

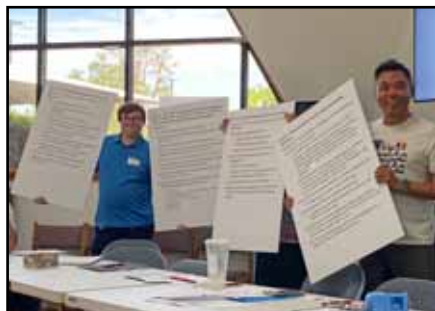
August 2023 | [www.iucc.org](http://www.iucc.org) | Join us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)!

OPEN AND AFFIRMING · JUST PEACE · GLOBAL MISSION · CREATION JUSTICE/GREEN FAITH

## Highlights of Leadership Weekend at IUCG (July 21-23)



Leadership Party at the home of Connie Jones (photos courtesy of Connie Jones)



Leadership Retreat (photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes)



Admin Board



Combined Boards

(photos courtesy of Jennifer Blackburn)



Ministries Board



New Leaders were installed at first service (left) and second service (right) - Photos courtesy of Jim Aynes



# Our 80's Drag Queen Bingo event on July 29 drew over 90 people!

(photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes & Pastor Sarah)



Jim Aynes & Christine Roy each won a bingo game!

With heartfelt thanks to our fabulous volunteers!



## Inclusive Storytime with Queen Cucu Chanel on July 29 was fun and entertaining!

IUCC and the Orange County Equality Coalition (OCEC) teamed up once more to co-host “Read with Royalty” - a story time event with Drag Queen Cucu Chanel. “Read with Royalty” features LGBTQ+ positive, gender affirming, and multicultural stories in a fun, safe, and positive place where all families can feel welcome and accepted.



## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion book club meeting on August 15

*from Lesli Mitchell, Co-Chair of DEI*

Our next DEI book club meeting will be Aug. 15 from 9-10:15 a.m. At our last discussion on Pauli Murray, we had a few questions about transgender issues. We thought it would be a good follow-up to watch and discuss the PBS/ Frontline documentary entitled “Growing Up Trans.” It’s about 1 hour and 20 minutes long. Here is the documentary link which should be accessible to all: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uluS-48tSpE>



The following article from the Human Rights Campaign, a leading LGBTQ+ rights organization, provides an overview of “Transgender Children and Youth: Understanding the Basics”: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender-children-and-youth-understanding-the-basics>



If you’d like to learn more about the anti-trans bills being proposed/passed across the country, this article gives a quick synopsis: <https://www.axios.com/2023/03/31/anti-trans-bills-2023-america>

Looking forward to our next meeting on August 15!

Here is the Zoom link for the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87905370822>

Meeting ID: 879 0537 0822

One tap mobile

+16694449171,,87905370822# US

+16699009128,,87905370822# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location:

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Have a good day!



## From the Senior Pastor

*by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano, Senior Pastor*



Isn't the summer just getting started? There's nothing like writing a newsletter article to remind me that time passes quickly! Actually, we're about midway through summer --a great time to check in and be sure we're getting enough vitamin D and enjoying those ocean breezes (when we can find them)! I think a good summer practice, one

I've tried to get better at, is to take at least 10 minutes a day to just be outside. I know it's pretty hot out there... but while you're out there acknowledge the sun on your skin, feel that coastal breeze (or go find it), listen for birds chirping, children playing and the sounds of summer. We obviously can't be on vacation all the time, but we do live in a vacation destination, so why not take a few moments out of your day to give yourself a mindful vacation in God's creation?

God has a way of breaking through to us in places we don't expect. That's why I love this summer series and the idea that each of us is a theologian who can find God in all aspects of life. The theologian's question is always "Where is God in this?" and "How is God at work?" Our summer series, "Animated Faith" challenges us to animate our faith - that is, to make it come alive! And we do that by looking for God in all aspects of our lives and, this case, even in Disney movies! The songs of the summer remind us of our childhood (or our children's and grandchildren's childhoods): from Pinocchio and Winnie the Pooh, to Frozen, Tangled, and the Lion King! Interestingly, when we look through our theological lens, we see more than we had before - and now we realize that even watching movies with the kids becomes an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God and one another as we animate our faith! This might make watching some of those films a bit more tolerable for those of you who may not relish the constant reel of grandchildren's obsessions, and who knows? You could find yourself transformed! God works in mysterious ways!



This is a fun series to invite your friends and family to experience. We'll continue it through the end of the month so if you haven't had a chance to join us, we still have several more Sundays to explore! This month we'll immerse ourselves in the Hundred Acre Wood as we reflect on Winnie the Pooh, head to the islands of the Pacific with Moana, get Tangled up in Rapunzel's story and explore one of Disney's newest animated hits about a Colombian family's magical gifts: Encanto! Just remember, we don't talk about Bruno! (Or do we?)

I hope your summer doesn't slip by too quickly! I've had so much fun with you already. From our delightful Sundays with the amazing music and theological exploration, to our Pastor's Potlucks and casual conversations to the rewarding time in retreat with our leaders as we began our new year together, to the awesome 80's Bingo with Cucu Chanel followed by our Read with Royalty and then Summer Spirit Day, July was truly a fun-filled inspirational month!

I'll be heading to Florida for a week to visit my husband's family. I'm not going to lie, I'm a little worried about the climate: it's heating up there! (Both politically and with the weather- oh, that humidity and hot hot ocean!) But we're looking forward to seeing family members, some of whom we haven't seen since before the pandemic. Where have your travels taken you? What adventures will you embark on these last weeks of summer?

I look forward to many more adventures with you this month and as our year continues. Let's continue to animate our faith with creativity, action, and connection.

In summer's delight,

*Pastor Sarah*

## Our Pastor's Potluck on July 11th was great fun!

*Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes*



It was a beautiful, balmy evening as about 40 friends gathered for a delicious potluck and great company under the sails.





## Mock-tails & Cocktails Under the Sails coming Aug. 16



Back by popular acclaim, it's Mock-Tails & Cocktails Under the Sails! Come join us on Wednesday, August 16, at 6 p.m. to enjoy delicious beverages served up by members of the Membership Ministry. This was a hugely popular event last year and is sure to be equally so this year!

This will be an evening potluck event and is open to all. Bring a delicious appetizer or dessert to share and plan to visit with friends!

Watch your e-blasts for more details. We look forward to seeing you there!

## A Message from Congregational Care

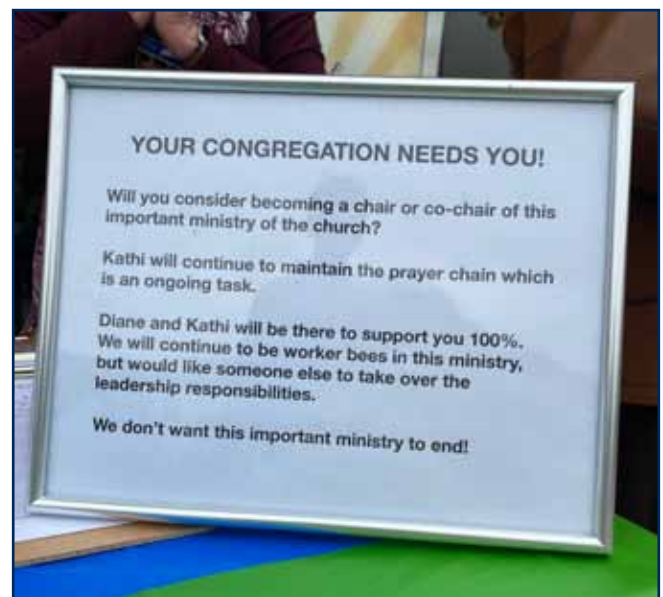
*by Diane Rust & Kathi Smith*



As you may know, we are presently without a chairperson for the Congregational Care Ministry. But that certainly doesn't mean that our members aren't reaching out to love and care for each other. We know that many of you send cards, make phone calls, visit each other, provide transportation, delivery meals, pray for each other, and help out with memorials.

We want to encourage you to keep your eyes and ears open for those in our congregation who might need some extra care or help. We know that Congregational Care will continue even though we don't have a chairperson, because this is a place where we try to make the love of God tangible for each other. However, if you are feeling called to chair this ministry, please let us know. We will be your worker bees and provide all the guidance you require.

Diane Rust & Kathi Smith





## Bon Vivant Dinner on August 26

Pre-pandemic, Bon Vivant dinners were regularly scheduled events held each month. We gathered at people's homes, the beach, or a park to enjoy an evening of laughter, camaraderie, life stories and shared experiences. We came away enriched, knowing each other a little better.

The Bon Vivant dinners have returned just in time for beautiful summer evenings. The dinners are offered every fourth Saturday, and you can sign up as a guest or host. On Sunday during coffee hour, see Debra Banwell on the patio to add your name for the next dinner. You can also call or text Debra at 949-433-1494.



8/02	Mark Allen
8/05	Janet Bamber
8/20	Keith Boyum
8/28	Henry Burke-Wilding
8/29	Keith Dillon
8/06	Paul Feick
8/27	Lorraine Fox
8/04	Worth Giller
8/13	Dara Hodges
8/15	Kadence Martin
8/07	Nitz Martin
8/15	Kai Mercier
8/25	Eric Nelson
8/09	Glenda Rynn
8/22	Jean Stewart
8/08	Eileen Vincent
8/27	Jaren Whitsitt



## Newcomer Luncheon on August 6

If you're a newcomer to IUCC and would like to learn more about us, please come to the upcoming Newcomer Luncheon on August 6 at 12:30 p.m. Contact [iucc@iucc.org](mailto:iucc@iucc.org) to RSVP. We'd love to get acquainted with you!



## AIDS WALK on October 7

Come and celebrate the arrival of autumn with a special Pride walk! It's happening on Saturday, October 7, 2023, at the 37th AIDS Walk Orange County. Join us and honor our LGBTQ+ community and those affected by HIV/AIDS. Be part of the IUCC team.

This walk will be an amazing experience filled with happiness, love, and togetherness as we embrace the spirit of our community. You can participate in our "Pride walk," watch exciting performances, play games, and explore the vendor fair. You can choose to walk alone or with a team. There are lots of ways for everyone to be part of this event.

IUCC will have a walk team and will host a booth. Watch for eblasts to learn more about how YOU can participate!

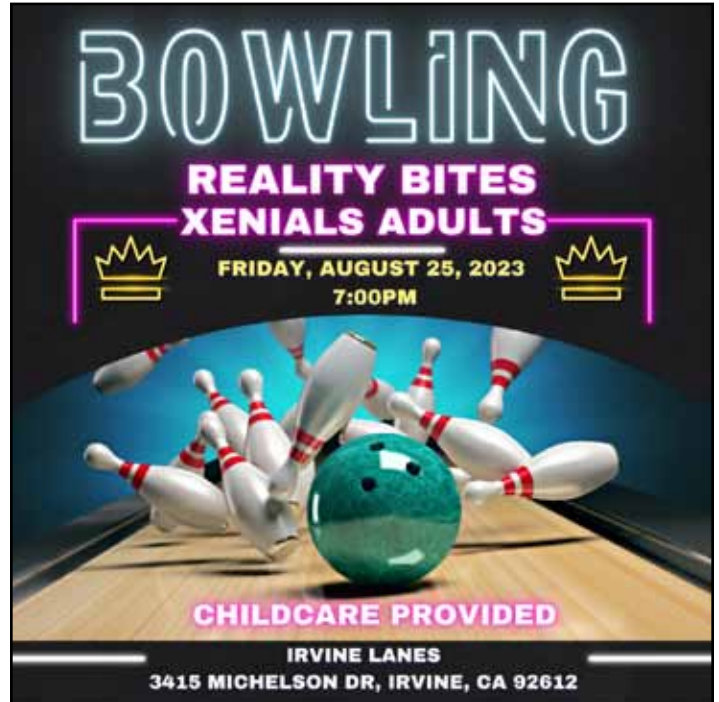
## Coming Soon!



### **From Our Heart To Yours Sunday, August 27 at 7:00 p.m.**

Come join your favorite choral interns Jaime Reza, Joy Dorko, and Thalia Moore for a special one hour recital. The music selected are favorite pieces that they have performed, or pieces that are just special to them.

Special guest performances by our own Yuyoung and Dr. Chris Peterson. This is a free concert with a love offering taken in support of the music ministry.



### **Calling all Gen X and Millennials! Friday, August 25, at 7:00 p.m.**

Reality Bites is a fellowship group for adults of a certain generation. The group is going bowling in August, and you are invited! It is a time for fun while getting to know each other better. If you have kids at home, you can have a night off for fellowship with the adults of our congregation. Childcare will be provided. Pizza will also be provided and the bowling alley has drinks and other food for sale.

The cost is \$20 per person to cover bowling, shoes, and pizza. If cost is an issue, please email Pastor Craig.



## From the New Moderator

by *Connie Jones*



First of all, I'd like to thank our previous moderator, Tricia Aynes, for successfully leading IUCC through the challenging pandemic years. Thank you, Tricia, for your grace and service of three years.

I am excited and honored to be selected as your new moderator where I will have numerous responsibilities looking out for

the well-being of IUCC, working with leadership and representing the congregation.

I have lived in Southern California all my life and graduated from Corona del Mar High School, UC Irvine (charter class), B.A. Music and Occidental College, M.A. Music.

Initially, I joined IUCC in 2006 to sing in our outstanding chancel choir. I've served as chair of the Music Ministry and search committees for two new choral directors. I also am choir librarian. Stepping outside of music, I served on the Pastoral Search Committee for our new settled pastor. Most recently, I co-chaired the Fund Development Committee and was selected to be on the Pastoral Relations Committee.

Last month, the leadership gathered at my home for a potluck to be followed by a leadership retreat the next morning. IUCC is in good hands with extremely talented and caring people. Please find a ministry or two that touches your heart and get involved if you aren't already. It is so rewarding.

As moderator, I will be attending monthly meetings of the Admin Board, the Ministries Board, the Coordinating Council and Fund Development. I continue singing second soprano in our chancel choir and participating in the ensemble for second service.

If you haven't done so already, please check out our new website. Alex Ingal has been working hard on it and anyone searching for a progressive church in Irvine will surely be impressed.

Thanks for reading my first newsletter article.

*Connie*



Welcome to Breeze! Last year IUCC migrated to a different software to manage important church data such as attendance, contact information, events, financial giving, and much more. The software is user friendly with wonderful applications to support smooth and efficient church administration.

It is time to roll this system out to the entire congregation. Your adaptability and support in utilizing this new system will enhance our church operations. Undoubtedly, there will be a learning curve as we progress towards full implementation.

By now all corporate members on the active list should have received an introductory email to create a Breeze account (if you missed this email or have questions, please contact the office at [iucc@iucc.org](mailto:iucc@iucc.org)). Once you've located the email, please respond to the introductory message by following four simple steps:

- Login into Breeze and access your account.
- Visit your personal profile and update your information.
- Upload a profile picture.
- Explore the system's functionality: attendance, directory, giving, profile, tags.

Complete details and instructions can also be found by logging onto the IUCC website at [www.iucc.org](http://www.iucc.org). Go to the top right hand area and click on the red button labeled "Resources," then scroll down and click on "IUCC Breeze." It will explain the process.

# The IUCC Legacy Circle



Many of you know one of our Legacy Circle members, **Bill Lawrence** (pictured at right). Bill was kind enough to record a wonderful video about why he and his partner felt it was important to remember IUCC in their estate planning. You can view his video here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vYWQ5Q3zcPMmamWBmQsFgZZ9Z0b6mtUb/view?usp=sharing>

If you have questions or would like to participate in the Legacy Circle program, please click on this link for more information: <https://iucc.org/legacy-circle>



In the video, Bill says, “The Legacy Circle was basically created by members of IUCC and friends to make bequests to IUCC in their wills and trusts so that the services and programs of IUCC can be continued in the future.”

He explains the importance of good estate planning and provides examples of how much it helps heirs avoid lengthy probate delays. In one instance, he provides an example of assisting a widowed neighbor with her care and finances before she died. As her trustee and executor, he was able to settle the majority of her estate in a timely manner. Unfortunately, one small account was not included in her trust, and that omission led to a delay of over four years in the full disposition of her estate. That’s why he stresses the importance of making sure that all details are handled properly.

“IUCC is near and dear to us,” Bill concludes. “We support its programs and ministries through an annual pledge during the stewardship campaign ... and we also want to make sure that the work of IUCC continues in the future, so we’ve designated IUCC in our will and are thus members of the Legacy Circle.”

## **The mission of the Legacy Circle is to contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of IUCC**

- through will or trust bequests
- designating IUCC as a beneficiary of an IRA, 401(K), annuity or other retirement account
- designating IUCC as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy
- through other gifts such as cash, marketable securities and marketable real estate

A gift to the IUCC Legacy Circle by members and friends of IUCC will ensure that the goals and dreams of IUCC continue for future generations!

## **What is planned giving?**

A planned gift can be made to IUCC through your will or trust, retirement funds, and certain life insurance policy arrangements. Planned gifts are almost always funded from accumulated resources or assets rather than income and are typically planned for during the donor’s lifetime but not actually received until after the donor’s death. Planned giving enables individuals to make sound financial plans that consider their own needs and those of family, as well as commitments to church and charities.

## **Why are planned gifts important to IUCC?**

By including IUCC in your planned giving, your gift will contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of IUCC for generations to come.

## **What is the Legacy Circle and how can I join?**

Anyone who establishes a legacy gift to IUCC and has completed a Confidential Bequest Intention form is automatically made a member of the IUCC Legacy Circle. It is our means of recognizing your lasting commitment to IUCC. If you wish to be an anonymous member, you may do so. If you have already made a legacy commitment to IUCC in your estate plan, we would love to hear from you so we are able to thank you for your generosity, make you a member of the Legacy Circle, and use the information to assist in our long-term financial planning.

## **What types of legacy gifts are currently supported?**

The Legacy Circle currently supports these types of legacy gifts:

- Bequests to IUCC in your will or revocable trust.
- Designating IUCC as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), annuity or other retirement account.
- Designating IUCC as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.
- Other gifts such as cash, marketable securities and marketable real estate.



## Photos from Summer Spirit Day on July 29: Wonderful Water

*by Lauren Louie, Co-Chair MYP*

We learned about being good stewards of water resources! We learned the importance of fresh water, went on a scavenger hunt to find ways water comes in and out around IUCC, used crafts and music to get closer to what water can teach us, and had fun with water! Thank you to the fabulous kids and IUCC volunteers who made the day possible!



Miss Martha showed us the importance of fresh water



Miss Myrna showed us how to create sensory bottles - they were fun to make, fun to watch, and a great way to see how water helps us get in touch with our feelings and imaginations!



Music helped us learn the story of the wise builder who built the house on the rock vs. the foolish builder who built the house on sand! Turns out it's hard (and fun!) to build on sand! Oops - here comes the waters that washed away the house!



Water play! We played with a slip and slide, reusable water balloons, spritz bottles, and sensory play! We loved splashing friends as they took their slip and slide turns!

## Ministry With Young People - Sunday School Fun!

*Photos and text courtesy of Lauren Louie, Co-Chair of MYP*



### NOT ALL SUPER HEROES WEAR CAPES - BUT WE SURE KNOW HOW TO ROCK THEM!

We've been learning about the power of creativity  
& the qualities of heroes at Sunday School  
(helping, honesty, bravery, just to name a few!).

Eric Houston (shown in photo on left) is one of our  
teen heroes! His humor & compassion are heroic  
traits he shows to the younger kids as a role model.



### SPECIAL EVENTS COMING SOON!

**Aug 25 @ 7pm: Bowling**  
(Young Adults, Gen X, & Millennials)

**Sept 10: Back to Church & Sunday School  
Rally Day at IUCC & After Church Social**

**Sept 24: IUCC All Church Picnic**  
(food, fun, & games!)





## Ministry With Young People - More Sunday School Fun!

*by Lauren Louie, Co-Chair of MYP*

We learned ways to be both brave and wise through a cooking lesson!



We helped to decorate our Sunday School room!



## STEPHEN MINISTRY AT IUCC ...

*by Bil Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest*



When you read this newsletter, our new class of six men will have only two more trainings left and then they will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers on Sunday, August 20, 2023. People often ask, "What did they study during their 40 hours of training?" Here's a peek:

1. Their consistent **presence** every week with a care-receiver is of paramount importance and the greatest gift one can give.
2. This ministry is about the art of "**listening**." This is the most important skill.
3. The power of positive **assertiveness**. There is a line in the sand as to what Stephen Ministers do.
4. The importance of understanding **feelings** and dealing with them creatively.
5. **Boundaries** need to be set before the ministry begins and maintained consistently.
6. Probably the most important thing that is highly stressed, even overstressed, is the pledge of **confidentiality**. Even one tiny breach of this issue could close down the Stephen Ministry and become a legal issue to IUCC and the UCC.
7. Understanding that this Ministry is **what Jesus wants** his Followers to do.
8. How to use **prayer and scripture** as part, or not part, of our work.

I hope this not only gives you an understanding of the power of our Stephen Ministry at IUCC but also might entice you to look further at doing this ministry as part of your faith journey.

PeaceLoveJoyHope Bil



## PC @ IUCC ...

*by Bil Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest*

I have found over the years that the concept "Progressive Christianity" means many different things to different people in different churches. Probably, PC's biggest asset is its willingness to make changes in concert with the times. Even the organization, Progressive Christianity (PC), has made many changes since its inception. Let me share **my** interpretation of what I think PC means today:

1. Most important: In the church's past history, there was (and still is, in most churches) great emphasis on Jesus dying for our sins. Today, it's about Jesus and the Great Commandment: that we practice **unconditional love (agape)**. I hear Jesus talking about accepting everyone (no exceptions) as they are; almost instant forgiveness; and a deep sense of caring for others. This behavior has to be modeled by each individual as well as by PC churches.
2. The PC movement respects, honors and encourages **interfaith cooperation**, realizing that almost all faiths want to make this a better world in which to live, each in their own way. Every faith has its strengths and weaknesses, but I find the foundation stone of almost every religion is love. PCers are not threatened by other faiths and want to work together in peace.
3. PCers understand the **Bible** as a religious history, rather than a literal history. The truth is not the story itself but found within that story. The Jews, who wrote the Old and New Testament, used a process called "Midrash" (a form of biblical interpretation) to understand how to find that truth. PC promotes that concept. A literal understanding of the Bible almost always misses the truth within the story.
4. One of the most important tasks of PC churches is to be constantly **educating** their members, because our faith ought always to be changing with the times. (My beliefs today are vastly different from my Sunday School lessons in the 1930s.)

PC churches welcome questions, encourage doubting, and want their members to keep seeking new truths. There are NO set answers. That is the only way one can grow in the faith. Brainwashing is forbidden. Constantly "seeking" is the way forward.

In the September newsletter, I'll share some more PC ideas from my perspective.

PeaceLoveJoyHope Bil



# The Embrace

by Vivian Elaine Johnson



## *A Spring Morning:*

Soil.  
Rich, ebony-black,  
pungent soil.

Dad,  
on his knees,  
works the soil between his fingers.  
He crushes lumps,  
smooths the surface,  
draws a finger-wide trench,  
then buries the seed.

Dad loves the earth  
for its embrace  
of the seed.

"The seed is resting.  
It is in transition," he says.  
Hope assures him  
that it will rise  
to new life.

## *A Summer Day:*

Sprouts, stems, leaves,  
plants reach for the sun,  
bursting with life.

Petunias, pansies,  
sunflowers appear  
to bring forth beauty.

Tomatoes, onions,  
lettuce, all rise out of the soil  
to nourish our bodies.  
Dad smiles.

## *An Autumn Afternoon:*

Sun  
shimmers through yellow leaves  
of the maple tree.

A minister,  
with a handful of warm soil, says,  
"We commit this body  
earth to earth, dust to dust,  
in sure and certain hope  
of life through Christ."

The earth, the soil,  
graciously opens its arms,  
to embrace dad.

Dad is resting.  
He is in transition.  
Hope assures us that he,  
like the seed,  
will rise.

His spirit will surely rise,  
vivid in our memories.  
We smile in his embrace.

--Vivian Elaine Johnson  
(In memory of my father)

