Youth & Young Adult Mission Trip

From June 22-26 we took a group of 16 people to the Oakland Peace Center. We volunteered with organizations all over Oakland. We worked with an organization that helps young people record and distribute their music and digital art, we weeded with an organization dedicated to getting fresh produce to low-income families, and we learned a lot about mass incarceration and immigration. We met a lot of beautiful people along the way and our lives were certainly changed!

~ photos and article courtesy of Sarah Fiske-Phillips
I’m sure many of you have experienced the joys and challenges of being a leader. It’s hard work. It’s rewarding work. It’s fun to work on a common goal or mission. It’s frustrating at times when achieving that goal seems elusive. There are incredible highs and painful lows when being a leader. But in the end, leadership is a gift to both the leader and those being lead.

I have had the privilege of being moderator of this community of faith and action for two years and am ready to embark on a third year. The weekend of July 21-23 is Leadership Weekend here at IUCC. We will gather on Friday for a potluck where we will say farewell, welcome back, and hello to our elected leadership. On Saturday, we will meet in Plumer Hall to begin the task of building community, “wasting” time together, and taking the first steps on seeing our newly adopted Long Range Plan come alive. On Sunday, we will officially say good-bye and install those who have stepped forward in faith to serve you and this church. I hope you can be there on July 23 (at either service) to offer your blessings as they embark on this leadership journey.

I want to say thanks and farewell to those who have given their gifts to all of us -- Tricia Aynes, Brad Beer, Cindy O’Dell, Pat Sauter, Suellen Rowe, and Randy Romine. They have truly made a difference in the life of IUCC. Also, I want to welcome our newly elected leaders -- Laura Palen, Daniel Blackburn, Scott Bollens, Cheryl Arismendi, Joni Baker, Kaytee MacDonald, Lauren Fleming, and Faren Eng. I look forward to working with all of them as we tackle the challenges and opportunities that await us.

One of the goals the leadership group will be looking at is this: “Recognize the inevitability of turnover in both staff and lay leadership and plan for changes that may be apparent on the horizon.” – a challenging goal indeed! So while the elected leaders begin thinking of ways to move forward with plans for this goal, I want you to think about what you can do.

At the recent Administration Board meeting, several of our committee chairs indicated how they need help with fulfilling their tasks. Wayne Banwell, Chair of Building and Grounds, can always use help in handling the array of ongoing repairs and fixes that require attention. If you’re good at fixing things, like to repair items, and want to be of service on specific projects, let Wayne or me know. It’s an easy way to give some time and effort. Bill Lawrence, Chair of the Fund Development Committee, is looking for a few people to help out with the upcoming stewardship campaign by working with him on planning and implementing the campaign. Let Bill or me know if this interests you. There are a myriad of other tasks that need doing, and many of them are short-term or one time needs. If you volunteer for any of those tasks, we can begin “to plan for changes that may be apparent on the horizon.”

When I was Chair of Stewardship, one of the members of the committee came up with this slogan, “this church doesn’t run on prayers alone.” How true that is! We need members and friends of IUCC to give of their time, talents, and treasure. Volunteer for a task, give some time, attend a meeting, step up to being a leader. If you do that, I guarantee you will be rewarded in ways you can’t even begin to imagine!

In faith and community,

Renae
I want to thank all of you for your support of this summer’s sabbatical experience, “Arts: Creating in Hope, Challenging Injustice”! I hope you’ll continue to be involved, this month and the next.

Of particular interest for July are:

- **Beginning Watercolor Painting** – a workshop with Laguna Beach artist Chris Sullivan on Saturday, July 8, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. There are 3 spaces still available! Please text or email me by Friday to sign up.

- **Northwest Boychoir Concert** – Sunday, July 16, at 7:00 p.m.

- **Creative Spirituality** – a workshop with Dr. Matthew Fox on Sunday, July 23, from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Don’t forget to visit Dr. Fox’s “Stations of the Cosmic Christ” exhibit at the Inspirit Center for Spiritual Living, 25782 Obrero Drive in Mission Viejo. The exhibit is open Monday-Thursday from 10:00-2:00 and Sunday from 1:00-4:00.

And preaching during this month will be Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips, Rev. Frank Lyman, Dr. Matthew Fox, and spoken-word artist Iyana Davis. Matthew Fox is an internationally-recognized scholar and teacher of creative, inclusive spirituality and has written many books, including *Original Blessing* and *Many Rivers, One Well*. Iyana Davis is a recent graduate of Claremont School of Theology and founder of Peace People in Atlanta, using the arts, music, and community service to build unity among people.

**Adult Sunday School** at 10 a.m. – Glenna Matthews and I will conclude our series on the common history of Congregationalists and Unitarians on July 9. Then Jim Martin will lead three weeks of discussion on *When Jesus became God* by Richard Rubenstein, a history of the interaction of the Christian religion with the Roman Empire in the years 250-500 and how wars influenced decisions about “orthodox” beliefs.

**Jesus Seminar on the Road** will be here on October 6 & 7 (Friday and Saturday)! Dr. Celene Lillie and Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins will introduce us to some ancient Christian texts discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, and explore how they are inspiring new art, music, and spiritual practices. Register now for discounted rates at [www.westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/irvine-2017](http://www.westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/irvine-2017).

And an early notice: visiting artist Priscilla Roggenkamp will be back on August 5 & 6, helping to finish the painting and offering a 2-part Print-making Workshop (Saturday, August 5, 9-11:30 and Sunday, August 6, 12:30-2:30).

**Pastor Paul is on sabbatical**

While Pastor Paul is on sabbatical, Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips and the Rev. Steve Swope will be sharing pastoral and administrative responsibilities. They will both be in the church office on Mondays; Steve on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and Sarah on Thursdays. In emergencies, you can reach them at 909-709-5919 (Sarah) or 949-575-0093 (Steve). They are also available by email at sarah-fiskephillips@gmail.com or steve@iucc.org.
Ancient Christian Texts Inspiring New Spiritual Practices

October 6-7, 2017
Irvine United Congregational Church

In 1945, a collection of early Christian texts was discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt. Many were written at the same time as the more familiar texts of the New Testament, but ultimately were excluded from it. As scholarship makes these ancient texts increasingly accessible to the public, they are inspiring new art, music, spiritual practices and more. In this Jesus Seminar on the Road, Celene Lillie and Natalie Renee Perkins will introduce The Gospel of Mary and Thunder: Perfect Mind both in their ancient context and creative, modern expressions.

Celene Lillie (Ph.D. Union Theological Seminary) is the Director of the Tanho Center and on the pastoral staff at Boulder First United Methodist Church in Colorado. She is the author of The Rape of Eve: The Transformation of Roman Ideology in Three Early Christian Retellings of Genesis (2017).

Natalie Renee Perkins (M.Div., Union Theological Seminary) is a writer, lecturer, preacher, chaplain, and composer who intertwines early Christian material with contemporary society through a social justice lens. She has performed professionally with cruise lines, national tours, symphony orchestras, and the USO.

Info and photos from https://www.westarstitute.org
Building Project/Capital Campaign Update

by Anne Rosse, Chair of Building Task Force

American humorist and businessman, Arnold Glasow, said: “The key to everything is patience. You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it.” So, IUCC, we are asking for your continued patience!

We had scheduled a Special Congregational Meeting for July 16 to vote on breaking ground for Phase 1a of IUCC’s Master Plan. But, we’ve had to postpone the meeting as well as the July 9 forum. We will announce new dates as soon as possible.

To hold this meeting, we need three items in place:

1. **City Approval**
The City of Irvine continues to make good progress on issuing three required permits: building, landscape and grading. The building permit is very close. The landscape permit is approved. The grading permit is progressing.

2. **Loan Approval**
Cornerstone Fund has given preliminary approval and we thank Mark Allen for his diligent efforts.

3. **Construction Budget**
Our contractor, Wieland, had hoped to deliver an updated construction budget on June 21. Unfortunately, due to very busy market conditions, they weren’t able to secure as many competitive bids for each trade as we hoped. And, with the current building boom, prices are higher than we hoped. With additional time, Wieland can negotiate on our behalf.

As soon as we are fully confident that we have all three of these items ready for your review, we will reschedule the meeting and also calendar two forums to give this congregation ample time to review information, to know what we can and can’t afford to build, and what our options are. Via the meeting, forums, bulletin and newsletter, we will make sure that your questions are answered before we decide, as a congregation, about breaking ground.

Meantime, please continue to make your campaign pledges generously. Every pledge payment and new gift brings us closer to being able to break ground. As Pastor Paul said: “We have been inspired by and are grateful for the legacy left to us by those who came before us at IUCC. Now we are embarking on the creation of another legacy not only for the next generation of people who share in our Progressive Christian values, but for the City of Irvine itself. We are here, we are a strong voice in the faith community, and we matter.”

In September, we plan to thank everyone for their generous campaign gifts, announce room namings and publish dedications. If you haven’t joined your church family in supporting this project, we invite you to make a generous gift today. To make a campaign pledge or for assistance, please contact capitalcampaign@iucc.org.

IUCC is blessed by a dedicated team working on the building project. They are: Mark Allen, Keith Boyum, Cindy O’Dell, Jim Raver, Anne Rosse (chair), Pat Sauter, Michael Spindle and Pastor Paul. Please contact any Building Task Force member or email btfchair@iucc.org with your questions.

Thank you for your patience and support!

~ Anne Rosse

**Special Meeting Postponed**

The Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for July 16 has been postponed. The Building Project Forum on July 9 has also been postponed. Both will be rescheduled as soon as possible and new dates will be announced.

If approved, our goal remains to break ground in September. With a six-month build, we could be occupying the new space by spring. Remodeling of the current church office into a new classroom for our busy preschool would then start so it is ready for students by fall.
The NORTHWEST BOYCHOIR is considered one of the premier children’s choirs in the nation. Its members perform regularly with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and other high-profile performing arts groups in the area. IUCC is pleased to present this concert on Sunday July 16th, at 7:00 p.m. as part of our 2017 Summer Activities Series.

It is open to the public - A freewill offering will be collected in support of the church general fund.
Kids won’t remember their best day of playing video games - but they WILL remember experiences like these. Encourage boys to become Boy Scouts!

The sight of Boy Scouts loading a trailer or truck full of gear and leaving for summer camp usually signals the end of another Scouting year. Some troops, like Troop 602, will be going to Lost Valley Scout Reservation for a week. Other Scouts in Orange County will be going to various other locations ranging from Camp Emerald Bay on Catalina Island to the Summit Bechtel Scout Reserve in West Virginia for the 2017 National Scout Jamboree. During that time, Scouts will be earning merit badges and participating in outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing, BMX bike racing, rifle and shotgun shooting, and many other fun and exciting outdoor activities.

When the Scouts come back from camp, the business of Scout troops does not stop. July is the time of year when troops like Troop 602 plan their activities for the upcoming year. Last year, Troop 602 went on overnight backpacking outings, participated in the Rancho San Joaquin District Camporee at Firestone Scout Reservation in Brea, handed out programs at the Memorial Day celebration at Bill Barber Park, and stayed for a weekend at Camp Balboa in San Diego to visit the MCAS Miramar Air Show to watch the US Navy Blue Angels perform. We have an exciting schedule of events coming up for the 2017-18 year and would like to extend an invitation to your child and your family to be a part of the fun and excitement that is Troop 602.

It is never too late in the year to join the Boy Scouts and Troop 602. If your child is between the ages of 11-17 (or is 10 years old and is going into the 6th grade), bring him to our meeting on Thursday nights at 7:00pm inside Plumer Hall. We always have a number of fun and educational activities that are led by our Scouts at every meeting. Come find out what the fun is all about in Troop 602. Like our sponsoring organization, our troop is intentionally inclusive and welcomes all Scouts and their families.  ~ Matt Mirmak
Troop 602 Potluck and Open House

Date: Thursday, July 13th, 2017
Time: 6:30pm (potluck), 7:15pm (meeting)
Location: Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA 92618

Bring a dish to share and something to cook on the grill for the potluck.

Our Scouts will have a fun activity planned for the youth while our adult leaders will be available inside Plumer Hall to answer any questions about Troop 602 and the Boy Scouts. Everyone is welcome to join us.
On behalf of the IUCC Chancel Choir, we want to thank you for your attendance at our Annual Spring Concert, Sounding Joy. It was a wonderful evening sharing the music of such pioneering women with you.

We feel blessed to have such a supportive congregation to receive our musical offerings. We work diligently for months preparing the music for each concert, and your response makes the hard work even more worthwhile. We love to see your smiling faces and hear about your favorite parts of the concert. Thank you for your continued love and appreciation for the choir.

**TRY CHOIR LITE!**

Gershwin was onto something with the lyric, “Summertime, and the livin’ is easy!” That statement is true for the life of a choir member at IUCC. During this season of “Choire Lite” there are no Thursday night rehearsals, just simple and beautiful anthems to sing, and the continued opportunity to inspire worship every Sunday. If you’ve ever wondered what it’s like to sing in the choir, we invite you to join us.

You don’t have to read music, or have a beautiful solo voice. The point of choir is that we blend our individual hearts, souls, and voices into something greater than we could do alone. We meet at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary and sing for both services. There is no obligation, and you can sing as many or as few Sundays as you would like.

Please take a moment to check out the beautiful new pottery communion vessels on display in the narthex. These were made by Steve O’Dell by request of the Women’s Retreat Committee for our annual use at Pilgrim Pines and other times when a simple, earthen plate, bowl and chalice might be more appropriate. Many thanks to Steve for sharing his lovely art with us!

~ Pat Sauter

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**Watercolor Painting Fun with Chris Sullivan**

Have fun this summer learning how to paint in watercolor! Watercolor artist, Chris Sullivan, will guide you through basic watercolor techniques and then assist you in painting a simple landscape step by step similar to the painting below.

This class is free with supplies provided! Thanks to a grant from the Lilly Foundation.

Date: Saturday, July 8
Time: 9:00 to 11:30
Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine
(949) 733-0220
Limited to 15 participants (high school students and adults only)
We sent the IUCC application and supporting documents to become a Creation Justice church to the UCC’s Minister of Environmental Justice, Brooks Berndt, in Cleveland, Ohio. He responded:

*The first thing I did this morning was read your application, and Wow! I was impressed. Your GREENfaith committee has done terrific work in just two years.*

*In recognition of your achievements as a newly minted Creation Justice Church, I will be having a Creation Justice banner sent straight to your church from the company making them.*

In response to hearing this good news, some of our IUCC leaders made the following comments:

*The Green team and our congregation’s involvement in environmental justice are coming into their own at a critical time in our country’s history.*

*I look forward to the banner arriving and having a ceremony where we honor our commitment to creation justice! Way to go!*  

*Your Green team’s hard work, perseverance, dedication, leadership, and care brought us to this point.*

This designation is the impetus we need to continue our work. Along with the cooperation, involvement, and enthusiasm expressed by our staff and lay leadership, and YOU, we have a solid base to move forward in our commitment towards environmental justice. Onward we go!

Were you present at one of the worship services on Sunday, June 11th? If not, you missed a service beautifully committed to creation. I urge you to obtain a CD of that service.

Thank you to those of you who responded to our survey in April. We are encouraged by your interest in protecting the planet with which we have been entrusted. We also gleaned many ideas from you, some of which we’ll include each month in this newsletter as “Eco-Tips from You,” such as the one at the conclusion of this article.

Every day is EARTH day!

Vivian Elaine Johnson (Green team: Judy Curry, Tony Dover, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Ashley Herndon, Eileen Vincent, and Vivian Johnson, chair)

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**Eco-Tips from You**

If your bank invests in fossil fuels, consider moving your account to a credit union.
The Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for July 16 has been postponed. The Building Project Forum on July 9 has also been postponed. Both will be rescheduled as soon as possible and new dates will be announced.

* Sunday * July 23 *
Dr. Matthew Fox will be preaching at 9:30 & 11 a.m., and facilitating a Workshop on Creative Spirituality from 1-4 p.m.

Internationally acclaimed spiritual theologian, activist, Episcopal priest, and author of *Original Blessing and One River, Many Wells* will be at IUCC July 23.

**Tuesday * July 18, 2017**
**9:30 a.m. * Plumer Hall**
This women’s group meets on the third Tuesday of each month. It nurtures friendships among our women and enhances our understanding of what the teachings of Jesus require of us. We are a diverse group coming from a variety of religious backgrounds. We follow progressive theologians, then we share our ideas. Join us! reesahanny@comline.com will answer your questions.

**IUCC Congregational Art Project**
**Saturdays 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. thru August 26th**
Help design and paint our summer experience - be part of the Collaborative Art Project! Show how IUCC does justice, loves mercy, walks humbly through image, color, and shape. Volunteers - of any artistic level - are encouraged to meet in Plumer Hall on Saturdays from 2-4 p.m. Contact Rev. Steve Swope for more information.

7/01 Peyton Campbell 7/28 Jeanne Maag
7/31 Jean Dietrich 7/28 Alessandra Martini
7/20 Phoebe Eng 7/04 Laurie McComb
7/04 Eduardo Figueroa 7/16 Louisa Proebeus
7/14 Sarah Fiske-Phillips 7/05 Laura Rhodes
7/13 Lauren Fleming 7/18 Randy Romine
7/03 Steve Goetz 7/15 Anita Schwab
7/05 Kathie Guth 7/25 Susan Sherman
7/03 Donna Haehl 7/28 Jane Smith
7/11 August Lobato, Jr. 7/22 Kerin Wilson
7/05 Jonathan Lyman 7/28 Scott Zane

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**Pastor's Potlucks**
Bring something to grill, a side or dessert to share, and join us on the playground for food & fellowship.

ALL ARE WELCOME!
Tuesday, June 15th
Thursday, July 15th
Wednesday, August 16th
Putting some time into preparing to give feedback to someone we care about, who is lacking in self-awareness with regard to particular behaviors that are interfering with our relationship, is a way to show love and/or respect for the other person, and a way to help us with our delivery. We want to be heard! There are lots of ways to “rehearse” the conversation we plan to have, and following are just some suggestions, not a recipe for success:

- Although the other person might hear the feedback as negative, how can we work to make the conversation “constructive,” i.e. helpful for the other person?
- Ask yourself what is it, exactly, that you want the person to change? What are they doing now that you find unacceptable? How do you plan to describe it for them, as far as possible, in an objective and behavioral way?
- What emotions do you feel when the person behaves the way that you find unacceptable? Be careful not to “blame them” for your feelings, because they are not responsible for how you feel. At the same time, it is important for them to understand how their behavior is interpreted by you in ways that cause unpleasant feelings.
- How will you offer suggestions about how they could act differently, so that your emotional responses don’t get in the way of getting along? In other words, instead of just telling them what you don’t like about what they do, be prepared to tell them what they could do differently. For example, “Instead of getting close to me, yelling, and pointing your finger in my face, as you did, I wish you would keep a little more distance between us when you are angry, try not to shout at me, and not wag your finger in my face” or “You can still be angry, but I could hear you better if.”
- What positive consequences can you outline for them that you predict will result from their willingness to change the behavior that is bothering you?

- What might you tell them about yourself that explains why you are experiencing so many unpleasant or uncomfortable responses to the way they are acting?
- If the behavior you are asking them to change is not new, how will you explain why you waited until now to have this “courageous conversation” about it?
- Anticipate their possible responses to your feedback and give yourself some suggestions about ways you can stay engaged in a constructive manner, even if you find yourself getting upset.
- How will you support them during the exchange and affirm that the reason you are having the conversation is because you value them and want to get along?

Rehearse a DASR SCRIPT

Describe: Describe the behavior you observe as objectively as possible, using concrete terms, keeping to actions and not motives. Describe your emotional reactions to the behavior without using abstract or vague language and without “generalizing” (you always, you never).

Acknowledge: Acknowledge your feelings and express them calmly enough that they can be understood, and direct your attention to the specific problem behavior and acknowledge that it is the behavior, and not the person, you would like to change. Acknowledge and take responsibility for your own feelings and don’t use your feelings as an excuse to attack, berate, or put down the other person.

Specify: Specify which exact actions you would like them to change, and specify which behaviors of your own you are willing to change, to help them behave in a manner that will not interfere with your relationship. Don’t “imply” but be direct. Don’t ask for a change they are unlikely to be able to make and don’t ask for changes in their personal characteristics.

Reaffirm: Reaffirm your belief that they can change behaviors that are getting in the way of a positive relationship if they value their relationship with you. Reaffirm your willingness to make some changes too if they are realistic and might be contributing to the dynamics between you that are not positive, and reaffirm why you value them and your relationship with them.
Progressive Christianity @ IUCC
by Bil Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest

My new book, “Cramming for the Finals: New ways of Looking at Old Church Ideas” is receiving nationwide exposure as I’ve been doing lots of broadcasts. Technology allows me to broadcast from my office in Irvine to the engineer in Little Rock, Arkansas, to the radio interviewer in a station outside of Boston. So far, all the interviewers have been very complimentary about the book even though they don’t necessarily agree. They all say it is most provocative, which is part of my reason for writing it. In every broadcast, I have been able to mention IUCC and how important it has been on my faith journey.

The one point I stress over and over is the fact that IUCC is Open and Affirming not only in its acceptance of people no matter where they are in their life’s journey but in every way, such as Biblical interpretation, our willingness to “paddle up stream” and our readiness to try new things. In my book, I often use what is happening at IUCC as a model of what the church of the future needs to do.

My book is also featured in the Progressive Christianity website whose Executive Director is Fred Plumer, the “founding pastor” of IUCC who has been very generous in his support of my book.

Also, this past week, I became involved in a program for former pastors. Most of these men and women had to leave their church because they could no longer believe in a theistic supernatural being and their church “forced” them out. I thought that maybe there would be 50 or so members of this organization, but I was floored when they told me that were over 800 members, mostly from fundamentalist churches. I feel so fortunate to be involved with IUCC where we can ask hard questions and receive honest answers.

In August, I’ll be doing a 4-week course on “The Historical Jesus.” It will be offered on Wednesday evenings from 7-8:30 on Aug. 9, 16, 23, and 30; and Thursday mornings from 9:30-11 on Aug. 10, 17, 24, and 31. The New Testament gives next to no information on who Jesus was as a human being, but there are ways to put together a composite so that one can discover the historical Jesus. The flyers will be available at church or you can call me at 949-240-2933 or email: bilaulenbach@yahoo.com

The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity:

1. Believe that following the path and the teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;

2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of the many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;

3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to: * Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics, * Believers and agnostics, * Women and men, * Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities, * Those of all classes and abilities;

4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;

5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;

6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;

7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;

8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion and selfless love.