Proposed Building Project Plan
by Anne Rosse, BPWG Chair

In late January, this congregation voted overwhelmingly to undertake a capital campaign to fund the Master Plan’s Phase I. The campaign’s goal was set at $1.5 million, with a stretch goal of $2 million in recognition that Phase I’s costs would be at least $2 million. When the campaign’s active phase ended in late June, $1.25 million had been raised. While we fell short of our goal, this is the most successful fundraising campaign that IUCC has ever undertaken. So, thank you for your generosity in embracing IUCC’s future!

In light of the fundraising shortfall and expected project costs, a Building Project Working Group (BPWG) was appointed by the Administration Board to address options for moving forward. The BPWG members are: Mark Allen, Keith Boyum, Cindy O’Dell, Anne Rosse (Chair), Ron Steiner and Paul Tellström. As part of its due diligence, the BPWG examined a broad range of options and strategies. Their proposed plan was approved by the Administration Board in mid-August.

The BPWG and Administration Board believe this plan (outlined below) is the best path forward for bringing essential new space to our aging church campus in a fiscally responsible manner. The new space will substantially improve our ability to live out our mission and ministry by supporting our commitment to be the church that God is calling us to be, one that offers abundant and inclusive welcome, that nurtures tomorrow’s peacemakers, and follows the teachings of Jesus Christ to love and care for our neighbors and planet. At the same time, we strongly encourage our fellow congregants to keep their stewardship strong to support core staff and programs while IUCC is stepping forth in faith to begin its campus transformation.

The main components of the proposed plan are:

1. Re-scope the construction project into Phase 1a and Phase 1b
To build the full Phase 1, with shovels in the ground mid-year 2017, our architects advise that the total project costs would be approximately $2.5 million. However, for an affordable amount of money, we can create most of the functional spaces that were originally envisioned for the full Phase 1 in a Phase 1a (please refer to the plan). We recommend that Phase 1a be undertaken now; it has an estimated cost of approximately $1.8 million including financing costs. Phase 1a would add more than 2,600 new square feet of space and includes all of these campus enhancements:
   - 3 flexible meeting rooms with operable partitions (for a total capacity of 80 people)
   - 2 enclosed staff offices
   - 1 patio for pastoral counseling and small group gatherings
   - 2 staff work stations
   - 1 single-occupancy restroom
   - Both outdoor (new) and indoor waiting areas
   - A centrally located and convenient “coffee corner”
   - Fellowship courtyard
   - Frontage landscape improvements & widened driveway
   - Signage/art installation fronting Alton Parkway that will evoke our mission and core commitments (artistic elements may represent Micah 6:8, interfaith welcome, Just Peace, Creation Justice and Global Mission)
   - Free up existing Church Office space in the Atwood Building for other purposes

Proposed project plan article continued on Page 2
When IUCC is ready, we could undertake Phase 1b. It is important to note that Phase 1b would not necessarily be built immediately after 1a. Based on needs and priorities, IUCC could decide to proceed with Phase II next (a new preschool/education building where Plumer Hall currently stands) and possibly also Phase III (a new fellowship hall/kitchen/youth space where the modular Atwood Building currently stands) before undertaking construction of Phase 1b. With the further addition of more than 1,900 new square feet of space, Phase 1b would include these additions:

- Lobby/reception space
- A fourth meeting room
- 1 additional office
- Additional workspace for staff and volunteers
- Expanded narthex and additional exterior improvements

2. Remodel the current Church Office (in the Atwood Building) into a fourth preschool classroom

At some point in the future, the Atwood Building will be torn down but, at this time, we do not know how long it will take to move ahead with Phase II, which would provide a new preschool building. In the meantime, we need to continue our commitment to provide safe and functional spaces for children and staff. A fourth classroom gives the Early Childhood Center (ECC) the opportunity of moving toward our goal of a total enrollment of 60 students more quickly. Studies show a 60-student enrollment improves financial stability. The City of Irvine continues to grow in population size, making higher enrollment goals viable. An additional classroom gives both the ECC and Sunday School programs more space and more options for how ages are grouped.

Remodeling and furnishing costs for the new classroom are estimated at under $50,000 and would be funded jointly (IUCC/ECC) from reserves. Additional enrollment would eventually pay back the amount spent. The ECC staff enthusiastically supports the addition of a classroom, as does the Child Care Committee.

3. Take on approximately $530,000 in new debt and up to $350,000 in a bridge loan

IUCC would take on up to $530,000 of new debt via a 30-year fixed rate loan at an estimated interest rate of 5.5% (or the most advantageous interest available). This would result in annual incremental debt service of approximately $37,600. IUCC’s current annual debt service of $11,000 on our $160,000 Cornerstone loan is managed well. We believe the new combined debt service of approximately [$11,000/ year + $37,600/year] = $48,600/year is also manageable, given the revenue strategies outlined below. In addition, a temporary and short-term bridge loan/revolver of up to $350,000 will be necessary, depending on the project's expenditure timeline, which is shorter than the three-year term for completing campaign commitments. However, we encourage our fellow congregants to pay off their campaign pledges early and generously to help lessen our loan needs. For those who can, completing pledge payments by December 31, 2018 would be gratefully appreciated. Finally, at the appropriate time, we suggest the Administration Board consider a “retire the debt” mini campaign.

4. Utilize a suite of financial strategies to afford the new debt service

To fund the additional annual debt service of approximately $37,600, the congregation can utilize the suite of financial strategies outlined below. Please note that these are preliminary estimates -- final budget amounts are subject to annual approval by both the Administration Board and congregation.

- Increase in the ECC contribution ($15,000/year)
- Zero based budgeting ($5,000-$10,000/year)
- Run intentional budget deficits ($10,000-$15,000/year)
- Fundraisers ($1,500-$3,000)
- Monitor new program costs
- Congregational growth
- Continue to accept Building Fund contributions

For more information, please click to the proposed plan on the IUCC website or contact any BPWG member.

We look forward to seeing you on September 11 as we hold a Special Congregational Meeting to decide – as a congregation – about taking this next step in our building project journey. At the meeting, we will hear from David Pfeifer, Principal, domusstudio architecture and BPWG members about this proposed path forward, with an opportunity for questions and answers.
This was to have been a sabbatical year for me, but there was too much excitement going on around our plans for the future at IUCC for me to want to leave. Instead, I will be taking my sabbatical in 2017, and more on that further down in this article.

Seeing that we have come to a place where our campus needs to reflect who we are now as a church community, your leadership has examined each step of the way forward with great diligence and reported back to the congregation at every appropriate place on the way. You in turn, responded with much affirmation, leading on to architectural renderings, a CUP, a Capital Campaign, and onwards to the congregational meeting this September 11, where we will make an important decision on what we have been talking about for a long time.

Leave for a sabbatical? I could not do that with all of this positive energy going on. Anne Rosse has been taking a strong lead with wise minds to guide us forward, and you can feel the thorough depth and breadth of knowledge in her opening article in this newsletter. I also encourage you to read our Moderator’s article in this issue. In it, Renae lays out where we were after the building of the sanctuary building to where we are now, including how IUCC stepped out in faith and with financial responsibility.

So, instead, Carl and I made alternative plans for a vacation in late August, and took a trip through Seattle (where we met up with the Emery’s and their niece for a delightful dinner on a working farm!) and up through Victoria, Vancouver, Jasper, Lake Louise and Banff. I think we all need reminders from time to time of the sheer beauty of the natural world that we have been given to care for, and it is so evident in each of the places we visited in the Pacific Northwest and the Canadian Rockies. Visiting glaciers along the way, it was also apparent that we are at a tipping point (if not past it) in the warming of the atmosphere, as each guide pointed out where the glaciers had been only five or ten years ago. This July was the hottest month ever recorded.

Near the end of our trip, Renae Boyum texted me, “Check your e-mail—Good News!”

The Lilly Endowment funds many different non-profits, individuals and institutions. Through its Clergy Renewal Program alone, it can give away as much as 7.5 million dollars per year. I checked on the statistics for the last few years, and it looks like there are about 140 recipients per year.

Last year, Dawn Price offered to take on the writing of the grant “with me” (which I place in quotation marks because she did most of the work). Mark Allen supplied the financial pieces. Last week came the news that we got the grant. Thank you Dawn! Thank you Mark! Thank you all who participated.

This generous grant is given to clergy to have during their sabbaticals in order to “do what makes your heart sing,” as Dawn remarked. A colleague of mine wanted to explore what being a pastor literally meant, and so she went to New Zealand to be a shepherd. Another friend took her family to Tuscany to learn rural Italian cooking, because she felt part of her role at her church was to provide hospitality and she loved to cook for people.

Carl and I will spend some time over three months next July-August-September attending theatre festivals—the Shaw, the Shakespeare (Canada) the Oregon Shakespeare, the Globe and others—as part of my own focus on renewal. IUCC will also receive about 30% of this grant to do something creative—perhaps even focused on theatre—as we discover another use for the flexible new classroom space that we may be building.

The Lilly Endowment, in this specific grant, specifies that the church should benefit through these funds in something that enriches the church as well as the pastor. A year from now, there should be a joy of a summer program going on at IUCC.

See you Sunday, don’t forget the Pastor’s Potluck on the 7th, and that picnic is just around the corner…

Pastor Paul
Comma Groups for 2016-17

Sign-ups for Comma Groups will continue through September; visit www.iucc.org/register! We are planning at least one family-friendly group, with child care available. If you are interested in being a Comma Group leader, please contact Steve Swope (steve@iucc.org).

Comma Groups meet once a month from October through April, at a time and place that's convenient for those involved. An experienced leader helps you stay in touch with each other's lives and talk about the month's topic.

This year IUCC is looking into what it means to be a Creation Justice Church, and our Comma Groups will help us figure that out – by considering the many topics involved in “creation justice” including race and poverty, world crises, agriculture and food production, and consumerism.

Adult Sunday School

The adult Sunday morning classes will be exploring ideas from Walter Brueggemann's Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks. Brueggemann, a retired UCC professor and pastor, has been called “a kind of theological rock star” by NPR's Krista Tippett. In this book Brueggemann discusses Hebrew prophecies related to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, prior to the Babylonian Exile, and raises questions about the applicability of those prophecies to contemporary America. Classes meet at 8:45 and 10:00 am; for those interested, the book is available for e-readers as well as in paperback.

Adult Study Opportunities

A big Thank-You! To Bil Aulenbach for leading August's weekday adult class (mornings and evenings!) on the possibility of a “new Reformation.” Here at IUCC, we are blessed with many knowledgeable adults like Bil (and Ken Wyant each Tuesday) who joyfully share what they're learning!

If you have a subject you think others might be interested in, please let me know. I’d be happy to talk with you about leading a short- or long-term study.

Midweek Salon returns on September 14

The next Midweek Salon will feature IUCC member and UCI professor Scott Bollens.

Scott recently spent several months in the troubled cities of Jerusalem and Belfast, interviewing residents and photo-documenting the conflicts there. Scott will share his experiences and pictures and talk about how reality and politics intersect. You won’t want to miss it – join us at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 14!

Please note that Dr. Lorraine Fox will be our Midweek Salon speaker on October 19.

Our second Faith & Works Conference will take place September 23-24 (Friday & Saturday). Keynote speaker Justin Lee founded the Gay Christian Network (www.gaychristian.net) and has spoken nationally. He wrote Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate to tell his own story of growing up Southern Baptist, coming out, and working with others who are gay and Christian. He will speak on Friday evening and Saturday morning.

Following Justin Lee’s second keynote address on Saturday morning, a panel of IUCC members and friends will discuss current and continuing issues for LGBTQ persons and families.

This year we have the privilege of screening a new documentary film, Take Me Away, the story of country singer Chely Wright’s coming out and its aftermath. We are also planning an AIDS Quilt exhibit for Saturday.

Other Events

The Jesus Seminar on the Road comes to Redlands UCC on September 16-17, with “The Secular Gospel of Jesus.” You can find more information and register at www.westarinsti-tute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/redlands-2016/.
Friday & Saturday, September 23-24
Our keynote speaker is Justin Lee, author of *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate* and director of the Gay Christian Network (speaking Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.)

Following Justin Lee’s second keynote address on Saturday morning, a panel of IUCC members and friends will discuss current and continuing issues for LGBTQ persons and families.

Saturday at 1:15 p.m.
Join us for the regional premiere of singer Chely Wright’s dramatic coming-out story!

Register online at [www.iucc.org/register](http://www.iucc.org/register)
More information at (949) 733-0220

4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA 92604
A Message from Pastor Sarah
by Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips

Dear Friends,

I’m so excited to be moving into the role of “intern” at IUCC this month. As I enter my third year of seminary, I will have the chance to develop some new skills and step into new roles at the church. Some of the things I am most excited about are: pastoral care (hospital visits, etc.), Admin Board meetings (I promise, I actually am excited for another monthly meeting!) and growing in my preaching. IUCC is such a wonderful place to grow and learn, and I am thankful to be doing my internship here while staying on staff!

Now on to my favorite subject: The Ministry for Young People! It’s been a great summer for the MYP ... We had quite a few kids at summer camp at Pilgrim Pines, we had a very successful Vacation Bible School, and the youth group and young adult group stayed active! As we look toward the future, I want to highlight some upcoming things:

- Since our youth leader, Ashley, received a Fulbright Scholarship in the Czech Republic, we will be looking to rehire the position in the next month or so. This is a critical position for our young people and I am dedicated to finding the perfect person for the job!
- We are brainstorming about a winter or spring service/mission trip. It may be local or national, but probably not international just yet. We do have aspirations for an international service/mission trip in the next couple years.
- All-Church Camp is October 7th-9th at Pilgrim Pines, and ALL are welcome! If you can’t make it up for the whole weekend, please join us for Apple Pie Day which is on October 8th! Please see me for more information!

As always, it is wonderful doing ministry with you! See you in church!

Pastor Sarah
I was sitting in our “favorite” pew on Sunday, August 21, and opened my hymnal to the sermon hymn, #391, *In the Midst of New Dimensions*. As we sang each of the four verses and the refrain, I thought about how the title of the hymn and the refrain really encapsulate where IUCC is right now.

*God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,*
*We your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.*

On Sunday, September 11, a special congregational meeting will be held after 2nd service in the sanctuary. There is one key item on the agenda: discussion of and voting on recommendations from the Building Project Working Group and Administration Board for moving forward with Phase 1 of the IUCC Master Plan. As a congregation, we will gather together to decide whether or not we will embark on this journey of building a place to house our dreams, hopes, and programs for the future.

It will be a journey of faith. But it will not be the first time this congregation has decided to move forward in faith when it comes to our finances. Some examples from our past include these:

In 1999, IUCC had a total indebtedness of over **$775,000** with an annual debt service of **$108,000** on the horizon. A committee was formed to draw up a business plan to address this. In June, 2000, the congregation voted to approve a plan which incorporated refinancing loans, implementation of a capital giving campaign (FREE TO SOAR), and use of reserves. By 2002, our total indebtedness was **$375,000** which made for a much more manageable debt service.

In 2004, University Synagogue moved to their own facility. They had been our tenants since 1997, and their leaving resulted in a loss of **$70,000** (for rent, shared utilities and janitorial expenses) to our income. Also, in 2004 our Pastor of 20 years, the Reverend Fred Plumer, retired. What did we do with this significant loss of income looming just as our pastoral leader was stepping away? The leadership knew we would have to monitor spending, and also made a conscious decision that the congregation would have deficit budgets for up to three years. (It was only two.) We also knew that the reserves were adequate, but that this would have to be short-term solution. Some members also stepped forward with additional gifts.

Pastor Paul arrived in 2006. The stewardship campaign for the 2007 budget resulted in the largest stewardship total ever. We increased our pledges by over **$70,000**. Stewardship campaign totals continued to increase over the next few years. In 2009, IUCC voted to call an Associate Pastor, the Reverend Elizabeth Griswold. In order to pay for this increased expense, the Stewardship Committee asked congregation members to “Step Up” their pledges and they did by over **$50,000**.

So today in 2016 we are being asked, once again, to step forward in faith. Note that today our mortgage is about **$160,000** (considerably less than it was 20 years ago) and that our total reserves are over **$500,000** (considerably more than they were over 15 years ago). I strongly believe that as the refrain from the hymn, *In the Midst of New Dimensions* says

*God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,*
*We your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.*

I hope to see you at the meeting and I hope you will join me on this new journey of faith!

In faith and community,

*Renae*
ORANGE COUNTY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Presents to citizens and professionals

Bringing Clean Energy to Orange County
A conversation with Nicole Capretz,
author of San Diego’s ambitious plan

Saturday Event
September 10, 2016
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA 92620
FREE ADMISSION
Light refreshments outside
Co-sponsor: IUCC’s Greenfaith Committee.

Thursday Event
September 15, 2016
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Irvine Civic Center
1 Civic Center Plaza, Irvine, CA 92606
(Corner of Alton Pkwy and Harvard)
FREE ADMISSION
Light refreshments outside

Event Description
The City of San Diego adopted a landmark Climate Action Plan (CAP) at the end of 2015 that will cut their carbon emissions in half and bring 100 percent renewable electricity to the city by 2035. This makes San Diego the largest city in the United States with this legally binding commitment.

Nicole Capretz of Climate Action Campaign, a key architect of San Diego’s plan, comes to Irvine to present important information on:
- California mandates for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction
- Content of San Diego’s CAP
- Roadmap to success

This event will provide valuable lessons as our Orange County cities move to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with State goals.

RSVP appreciated: http://occlimateaction.org

Orange County for Climate Action (OCCA) is an alliance of OC organizations to address the problems of climate change and how it affects individuals, organizations, and our community.

Member organizations: Living Ubuntu, United Nations Association-Orange County Chapter, Orange County Interfaith Coalition for the Environment, and The Grain Project
News & Events

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday * Sept. 11 * After 2nd Service

On Sept. 11, IUCC will hold a Special Congregational Meeting to decide how we want to move forward with the building project. Please plan to attend and vote on the proposed plan for financing and building new space on our aging campus.

PASTOR’S POTLUCK
Wednesday * Sept. 7 * 6:00 p.m. * Childcare Patio

The BBQ will be hot and ready to grill! Bring your BBQ item along with a potluck side dish to share. Everyone is asked to bring their own picnic and tableware. Soft drinks and condiments will be provided.

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP
Wednesday * Sept. 7 * 7:00 p.m.  Come Walk the Walk!

Everyone is invited to Plumer Hall after the Pastors’ Potluck on September 7 at 7:00 p.m. to enjoy coffee and dessert and meet the Rev. Joseph Shore-Goss, pastor of The UCC in the Valley, our sister church in North Hollywood.

Rev. Shore-Goss is bringing the labyrinth (familiar to some from the Women’s Retreat) and will talk about the labyrinth and its history as a sacred practice. After a short presentation, we all will have an opportunity to “walk the walk,” following the steps laid out centuries ago. The program, hosted by the Women’s Fellowship as part of its series on Sacred Practices, is suitable for all ages and stages. We urge everyone to participate.

ALL CHURCH PICNIC
Sunday * Sept. 18 * After 2nd service * Mason Park

The Fellowship Committee is hard at work planning an exciting day with food and games. We provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and paper goods. You sign up to bring a dessert or side dish to share! Sign up on the patio.

SAVE THE DATE! CROP WALK
Saturday * October 15, 2016

The 28th Annual Newport/Irvine/Mesa CROP Interfaith Hunger Walk will start at Our Lady Queen of Angels School, across from Corona del Mar High School. The Walk goes 7k (4.2 miles) around the beautiful Newport Beach Back Bay. A shorter 4k (2.4 miles) walk will also be available. Last year’s CROP Walk team is pictured above.

9/16 Andrew Adkins 9/19 Vivian Johnson
9/29 Lauren Adkins 9/7 David Karsten
9/26 Susan Allen 9/23 Lizabeth Kerr
9/6 Cristina Arce-Jones 9/14 Susie Lang
9/17 Kiana Austin 9/16 Laura Long
9/17 Maya Austin 9/14 JoAnne Mansell
9/17 Scott Bollens 9/29 Iris Mecartney
9/16 Lavinia Cooper 9/12 Aidan Mitchell
9/14 Alyssa Cornett 9/11 Jeff Oleson
9/14 Judy Curry 9/20 Sofia Portillo
9/26 Ruby Fulton 9/9 Suellen Rowe
9/8 Peggy Goetz 9/20 Stephanie Sanders
9/16 Ashley Herndon 9/3 Patricia Stalcup
9/20 George Johnson 9/10 Paul Thornton
September is a time of change. Students go back to school, Autumn is right around the corner bringing changing leaves and cooler temperatures (eventually), and the IUCC Chancel Choir is back together after our short Summer hiatus. It’s an exciting time for me, because I miss singing in the choir while we are off. Singing in a choir brings so much joy and I want to share why that is the case.

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

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

If you have read any of my articles, I suspect you know where I’m going with this! It’s not too late for you to come and join us in the Chancel Choir. We have an amazing time making music together. We unite our voices and our hearts in a common goal to create beautiful music to uplift the congregation on Sunday mornings. We also provide music for special services and two concerts every year. We rehearse in the sanctuary Thursdays from 7 p.m.- 9 p.m. Our first rehearsal is Thursday September 8th. We arrive on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. to sing both services. We would love to have you join our happy choir family!
Troop 602 Citizenship Breakfast
at IUCC’s Plumer Hall

Troop 602 will be hosting their inaugural Citizenship Breakfast on Saturday, October 15, 2016 from 8:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The purpose of the Citizenship Breakfast is to stress the importance of exercising our Constitutional right to vote and to encourage all people, especially our youth, to be active participants in civic matters that affect our community and nation. The cost of the breakfast is $7.00 which will include pancakes, sausage, and juice. All proceeds from the breakfast will help the Scouts of Troop 602 purchase new equipment for camping and pay for their upcoming overnight camp outs. In addition to the breakfast, Troop 602 has invited all of the candidates running for Irvine City Council and Mayor to participate in this breakfast. The candidates will be there to answer questions and provide information to the community about their campaigns. To learn more, you can contact me at irvineeaglescout1987@gmail.com or 949-689-8854. (Disclaimer: Since the Boy Scouts of America is a non-partisan organization, Troop 602 does not endorse any candidate for political office. However, we do strongly encourage the members of our community to exercise their Constitutional right to vote as part of their civic duty. Per the longstanding BSA policy, the participating candidates will not be giving speeches or engaging in campaign fundraising at this event.)

~ Matt Mirmak

Boy Scouts request donations for flood relief

Wiatava Lodge, the Orange County Council’s Order of the Arrow (OA) lodge, is putting together hygiene kits to send to Louisiana to aid in the flood relief efforts lead by the Southern Region Boy Scouts of America and the Order of the Arrow Relief Corps. These hygiene kits will fill a great need in Louisiana as people recover from devastating flooding. Wiatava Lodge is asking for donations of the following items:

- small soap bars or body wash
- travel size toothpaste tubes
- toothbrushes
- floss
- small wash clothes (no towels)
- small bottles of shampoo
- combs
- disposable razors
- toilet paper
- small packages of wipes

If you would like to donate any items, please drop off your items at the William Lyon Center for Scouting at 1211 E Dyer Rd in Santa Ana or you can drop them off at Plumer Hall on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m. when Troop 602 has their weekly meetings. The donated items will be accepted up until September 8th. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact Wiatava Lodge chief Manue Lopez at chief@wiatava.org or Matt Mirmak at troop602@gmail.com.

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is a service organization and the national honor society of the Boy Scouts of America. Members are elected from within their units and recognized as those who best live the ideals of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service. Founded in 1915, the OA honors Scouts that best exemplify the values of the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. To become eligible for election to the OA, a Scout must have achieved the First Class rank and have completed a minimum of 10 nights of camping (5 of those nights must be at a long term resident camp).

~ Matt Mirmak
At every worship service the congregation is reminded that we are Progressive Christians. According to The Center for Progressive Christianity (whose Executive Director is the Rev. Fred Plumer, Pastor Emeritus at IUCC), there are “Eight Points” that define Progressive Christianity which can be found at the end of this article.

I got involved in the Progressive Christian (“PC”) movement when I became an Associate of Westar Institute in the late 1980s. The Jesus Seminar is an outgrowth of this institute which besides the historical Jesus has studied the history of God, the early church, St. Paul, and Gnosticism as well as many other subjects concerning Christianity. The most important aspect of this group of over 200 scholars (called Fellows) is that they are not directly involved with any denomination. They simply want to get to the heart of the subject from a scholar’s viewpoint.

My approach to Christianity and my own theology is centered around the findings of these scholars as well as other influential people such as Bishop Spong, Hans Kung, Amy Jill Levine and Bart Erdman. There are some folks who would call me an atheist, others a heretic, and still others would suggest that I might be more comfortable in the Unitarian Universalist church. My only retort is: You can call me whatever, but I know that the historical Jesus is my “Christ.” I follow his teachings on a daily basis and believe in a creative force in the universe that I call Creation. What am I?

My newest book, “Cramming for the Finals,” where I share my faith journey and how I arrived there, is due out sometime before Christmas.

I am deeply appreciative to IUCC and to Pastor Paul for allowing me be a member and share my theology. There are many Christian churches that would not be so welcoming.

**FIRST REPORT, IUCC 21ST CENTURY REFORMATION THESSES**

About 25 folks met for five Wednesdays in August 2016 to discuss what is involved in PC under the banner of “Charting the 21st Century Reformation.” Historians suggest that every 500 years the church seems to go through a reforming process which is always painful. The basis of our class was a series published by Bishop John Spong in his weekly newsletter. Every member of the class was given a copy of each of those newsletters dating back to December 5, 2015.

As you might imagine our sessions were interesting and provocative.

A copy of the Theses we developed through August 17 is attached at the end of this article, but we need to include a disclaimer here. These ideas are simply the consensus of a majority of those who attended. They have nothing official about them because one of the things IUCC does very well is present new ideas and allow each person to work out their own theology. Every Sunday morning, we hear these words: “IUCC accepts each and every person no matter where they are on their life's journey.” This class honored these words and didn't want anyone to think that anything we said has any power over IUCC. They are simply the thoughts of some of the members of this church family who wanted to be challenged by some different thinking.

**CHARTING THE 21ST CENTURY REFORMATION AT IUCC**

**THE THESSES:**

1. Post the “Eight Points of Progressive Christianity” on all bulletin boards and remind our church family of who we are in all newsletters and church bulletins.
2. Stress and continue to “Welcome everyone, no matter where they are on their life’s journey.”
3. Offer children, youth and adult educational opportunities which continue to promote Progressive Christianity.
4. Stay vigilant in ascertaining that our prayers, hymns and music promote Progressive Christianity.
5. Promote the God of the Bible and of our traditions to be THE GOD of the entire Universe, not just earth.
6. Admit that we cannot define this GOD primarily because we cannot define the vastness of the universe. Here are some ideas of what to call the “promoted” god: THE GOD of the Universe or “Creation” or “The Ground of All Being” or “The Higher Power.”
7. The Bible was written by men who wished to express their understanding of how God functioned in their society. Almost all the authors of the different books of the Bible were Jewish, so one should not read these books literally, but rather read them through Jewish “eyes.”
8. The nativity stories were not written to tell us how Jesus was actually born but were written 55 to 70 years after...
Jesus died to stress the idea that whenever and wherever his birth, it was/is a very special birth, even almost 2,000 years after he died.

9. The Resurrection: Neither Paul, Mark (original version which stops at 16:8) nor 18 of the other new-found gospels includes a resurrection story. Matthew, Luke/Acts and John all tell different resurrection stories. They were never told as stories that actually happened but are “religious history” told to share a great metaphor: Jesus gives us the tools to change a negative experience into a positive one.

10. When one reads the Bible through Jewish eyes, not only does it make more sense but when one puts the dogma, doctrine and traditions of the past 2,000 years into the annals of “church history,” one can then meet the real Jesus and his powerful eternal truths...love (agape) self, neighbor and Creation in order to live life to the fullest.

There will be more THESES in next month’s newsletter in the PC article. If you have any comments or questions about Progressive Christianity or these THESES please feel free to contact me at (949) 240-2933 or bilaulenbach@yahoo.com.

PEACE LOVE JOY HOPE

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By calling ourselves Progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who...

1. Believe that following the path and the teachings of Jesus one can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of the many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to: * Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics, * Believers and agnostics, * Woman and men, * Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities, * Those of all classes and abilities;
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion and selfless love.
Telling the truth to another person, about that person, takes caring, courage, and commitment to their personal growth. The process by which people learn how others experience them is called “feedback.” Feedback is rarely welcomed, even when it is asked for, especially if the feedback someone gets is surprising in that it doesn’t match what they think is true about themselves.

When someone has an accurate awareness of who and how they are they don’t need “feedback,” but rather affirmation. Feedback is given when we feel a need to correct what someone thinks is true about themselves. We almost instinctively know that hearing that we see someone differently than they see themselves is stressful, so most people avoid the conversation. As we’ve discussed earlier, it is easier to talk to someone else about another person than it is to talk directly and honestly to them. But no one grows in self-awareness when information about them is given to another person. So, even though such conversations are usually awkward, direct feedback is the only way to give someone information that will help them measure their own “self-concept” against what others think is true about them.

For the next few columns we will talk about what we’ll call “conditions” for effective feedback: what needs to be true in a conversation that has the potential to give someone the information they need to make an adjustment to their self-concept so that they perceive themselves more accurately. These conditions apply to people of all ages. However, it is easier and more helpful to provide feedback to children since they will be more “malleable” in their ability to adjust their self-perceptions. Many adults are in need of feedback also, but the longer one persists in holding a certain view of themselves, the more difficult it is to take another look.

**CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK**

1. **TRUST IS NECESSARY.** This is the most important ingredient in a feedback interaction, for anyone at any age. It is very unnerving to hear information about yourself that you are either unaware of or disagree with. Almost everyone becomes anxious in this situation, and trust between the person giving the feedback and the person receiving the feedback will help both parties deal with the discomfort.

Help that is not perceived as help is not help. When children (or anyone) hear something about their behavior that doesn’t “fit” with their perception of themselves, it is easy for them to respond emotionally by feeling “picked on” or criticized. As in any other relationship, children need to believe that those giving feedback are not trying to hurt them, even if they feel hurt. In other words, they need to trust the motives of the person causing the discomfort, whether it’s a parent, teacher, coach, or friend. People receiving feedback need to know that those giving feedback have their interests in mind, and not just their own.

The element of trust is one reason that feedback is often so painful: the most effective feedback comes from those we believe care about us, and it’s hard to know that they see us differently than we see ourselves. At the same time, because of the trust, the person getting feedback is most likely to benefit. Children who hear feedback from their parents need to believe that the parent wants the child to be happy and well adjusted, not that the parent wants to look or feel like a good parent. Friends need to believe that their friend is willing to risk hard feelings because they value the relationship and want to help the other understand why others respond to them as they do. It is important that the person giving feedback is believed, and this is most likely to be true in the context of a loving, kind relationship.

Remember, the purpose of feedback is to help someone know themselves well, which will enable them to understand why others respond to them as they do. In the end, self-knowledge allows us to keep relationships running more smoothly because we understand how our behavior impacts other people, and thus we can either explain our behavior, or adjust our behavior. We have seven more “conditions” to explore, but this (trust) is the underpinning for the success of a successful feedback interaction.