In August, our junior and senior high youth and youth ministry leaders drove to Utah for a week of service at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. On August 24, they spoke to the congregation about their experiences. Ken Wyant echoed the thoughts of many of us when he posted this message on Facebook: “[The church service] included young people addressing the congregation confidently and passionately about their own concerns; and they were convincing us to adopt those concerns for ourselves. Well done, youth. Well done, youth ministry leaders. Well done, adult members. Well done, IUCC!”

Photos courtesy of Sarah Fiske-Phillips
Normally, summer slows me down a little—I take time to head off to the cabin and read and relax, or wander the gardens at the Huntington. This wasn’t one of those summers.

Sometime last year, our youth director described a trip she wanted to take with the kids. Annie told me we would be going to rural Utah in August with a lot of people where we would live in a three-bedroom house and do volunteer work at Best Friends Animal Society, the largest no-kill shelter in the country.

Something told me to just say, “Yes.” I am so glad I did. It was a terrific experience from the minute I got there. With me were eight youth, our three-member MYP team, and one of our dads, Eric Burley, who turned out to be a great chef, chauffer, photographer and chaperone.

Annie started us off on the experience by getting us all to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, where we could root ourselves in just how spectacularly awe-inspiring our earth is, how vast are its resources and how small we are in comparison.

The next morning, we began a week of volunteer service projects at the shelter, which is enormous and covers many acres. I learned that church groups regularly come and assist as volunteers.

We learned the reasons why so many animals end up here homeless and afraid, and our youth asked questions about puppy mills, bird breeding, dog-fighting and the various special-needs cats. We also weeded around the dog enclosures and in the horse fields. We were allowed to bring home a pit-bull mix named Roxanne for an overnight and saw close-up how animals need love and affection just as do humans.

At night, we talked about what we did and what we saw, and in some instances the conversation sprang from a theological reflection. On the second night, I used the creation story from Genesis to open up conversation.

What does it mean in this creation story, when God encourages humankind to subdue the earth? What does it mean to have “dominion,” to rule over everything? Is it about experiencing and exercising your power as the leader of the food chain, or are we seeing ourselves becoming, as Jesus modeled, more servant than master as we recognize our need to be caregivers to our earth and all that is on it? Have we progressed in our thinking and understanding of the natural world and our God-given responsibility to it, to know that it is a gift for us to nurture and pass on to the seventh-generation, rather than to take and lay waste to for our immediate selfish needs?

The sun outside our windows set on towering red rocks in the distance as our next generation, thoughtful and engaged, raised questions and made observations; one after another (in the kind of manner that causes one to have hope simply by participating in such liminal teaching moments) that by providing such experiences for learning and reflection, a new generation will lead better than their elders.

At the end of the week, we finished our day at Zion National Park gazing in wonder at the natural beauty of this world over which we have been given stewardship.

We have a strong team in our Ministry for Young People, and I want to thank you for supporting your church in the desire to keep programs for kids, youth, young adults and families in the forefront of what we do. We want to share a vision of peace, shalom and stewardship for Creation in walking the way we believe Jesus asked us to walk, with the young people in this community. They will be leading us, and from what you will now hear, I suspect you might gather, as I have, that we have an embarrassment of riches here.

And so, we begin a new church year with a strong set of summer programs for youth behind us, with many more to come. We begin a new year together with growing technology in our sanctuary and more opportunities for education, worship and growth.

I was so touched by the article in this issue by our moderator, Anne. First, it is wonderful writing, but more than that, it reminds me of how important it is to really reach up and out to be the community we need to be so that others can
experience the feeling of finding a spiritual home when they need one most.

In fact, I can count myself as one of those people. I wonder if you can imagine how wonderfully upside down my life feels right now as I contemplate the fact that Carl and I will be able to become legally wed among so many church friends and family this week. It wasn't that long ago that we could be allowed in a church together only if we described our friendship as something other than what it is; if we agreed to lie in order to come into a place that claimed to value truth. Like Anne, we share a profound sense of gratitude, and ours is for this special day before us.

My friend and preaching mentor, Tom Long, wrote a wonderful commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, where he says, “When the world looks at the church, it should see not simply another social organization trying to raise money and keep its membership up; it should see a living embodiment of the kingdom of heaven, a community of faith where leaders serve instead of swagger, where the weak are nourished instead of cast aside, where people who lose their way are not forgotten but sought and restored, where people cultivate mercy and forgiveness as if they were the rare flowers of heaven.”

Quite simply, it is “church” at its best, and it asks a lot of us. But, it is in the trying that counts. Welcome home.

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Matthew Redrich has completed his internship with us over the course of a year. He has one preaching date to complete later this fall, but otherwise he is now ready to step down as our intern and be supported as a Member in Discernment as he goes through the process that leads up to ordination, and we will continue to be the Redrich’s home church.

The many gifts that he and Chris have brought us over this past year are evident in a new website, their leading efforts in our worship technology, and the life they have brought to our young adult ministry.

Mathew will be honored in worship on September 7. Well done, Matthew!

~ Pastor Paul

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**Adult Education**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS:**

**THE GROWING INEQUALITY IN AMERICA**

2 SUNDAYS: SEPT. 7 & 14
8:45 a.m. & 10 a.m.

Greg Duncan, an education professor at UCI, will present a two-part series on the growing inequality in America, its implications for the life chances of children growing up in disadvantaged families and how policies might address the problem. These classes will meet in Plumer Hall on September 7 & 14. You may attend either the 8:45 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. session.

Dr. Duncan, a leading scholar in the field of early childhood education and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, was awarded the 2013 Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize for his groundbreaking work on the lasting effects of poverty on child development. It was bestowed by the Zurich-based Jacobs Foundation.

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**BIBLE CLASS**

TUESDAYS * 4:00 p.m.

We are almost finished with our study of the Book of Acts. Join us to learn what we will study next!
What does Pride mean to you?

OC Pride means different things to different people. We asked folks to tell us what Pride meant to them - in just one word - and write it in chalk on our “frame.”

The frame idea was a huge hit, and here are just a few of the photos we took.

Thank You!

Many thanks to Chris & Matthew Redrich - who organized, set up, and staffed IUCC’s booth at Orange County Pride - and to Larry Gates, Felicity Figueroa, and Tricia & Jim Aynes, who also helped staff the booth.

It was a great opportunity to reach out to the LGBT community with our church’s message of love and inclusion!
I will always remember that clear October morning as one of those life-defining moments. As part of my academic interest in post-Holocaust literature, I was systematically visiting each and every concentration camp. Standing in Theresienstadt, surrounded by the joyful art of innocent children who had died there, I had a complete crisis of faith. Gone. Completely. In an instant. Yes, I've studied global genocides but this one was more personal, more immediate for me. As a German-speaker, I could read Mengele's handwritten notes, could experience the incredible language of Rainer Maria Rilke and Goethe being used to clinically describe mass executions and torture.

At that point in my life, being a person of faith was fundamental to my self-definition. My faith fed my soul and framed how I lived my life, one based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. To have it fall away so completely and irrevocably was life-changing, jarring in its impact, leaving a huge void. Shortly after this, I married a man of a completely different faith and, when our daughter came along, we raised her without religion, so complete was my rejection of all faith traditions.

Many years passed like this, Sundays now devoted to youth sports, the inevitable “busy-ness” of life doing much to mask the emptiness, the loss of my faith. The passing of my father, followed soon after by the passing of one, then the other of his parents, made it difficult to mask the emptiness – and, yet, I was reluctant to return to church. I didn't pray; I didn't believe. I watched how Christians treat others in the name of their religion and felt reinforced in the path I'd chosen.

But, sitting on the sidelines, not trying to make things better, is not really my nature. So, before long, I found myself starting to pray again. I would sneak into churches to sit and reflect, finding glorious and much-needed peace at those times. I didn't talk to anyone about what was going on internally – I decided that if I was to have a faith, it would be exactly that – mine. That I would take each piece of it, hold it up to the light and examine it. I vowed that any faith would not be based on the God of my childhood – an all-powerful sovereign - but, nevertheless, I returned to the church of my childhood, hoping that I would find comfort in the familiar. I didn’t. Instead, I found judgment and prohibitions on who I can love and how I can worship. I walked away again.

Life would have been so much easier if I had had a list of reasons to go to church like the one compiled by Rev. Anne Russ (please see the article, “Ten Reasons Why You Should be Going to Church” on next page). It would have reminded me of a couple of really important messages, namely, (1) not all churches are anti-something; most are for people, for acceptance and for hospitality – they just don't get the good press; and (2) come to church to get to know Jesus, even if those of us already in church often do a lousy job of following him. Amen.

I am so grateful for the day I walked into IUCC, feeling like I would never be part of a faith community again. I was wrong. Here, I have found a community – a place to worship, to study, to have doubts, to laugh, to share, to serve and to grow. A place that believes in the separation of church and hate.

I found sanctuary at IUCC and it is profoundly important to me to be able to offer it to others. As a church, we are poised to take the next step on our journey. We no longer need to be “that” church, an outlier in what we believe. Many churches and faith traditions are joining us in supporting marriage equality. But, there are plenty of other Social Justice issues that need our time and attention. Our community needs us – needs us to be visible, active and hospitable.

Being evangelistic is not something that IUCC is entirely comfortable with. But, each of us has a story to share – how we became part of the IUCC family. And, the time for us to share those stories is now. It is time to even more intentionally throw open our doors and invite in our neighbors. To have them be part of IUCC’s future – a future of making a difference in people’s lives and serving our community.

So, what are your suggestions for things we can be doing as a church and as individuals to bring in new members? Please share your ideas with me. You can catch me on the patio, pull me aside at one of our terrific events, send me an email or give me a call. I look forward to hearing from you!
When Rev. Libby Tigner (Associate Conference Minister for Church Relations, UCC Southern California Nevada Conference) spoke at IUCC in July, she shared a compelling list of reasons for going to church. That list, reprinted below, was compiled by Rev. Ann Russ, First Presbyterian Argenta Church, North Little Rock, AR (argentapres.org).

Perhaps there are friends or relatives in your life who would respond to a list like this – you could share it with them and bring them to IUCC one Sunday. We’d be glad to welcome them!

10. Coming to church doesn't mean you have no doubts about God or faith or religion. It means you have a place you can share with people who have their own doubts.

9. Bad stuff is going to happen in your life. It just is. A church community cannot be everything to everyone in times of crisis, but when the bottom falls out of your world, it's great to have a community to lift you back up.

8. Bad stuff is going to happen in your life, part two. The time to build a relationship with God is not when life turns ugly and you've run out of all other options. Attending worship regularly helps build a relationship with God and others that will give you a solid foundation when the winds blow and the storms come.

7. Not all churches are anti-something. Most of us are for people, for acceptance, for hospitality. Really, we're out there. We just don't get the good press.

6. Any church worth its salt has really good food on a regular basis.

5. Churches offer paint-by-number opportunities to serve. Many people would like to help the poor, the hungry and the homeless, but they don't know how to get involved, how to make the time to be involved, or what they can do to really make a difference. Churches offer you ways to plug in to help those who need it most.

4. You've got a gift. Probably two or ten of them. Becoming involved in the ministry of a church will help you discover and use gifts you never even knew you had.

3. Not all churches are after your money. Good churches want you have a healthy relationship with money. Sure, churches need to pay the electric bill and the pastor and the youth director, but money and the church is more about you than it is about the church. It's about your own relationship with money. World events have proven that it's much better to put faith in God than in a bank account. Church can help you with that.

2. Taking a break from our hectic lives to come to church is accepting the gift of Sabbath. Wayne Muller says “(Sabbath) dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.” We don't take Sabbath and come to worship because we have time and have finished up everything that needs to be done. We take Sabbath because it is time to stop, and we are designed to stop, rest and reflect. Those don't are destined to crash and burn.

1. Jesus is really cool. Even if you don't know if you can believe in the whole Son-of-God thing, even if you refer to the resurrection as the Zombie Jesus event and even though those of us already in church often do a lousy job of following him, come to church to get to know Jesus. The more you get to know him, the more you'll understand why people call his way, “The Way.”
The Dream is Now

We need to fix America’s broken immigration system and give undocumented youth and their families the chance to earn their citizenship.

Join us in viewing this important documentary film on immigration

Sept. 21 @ 11:30am
Tapestry Unitarian Universalist Congregation
23436 Madero,
Mission Viejo 92691

Sept. 28 @ 12:30pm
Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Pkwy.,
Irvine 92604

Join OCCCO (Orange County Congregation Community Organization), Tapestry Unitarian Universalist Congregation & Irvine United Congregational Church as we explore the realities of undocumented students in the US today. Free admission. Refreshments will be served.

For more information: 714-612-5028

Brought to you by:

OCCCOC
IUCOC
Tapestry
In a jointly sponsored event on August 22, Irvine United Congregational Church and University Synagogue welcomed Chapman University President James Doti, who addressed the topic of “Life Lessons for Leadership.” Dr. Doti spoke movingly about the importance of vision in moving from a current place to a desired place. He emphasized that effective leaders recognize the driving forces that propel their vision forward even as they are mindful of the restraining forces that stand in the way.

“Your vision must be so passionate that you’ll be able to fight restraining forces,” he said. “To fight the fight, you need vision and passion to succeed. Most leaders fail because they don’t have a clear vision. Articulate where you want to go. It’s all about people. Effective change requires focus and persuasion.”

When asked by the Rev. Paul Tellström of IUC the question of how to set a vision and find consensus, Dr. Doti responded “Change can’t happen in a vacuum. It’s individuals, passion, and tenacity – using your powers of persuasion in a compelling enough way to make others a part of it. Work and work and try to get them inspired. Tell them why it’s worth it. Transform them. Present an exciting, compelling vision – and people will join in.”

When asked by Rabbi Rachlis of University Synagogue how to move people into a team – to give them confidence in themselves and help them to achieve goals, Dr. Doti responded, “Everybody has a comparative advantage. Every person has something they can do better than anyone else. An effective leader finds that talent and plays to their strengths. He gives them something to succeed at.”

Throughout his life, Dr. Doti has relied on the wisdom of mentors to guide his way. Paul Depp told him, “Just remember, Jim, treat everyone with respect and dignity. If you do that, you’ll do just fine.” George Argyros offered, “In your heart of hearts, you know what to do – just do it.” Barry Diller had just one word of advice to follow even when you fail: “Next!”

During the earlier Shabbat Alive service, Rabbi Rachlis invited everyone with ties to Chapman University to come forward and light the Shabbat candle, and about a dozen people shared positive stories about what Chapman had meant to them. Both during the event and afterwards, it was clear that Dr. Doti and Chapman University had played an important role in the lives of many of those present.

Members of the two congregations hold several joint events every year, and we were grateful for the opportunity to mingle in friendship while re-affirming and strengthening our long-standing partnership together.
I don’t know about you, but I get kind of discouraged sometimes. There is so much suffering in the world, and no matter what I do, I feel powerless to make a difference. Sometimes I feel like I’m just spinning my wheels with my volunteer work and getting nowhere. I try so hard, but it barely scratches the surface of what I’d like to accomplish. One step forward, two steps back. Maybe you feel the same. The people I’ve met at IUCC are an uncommonly caring and altruistic bunch, so I suspect the malady is pretty common here.

Quite recently, I was doing a volunteer orientation for a woman who wanted to participate in our visiting immigrants in detention program. I was explaining to her how many detainees were on our wait list hoping for a visitor and how much it bothered me that we didn’t have enough volunteers to help more of them.

She smiled and reminded me of the Starfish Story (shown in center), which I had long ago forgotten. It really felt like God was speaking through her, because the story was exactly what I needed to hear. Then a little later my husband and I went out to lunch. Directly behind him, facing me, was a woman wearing an enormous starfish pendant. I never think about starfish, yet here I was reminded of them twice in the space of a few hours! It’s at times like these that I think God is slapping me alongside the head saying, “Look, dummy, I’m trying to send you a message here!”

For me, the macro message was this: I don’t need to take the weight of the world on my shoulders and feel responsible for fixing everything that’s wrong. In fact, it’s pretty arrogant of me to think I can. I need to chill out and know that it’s okay with God if I stop trying to do it all and just focus on one thing - taking care of one person who needs my help in that moment - and maybe it will inspire others to do the same.

I’d love to inspire you to join the Friends of OC Detainees visitation program. It’s not hard, and it takes just a little bit of time. Visitors have called the experience “transformational.” Your smiling face and friendly attitude can make an enormous difference to the lonely, isolated detainee you visit - and it can change the way you look at the world too.

If your volunteerism takes you in another direction, that’s great! Choose something that inspires you and go for it with all the gusto you can muster. But do it in moderation and don’t obsess about it - I have it on good authority that you don’t have to do it all yourself :). If you can make a difference to one person, that matters a lot. And if you’re passionate enough about the work you’re doing, maybe you CAN sway others to your cause - others who can increase and enhance the good work exponentially. Isn’t it worth a try?

We may not be able to make a difference to all the starfish out there, but we can make a difference to one. And the more people who pitch in and help, the more of a difference we can make. What a journey it will be!

Tricia Aynes
tricia_aynes@yahoo.com
Here are some photos from our wonderful Vacation Bible School on August 4-8. The theme was Mission: Possible, and the program included top secret missions, interactive Bible fun, and snacks. A great time was had by all!

The new Master Plan for the IUCC campus was submitted in late June to the City of Irvine for a Modified Conditional Use Permit, the next step in our process of planning for IUCC’s future and legacy.

We have received initial feedback from the City, indicating that they have classified our project a major modification. We had hoped that they would accept the project as a minor modification, which would have involved a less costly review, but our original budget estimates were based on a major modification determination so we were not unprepared for this result. With our architectural firm, domusstudio, we are responding to the City’s questions and providing additional information as requested. We will continue to be in dialogue with the City as they undertake various studies (i.e., traffic) as part of the review process.

The Master Plan was developed with domusstudio architecture (http://domusstudio.com/), a San Diego-based firm with extensive experience in planning religious and educational facilities. The plan, which encompasses new administrative, fellowship, outdoor, and educational space, has been developed to ensure maximum flexibility – giving us options for phased build-outs, depending on church priorities, needs and growth, along with our financial capabilities.

Regular updates on this project will be provided via the newsletter, website and bulletin so please check back!

Photos courtesy of Sarah Fiske-Phillips
Currently we have a wonderful team of second service ushers, but the number of teams needs to grow in order to accommodate two services as well as special events or holiday services, which also require ushers.

We are especially in need of ushers for the first service that now begins at 9:30. Second service start will remain at its current time of 11 a.m. There will be a sign up sheet on the patio after service where you can indicate your availability and preference for dates and times. Generally, each team of ushers serves for one or two months, but the schedule is flexible. You can also contact new usher coordinator Laura Palen at laura.g.palen@gmail.com to ask questions and/or to volunteer. Thanks!

**September Birthdays**

Susan Allen  
Cristina Arce-Jones  
Kiana Austin  
Maya Austin  
Scott Bollens  
Lavinia Cooper  
Alyssa Cornett  
Judy Curry  
Ruby Fulton  
Peggy Goetz  
George Johnson  
Kolby Johnson  
Vivian Johnson  

David Karsten  
Lizabeth Kerr  
Susie Lang  
Laura Long  
JoAnne Mansell  
Iris Mecartney  
Jeff Oleson  
Sofia Portillo  
Suellen Rowe  
Karl Schiller  
Patricia Stalcup  
Paul Thornton

**Pastor’s Potluck**  
**Thursday * Sept. 4 * 6 p.m.**  
Join us! Bring your own meat/fish item to grill, a sidedish to share, and your eating utensils and tableware.

**Women’s Fellowship**  
**Wednesday * Sept. 10 * 6:30 p.m.**  
We will share a salad bar on our own “Back to School Night” as we hear about the vision for our own Early Childhood Center from Laura Long, Chair of the ECC Committee. Sign up on the patio after service.

**Isaiah House**  
**Wednesday * Sept. 10 * 3:15 p.m.**  
**Meet at IUCC Parking Lot**  
We have been working in Santa Ana preparing and serving meals for more than 40 women at Isaiah House as well as the 150 homeless at Civic Center. We prepare bread and salads and serve the guests there. Interested volunteers meet Steve Goetz in the IUCC parking lot at 3:15 p.m. Call Steve at 949-436-1946 or write to sgoetz53@gmail.com for details.

**IUCC All Church Picnic**  
**Sunday * Sept. 21 * 12:15 p.m.**  
**Mason Park**  
Look for the sign-up potluck sheet on the Fellowship table on the patio after service. More exciting details to follow!

**Crop Walk * October 19**  
**Queen of Angels School**  
**Corona Del Mar**  
Join us for the 26th Annual CROP/Hunger Walk to raise money to help fight hunger and homelessness both locally and internationally. It’s a wonderful opportunity for groups to walk together towards this goal. Contact Steve Goetz at sgoetz53@gmail for more information.
I’m trusting that you, my faithful readers, have done last month’s homework in preparation for this month’s “thoughts.” As a reminder, your task was to prepare children to be able to challenge the various forms of thinking they will encounter—thoughts, beliefs, convictions, ideas, information (which are all the same thing), to be sure that what they are being told is factual, not just what someone thinks is true. Of course, this is not a bad idea for adults either. Once children are aware that saying that something is true doesn’t make it true, and that people often misrepresent truth, we can introduce them to specific forms of erroneous thinking that can cause harm to others, such as prejudice, bias, phobias, and stereotypes.

**PREJUDICE.** This word is based on the word “pre-judge.” To pre-judge is to pass judgment prematurely or without sufficient reflection or investigation. Prejudice is an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without real knowledge, thought, or reason. We can show prejudice either positively or negatively. Usually when we hear the word prejudice we assume it’s a negative judgment, but that is not necessarily true. Prejudice is any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favorable or unfavorable. For example, if we see a person wearing glasses and carrying a lot of books we may “assume” that they are smart. Or if we see an unkempt homeless person on the street we may decide that they are an addict, or mentally ill, or unmotivated.

No matter how open minded or accepting we believe ourselves to be, and no matter how good a job we think we are doing when it comes to raising tolerant children, the fact remains that we all carry prejudices and biases. You may want to share with your children times when you’ve made the wrong judgment about someone so they know how common it is and that it is something to be careful about, not ashamed of. There are, unhappily, numerous news stories that will provide a platform for discussions of prejudice, and of the harm that can come from un-checked judgments.

**BIAS.** Prejudice can lead to bias, which is an opinion, attitude, or tendency formed without evidence, which leads us to favor one group over another, often without any justification. Racial prejudice often leads to bias, when people assume that white children are “smarter” than black children and then treat them differently in our educational systems.

**PHOBIA.** A phobia is an intense, irrational fear. Common phobias are intense fear of spiders (even harmless ones), or talking in front of other people. One is “phobic” about something because they expect something awful to happen by what they are afraid of. We’ve spent many months talking about sexually diverse people who regularly experience prejudice, bias, and “homophobia,” which is an intense, irrational fear, disgust, or hatred of intimate same sex relationships that becomes overwhelming to the person. Irrational fears affect the way an individual treats others who provoke the fear. Homophobia sometimes results in fear of knowing, befriending, or associating with gays, lesbians, or bisexuals; fear of being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual; and fear of stepping outside of accepted gender role behavior. Some gay people have been killed because someone mistook friendly gestures as “coming on” to them. Here we see how prejudice and phobias act together to cause totally unnecessary harm. You can do an exercise with your kids to see if they have any “phobias,” and ask what kinds of irrational behaviors they may have done in response to this phobia?

**STEREOTYPE.** A stereotype is a fixed image of a person or a group of people that is oversimplified and does not consider different individuals in a group. Again, stereotypes can be either positive or negative. There are many stereotypes based on ethnicity and culture. Talk with your children about stereotypes about their heritage. Discuss where those stereotypes come from and where they reflect some truths and where they reflect myth. Stereotypes are a little more complicated than prejudices and phobias because there is often an element of reality for particular groups. Here it is important to sort through some stereotypes that we can just accept and even enjoy (“little old ladies”; speech patterns common in a particular ethnic group; “senior moments”; strong silent types) from those that may hurt others. For example, almost always when I tell people that I’m Irish, gestures and jokes begin immediately about drinking. Well, in fact the Irish have more pubs than restaurants and are known to enjoy a pint. But if my family was struggling with alcohol addiction the joke might not be so funny to me. For this reason, we want to help children understand that something may be true a lot of the time, but not true all of the time. It is true that some gay men are comfortable feigning womanly gestures, but that is not true of all or even most gay men. A man using effeminate gestures being tagged as “gay” is a stereotype. It is true that some lesbians like flannel shirts and jeans and have short hair. But it is equally true that some lesbians wear lipstick and dress in female fashion. So your task here is a little complicated. When can we accept and enjoy some stereotypes? When should we avoid using stereotypes to “pre-judge” a person? Most importantly, when should we notice that we are using a stereotype or pre-judging another person and use care to “get the facts” about a person before deciding who they are?

We’ll conclude this series next month. If you have ideas about what you’d like me to write about after that, send me a note (pgsfc@cox.net). It you don’t tell me what you’d like to talk about, I’ll be talking about what I want to talk about. Better than me.