Ivan, United Congregational Church
An Open and Affirming – Just Peace Congregation
A Progressive Christian Voice for Irvine and Southern California

July 5, 2012

http://www.iucc.org

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The Newsletter For July!

From the Pastor’s Desk …

I was surprised when a few people came up to me to say, “Goodbye” on Sunday. Then it hit me—the second half of my sabbatical is right around the corner.

In a short while, Carl and I will be heading up towards the Arctic Circle and then down to Denali Wilderness Park in Alaska. After that, we board a ship and stop off at various glaciers and towns on our way to Vancouver, where I am going to meet up with a west-coast branch of my Canadian relatives. Last year, I visited the “home base” of my family in Nova Scotia.

After that, I hope to spend time writing (and reading) up in Big Bear. I’m glad that I split this time in two—I enjoy my work and I don’t like to spend too much time away. This feels “just right.”

While I am gone, Elizabeth will be in the lead. Ken is on board, and he is a great addition to the staff. George Johnson and Bil Aulenbach will each take a Sunday, as well.

Important:

If you, or someone you know, wishes to receive this *News & Notes* but cannot access the Internet, please do either of the following: [a] let the church office know at (949) 733-0220, and we can mail a printed copy; or [b] just pick up a printed copy in the narthex on a Sunday morning.
Seth Castleman (whom I have heard some people refer to as “our rabbi”) will be speaking this summer. He is also leading a series on the Jewish Jesus with Bil Aulenbach, which starts Wednesday, July 11. That date coincides with our first “Pastors’ Potluck” behind the preschool. Almost 70 people are signed up for the series, so if you are interested in previewing it (or if you are signed up) why don’t you come early and enjoy some food and good company at the potluck and then check out the series that will be starting in Plumer Hall?

Summer is travel time. Our “Minister of Travel,” Dale Vaughan, has put together another great trip. A good dozen or so of IUCC folks will be in Ireland this August, beginning in Dublin, heading up to Northern Ireland, and then down through the Ring of Kerry. In October, our Newport-Mesa-Irvine Interfaith Council is repeating the trip to China that some of us took four years ago. The trip is very inexpensive for what it covers, and one of the best experiences I have had traveling. I hear that one of our folks has committed to going, so speak to me if you are interested, and I will put you in touch.

As we begin to look at officially designating ourselves as a “Global Mission Church” next year, an opportunity may be coming our way to join some other UCC and Disciples of Christ (DOC) people on a mission trip to Palestine in January. It will be an opportunity to learn more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict close up, while also visiting many of the sites and getting a good orientation to the Holy Land.

[See more about Global Mission on page 11 in this newsletter. –ed.]

“Global Mission” will be one of our big themes for next year. It seems natural, too, as we have taken three trips this past year to Guatemala, the border immersion experience starting in San Ysidro, and the youth/young adult trip that just came back from Hostotipaquillo (in the Mexican state of Jalisco).
General Synod 29 — It isn’t too early to mention this, because IUCC, along with all of our churches in Southern California and Nevada, will be asked to take a role in hosting the United Church of Christ’s next General Synod. It will be held in Long Beach from June 28 through July 2 of next year.

Every two years, our churches from across the nation come together to discuss business and to find out about what is happening in all facets of our denomination—from Global Mission to financial services to new books and resources…and more. It is also an opportunity for 3,000 more progressive folks who speak a common language to come together. I’ll never forget hearing Bill Moyers preaching and Barack Obama speaking to us in Hartford a few years back, encouraging us to walk the path of justice.

My colleague in Mission Hills, the Rev. Scott Landis says, “Perhaps my favorite aspect of Synod is worship. Singing hymns of our faith and experiencing new forms of worship with 3,000 others is deeply moving. From dance, to song, to breaking open the word, to prayer – worship is central to who we are as a community of Christ. Synod takes that seriously and it is its basis.”

Can you imagine being in a room with 3,000 people—all engaged in progressive, open and affirming worship? I would like you to more than imagine it. I would love to take a bus full of us up there. IUCC’ers can learn a lot about our roots and where we are going as a church by attending a day (or more) of General Synod, and it will be right in our back yard. We will be asked to bake cookies—some 1.2 million home-baked cookies appeared at the last Synod as symbols of hospitality, made by the local churches of the hosting Conference.

I hope you have a summer full of many blessings, and I look forward to returning to you in a short while.

Yours,
Pastor Paul
Dear IUCC,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this final newsletter article. While I am excited for my upcoming trip to India I am also incredibly sad to be leaving this community. When I think back to my time at IUCC, I can remember so many wonderful things: mission trips, overnights, church picnics, Sunday School, fellowship time, youth group meetings, and much more. I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the support you have given me personally, as well as the ways you have helped to grow the youth program. I feel so lucky to have spent this time here, and I will never forget the ways I have been impacted.

I do want to briefly highlight our recent trip to Mexico. We spent 6 days in Hostotipaquillo where we worked with the local children, built a road for a family that had difficulty getting to their ranch, and worked in the organic garden run by the Catholic Worker house where we stayed. I was once again impressed by the work ethic and positivity that our youth brought with them, and I know that we all learned a great deal by spending time outside of our normal bubbles.

Many thanks to IUCC for financial and prayerful support.

I hope you will all keep in touch. My blog address is: sarahfiskephillips.wordpress.com, and my email address is: sarahfiskephillips@gmail.com

Much love,
Sarah
Scenes from the Hostotipaquillo Mission Trip

Photos: Sarah Fiske-Phillips
We gather in small groups of 6 to 10 at someone’s house, usually. Everyone brings something to contribute to a shared meal. The host decides the theme and gives assignments, and the host does not even have to cook! After all, the host has the responsibility of having a clean house and taking care of the dishes.

Foods do not need to be fancy. Hamburgers on the grill are perfectly acceptable.

♫ We’d love to welcome families, including families with small children.

The sign-up sheet should be out on the patio starting the first Sunday of the month. You can also let me know directly that you would like to participate: LMLindy@cox.net

Join in! Get to know some people in the congregation!
Hoping to see you on July 28!

Lindy Garber
Fellowship Chair

♫ All-Church Picnic at Mason Park will be on September 16, 2012. Put it on your calendar!
Father’s Day Speakers; and
Photos Around the Congregation, June, 2012
Photos by Janet Wiita Johnson
Editor's Note: IUCC has a formal, budgetary commitment to support Family Promise.

Here is a particular support opportunity:

**Time For A Celebration!**

*Family Promise is planning its first Benefit Dinner.* The event will honor those families that have already graduated and help us to continue to provide support to parents and children who find themselves in tough situations. The event will be held at the beautiful and historic Wilcox Manor in Tustin.

**Date:** Saturday, July 28, 2012  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Location:** 310 South Pasadena Ave, Tustin CA  
**Tickets:**  
$75 Individually  
$125 - VIP Tickets: Meet the owners of Wilcox Manor, enjoy a private tour and cocktails at 6 pm.  
$550 Table of Eight

To RSVP - Call the FP office at 714-787-3487 or email Casey at ccrosbie@familypromiseoc.org

**Mail Checks to:**

Family Promise of Orange County  
161 S Orange Street  
Orange, CA 92866

We hope that you will be able to join us for an evening of merriment and entertainment!

Blessings,

Casey Crosbie  
Executive Director
JULY BIRTHDAYS!

May Chan
Sarah Cook
Annette Fadness
Eduardo Figueroa

Olive FitzGerald
Randy Garber
Steve Goetz
Elizabeth Griswold

Donna Haehl
August Lobato, Jr.
Jonathan Lyman
Laurie McComb

Randy Romine
Susan Sherman
Dennis Webster
Kerin Wilson
Robert Woods
Leadership Retreat 2012

Each year the leadership of IUCC (all the people the congregation elected at the Spring Congregational Meeting plus pastors and staff) holds a retreat. And no, it doesn’t involve exotic locales or expensive meals, although we did have a delicious potluck and lunch thanks to the efforts of Lindy and Randy Garber and Pat Sauter.

Cindy O’Dell  The purpose of the retreat is to introduce new board members to each other, and explore ways to work together.

This year, your leaders reviewed the goals that were developed three years ago by the task force for long-range planning. We also looked at the specific goals we set last year and where we stand in meeting them. Then we turned our attention to the year ahead.

IUCC had some hits during the past year:
- Comma groups
- Stephen Ministry
- Adult education
- More music at first service
- The continuing strength of our music program in general.

Some things were started, but need more work:
- More involvement by youth in worship and other activities throughout the year
- Additional child care options for families during special events and coffee hours
- Global mission and involvement with local organizations such as Family Promise

And we had some misses:
- Technology
- Becoming more “green”
- Developing volunteerism
- Following up on the long-range goals include reinvigorating first service

This year we’ll be putting more energy into those areas and working toward better techniques for communicating with the congregation and among ourselves.

Technology going green, reinvigorating first service, volunteerism and communication are big themes, but your leaders came up with many suggestions and we’ll being
Global Mission Comes to IUCC

At the Congregational meeting on May 20, 2012 Pastor Paul challenged the members of IUCC to become a Global Mission Church. He asked me if I would be willing to oversee the project. As an Episcopal priest in the Missionary Diocese of Hawai’i for 15 years, I gladly accepted the challenge. (Believe it or not, back in the 1960s Hawai’i was “missionary” territory for many Christian churches. Major tourism had not yet started in the Islands.)

In Matthew 25:31-46 (called “The Last Judgment”), Jesus knew his days were numbered and tells his disciples the story of the separation of the sheep (good guys) and the goats (bad guys). Then he stated that when they feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison (in other words reach out to the hurting world) “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” I have always seen this as part of my “marching orders” as a Follower.

In 1996 UCC, along with our sister church, The Disciples of Christ, developed a program entitled “Global Ministries” and then challenged its churches to respond. IUCC has accepted that challenge. So for the next year we shall be emphasizing GM so that by the May 2013 Congregational meeting we shall be a certified Global Mission Church. This means that IUCC “understands itself to be interrelated with the whole of God’s creation across all physical and human barriers, and seeks to timely and appropriately meet God’s people and creation at the point of deepest need.” (Booklet entitled, “Be a Global Mission Church!” page 6.)

At IUCC, becoming a Global Mission Church means that we reach out to the hurting world in a variety of ways staring right within our congregation utilizing the Stephen Ministry and our ministry of Congregational Care as our foundation stones. Next we go
right outside our doors with Family Promise, the Catholic Workers feeding program or Southwest Community Center (downtown Santa Ana) or any programs that deal with local issues (AIDS Walk, CROP walk, etc.).

Next we go to other countries such as Guatemala or Mexico or even Palestine to develop a base of operation there. The possibilities are limitless and it will be the job of the IUCC GM Ministry to present these opportunities for us to minister “to the least of these my brethren” and sisters wherever they might be.

At IUCC, Global Mission falls underneath the "Mission and Service Ministry" chaired by Karl Schiller. This Ministry will simply have Global Mission become another of the many programs they now oversee and encourage. Global Mission had its first planning session in June and plans to meet almost monthly until next May.

At the first meeting were Pastor Paul, Karl Schiller, Dave Smith, chair of the Advocates Ministry, Alyssa Stanford, web designer, and myself. Our Associate Pastor, Elizabeth Griswold and the Rev George Johnson will serve as consultants. Since the meeting Alaina Haynes (as I write this in Mexico with the youth mission) has accepted our request to represent the youth for Global Mission. We are in the process of asking other key people from our present ministries to join us as we attempt to make Global Mission a vital part of our church family.

Stay tuned because we think Global Mission it going to be an exciting time in the growth of IUCC as we share with you on a continuing basis where we are going during the next year.

Peace  Love  Joy

Bil Aulenbach
In June, we were treated to an exceptional experience by our Chancel Choir and Music Director, John St. Marie.

Actually my experience began in May when I heard that I could be part of the program by adopting an instrument. I found this an exceptional opportunity to participate and to anticipate. I eagerly signed up for the cello.

The night of the concert came and I must admit I enjoyed having a reserved seat as a thank-you, but it was not necessary. The choir would have been visible and impressive from any seat and the sound filled the sanctuary. I was awed by the professional appearance of our choir - white blouses, black skirts, and dark suits. It was as though I were back at one of the many concerts I attended at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. I was not disappointed for a minute.
The selections were lovely and I especially appreciated having all the words included in the program so I could follow and reflect. Perhaps because I favor classical music with a romantic tilt, the Mendelssohn, *Hear My Prayer*, was my favorite, though I would not have changed a single selection. The final piece, Franck’s *Psalm 150* brought me to my feet. Unusual for me because I am a traditionalist and believe standing ovations are usually reserved for Handel’s *Messiah*. I could not stay seated at the end of our concert. It was truly inspirational and left me exultant.

A wonderful evening was completed with a lovely candlelit reception in Plumer Hall. Good food, pleasant ambiance, surrounded by friends and fellow music lovers. What a grand way to end a very special evening.

When I signed on for the cello I dedicated it to my husband who brought music into my life. Now I thank John St. Marie for bringing music into all of our lives.

All photos by Ken Faulkner, 6/10/12.

John St. Marie
We’re in the midst of outlining sixteen proven strategies for reducing the risk of bullying behavior, which means being the “victim” of bullying, or using bullying behavior in an unhealthy attempt to meet legitimate needs. Last month we discussed speaking the truth about the power of words and their ability to cause emotional harm; empowering children to use their influence either as a substitute for controlling behavior, or as a way to interfere with attempts to use cruelty or violence against oneself. Let’s continue.

3. Take responsibility for family and classroom “operating rules”. Since families are human creations and not creations of nature they are more complicated and unpredictable than are “natural” things. When things conform to the laws of nature we can learn what those laws are and will observe how those laws are constant. Rain always fall down, grass is always green, natural “exchanges” always happen the same way – we breathe out carbon dioxide for the trees to use in photosynthesis and trees exhale oxygen for us to breathe in, etc. Families have no such “laws” and thus vary from culture to culture and even from house (tent, tepee, igloo, trailer) to house.

What then “governs” how families interact (exchange) with each other? Borrowing from systems theory we coin the term “operating rules” to refer to the spoken or unspoken rules that govern behavior within the family. Such “rules” also operate whenever there are groups of people who have consistent contact with each other – classrooms, sports teams, office / workplace groups. These “rules” govern many types of behaviors that influence the way children learn to behave in the world.

Operating rules govern matters that are both trivial and substantive. For example, in some houses dogs sit or sleep on the furniture, in others dogs are not allowed on the furniture. In some houses people take their shoes off and in others they leave their shoes on. Some families have people who come in without knocking, some have “knock and enter” friends who knock but open the door at the same time, others expect people to knock or ring and then wait to have the door opened. It is up to the adults in the house to establish the operating rules. In cases of extreme family dysfunction, the operating rule becomes that the adults relinquish this role and allow the kids to “take over” the house.
Operating rules are plentiful in each family and serve the function of allowing people in the household to relax and feel secure in knowing how to avoid conflict and keep the peace within their own family. Children begin to learn these rules as soon as they are out of their cribs and follow them until their parents die. As you know, it’s “mama’s house, mama’s rules”, no matter how old you are! Leaving your parents’ house allows you to establish your own rules, usually some combination of rules you grew up with and others you establish for your own comfort, often in contradiction to those you learned as a child. This, of course, explains all the trials and tribulations of “courting” and forming new intimate relationships, as we attempt to blend different sets of “rules” in establishing a new household. But that’s another column!

For the purpose of helping children deal with bullying problems we will be talking only about those operating rules that influence whether children fall victim to bullying because of the rules they are growing up with, or feel entitled to bully others because of the way people in their families “operate” with each other.

Next month we’ll outline some specific operating that can be especially harmful to children, such as rules around truth telling, anger management, language, snitching, sarcasm and unkind teasing, role expectations, etc. For now, spend the next month thinking about the rules you grew up with. What kind of language could you use when you got angry? Could you slam doors? Could you walk away from your mother when she was yelling at you? Could you “talk back”? How did your parents fight?

We’ll talk more.
News & Notes
Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Parkway
Irvine, CA 92604
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