, skilled facilitators for our group. There are 24 of us in the training program – two of our members are incarcerated, so they receive all the recordings of the monthly group meetings on CD, and they are completing the assignments from their prison environment. Their 'presence' with us has greatly enhanced our experience. The rest of us in the group meet monthly in a smaller discussion group, and we've had a variety of 'field trips' to different sorts of chaplaincy environments. So its been a rich and inspiring experience for me. This training is completed in July; the CPE program starts in September.

I just wanted to share with you my joy and celebration at being accepted into the CPE program – you knew I was looking towards chaplaincy as I left FCC, and I wanted you to hear how the journey is going!!

Much love to you all – I miss you a lot, and thought of you all on Easter, while I was on retreat at Spirit Rock. On my way home on Tuesday afternoon, there was the beautiful flowering cross in front of the church, just as I'd hoped it would be. Many blessings,

**Sara**



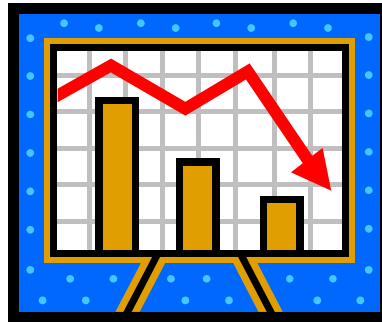
Northern California Organizations of the Industrial Areas Foundation\*

Invite You to Join Us for the

## Northern California Economic Conference

*“Working for a Just Economy”*

**Sunday, May 17, 2009 2:00pm – 6:00pm**



1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of San Rafael

1510 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. (at E Street) San Rafael, CA 94901

### **Together with local and national economists we will learn share and reflect:**

- How did we get into this economic mess?
- How are we affected personally as well as in our communities, state and nation?
- What do our traditions say about economic justice?
- What can we do together to make a difference in these challenging times?

### **Plenary sessions and interactive workshops led by:**

- Dr. Dowell Myers, Professor of Urban Planning and Demography, USC
- Dr. Paul Osterman, Dean, Sloan School of Management, MIT
- Stephen Levy, Director, Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy
- Scott Graves, Senior Policy Analyst, California Budget Project
- Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director, Just Congregations, Union for Reform Judaism
- Ernesto Cortes, Jr., SW Regional Director, Industrial Areas Foundation

**Please register your attendance with your institution**

**Contact the Bay Area IAF offices for more information at (415) 563-0262**

\*Marin Organizing Committee (MOC), Bay Area Organizing Committee (BAOC) in San Francisco, North Bay Sponsoring Committee (NBSC) in Napa and Sonoma Counties, Communities Organized for relational Power in Action (COPA) in Monterey Santa Cruz Counties, and Sacramento Valley Organizing Committee (SVOC) in Sacramento and Yolo Counties.

# Fairfax Community Church UCC

## Core Council Meeting

### March 15, 2009

A meeting of the Core Council of the Fairfax Community Church was convened by Moderator Lynn Bauer on March 15, 2009, at 12:25 p.m. Reverend Robert Shively, Lynn Bauer, Chris Figari, Warren Uhte, LaVerne Uhte and Kathleen Hale were present.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Shively.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*It was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the minutes of the February 15 Council Meeting be approved as written.*

#### **REPORTS**

Pastor's Report. Rev. Shively reviewed the pastor's report for the month, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, together with his report on the house meetings.

Search Process and Questionnaire. The Search Committee has not yet met, but will be meeting soon with Chris Figari and the profile writers in order to provide suggestions to Chris regarding the questionnaire. She will also be meeting with the Pastoral Relations Committee on this matter.

Treasurer's Report. Warren reported that there was no current Treasurer's Report because he had not yet received the information necessary to prepare it. He said that he had received information and envelopes from the Conference for use in the Great Hour of Sharing which will take place on Sunday, March 22, and that he will send an email to Church members so they can be prepared to make donations. Warren also mentioned that there is currently no category in the budget for capital expenditures and that he will discuss this matter with Dean Hanson who is setting up new categories to cover building improvements.

#### **BUILDINGS AND GROUND.**

Office B. Lynn reported that she had met with Michael Berman of UDV (our tenant in Office B) and that they had purchased a new carpet for the office. She was very impressed with his attitude and the work the organization had done to improve the office. Because they are unhappy with the condition of the kitchen, as we are, Lynn suggested that we ask them to work together with us (and perhaps Daycaring) to clean it up. She also said that they sometimes have special events for which they would like to rent space, but nothing has been available, and suggested that because of their very satisfactory status as tenants that they be given priority.

Office A. Office A is still not rented and the last applicant for it (who wanted to use it continuously) was not considered satisfactory. It was pointed out that in order for the Church to maintain its tax-exempt status anyone using a space more than twice a week must be a non-profit.

***It was therefore moved, seconded and unanimously carried that in order to comply with the statutes of Marin County and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Church, all potential tenants who plan to use the space more than twice a week must have non-profit status.***

New Cleaning Service. The new cleaning service is now in place and Toni-Marie has agreed to supervise them. Any comments regarding their work should be referred to her.

Further Painting Estimate. Sam Case had sent an email to Nancy Hanson on March 11 (a copy of which is attached) regarding extra painting that he thinks is needed, and submitted a bid for \$565.00.

***It was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that Sam Case be authorized to do the work proposed in his letter to Nancy Hanson dated March 11, 1009, for a total cost of \$565.00.***

## NEW BUSINESS

Building Needs. It was agreed to remove the items stored in the library including the baptismal font from the library. Lynn will ask Michael Vurek to put some of these items on Craig's List.

Membership Rolls and Bylaws. It was agreed to table a review and revision of the membership rolls and bylaws until the next Council Meeting.

Hours of Interim Minister. Chris Figari said that the Pastoral Relations Committee would discuss Rev. Shively's hours with him to determine whether or not twenty hours of week is sufficient to accomplish what he needs to do, or if an increase in hours is necessary. They will report the results of their discussion to the Core Council, whose members will make a final decision.

Congregational Meeting (Grand Council). It was agreed to change the meeting date from April 26 to May 3 and to serve a potluck luncheon at the Congregational Meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT/ NEXT MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next regular meetings will be held on April 19.

Kathleen Hale, Clerk