Carl and I have been watching the storm along the east coast carefully — many of our friends and family reside in or near the path of “The Frankenstorm.” Carl heard from his brother Jay today for the first time since the storm began. Jay and Debbie live near the tip of Long Island, and reported to us that it was by far the worst storm they had ever lived through. Aside from trees and fencing being blown away, their house came away intact. A neighbor with a generator allowed them to hook up their refrigerator and an extension cord to his power source, and the process of recharging cell phones in order to call family began. They are still without heat and electricity and will be for some time.

Over in Manhattan, my friend Kenny was rescued from his apartment in Greenwich Village and was whisked to an apartment in Harlem where electricity and amenities abounded. Kenny echoed Jay’s words; it was the worst storm ever.
Since then, we have seen terrible suffering in the metropolitan New York area. From a story of two small children ripped from their mother’s arms in the strength of the winds, to the destruction of over a hundred homes in Queens by a fire that was likened to the firestorm of Dresden, there is no doubt that we will be hearing tragic stories in the weeks to come, as well as stories of great strength and courage.

Already, the UCC has set up a relief program, which you can access by clicking: here. And, this is a moment to say how grateful I am for the support IUCC gives to One Great Hour of Sharing. You can be sure that some of the dollars we collected last April will be put to good use.

This month’s Comma Group theme is theodicy. Theodicy means “God” (Theos) and “justice” (dike). Theodicy attempts to resolve the question of how the problem of evil or suffering can be present in the world alongside of a loving God—one that many people expect has the power to protect God’s people from suffering and evil in the world.

Why is there suffering? Why would God allow me to feel such pain, such loss, such a bad turn of fortune?

An elderly friend in the hospital told me that the pain she felt was so bad that she began making animal sounds that she did not know could come from within her, along with anger that she should have to suffer like this—anger that was sent in every direction including the source of Creation.

When bad things happen in our world, we look for a place to lay the blame. We want accountability. And then...there are no answers, or the answers that are out there are just too hard to sort through or make sense of at the time. That is when people stop and turn their confusion and anger on their idea of God, which suddenly does not gibe with the present reality.

Some will try to explain that it is “God’s will” or even “God’s wrath” and that our problems were brought upon ourselves due to our negligence with regards to a certain understanding of faith.

I don’t believe in a corporeal God that is “up there” punishing us and watching us suffer. Rather, I tend to find the Divine in the response and the aftermath. To quote Harold Kushner:
I don't believe that an earthquake that kills thousands of innocent victims without reason is an act of God. It is an act of nature. Nature is morally blind, without values. It churns along, following its own laws, not caring who or what gets in the way. But God is not morally blind. I could not worship Him if I thought He was. God stands for justice, for fairness for compassion.

For me, the earthquake is not an ‘act of God.’ The act of God is the courage of people to rebuild their lives after the earthquake, and the ruse of others to help them in whatever way they can. [When Bad Things Happen to Good People, 59-60]

In the days, weeks and months to come, I think we will see evidence of the Divine in the stories of strength, hope, courage and pitching in that these neighbors, their communities and our country will show in order to alleviate the suffering of those affected by this storm. It will bring out the best in us after the worst has already come.

For those of you in Comma Groups, I hope you enjoy your discussions on “Where is God when bad things happen” throughout the month of November.

Our IUCC/US Thanksgiving service will feature Fr. Greg Boyle. His witness to the creation of a positive, life-changing ministry in the heart of a difficult part of Los Angeles will be inspiring. And...how wonderful to be hosting our friends at the synagogue again! You can read more about the service in this issue.

Also, at first service ONLY, don’t miss the Jazz Liturgy on November 11 at 9:00. Laura Harrison and I will be leading a special service of music and word as we celebrate the culmination of our Stewardship season. The two services will be very different that day as you bring your pledges of support for 2013. I hope to thank you all personally for your support, but let me say it now: It is so important that we meet our goal this year and know how to budget for our church’s programs this year. Thank you for being good stewards of your church by your generosity and by getting your pledges in on time.

Yours,
Pastor Paul
For the past several weeks our Bread for the Journey discussion group for young adults in their 20s and 30s has been discussing works by Bo Lozoff. He’s written several books related to his work with the Prison-Ashram Project and the Human Kindness Foundation. He came to this work after living for a period as a nomadic 60s hippie and ending up working for a while as crew on a small sailboat with his wife, Sita. Eventually, the ship’s captain, along with Lozoff’s brother-in-law, was sent to prison for smuggling drugs. Bo and Sita sought another path and joined an ashram (a spiritual hermitage generally in the Hindu tradition), but remained profoundly affected and touched by the experience of those within our country’s prison system. So they went on to found the Prison-Ashram Project, with the premise that became the title of Bo’s first book, We’re All Doing Time: A Guide for Getting Free. Whether one is incarcerated within walls and bars, or incarcerated within a prison of our own anger, fears, or material possessions, there is a sense that we need to break free from such captivity, and that all we have is time to do so. And, most importantly, we each are the only ones capable of enacting our own spiritual liberation.

So Bo and Sita began to teach meditation, yoga, and other spiritual practices from an interfaith perspective in various prisons. They also sent in newsletters, books, and other publications so that prisoners would have access to some positive non-coercive spiritual reading material. They then began to receive many letters and requests for advice, and the project became much more personal. The last section of We’re All Doing Time publishes a good sampling of this correspondence.

Another of Lozoff’s books, Deep & Simple: A Spiritual Path for Modern Times lays out his theory that there are basically three main components upon the spiritual path, and that all the major world religions would validate these. He lists personal spiritual practice, simple living, and service to the community. Our young adults discussion group is working through these sections of the book, reading the prison letters, and also incorporating some of the hands-on spiritual practices into our own lives. After all, as Bo quotes Trungpa Rinpoche in the book, Reading spiritual books is like reading the menu at a restaurant. Don’t forget, you must eat the meal.
We also regularly share snacks, share what’s going in our lives, and share prayers for each other. All young adults in college or their 20s and 30s are invited to join us on Tuesday evenings in the Youth Room...now at our new starting time of 7pm!

All this talk of compassion for those in prison as well as for our own spiritual incarceration is so relevant both biblically as well as politically. To give just one example, in the famous passage from Matthew 25 that tells of separating the sheep from the goats, Jesus offers a well-known teaching in which the Son of Man rewards those who visit “the least of these” in prison and admonishes those who don’t. If you feel moved to get personally involved in this issue, local efforts to visit prisoners are currently being undertaken by our own Bil Aulenbach as well as Unitarian Universalist activist Jan Meslin (jmeslin@cox.net). And of course, our actions at the polls have great effect on those behind bars as well. This year, Prop 34 would put an end to the state-sanctioned killing done in our name when California uses the Death Penalty. And Prop 36 would amend our state’s Three Strikes Law and its requisite mandated prison sentencing.

These issues are so timely in the life of our congregation as well when we consider that this month’s theme for our Comma Groups, as well as the first Sunday’s worship service, is theodicy, or the theological question of why bad things happen to good people. How can there be evil in a world ruled by a benevolent God? I learned in college philosophy classes that God is classically supposed to be not only omnibenevolent, but also omniscient and omnipotent. Therefore, the situation of human and creation suffering begs the question of what’s going on here. Why are people being murdered, by individuals or by the state? Why are some never given a real chance at life and thrown in prison for decades on end? Why does our favorite aunt get cancer and die so young? Why are children born at the wrong place and time condemned to suffer lifelong pangs of hunger and war? To give my own very brief answer to the broader question raised by theodicy: I disagree with the supposition of God’s omnipotence. To some, that may diminish God. But to me, it lifts up the laws of nature that even God cannot transcend. And, very importantly, it lifts up the role each of us plays individually and collectively, in taking our inspiration from our understanding of God’s justice and doing our best to right these wrongs.
One person I know who is doing this work in an amazing way is Jesuit priest and founder of Homeboy Industries, Father Greg Boyle. Every day he works with young people from across Los Angeles who, through no fault of their own, were born into situations of dire poverty—both financial and social. Yes, the former gang members whom Father Greg blesses, counsels, and employs have made some incredibly terrible choices. But he supports them now as they make the most important choice before them—to choose to go forward now on a very different path in their lives. I am incredibly grateful that we will have the chance to learn more about Homeboy Industries and Father Greg’s work when he is our guest speaker at this year’s annual joint Thanksgiving Service with University Synagogue on November 20.

We really do have so much to be grateful for, in our personal lives and in our congregational life. Our Children’s Choir will celebrate this Thanksgiving theme in worship during Second Service on November 18 as they praise God in song for all of our good gifts. And I also want to express my own thanks for all of you who have responding in such gratitude to this year’s Stewardship Campaign, so that we as a church can continue to grow, thrive, and share our good news and good works with our wider community.

Yours in gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise,
Pastor Elizabeth

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Youth Group Report
By Erika Sanders

Fall greetings everyone!

I hope you had the opportunity to attend Youth Sunday a couple weeks ago, the youth did a fantastic job! It was wonderful to hear personal stories from Chantel, Taelor, and Aidan about what tolerance means for in their daily lives. It was fun to see Jillian take on a big role as worship leader for both services and to see Mike and Stewart teach the children about Stewardship. Sarah did a great job leading the call to worship and Alana did a great job leading the stewardship moment. If you missed Youth Sunday, be sure to mark your calendars for December 16th because the youth will be leading both services again!
At our overnight in October, the youth and I brainstormed a list of activities they would like to do for youth group activities. One of the top items on the list was visiting the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. On Sunday, November 11th, the youth group is planning a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance following the 11 o’clock service. Some other youth activities to look forward to this month are a hike/nature walk and an all youth bowling trip.

Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

Nov. 4th: Youth Group lunch and fellowship  
Nov. 11th: Trip to the Museum of Tolerance  
Nov. 18th: Hike/nature walk after the 11 o’clock service  
Nov. 25th: All youth bowling  
Dec. 16th: Youth lead both services followed by a Youth Group Christmas activity

→ Save the date for FEB CAMP: Feb. 15-17!

Peace,

Erika
Quality Improvement Just Got Easier

A widespread quality improvement effort for early care and education has launched in Orange County, and IUCC’s Early Childhood Center has the opportunity to participate. The Orange County Quality Improvement System (OC-QIS), led by Orange County Department of Education, will provide training and technical assistance to early childhood programs to help them offer higher quality services to young children. Another focus will be community outreach and education to help families understand the importance of early education and to recognize markers of quality.

Key to the OC-QIS is a new statewide five-tier rating system designed to assess the quality of early education programs using four assessment tools. The opportunity to be rated will be available to any program, but the score need not be publicized to the general public. Instead, the quality rating begins with a self-study and is intended to guide a program’s efforts to make quality improvements that affect how children learn and grow.

Center Director Irma Rosales and I attended the kick-off for the OC-QIS in October and she is excited to learn more about how to launch a quality improvement self-study with her staff. With this knowledge along with training and support from the OC-QIS, Irma and the preschool teachers can better serve children and families. Self-assessment takes courage and commitment, and I know that you will applaud and support their endeavors.

On Halloween, a pack of precious pirates, princesses, and superheroes and their proud parents and teachers made their way from the Early Childhood Center to the Lakeside Senior Center for trick or treating. They returned with bags of loot to the center where they enjoyed a potluck feast.

**EARLY LEARNING TIP:** A baby’s brain needs two full years of development after birth before the child can recognize that images on a TV screen represent equivalent things in the real world. That’s why pediatricians recommend that children under age 2 not be allowed to watch TV or videos. All young children learn best through interactions with objects and people in the real world than through sounds and images on a screen. You can find out more [here](#).
On Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. we at IUCC will host the annual joint Thanksgiving Service with University Synagogue. This year the guest speaker is Father Greg Boyle the Director and Founder of Homeboy Industries of Los Angeles and the author of Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion.

Homeboy Industries serves at-risk and gang involved youth with a continuum of services and programs designed to meet their multiple needs, and it runs four businesses that serve as job training sites. Homeboy Industries is the largest and most effective gang intervention organization in the nation.

Homeboy services and programs include: tattoo removal, curriculum and education, employment services, and solar panel installation training and certification, and many more. Their social enterprises include: Homegirl Cafe and Catering, Homeboy Bakery, Homeboy Diner, Homeboy Grocery and many more.
Father Boyle is a Jesuit priest. He served as a prison chaplain and as pastor of Dolores Mission Church in Los Angeles. He founded Homeboy Industries in 1988. Besides his work as Director of Homeboy Industries, Father Boyle travels the country speaking about his experiences and the lives that have changed through the gang intervention programs at Homeboy Industries.

We are honored to welcome him to IUCC and to share this program with our friends from University Synagogue. A reception in Plumer Hall will follow the Thanksgiving Service.

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Adult Education: Upcoming Opportunities

Sunday Adult Education continues to meet in Plumer Hall between worship services. The theme for November is Protestant Reformation. Each session is independent so please join us for every Sunday or one Sunday.

Tuesday evening Bible Study meets at 6:30 p.m. in Plumer Hall. (No meeting on November 6--election day, and on November 20--Thanksgiving Service.) We are looking at the Pastoral Epistles, those brief but controversial letters that purport to be instructions from the Apostle Paul about how to conduct a Christian life in the early Church. Bibles are provided, but please bring your own opinions and ideas. The discussions enlighten everyone.
Global Ministries (UCC) Child Sponsorship is a partnership between with various participating centers around the world. Your sponsoring helps the partnering institutions provide services to children at risk by extending a helping hand. Since the 1950’s, this global ministry has been working to safeguard the future of children around the world in Latin American, the Caribbean, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa and Southern Asia.

The children are generally refugees or from low income families. Often they have been orphaned or abandoned and range in age from 2 to 18. The cost of ongoing sponsorship is from $25 to $30 a month. Participants will receive a brief biography and a photo of your sponsored child.

Your support help provide a child with adequate food, clothing, healthcare as well as paying school fees, uniforms and books.

As well, you and/or your family can write your child and it will even be translated in either their language or yours. Gifts can be sent but they will be utilized by all the children.

This is a great Christmas present for you or anyone in your family, one that keeps on giving. Flyers with all the information will be distributed on the first Sunday as well as being available in the church entrance.

A young woman we knew in Hawai’i sent out a Christmas card that said it so succinctly; “Christmas presence ... give yourself away.”
THIS WON'T HAPPEN WITH GLOBAL MISSION AT IUCC!

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT!
GLOBAL MISSION OPPORTUNITY: Challenge & Hope in the Holy Land Jan. 2-12, 2013 sponsored by Global Mission Partners to provide an opportunity to see Israel-Palestine and to gain an understanding of the challenges to “Just Peace" in the Holy Land, as well as to visit a number of Holy sites. IUCC’s Don and Connie Weir have been: “It will change your life.” More information? Talk to Pastor Paul, Bil Aulenbach or Don & Connie.

November Birthdays!

Jean Raymoure
Irene Thornton
Cheryl Arguile
Robert D. Thornton
Steve Stanton
Matt Mirmak
Roni Portillo

George Fulton
Janet Emery
Tom Silk
Michael Spindle
Dean Inada
Jennifer Bullington
Kelly Rehbein

Bob Chan
Christopher Huber
Ben O'Dell
Nicole Bermudez
Ben Allen
Emme Exelby
Nick Allen

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2013: IUCC’S BLACK & WHITE PARTY!
New Members – Oct. 14, 2012

Robin Palmer has been attending IUCC since January, and is pleased to be making IUCC her “official” church home. She lives in Aliso Viejo, and has taught school in Capistrano Unified for over two decades.

Ken Matsuyama has transferred his membership to IUCC from Diamond Bar UCC. Ken was raised in the Gifu prefecture in central Japan and his mother, father and two brothers still live there. He became a Christian after attending IUCC several years and was baptized by our own Terry Lepage. He was her first baptism.

Ken served as a volunteer coordinator at the Emmaus Christian Center in Sendai Japan for one year after the 2011 tsunami and continued his Christian studies there with the Rev. Jeffrey Mensendieck, UCC Global Mission Youth minister operating out of the center. He has been active at IUCC for many years with his partner, Randy Romine.
Bill and Jean Dietrich are retired, and moved here from San Rafael, where they were members of the First Presbyterian Church. Jean worked as a Human Resources Director, and Bill as a transportation engineer. Bill is from Illinois, and Jean is from California. They have three grown children, Dave, Doug and Deborah.

Colleen McNamara attends first service. She grew up in New York in the Catholic tradition. She lives in Irvine, and previously attended Mariners. Colleen is a retired nurse, and she has two grown sons.

Jayna Tisdale was introduced to us by her partner, Van Muse. She was born in Oregon and grew up Catholic in Fort Jones, Calif. Jayna is an Accounts Administrator and a Coordinator for a non-profit foundation. Jayna now has four kids: Kaitlynn, Raymond, Madelyn and Sophie.
Jim and Trish Aynes have re-instated their membership after many years living away up north. They were long-time members of IUCC.

Crop Walk Is an October Success!

By Steve Goetz

"Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty." That is what the clever acronym, CROP, stands for. And IUCC stood far and above the twenty-one participating faith and secular communities in the 24th Annual CROP Interfaith Hunger Walk. Understanding that this event is not a race, we have come close to being first in donations, but as far as I know, have never come in first until this year. In fact, by raising over $4,200.00, IUCC sponsors and walkers raised nearly four times more than the next largest amount donated by an organization. This is a great tribute to the commitment of IUCC members to helping those in Orange County and the
world who are most distressed by hunger and homelessness. If anyone would still like to donate to the walk this year, you may go to this site: www.cropwalkonline.org/newportbeachca.

Many thanks to all the sponsors, walkers, and those IUCC volunteers who made the event a rousing success.

From the Moderator

It’s been said before, but take a look at an IUCC Sunday morning bulletin and you can be overwhelmed by the number of activities we manage to offer each week and month. Although it does seem like some people manage to get to all of them (I have no idea how), most of us have learned to pick and choose among the options, even if means missing things we would like to know more about.

Cindy O’Dell How do you choose between watching our young members delight in an early Halloween event over walking with fellow IUCCers and members of many other congregations from Irvine, Newport Beach and Costa Mesa to raise funds to fight hunger through Church World Services? (I opted for the walk.)

I’ve noticed that my Sundays have gotten busier and busier as I try to check in with the various task forces and committees and even staff members on a Sunday morning. If I look like I’m too busy to talk, stop me anyway. It’s always important for me and all the members of the Admin and Ministry boards to know what’s on the minds of the congregation.

That’s why we’re holding forums after first and second services on Nov. 11. The goal is to get more feedback from the congregation about where we should be going with building plans. Although Keith Boyum and the members of the building task force did a great job of finding out what was on the minds of various church leaders the last time around, we’ve decided with the recent opening up of options, that this time we want to hear from as many people as we can.
The forums will help us shape specific questions for a survey later in the month. I invite your participation in both.

Our two task forces (looking at first service options and our technological problems and needs) have begun assessing where we are now and will looking at ideas that move us forward. Nick Sanders is leading the technology task force with help from Catherine Nelson and Lester Ricks. Nick is also tapping the expertise of people he works with, which is a great bonus for us.

The most important part of any plans for the coming year rests on the pledge drive. Members have been sharing what IUCC means them at the start of each service. I’ve been touched by their stories and hope that those talks spur all of us to think carefully about what IUCC means to us as individuals and as members of a progressive Christian community and how we can play our parts both financially and through volunteering our time and talents.

The Administrative Board would like our congregation to take another look building plans for IUCC and other options. We want to offer another set of opportunities for discussion of questions or comments about the building project and also provide a way to get the entire congregation’s input on what things should be considered.

There will be congregational forums after First and Second Service on Sunday, Nov. 11, led by members of the Administrative Board. Here are examples of the questions that will be discussed:

- What do you really like about our existing building and grounds?
- What do you really not like about our building and grounds?
- What building and/or grounds improvements does IUCC need to make?
- What building improvements would best serve a specific group at IUCC?
- Are you willing to support having a building in a different location in Irvine? Why/Why not?
- Are you willing to move or to move the Child Care Center to a temporary location while we rebuild/remodel on our existing property?
- Are you willing to support a capital campaign to fund the building efforts?
- Would you rather just leave things as they are?
- How high of a priority are the rooms used by the Child Care Center and Sunday School programs in the remodeling effort?
- Do you think that the existing offices for the IUCC staff are sufficient?

On Nov. 26, a survey regarding the building project will be sent by email for each member of the congregation to complete. The survey will be open to all members through Dec. 9. A report on the survey will be presented at the January Congregational Meeting.

**Trunk or Treat!**
Save the Date
December 9, 2012
Join us for an afternoon and evening of pure Christmas joy!

Advent Workshop
4:00 p.m.
The whole church family can make Christmas decorations and gifts at any or all of our many craft stations in Plumer Hall. Don't forget our annual chili cook-off at the Workshop!

Winter Solstice Concert
7:00 p.m.
After the Workshop, “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” choir members to the Sanctuary to get “A Glimpse of Snow and Evergreen” and to hear the “Joy of Belle: Din Don! Merrily on High” sung “Magnificat”-ly.
Q. So, John -- or shall I say "Dr. St. Marie" (I'd like to!) -- what is the title of your new degree? And, when did you complete it?

I earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Music. I completed my dissertation and sent it off to my professors for comments and editing on October 1st. By October 14th, all three of my professors had completed reading my dissertation (they said it was in record time) and provided their suggested edits (which were quite minimal). My final paperwork was signed on October 16th which cleared the way for me to upload my dissertation for publication.

Q. I think I recall that you have studied at the University of Southern California. So am I right that U.S.C. has awarded your doctorate?

Yes - I studied at USC and, as of Oct 16th, have completed all requirements for my degree. I should receive my diploma in the mail sometime in December!

Q. What is the title of your dissertation? And along with the title, can you offer a few words about the content of this thesis?

The title of my dissertation is: "Theology as the Basis for Golden Section Analysis: A Model of Construction for Johann Sebastian Bach's St. John Passion"

Basically, I developed a theory to explain why the musical work is divided so disproportionately resulting in a short first half and a much larger second half. (Imagine the intermission breaking the action in a football game into a 20 minute first half followed by a 40 minute second half). My dissertation determines that Bach utilized a theological principle to guide him and, subsequently, applied a mathematical proportion (the Divine Proportion) to the music which dictated the form and structure resulting in unequal halves of the musical work. The scholarship is completely original - no other writer has ever looked at this piece of music in this manner. In fact, my research is the first to systematically apply Golden Section analysis upon a multi-movement work using a non-musical rationale to determine start and end points for calculation.
Q. How did you happen to choose this topic?
One of my professors asked in a Choral Literature class if anyone had a rationale for why Part I of the St. John Passion was so short. I responded that it appeared to be approximately 1/3 of the total music which called to mind the Divine Proportion. He stated that Divine Proportion application would make the 1st half longer than the 2nd so my theory was incorrect. I countered by pointing out, that in Lutheran theology, the death of Jesus was the beginning of human redemption and that Bach probably applied the Divine Proportion from the back of the work resulting in the shorter Part I. He stated he had never heard such a theory – I asked him the reason Part I was so much shorter. His response was that he had no theories. He said that no one has adequately explained the reasoning in music scholarship and that the issue remained an open question. Hence, the seed of my dissertation topic was planted.

Q. How long did the research and writing take?
My initial stint took about two months of analysis – by the end of this time, I was certain that my theory was correct. Scouring the research to find scholarship relating to my topic was an arduous process because I had to piece together different types of research from various professional fields to lay the groundwork for my theory.

I spent a few months reading through math journals on Golden Section (or Divine Proportion) to understand what the Golden Section was and how it was found and applied.

I also had to delve into Lutheran theology to determine why Bach might have been motivated to attempt such an unorthodox compositional technique.

Then it was on to sifting through the vast scholarship on Bach to find any grain of information that could apply to my study (very little related directly).

Every step was very time consuming.

All in all, I’d say that I researched about 8 months (hashing out the theories, applying the calculations, and analyzing the music) and, finally, wrote for a total of 6 months. Of course, writing and researching was interrupted for an extended period because of a particularly busy time that began in 2010 when I started three jobs. I made my final push this Summer/Fall and turned in my document to my first reader on October 1st.
Q. Do you envision any professional journal articles or presentations or other scholarly / academic "out takes" from this dissertation?

Because my research looks at Bach music analysis in a wholly new way, it is likely that I may find opportunities to present my findings. Bach is very well known and a large body of research has been amassed about his life and music in the past 100 years – it is difficult to find new threads of research that have not been explored. When something new comes along, there tends to be quite a flurry of activity in Bach scholarship – I guess we will see. One of my professors is writing a chapter for Cambridge University Press on Sacred Church Music and he shared that he intends to include my findings. My first citation! Exciting!

Q. How about just for the benefit of IUCC singers and members who appreciate choral music? Might you offer some of us any "out takes" from your dissertation?

Well, in basic terms, the Divine Proportion is something that occurs in creation. Have you ever noticed the multiplicity of interesting patterns in the seeds of a mature sunflower or the pattern of pine cone or distribution of leaves on a twig? All of these things are expressions of the Divine Proportion. In fact, nature abounds with examples of Divine Proportion: in the distance between planetary orbits, in the double-helix structure found in DNA, in the formation of crystal lattices, and even in the proportions of the human body! This special proportion became known as the Divine Proportion because it was revealed by God in the book of Exodus where the Israelites are instructed to build the Ark of the Covenant. God specifies its dimensions thereby revealing this special proportion to humankind. The resulting shape is proportionally identified by modern mathematicians as a Golden Rectangle. Even more interesting is the fact that God commanded that the ark be overlay with Gold – so quite literally, it is a Golden Rectangle.

Bach takes this special proportion and constructs a large musical work (2.5 hours) with these same dimensions, but does it in a very specific manner based on a theological concept. When one performs Golden Section calculations on the Biblical narrative of the Passion story in the Gospel of John, the proportion pairs Jesus’s death with Peter’s denial. This proportion is maintained by Bach in his massive composition, the St. John Passion. The proportion thereby dictates where the break between Part I and Part II occurs. It is exact! There are some very freaky numerical coincidences that occur – it makes for a very interesting read. I’d be happy to share my dissertation with anyone interested…I promise that it is interesting reading and I do a good job of making it understandable for those who might be mathematically or even musically challenged.
Q. Through the years, I’ve told students that one might get a bachelor’s degree as a reasonably broad credential that would permit entrance to various career paths. But people usually have an occupational outcome in mind when putting in the considerable effort of obtaining a Master’s or Doctoral degree.

So here’s the question: How will this degree sustain your professional future? Or in other words: why did you get this degree?

My motivation to return to school was simply to learn as much as I could so that I could be a better performer and teacher: better at sharing my passion for music with others and more knowledgeable so that I had the tools necessary to inspire others (hopefully) to begin a lifelong journey of exploring the depth and beauty of music so that it might feed their souls and open their hearts to new, profound spiritual experiences.

What is my degree good for? Well, should I desire to teach at the college or university level, it is a necessity. Completing such a degree shows a deep commitment to learning and establishes me as a strong advocate for the choral arts.

Q. What’s next for you? Will you do academic research in the future on this or related topics?

I think a nice week of sleep would be ideal, then I’ll flirt with the idea of future research and publication. I already have another multi-movement work that I have investigated with Golden Section analysis – I can tell you that my preliminary findings are very promising!

I have been asked by the American Choral Directors Association to be part of a national task force to develop a mentoring protocol for young conductors and will expand my own mentoring leadership role in the Choral Community by becoming a mentor to young students at LA County High School of the Arts, in much the same manner that I currently mentor young conductors (Choral Apprentice) at IUCC! This year, I am also providing the same mentorship opportunity to a volunteer singer at IUCC, Beth Nitzan, who is studying conducting and is enrolled in the music education credentialing program at California State University, Fullerton.

Q. May we call you "Doctor St. Marie" around IUCC? It might be a good thing!

I am plain ole John – but, if you want to see me blush, by all means... It is possible, one day, that the title might become a familiar sound. For now, I’m just pleased with my personal accomplishment and am so grateful for the opportunity to serve here at IUCC.
Stewardship Update

Our Stewardship Financial Goal: $405,000

Pledged as of November 5: $215,576

Some 55% of the “giving units” that pledged in 2012 have now pledged for 2013.

Have you?

Our elected leaders can’t make good plans for 2013 without a solid estimate of the income that IUCC will be experiencing. So: Please make your pledge today! You can pledge on the IUCC web site by clicking: HERE.

And, thank you very much!

Dealing with Loss in a Season of Joy

The holiday season is difficult for many people, particularly those struggling with significant losses. The loss of jobs, broken relationships and death all bring unimagined pain. Parties, family gatherings and even worship are often too difficult for those dealing with loss to navigate.

The Revs. Alexis Solomon (hospice chaplain at Odyssey Hospice) and Scott Landis (pastor Mission Hills United Church of Christ) offer a seminar to help those dealing with loss. This event, hosted by the San Diego Partnership of UCC churches, will take place on Sunday afternoon, November 25, 2-4 p.m. at the Kensington Community United Church of Christ, 4773 Marlborough Drive, SD, 92116. Participants will be given an opportunity to identify clearly their loss and will be offered some helpful techniques to honor that loss during the holiday season.

Anyone experiencing recent loss or attempting to help those in pain is invited to attend.

[See poster overleaf. –ed.]
Women’s Fellowship Event!

Date:  Wednesday, November 7  
Time:  6:30

We will meet at Suzie Feick’s home which is very close to IUCC in Woodbridge.  
85 Nighthawk  Irvine  949-559-6444

Please plan on joining us for a “hearty salad” and lo-cal dessert (JOKE--is there such a thing?).  We can enjoy one another’s company and share something with the group that is especially meaningful during this Thanksgiving season.  
(Person, place, thing, pet, event--anything you can think of that makes you thankful.)

DO try to come and have a good time with us--everyone is invited!
BULLYING Part 10: Reducing the Risk, Continued.

Continuing with the theme of using parental power, or influence, to help keep our kids safe, we’ll move on to the task of teaching kids to meet each of their basic needs – survival, security, belonging, love, self-esteem, and reaching their potential – with safe, rather than dangerous, behavior. The most important lesson about violence, remember, is that it is behavior, and behavior is the way that people get their needs met. Beginning in infancy when babies learn that crying in a way that really bothers people is their best assurance of having someone show up to quiet them by meeting one of their needs – a bottle, a diaper, a blanket, holding – children figure out that getting needs met is a two way street. One person has a need, and if getting that need met involves other people, they figure out how to engage with people to see that it happens. In one of the old clichés, “if you want a friend, be a friend”. Unhappily, both “good” behavior and “bad” can result in getting one’s needs met.

We all need to eat. One can work for money to buy food; one can ask for food; or one can steal food. In either case, one eats! We can insure our survival by being careful about where we walk; locking our cars and homes; or by carrying weapons to “deal with” someone who threatens us. We can learn to feel secure by building in predictable routines; being with people we’ve learned to trust; learning to keep ourselves safe. Or we can feel secure by making others afraid of us – being the dog who growls and barks so that others stay away from us so we don’t get hurt. We can have friends and lovers by being friendly and loving, or we can intimidate others into being afraid not to be with us or threatening to hurt them if they try to leave us. Or we can become so insecure we’ll hang around with anyone who will have us. The need to belong is not optional; people do need people. But some children sacrifice their own well-being in order to “fit in” if they fear they won’t be accepted as strong and unique individuals. We can feel loved if we are in a mutual, negotiated relationships; or we can feel loved when someone does everything we tell them to. We can have positive self-esteem and feel good about ourselves when we can identify
our strengths, when we can look at our individual accomplishments, when we hear the praise and affirmations of others. Or, we can feel good about ourselves because we are intimidated by us; or because we spend all of time pointing out what’s wrong with everyone else so that we seem good by comparison. We can develop our particular talents to become the best that we can be, and someone we can be proud of. Or, we can set our sights on being the “baddest of the bad” as our claim to fame.

If bullying didn’t work, no one would do it! Kids bully because it meets their needs. So, parents have no say as to whether kids get their needs met: parents have the ultimate say as to who kids learn to look to in order to get their needs met, and how they learn to use either healthy, or unhealthy, strategies to meet their needs. You’re right....it’s an awesome responsibility. Because the research shows that when kids learn to meet their needs in unhealthy ways, such as bullying, those patterns tend to persist into adulthood. Today’s schoolyard bully is tomorrow battering spouse. Today’s “wimp” is tomorrow’s victim. This fact brings us back to the theme we ended our last column with. The need to monitor closely how kids are meeting their needs – for security, belonging, love, self-esteem, etc. If adults are not paying close attention they are missing the opportunity to teach kids one of the most important issues in life.

We all have needs. We will always have needs: it’s what makes us human. When we are small, parents meet our needs, if they are responsible parents. As we mature, parents work with us to meet our needs: they will buy us the sneakers we want as payless. If we want more expensive sneakers, we’ll chip in some of our own funds to go to a pricier store. Parents will prepare our food for us when we are small. Later we’ll start to make our own sandwiches. Parents will protect us when we’re little. But when it’s time to leave their constant supervision, they will tell us who to call if we need help, and who to answer the door for. When we’re little, parents chose our playmates. Later, they will help us learn to choose the right children as friends. Friends who negotiate with them and are kind to them. What kind of music do they listen to, and what do the lyrics say about love. When children are young, parents praise them and tell them they are wonderful. As they grow, they learn to praise themselves, and to get praise from others for doing good things. When they’re young we love them, not by hurting them but by setting firm, but kind, limits.

By the time children have reached adolescence the “lessons” about meeting one’s basic needs are pretty firmly in place. The time to plant the seeds is as they grow, and as they encounter challenging situations, such as being bullied, or being tempted to bully. One of the biblical proverbs tells us that we should
“train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”. This doesn't mean that our children will never depart from our lessons behaviorally. I think it means that if parents put the right messages/lessons in their children's heads, they will always remember what they've been taught, even if they are not acting the way they've been taught. These lessons are what allow us to “repent” – or turn around. How many of you reading this column still hear your own parent's voices in your head on occasion? “Nagging you”, if you will, when you are departing from what they taught you. We know that even dead parents can “nag”.

Watch your children closely to make sure they are meeting their needs in safe, healthy ways. What they learn now will last a lifetime.
News & Notes
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