

December 2017  
[www.iucc.org](http://www.iucc.org)  
Editor: Tricia Aynes

## Kudos to our amazing young people for making Youth Sunday on November 26 one of our best yet!



*Photos courtesy of Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips*



# From The Pastor

by The Rev. Paul Tellstrom



Advent is known as the season of watching and waiting. Every Sunday, the texts bring us into a place of contemplation and prepare us for a feeling of wonder as the season lifts us up and carries us closer to the story of birth and rebirth.

We will hear the *Gospel of Luke*, where Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem. The

innkeeper is there, and shepherds will arrive soon. Angels appear, and a light from a star shines in the darkness on the scene of Jesus' birth. Even the three magi draw near, and not only don't we mind that they wander in 12 days early from another gospel, we expect them to be there.

At this time of year, I don't care that Jesus was probably born in summer, and that some of our facts are askew. There is no record of the "Slaughter of the Innocents" outside of the Bible, for example. You would think that a story as big as the killing of all male children under the age of two would be recorded somewhere else.

But hard facts are not what this story is about. It is about a God of Second Chances that beckons us to be moved again this year by the story of Jesus' birth, so as to follow him through his ministry of teaching, healing, and the kind of protesting against injustice that led him to his death. Will we walk away from the glow of Christmas Eve to face what is ahead of us in the coming new year with strength and hope so that we can continue to be agents of change?

I believe our own church community makes an important difference in Orange County. This is a time to see how the work we have done together is manifesting itself in the project that is unfolding around us. In fact, I see signs of Advent that are alive in what is happening on our campus right now. There is some real "watching and waiting" for something new to emerge.

Come to church in the weeks ahead, and you will see tangible signs of destruction turning into rebirth. It is fascinating to see it happening to our campus. This past week was about jack-hammers and stump removal. Ahead,

there is newness all around us. You have demonstrated our commitment to caring by this act of creating space for it to happen.

Advent is here and Christmas is coming. Don't let a little rubble keep you from church. It isn't an inconvenience—it is our adventure in faith together as we build the next chapter.

I look forward to seeing you during this time of "rebirth."

And, a reminder: on December 24, there will be two services only. We are combining morning services. The pageant usually held on Christmas Eve will be a part of our one worship service from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. At 9:30 a.m., there will be special music that leads into worship. In the evening, there will be the sublime 9:00 p.m. service as you know it, with choir, candlelight, lessons and carols.

See You in Church—

*Pastor Paul*





# Moderator's Column

by Renae Boyum

I'm a big fan of home improvement shows. My favorite shows to watch on a regular basis are on HGTV or the DIY Network. The shows feature building, remodeling, and decorating.

Come to think of it, I'm sure I'm not the only one here at IUCC who is fascinated with the process of building, remodeling, and decorating homes and other spaces. Since we now have a chance to observe this process firsthand over the next few months, I thought it might be helpful to think about this process and the stages we will all go through. Let me propose that there are five stages, as follows:

**Stage 1: Dreaming and Planning.** As 2017 draws to a close, it seems like we've been in this stage a long time. We began dreaming about the building back in 2010 or so, and seriously began planning a couple of years later. As part of this stage, we learned how to wait - sometimes not so patiently. We waited for city approval of the Conditional Use Permit, and we waited for other building permits. We waited for loan approvals. I'm sure, like me, you were excited when we had the ceremonial ground-breaking on October 15, but then we got to wait about another month for real activity. Now, in December, we are moving on to:

**Stage 2: The Beginning.** As of the end of November, the construction fence was up, the entrance to the parking lot was closed, some trees had been removed, some pavement had been torn up. It's really starting, and with that come feelings of excitement, anticipation, and perhaps some worry. We have to learn new routines for parking our cars and making our way to the sanctuary. It's all new, we are adjusting, and we are being very positive! My guess is that sometimes over the next six months these feelings might change as we move on to:

**Stage 3: The "Are we done yet" stage.** Perhaps at this stage we will be getting tired of the dust, the inconveniences, the sense that things are in disarray. We will wonder when this will end. We'll see the progress being made and we'll know that the completion will come, we just don't know exactly when. Just as with the HGTV home remodel projects, there may be unforeseen delays or problems. We'll know that our project is in good hands and that whatever problems may arise will be solved. But nonetheless, there will still be that sense that we wish it was all done. And then - it is finished - and we move on to:

**Stage 4: Hooray! We're done!** After months of waiting, the building is completed. I'm sure we will agree that all of this was worth the wait! We will enjoy the new meeting spaces, the new pastoral and staff office spaces, and the new look and feel of the church campus. It will be an exciting time for IUCC! But wait, there's one more stage:

**Stage 5: Dreaming and Planning.** After we've completed the move into our new spaces, it will be time for the staff, the leadership, and congregation members to begin dreaming and planning about how we can use these new spaces and begin implementing new programs for ourselves and for the greater community. New plans will allow us to continue to be a beacon of social justice and progressive Christianity. We can think about how to fulfill the words of Micah 6:8 - *But what does the Lord require of us, but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.*

I am looking forward to watching and being a part of all of the above stages with you! As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember what a wonderful gift this building will be!

In faith and community,

*Renae*



Two photos showing the official signing of loan documents and Deed of Trust.

~ photos courtesy of Keith Boyum



## Decorating the Sanctuary

*Photos courtesy of Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips*



## Clean-Up Day

*Photos courtesy of Cindy O'Dell*





## Adult Education

by the Rev. Steve Swope

**Adult Sunday School** finished an overview of major world religions. During December, Keith Dillon will offer thoughts on Images of Faith – how religious ideas and persons

are represented visually, the ways images can influence or reinforce our beliefs – and is it possible to “blaspheme”?



Discussion at 8:45 & 10 a.m.

On Dec. 31, I’ll start a 3-week look at the foundations of Christianity in the Judaism of 250-50 BCE, and on January 21, Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi will begin a short series on forms and styles of prayer.

**Tuesday Bible Study** meets at 4:00 p.m., with Ken Wyant in leadership, exploring the Christian scriptures in the order they were written, according to Marcus Borg’s *Evolution of the Word*. In mid-November we began to discuss the Gospel of Luke, the longest of the four canonical gospels. Join us – the conversation is always stimulating!

Do you have a hidden talent or secret interest? Have you had an amazing or inspiring experience? Share them with your IUCC family! We’re looking for **Midweek Salon** speakers for 2018, and we only need an hour of your time – in the comfy atmosphere of Plumer Hall. Contact Adult Programs Director Steve Swope at [steve@iucc.org](mailto:steve@iucc.org).



I know the holidays fill our minds and schedules with lots of things, but I hope you’ll begin thinking about – and planning for – Professor Amy-Jill Levine now! She’ll be with us on Friday evening, March 9 and Sunday morning, March 11 (Saturday, March 10 she’ll be Chapman University’s featured speaker

for Founders Day). Prof. Levine is a dynamic, engaging, and amusing speaker. She’s written several books, including *Short Stories by Jesus* and *The Misunderstood Jew*, and co-edited *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. You won’t want to miss her! To pique your interest, here’s a brief video of Prof. Levine talking about the Christmas story. Check it out! <https://youtu.be/SbGbkBAHOvA>

## Thanksgiving Service

by Tricia Aynes



IUCC Pastor Paul Tellstrom, UCI Law Professor Jennifer Chacon, and University Synagogue Rabbi Arnold Rachlis

It was a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving service with our sister congregation, University Synagogue, on November 21. This was our 29th annual shared service, and the spirit of close friendship was all around. Pastor Paul and Rabbi Rachlis set exactly the right tone with their remarks, conveying genuine love and affection. Our combined choirs made beautiful music together. Cantor Ruti Braier sang a hauntingly beautiful and poignant piece entitled “Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor.”

A big first this year was the addition of greetings by Hossein Abbasi (Unified Mosque of Irvine), the Rev. Kerrol Pulido (Iglesia Vida Abundante) and Dr. Jim Turrell (Center for Spiritual Living), making the service truly ecumenical - a coming together of people of various faith backgrounds.

Guest speaker Jennifer M. Chacon, a law professor at UCI, delivered a thoughtful and heartfelt talk about her own family’s history in America. Because her father’s experience was that his Spanish culture and language were problems to be overcome, he raised his children to speak only English. The sad result was that she and her siblings did not have the rich experience of growing up bilingual, and she was deprived of the opportunity to talk meaningfully with her Spanish speaking grandmother next door and learn of her struggles.

“The loss of linguistic links makes it hard for us to pass down our histories,” she said. “I hope one lesson our immigrant kids learn is that they are valued. I want our children to have the cultural and linguistic ability to see other people’s problems as their problems, and the solutions as their responsibility.”

# Building Project Update

by Anne Rosse, Chair of Building Task Force



While it may have felt like we would never get here, congratulations, IUCC -- construction has finally begun!

Below are some key updates about what to expect over the next month or two, along with our updated construction timeline:

- **December:** site preparation will continue throughout the month.

Demolition is nearly done; we're starting to trench and pull utility lines.

- **January:** look for the foundation to be laid in early January as the focus moves from site prep to active construction.
- **May:** with the delay in starting construction (due to our loan paperwork), we now anticipate that the new building will be completed in May 2018. In case of intemperate weather, our construction timeline already includes a 10-day allowance so our May timeframe looks achievable.
- **June:** the new building will be ready for occupancy in June 2018! We'll mark this momentous occasion with a dedication and celebration.

We are grateful for your gracious cooperation as we navigate the temporary loss of parking spots and our main entrance. Kudos and appreciation to the many folks who are utilizing our off-site parking at Lakeside Center or who are taking on our Green Faith challenge by walking, biking and carpooling to church.

Each week, we meet with the contractor and architects to address any logistical issues. If you have concerns, please let us know by contacting our super-helpful Deacons, the Church Office, or any member of the Building Task Force (Mark Allen, Keith Boyum, Cindy O'Dell, Jim Raver, Anne Rosse, Pat Sauter, Michael Spindle, and Pastor Paul).

Now that we are in active construction, generous payment of your campaign pledges is even more important. As you make your end-of-year giving plans, please include the capital campaign.

Thank you, IUCC! Because you came together to invest in our future, in six months we will have a new building. Supported by strengthened facilities, we can grow in community significance through strong programs and service to our region. We look forward to using the new space as resources for reaching out, for serving, and for standing tall for our shared progressive Christian values.



**Demolition Photos**  
Courtesy of Anne Rosse





# GreenFaith Team



**GREENfaith \* Committed to Environmental Justice \***  
**IUCC is a Creation Justice Church of the UCC**

## Alternative Gift Giving

by Vivian Johnson



We like to show our love by gift giving. But are you weary of giving more “stuff” that fills closets and shelves? Perhaps this holiday season you’d like to consider the following:

- **Be economical:** Decide with your family to purchase all gifts from a thrift store or a Dollar Store. You will be amazed at the nice items available for a lower price.

- **Buy Consumable:**

Purchase gifts of food, candles, postage stamps, etc.

- **Give Experiences:** a meal, play, theme park, train trip, etc.
- **Explore your city:** Plan activities and sights you’ve never seen right in your area.
- **See the World:** One couple’s favorite gift was when they took their children and grandchildren to Costa Rica. The adventure far outlasted any other gift they could have given.
- **Adopt an animal:** Suggest that your family give *you* a gift that supports another culture: a cow, sheep, or other animal. The Heifer Project is one such organization.
- **Buy from developing countries:** Make it fair trade. “Fair-Trade Certified” products are made with respect to people and planet, with products ranging from coffee and chocolate to body care and clothes. Equal Exchange is one worker-owned cooperative that offers fair-trade goods. Ten Thousand Villages and Servv also have fair-trade gifts.
- **Use your skills to make gifts:** food, candy, plants, wooden or knitted items, jam/jelly, paintings, art work, written pieces, recorded music, etc. When grandchildren are young, they enjoy a recording of their grandparents (or others) reading a story to them. It is a gift enjoyed many times over.
- **Give gifts of money:** designate funds for college, car insurance, music lessons or for travel to a developing country.
- **Volunteer:** Two grandchildren accompanied their grandmother to the Grand Tetons (through the Road

Scholar Intergenerational Program) to assist the Forest Rangers in doing service projects. They lived there for a week in the summer and had a great time working and playing. Because it is a service project, some tax deduction was allowed. (Visit Road Scholar.com or Volunteer Match.com to find opportunities.) Other ideas: Serve a meal at a homeless shelter or paint a room for an elderly person.

- **Coupons:** We all love it when someone does something for us. Coupons for babysitting, lawn mowing, gardening, dish duty, or full TV remote privileges for the night (sounds good to me!) are some ideas. Use your imagination based on your knowledge of what would please the recipient.
- **Scavenger Hunt:** A simple gift can be made more fun by giving clues to find it somewhere in or outside the house. One friend tied a long string to a gift and the recipient had to hunt upstairs and downstairs until finally discovering it. Looking for the gift stretched the fun!
- **Get in Shape:** Enroll yourself and willing family members in a marathon or a 5 or 10k. This is celebrating by improving your health.
- **Adopt a Star:** Budding astrologers on your gift list will delight in having a star to call their own. (See [adoptastar.whitedwarf.org](http://adoptastar.whitedwarf.org))

Be creative. Come up with your own gift ideas. Happy gift giving!

*Vivian Elaine Johnson*

(GREENfaith team: Judy Curry, Tony Dover, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Martha Hansen, Bonnie Shaffstall, Eileen Vincent, and Vivian Johnson)





We love to share our IUCC family story with others, and so you'll see a lot of photos and videos being taken and shared in many ways. If you don't want your image used in our story telling, please turn in a Media Opt Out form, which is available through our church office by calling us at 949-733-0220 or by e-mailing us at [iucc@iucc.org](mailto:iucc@iucc.org).

Thank you!

## Christmas Concert Time is Here!

*by Joni Baker*

"It's that time of year  
When the world falls in love  
Every song you hear seems to say  
'Merry Christmas!  
May your new year's dreams come  
true'" - The Christmas Waltz



It's also that time of year when the IUCC Chancel Choir invites you to join us for an evening of song to lift your spirits this holiday season. We have prepared a completely secular program, and have guest instrumentalists joining us for a few pieces. There's something for everyone including solos from our interns, audience participation, familiar old favorites and perhaps some new ones.

Please carpool, as the parking will be challenging. We will have shuttles from the offsite parking location beginning at 5:45 p.m. After the concert the shuttles will run until 9:00 p.m. See a choir member to get cards to distribute to your friends.

Sunday December 10th at 7:00 p.m.  
Childcare will be offered.  
A free will offering will be collected.  
Parking at 4615 Barranca Parkway  
A cookie and beverage reception will follow.

We hope to see you there with all your friends!!





# News & Events



## IUCC is on FACEBOOK!

Did you know? IUCC has an active Facebook page which has information about upcoming events and related events for social justice and progressive Christianity causes. You can find it at: <https://www.facebook.com/irvineucc/>

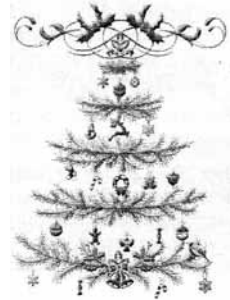
If you have events you would like to see posted on Facebook, please send the information to Cindy O'Dell at [odellcindy19@gmail.com](mailto:odellcindy19@gmail.com)

Thank you!



## Annual Holiday Pot Luck Wednesday, December 6, 6:30 p.m.

Women's Fellowship & the Shawl Ministry will gather for the annual meal with turkey and fixin's. Bring a dish to share and \$5 to defray costs.



## Choir Christmas Concert Sunday, December 10, 7 p.m.

Join our Chancel Choir for an evening of song to lift your spirits this holiday season. There's something for everyone including solos from our interns, audience participation, familiar old favorites and perhaps some new ones. More details on page 9!



## Coffee Hour Hosts Needed!

Ah, coffee hour snacks! They're yummy, they're colorful, and they provide a wonderful backdrop of warmth and welcome to our patio after services. Happy IUCC

people gather around the snack tables to visit, catch up with friends, and meet interesting new people. It's our guilty pleasure, and we love it! Our coffee hour snacks are provided by volunteers. Won't you add your name to the list of volunteers? Sign up sheets are on the patio on Sunday mornings. If each of us committed to one Sunday each year, our calendar - and our tummies - would be full. Thank you!



## Big Brothers/Big Sisters Sunday, December 10, 12:15 p.m.

The IUCC Young Adults will be hosting an information session with Jackie Cuevas from Big Brothers/Big Sisters of OC. If you are looking for a new place to volunteer or just more information about this amazing organization, please join us for lunch! Contact Pastor Sarah with any questions!



## Altar Poinsettia Sponsorships

Here is your opportunity to sponsor a poinsettia to honor, celebrate, or memorialize a person or an event. Sign up after service for a \$10 donation. Your sponsorship will help put the finishing touches on our

sanctuary decorations. Sponsors are welcome to take their poinsettia home after our candlelight service on Christmas Eve. Sign up with Michelle Lin on the patio after service.



12/3	Jessie Billings	12/20	Calla McCarty
12/7	Lewis Blackburn	12/17	Jessica Neilson
12/8	Julianna Burley	12/2	Nat Rinn
12/11	Bill Dietrich	12/1	Danny Sanders
12/3	Taelor Exelby	12/17	Nick Sanders
12/23	Andrew Figueroa	12/29	Pat Sauter
12/31	Paul Figueroa	12/26	Pat Sutcliff
12/11	Tommie Kozlov	12/17	Todd Thompson
12/21	Elliot Macdonald	12/5	Marie Trout
12/21	Finn Macdonald	12/30	Carol Welsch
12/24	Aspen McCarty		

## Powerful Parenting

Dr. Lorraine Fox

### THE GIFTS OF CIVIL BEHAVIOR – and “NAGGING”

I mentioned that we would examine the role that media – social, television, and radio – is playing in a noticeable decrease in civil behavior between people, especially people who are disagreeing with each other. I write this month's column with the unfortunate media barrage of stories involving boorishly uncivil behavior toward women by those who have power over them as background. What a total disconnect to the season of joy, peace on earth, faithfulness, hope, and love. I would suggest that this dissonance between the holiday tunes and Christmas message and what we are hearing in the media is providing us with perfect opportunities for conversations with our children about how such behavior – verbal and otherwise – pollutes the holiday atmosphere because it goes completely against the message of Christmas, and what people need to feel comfortable in their living environments.

The holidays provide a perfect time for “drumming in” (yes, I know, seasonal reference) the lessons of civility. It's also a way to counter the generally cheerful atmosphere by irritating the young ones (birth–18) in your house by reminding them of how discourteous behavior robs us of joy. Have them watch for smiles on people as they engage in bantering about conflicting points of view. Have them notice that smiles are absent on those faces. This is the opposite of what “joy to the world” is meant to do for us.

Lack of “civility” is not only about what we do, but about what we don't do. Monitor your children as they comment on and respond to gifts they receive. How children learn to respond to the generosity of others when receiving gifts will develop life-long habits of pro-social, gracious behavior that will serve them, and those around them, all their days. Even my dog wags his tail when I give him a treat, but I have often been astounded by the “uncivil” behavior of children and teens when they are: disappointed by a gift; take a gift for granted; show no appreciation for the time and trouble it took someone to get just the right gift; or either walk away or begin playing with something with nary a gesture of appreciation. Is it appropriate to prompt children to remember when a “thank you” is in order? Absolutely. Is it okay to hound children until they write thank-you notes? Absolutely. Civil behavior does not come naturally, it is learned, and instilled by caring adults.

Christmas is family time, even a bit too much family for some. Holiday breaks mean that family members spend

more time together than when school and work schedules give us a break from each other. More time in close quarters often means more conflict. Conflict is not “bad,” but it's stressful. In addition to harassment allegations and rebukes, now on television we are witnessing barrages of unkind and hurtful exchanges between people in conflict followed by people “quitting” or being fired. This gives our children the unrealistic notion that we can just get away from anyone with whom we disagree or who is hurt by our lack of kindness or courtesy. Remind them that most of their neighbors will not be moving, most of their classmates will stay in their class, family members will not be finding new families, and the wounds from harsh or hurtful words will make living together very unpleasant and “pollute” our own atmospheres.

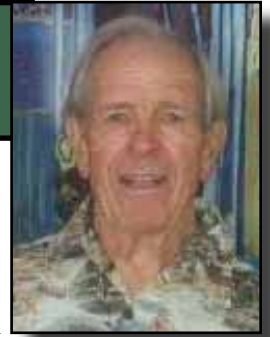
Parents can use this time to help kids find ways to cope with conflict that do not involve what they see on television – yelling, name calling, put downs, walking away. Civility asks that we find ways to live together –while disagreeing - that allow both people involved in a conflict to be proud of their ability to show respect for others and for themselves, even while disagreeing or not getting along. Children we live or work with don't have to agree with us or even willingly cooperate with us. However, we can insist on civil behavior in our presence, in order to develop the habit pattern of disagreeing without being disagreeable, as it were.

In the book of Proverbs, the wise King Solomon gives us enthusiastic support for parental “nagging” about developing habits of civility. A verse says: “*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*” (Proverbs 22:6) and seems to be untrue if we think of the meaning as having to do with behavior. We all know children who have been “trained up” properly and later seem to depart from it. But we also know that it is impossible to escape from those endless, nagging, repeated words from parents that haunt us for the rest of our lives. How many times have you heard yourself saying to your children *exactly* what your parents used to say to you – even though you resented and dismissed it when you heard it as a child? How many times have you heard someone talk about a parent “rolling over” if they knew a child was doing something against what they were taught? We all know that you can be nagged by someone who lives thousands of miles away, or even by a dead person! Apparently what we “cannot depart from” are those lessons in living that stay in our heads - the “tapes” from our parents that play over and over from childhood until death. Make your “tapes” helpful for civil living.

So buy up the moments and give the gift of insisting on “civil” behavior. They will roll their eyes now, but they will remember the lessons all their days. People around them will thank you for it.

## PC at IUCC “Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee *die* ...”

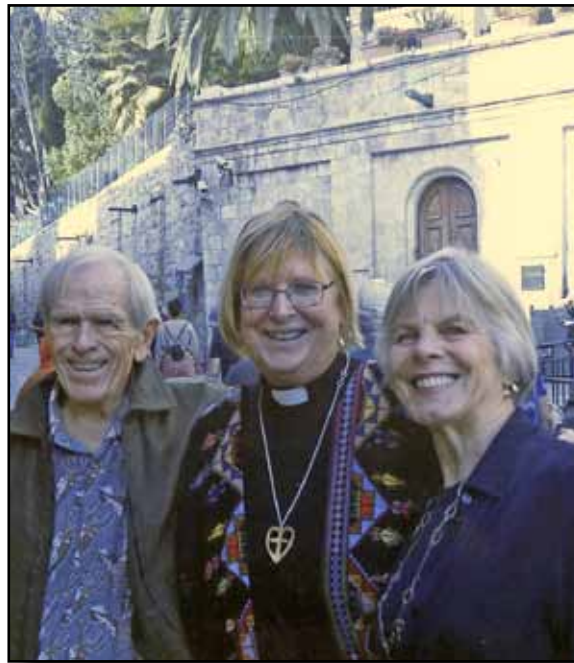
by Bil Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest



When I started this, Annie and I were in the Arab sector of Jerusalem and had connected with The Rev. Loren McGrail (pictured in center between Annie and me), a UCC pastor whose ministry is based in the Palestine area of Jerusalem. Last spring, Loren preached at IUCC. We told Loren that we were going to Israel in November. On November 3, we met her at our hotel and spent most of the next five days with her as she showed us Jerusalem through the eyes of the Palestinians. We witnessed the violation of human dignity right before our eyes.

This viewpoint is very different from what the tourist sees. They don't have any idea that the Israeli government is doing its rendition of persecution right under the tourists' noses.

A good example takes place in Bethlehem, six miles from Jerusalem which is now an open-air “prison” totally surrounded by 20” walls. The tourists are bussed in, driven to the “religious” sites, then bused to a designated souvenir shop and finally to a specific restaurant before they are bused out. Tourists have no chance to wander around the city on their own, which “kills” local Palestinian businesses.



The three of us took a local bus to the Bethlehem check point. We walked through the security easily. We were “tourists,” not local Palestinians who would have been checked and rechecked, hassled, and made to wait for no apparent reason. In the night/morning, the Palestinians have to be at the check-point at 3 a.m. to make certain they arrive at work by 7 or 8 a.m. When we cleared security, we bumped into the walls.

Once we were in the city, Loren made a phone call to a local man, Majidi, who picked us up and took us to his tourist shop where he had not had a sale in a week because tourists are not allowed to “roam” the city to “buy” local. We then went to a local restaurant where we were treated royally because there are no longer tourists who come there, even though it's 100 feet from the Church of the Nativity.

After a delicious lunch, we went to a “refugee” (meaning temporary) camp which was opened 70 years ago. Loren needed to talk with a local woman about a sewing project Global Ministry has, to teach Palestinian women how to sew to obtain economic independence. We had a couple of more stops and then started our return through all the checkpoints to return to Jerusalem.

For five days, the three of us witnessed the subtle “de-humanizing” that the Israelis are doing to Palestinians. It was heart-breaking and can easily give one a great sense of hopelessness. Fortunately, the Palestinians are known to be a people of strong faith (Christian and Muslim) and intestinal fortitude.

Our three-week trip to Israel and Palestine was one of those unbelievable eye-opening experiences that can change lives. Annie and I are eager to share with our church family some of our positive experiences of walking some of the paths in Galilee where Jesus lived and worked as well as our eye-witness accounts of some of the

disheartening sights we saw happening to the Palestinians with our church family.

Because we are “resurrection” followers, now we can change that “Good Friday” sense of hopelessness into positive, creative actions because that's what IUCC does so well.

PeaceLoveJoyHope Bil

We'd like to share some powerful words from a young college woman, a volunteer at the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind, our daughter Heidi's school:

**“CHRISTMAS PRESENCE...GIVE YOURSELF AWAY”**

# December Film List - Holiday Movies

by Keith Dillon



**Here's a list of films that will, hopefully, put you into the holiday mood.**

- 1) *A Christmas Carol* (1938, Edwin L. Marin) – There have been many Christmas Carols in cinematic history. For my money, this is still the best of the lot. Reginald Owen plays Scrooge with the hammy resonance of a 30s era Shakespearean actor.
- 2) *Holiday Inn* (1942, Mark Sandrich) – In this film, Irving Berlin gave America one of its greatest Christmas carols: “I’m dreaming of a…” The film also features Fred Astaire and Irving Berlin, doing what they both did so well.
- 3) *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946, Frank Capra)
- 4) *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* (1947, George Seaton) Obvious choice; enough said.
- 5) *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965, Bill Melendez)
- 6) *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966, Chuck Jones, Ben Washam) – 2 classics from 60s Television. For me, one of the best things about these two pieces is the music, especially Vince Guaraldi’s score for Charlie Brown.
- 7) *A Christmas Story* (1983, Bob Clark) – This corny little farce is yet another obvious choice for the holidays.
- 8) *Elf* (2003, Jon Favreau) – This charming live action cartoon features one of our greatest physical comedians playing a naïve little elf encountering Manhattan for the first time in his life.
- 9) *Bad Santa* (2003, Terry Zwigoff) – This film is an antidote to the saccharine of *Elf*. “Not now, lady. I’m on my break!” Just kills me.