From the Pastor's Desk …

Did you know that we have a staff member who has been working for IUCC for twenty years? On October 15, Heidi Willcox will celebrate two decades of service as our bookkeeper.

We would love to have thrown a celebration, but Heidi is very modest and does not like a fuss—so while we are honoring her wishes, I still think that it is only right to mark the occasion.

Heidi lives in Lake Forest with her husband, Mark, and has three children—Torrey, Jordan and Nicholas. They are dog lovers and Angels fans, and if you are ever in the office, take a look at some of the pictures she has of her family, both human and canine! I know that Heidi likes to be able to put faces to people’s names, so if you come in during the week, please introduce yourself if you don’t know her.
Twenty years is a long time, and I know that we all hope that she will continue to be the person who organizes and looks after our financial matters for many years to come. Each of our treasurers has noted their respect for the great work she does, and let me say that I join them in admiration.

Happy 20th, Heidi!

[Heidi Wilcox – pictured right. – Ed.]

I have been reading Dom Crossan’s book, *The Greatest Prayer* in which he examines the Lord’s Prayer. As usual, Crossan is pithy, direct and not without humor. As I read his words, I can hear his voice as he spoke from our pulpit last spring.

This year, our Comma Groups are exploring a new theme each month, and our pastoral staff will take on those topics each Communion Sunday.

On October 7 we have a chock-full Sunday. It is World Communion Sunday and the day we give our annual Neighbors in Need offering. The choir will be singing at two identical services, after which the Trevor Project (lgbt bullying/suicide) will be here, presented by our Stephen Ministry. And, the sermon will address the monthly theme.

Our first Comma Group theme will be on “prayer” and that is why I decided to read Crossan’s book now.

Crossan writes, “The Lord’s prayer is Christianity’s greatest prayer. It is also Christianity’s strangest prayer. It is prayed by all Christians, but it never mentions Christ. It is prayed in all churches, but it never mentions church. It is prayed on all Sundays, but it never mentions Sunday. It is called the ‘Lord’s Prayer,’ but it never mentions ‘Lord’” (p.1).

How often do you pray the Lord’s Prayer? We say it together in church each week, almost like a mantra. Do we ever really take the time to wonder what the prayer means? It is after all, the only prayer that Jesus taught us to say.

This brings up other questions as well—what do we believe we are achieving by praying? Is there a deity that is actually interested in assisting us in winning the lottery or losing those ten pounds?
In our Bible study, we talked about prayer, and I heard a few interesting comments. Shirley Lorenz spoke about how Mother Teresa was once asked about how she viewed prayer, so I looked up the conversation, which turned out to be with Dan Rather.

"What do you say to God when you pray," he inquired.

"Nothing," replied Mother Theresa. "I just listen."

"What does God say to you?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Mother Theresa. "He just listens."

As the conversation about communicating with God and the Lord’s Prayer continued in Plumer Hall, Ken Wyant had the last word, which often happens! He said that someone once asked, “How long do I have to say the Lord’s Prayer?” And the answer came: “You have to say it until you want to say it.”

I hope you will be in conversation about prayer with us during October, and that the prayer and conversation will continue long after that.

Yours,
Pastor Paul

From the Associate Pastor

Right now (Oct. 3rd), I’m writing from Kansas City, where I’m taking part in one of the twice-yearly gatherings of the Target 2030: Next Generation Leadership Initiative. This is a program organized by our UCC Pension Boards that brings together young clergy from our denomination from across the country to offer opportunities for professional development and community building. This week we are attending the annual Leadership Institute at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. I am learning all kinds of exciting new ideas for ministry. But I’m also having to do a little bit of translation work, because not surprisingly, a mega – church of 18,000 members in Kansas has a little different approach and a little different theology than good old IUCC!

Nevertheless, some things translate well and work in many settings. I have been inspired by the supreme discipline and work ethic of the senior pastor. I have learned lots of great things about the goals of a sermon and how to prepare sermons of different styles. I’ve heard about the importance of an outwardly-focused church in attracting first-time visitors, and about the importance of displaying radical hospitality if you want those visitors to come again. And as we enter into our stewardship season, I’m reflecting on a workshop that em-
phased a clearer focus on the need of an individual member to be generous, rather than on the need of the church to make all the ends meet in the budget. So I thank you all for this professional development time away, and I look forward to talking more about what I’ve learned once I return.

I’ll come back on Saturday and head straight to Game Night. Our Youth Group plan to spend the night in Plumer Hall that night and do some prep work for Youth Sunday (coming up on October 21) while also having fun. Since this newsletter will come out afterwards, I’m sure everyone will have had a wonderful time displaying their best game-playing skills, enjoying pizza, salad, and dessert, and having fun with their church family!

The following weekend, October 12-14 will be All-Church Camp up in the San Bernardino Mountains at Pilgrim Pines. I’m excited about the folks I’ve already heard are going, and I hope many more sign up as well. More information and online registration can be found here. The site says there will be hikes and games, a talent show, tie-dye and crafts, worship and reflection, and more. Seth and I will be going up and taking a couple of our youth as well, and I hope to see you there!

Then at the end of the month, our annual Trunk-or-Treat will be held in the parking lot after Second Service on October 28. I think we’re sure to enjoy another family-friendly, fun Halloween event. Please sign up soon to decorate your car trunk and pass out treats to our kids while offering a safe way to enjoy the holiday. And remember, costumes are encouraged!

So come to services on Sundays, worship God in your daily life every day, and enjoy all the activities our church offers to serve our own community as well as the wider world. Let’s come together to make IUCC a place where all are welcomed and where all extend that welcome to everyone in need.

In God’s peace,
Pastor Elizabeth
Youth Group Report
By Erika Sanders

Wow! I can't believe it is already October! September flew by and was packed with fun activities for youth. Thank you to all who attended the Global Missions luncheon. Your generosity has provided the youth with financial support for our next mission trip.

Another highlight from September was attending the Irvine Global Village Festival. I enjoyed spending the day with IUCC's youth and trying a variety of international foods. A picture from that activity is shown here.

Similar to September, I expect October to be full of exciting youth activities. Some of the events I am most excited about are attending Open Mosque Day with the youth on October 7th, Youth Sunday on October 21st, and Trunk-or-Treat October 28th.

**Important Youth Dates:**

- **Oct. 6th:** Youth Overnight
- **Oct. 7th:** Open Mosque Day
- **Oct. 12th – 14th:** Family Camp (No Youth Group)
- **Oct. 20th:** Youth Sunday Rehearsal (If needed)
- **Oct. 21st:** Youth Sunday + Youth Group
- **Oct. 28th:** Trunk-or-Treat

Peace,
Erika
Recently, when someone at church said to me, “So I hear you are taking on Doreen’s job with the childcare center?” my emphatic response was “Not exactly.” You see, no one can really do what Doreen Smith did all these years in overseeing and coordinating the IUCC Early Childhood Center. At Doreen’s farewell party (she and daughter Jacqui Ala have moved to Ohio to be closer to Doreen’s aging parents), I was very serious when I gave Doreen a hug and said, “It is going to take an entire committee to fill your shoes!”

And so, as the newly appointed chair of the childcare committee, I am recruiting committee members. Already Kelly Rehbein, Lyle Norton, and Kathy Brown have stepped up to the task, and I thank them most sincerely. **We are seeking three or four additional IUCC members** who are interested in early childhood education, families, and our church’s service to the community to join us. Initially, the committee will seek to strengthen the bond between IUCC and the Early Childhood Center. We will review the center’s mission and vision and craft strategic goals for the future. Please email me at laura.a.long@cox.net if you are interested or have questions about the commitment.

Currently, the Early Childhood Center is off to a great start this fall with 38 children, toddlers to pre-K, enrolled in the three classrooms. However, at least one full-time opening is available in each classroom (2s, 3s and pre-K), and part-time space is open in the two-year-old room. A tuition discount is available for church members. **If you or someone you know is interested in the IUCC preschool, call director Irma Rosales at 949-733-0228 for a tour.**

In addition to the regular classroom activities this month, the children will be trick-or-treating on Halloween morning at the nearby Lakeview Senior Center. The senior residents—many in costume—station themselves at the doors to their rooms as the children parade through the hallways in search of treats.

The IUCC Child Care Center will close at 4:30 p.m. on Halloween.

Finally, did you know that more than 5.8 million U.S. children live in their grandparents’ homes and more than 2.5 million grandparents have taken on the responsibility to raise these children, according to the AARP? With statistics like that, you or someone you know may be raising a grandchild. Caring for young children is never easy—even when you’ve done it before—and ZERO TO THREE has stepped up to help. With funding from
the MetLife Foundation, they have created some great online resources that grandparents (or anyone, for that matter!) can download to refresh their skills with young children. Information sheets are available in English and Spanish on basic healthy child development for each age, and you’ll also find resources about challenges, such as setting limits and handling trauma and divorce. Need some fun activities to support early learning? The website has lots of suggestions here, and there are podcasts, too, which can be downloaded to an MP3 player—a perfect way to learn some new tips while on the go.

Comma Groups:
IUCC’s Distinctive Small Groups Program

Best experience I’ve had in Church!
Great bonding.
Nice people, good group, good experience.

The purpose of Comma Groups is to develop close relationships with other IUCC members by exploring some spiritual themes in small groups. Groups are encouraged to share a meal together and to maintain confidentiality within the group so everyone will be able to freely discuss their opinions and ideas.

The worship service on October 7, 2012 will kick off Comma Group season for this program year. The theme for worship and for the Comma Group meetings for this month will be Prayer.

We have 116 people participating in 14 different Comma Groups. Most of the groups have already scheduled their initial meetings. If you signed up to participate, but have not yet been contacted by a group leader, please email Ken Wyant at ken@iucc.org.

• Next month’s theme will be “Why do bad things happen to good people,” followed by “Evangelism” for December. IUCC member, the Rev. Terry LePage, has put together resources for the group leaders to use as discussion starters.
Adult Education:  
Upcoming Opportunities

IUCC’s continuing Sunday morning class meets between services weekly in Plumer Hall, at 10:15, following the conclusion of first service. Our October 7 class will feature IUCC member Doug Haynes on “The History of Medical Ethics.” On October 21, our class will feature IUCC member Jim Martin on “The Kingdom of God.”

IUCC’s continuing Tuesday evening Bible Study will discuss the book of Job on October 2 and 9. Pastor Paul will lead the sessions on October 16 and 23 with discussion of the Scripture lessons for the Sunday service.

Both classes are open to everyone, and they are planned so that visitors, newcomers and regular attenders can all participate comfortably. Please join us!

1UCC Adult Education Forum

WHY WE CAN’T ALLOW THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT TO RU(I)N OUR COUNTRY

Wednesday, October 17, 2012
Choose from 2 sessions: Noon-1:30pm (Bring your own lunch) or 7:30 -9:00pm
PRESENTER: Stephanie Campbell, President OC Americans United

Stephanie Campbell is a naturalized U.S. citizen, born in England, and spent part of her childhood in Israel. Having lived in three countries, two with an established religion and one with freedom of religion, she is committed to the guarantees of religious freedom in our First Amendment based on personal experience and principle. Ms. Campbell is the president and a founding member of the Orange County Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. She is also a member of the National Advisory Council of Americans United. She is very active in church/state separation issues at the local level in issues of keeping religion out of the schools and city councils and on the national level where she has lobbied our California Senators on a variety of issues including Supreme Court nominations. Ms. Campbell is a certified ACLU speaker on Church and State issues and also speaks on women’s issues and gay rights issues. Ms. Campbell has a Masters Degree in Business Administration and an
undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Washington. She is currently a Software Test Manager with TeleCommunication Systems in Aliso Viejo, CA.

Americans United operate on the principle that all Americans have the constitutional right to practice the religion of their choice, which of course includes refraining from taking part in religion, if that is your preference. We believe that to ensure that right, the government must remain neutral on all religious questions. This is the principle our parent organization was founded on and is our guiding principle today. The national organization was founded in 1947 by a coalition who came together to fight proposals in Congress to provide government funding to private religious schools. The fight was won by lobbying and educating members of Congress. With the first success they extended the campaign on the importance of maintaining church-state separation to the states. The Orange County chapter of Americans United was founded in December of 2004 following, and because of, the 2004 election. A few of us had been concerned about the role religion played in that election as well as the rising influence of Orange County’s mega-churches and we wanted to put a stake in the ground for religious liberty. Since forming we have provided a focal point within the County to address religious liberty concerns, supplied speakers to different groups and presented educational programs on a variety of topics including intelligent design, sex education, end of life issues, and gay marriage among others.

REGISTRATION:
Name:_______________________ Ph: __________ email:_______________________
Which session?  12-1:30pm____ or 7:30-9pm_____
• A few words about study programs upcoming in 2012-13, led by the Rev. George Johnson;
• Memories from the Youth trip to Mexico, from Alaina Haynes;
• Words about the Stephen Ministry, by Stephen Ministry Chair Dave Schofield;
• A description of the AIDS Walk, and IUCC’s continuing participation and leadership in that charitable activity, offered by Felicity Figueroa; and
• Pastor Griswold’s description of Catholic Charities, and IUCC’s history and possible future in supporting that healing work.

More than 80 attended the luncheon, and over $435 was raised for support for IUCC Youth experience with global mission in the year to come.

And yes, there are, and will be, follow-ups. Here is the key piece. Note: you can cut out a response form and return it!

### HOW TO BE INVOLVED WITH GLOBAL MISSION AT IUCC

Global Mission at IUCC is defined as any activity which reaches out to the hurting world, whether it is here within the walls of our congregation, right outside our walls, or across the world. The mission of Global Mission at IUCC is to have every person in our church family become involved at some level, from offering your prayer to actually going into the mission field and serving. Below are listed several possibilities.

Monthly we will distribute brochures (on sanctuary chairs or in the Sunday bulletin), sharing with you the tremendous global outreach of the United Church Christ.

**SOME IDEAS:**

___ Pray for our outreach ministries and missionaries here and all over the world.

___ Donate money and goods to specific ministries here and in your community.

___ Attend presentations, classes, missionary visits offered at IUCC.

___ Volunteer at one or more of IUCCs many ministries.

___ Host, as a group or an individual, a fund raiser or special event for a ministry.

___ Join the Global Mission steering committee. We need all the help we can have.

___ Sponsor a child/youth (brochure “Sponsor A Child”) or Baja Scholarship Fund in Mexico.

___ Become a pen pal with someone in another country.

___ Hire our IUCC youth to do jobs to raise money for their mission trips here and abroad.

___ Chair a specific ministry or start a new one.

___ Your own idea on how to support Global Mission at IUCC.

I would be interested in in becoming involved in Global Mission at IUCC by doing:

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Name________________________________________Ph:___________________

Email:____________________________________

(Return to any of the IUCC pastors, the office, Bil Aulenbach or GM Committee member)
Thank you, Guatemala

Barking dogs, roosters cock-a-doodle-doo’ing, and nuns singing - how joyous an experience to wake up to compared to cars speeding down Jeronimo Lane in Lake Forest, CA. I woke up with the realization that I was no longer in the OC.

My Spanglish was not polished but I figured if I got the point across I was successful no matter how many grins I got from my 17 year old who just completed her 5th year of Spanish and was also joining us on this trip. I was thrilled for her to experience real life first hand.

Our goal on this trip with our fellow IUCC parishioners was to use funds collected to build stoves for those families that were so poor that they barely had anything that resembled stoves or what we might more likely consider camping type wood fire pits. We also planned to meet with the principle of San Cristobal School, (Carlos - a friend of Pastor Elizabeth’s) to help at the school and to learn more about it how our church community
could help improve the students’ lives. We also hoped to be more educated on what daily life was like in Guatemala and hear firsthand accounts of the past civil unrest.

I think we succeeded with our goals on this trip. There is so much to say but I think the most important is the lesson of how giving is better than receiving. Living in such a materialist world it is sometimes hard to remember our Christian duty to help those in need.

While meeting with the principle of San Cristobal School, Carlos I was intrigued by a picture he had over his desk of a professional business man sitting with Jesus - it made me wonder what a great thought to review your daily activities with Jesus and think about what a “work review” or a “life review” would be like. It inspired me to view work, my life and prayer a little differently.

As Mother Teresa once said, “We can do not great things, only small things with great love. It is not how much you do but how much love you put into doing it.” I hope this is our beginning of small things with great love from the community of IUCC for our brothers and sisters in Guatemala.

■ Denise Bermudez
New Members – Sept. 9, 2012

Jim is from Maryland and was baptized in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. He is a physician with Kaiser. Jim has two children, Caleigh and Aiden. Jim is married to Mark Miller.

Mark is from Southern California, and comes from the Catholic tradition. He owns the Trading Post Fan Company in Huntington Beach.

They are drawn to IUCC for the Open and Affirming Atmosphere of unconditional love. For them, the concept of a safe sanctuary in a loving community is important.

Elizabeth is originally from Virginia and moved here with her late husband in 1972. She grew up in the Episcopal church, but as an adult never found a spiritual home until attending IUCC. She has a dog who is the love of her life, and is now retired. Elizabeth volunteers and also works at Atria Woodbridge, an assisted living facility just down the street, where she has found a passion in this work.

Susan lives in Irvine, and she is a retired social worker. She has a son. Susan was born in and raised in the Bay Area, graduated from U.C. Davis and then served in the Peace Corps in Brazil for 2 years. She comes from the Unitarian tradition, and was baptized a Baptist. She was in search of a church that was both spiritual and actively involved in human rights and other social issues. Susan enjoys our adult Sunday school, our worship and music.
New Members – continued

Jordan was born and raised in Durham, NH, and has been a member of the Congregational Church all his life. He met Tara and moved to Finland. Upon their return to the US and after the birth of their daughter, Erica Jane, he finally found a spiritual home at IUCC. He works with his wife at a custom sports clothing manufacturer in Santa Ana, where he is the manager of the art and embellishment department.

Tara is from South Africa, and grew up in the Roman Catholic Church. She is International Sales Coordinator at the business in Santa Ana where Jordan also works.

Tara has been drawn to IUCC because she can be herself and come to her understanding of God in her own way, while finding a great sense of community.

Fellowship!

Yes, we have Fellowship!

We recently hosted the annual IUCC Picnic – see photos below!

(Photo Credits: Cindy O’Dell)

And by the way: **SAVE THE DATE: February 2, 2013: IUCC’s Black & White Party!**
Picnic Prep!

At Ye Olde Picknick!

Best in Town!

Fun & Games!

Fun For All

Nobody here – gone to picnic!
Something new! But building on the familiar idea of the Pastors' Potlucks. **Announcing:**

**Second Thursday-of-the-month potlucks!**

The kickoff is **October 16.**

We will gather at 5:45 – a “choir rehearsal – friendly” time. Grills will be stoked and ready. To join in, simply bring your own:

- Utensils – flatware, plate, a glass for drinking
- Meat or other item to grill
- Side dish to share

Gather in Plumer Hall. No sign-ups needed. Water and iced tea provided.

Questions? Reach Lindy Garber at: 949 495 1931

**Y'all come!**

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**Bon Vivant Dinners**

**Bon Vivant dinners** are not small groups that persist for several weeks or several months (as Comma Groups do). Instead, Bon Vivant dinners are “one off” occasions, for people to come together, break bread, enjoy each others’ company, and get to know each other a little better. There is no “curriculum” for these social occasions.

We gather in small groups of 6 to 10 at someone’s house, usually. Everyone brings something to contribute to a shared meal. The host decides the theme and gives assignments, and the host does not even have to cook! After all, the host has the responsibility of having a clean house and taking care of the dishes.

Foods do not need to be fancy. Hamburgers on the grill are perfectly acceptable.

✈️ We’d love to welcome families, including families with small children.

Please sign up on the patio by October 21 for our October 27 Bon Vivants!

Join in! Get to know some people in the congregation!

Hoping to see you on the last Saturday of the month, **October 27!**
Outreach

Many thanks to our wonderful IUCC volunteers at the Irvine Global Village Festival:

Erika Sanders and the Youth Group;
Lavinia Cooper, Eileen Vincent,
David Schofield, Brian Pearcy,
Jim Aynes, and Tricia Aynes.

They did a stellar job representing our faith and our church at this annual event celebrating the city's diversity.

Photo Credits: Trish Aynes

Crop Walk Is a-Comin’

Save the Date!

OCTOBER 28, 2012
for the 24th Annual
Newport/Irvine/Mesa CROP Interfaith Hunger Walk
**Where:** Our Lady Queen of Angels School, across from Corona del Mar High School. A 7k walk around the beautiful Newport Beach Back Bay. A shorter 4k walk will also be available.

**When:** 1 PM, Sunday, October 28, 2012 (Walk leaves at 1:30)

**Purpose of the Walk:** This is a fund-raising event to help fight hunger and homelessness both locally and internationally. It’s a wonderful opportunity for religious groups from all faith traditions, businesses, schools and other secular groups to walk together towards this common goal. The walk is non-denominational.

Some local groups that receive a portion of the donations include: Isaiah House Homeless Shelter, Share Our Selves, Orange County Interfaith Shelters, Jewish Family Services to name a few. However, you may designate any tax-exempt food aid organization to whom you would like your donations to go.

- Our walk joins with 2,000 other walks nationwide, raising millions of dollars for the more than 1 billion people in our world who go to bed hungry.

You can donate directly to the Newport Beach CROP Hunger Walk by going to: [www.cropwalkonline.org/newportbeachca](http://www.cropwalkonline.org/newportbeachca)


Our walk is overseen by Church World Service, an organization providing international & local relief for the hungry and homeless. Church World Service has the highest rating possible on Charity Navigator. It is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit and the tax ID is 13-4080201.

We invite you or your group to join us on this joyous occasion to help fight a very serious problem - poverty and hunger.
If you would like to participate in this walk or if you simply want more information, contact:

Steve Goetz, Chair - OR - Jim de Boom, Executive Director

Newport Mesa – Irvine CROP Walk
OC Interfaith Council

(949) 436-1946  sgoetz53@gmail.com
(760) 641-0301  nmiinterfaith@aol.com

From the Moderator

The weather may not have heard that it's time for crisp fall days (it's nearing 90 degrees as I write this), but there's no doubt that IUCC is well into the season.

The various ministries are busy with everything from launching Sunday education programs for children and adults to organizing mission and service activities such as the annual CROP walk to planning potlucks and parties and game nights.

It's also the time of year when ministry and committee leaders are asked to think about plans for next year and prepare budgets. There are so many good ideas for keeping IUCC a vibrant and caring community that it will be hard for the budget committee to choose among them if funding falls short of hopes and dreams.

The fund development committee headed by Janet Emery and Susie Lang has begun planning the annual stewardship campaign. Successful fundraising means there's money to strengthen existing programs, improve technology and reward our hard-working staff as well add new programs to benefit both IUCC and the greater community.

We're also moving ahead with two task force committees, one to look at first service and the other to make suggestions for improving the technology we use (or try to use) in the sanctuary and Plumer Hall as well as ways to make our Web site more useful and interactive.

A first service task force (Barbara Moss, David Carruthers, Craig Tyrl and Steve Goetz) is looking at who currently attends first service and why before looking at ways to reinvigorate the 9 a.m. service.
Nick Sanders, who serves as secretary for the admin board, and Lester Ricks have said they'll help with the technology task force. **If technology issues interest you, please consider joining that committee by talking to Nick or to me.**

Your input about IUCC is always welcome. Both the ministry board (the second Monday of the month) and admin board meetings (the third Monday of the month) are open to all.

Cindy

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**Ballot Forum Upcoming – October 21**

Join the discussion – in Plumer Hall, about 12:15 p.m., following second service – about the propositions on the ballot this November. Sponsored by the Advocates for Peace & Justice Ministry, we’ll be nonpartisan but plenty opinionated!

Interested in doing a little research on your own? Here are some things to try.

The Official Voter's Guide, issued by the California Secretary of State:  
[http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/](http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/)

The League of Women Voters recommendations:  
[http://ca.lwv.org/action/prop1211/index.html](http://ca.lwv.org/action/prop1211/index.html)

The California Council of Churches IMPACT recommendations:  
October Birthdays!

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| Craig Tyrl     |  
| Dale Vaughan   |  
| Connie Weir    |  
| Heidi Willcox  |  
| Torrey Willcox |  
| Glenda Wyant   |  

21
Join our Stephen Ministry team on the first Sunday in November (11/4) to learn and explore some of the answers to these questions. Our Stephen Ministers are provided with education on a monthly basis on issues that affect all of us at times. Some of you have joined us for education on Alzheimer’s, end of life issues and others subjects. I will provide the education piece and we will also have a panel of recovering alcoholics, addicts and codependents who will share their own experience, strength and hope with you.

I have been a drug and alcohol counselor since 1977 and have acquired considerable knowledge and experience on the subject of abuse, addiction and “recreational” use of substances. I have worked with adults (abusers and their family/friends) in hospital rehabilitation programs most of that time, and have also worked with teens at Juvenile Hall in Orange on substance abuse and mental health issues.

Family members and friends are often deeply affected by the alcohol and drug abuse of someone they love. This can lead to emotional, spiritual and physical illness such as depression, anxiety, gastrointestinal issues, high blood pressure and many more and worse conditions. Most of the people I see in my private practice are family members and friends of substance abusers. These are people who are most likely to reach out for help, while the alcoholic/addict often continues to nurse their pain (guilt, anger, resentment) with substances.

I do not “treat” my own family members in my practice and hence would not “treat” any of you whom I consider to be my church family. However, I am happy to provide you with resources for whatever kind of help you are open to. Know that I am passionate about this subject. It has been a blessing for me to have been a part of helping turn people’s lives around. Today, some of my closest friends are recovering alcoholics and codependents. My partner Patty and I are both recovering codependents. We will talk about what that means. The most important and powerful mentors in my life have
been recovering alcoholics and codependents. No one knows better than them the agonizing pain of addiction and the recovery process that can dramatically lead them out of that pain.

HELP IS AVAILABLE.

There are many resources “out there” to help you walk through what can be extremely difficult emotions. Come to our education meeting and learn, along with our Stephen Ministers what those resources are. Let’s talk about this sometimes TABOO subject. Often shame and embarrassment, guilt and anger can actually prevent us from seeking help. Education about this subject can help to cut through these emotions and often change lives in very positive directions.

We will gather in Plummer Hall after church at 1:00 pm. Bring a snack for yourselves.

Get the Most From General Synod 29:  Start Your Bucket List Now!

Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, as a couple of terminally ill duffers out to LIVE! before they die, made “bucket list” a household phrase in 2007. From skydiving to riding motorcycles along the Great Wall of China and flying over the North Pole, they “did it all,” crossing item after item off their lists with a panache that eventually spilled over into friendship, connection with faith and family and the fulfillment of dreams in unexpected ways.

Good plot…great plan for Synod goers!

Okay, you’ve decided to give General Synod 29 a try: it is, after all, in Long Beach, hosted by your own Conference. Now would be a good time to think bucket list. What might you hope to see and do between June 28 and July 2, 2013?”

How about the 2013 equivalents of “dancing with Bishop Tutu” and “flash mob communion,” memorable moments recalled by past participants in articles for Connecting Voices magazine (http://www.scncuucc.org/voices)?
Or, as others have celebrated:

- “an experience of God’s peace”
- “a family reunion - immersion into our identity as people of the UCC”
- “the palpable power of those who follow Jesus”
- “the energy of faith-rich community”
- “worship as an invitation to simply be”
- “a deep sense of belonging…these people ‘get me!’”
- “Knowing the fire and passion of Synod will live on in and through me”
- “Magic!”

The list is long, the possibilities exciting. Synod, as one person put it, is “one large goose bump of an experience.”

What will Synod 29 bring? Rev. Dr. Ben Guess, Executive Minister, UCC Local Church Ministries and one of UCC’s Collegium of Officers, put it this way: “an opportunity to articulate who we are as a community of faith, to share our vision, values and voice.” To which Conference Minister Rev. Felix Villanueva added the SCNC-specific goal that the Long Beach gathering “be a showcase for the Conference’s uniqueness and diversity and an opportunity to lead the UCC into what the church can become.”

Great items for our – and your – bucket list!

See you in Long Beach!

**Janet**

Janet Vandevender
Co-Chair, Synod 29 Local Arrangements Committee
Our Southern California-Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ has a very special outreach. Our churches have a truly wonderful relationship with Peppermint Ridge, a non-profit organization founded in 1959 with the mission of providing loving homes and empowering support services for individuals with developmental disabilities. A truly caring and helpful staff gently guides these special people toward greater independence and fuller community participation.

At the 2011 Annual Gathering in La Jolla. I had the privilege of hearing some of the residents of Peppermint Ridge sing their rendition of “Amazing Grace.” It was so powerful I found myself unable to talk or move. Something happened to me that afternoon that I cannot fully explain. I made a mental note that I would one day try to contribute whatever talent I could offer to this important and worthy non-profit.

I recently visited the Executive Director, the Reverend Audrey Turner, and Tracy Mauser, the Director of Development at the main Peppermint Ridge facility in Corona. I was given an extensive tour of group homes and met several of the full time residents, two of whom I recognized from their choir. There are five homes on campus, and another six elsewhere in Corona. All kinds of activities are available to the residents, and there is clearly a sense of community and a joy for life. I had no idea that Peppermint Ridge was such a vibrant ministry until that Annual Gathering when I got a chance to be around some of these very special developmentally disabled people. And, I am so proud to be a part of our Southern California Nevada Conference after visiting Audrey, Tracy and the residents of “The Ridge.”

We sat down together to discuss how I might be able to help. I offered to play my one man adaptation of Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol (in which I toured last holiday season) as a benefit for them, and after looking at dates, we decided to do this during the Christmas season of 2013 right here in Irvine. I know it is down the road in terms of time, but the ministry of Peppermint Ridge is on-going. I invite you to learn more about one of the ways in which IUCC supports Conference-wide ministry by going to their web-site. http://peppermintridge.org/index.html
2012 OCEC EQUALITY AWARDS

Remembering Katherine B. Darmer & Recognizing National Coming Out Day

Oct. 11, 2012
6:30 - 9pm
Hors D’oeuvres & Beverages
Auction
$50 per ticket
$25 OCEC members

Award Recipients

Katherine B. Darmer Equality Award
Laura Kanter

Courage and Vision Award
John Ibson

Community Leadership Award
Pat Magee

Outstanding Community Partner Award
Gay Neighbors Families & Friends of Santa Ana

Event Location

Keynote Speaker & Award Recipient

John Ibson attended high school in O.C. and holds a Ph.D. from Brandeis Univ. He has taught at CSUF for over 40 years where he implemented a Queer Studies Minor. He is a strong advocate for the LGBTQ community.

Please RSVP EqualityAwards2012@ocequality.com or www.ocequality.com
BULLYING Part 9: Reducing the Risk, Continued.

School is now in full swing so we’ll continue our optimistic approach to bullying by continuing to provide strategies to reduce or eliminate the possibility that our children will get caught up in this destructive relationship. Last month we talked about the importance of letting children know that they are completely in charge of how and what they think. Feeling in charge of one’s own brain already leads to the kind of self-confidence that will go a long way to eliminating the need for someone “weaker” to build up one’s self-esteem, and eliminating the kind of thoughts that lead children to think there’s nothing they can do about a situation. We also discussed that, closely connected to this thinking process is realizing that we are also in charge of our own feelings. No one can “make us” feel anything. Other people can do things or say things, but can’t “make us mad”.

The ability to mature into taking control of one’s thoughts and feelings is slow and adults need to be patient as children grow to keep introducing ideas that might not make much sense to young children but that will gradually be ideas they can use to help them cope with relationships. With this in mind, we want to acknowledge that parents of children with developmental challenges will have to be more patient, more persistent, and more involved in the supervision of their children’s relationships. Children who look different than other children, or learn different from other children, or who have problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will need additional help learning how to deflect rude comments that make fun of them. We can do this by role playing at home, using real examples of hurtful interactions they have experienced. Have them share things that others have said that were hard for them to handle and then help them come up with responses that help them to feel confident. “Hey – four eyes!” Response: “Me? Oh I was just feeling a little sorry for you because you only have two eyes”. “Hey – stupid”! Response: “Me? I’m sorry that you think there’s only one way to learn because actually everyone learns differently and there are lots of ways to learn”. Whatever the challenge – looks, height, learning differences, impulsivity, physical challenges – we can help our children field remarks with snappy comebacks that keep them feeling in control. Defensive behavior only makes them look “weak” and encourages the verbal bullying. Being prepared with a comeback will build in strength.

Children who struggle with self-esteem, for whatever reasons, often find it easier to look for others who can be “put down” than to find reasons to build themselves up. If you have a child who struggles with their own self-confidence and self-esteem, you might
have to work harder at helping them develop a tolerance for difference. Fearfulness causes people to “judge”, rather than “accept” difference. If a child feels happy with him/her self and secure in who they are, knowing they are loved and accepted as they are, they have no need to feel threatened by people who are different from them. We want children – both those who are secure, and those who are insecure – to understand the relationship between intolerance and insecurity. In fact, if you notice your child having troubling accepting a child or family who is very different, it is a pretty good way to detect personal insecurity. Children left personally insecure because they feel unacceptable are tempted to deflect attention from their own perceived weaknesses by finding fault with others. When a parent hears their child putting down another child or another group it’s a good time to investigate the feelings of security in their own child, in addition to giving the talk about tolerance.

Unhappily, having children in the room when the news is on provides a good opportunity for impromptu talks about tolerance. Gay bashing, the Israel-Palestine conflict, references to Arabs and terrorists in the same sentence, African genocide of people in their own countries – any of these provides a wonderful opportunity to teach tolerance. We basically teach tolerance in children by finding out why they are not tolerant. One of the wonderful things about very young children is that they really don’t notice difference. Children raised by loving caregivers of different ethnic groups love them as their parents. Small children will play with any other small child without caring how they look or what color they are. Intolerance has to be taught. Unfortunately, when children pick up intolerance from exposure to us (adults) we then have to turn around and teach them otherwise. Exposing children to people who look different and live differently is a great way to build in the wonderful skill of judging people as Martin Luther King urged us: “By the content of their character”, rather than by some artificial difference that never really changes one’s humanity.

One more strategy for this month. Monitor peer interactions with proximity. It’s important to know how children talk to each other, how they play, how they talk to the pets. And never assume that everything is all right because there is no noise. Develop a low tolerance for even “petty” acts of striking out with toys, dolls, pets, siblings. Put your nose in their business and recognize their immaturity and need for guidance even if they resent it. Buy up the moments when you’re around to help them with the moments when you’re not. There is always another way to express yourself, and we’re the ones in charge of helping them learn the safe, kind ways.
News & Notes
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