



The Rev. Dr. Mary Susan Gast
Conference Minister

12 September 2008

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andres
The Rt. Rev. Barry L. Beisner
The Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno
The Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves
The Rt. Rev. Jerry A. Lamb
The Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you. Though we have not met all of you, we are among your ecumenical colleagues. As Conference Ministers in the United Church of Christ, we serve in a similar ministry to yours, as spiritual leaders to the 254 congregations of the United Church of Christ in California (126 in Southern California, 128 in Northern California) and join you in many ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

We write to you in this moment to express our gratitude for your important and powerful witness for equal legal protection for all families in your joint public letter opposing Proposition 8. We are in complete agreement with you on this important matter of civil rights and want you to know that you do not stand alone in the religious community in this position.

In 2005, following in a historic tradition of standing for human and civil rights dating back to the Amistad captives, our United Church of Christ General Synod approved a resolution affirming equal marriage rights for all persons. The Southern California Nevada Conference was the originator of that resolution and was supported by the Northern California Nevada Conference. The resolution received what was reported as 'overwhelming' support and continues to do so. However we have also experienced opposition and brokenness of relationship within our denomination because of the action. So we know too well the cost of such prophetic leadership and applaud your action all the more.

If there are any further ways in which we can partner with and support you in this or other concerns of faith and justice, please do not hesitate to call on us.

In the name of Jesus who "calls us to love rather than hate, to give rather than to receive, to live into hope rather than fear" thank you again for your courage and leadership.

In prayer for justice,

Rev. Dr. Mary Susan Gast
Conference Minister
Northern California Nevada Conference
United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Jane Fidler Hoffman
Interim Conference Minister
Southern California Nevada Conference
United Church of Christ