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## Circles of Peace: 2006 All Church Retreat at Cazadero

By Adam Blons  
Minister of  
Community Life

FCCB's All Church retreat at Camp Cazadero, held every fall for at least the past 25 years, is a celebration of faith and friendship in a gorgeous setting. When you arrive at Camp Cazadero, located just outside of Guerneville, you emerge from a winding dirt road into a large open field and circle of cabins. These rustic buildings (complete with hot water!) are cozy and yet surprisingly comfortable. The weekend of Sept. 23-24 was my 8th time at this retreat and still God's presence at Cazadero is as strong as ever.

The weekend began with a small group of early birds arriving Friday night and sharing whatever they brought for dinner. On Saturday morning, Margie Coates and company arranged the welcome table with cookies and lemonade. Soon, activity was buzzing from one end of camp to the other as children began lizard hunting or playing Ga Ga Ball, while adults began to ease into the rhythm of being on retreat. The rest of the day flowed from singing to crafts, to swimming, to hiking, everyone moving at their own pace yet all together in community. This year adults and youth participated in a workshop on Non-Violent Communication shared by an outside trainer.

Following dinner on picnic tables on the deck was a rousing folk dance followed by s'mores and singing around a campfire. As children were put to bed, youth and adults gathered to hang out. The youth loved sneaking and hiding around the camp playing Sardines! All eyes were drawn to the awesome star-filled night sky. When I fell asleep that night, I marveled that here in this one field on this one mountaintop were 130 people who love and care for each other enough to share



bunks and bathrooms and a common table.



Sunday morning culminated in worship at Vesper Point—a beautiful tree-lined "sanctuary" hovering above a deep river valley—where we sing and pray and share communion together. This year it was children and youth who volunteered to serve communion, and everyone knew when they came forward that it was just as it should be at Caz. God was so accessible to everyone there—young and old, new to the community and long-time members. And we, encircled by the beauty of nature, held by a welcoming and loving community, found many moments to savor God in music, in play, in food, in meeting new friends, and in returning home satisfied.



**First Congregational  
Church of Berkeley  
United Church of Christ**

2345 Channing Way  
Berkeley CA 94704  
510/848-3696  
info@fccb.org  
[www.fccb.org](http://www.fccb.org)

*One in a series of longer articles illuminating the life of FCCB.*

## Some Cazadero Weekend Recollections

### Bruce and Carol Copeland:

“We remembered that our last time at Caz was a Plymouth House retreat 61 years ago during our courting stage. This year, we enjoyed the multi-generational participation, from brand new babies to us old timers. As relatively new FCCB members, we appreciated the free time which allowed us to get acquainted with folks we had not known before—and some nap time. We had fun at the campfire Saturday night eating s’mores, hearing good music and seeing all ages engaged in word games and crafts.”



### Diana Graham:

“I have been going to Cazadero for our All Church Camp for about 18 years. This year was lots of fun. The theme was “Circles of Peace,” and there were opportunities to make symbols of peace during the craft time or bread for communion on Sunday as well as to learn about non-violent communication techniques. There were sports and swimming, and for me a chance to do a new hike. There was



dancing (including an opportunity to practice my grade school Virginia reel), singing around the campfire and telling great jokes like ‘Why did the dinosaur cross the road?’ ‘I don’t know, why did the dinosaur cross the road?’ ‘Because the chicken hadn’t evolved yet.’ And seeing all of the kids of various ages reminded me of how my children went from young to YES to Winthrop. But, as always, the most memorable part of Caz was the chance to talk to people I had never met, to sit in the quiet of the beautiful forest, and to worship at Vesper Point. It was also a time to remember that I am part of God’s creation and that whatever is happening, this is a place where I can be at peace and recharge myself to work for peace in our world.”

### Brianna Contaxis-Tucker (age 11):

“The best thing about Caz was the Yes program. We got our own cabin, just the kids, Adam, and Julie. At night we played Sardines and one time we hid so well the others gave up. We had a pie race and got to eat the pies. Then we hung out in our cabin and went to sleep at like 11:00-12:00. During the day, we played Ga Ga Ball and hung out at the art tables and made warm fuzzies and message bottles. This year Caz and the Yes program were great!”



### Seth McNaught (age 8):

“I want to tell you where to find some of Cazadero’s amazing wildlife. On the grassy plains, you will find young blue-belly lizards and larger ones in the shed that is in the corner of the field. To catch or see the larger alligator lizard, you must hike into the forest and turn over logs. Do not try to pick up one. They bite. Instead scoop them with a net. You can also hike into the place where worship service is held and take a side trail down to pools where salamander larvae can be found. I hope you can find some of these animals next time you go to Caz—plus maybe a little scorpion or katydid—and observe them captive and in their natural habitats.”

