FROM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL TO BEACH GET-AWAYS TO BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY LUNCHES, OUR YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS WERE BUSY THIS SUMMER!

Photos courtesy of Sarah Fiske-Phillips
HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF: HOW YOU CAN HELP

As part of our congregation’s efforts to assist with Hurricane Harvey disaster relief, Boy Scout Troop 602 and the IUCC Youth Ministry will be collecting supplies to assemble hygiene and school kits for the next two Sundays beginning on Sunday, September 3rd. We will be sending the completed kits to Church World Services (CWS), the relief agency used by UCC Disaster Relief Ministries, to distribute to people who have been affected by the hurricane. Please bring one or more of the items listed on this page to our table outside of the sanctuary. If you are unable to bring a donation on Sunday, you may also drop off your donations to Troop 602 at their Thursday night meetings at 7:00 p.m. inside of Plumer Hall.

Troop 602 and the IUCC Youth Group will be hosting a kit assembly get together on Saturday, September 16, in the child care back patio at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend to help us assemble these relief kits. Food and drinks will be provided.

Cash donations may also be submitted to IUCC marked for “Hurricane Harvey” with the request they be sent through our Conference office or to Wider Church Ministries. Donations may also be sent directly to Wider Church Ministries, Financial Services - 6th Floor, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115.

* For kits and buckets, please do not enclose money inside the kits or in the shipping boxes. Find shipping and donation instructions at cwskits.org

CWS School Kit
Supplies needed:

- One pair of blunt scissors removed from the package (rounded tip only)
- Three 70-count bound notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-210 pages (no loose-leaf or filler paper)
- One 30-centimeter 12” ruler
- One hand-held pencil sharpener removed from the package
- One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)
- Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers removed from the package
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
- One 12”x14” to 14”x17” finished size cotton or lightweight, solid colored canvas bag with cloth handles (no logos). No reusable shopping bags or backpacks.

All items must be packed inside of the cloth bag. To purchase an affordable bag, visit: www.myshopangel.com.

CWS Emergency Cleanup Buckets
Supplies needed:

- One five-gallon bucket with resealable lid (If bucket has been used, clean well but do not use if it has held chemicals of any kind.)
- Four scouring pads
- Seven sponges, including one large
- One scrub brush
- Eighteen reusable cleaning towels (e.g. Easy Wipes)
- One 50 oz. or two 25 oz. bottle(s) of liquid laundry detergent
- One 16-28 oz. bottle of liquid disinfectant dish soap
- One 12-16 oz. bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray bottles)
- One package of 48-50 clothespins
- Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
- Five dust masks
- Two pairs non-surgical latex gloves
- One pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather
- 24-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll and removed from carton
- One 6-9 oz. bottle of non-aerosol insect repellent

All cleaning items must be new—all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened. Place all items into the bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment. Snap the lid on tight and seal with packing tape.

CWS Hygiene Kit
Supplies needed:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15” x 28” to 16” x 32” (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One finger nail or toe nail clipper removed from the package
- One bath size bar of soap in the wrapper
- One toothbrush in the package
- Ten standard size Band-aids

All items need to fit inside a one-gallon plastic zipper closure bag. Remove the excess air from the bag and seal before boxing. Do not add any extra items or toothpaste. A tube of extended expiration date toothpaste will be added to each Hygiene Kit just prior to its journey.
I imagine that some of us during our school days had to write an essay on “How I spent my summer vacation.” In that essay, you probably recounted stories of the trips you took, stories of the “exciting” times and perhaps even a paragraph on the daily routines of your time away from school. The ritual of writing that essay helped you to remember and also to focus on what the coming year might bring.

Think about the exciting summer we’ve had at IUCC. I know that Pastor Paul will share stories of his sabbatical, but here’s what we can share and remember. Drama, poetry, dance, all kinds of music -- Dixieland, bluegrass, folk, Chinese, traditional, and classical -- creation of art, outstanding guest preachers and speakers -- in short, an amazing array of experiences! It truly has been a summer of rejuvenation for our Sunday morning worship. Thank you to Pastor Steve Swope for his monumental efforts and planning of all these events and activities. He has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure that IUCC continues to run smoothly. Pastor Sarah has worked with the youth and also has assumed a greater role with visitations and the Preschool. Both have truly “stepped up to the plate” and made a difference this summer!

Now to focus on what lies ahead. Mark September 10 on your calendar (electronic or otherwise). On that day, we will mark the formal end of Pastor Paul’s sabbatical with a Dixieland band, a sermon from Pastor Steve, the welcoming of new members, and a welcome back coffee hour for Pastor Paul! Join us for the coffee time between services -- 10:30 to 11:00 -- to greet Pastor Paul! I know he will be glad to greet you and share some time with all of us.

But there’s even more planned for September 10. After second service, beginning at about 12:15 there will be a Special Congregational Meeting for the purpose of voting on a motion to proceed with Construction and Construction funding of Phase 1A. This vote is the culmination of years of dreaming, planning, working on committees and task forces, working with the City of Irvine, fundraising, budgeting, meetings and more meetings. It truly has taken a village to make this day happen. Thanks to the members of the many task forces that worked through the years to see this effort to its fruition -- Long Range Planning, Capital Campaign Team, and Building Committees (more than one).

Special thanks to Anne Rosse who chaired both the Capital Campaign Team and the Building Task Force. Her tireless efforts, persistence, and expertise have truly been a gift to us all. Thanks to the members and friends of IUCC who have supported this project with their financial gifts and with their prayers of love and support. Details of the proposed motion have been sent out and can be found on the IUCC web site. Plan to come to the meeting and be part of this historic day in the life of IUCC.

As Keith Boyum said on January 31, 2016 when we voted overwhelmingly to launch the Capital Campaign,

“Now it our turn to exercise foresight, to offer legacy, and to take a worthwhile risk -- that actually seems smaller than the one taken three or so decades ago. We can now touch the future with our gifts and support. And three or more decades from now, it may come to pass that those who gather here will pause and reflect with appreciation on what we did today.”

September 10 -- a day to say welcome back, a day to look forward, a day to finally begin building! I look forward to the months ahead as we embark on a building process that will culminate in increased office and meeting space. More importantly, that increased space will allow us to offer more programs and to make a greater difference in the community. What a tremendous legacy that will be!

In faith and community,

Renae
Comma Group sign-ups have begun! See me after worship for a sign-up sheet, or register online at ucc.org/register. Our study material this year will be Rob Bell’s book What We Talk About When We Talk About God.

How can we talk to our neighbors – folks who may have very different beliefs – about the ways we understand God? Rob Bell has some ideas, some stories, and even some helpful language to share. Join one of our Comma Groups and be part of the conversation!

And if you’ve wondered about helping to facilitate a group, please contact me! The groups that have the most fun seem to be the ones which share monthly tasks, with one person coordinating. Maybe that person is you… I’d be glad to tell you more!

Jesus Seminar on the Road – The early registration discount ends Sept. 22, and you don’t want to miss this event! Our speakers will not only discuss some ancient Christian texts, but they’ll demonstrate how we might develop new spiritual practices from them. Details are on page 5 and on our website; sign up at www.westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/irvine-2017.

Adult Sunday School – Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi continues to lead the discussion on UCC scholar Walter Brueggemann’s “Countering Pharaoh’s Production-Consumption Society Today” through Sept. 10. After that, Rev. Terry LePage will be offering some interesting and challenging ideas around spirituality and activism.

Midweek Salon is back after a summer hiatus, and our first fall guest is Kelly Garrity! Kelly sings with our Chancel Choir and is a professional counselor. She’ll talk and answer questions about her work using mindfulness through poetry. Join us at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27.

Bible Study – In August we finished the book of Revelation and began the letter of Jude, nearly at the end of the New Testament. This month: three letters attributed to John, and as always, Ken Wyant’s light-hearted but scholarly leadership.

Sabbatical – Pastor Paul will officially return to our midst on Sunday, Sept. 10. Plan to be here to welcome Paul and Carl home, to rejoice in a new season of the Chancel Choir’s beautiful music, and to enjoy a Dixieland-jazz combo!

A significant portion of Pastor Paul’s sabbatical grant from the Lilly Foundation – $15,000 – was designated for the congregation to spend during the summer, to foster our own explorations and growth while our senior pastor was away.

In brief, we used $2,300 for nine guest preachers, $2,800 for 18 performing artists, $3,035 for visual art experiences (two workshops, a demonstration, guidance for our summer-long project, and all supplies), $2,600 for a day with Matthew Fox, and $3,765 for extra staff time.

Editor’s Note: Special thanks to the Rev. Steve Swope and Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips for their hard work in bringing us such original, creative, and thoughtful speakers and programs to enrich our summer experience! IUCC was very blessed to have their wisdom, guidance and inspiration during this time.
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

Registration is now open at https://www.westarstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/irvine-2017/. (Student discount and scholarship information will be available later.)
Building Project/Capital Campaign Update
by Anne Rosse, Chair of Building Task Force

We hope you’ve made plans to join us on September 10 for a Special Congregational Meeting. This meeting is the final step needed for breaking ground and beginning the real work of fulfilling our promise to update the IUCC campus. There is a single issue on the agenda: authorizing construction by approving the final plans and budget for Phase 1a.

Phase 1a will add 2,900 new square feet to the IUCC campus. Of this, 2,482 sq. ft. will be indoor space and 407 sq. ft. will be outdoor space, including:

- 3 meeting rooms with operable partitions. Each meeting room will have a seated capacity of 23-28 people. When combined into 1 large room, this multi-use space will be able to accommodate 80 people (seated) and 160 (standing).
- 2 staff offices. One office will be used by the senior pastor; the other can accommodate 1 or 2 staff members.

- 1 patio immediately adjacent to the staff offices and one of the meeting rooms. With a capacity of 25 people, this new space will serve many needs (pastoral counseling, fellowship, small group meetings and events, etc.).
- 1 future office to be used in the near-term as flexible work space for staff and volunteers.
- 1 single-occupancy restroom.
- Church office with administrative staff work stations and waiting area
- New IUCC signage, frontage landscape improvements (with low-water use plantings), enhanced pedestrian access, and a widened driveway
- The proposed coffee corner was removed from the project scope but funding for a portable coffee cart has been included.
- Existing church office space will be freed up and remodeled into a fourth classroom for preschool

(Building Project article continued on page 7)
Overview:

Throughout our planning, we have focused on meeting IUCC’s highest needs and priorities while being good fiscal stewards. Therefore, a few projects have been designated “additive alternates.” They include: (1) replacing the concrete in front of the Atwood Building/Plumer Hall; (2) replacing the NW sanctuary HVAC unit; (3) temporarily cooling the sanctuary during construction; and (4) installing a welcome screen. The congregation can decide to include any of them, subject to funding and church priorities, during this construction or at a future date.

To save additional costs, we will initially use our current tables and chairs (from Plumer Hall) in the new meeting rooms but look forward to being able to install either high-quality used furniture or new items as soon as funds are available. In the near future, we will create a “wish list” of supplemental items to enhance activities in the new space and invite congregants to help supply those extra items.

To hold the September 10 meeting, we needed three key items in place – and appreciate your patience and support as we worked to accomplish them.

1. City Approval
   On August 23, we heard from the City of Irvine that our permits were approved and ready to be issued.

2. Loan Approval
   On August 24, we received the approval letter from our lender, Cornerstone Fund.

3. Construction Budget
   Due to very busy market conditions, bids came in higher than expected but our contractor, Wieland Corp., worked hard over the summer to secure multiple competitive bids on our behalf so we could finalize the budget.

Upon congregational approval, we will move quickly to undertake the projected 6-month build. Key milestones are highlighted below. We have included a 10-day “rainy day” allowance and will minimize construction activity during key holiday periods. Our goal is to have construction finished by Easter (April 1, 2018). Regular communications will keep our congregants, visitors, preschool families and neighbors apprised, especially with regard to construction impact on parking and driveway access.

Late September
   Site mobilization (fencing, construction trailer)

October
   Site prep and demolition

November
   Construction begins

February
   Drywall/flooring

March
   Install fixtures/paint

April
   Move-in

May
   Remodel of current church office to new classroom

September
   New classroom ready

To support this project, we need the entire IUCC family to come together. Every pledge payment and new gift brings us closer to making this new space a reality. If you haven’t joined your church family in supporting this project, we invite you to make a generous gift today. And, if you have already pledged your support, we thank you for your generosity.

When we embarked on the capital campaign, “Embracing the Future,” to fund this campus renovation, we asked that everyone try to make a pledge of three times (3x) their stewardship commitment. We fell short of that, achieving 2.7x, not 3x. Please prayerfully consider whether you can increase your campaign pledge to meet that 3x stewardship target. Your augmented goal can make a real difference. In the words of Anne Frank, “No one has ever become poor by giving.”

In the next several weeks, we plan to thank everyone for their generous campaign gifts by publishing names and dedications but no pledge amounts. If you asked to remain anonymous, of course, we will respect your wishes. We will also announce room namings in the new building.

We began this building project journey several years ago, wanting IUCC’s shared values to impact and improve our Irvine and Orange County communities. Supported by strengthened facilities, we can grow in community significance through strong programs and service to our region. Indeed, the five-year strategic plan adopted by the congregation in May 2017 takes that desire for service and significance to the level of goals and strategies. And, using that strategic plan, at the July leadership retreat, our lay leaders fleshed out objectives for using the new meeting spaces, and for capitalizing on the new work spaces for staff and volunteers.

We look forward to using the new spaces as resources for reaching out, for serving, and for standing tall for our shared progressive Christian values.

See you on September 10 when this congregation votes about stepping forward in faith to begin our long-awaited campus update!
What’s for Dinner?

Are you like me in that I’m dragging my feet in deciding if I’m going to eat less meat or even become a vegetarian or vegan? Food is an emotional topic, I’m discovering, not only because we receive nourishment, but also because we derive such pleasure from eating. Some of my favorite meals are comfort food, food my mother lovingly prepared. If I give up beef, that means I’ll no longer delight in Mom’s meatloaf, Sunday dinner roast beef, or Swedish meatballs! Ouch!

Kathi Smith, an IUCC member, concurs: It’s so much harder to change our diet than it is to turn off the water while brushing our teeth. I asked Kathi why she is vegan: Becoming vegan has been a journey, but I am finally committed to this diet for the rest of my life. There are so many reasons why: for the animals, for my health, for the earth and its people. Animal agriculture is simply not sustainable as our population continues to increase. You might want to watch the documentary, Cowspiracy, to better understand the impact of animal agriculture on our beautiful planet. Eliminating beef and dairy from your diet can make a huge difference in combating climate change. Every single day, someone following a vegan diet saves 1100 gallons of water, 30 square feet of forest, 20 pounds of CO2 equivalent, 45 pounds of grain, and one animal’s life. Think of what you can save in a year!

As a GREENfaith (Creation Justice) church, we are members of California Interfaith Power & Light, an organization dedicated to care of the Earth. To aid our understanding of the food issue, the following excerpts are taken from their newsletter.

“The ways in which we produce, distribute, consume, and waste our food contribute massive amounts of greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere. According to author Anna Lappe, ‘[while fossil fuels are the largest cause of global warming] the global system producing and distributing food... likely accounts for 31 percent or more of the human-caused global warming effect.’ (Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It)

“So what can be done to reduce our agricultural emissions? There are four main steps to creating a more just and sustainable food system: they need to be plant based, local, seasonal, and widely accessible.

“Why plant based? Did you know that 20 servings of vegetables have fewer greenhouse gas emissions than one serving of beef? Livestock emit large amounts of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and take up huge swaths of land for production and waste storage. A University of Minnesota study found that if current global food trends prevail, by 2050 our diets will lead to an 80 percent increase in global greenhouse gas emissions from food production. The study found that adopting alternative diets (Mediterranean, pescatarian, or vegetarian) could reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes by about 25 percent, cancer by about 10 percent and death from heart disease by about 20 percent relative to the omnivore diet. Further, according to lead researcher, G. David Tilman, if the world adopted versions of these healthier diets, ‘global greenhouse gas emissions [would be] reduced by an amount equal to the current greenhouse gas emissions of all cars, trucks, planes, trains and ships.’

“Why local and seasonal? The University of Vermont has put together ten great reasons on why local food (which is most often also seasonal and organic) is better for you and your family. Further, local just makes sense. If your food is transported shorter distances, it is then connected to fewer greenhouse gas emissions and contributes less to local air pollution.

“Why widely accessible? Not all people have the same opportunities to eat fresh, local foods. In the U.S. 42 million Americans struggle with hunger and according to the USDA more than 18 million U.S. citizens live in food deserts, communities that don’t have sufficient access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. Sustainable food should be a right, and we need to ensure that our fellow citizens have enough to eat – for their health and well being, and for...
the health and well being of the planet. Think about how you and your family can be more sustainable in your food choices.” (from Rachel Klein, California Interfaith Power & Light)

In a Youtube interview, Anna Lappe agrees that it can seem overwhelming to change one’s diet. However, she has found that she feels healthier by doing so. She says that making healthy choices is not about deprivation, nor about taking away pleasure. It’s not about making you suffer. Rather, eating well makes you feel healthy and energized!

Bon Appetit!

Vivian Elaine Johnson

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

Eco-Tips from YOU

*Try meatless Mondays
*Watch Cowspiracy documentary
(Google, watch free online)

Miss Lily’s Green Tips

Dear Readers,

In the coolness of the morning, I think about Septembers past - going to school, shopping for clothes with my mother, enjoying fresh corn, and remembering the summer months.

There is a lot to reflect upon - 9/11 always stands out, as well as the kindness of others. The days get shorter, yet the sunsets are sublime. We go back to work, and the paycheck comes in handy.

My niece works it out in her garden. She harvests her tomatoes, admires the purple eggplant flowers, and smiles at the green bean blossoms. She reaps and she sows. Perhaps gardening is a better way of life.

Much love,

Miss Lily

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

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! Besides, snacks eaten at church have no calories, right??

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 commited to one Sunday each year, our calendar - and our tummies - would be full. Thank you!

There’s a great way to contribute to IUCC by signing up for Ralphs Community Contribution Program!

Ralph’s grocery stores offer a community outreach donation option that enables you to contribute to your favorite charity (IUCC, of course!) every time you shop!

To learn more and to sign up, go to: https://www.ralphps.com/topic/community-rewards-9. Anyone who uses a Ralph’s card can go to their profile and designate IUCC to receive a 1% rebate on their grocery purchases. If you already participate, you must re-designate IUCC again after September 1 to continue the contribution.

Anyone who spends an average of $100 per month at Ralph’s will be responsible for making an extra $50 per year donation to IUCC!
Special Congregational Meeting
12:15 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10

After second service on September 10, this congregation will vote on breaking ground, beginning the real work of fulfilling our promise to update the IUCC campus. Be sure to attend and vote!

Pastor Paul is on sabbatical
- but will return Sept. 10!

Please join us in welcoming him back! Until then, 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 494-575-0093 (Steve). They are also available by email at sarahfiskephillips@gmail.com or steve@iucc.org.

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, Sept. 19, 9:30 a.m.
The Seekers women meet on the third Tuesday of each month for theological and spiritual study and discussion. Newcomers are always welcome! Call Reefa to get details - (949) 859-7091.

Midweek Salon
Wed., Sept. 27, at 7:00 p.m.
Kelly Garrity sings with our Chancel Choir and is a professional counselor. She'll talk and answer questions about her work using mindfulness through poetry.

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Sat., Sept. 9, 2-4 p.m.
Wed., Sept. 27, 6-7:30 p.m.
After taking the summer off, the Prayer Shawl Ministry will resume its monthly meetings on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 2-4 p.m. and Wednesday, Sept. 27, from 6-7:30 p.m. Bring your current project to “sit and knit” in this ministry vital to our church community. We will be planning future events, including our annual Thanksgiving Feast in November. See Pat Sauter or Nancy Dreckman for further details.

Women’s Fellowship
Wed., Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m.

Women’s Fellowship will resume regular first Wednesday suppers on Sept. 6 at 6:30 p.m. in Plumer Hall. Everyone brings a salad bar ingredient and $2.00 to defray the cost of greens and dessert. (Is that a “greens” fee?) Come join the lively conversation and fellowship in this casual setting. Anyone can play—just sign up on the patio and put a reminder in your datebook. The other dates for Fall are:

Oct. 4th: Bread for the World
Nov. 1st: All Saints Day
Dec. 6th: Christmas dinner and Boutique
September is a time of change. Students go back to school, Autumn is right around the corner bringing changing leaves and cooler temperatures (we can only hope), and the IUCC Chancel Choir is back together after our short Summer hiatus. It’s an exciting time for me, because I miss singing in the choir while we are off. It’s interesting to know some of the reasons for this.

Studies have shown that singing has positive psychological effects. The act of singing releases endorphins, which are known to elevate mood and decrease physical pain. Singing karaoke in front of a crowd can build confidence which brings long-lasting effects on general well-being. But of all types of singing, choral singing seems to have the most dramatic effect on people. The reasons behind that go beyond the physical effects, which can be achieved in solo singing.

In an article by Julia Layton, titled “Does singing make you happy?” she writes, “Choral singers need to concentrate on their music... and it’s hard to worry about things like work or money or family problems when you’re actively concentrating on something else. So choral singers tend to have a built-in stress-free zone.” She explains how some of the most important ties between singing and happiness are social ones. “The support system of being part of a group, and the commitment to that group that gets people out of the house and into the chorus every week – these are benefits that are specific to group singing. And they seem to be a big component of why choral singers tend to be happier than the rest of us. The feelings of belonging to a group, of being needed by the other members of that group, go a long way toward combating the loneliness that often comes along with being human in modern times.”

With recent events in our country and around the world, now is the perfect for healing through music. For me, singing is a time when I can leave my problems behind and become completely engrossed in the music and camaraderie.

If you have read any of my articles, I suspect you know where I’m going with this! It’s not too late for you to come and join us in the Chancel Choir. We have an amazing time making music together. We unite our voices and our hearts in a common goal to create beautiful music to uplift the congregation on Sunday mornings. We also provide music for special services and two concerts every year.

We rehearse in the sanctuary Thursdays from 7:15 p.m. -- 9:00 p.m. Our first rehearsal is Thursday, September 7th at 6:30 to have some refreshments and fellowship. We arrive on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. to sing both services. We would love to have you join our happy choir family. If you have any questions please email me at waitin4chachi72@gmail.com
Powerful Parenting
Dr. Lorraine Fox
THE ROLE OF THE “SELF” IN MOTIVATION

It's time to wrap up our series devoted to a journey into the three aspects of “the self”: self-concept, self-esteem, and self-awareness. School has started and once again parents will become very interested in the concept of “motivation.” This month we'll consider how the aspects of the self figure into “motivation”: various ingredients that cause a person to do certain activities and act in certain ways. For the purpose of a short column we'll have to reduce the somewhat complicated notion of motivation into a very simple formula: 1. Payoff - What will I get if I do a certain thing or act a certain way, and do I want what I'll get? If I am not interested in what I will get, I do not have a “motive” to do a certain activity or behave a certain way. 2. Am I literally capable of doing what it is that I would like to do to get the rewards/payoffs associated with the behavior? 3. Do I believe I am capable of doing what I am interested in doing, to get the rewards I am interested in getting?

One of the most important concepts related to motivation for parents and others who are interested in motivating children is this: **You can only motivate someone to do something they are able to do.** Upping the reward doesn't make someone able. You can offer me $500 to fix your car, but even if I want and need the money, I'm not going to fix your car if I don't know anything about cars. If someone does not have the skills to do what we want them to do, we have to see if we can motivate them to learn how to do it. One of the quickest ways to “demotivate” a kid is to decide that they are defiant or lazy when they don't do something we want them to do, on the assumption that they could do it if they wanted to. One of the crucial distinctions to make when dealing with a kid about their willingness to do something is to know the different between “won't” and “can't.” Confusing these causes considerable tension in relationships and also causes us to miss an opportunity to be helpful rather than dismissive or punitive.

This is where issues of the “self” come to the forefront. The difference between “won't” and “can't” may be based on reality, or may be based on perception. And as we've discussed for over a year, the “self” is not based on reality, but on perception: what does someone **think** is true? Kids with accurate self-concept are much more likely to be motivated to engage in tasks they know they can do and avoid tasks they know they struggle with. This is wise because it leads to much more satisfaction with endeavors. If you try golf and you're really bad at it, you'll probably find another hobby. If you try golf and find you've got a pretty good swing, you'll make it a hobby. None of us persist at doing things for pleasure we stink at. On the other hand, you don't know what you're good at until you try it, and this is where self-esteem becomes important. If kids have generally good feelings about themselves they will be willing to try something and take it in stride when they find that's probably not going to be something they excel at. In other words, they won't tie their feelings about themselves to whether they are particularly good at one sport or another, or one subject in school or another. Some kids feel the need to protect their egos by acting like they “won't” so others won't know that they “can't.” Sometimes we tell a kid that something is “easy” because we find it easy, and they then feel ashamed that they find it hard. Easy for you is not necessarily easy for me.

Nobody is good at everything. To have a happy and well balanced life we find those interests and activities that suit our particular abilities and spend less time with those that are more challenging, unless we find “challenge” rewarding. One can be motivated to “try” something that they might have trouble with, or that is required subject, if they are clear that not excelling does not mean they are not a fine person. We want our kids to find their bliss, and also be willing to engage in necessary activities whether or not they are as satisfying. The reward, or payoff, may just be that they put the effort into it, and we or others appreciate that they tried.

Motivation, then, is both an “idea,” or concept, and a process – willingness to try. The more accurate one’s ideas about themselves, the more likely they will put the effort into trying. The motivation formula is: **ATTITUDE (POSSIBILITY) + MOTIVE (DESIRABILITY) = ACTION.** Each ingredient in the formula is highly subjective and particular to an individual. Parents are largely responsible for instilling positive attitudes in their children, so that they grow up believing in their abilities to do some things, although not everything, well. Each person is motivated by different rewards based on individual characteristics, as different people are made happy by different payoffs. It is the parents’ job to let each of their children find and accept who they are, to find their individual joys and talents, and to be their cheerleaders. Finally, we appreciate all of their efforts, reminding them that **failure is an event, not a person.**
A “snapshot” of the Historical Jesus

For the past four weeks, a group of IUCCers have been looking at the “ingredients” that are used to find the real Jesus. Here’s the start of a composite. (The resources to develop this image are enormous and can’t be listed here.)

1. Jesus was born a Jew, lived a very Jewish life and died a Jew. This means he was circumcised shortly after he was born, went to Sabbath services every Friday evening at the local synagogue, wore a yarmulke (skull cap), was taught the Talmud (first five books of the Old Testament) in either Hebrew and/or Greek. He made Bar Mitzvah at the age of 12, a ceremony when Judaism recognizes that a boy is now a man. During his training for his Bar Mitzvah, he studied all the laws (613 of them), customs, and learned to speak and read in Hebrew and/or Greek.

2. We are very sure that his mother’s name was Mary but the history books of the rabbis suggest that he was illegitimate and that his “father” was a soldier, either Roman or Herodian. After the birth narratives, we hear little or nothing more about Mary. It was some 85 to 95 years after Jesus’ birth (6 BCE. Before the Common Era) that we hear about a birth story. The early gospels and the letters of Paul don’t mention any such birth story or stories.

3. The first time that we meet a “father” for Jesus, called Joseph, is 85+ years after his birth. Both he and the other Joseph in the gospels (Arimathia who supposedly buried Jesus in his very expensive tomb) seem to be imaginary figures based on the Old Testament Joseph (cloak of many colors), an extremely kind man who even welcomed his brothers who had sold him into slavery as a boy. Jesus was probably raised by his mother’s family because as “used goods,” Mary could demand no dowry and no Jewish man would marry her, except the fictional Joseph.

4. Every child in those days was taught a skill or trade because children were the backbone of the economy. There is a strong suggestion that Jesus was taught carpentry, maybe even specializing in wooden farm implements.

5. Jesus is the Greek translation of the Aramaic Yesuah (meaning “salvation” or “saved”) and this is what he would have been called because the main language of the Jews in those days was Aramaic, a 3,000 year old Semitic Hebrew dialect.

6. Joshua (Jesus in Hebrew) was born in or close to Nazareth. The idea that he was born in Bethlehem is part of the birth narratives which are not history-history but religious-history. The possibility of the family going to Bethlehem or Egypt is right next to zero. Nazareth was a tiny agrarian town in the south of Galilee which could have been the start of a new Jewish community. (Today, its population is over 100,000, mostly Arab Muslims who make their living by selling Christian souvenirs to tourists.)

7. In one way or another, Jesus was educated. Minimally, he would have been taught by an elder in the synagogue who might not have had as much education as some of his students. Maximally, Jesus could have been taught by a well-trained/educated rabbi. The possibility of that is very low because Nazareth was a tiny community. I suspect the whoever and wherever of his education isn’t that important during this time. The important idea is that as a young adult he received further training. A few writers suggest that he went to India. (One Hindu guru I read claimed he knew the house where Jesus lived and the teacher under whom he studied.) Others think that maybe Jesus joined a monastic-like community that believed in the strict adherence to the law and celibacy. These could have been the Essenes who lived in Qumran, but there is no proof of that. We can surmise that someplace along the line Jesus became well trained in Judaism, its scriptures, laws and customs.

Enough for now but we shall continue in October.

Peace Love Joy Hope

Bil