

# Little Brown Newsletter

Little Brown Church of Sunol ~ United Church of Christ, Congregational

September 2008



**Sunday Services: 10:30 am**  
**Sunday school and childcare are provided.**

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**

Book Discussion Group 7 pm

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**

Confirmation Class, following worship

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

Rev. Mary's Installation 4pm

## MINISTERS CORNER

Last week I had the opportunity to observe one of the classic autumn rituals of American life --- the first day of school at the elementary level. It was 7:45 AM on a beautiful, clear, cool morning. The children were lining up with their parents eager to greet their new teachers, find their new classroom and start their formal education process. But just to be on the safe side, most were holding on tightly to their parents' hands. However, I am not sure who looked more apprehensive; the new students of the young parents.

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From my observation point, all was going well with the opening day event. And then it happened. The stress was too much, the level of unknown to overwhelming, the anticipation and wait just a few minutes too long. A little one started to have a complete meltdown...his wails and sobs ringing across the parking lot. It caused the other children to look askance, to begin to look around with even more uncertainty. However, the teachers and administrators quickly moved to comfort the youngster, reassure the parents and move the rest of the students forward to start their day.

Whether the religious liturgical calendar calls for it or not, the start of school is also the start of the church year. I am glad that the two overlapping calendars are cadenced with education, literacy, the development of rational thinking, the gaining of knowledge, the acquiring of insight, with the ultimate goal being the ability to think for oneself.

The United Church of Christ in general and our congregation in particular value acquiring those educational skills. They assist us in our faith formation and in our leadership ability to lead this church forward. And as we start up church life again busy with activities to accomplish, tasks to complete and to grow in love, may we face the future with the same faith as those elementary school youngsters on their first day.

We don't know exactly what God has in store for us but we trust that we will grown and change for the better --- for having experienced the process. And if there comes a time when the world just seems to overwhelming, that we are not up to the challenges that life is presenting us, those around us, with the help of God will hold our hand, hug us when we need it and help move us forward so that we may be ready to face life with joy and anticipation.

So on September 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 in the morning, come on down to the Little Brown Church. Bring your life experiences, bring your hopes and fears, bring your desire to learn and grow, bring all that you are to share in our journey of faith together. You will be glad that you did.

Faithfully,

Mary

.....  
If anyone would like to reach me for any reason, feel free to get in touch with me in whatever manner is most convenient. If you call me on my cell phone, it I don't answer right away, I will get back to you very shortly. That number is 510-866-3167. Feel free to leave an email on the church email or my personal email at [mpconant@comcast.net](mailto:mpconant@comcast.net).

**The Bay Association**  
of the Northern California  
Nevada Conference  
and

**The Little Brown Church of Sunol.**  
**cordially invite you to**  
**a Service of Worship for**  
**The Installation of**  
**The Reverend Mary Conant**

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**Sunday, September 28th at 4:00 PM.**  
The Rev. Dr. Mary Susan Gast  
will be the guest preacher.  
Clergy to robe and wear red stoles please.  
Potluck dinner with a New England theme to  
follow.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Discussion Group  
Monday September 15th  
7:00 PM  
*The Mysteries of the Middle Ages*  
Thomas Cahill

The book can be purchased on line or at any major book store chain. This meeting time and date is not set in stone. If another day or time works better for the group, we can adapt. This group is open to all in the wider community.

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Any child entering the 7th grade may join the LBC confirmation class journey where we will explore what it means to be a Christian, how our faith impacts our life and what it means to be a part of the United Church of Christ. The first class will begin September 21st immediately after church. We will meet every other week until around the time of Pentecost. If anyone has any questions, please see Mary.

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We are looking for foreign language readers/speakers for World Communion Sunday on October 5th. If anyone in the congregation is bi-lingual or can read the written word in another language, please be in touch with Mary.

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## BENEFICO COFFEE

**FOR YOUR PLEASURE AND**  
**FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR THE FARMERS!!!!**  
Landy White is our coffee representative for **Beneficio Coffee.** You can contact him if you are interested in purchasing Beneficio Coffee. Remember your support means Social and Economic Justice resulting in a better life for the small coffee farmers and dollars back to our organization for outreach and giving...just let him know if you would like to order some coffee....and thank you!!!!



## DRUMMING

***Come join us for Drumming***  
***6:30 PM-7:30 PM***

Come experience the joy and freedom of drumming from the heart. Bring your own drums or other musical instruments or use ours. All are welcome and No experience necessary! Through drumming, we will free our natural creativity and potential for a deep connection...with ourselves, each other and our Spirit. Rhythm is our birthright, and drumming can awaken us to powerful feelings that have long been bound and submerged by the trappings of daily life.

For more information including dates:  
Contact – [KLMatlock@earthlink.net](mailto:KLMatlock@earthlink.net)

# TUNING OUT THE CHAOS

By Peter Lappin New York, New York

Remember what was life was like without the internet, e-mail, digital cable, cell phones and PDAs? Me neither. Every day it seems there's more to watch, more to read, more to know, just to keep up. Add a daily double latte (make that a triple) and it's no wonder so many of us experience sensory overload and find it hard to wind down at day's end. Constant stimulation makes you lose touch with who you are and what you really need. Try these simple tips to help tame the turmoil:

## 1. Turn it off.

Does your job really require you to check your e-mail or track global stock market gyrations 24/7? Unplug the gadgets for a few hours. Trust me, they'll still be there when you need them.

## 2. Do a body scan.

Find a quiet place to sit. Starting at the top of your head, check in with your body: Is your neck tight? Are you holding stress in your shoulders? Consciously release the tension in your body as you breathe deeply. (Start by exhaling completely—your next breath will be a big one and this fresh intake of oxygen will refresh you.)

## 3. Visualize calm.

We all carry memories of more tranquil times: a beach getaway where you took lazy naps on the soft sand, an aromatherapy massage you got on your birthday. Recall how you felt in those peaceful settings, and your body will naturally relax.

## 4. Read...and write.

Rather than watching TV or surfing online, pick up a magazine or book that inspires you. Better yet, write. Journaling is one of the best ways to recapture a sense of centeredness and to reconnect with yourself.

## 5. Focus on a long-term goal.

Are you learning to crochet so you can make an afghan for your friend's baby shower? Have you always wanted to take up yoga? Big projects can reconnect you to your passion and help put your day-to-day concerns into perspective.

## 6. Look at the big picture.

The presidential election will be over in a few months; the economy will eventually take an upturn. Like the seasons, events happen in cycles. Instead of worrying about what may be immediately ahead, try thinking about the ebb and flow that are life's natural rhythm

**7. Exercise.** Exercise can be part of your daily routine and a long-term goal too (see tip 5). For an extra lift: Sign up for a race or walk sponsored by an organization whose mission you believe in. You are not only helping yourself by participating, but helping others as well. ([walk.avonfoundation.org](http://walk.avonfoundation.org) is a great place to start.)

## 8. Cook.

There's nothing like cooking to help you leave your worries behind. Preparing a meal keeps you in the now and stimulates your senses. Bonus: eating a home-cooked meal is a wonderful way to nourish yourself.

## 9. Reconnect with nature.

Do you spend your day surrounded by traffic and the walls of a cubicle? It's important to remind yourself that you live in a world of great natural beauty. Take a walk in the park or the woods, contemplate a glorious sunset or cuddle with a pet. There's nothing more calming.

## 10. Show your love.

When was the last time you let a family member or friend know how much they mean to you? Expressing your appreciation through words and actions puts you back in touch with perhaps the most powerful force you have: your love for others.

You know how you have to charge your cell phone regularly? Think of these tips as ways to recharge your mind, body and spirit. Why not tune out the distractions and give yourself a mini-vacation every day? You've earned it!

The above article originally appeared in [Guideposts magazine](#).

# THANKSGIVING IN AUGUST

By: Caren Foster

We have so much, and so many, to be thankful for here at the Little Brown Church~

I am thankful for Erna and her dedication to the wedding ministry of our church which blesses so many couples in their new lives together. Her support team – Lina and Denise – also deserve a big round of applause. Erna is also the consummate gardener who keeps the front of the church looking bright and welcoming. She even scrubbed the fountain when the algae took over.

I'm thankful for Katalin and Lesly and John and Landy and Mary – the musical backbone of our services. They bring true heart and soul, not to mention tempo and tune, into each service with their talents.

I'm thankful for my daughter Amanda, who chose to spend her community service hours staining the deck behind the parsonage and to John and Mike who prepped it for her. To Roger, who set up our E-cycling fundraising and earth-saving opportunity and to Robin who is our Tri-City Homeless Shelter connection with those less fortunate – thank you!

I am thankful for a dedicated council who keeps the business of the church going, watches over our members, supports our pastor, maintains our building and grounds, deals with issues and looks to the future. I'm referring not only to the current council, but to everyone who has stepped up to be part of the leadership of the church.

I am thankful for Mary who heard God's call to come to the Little Brown Church and didn't shy away from potential difficulties, but embraced us, and the opportunity to serve. Her installation service will be a true celebration.

So many pitch in, in so many ways ~ Victoria keeps us posted with our newsletter and Dave makes sure we are emailed with all the latest announcements, Lina cleans house, Landy is there every morning to unlock the doors and make a pot of coffee to share, Kevin and Katherine can be counted on to greet us, and Sherry, and all those who volunteer to take on a Sunday school session, make our children feel like a special part of this church.

For those who work diligently behind the scenes to keep the buildings and grounds inviting, who help keep our doors open with their financial contributions, and who reach out to see that LBC participates in the wider church – thank you. There are so many gifts that each of us offer, I'm thankful to all of you who share those gifts with no expectation of thanks in return.

For those who can't be with us each Sunday, but keep us in their hearts – thank you.

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For every parent or grandparent who brings their young children to hear the Word and share the church family experience – thank you.

For **EVERYONE** sitting in the pews - who shares the spirit of Christ and a "glad to see you hug" each Sunday morning – thank you. (Thelma clearly wins the Gold Medal in the hug department)

## NEW FOR THE FALL! THE BOOK:

*"What Matters to You? Matters to Us - Engaging Six Vital Themes of Our Faith is an ideal tool to introduce the United Church of Christ to today's seekers and disciples. Using stories from individuals and congregations past and present to restore and re-story the essentials of what matters to all of us; it links the questions of curious inquirers and longtime members to those of the larger community of faith. As author Sid Fowler writes: "God is in the questions."*

-- Rev. David C. Schoen, Minister for Evangelism, Stewardship, and Congregational Vitality, Local Church Ministries (A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ).

What Matters to You? Matters to Us: Engaging Six Vital Themes of Our Faith:

- 1) We Are People of God's Extravagant Welcome
- 2) We Belong to Christ
- 3) We Are A People of Covenant, a United and Uniting Church
- 4) We are One at Baptism and the Table
- 5) We Thank God by Working for a Just and Loving World
- 6) We Listen for the Still-speaking God

A seventh chapter offers historical examples. The United Church of Christ's Statement of Faith and the Preamble to the Constitution are also included.

Sidney D. Flower is a Washington, DC-based UCC ordained minister and consultant who assists congregations to become centers of spiritual formation. Please review the [User's Guide](#) for the ideal companion for this resource

Save 25%: \$6.00 each (Reg. \$8.00) for an order of six or more copies. Go to [UCPress.com](http://UCPress.com) to order now or call United Church Press toll free: (800) 537-3394 (M-F, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, ET)

**Please email Victoria Christian ([vkalikiano@aol.com](mailto:vkalikiano@aol.com)) to order your copy today and we can try to get the discount.**

# LET'S KEEP INFORMED ~ WITH OUR WIDER CHURCH



How would you like to see the UCC's message on televisions **all across the country**? Then all we need is your pledge of support today!

To date, UCC members and supporters have donated nearly \$175,000 to help bring the Steeples ad to a national audience this fall. That will translate to a viewer ship of approximately 8 million people.

But if **everyone** joins the effort, we will more than **DOUBLE** our viewer ship to 20 million!

If you can't give today, how about **pledging a future donation**? We'll count your pledge toward our \$350,000 goal.

Together, we will spread Jesus' message of unity, welcome and hope to millions this fall.

We can do it, but we have to do it together. **Give a little or give a lot. But give.**

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."  
Matthew 10:40-42

Be God's welcome. **Bring Steeples to the peoples.**

Sincerely,

The Rev. John H. Thomas  
General Minister and  
President  
United Church of Christ

The Rev. Felix Carrion  
Stillspeaking Ministry  
Coordinator  
United Church of Christ

(Courtesy [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org))

Our local Bay Association info can be viewed at [www.bayassociation.org](http://www.bayassociation.org).

## **Council Members:**

**Buildings & Grounds:** Roger Pratt

**Christian Social Concerns:** David Dogan

**Council Chair:** Mike Brown

**Evangelism:** Caren Foster

**Parish Nurturer:** John Robertson

**Pastor:** Mary Conant

**Spirituality:** Victoria Christian

**Stewardship:** Lina Owsley

**Treasurer:** Landy White

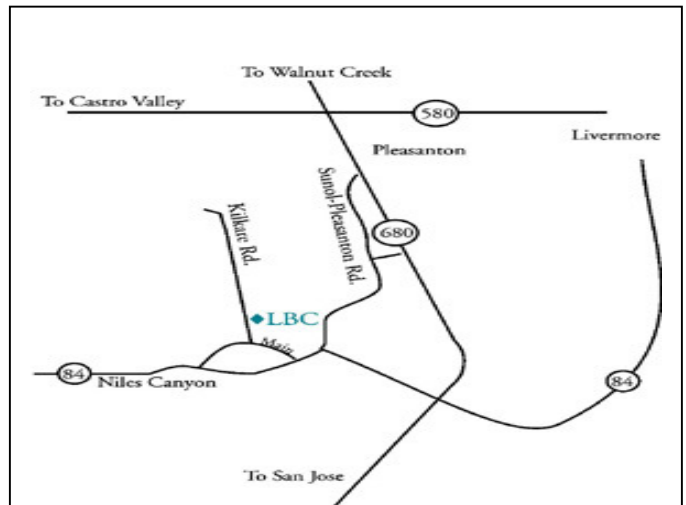
**Worship & Arts:** Lesly Mohr

**Youth & Children:** Sherry O'Connor

**Scribe:** Open

## **Pastoral Relations Committee Members:**

**David Dogan, Deverie Lautenschlager and John Robertson**



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