IUCC’s Annual Trunk or Treat on October 27 was a hoot!

Photos by Tricia Aynes
“The Rev. Dr. Jack Cahill” is a name you will be seeing in the masthead of all of our communications starting this week. However, he will be the first to ask you to call him “Jack.” Jack and Sandy Cahill (pictured below) moved to Laguna Woods upon his retirement this year as pastor of the First Congregational Church of Morenci, Michigan. He grew up in Orange County, and they are now close to where their grown children, Paul and Allison, live.

Our Adult Education position is now (happily) filled, and Jack’s qualifications are many. He and Sandy will be at both services on November 3rd to meet the congregation. Our Bible study will end its long hiatus and resume Tuesday at 6:30 with a meet-and-greet followed by some direction from you in terms of content and possible alternate times.

Here is some background on Jack: He has a B.A. from UCI, a M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and a J.D. from the University of Oregon School of Law. He has pastored three of our churches across the country, and for a brief time early in his calling, he was the Associate Pastor at our San Bernardino church.

In the midst of his career before returning to ministry again, Jack was employed at Colorado Christian University, where he served in various capacities: Dean of Students; Dean, School of Professional Studies; Chair, Dept. of Biblical Studies; Vice President, College of Undergraduate Studies; Dean, School of Theological and Biblical Studies; and Professor of Law and Religion.

After serving as an enlisted Marine in Vietnam after high school, Jack later served as a Navy chaplain to Marines and as a chaplain-intern at the Mayo Clinic.

Sandy and Jack attended our recent Youth Sunday “undercover” and stayed through both services and the Adult Ed time led by Jerry Stinson. It may be that some of you have already met them simply by showing hospitality to our guests.

In addition, Tricia Abouabdo is being promoted to Sunday school Co-ordinator after working as one of our child care assistants. Tricia, Annie and Sarah all work together as a great team. Our pastoral intern, Matt, has been assisting in all areas of worship and Sunday school. The energy that is happening around our programs for young people is tremendous. This is the opportunity I have been waiting for to these many months to be able to say that we have a full program for kids and youth on Sundays that you would be proud to invite your friends to visit. Our recent youth Sunday and the influx of a few more kids up front during the Children’s Time are testimony to this.

In June, you were invited to come to a staffing forum where I laid out my ideas about forming a “ministry team” that would work together across our various job portfolios. I am so glad to be able to say that the team is now in place. We are once again fully staffed! Thank you for your patience as we moved from having a full-time Associate Pastor and an interim Adult Ed Director to having very little staff support for our programs during this period. I feel energized by these changes—new faces will bring fresh ideas to how we do ministry, and we have the opportunity to capitalize on the great skills that have been brought to us in Jack, Sarah, Matt, Annie and Tricia.

I’d like to say a word about the last Adult Ed offering of the year before Jack takes over. The relationship we have with our synagogue is an important one. On Wednesday, November 6, author Marty Brounstein will be with us at our joint church-synagogue event here at IUCC. He has written a remarkable book called Two Among the Righteous Few: A Story of Courage in the Holocaust. I used part of his true story in my sermon last Sunday in the hope that it might tempt you to come and learn more about the brave people (in this case, Catholics) who harbored Jews in their homes.
From the Pastor's Desk (continued from page 2)

at their own peril during the German occupation of Holland.

Two weeks later, we will be at University Synagogue to share in our annual Thanksgiving Service (Tuesday, November 26). Our combined choirs will be singing and our speaker will be Rusty Kennedy, founding CEO of the OC Human Relations Commission. Mr. Kennedy’s topic will be “How Welcome Is the Mat: 50 Years after the Signing of the Civil Rights Act, How Is Orange County Doing?”

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On a very personal note, those of us who knew Lois Johnson are very saddened by her passing. Lois was on my search committee and a member of my pastoral relations committee. She was warm, caring, direct, funny... (she had such a great laugh) and I miss her. One of the most meaningful gifts I have seen given to another person to help in their transition came from Lorraine. For Lois’ early birthday party less than two days before she passed, Lorraine gave a harp concert featuring Brian Noel playing outside her door while the guests sat in chairs in the hallway. It was a loving and deeply spiritual gift, and Lois acknowledged each piece of music as it was played. We all got to say, ‘good-bye.” Lois’ memorial service will be on Saturday, November 23 at 11:00. Lorraine—we love you.
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I am looking forward to being a part of this church family as we continue to live deeply into each others’ lives.

November is Thanksgiving, and it is also Stewardship season. Your church needs your commitment of financial support at this time in order to continue being a beacon of hope and a progressive light in Orange County. Your leadership was asked to pledge in advance of the Stewardship Campaign, and the increase in their pledges came to 12%. I raised mine accordingly, and I hope you will consider doing the same. Our “Aspirational Budget”—the amount we need to do all the things to which we aspire next year, shows that we need to match our hopes for the coming year with a tangible response to those hopes. And, in order to let our Stewardship leaders know that we can get there, pledge cards need to be in the plate on November 10.

“Surprising Gifts” is the theme of our Stewardship season this year. We have certainly been blessed with many gifts over the years, and look forward to the fresh gifts and energy of a new staff ministry team. 2 Thessalonians says, “May God… who reached out in love and surprised you with gifts of mending help and confidence, put a fresh heart in you.” I am asking on behalf of IUCC for your help this year in bringing your gifts to the table once again so that we may move ahead with mending help and confidence.

See you in church!  ~ Pastor Paul

A SERVICE HONORING THE LIFE OF LOIS JOHNSON
SATURDAY * NOV. 23 * 11 a.m.

A service will be held in honor and memory of IUCC member and dear friend, Lois Johnson, on Saturday, November 23rd at 11a.m.

Lois died Tuesday, October 22, after a long battle with cancer. Please wear brightly colored clothing in honor of Lois’ taste in clothes.

Condolences may be sent to:
Lorraine Fox
22672 Via Granados
Mission Veijéo, CA 92692

Advent Workshop

Mark your calendars for the All-Church Advent Workshop & Chili Cook-off on December 1st at 4pm!

A fun-filled seasonal event that is intentionally intergenerational! There will be caroling, crafting, Christmas stories and conversation. In addition, there will be the annual chili cook-off. If you think your chili has the stuff to knock the socks off the judges, then sign up to enter. There are several folks in the congregation who think they have the inside track on this event. Maybe your chili can convince the judges otherwise! Join us to start your holiday season. It is always a great time! Sign up on the patio to bring a potluck dish and to register for the Chili Brawl!

- Sarah Fiske-Phillips
October was an exciting month for the Ministry for Young People. We enjoyed events such as Trunk or Treat, Youth Sunday, and Game Night. We also hired Tricia Abouabdo as our Sunday School Coordinator and we are looking forward to the gifts that Tricia will bring to this new position. Here are some highlights and upcoming events:

**Youth**
The youth group started a series on interfaith dialogue. They explored Islam, Judaism, and visited a Buddhist temple. They led a very insightful Youth Sunday where they shared about their experience exploring other faiths. We had the joy of confirming two youth, Sara McComb and Aidan Mitchell, on Youth Sunday as well. The youth have also been leading Sunday School for our Kindergarten through 6th graders once a month.

**Young Adults**
The young adult group learned about climate change among other things this month. They also enjoyed a dinner and game night and lots of interesting discussions. Next month, they will be attending the Marty Brounstein event as a group and the Thanksgiving service with the synagogue. We will also be hearing from our very own Felicity Figueroa and Colleen McNamara about immigration.

**Children and Young Families**
There were lots of events for our children and young families this month. Game Night was very fun with plenty of fun board games and good food. Trunk or Treat was also a huge success with 15 cars participating and lots of young children (and adults, too!) dressed up for the Halloween festivities.

Many thanks to the volunteers who made Trunk or Treat and Game Night successful, and to all of you who are helping to make MYP so fantastic!
When the calendar flips over from October to November, my thoughts immediately turn to the topic of gratitude. Because I think remembering to feel grateful is so important, I keep a gratitude journal, which a fabulous corrector whenever I’m tempted to wallow in “woe is me” thinking. I try to be even more conscious of it during this month of giving thanks. So, this November, what am I thankful for?

- For the family I was born into and the family I’ve created;
- For friends who immeasurably enrich this journey;
- For the gift of being able to be of service to others; and
- For IUCC being such a vibrant community, with an open and welcoming heart, where we believe in the separation of church and hate.

Expressing my gratitude for the important role that IUCC plays in my life is a value about which I feel strongly, and I do this by committing my time, treasure and talents. What do I mean by this?

- **Time**: attending church, special events, and other programs regularly. For me, being part of a community, part of a church family involves being intentionally present and bringing an open heart and mind for the connections that will be made, for the lessons being shared – whether these occur on a Sunday morning, during a spirited Comma Group discussion, or over a cup of coffee. Fortunately, at IUCC we have such a wide range of programming that there really is something for most everyone!

- **Treasure**: giving generously of my resources by pledging during Stewardship. Pledging (or estimating one’s giving) allows this church community to plan for our common life. 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 asked, “Who among you would begin to build a tower and not determine the cost?” Please help to ensure a successful Stewardship Campaign by making your pledge by December 1.

- **Talents**: if you’ve ever sat near me in church, you know that I was not gifted with musical ability! So, unfortunately, that’s not a talent I can share at IUCC but, luckily, we have an abundance of musically talented folks to offset my manifest deficits. The talent I do bring to IUCC is an unbridled enthusiasm and willingness to help, which hopefully makes up for my many shortfalls in other areas. But, truly, one doesn’t need great talent to make a real difference at IUCC – just the willingness to say, “I am here, how can I help?”

Speaking of making a difference... November 10 is Stewardship Sunday and we will mark the end of our formal campaign with an All-Church Work Day. So, please join in the fun by wearing your work clothes to church, encourage your friends, family & Comma Group to stay for a quick lunch, and then help out with the various projects that will improve our beloved church campus. While some projects will involve climbing a ladder, there will be plenty of options for those who enjoy more low-key activities, including making cheery cards for shut-ins with some of our youngest members.

So, this November, what are you grateful for?

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. I look forward to hearing from you.
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. We ask that pledges be completed no later than December 1. 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.
WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP
WEDNESDAY * NOV. 6 * 6:15 p.m.
A light supper will take place prior to the interfaith event in the sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. We will be providing the reception after this event and will use our time at 6:00 to prepare the tables and goodies. Plan to come for this social/program combo and get to know the “shakers and bakers” of IUCC. Sign up on the patio or see Pat Sauter with any questions.

AN INTERFAITH STORY OF COURAGE & COMPASSION
WEDNESDAY * NOV. 6 * 7:30 p.m.
Marty Brounstein will speak on “An Interfaith Story of Courage and Compassion” based on his book Two Among the Righteous Few: A Story of Courage in the Holocaust, the true story of Frans and Mien Wijnakker, who saved the lives of at least two dozen Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust. This event is co-sponsored by Tom and Andra Ellingson and University Synagogue. A reception will follow.

ALL CHURCH WORKDAY
SUNDAY * NOV. 10 * 12:15 p.m.
Our Building & Grounds Committee is organizing an after service workday on Nov. 10. The objective is to get as many members as possible to participate. It is a great opportunity to get to know other members of our congregation as you work side-by-side on some light chores that need to be tended to. Lindy is putting together a list of projects so there will be plenty to do. We hope you will come to church dressed to work and ready to roll up your sleeves and make this an all church service project. Sign up on the patio or contact Lindy Garber at lmlindy@cox.net for details.

IMMIGRATION SUNDAY
SUNDAY * NOV. 17
Nov. 17 will be Immigration Sunday at IUCC! The sermon, by guest preacher Rev. Jerry Stinson, will highlight the call to welcome “the alien in our land.” After second service, Julio Vargas will show his documentary “The Wall that Binds Us,” and we will have a panel of Dreamers to answer questions. We will offer a practical opportunity to help the undocumented through visiting immigrants in detention.

BUILDING PLAN FORUM
SUNDAY * NOV. 17 * 12:15 p.m.
We will discuss the proposal received from domusstudios, along with the timeline and costs, plus an opportunity for questions & answers.

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY * NOV. 24 * 12:15 p.m.
Please join us for a special Congregational Meeting to review and vote on building plans. Your attendance at this meeting is very important - be part of the planning process for IUCC’s campus! For more information, please see a member of the Building Task Force: Martha Selby (Chair), Keith Boyum, Lindy Garber, Cindy O’Dell, Jim Raver, Anne Rosse, Michael Spindle and Paul Tellström.

25th SHARED SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
TUESDAY * NOV. 26 * 7:30 p.m.
UNIVERSITY SYNAGOGUE
Join us for our Pre-Thanksgiving services at University Synagogue, led by Rabbi Rachlis and Rev. Paul Tellstrom, with speaker Rusty Kennedy, founding CEO of the OC Human Relations Commission. The University Synagogue and IUCC Choirs and Cantor Braier will sing.

ADVENT WORKSHOP
SUNDAY * DEC. 1 * 4 p.m.
Join us for our annual Advent Workshop and Chili Cook-off! The whole family can make holiday decorations at a variety of craft stations. See page 3 for more info.

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP
WEDNESDAY * DEC. 4
Come to an old fashioned New England Christmas Celebration, including dinner and a carol sing lead by Larry Gates. See Pat Souter with any questions.
THE CHANCEL CHOIR OF
IRVINE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
DIRECTED BY DR. JOHN ST. MARIE
PRESENTS THEIR WINTER SOLSTICE CONCERT

... AND A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 8, 2013
7:00 P.M.

IUCC
4915 ALTON PARKWAY
IRVINE, CA 92604

TICKETS ARE $10 WITH PROCEEDS GOING TO IUCC'S GENERAL FUND
Referral Process
Referral is the process of identifying people who need care and matching them with a Stephen Minister who can provide the necessary care. Any member of the congregation can make a referral for potential care. Referrals are encouraged to be made by Pastors, Stephen Leaders, Stephen Ministers, Administrative Board Members, Ministry Board Members, i.e. any church leader.

In order to maintain confidentiality, it is critical for the person making the referral to first obtain permission from the person needing the care. Referrals are made to our pastor and/or the referrals coordinator. To insure confidentiality, referrals must be made directly to these individuals. Pastors and/or the referrals coordinator may be contacted by phone at church (733-0220) or in person.

There are five kinds of needs for which Stephen Ministers are equipped for care:

- Crisis care includes those dealing with hospitalization, a terminal illness, death of a loved one, divorce, unemployment or a severe financial setback.
- Follow-up care is for individuals who need care as they recover from a major life crisis.
- Chronic care needs include people who are disabled, aged, in nursing homes, experiencing chronic pain and/or living with degenerative diseases.
- Preventive care helps people anticipate and prepare for potentially difficult upcoming events such as first time childbirth, retirement, relocation and entrance into college or the military.
- Supportive care includes examples like a spouse caring for a dying mate, a son or daughter considering placing an elderly parent in a long-term care facility or supporting a parent through the death and funeral of the other parent.

Preparing Interview and Matching to Stephen Minister
Once a referral is made, a preparation interview is conducted by the referrals coordinator to assess the individual’s need and if Stephen Ministry is appropriate. After obtaining his/her permission, the Stephen Partner is matched to a Stephen Minister and the program begins.
Comma Group Topic for November: Service and Witness

**Service and Witness**

During the month in which we traditionally give thanks, this month's Comma Groups will explore Schmiechen's component, “service and witness, in and outside the church.”

As Christians, we are exhorted to share the good news of our faith, to serve as witnesses, to help further the kingdom of God. But, how to do this with full respect and love for all others is sometimes a challenge.

“But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” ~ Acts 1:8

A witness is someone who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard or experienced. The twelve disciples served as witnesses for Jesus Christ. In going out and teaching about him, they were bringing with them a first-hand, authoritative account to their evangelism, or preaching of the gospel.

We often associate the word evangelism with the hard sell approach by fundamentalist preachers, but the Greek origin of the word simply means “good news.” As Christians, we have received good news to pass along to the world. IUCC is based on an eagerness to share the benefits of God's love without requiring conformity to any creed. We don't concern ourselves with who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. We resent being told we have to hold specific beliefs or else risk eternal damnation. Many of us have felt embarrassed or even hurt by those who take pride in their ability to convert others to their own belief in personal salvation. In reaction, we become tentative about telling our own story and encouraging others to adopt our belief in acceptance, tolerance and the gospel of love.

Good news can take the form of deeds or words. Through his act of foot washing, Jesus makes clear God's call to serve others and, in so doing, to recognize Christ in the least of our sisters and brothers (Matthew 25:45). Acts of service, justice and advocacy are all integral parts of witnessing, of proclaiming the good news.

**Service vs. Advocacy**

Within churches, there may be challenges around how to allocate resources, including how to split resources between direct service and advocacy. Service is providing relief or support to people affected by a problem. Advocacy is addressing the underlying causes of a problem, providing solutions, and creating change to eliminate the problem.

Finding the balance can be difficult, especially when there are a myriad of good causes to choose from, including responding to natural disasters, supporting the good work of Family Promise or advocating for immigration reform, to name just a few. Churches can also struggle with how to allocate resources among: their own members and ministry, in service to their nearby neighbors and community, and in service to the wider world.

**Two Among the Righteous Few: a Story of Courage in the Holocaust**

In his October 27th sermon, Pastor Paul spoke about Marty Brounstein's work, *Two Among the Righteous Few: a Story of Courage in the Holocaust*, the true story of Frans and Mien Wijnakker, who saved the lives of at least two dozen Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust. Catholics, who led a simple life in a small town, the Wijnakkers showed tremendous courage in helping others in dire need.

Mr. Brounstein will be speaking at IUCC on Wednesday, November 6, at 7:30 p.m. This event is part of IUCC's ongoing educational series with University Synagogue and will be followed by a reception in Plumer Hall. Come and hear why this story is so important personally to him and enjoy an evening of interfaith discussion and exploration.

**Possible Comma Group Discussion Questions**

- Do you consider yourself a Christian witness? What does it mean to be a Christian witness in a multi-religious world?
- Is being a witness and an evangelist the same thing? If not, what are the differences?
- Do you think more resources should go for direct service or advocacy? Does IUCC strike a good balance between these two? If not, what should be different? How do you determine the balance in your personal choices?
- Schmiechen advises that churches that become too focused in one aspect of their ministry tend to lose vitality. Is IUCC maintaining a good balance, especially with regard to service and witness, in and outside the church?

Discuss these questions and more this November!
In an attempt to regulate society, people often resort to the misuse of language to bolster the point of view they want to advance. As we discussed last month, this was done to keep various classes of people “in their place,” and is still done in many ways. Children, for example, are often not referred to as “citizens,” and therefore although our constitution grants certain rights to citizens, these rights often do not extend to children. In order to support the notion of males as being superior to females, so-called “generic” terms for people are kept male identified: mankind; humans; humankind; women. Even today many people addressing a group will say, “Okay guys, let’s settle down.” In a mixed group no group leader would ever say, “Okay girls, let’s settle down.” “Dude” is often used to refer to anyone as a hello.

Throughout the march toward justice and equality we have heard things about homosexuality as being “un-natural.” Of course, we heard the same thing about mixed marriage. Again, take your children to see “Lincoln” and “The Butler” so they can hear the arguments about the legitimacy of slavery by references to “the natural state” or “the natural order,” which then equates “white” with good, white people as intelligent and superior, cowboys who are the “good guys” wearing white hats. “Dark” was then presented as being dumb, or even evil (black hats), or less than, like black people.

An interesting problem with the misuse of language is that even when language is used correctly it can be common to misinterpret it by giving it a negative meaning. For example, how do you respond when someone says that homosexuals are “abnormal”? If your instinct was to correct that statement or to hear it negatively, you have confronted the problem with language. As a matter of fact, homosexuality is abnormal. To be normal is not the same as being “good” or “healthy.” The word “norm” means “most”. When teachers grade on a “normal” curve, they consider how most students did. Some students will be below the “normal curve,” but others will be above it! I have a Ph.D. which is true of less than 1% of the population (except at IUCC). This makes me “abnormal.” If you are a blond or a redhead, you are “abnormal.” If you have perfect pitch – you guessed it, you are abnormal. The word “deviant” has the same meaning. To be deviant is not necessarily good or bad, it just means that someone is different from the general population. One can “deviate” from the norm by being exceptionally talented, as well as by being unusually evil. It is true that heterosexuality is more the “norm,” but that does not have implications for being “natural” or healthy. “Nature” loves diversity. Witness the Eagle and the Lion, and also the Anteater and Armadillo. So I see that you are already guessing your homework for this month. As parents, it is important to listen to the words that children use, and how they use them. As we discussed at length in our bullying series, words can hurt. But words can also cause unnecessary confusion. If one of your children is exceptional in some way, either due to deficits or gifts, they are abnormal. Help them to learn what that word means and to be comfortable with being “out of the norm.” Also teach them not to use a word that is intrinsically non-judgmental in a way that seems to put others down.

Another language task is to help children, especially teenagers who will be grappling with their own sexuality, learn how to listen carefully to uses of certain words to misinform. For example, one often hears the term “sexual preference” when referring to homosexuality, although it is never used to refer to heterosexuality. That word is used for gay people so that efforts to “convert” a gay person to a straight lifestyle seems likely to be successful, since one can always learn to enjoy a different flavor of ice cream if the store is out of your “preferred” flavor. That is why the words “sexual orientation” are more accurate than “sexual preference.”

The words “queer” and “faggot” and even homosexual were replaced by the word “gay” for the same reason that “black” replaced the “N-word,” Negro, and Colored. It was an effort by members of a disparaged community to erase the many negative connotations that became associated with the words. Later, for black people, the term “African-American” was introduced by Jesse Jackson, in an attempt to widen our definition of people of color to include more than the color of their skin and to link people to their heritage. This is another example of quite recent social transition, demonstrating that people seeking equality engage in a continuous process to gain respect. The use of certain kinds of language is crucial for conveying respect. Interestingly, now there are some people of color who are objecting to the term “African-American” since many black people are not actually African by heritage. As Sonny and Cher used to sing, “The Beat Goes On.”

Finally, in the 1980’s, at the height of the women's movement, many gay women wanted to declare that issues between gay women and gay men were different, so many began using the word lesbian rather than gay, a distinction that is important to some gay women but not to others.

The use of language and the struggle for dignity and equality are very much intertwined. When children understand this, they will learn to become more respectful, and follow Micah’s instruction to “love kindness.”