This year’s annual picnic at Mason Regional Park turned out to be a very enjoyable way to wrap up the summer. About 70 people showed up to have fun together enjoying the beautiful weather by the lakeside, hotdogs and hamburgers, and exciting games. This event was planned by the Fellowship Committee with help from the Ministry for Young People, who provided games and entertainment for the kids. Thanks to everybody who brought food. The variety of salads, fruits, desserts and other dishes helped make the picnic complete. ~ Alyssa Cornett
A word of thanks—I want to commend the Rev. Dr. Jack Cahill for his work at IUCC over the past year. Jack has been a good colleague and friend to me during this time. His many years of wisdom and unassuming good nature in listening to people and leading discussions have been an asset to the church.

Jack has resigned to pursue other interests—mostly spending more time with Sandy and their grown kids. I wish them well in all they choose to do at this time in their lives.

This vacancy in the Adult Ed position needed to be filled quickly—we are rolling out Comma Groups this week, we now have two Adult Ed classes to be filled every Sunday with teachers, preachers and activists in our midst, a joint Thanksgiving Service to host with the synagogue, and a special speaker for the Spring to be found on the horizon.

It would be impossible to promote our current Adult Education Director position, interview candidates and hire a new director within the time frame we need, and so I created a position named, “Interim Adult Education and Media Director,” with the input and help of some of our top leadership. This will give us some time to explore what we need in this position for the future.

In the meantime, I am pleased to announce that we are hiring Matthew Redrich to be our interim director. His primary duties at first will be to make sure Comma Groups are up and running, and to schedule speakers to lead our Sunday morning Adult Ed classes. He will have ten hours per week in which to do this for October and November while he is finishing his CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) requirement at a local hospital. In the months that follow, he will give us some more hours, where he will help us recruit a noted theologian or activist to fit the kind of special speaker event for which our church is known. Matthew will also bring us his media and outreach skills and train us (staff and volunteers) to become proficient at the kind of skills IUCC needs to learn in this new century.

Matthew’s role will be perhaps a bit more administrative than we have seen it performed in the past, but he has excellent organizational skills and I want to put those to work.

His position as, “interim” will, by the very name, have a beginning and an end. I know that Matthew is pleased to be coming onboard, and ready to fill the gaps that have been left open by this vacancy.

This Sunday, October 5, we will:

- Start rolling out our new Comma Groups,
- Begin our first Confirmation class with a new group of Confirmands,
- Celebrate the Baptism of Ray Scheller,
- Welcome new members into the church,
- Have some brief words of remembrance for the Rev. Dave Sandberg, our other unofficial “Pastor Emeritus” who served many members of our church as pastor in Laguna Niguel, and
- Celebrate “World Communion Sunday” with our annual Neighbors in Need offering.

I am leaving with our Global Mission group for Japan on Monday, the 6th. We will be gone for ten days. I am looking forward to our itinerary, including preaching in Sendai, where my English is being simultaneously translated into Japanese!

Finally—weddings! What a year this has been for so many of us who were unable to marry or even believe it might ever be possible. Carl and I are still basking in the glow of that Sunday, just a few weeks ago, when you surrounded us with love. Celebrating the wedding of Dave and Brian just a couple of weeks later in a room filled with the glow of candles and such support and love as we together made an acknowledgment of their desire to make their commitment to a life together, was one more highlight of what it means to be a part of this community.
One of my favorite childhood memories is running Saturday morning errands with my father. I felt like such an important “big girl” as we navigated the hardware store -- the smell of freshly cut wood still evokes memories of my father. He was a big fellah, tall and stocky, with such large hands that he couldn’t hold my little hand as he tried to navigate me safely through crowded stores. So, I used to make a tight little fist and he would hold me that way, his huge hand encircling mine. I always felt so loved and cared for in those moments, utterly safe.

In his final days, as he lay unconscious in Hoag’s Intensive Care Unit, I struggled to say goodbye, to tell this honorable man how very important he was to me. So, I shared a secret with him – that all through my life, during times of stress and emotional chaos – I would visualize a certain image – a young girl, her blond hair in long pig tails, walking hand in hand with her father, his enormous hand holding her safe.

Beloved ... that is how my father made me feel. And, that is exactly how I want IUCC to make each one of us feel. Think about this word – so rich in meaning. It connotes that you are loved – as in, you are my beloved child – and also that you should accept love, are worthy of love – as in, you should be loved.

My father was an economics professor so, as a result, phrases like “heteroscedastic variables” were not uncommon at the dinner table! This early exposure to economic theories help me form my own conviction that “middle out” vs. “top down” is the best model to address income inequality – to ensure that as many people as possible are successful. That, as Christians, we need to be especially mindful of the voiceless and marginalized as we strive to improve life for everyone. At IUCC, we want to see whole communities flourish, not just a select few.

IUCC is our community. In this community, we proclaim that God is love, that we love each other, that each of us is worthy of being loved. Beloved. Returning back to the image of the little girl’s fist wrapped up tight in her father’s big, safe hand ... the gift of being in this community is that sometimes you are going to feel like the little girl, needing to be wrapped up and held safe ... and other times you can be the giver of that love, holding someone else tight, making them feel safe. This is, indeed, the gift of the IUCC community.

For more than two decades, we have depended on our preschool, the Early Childhood Center, to supplement our finances and the school has enriched our reserves. But now, as enrollment has declined, the preschool requires some facility and programmatic improvements to stay competitive. Meanwhile, it continues to provide a nurturing early childhood educational experience sharing IUCC values with the families who participate. The preschool is engaged in a year-long comprehensive quality improvement project that will help restore its place as a contributing financial partner. During that process, funds that we normally count on will not be as available. Therefore, as a community, we need to rally around the preschool, doing a little extra, while supporting it to be successful.

This month, we will launch our 2015 Stewardship Campaign. Jesus spoke more about money than any other topic in the Bible, so we can’t be afraid to talk about it either. As the Rev. Ann Russ, First Presbyterian Argenta Church, states in Ten Reasons Why You Should Be Going to Church: “Good churches want you to have a healthy relationship with your money. Sure, churches need to pay the electric bill and the pastor and the youth director, but money and the church is more about you than it is about the church. It’s about your own relationship with money.”

With the thoughtful input of ministry and committee chairs, your leadership team has crafted a budget that reflects IUCC’s vision and needs for 2015. The resulting Stewardship goal is very ambitious - $440,000 - and, if we can’t meet it, that vision will have to be scaled back. But, in a tremendous demonstration of commitment, 100% of IUCC leadership has already pledged their financial support, kicking off this season of giving in unanimous solidarity.

Won’t you join us by prayerfully considering your pledge and make a financial gift that shares in this vision and honors the importance of IUCC’s place in your life? Achieving our budget goals for the year requires an average 10% increase in member pledges. We are a community, so next time you are in church, please take a look around at the other members of your church family. And, if you can, please pledge 15% more, knowing that someone in the row in front of you can only pledge 5% more.

As always, I invite you to share your thoughts. You can catch me on the patio, pull me aside at one of our terrific events, send me an email or give me a call.
On Sunday, Sept. 28, IUCC had a showing of the film "The Dream is Now," followed by a panel discussion. This event was part of an on-going project on behalf of TIO, a group made up of individuals from IUCC, Tapestry Unitarian Universalist Congregation and OCCC (OC Congregation Community Organization), to educate our members regarding the need for compassionate and comprehensive immigration reform.

The movie, informative and very moving, told the stories of various undocumented youth, many of whom had been brought to the U.S. as babies. (It is available for viewing on-line at http://www.thedreamisnow.org/documentary.)

Afterwards, the audience of about 65 IUCC members and friends moved over to Plumer Hall to hear the real-life experiences of the panel members. First up were Orlando, recently released from a prolonged detention at Adelanto Detention Facility, and his 13-year-old son, Ismael; Ismael shared what it was like to have his father taken away from the family and broke down as he recounted how his uncle had been murdered in Mexico.

The next speaker, Rogelio, told the audience about his family's reasons for coming to the US and explained how DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is allowing him to enroll in college.

Christina Fialho, founder of CIVIC (Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement http://www.endisolation.org/), then gave everyone an update regarding the current state of immigration reform and spoke about the visitation program she began, which has now grown to include more than 32 facilities nation-wide.

Lastly, the group heard from Londa, a volunteer with Friends of OC Detainees, who has been visiting immigrants in detention for almost two years; she spoke about the emotional connections one makes with the detainees and the beauty of two people sharing their common humanity.

Friends of OC Detainees is a group of volunteers who visit immigrants in detention. Under the auspices of our Mission & Service Ministry, IUCC is recruiting volunteers to participate in this humanitarian work.

If you would like to learn more, please contact Tricia Aynes at tricia_aynes@yahoo.com or attend one of the volunteer orientations below.

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**FRIENDS OF OC DETAINEE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS**

**11 a.m. and 6 p.m. (pick one)**

**Monday, October 27**

**Tapestry Unitarian Universalist**

**23436 Madero Suite #140**

**Mission Viejo, CA 92691**

IUCC is an affiliate of Friends of OC Detainees

RSVP to tricia_aynes@yahoo.com
Building Plan Update
by Anne Rosse

In the past month, progress has been made on the City of Irvine’s review of IUCC’s new Master Plan. The plan was submitted in late June to the City for a Modified Conditional Use Permit, the next step in our process of planning for IUCC’s future and legacy.

Our project was reviewed by the Architectural Committee of the Woodbridge Village Association (WVA). The WVA is responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations for the Woodbridge planned community where IUCC is located. The plan was well-received by the WVA, and we hope to receive their official approval soon. With their input, the proposed frontage to Alton Parkway became an even more warm and welcoming one, with a widened pedestrian path and more open feel, so that passers-by will feel IUCC’s neighborly welcome and intentional hospitality.

Following WVA’s review, our architectural firm, domusstudio architecture, prepared a supplemental submission to the City, responding to their requests for additional information about our parking needs at various times of day throughout the week, along with sharing the WVA-recommended changes. We anticipate that it will be late October before the City responds to this new information and a likely next step will be a traffic study.

In the meantime, a small group has been formed to do some preliminary planning in anticipation of a possible capital campaign. Renae Boyum has graciously stepped up to chair this group, which so far includes: Pastor Paul, Dawn Price, Mark Allen, Anne Rosse and Fund Development Chairs Ken Wyant and Bill Lawrence. Priscilla Bizer, our UCC campaign consultant, serves as an advisor.

Because of timeline uncertainty regarding the City’s review of our project, along with how much church business needs to be accomplished at our January 31, 2015 Winter Congregational Meeting, this planning group has recommended that we call a Special Congregational Meeting instead of adding a capital campaign vote to an already full agenda. A special meeting served us well in deciding to move forward with developing a Master Plan – a dedicated meeting format will serve us well again in making the important decision on whether this congregation wants to undertake a capital campaign to build the first phase of the Master Plan or not. The best timeframe for this special meeting is unclear but, meanwhile, the congregation will be updated at the Winter Meeting about the project status.

ECC Joins State’s Quality Improvement Project

Early childhood education provides many benefits for children, families, and society, but those benefits depend on the quality of the early education programs. California is making a significant investment in raising quality in early education through the state’s Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge. Now, IUCC’s Early Childhood Center (ECC) is pleased to join hundreds of preschools and early education programs state-wide in that effort.

The ECC was selected to participate in the QualityStart OC Project, our county’s version of the Race to the Top effort, housed at the Orange County Department of Education. Our program will receive a “star” rating based on a matrix of core quality elements, and the ECC will receive a plethora of resources and hands-on support to set and reach quality improvement goals. The combination of rating and quality improvement support is a proven effective approach to change that will have a positive effect on children’s school readiness and lifelong success.

Each of the three ECC classrooms has been assigned a professional early education coach who will provide up to 15 hours of one-on-one assistance in each room. The teachers and director will be able to attend a wide range of trainings and will have access to books and other resources to support their goals. The director and each classroom will receive $200 stipends (a total of $800) to purchase needed classroom materials. In addition, a state-qualified mentor director has been identified to assist the ECC’s director to manage change.

We are very excited—and challenged—to participate in QualityStart OC and are confident the program will make a difference in the ECC’s efforts to stay competitive and to offer a program that reflects IUCC’s mission and progressive values to our community.

Contact me if you have questions or want more information, and be sure to “like” the ECC on Facebook where you can follow the exciting developments throughout the next year.

—Laura Long, Child Care Committee Chair
Have you been waiting for the chance to wear jeans to church? Well, your opportunity is finally here!

Wear Your Jeans to Church Work Day  
SUNDAY * NOVEMBER 9 *

We’ll mark Stewardship Sunday with an all-church work day to care for our beloved church campus. Plan to be part of the fun and meet new friends as we tackle chores together!

Save the date and watch for more info in the Sunday bulletin and the newsletter.

**October Birthdays**

Jean Arce  
Bil Aulenbach  
Judy Bateman  
Renae Boyum  
Lauren Dobbert  
Kristjana Gailiun  
Laurie Gaskill  
Skip Gaskill  
Liz Henderson  
Steven King  
Roger Laule  
Don Mansell  
Melanie McDonald  
Brian Osborne  

Brian Pearcy-Schofield  
Penny Portillo  
Becky Roach  
David Schofield  
Dave Smith  
Michelle Stover  
Craig Tyrl  
Dale Vaughan  
Connie Weir  
Heidi Willcox  
Torrey Willcox  
Glenda Wyant  
Allie Zane

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**ISAIAH HOUSE**  
2nd WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH  
* OCT. 8 * 3:45 p.m.  
MEET AT IUCC PARKING LOT  

Time change for October 8! We will meet at the church parking lot as usual, but we will be leaving at 3:45. We will be picking up pizzas and drinks on the way since the house oven has broken down. If you are planning to go, call Steve at 949-436-1946 or write to sgoetz53@gmail.com for details.

**BALLOT REVIEW**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 * 12:15 p.m.  
IUCC will host a ballot review with the focus on the propositions. We’ll review and discuss recommendations and endorsements.

**CROP WALK * OCTOBER 19 *  
QUEEN OF ANGELS SCHOOL  
CORONA DEL MAR**

Join us for the 26th Annual CROP/Hunger Walk to raise money to help fight hunger and homelessness both locally and internationally. It’s a wonderful opportunity for groups to walk together towards this goal. Contact Steve Goetz at sgoetz53@gmail for more information.

**TRUNK OR TREAT**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 12:15 p.m.  
Kids are invited to come in costume for this family-friendly event featuring trick-or-treating to various decorated car trunks in our own IUCC parking lot. Volunteers should plan for 30 children. Please see Sarah, Annie, or Tricia for details, and come to the table on the patio to sign up!
For the past year we have explored many aspects of sexual diversity. We began by outlining the broad spectrum of sexuality that is part of the natural world, including the world of human relationships. We put the task of dealing with sexual diversity in the context of coming to terms with all diversity, including racial diversity, religious diversity, gender diversity, and the entire rainbow of difference that comprises the human race. Working toward justice for all peoples has been a challenge throughout history, and we are glad that “God is still speaking” and working with us to embrace what the Creator has already embraced: a full range of difference in creation to keep life interesting and fun.

In our considerations we have covered differences in sexual and affectional attraction, differences in gender identity, differences in conformity to social expectations with regard to sex and gender, and differences in how individuals come to terms with their own similarities or differences with regard to their peers. We have reviewed the evidence that suggests that failure of parents, teachers, peers, and social groups to come to terms with sexual differences leads many to suffer with a variety of mental stresses. We explored how verbal misrepresentations and thinking errors lead some to form biased, prejudicial and stereotypical ideas about people who are different from them. But many “errors” can be corrected, and this one.

We end the series this month by outlining what the prophet Micah has called us to do as far as walking humbly amidst those who differ from us, extending kindness to others who may not love as we do, and seeking just ways of treating others, regardless of who or how they love.

“Tolerance” has often been promoted as a goal, but I don’t think that is really what we want to aim for with our young people. If you heard that someone’s opinion of you was that they could “tolerate” you, would you consider that a compliment? Of course not. We don’t want to be just tolerated. Wouldn’t you rather have someone truly “accept” you, as you are, and not just put up with you? Like tolerance, acceptance is really not our ultimate goal, but for some people it’s the best we’re going to get.

While better than tolerating, accepting someone or something implies that there is something that “needs” to be accepted: such as, “you’re not gay to me, you’re a person.” For some people this is as far as they will be able to go, and it is certainly better than prejudice, and also better than tolerance. Acceptance does not imply “approval,” and some people will never be able to bring themselves to “approve” of others who are not like them, so it will be work for them to learn to accept others. A limited goal, but on our way.

What would really be “just” would be to learn to “affirm” others, not just tolerate or accept them. To affirm is to assert positively; to maintain the other as true; to support and uphold the other, despite differences. For many individuals, affirming also includes admiration and acknowledging that being gay, lesbian, bisexual, gender non-conforming, questioning, or transgender in our society takes strength. Another part of affirmation is an appreciation, which values the diversity of people in many areas and sees LGBTQ persons as a valid part of diversity. Affirmation also includes nurturance, assuming that our LGBTQ young people are indispensable in our society, viewing them with genuine affection and delight.

And so many congregations, ours among them, have pledged to be “open” or accepting and welcoming, and—beyond that—“affirming.” For many in our church it has been quite a journey and they, and all of us, are the better for it. Some are still traveling, but thankfully not alone.

There are many good things about people. One is that they are each unique and diverse in a myriad of ways. Another really good thing about people is that they can change. Learning to embrace diversity, including sexual diversity, is something everyone can do if they listen to the God who is still speaking, and who created the diversity. One of the wonderful features of children and teens is that they don’t struggle nearly as hard as adults to change. This makes them a little unpredictable, which makes them interesting, but it also makes them more flexible than us. Our children and young people can move nicely, with our guidance, from ignorant (unknowing), to questioning, to accepting, to affirming in a beautiful way.

Think of yourself. How many of you thought dandel-
ons were “flowers” and made a lovely bouquet for your mother? How many of you were “hit” as a child, and later decided to raise your children differently? How many of you who were raised reading the Bible eventually found yourself uneasy with the casual references to slaves? As I said, people can change.

I wish you and your children well on your journey through diversity. The world, as well as our congregation, provides a wonderful path for exploration. I’ll meet you at the corner of Interesting and Wonderful.

For every girl who is tired of acting weak when she is strong, there is a boy who is tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable.

For every girl who is tired of people not trusting her intelligence, there is a boy who is burdened with the constant expectation of knowing everything.

For every girl who is tired of being called over-sensitive, there is a boy who is denied the right to be gentle and weep.

For every girl who is called unfeminine when she competes, there is a boy for whom competition is the only way to prove his masculinity.

For every girl who throws out her EZ bake oven, there is a boy who wishes to find one.

For every girl who takes a step toward her liberation, there is a boy who finds the way to freedom has been made a little easier.

Author Unknown (published in Relational Child and Youth Care Practice, Vol.17, NO.3)

IUCC’s yearly Stewardship Campaign supports the church’s needs, funding new and ongoing programs that strengthen our church community while enhancing our ability to build meaningful connections beyond our church walls. Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s) about Stewardship are posed and answered below, with thanks to United Church of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the source materials.

I give every Sunday during worship -- why pledge? Pledging (or estimating your giving) allows your church community to plan for our common life. There will always be opportunities for spontaneous, spirit-led, and heartfelt giving; however, estimating your giving for the year allows the church to plan the extent of its mission and ministry - can we do what we have been called by God to do? Pledges become a touchstone either indicating we can go ahead or we need to rethink what we are doing. As Jesus said, “Who among you would begin to build a tower and not determine the cost?”

How do I pledge? In the fall, members and those who regularly attend worship services will receive a pledge card through the mail. Pledge cards will be available at church, too. A pledge also can be made online at iucc.org/giving/pledge. We ask that pledges be completed no later than November 14. You may pledge to give a set amount every week or month, or you may determine an annual amount that you estimate you will give, in a pattern to be decided by you.

Is there an amount that I am supposed to pledge? In a healthy household, every member participates as they are able. This can be your guide to giving. Or, another way to think about your giving is to determine a percentage of your income that your feel you are able to share with IUCC for its common life and ministry. As time goes on, you may want to be challenged to grow in giving by increasing that percentage.