DAYS OF GRACE

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2026 JANUARY 2027



Gary Grundman, Gary Pope-Sears, and Marty Murdock Putting in Work in Altadena



Three Men and

Two Houses



Helping with Recovery after Wildfire in Altadena

As we write this, Gary Pope-Sears, Gary Grundman, and Marty Murdock have just returned from an inspiring Thursday evening gathering in Altadena, California. We are the remnant of a larger team originally signed up for this project. We have spent the week preparing walls, doing painting, installing baseboards, trimming doors, sharing stories, and celebrating the privilege of serving others. The need here is huge for folks trying to help people receive honest assistance as they seek to repair or replace their homes after the fires—more than 9,000 homes were lost in the immediate area of Altadena.

We are working with a non-profit organization called Hope City Crisis Response Network. Many of our colleagues have worked with them in fire recovery in the Middletown area of Lake County, and more recently in the fire recovery efforts in Paradise. They are honest and helpful and well organized. What made this evening particularly special was that the dinner offered not just for us as volunteers, but to any of the homeowners with whom they are working as well. Around the tables we heard so many stories of struggles with insurance companies and government agencies, with unscrupulous building contractors, and opportunistic corruption in general. Somehow the people we met this evening have found hope and courage and community, and they are moving toward being in their own homes again.

We would invite all of you to join us next year. The need is great, the accommodations are actually quite lovely, and the fellowship with cherished colleagues is a gift to savor. Best of all perhaps, is that we leave each house that we work on that much closer to being finished, so the owner can again dwell in the safety and comfort of their own home. We think that God is smiling on these efforts. We will be setting dates soon for the next trip.

Actually there were about 10 of us originally scheduled for this week, but medical issues and family issues popped up to shrink our team. But we shall return! Watch for details in Days of Grace for the next trip.

President's Message

Dear Friends,

For years Rev. Susan Foster, Chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and I, in my work as a Boundaries Trainer for the Conference, heard troubling stories from newly ordained clergy, candidates in the process, and local pastors about some disrespectful behavior from clergy who had retired in the churches they were serving. We began asking these newbies, "What kind of behaviors? How did you communicate with the retired clergy about them? How did you mitigate these behaviors? What worked? What didn't? With what might you need help in seeking resolutions?" We're still asking these questions.

In September, Susan and I took the conversation and what we had gleaned from the new ones in ministry to an RCA Board meeting for reflection with the retired pastors and their spouses. Here's what we learned that day together:

1. It's important for us as the retired to recognize that we are changing roles as soon as we retire and begin attending church services. We will no longer be the primary person that the congregation turns to when asking for leadership, information, help with solving issues or conflict, or comfort in a stressful situation. Worship may not feel the same under another person's leadership. In fact, the style of leadership may look very different than yours when you were leading a church.

As a retired pastor, you get to look at things differently in whatever church you choose to worship in. You may see dynamics you've never seen before in a church. You may detect hidden agendas or emerging conflicts that were not so obvious when you were in role as pastor. What's your job in this? Observe, observe, observe, and listen, listen, listen. You may want to act BUT the only person to speak to is always the appointed/ assigned pastor, NOT the members!

2. It's important to remember that as a connectional church, we are almost always in dual relationships with each other. One moment someone is a close colleague on staff with us and in the next moment they are our D.S. Roles have to shift and boundaries must be observed. How will you navigate those? You are on the receiving end of the pastoral relationship. This is a shift. You are no longer the Center of the Church. You both have a relationship to the Annual Conference but the roles are very different now. The Appointed/ Assigned Pastor's role is to lead and to set the mission and vision for the church. She/he/they is "in charge" of the direction this congregation takes and how they live out their vision and that person's vision may be very different than yours. But it doesn't make the Assigned/Appointed Pastor's vision wrong—just different. The retired pastor's role is to support the appointed/assigned pastor in her/his/their care.

Remember the Appointed/ Assigned Pastor cannot read your mind. Our advice? Make an appointment to get to know the Assigned/ Appointed pastor fairly quickly upon arrival—yours or theirs. If you want to volunteer in this new church you've chosen, then discuss this with the Appointed/Assigned pastor. As a pastor who had many retired pastors in her congregations over the years, I welcomed whatever gifts the retired wanted to give to help with the ministry. I experienced them all as beacons of light and grace to work with and cherish. They listened to me, conferred with me, and observed things WITH me and because they did, I think I sharpened skills of being able to discern outcomes BEFORE I

committed to certain goals saving me lots of time and trouble.

3. What drove you crazy working in a parish when you were an active pastor? We're guessing that those same things happen in most congregations. So don't do those things to your new pastor. Become a friend shaped colleague. A friend shaped colleague would never dress down any colleague. They embody being friendly, compassionate, curious, helpful, and being a good listener.

Hold positive regard for colleagues, assume they are human, have a brain, wish to succeed and want the best for the church and Jesus Christ. Treat them as you would want to be treated. This is the behavior expected of us as retired clergy and spouses. Not to judge them, "fix" them, critique them or disparage them. We're still all learning together. So what if they have a different music list that you can't stand? Tune the music out during worship and use the time to pray. Practice being flexible and adaptable.

4. The Book of Discipline states in Para. 341.5 that authority rests in the appointed pastor and NOT in the retired pastor. Religious service rests in the authority of the appointed pastor. Which reminds us as the retired that it is time to grow in a different way. We are changing from the lane of primary doer to an Emmaus approach of walking with our pastors in our church. We will need to become more receptive to pastoral care for ourselves and our spouses, asking our pastor to pray with us. We will need to learn to "yield" to another's perspective, discernment and leadership. We will need to run our great ideas for new ministries, projects, missions and ministry by our Appointed/ Assigned Pastor FIRST before taking an action to realize them no matter how good those ideas seem to us. And finally, we will need to say NO to anyone in the congregation who asks us to officiate at weddings, funerals, and baptisms because we know in our hearts that these intimate acts create relationships between pastors and members in a way that nothing else does thus giving our pastor the opportunity to deepen her/his/their relationship with members. WE TAKE THE HIT and say: NO! And practice a full STOP if/when congregants ask us to do these things.

We encourage YOU to be the blessing to your pastor by any means you can, in all the ways you can, at any time you can.
Grace to you all,

Maggie

P.S. What did we forget? Please feel free to respond with more ideas by contacting me. 916-six hundred - 7083 (formatting to thwart spam bots)



Award Winning Artist Mike Friedrich

Rev. MIKE FRIEDRICH was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in July, 2026 by the San Diego Comic-Con. Mike began his career in comic books by writing scripts for DC Comics and Marvel Comics through his years at Santa Clara University. He is credited with co-creating the characters of Thanos and Drax (Marvel Comics) and Merlyn (DC Comics). Throughout his 35 year career in the comics field he was a writer, small press publisher, marketing executive, artists' agent and convention organizer. He left that field in 2002 and became a union organizer on the UC Berkeley campus.



In a rather strange unexplainable twist, Mike retired from his union position, received a Master of Theological Studies from Pacific School of Religion and was eventually ordained a Deacon in 2016, immediately eligible to retire again.

Mike has been active in Friends of Wadi Foquin, participating and/or leading 4 pilgrimages to Palestine and the Holy Land. He is currently involved in Bay District planning and strategy. He attends New Bridges UMC in Alameda and occasionally sings in the choir at his home church, Berkeley Methodist United Church.

Word has been heard from.....

Greetings California Nevada Retired Clergy friends....

Michael Swartz turned 80 in May He enjoys providing pulpit supply for clergy friends in the area. He also confutes his work with the Illinois May Ministry group and will be traveling to Southern Mexico were he's been going off and on since 1994.

Nancy McConnell is enjoying retirement and occasional lunches and happy hours with other retired speech therapy colleague. Her pickleball, bunco, and P.E.O. groups keep her busy as does our dog, Dudley, a high-maintenance Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

We are looking forward to a second Viking River cruise along the Rhine this fall (hopefully rain will help the river rise). In December we head to Long Beach, CA to celebrate Christmas with Nan's 102 year old dad and family. We'll spend the winter in our condo there. If you're in SoCal between January and April, give us a call!

Love and blessings to you all!

Michael Swartz and Nancy McConnell
Bettendorf, Iowa.

Making Asilomar More Accessible

A cherished gathering. More ways to take part.

FEBRUARY 2–4, 2027



Looking forward to the 2027 Gathering of Spiritual Leaders at the beautiful oceanfront Asilomar Conference Grounds, but concerned about navigating the rolling terrain? The Endowment Board has you covered!

In addition to providing per diem assistance to help offset the cost of attending, The Endowment Board has approved funding for **heavy-duty mobility scooters** for participants with accessibility concerns.

Early reservations will help the conference ensure that you are assigned to a room that can accommodate scooter access.

The Endowment Board remains committed to finding meaningful ways to help retired clergy feel connected, engaged, and fully included in the life of the Conference. We are grateful for the opportunity to support your participation in this cherished annual gathering.

RESERVE YOUR SCOOTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Contact Rev. Clyde Vaughn • **cvfaad7@gmail.com**

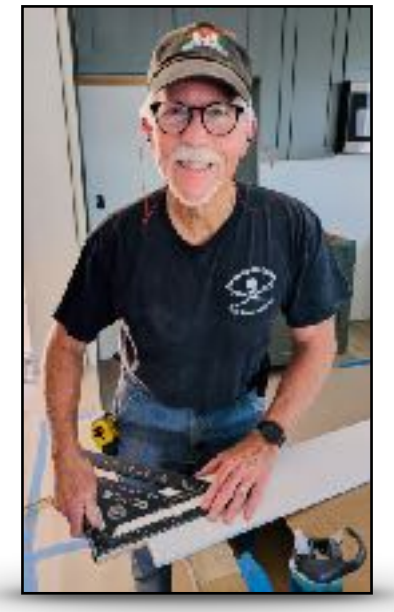
Mission and Justice

From your Mission and Justice Committee…….

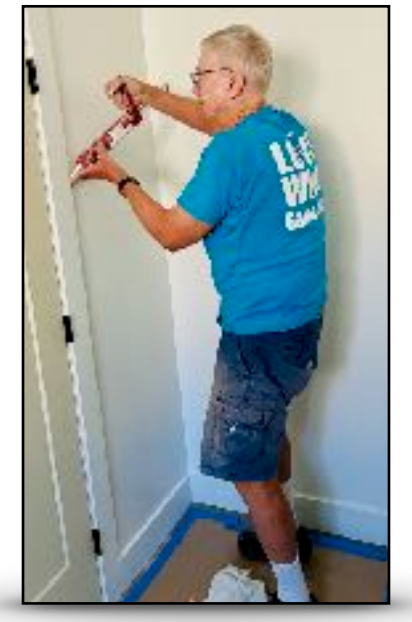
As you know, the Annual Conference this year passed a resolution from RCA for clergy to be ready for disasters by having preparatory training part of seminary and clergy training. In Our conference we have already lived through fires, floods, earthquakes and sea level rise. What do clergy and their congregations need to do to be better prepared for these emergencies, likely to see increases with climate change. PSR and Claremont have been contacted to begin conversation with them. Please bring this up in the church you attend and with clergy clusters. For resources to follow through, contact Betty Pagett at bettypagett@gmail.com
Let's take the lead in being prepared by learning from experience! Betty

Mission and Justice in Action

More photos from the Mission Trip to Altadena!



Gary!



Gary!



Marty!

Share the Light, Share the Sweetness

Two Unique Ways to Support Retired Clergy this Holiday Season

The holidays invite us to remember the people who have shaped our lives and to share our gratitude. This year, The Endowment Board offers two opportunities to celebrate those connections while supporting retired clergy and their families: our annual Tree of Light campaign and our See's Candy drive.

Whether you honor someone whose kindness has stayed with you or share a box of chocolates with someone you love, your participation puts Gratitude in Action.

Tree of Light

135 Years of Light—and the People Who Made It Shine



For 135 years, The Endowment Board's story has been illuminated by faithful people: ministers who answered a call, spouses who served alongside them, congregations that surrounded them with love, and donors whose generosity helped ensure retired clergy would be cared for in their golden years. Our 2026 Tree of Light celebrates those people and invites you to consider: **Who has been a light in your life?**

Perhaps it is a pastor who walked beside you through a difficult season, a colleague whose friendship enriched your ministry, a family member who encouraged you, or someone you especially miss during the holidays.

Through a year-end gift to The Endowment Board, you can honor or remember that person and share a small piece of their story. Every donation includes an ornament that you are invited to personalize for your honoree with a handwritten message of love and admiration. We will hang it on the tree in our office lobby, photograph it, and include the photo in the acknowledgment sent to your special person.

As the branches fill, the tree becomes a gathering of stories. Behind every ornament is a relationship, and every name represents a life that has made a difference. Our Tree of Light will remain on display through **January 6, 2027**. Letters will be mailed in mid-November, or you can make a tribute donation online and reference the Tree of Light in your note and we will create an ornament on your behalf. **Be the light for someone this Christmas!**

Parish Wisdom in Scholarship & Education (W.I.S.E.) Spiritual Growth and Fellowship Grant Application

Purpose: To reimburse Retired Clergy and Spouses and Surviving Spouses for fees involved in seeking spiritual and creative direction or education through individual or group events.
Funding: Limited funds are available annually for personal spiritual/creative direction & education. Funds are given by the Retired Clergy Association with funding provided by the **Conference Claimants Endowment Board** in support of their mission serving the retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses of the CA-NV Conference.
Eligibility: Grants are available to all RCA members
Amount Available: **$500** per person per year. Eligibility renews on July 1 of each year.
Procedure: Complete application below. Send to RCA via scan in email or USPS (NO PHOTOS).
Checks will be mailed directly to applicant. Please be sure to give correct mailing address.

Application:

Date: _____

Name: *(check will be made out to this name)* _____

Address: Street_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone number: *(in case we have questions)* _____

Email: *(in case we can't get you by phone)* _____

I am requesting a RCA Spiritual Direction grant in the amount of $_____

Please respond to each point:

~ I am a member of the RCA. Yes_____ No _____

~ What is it that you wish to do? _____

_____

~ How will this facilitate your spiritual growth? _____

_____

_____

Total Cost for this event: $_____

I promise to write a brief report on this event and how it affected my spiritual/creative growth or education (what I learned!) upon the conclusion of the event. Yes_____ No _____

I have read the eligibility and availability information above. I understand the restrictions and that a check will be mailed to me directly and have double checked the mailing information.

Signature: _____ Date:_____

Mail application to:
RCA, 9328 Elk Grove Blvd #105-141, Elk Grove, CA 95624

See’s Candy

A Sweet Tradition with a Caring Purpose



Looking for a joyful, seasonal way to give and get? Our See’s Candy fundraiser brings together a familiar holiday tradition with a philanthropic twist!

For every box purchased through the **online See’s Candy storefront available on The Endowment Board’s website, up to 50% benefits the Shepherd Fund**, which provides assistance to retired clergy and their families facing financial hardship.

A box of See’s Candy makes a delightful surprise for grandchildren, a thoughtful hostess gift, or a sweet addition to a holiday gathering. Have candy shipped directly to a loved one, or have it delivered to yourself to bring along when visiting family and friends.

Ordering is open now through December 4, 2026.

This holiday season, we invite you to share the light of someone who has made a difference and share a little sweetness along the way. Thank you for helping The Endowment Board continue its tradition of care for the retired clergy and spouses of the CA-NV Conference.

November
THOM ABRAHAMSON
DEBBIE ARJONA
BILLYE AUSTIN
DONALD BALDWIN
BILL BALLAGH
MARY BECK
GAYE BENSON
MYRNA BERNADEL-HUEY
GENE BOUTILIER
BETTINA BROWN
HAZEL BUCKNER
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LISA CARTER-NORDLANDER
AMELIA CHUA
DICK CORSON
PAM COY-ARMANTROUT
JIM CRAWFORD
STACI CURRENT
JIM CURRENT
STEVE DRAUCKER
KATHRYN DUNNING
ALEXIS EASTON
JANICE EMERSON
MARILYN ERICKSEN
DOUG FITCH
ART GAFKE
JUDSON GEARS
LIN GOODYEAR
SHIM HABTE
HEATHER HAMMER
NEAL HARRELL
MELINDA HILL
MARTHA HOEFNER
JAN HOUGLAND
KAY HUTCHINSON
BILL HUTCHINSON
ANTHONY JENKINS
DOUGLAS JOHNSON
EILEEN JOHNSON
STEVE JOHNSON
HEE-SOO KIM
SU-KYONG KIM
VERONICA KIMBLE
MO-CHI LAM
EILEEN LINDSAY
ODETTE LOCKWOOD-STEWART
LINDA LOESSBERG-ZAHL
JIM LUTHER
DIANNE LYNN
ED MARTIN
KAREN McCLINTOCK
MARTHA McCORKELL
FAYE McCOY
JAN MISHLER
NORM MOWERY
MARGARET OROPEZA
BETTY PAGETT
MARK PARSONS
JOHN PAVONI
GARY POPE-SEARS
SCHUYLER RHODES
DAVE RIECK
BETSY SCHWARZENTRAUB
DANTE SIMON
JERRY STRAKS
VERNA TAM
ROSEMARIE TIAPULA
KAY WATTERS-JULSING
STEPHEN YALE
FRANK YANG



December
LILLIAN BAKER-HOLLEMAN
TINA BALLAGH
MARILYN BASTEAR
SHANNON BLACK
JOYCE BRACKNEY
JOSEPH BROWNRIGG
PATRICIA BRUCE
MARGARET BRUCE
LANCE CHOY
STELLA CORDES
ERIC DALE
SHARON DELGADO
GUARI DELGADO
ANNE DILENSCHNEIDER
PAUL DIRDAK
CAROLYN DOWDY
ANGELI FITCH
BETTY GEARS
ALICE ANN GLENN
NOBUAKI HANAOKA
PAUL HARKNESS
DOREEN HART-HINSHAW
LEE HAYWARD
DONNA HOUGLAND
DANNY HUANG
NOBU IMAIZUMI
LINDA KELLY
HENRY KIM
PETER KIM
CHRISTOPHER KLEIN
JEFFREY KUAN
NANCY LANDAUER
PAT LEAMY
KIM LESLIE
LILIA LOPEZ-RAHMAN
WINNIE McILVENNA
MAGGIE McNAUGHT
LEE MORRISON
JO NEISH
ALICE OBERG
ANTHONY OROPEZA
ANDREW PARK
RONALD PARKER
GINNIE PEARSON
ADRIAN PELL
GAYLE PICKRELL
DIANE PINNEY
MARY PRANCE
LINDA PRENDERGAST
DON ROULSTON
BETH STIDHAM
WANG THAO
CAROL UBALDE
TED VIRTS
LOC VO
CAROL WALKER
SHARON WATSON

January
BRANDON AUSTIN
RUTH BALL
RICHARD BASTEAR
MARK BOLLWINKEL
THOMAS BRACKNEY
PAT CLARK
NORM DALEY
NANCY DANSON
KAREN DARLING
DON DeNOON
ANITA DUTT
LOIS EDDE
INITA ESCAMILLA
ANGELO FAZIO
MARGARET FONG
ROCHELLE FRAZIER
FRANK GOMEZ
ALPHA GOTO
HAE SOON HAN
LAURA HEFFERNAN
VERN HILL JR.
CAROL IMAIZUMI
BILL JEFFERIES
BILL JOHNSON
DIANE JOHNSON
OK-WHAN KIM
YOUNG SOOK KIM
CONNIE KIMBALL
ROSEMARY KIMBER
JoANN LAWSON
CAROL LAYTON
JINSIK LEE
JULIA MAJOR
MARGE MARTIN
DOUG McCOY
SHEENA McKENDRICK
VINCENT MIXIE
CEDAR MOSS
JANET MUELLER
NEAL NEUENBURG
JEFF NORDLANDER
OSCAR OCHOA
HANKYU PARK
HARRIET PECOT
MONIQUE-CHERI PIERRE
KIM RISEDORPH
LORI SAWDON
KEN SCHWARZENTRAUB
MICK SMITH
MARY SPENCE
PATRICIA SPOONER-WALTHER
RICHARD STINSON
KAREN STOFFERS-PUGH
CINDY STORRS
RICHARD TAYLOR
DOLORES WAGER
MARY LOU WHITE
DAVID WOLF



November
THOM & DEBBIE ABRAHAMSON
GEORGE & LOUISE CARTER
TOM & EVELYN COTA
OSCAR & INITA ESCAMILLA
BECKY GOODWIN & PAUL COLBERT
PAUL & LANA HARKNESS
SIOSIFA & MELE HINGANO
ANTHONY & VALERIE JENKINS
LIZABETH & CHRISTOPHER KLEIN
JIM LUTHER & DAWN HORDER
JAY PIERCE & JOSEPH JACOBS
STEVE & KELLEY PUDINSKI
FLOYD QUENZER & DONNA HOUGLAND
RICHARD & DIANE TAYLOR
SAMUEL & SOLINNA VORN
MICHAEL & SUZANNE YOSHII

December
DAVE & JANET BUNJE
JIM & CELINDA CURRENT
ELMAR & LINDA DE OCERA
SHARON & GUARI DELGADO
RAY & CAROLYN DOWDY
GREGORY & CARYL FLOYD
JOHN & MEGUMI FUJIMORI
LIN & NANCI GOODYEAR
NOBU & CAROL IMAIZUMI
SUE KING & JIM DUFFY
BOB & ELIZABETH ANN KUYPER
FRANCES & FRANK LEIBERT
LINDA & BOB LOESSBERG-ZAHL
LILIA LOPEZ-RAHMAN & MATI RAHMAN
DAVID & CEDAR MOSS
AURA-LILA & OSCAR OCHOA
TED & HARRIET PECOT
NANCY PHARIS-CURIE & DENNIS CURIE
MACK & NANCY PHILLIPS
MONIQUE-CHERI PIERRE & ERIC DALE
DAVE RIECK & TRACEY WAYMEYER RIECK
PETER SUHN & SUNHA BAAK
BETTY & BOB WEISER
CHUCKUA & POYEE YANG

January
TINA & BILL BALLAGH
NOBUAKI & AYAKO HANAOKA
KIEN SREY & SAMUT CHHENG SREY
STEVEN THOMPSON & KAREN PETERSON
CLYDE & SHEILA VAUGHN
HARRY WOOD JR. & NANCY REIMER-WOOD

Conversation Starters

- When was the most inappropriate time you couldn't stop laughing?
- Do you operate more by your head or your heart?

Ask these questions of friends and family and share a memory or spark some conversation!

California-Nevada Annual Conference of the
United Methodist Church
Retired Clergy Association
P.O. Box 980250
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Conference Session

June 11-14, 2027

> SAFE Credit Union Sacramento Convention Center

Annual Luncheon

June 11, 2027

>SAFE Credit Union Sacramento Convention Center

Deadline for Next Issue

January 15, 2026