IUCC breaks ground on new building!
Thanksgiving is around the corner, and Advent begins right after that. This is the time when a church staff shifts into a higher gear and off we go. Fortunately, despite deadlines and things that come up when we're trying to finish something else, it is all a labor of love. Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas? Bring it on!

There is a new twist this season—we are building an extension on to our sanctuary. Yes…it is finally and actually coming to pass. And when it is done…how happy and relieved we will be. Room for meetings. The staff together in one place. A new garden area in which to have a small gathering. Folks, in not too many months from now, it will all be accomplished.

For now? Our main driveway will be closed off for a while. You’ll have to come in through Creek by way of the Woodbridge Village Association. A good deal of our parking closest to the sanctuary will be gone. However, as the construction goes on, our builders have promised to reclaim parking spots as the materials get put in place. It should get better after we reach the half-way point.

This is a thoughtful, kind and generous congregation. There are several ways that you can help your church during the next six months.

First and foremost, many of us (our family included) gave sacrificially in order to build this project. We are now in our Stewardship season. In order to make a budget for next year, our pledges cannot drop because we also gave to the Capital Campaign.

- Will you help us by returning your pledge card by November 12?
- Will you please consider raising your pledge by whatever amount you can? Please let the Capital Campaign stand on its own, apart from your pledge.
- If you did not give to the Capital Campaign for whatever reason, would you consider making a stronger pledge to our Stewardship Campaign? We are doing this over three years, and although the congregation knows this and voted overwhelmingly to go ahead, it does bear repeating.

General:

- The first half of the construction will offer us the least amount of parking. Can one car suffice if you normally bring two? Carpool? Do you live close enough to walk? Bike? Unicycle?
- Most important: Come to church during this time. Someone once said that 90% of life is just showing up. This is when we stick together—IUCC members and friends enjoy seeing each other and supporting the work we do. Speaking from a staff perspective, I know that for a talented and dedicated staff such as the one I have the privilege to work with, we all want to bring the best we can to Sunday morning and other experiences during the week as well. Be there! So, as I usually sign off in these articles:

See You in Church!

Pastor Paul

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See what our 130 UCC churches are doing in our Southern California-Nevada Conference. Take a look, or even subscribe online.

http://www.scncucc.org/voices/

Check out Pastor Paul's sermon for Day 1:

http://day1.org/8025-paul_tellstrombring_her bring_him
I grew up on a farm in Minnesota. There were six children in the family - three girls and three boys. We went to a Lutheran Church, and for five years of my schooling I attended a Lutheran parochial school. There were 50 students in the school in grades one through eight. It was a one-room school with one teacher for all eight grades. The exception to that was the year I was in first grade. There were 13 students in my class (baby boomers!) and the decision was made to give us some time with one teacher. So, every afternoon we went to the room next door and learned how to read.

One of the other unique things about the school was that virtually everyone who attended was related and most of us were first cousins. My mother’s brothers and sisters and their families all lived close by and their offspring attended the school with me. Besides going to school (and church) together, those aunts and uncles and cousins formed an integral part of my family’s social life. Visits to my grandmother’s home to spend the 4th of July, Christmas Day, New Year’s eve, special occasions such as baptisms and confirmations, and meals and visits with the relatives were an important part of my life.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I remember the many meals I shared with extended family. Usually around the beginning of November one of my aunts would ask us for the day or my mother would invite several of her sisters and their families to share in the Thanksgiving feast. We would start the day by going to church and then driving home to get ready for the big day. Quite often there was snow on the ground and that added to the specialness of the day. The big meal was always right around noon. No late afternoon or evening meals because my dad and the other dairy farmers had to be home to milk the cows! We would gather for the "traditional" meal complete with riced potatoes and lots of gravy (my mom was the best gravy maker I know!). There would be lots of conversation and I always enjoyed the chance to spend time with my cousins.

A very sharp memory of one of those Thanksgivings was right after President Kennedy had been assassinated. Thanksgiving was November 28 and the death of Kennedy and the events of the previous weekend were fresh on everyone’s mind. I was 13 on that Thanksgiving and I was truly saddened by Kennedy’s death. My family was never big on discussing feelings, but that day, we shared our sense of loss and disbelief.

In 2017, my family will gather at our home. My daughter and her family, my son-in-law’s Mom and Dad, my sister-in-law and her family will all be there - 17 in all including 5 kids! It will be a fun-filled, pulsing day full of good food, laughter, and conversation. We will be missing my son and his wife but they will be with us in spirit. I hope you have plans to spend the days with friends and or/family. Wherever you are or whoever you are with, I hope you will feel the joy of community!

That joy of community is one of the many things that make IUCC so special. On Tuesday, November 21 at 7:30 p.m. we will gather with our friends at University Synagogue to share a Thanksgiving service. Please join us for this special time of remembrance, thankfulness, and celebration of two unique faith communities coming together. I hope to see you there, and Happy Thanksgiving!

In faith and community,

Renae
Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes & Sarah Fiske-Phillips

Photos from Trunk or Treat on October 29th
Things have settled a bit, now that autumn is here. Thanks to Howard Emery for an enlightening Midweek Salon on October 25, about his experiences in Japan’s forest-healing centers! With the holidays approaching, Midweek Salon will be on hiatus until next year – but watch for information about what’s coming!

I’m continuing to lead an exploration of major world religions in Adult Sunday School at 8:45 & 10:00 a.m. So far, we’ve oriented ourselves by looking at Christianity and the fairly familiar subjects of Judaism and Islam; we’ve also discussed Confucianism.

Coming up this month will be Daoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. And while I’m taking a weekend off Nov. 5, there will be free discussion at both hours. We’re an educated, inquiring congregation – why not take this chance to share what you’ve already discovered, and learn from others, too!

Tuesday Bible Study with Ken Wyant has completed the First Letter of John from the New Testament, and begun the Second (of three). By the end of this month we may be able to begin the Gospel of Luke, as we explore all the Christian scriptures in the order they were written, according to Marcus Borg’s Evolution of the Word. Join us for always engaging and entertaining discussion!

This month Rabbi Arnold Rachlis, Cantor Ruti Braier, and our friends at University Synagogue will host our annual Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 21 at 7:30 pm. UCI law professor Jennifer M. Chacon (pictured at left) will speak on “Immigrant Communities: Language and Memory.” She is an immigration-law expert and is also involved with El Sol Academy in Santa Ana.

Comma Groups have all had their first meeting. Many thanks to this year’s leaders – Renae Boyum, Lorraine Fox, Linda Haghi, Terry LePage & Laura Long, Jim Martin, and Anne Rosse!

We had beautiful weather for this year’s CROP Hunger Walk on October 21! Team IUCC made a strong showing with ten members (nine human and one canine) and a current total of $1243. We still have a ways to go to meet our $1500 goal, so please consider donating at https://www.crophungerwalk.org/newportbeachca/Team/View/47379/Team-IUCC. The money collected will go to provide hunger relief around the world while 25% will stay right here in our community to support three very wonderful local organizations: Stand Up For Kids (http://www.standupforkids.org/orangecounty), Isaiah House (http://www.occatholicworker.org/help.html) and OC Gateway to Housing (http://ocgatewaytohousing.org/). Contributions are down this year and every bit helps, so please be generous! Thanks so much!!
There’s a saying about how it is easier to preach patience than to practice it. Well, we’re getting lots of practice at being patient! We expected to break ground in mid-October but wrapping up all of the loan paperwork has taken longer than we planned. If you’ve ever bought a house, you know just how much loan paperwork there can be. And, unfortunately, we can’t start any construction-related activity until the loan completely closes. The good news, we are very, very close to being able to begin construction and will announce the new start date soon.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau said that “patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.” So, thank you, IUCC, for your patience while we resolved these pesky delays.

With fencing and demolition just around the corner, here are some important reminders about what to expect while we are “under construction.”

1. Construction is expected to last approximately six months.
2. Our Alton entrance will be closed during major portions of the construction. Signage will direct you to the Woodbridge Village Association entrance off Creek Road.
3. Disabled parking will be moved to near Plumer Hall; look for signage marking the relocated stalls.
4. If you are able, we encourage you to utilize our overflow parking spots near Woodbridge Village Association, leaving the closer stalls available for those who need them.
5. The construction zone will be fenced off and accessible only to contractors. An 8-foot wide pathway will be created for sanctuary entry/exit. We’ll be encouraging the use of the side entrance into the sanctuary, especially as the preferred ADA pathway.
6. For more information about parking and sanctuary access, please refer to the IUCC Logistics Plan on the following page (page 8).
7. For the first few Sundays, we’ll have folks on hand to assist with parking questions and pedestrian routes.
8. Please allow yourself a little extra time on Sundays.
9. We’ll be providing regular updates on construction progress and how it is impacting our church campus.
10. By working together, we can make the inconvenience of being “under construction” a better experience for everyone!

IUCC is a vibrant and thriving faith community. We follow Jesus Christ, who teaches us to live a generous life, to grow intentionally in our welcome by breaking down barriers, creating and sustaining a community of compassion and care. On any given Sunday, we are blessed to hear Pastor Paul preach about caring for the least among us and seeking justice where there is oppression. Inspiring choral voices are raised in praise. Dedicated ministries meet for crucial advocacy and service. Youth come together in safe and nurturing space to explore their own beliefs. The Bible and thought-provoking Progressive Christian scholars are studied to inform our personal spiritual journeys. And, we gather in meaningful fellowship.

Recognizing the limitations of our aging campus, we came together to plan for new space that will better support all of these commitments. When Phase Ia is completed, we will take an important step in having more significance in the community and in the lives of our congregants.

At the lovely Ceremonial Groundbreaking (on October 15), through beautiful songs and heartfelt words, we recognized what IUCC has been able to achieve by coming together as a community. We can’t wait to come back together - in six months – to celebrate the new building and all of its possibilities!
IUCC New Addition Site Logistics Plan
Project Duration: 6 months

IUCC - Church Parking Lot Access

Entry off of Alton Pkwy will be closed during construction. All access to the church shall be off of Creek Rd.

Sunday Parking
- Additional IUCC Parking
- Church Parking Lot Entry
- Construction Zone
- No Parking
The scriptures say, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” For many of us who work for care of the earth, our faith is the driving force that has shaped our willingness to do so. Other people of faith may state that they don’t believe in climate change. They claim that God will take care of the climate and humans can depend on God’s actions to solve any problems. However, even if one doesn’t believe in climate change, it still exists. It is based on facts and evidence, not one’s belief. Not to use our God-given minds to care for the earth is a complete lack of responsibility on our part. If, indeed, the earth is the Lord’s, let’s treat it that way!

Climate scientists have warned that climate change will bring about – and already is bringing about – more frequent and fiercer storms. But our rising global temperature leads to more than just destructive weather patterns. Here are some additional potential effects as researched and reported by the Sojourners periodical (https://sojo.net):

- Natural disasters disproportionately affect low-income people who lack the resources to prepare, recover, or relocate.
- Food prices increase as farmers face new levels of unpredictability in weather patterns. Drought and floods may cause widespread soil infertility and increased plant diseases.
- Changes in weather patterns lead to both increased drought and flooding, because warmer air can hold more water. Many dry places will become drier, while others will be inundated with rain.
- Warmer temperatures broaden the geographic range of insects that carry deadly diseases such as malaria, affecting more people. Warm air holds pollution closer to the ground, increasing respiratory illness.
- As land becomes uninhabitable, more people will be forced to leave their homes to seek opportunity elsewhere.
- Whole industries, such as commercial fishing and ecological tourism, will be affected, and adverse conditions could destroy jobs in agriculture and industry.
- The plant and animal world will become less diverse due to rising temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns that affect their habitat. Ocean acidification due to increased carbon pollution leads to coral reef loss.
- Budget deficits will increase due to increased costs in infrastructure, healthcare, unemployment, and food assistance. This will be accompanied by lowered economic productivity.
- Energy supplies will drop; prices will rise. Water shortages will leave hydroelectric dams under-powered, and natural disasters will affect power plants and reduce the capacity to respond – while rising temperatures increase demand for uses such as air conditioning.
- The gap between rich and poor will get worse. Effects of climate change fall disproportionately on the people that have done the least to cause it and have the fewest resources to cope with disruptions – the poor!
- International conflicts and wars may multiply. Decreased food security and water access may lead to resource conflict as people struggle to survive. Some countries may become uninhabitable, while other lands may become desirable and fought over. Increased migration also leads to international tension.

How many of the above are already taking place?
Every day is Earth day!

Vivian Johnson
GREENfaith team: Judy Curry, Tony Dover, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Martha Hansen, Ashley Herndon, Bonnie Shaffstall, Eileen Vincent, and Vivian Johnson

Eco-Tips from YOU
Stay informed! Receive “The Pollinator: The UCC Environmental Justice Newsletter” by email every two weeks. To subscribe, email ecojustice@ucc.org and type “subscribe” in the subject line.
Dear Readers,

Autumn is a time of thought. I notice the days getting shorter. I see leaves fall to the ground. I enjoy the harvest.

My nieces like to plant in the Autumn. They put tulip, daffodil, and iris bulbs into the ground. I plant broccoli. I like their yellow flowers.

Mostly, I love the Fall foods. I eat apples, caramel corn, and pumpkin pie. I look forward to the Thanksgiving holiday. Indeed, it is good to give thanks!

With love,
Miss Lily

It’s hard to believe that I am already writing about the Winter Solstice concert! Where has this year gone?

The choir began working on the music at our retreat on September 30th and have continued working every Thursday since. We trust you will thoroughly enjoy the music John has selected for us. This year we are bringing you a secular Christmas and Winter themed concert. All songs are in English, so no lengthy translations to wade through at this concert!

I think I speak for the whole Chancel Choir when I say that we love singing to a full house. Concerts are a wonderful way to introduce your friends to IUCC. We will have cards available soon that you can hand out to friends and family, as a way of invitation. While it is a labor of love, we do work very hard to share this music with you. Please help us fill the sanctuary. Thank you for your continued support of the Chancel Choir, and we look forward to a lovely evening together. Below you will find all the pertinent information:

- December 10th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.
- No ticket needed! A free-will offering will be collected after the concert.
- The concert will be followed by a reception to socialize and bask in the post-concert glow.
- Childcare will be provided.
- We will have parking difficulties due to the construction. We encourage carpooling, and we are working on shuttle service from remote locations yet to be determined.

Ah, coffee hour snacks! They’re yummy, they’re colorful, and they provide a wonderful backdrop of warmth and welcome to our patio after services. Happy IUCC people gather around the snack tables to visit, catch up with friends, and meet interesting new people. It’s our guilty pleasure, and we love it! Our coffee hour snacks are provided by volunteers. Won’t you add your name to the list of volunteers? Sign up sheets are on the patio on Sunday mornings. If each of us committed to one Sunday each year, our calendar - and our tummies - would be full. Thank you!
News & Events

Annual Thanksgiving Service
Tuesday * November 21 * 7:30
University Synagogue,
3400 Michelson, Irvine
This is a warm, wonderful, annual event shared with our sister congregation to celebrate our long friendship. All are welcome!
Guest: UCI Professor Jennifer Chacon speaking on “Immigrant Communities, Language, and Memory.”

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, November 21, 9:30 a.m.
The Seekers meet on the third Tuesday of each month for theological and spiritual study and discussion. Newcomers are always welcome! Call Reefa for details - (949) 859-7091.

All Saints Sunday
November 5
During this service, we will celebrate departed saints in our lives, recognizing our saints that have gone this past year.

All-Church Work Day
Sunday * November 12 * 12:30
Please plan on dressing down and helping IUCC get ready for the holiday season. Light chores will be assigned to everyone who wants to pitch in. Lunch will be provided afterwards. Let’s make our campus “shine” again.

The Story of Stuff
Sunday * November 19 * 12:15
The Green Faith Committee will be showing a short animated film on consumerism and its impact on the planet. Join us after second service for a light lunch and the movie.

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Annual Thanksgiving Feast
Wed., Nov. 29
We are planning our annual Thanksgiving Feast for Nov. 29, with turkey and all the fixins. All are welcome!

Ben Allen
Nick Allen
Nicole Bermudez
Jennifer Bullington
Eric Burley
Beverly Deshler
Janet Emery
Emme Exelby
George Fulton
Kelly Garrity
Dean Inada
Matt Mirmak
Beverly Neilson
Ben O’Dell
Roni Portillo
Jean Raymoure
Christina Ruiz
Tom Silk
Michael Spindle
Irene Thornton
Rob Thornton
Robert Zane

Director of Adult Programs Steve Swope displays IUCC plaque engraved with the names of Jesus Seminar presenters Natalie Renee Perkins (L) and Celene Lillie (R).

Photo courtesy of Tricia Aynes
We began our new series last month by taking note of a social change that has been getting quite some attention recently. The behavior causing concern, in both children and adults, is behavior that lacks “civility,” or common courtesy or politeness. We mentioned that most people begin lessons in civility early with very young children, teaching please, thank you, excuse me, etc. However, spending time with children of school age will reveal that much of this behavior seems to be no longer practiced even in lower school grades. We should not be surprised, of course, because we are noticing that courtesy that used to be referred to as “common” is no longer prevalent in the general population.

This deterioration in what is often called “civil discourse” seems to be fanning the flames of increased rudeness and aggression between people, even among people with public professional positions. Paying attention to this recent slide in courtesy and increase in bullying behavior gives us a clear message that we will have to work harder with our children and young people to instill habit patterns of decent social interaction than was necessary in the past.

“Civil” behavior used to govern business and social interaction between adults whether or not they agreed with each other. It seems that today disagreement with someone’s position on almost any matter gives permission to slide into disrespectful and sometimes downright “brutish” behavior toward others. If we are willing to take responsibility for raising children to be civil in the face of conflict, we’ll have to discipline ourselves to monitor interactions between children and teens carefully and step in when lines of courtesy and respect get crossed. As I cautioned last month, this monitoring and intrusion will not be appreciated by our children, but if habits of civility are built, life will be far less stressful and relationships will be far more satisfying than if we are careless in this area of child rearing. Using the now trite but still true “it takes a village” principle, this means that all of us who interact with children and teens have a role to play.

While mass media tends to reveal uncivil interactions primarily between people in work settings, such behavior with children begins in play settings. We would hope that corrections in “uncivil” behavior would be expected when children are playing together without adult supervision. However, we should be worried about what children are learning even when “playing” with adults involved on the sidelines.

I’ve been reading more and more about how the uncivil behavior of adults during sports activities is leading to mimicking behavior between children playing together. As a parent, it is important to not sit quietly when an adult confronts another adult (another parent, a coach, referee, etc.) rudely and boorishly. Every time this happens in front of our children, we are given the opportunity to review, again, why such disrespectful ways of interacting are emotionally damaging and even potentially dangerous as people lose control of their ability to restrain their aggression. Children are often exposed not only to hostile, confrontational words, but sometimes to actual assaults during a “game.” Research is showing how some children get literally sick, including throwing up, before some sports games, in anticipation of the angry and hostile outbursts that occur if they or a teammate makes a mistake or if there is a disagreement between officials and parents. This is another example of how lack of civility is proving to be not only unpleasant but unsafe.

Both work and play provide opportunity to use one’s mind and abilities in ways that enhance one’s self-esteem, in addition to providing a “laboratory” for learning to live peacefully with the “neighbors” we’ve been asked to love, even when we are competing with or playing against them. There are almost no jobs that do not require at least minimal interaction with other people. Learning to play well together teaches us how to work well together, and for most people, who will couple, how to live well together.

There is very little that is harder on an intimate relationship than an exchange of careless, hurtful words - whether between loving adults or parents and children. Next month we’ll examine how media exposure – both social media and radio and television – is interfering with our efforts to teach the benefits of living together in a “civil” society.
Jesus Goes to Jerusalem
by Bil Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest

As you read this, may I remind you of two things:
1. The New Testament was never written with the intent of
telling actual history. It was written to share the biases of the
writer.
2. My doctorate thesis was entitled, “The Influence of the
Old Testament on the Gospel of Matthew” in which I could
show that nearly every sentence or story in that gospel was
modeled after the Old Testament.

Last month, we left Jesus leading a popular itinerant
ministry in the Galilean area. He was headquartered in
the very commercial city of Capernaum, on the northwest
corner of the Sea or Lake of Galilee. Something convinced
Jesus that he and his ministry needed to go to Jerusalem
during the Passover, which falls on the first full moon of the
spring equinox.

Why? Did he want to confront the corrupt leadership of
Judaism? Or, did he want to bring his message to the vast
crowds of Jews gathered for this high festival? In spite of a
few of his close followers trying to convince him that this
might not be a smart thing to do, Jesus decided to go
and his entourage began their seven to nine day walking journey
up the mountain to the Holy City. Jesus knew it was going
to be an expense trip because one had to pay Roman road
taxes, taxes to enter Jerusalem and the high cost for food
and lodgings for his entourage. He would have to pay the
Temple tax, the high rate of exchange to purchase Temple
currency and the exorbitant cost to purchase animals to
sacrifice.

The Gospels tell many stories about Jesus’ experiences
in Jerusalem but most of them are midrash, stories for
interpretation, not necessarily historical data. The story
of Jesus over-turning some of the tables of the money-
exchangers is a good one, but reality says that if Jesus had
done that he would have been arrested, jailed, fined and
banned from ever coming back to the Temple.

We read about the Palm Sunday parade which sounded
like Jesus had been welcomed as a hero, maybe even the
Messiah, but reality says this could never have happened.
The Romans, the Herodians and the Jewish leadership
would have not only snuffed-out the parade but also
arrested many people for causing a disturbance. The very
last thing any of the many “authorities” would have allowed
to happen was a parade or a demonstration.

I strongly suspect the Last Supper did
happen because they were occurring
all over the city as the Jews were
preparing for the great Passover. I
also believe the words about the bread and wine, Body and
Blood, were spoken, since they have become central to the
faith.

I doubt if the Temple guards needed Judas to show them
where Jesus was. Reality says that Caiaphas, the High Priest,
and Pontius Pilate had already planned Jesus’ demise on
trumped up charges as soon as they heard that he was in
town. The Gospel of Judas (a later gospel) never alludes to
Judas doing such a thing, but so many of these stories were
developed to fulfill Old Testament prophecies and not to
share historical data.

The idea of there being a trial in the middle of the night
for the 70 male members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body
of Judaism, is ludicrous. Can you imagine trying to rouse
70 men from a deep sleep to come to a trial to seek their
permission to murder an innocent man?

Once Jesus had been arrested, the idea that any of Jesus’
entourage would hang around makes no sense, so the story
in which Peter denied Jesus three times is simply there to
satisfy Old Testament prophecies. Jesus’ entourage knew
they were part of the witch hunt and went into hiding.

The idea of dragging Jesus to Pontus Pilate’s house early
in the morning to seek his permission to crucify him has
nothing to do with truth. It has to do with this new religion,
the Followers of the Way, wanting to put the blame for
Jesus’ crucifixion squarely in the laps of the Jewish leaders
who had expelled them from Judaism in 88 CE. They also
wanted to take the Romans off the hook for having executed
Jesus because they wanted to appease their oppressors. Next
month, we’ll look at the historical crucifixion.

As you read this, Annie and send greetings from Israel,
Palestine and Jordan where we are doing research and
gathering information about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.
We hope to be able to share it with you.

PeaceLoveJoyHope
Bil
November Film List - Oscar Predictions

by Keith Dillon

It's Oscar season again. And this one's gonna be wild. We began the year with last year's misannouncement of Best Picture. That's been topped with Harvey Weinstein, James Toback, and now Kevin Spacey. Smells nasty, dun' it? There's more to come, I'm sure. It's Hollywood, after all. In the meantime, let's have some fun. I used four websites (indiewire, goldderby, awardcircuit and harpersbazaar.com) to put together a possible list of front runners for the Academy Award in 2018. I didn't see any of these films, so I could be way off. Viewer discretion is advised.

1) Dunkirk – Christopher Nolan's fable about sacrifice in World War Two England. It pleased both crowds and critics during what, otherwise, was a lackluster summer.
2) The Shape of Water – Guillermo Del Toro's fable about friendship and trust between misfits in a world ruled by technology. It thrilled at Venice and Telluride.
3) Lady Bird – This family drama is Greta Gerwig's directorial debut. It teams Irish actress Saoirse Ronan with Laurie Metcalf and playwright Tracy Letts.
4) The Darkest Hour – Gary Oldman is the latest entry in a recent Winnie-off that features, among others, Michael Gambon and John Lithgow. Mr. Oldman is, by many accounts, the best of the lot. Think about that. He's also played both Sid Vicious and Lee Harvey Oswald.
5) The Battle of the Sexes – This film pits Steve Carell against Emma Stone as they recreate the famous Bobby Rigg vs. Billy-Jean King tennis match of the 70s.
6) Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri – A dark, dismal comedy about American Justice, or the lack thereof, by Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. It stars Francis McDormand in what, by all accounts, is a monstrous performance.
7) Get Out – Get Out is Jordan Peele's take on Sam Peckinpah's Straw Dogs. It involves a young black man being bodily threatened by a Euro-American community when they discover that he has a Euro-American girlfriend.
8) The Beguiled – Sofia Coppola's remake of the 1971 Clint Eastwood vehicle about a soldier who is castrated in a Civil War mansion/hospital by the group of women he romances. Nicole Kidman and Colin Farrell star.
9) Mother – Darren Aronofsky's film Mother reads like a meditation on Rosemary's Baby. It stars Jennifer Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris & Michelle Pfeiffer. Black Swan amply demonstrated to me, at least, that Aronofsky has a gift for turning horrific visions into strangely beautiful ones.
10) Mudbound – This story about two poor farming families in 1940s Mississippi has one real blemish, at least as far as the Academy is concerned. It was produced and first exhibited on Netflix.