

UCC head arrested in peace petition act: Protest at White House

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Joining protest with prayer, the head of the United Church of Christ was arrested October 10 outside the White House while attempting to deliver to President Bush a pastoral letter condemning the Iraq war.

More than 60,000 UCC members and supporters signed a petition in agreement with the letter, which blames the Bush administration for the deaths of thousands of Americans and Iraqis, the violation of human rights, and the diversion of billions of dollars from social welfare programs.

Led away from the White House gates with his hands cuffed in plastic binds, John H. Thomas, president of the United Church of Christ, said a sense of urgency over “the mess in Iraq” brought him to the White House.

Antiwar efforts “require more than the old kind of lobbying and need extraordinary witness,” he said. The 1.2-million-member United Church of Christ is known for its liberal stance on social issues.

Also arrested was Linda Jaramillo, a minister and another senior UCC official. Both she and Thomas were given three chances to leave a “no protest zone,” a church spokesperson said, before they were arrested by U.S. Park Police. The two were released about three hours later. *-Religion News Service*