

CRIBBS NOTES-July 8, 2007

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Church of Christ, more than eight-thousand people converged on Downtown Hartford, Connecticut, for General Synod 26.

Headliners included journalist Bill Moyers, actress Lynn Redgraves, United States Senator Barack Obama, and children's advocate Marian Wright Edelman. Each one brought a message that challenged and inspired the audience.

The Southern California Nevada Conference sponsored a resolution on immigration. Two other conferences brought similar resolutions as well. All three were merged into a single resolution and presented to delegates of the General Synod. After some debate, the Synod approved the resolution that calls on local congregations to extend radical hospitality to all persons regardless of their legal status. It criticized the construction of fences along the US/Mexican border, and directed the National Ministries of the UCC to work for just legislation that protects migrant families.

This is a proud but difficult moment in the life of our beloved denomination. It is a time when cruel behavior against peoples of the world is carried out in our name. This is a special period in which we are witnessing the deafening of an American administration that refuses to heed the will of the American people to end an unjust war.

The 50th Anniversary of the UCC also ushers in a "jubilee era," when we forgive debts and erase trespasses. As the people of the United Church of Christ, we are encouraged to learn the history of our young church and create a vision that carries us forward.

Members of the UCC joined people of Connecticut in launching the Amistad, a replica of the famed slave ship that transported human cargo from Africa in violation of anti-slave laws in America. The Amistad sailed from Hartford to England on its way to Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa.

In the hot sun one day before General Synod convened, the dock where the Amistad was moored, was filled with spectators who commemorated its unfortunate voyage in the early Nineteenth Century that resulted in its arrival into Long Island Sound off New Haven with its illegal contraband.

We were reminded again of the importance of Christians being engaged in social justice and living out our Covenant with Christ. We are called to bear witness to God's love. We are called to present a living testament of mercy, justice, and goodness.

Here at San Marino Congregational Church, UCC, we have an exciting opportunity to further our extravagant welcome by extending radical hospitality to everyone in need. Our facilities can be dedicated to God's Mission to service the poor, the oppressed, and disfranchised. We can offer ourselves as a gift to individuals and families who need us.

As we look ahead and determine how we will share our resources, let us prayerfully commit ourselves to generously and courageously make our church available as a sanctuary where radical hospitality is found.