

Under the Bell

@ Caz vol. 2

UCC and UCCR

The UCC (United Church of Christ) and UCCR (United Camps, Conferences and Retreats) have been working together for over 50 years.

UCCR was officially formed and registered as a nonprofit cooperative organization in 1970 by a group of Northern California clergy who sought to unite their efforts to manage their respective denominational camp and retreat properties. The design was to establish a central office that could handle accounting, reservations, staffing, and property oversight for seven church-owned camps and retreat centers throughout Northern California. The denominations included the UCC, United Methodist, Disciples of Christ We are mission driven, and have been for 50 wonderful years! UCCR has been managing Camp Caz since its inception.

Although Camp Caz has been struggling with deferred maintenance (old buildings) and the changing landscape of our local churches (aging and decreased membership and participation in many churches), it has been almost paying for itself without on-going maintenance. Many camps happen during the year and summer months when the UCC is not using it. This had helped but the NCNCUCC (Northern California Nevada Conference of the UCC = us) does not make money from our camps. It pays UCCR, for staffing, supplies and a tiny bit to help with maintenance.

Then COVID came and camps closed. We know how the closures of many businesses has affected us all. But, a company like UCCR that runs by holding camps was stricken. Mike Carr, President and CEO of UCCR presented Rev. Diane Weible our NCNCUCC Conference Minister their plan of charging us with additional fees on top of their usual fees to help them since camps were not being held. This was sudden and unexpected.

This was brought to the Conference Council, (the elected body that oversees the running of the Conference). We were unable to pay the additional fees. We did not have it in our budget. We did not have anywhere to get it and also keep Camp Caz afloat. Since we couldn't pay the new fees

Conference Council voted to break our contract with UCCR.

To break our contract, to suddenly begin managing the actual campus that is Camp Cazadero, to deal with new staff, people that were illegally living at the camp, maintenance, water testing, the dwindling water supply due to droughts and system age, FIRE took enormous time, energy and money of our Conference staff, Conference Council and countless dedicated volunteers. Cynthia Diggs, a former Camp Caz manager who raised her family at Caz told me, "I've managed a lot of camps in my life but none was harder than Camp Cazadero. I love the place. I raised my family there. I loved it that much. But none was harder, so hard." It has taken a toll on all of us as well. However, this move has kept Camp Cazadero a part of our Conference and kept our Conference financially viable.

Good has come out of all this; new people have been at Camp Caz, there is a renewed interest, we are re-learning the uniqueness and quirks of the campus, a committee was formed to envision a new and self-sufficient Camp Caz and their vision is beautiful... Until next time. Humbly, Charlotte Asher
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