Farewell, Michael!

There were tears, toasts, and lots of hugs on June 24 as IUCC bid a fond farewell to retiring Church Administrator Michael Spindle. We will miss you!
A sample of the comments made about Michael:

LaRae Cunningham:  “Warm, generous, caring - a perfect fit for IUCC.”
Laura O’Brien:    “You can always count on him.”
Felicity Figueroa:  “He’s like a Tootsie Roll pop – a crusty exterior … and a soft center.”
Dale Vaughan:    “David and Michael come closer [to help] in hard times. They give the greatest hugs in the world. I am blessed to have them in my life.”
Mark Allen:    “Generous of spirit and always willing to work hard. We’ll miss you!”
Renae Boyum:    “A treasure to work with.”
Dave Schofield:  “We served on many ministries together – Michael was integral to much of what happened in the life of this church. We appreciate and love you both.”
Pastor Paul:   “We will miss you both deeply and see you soon – wishing you the happiest of transitions.”

Michael shared that while participating in the 1991 AIDS Walk, he met a group of walkers from IUCC. “They were giving an extravagant welcome even back then,” he said. “It made an indelible impression.” Later, he came to IUCC to ask about a place to have a memorial service for his partner Steven after other churches had refused. “I met LaRae Cunningham [the church administrator then]. She handed me the keys to the sanctuary and said to let her know if there was anything I needed. A few days later, Fred Plumer called with an invitation to coffee. Shortly after attending here my first Sunday and experiencing an incredible sense of love, I realized this was my home and got pulled closer in.” He ended up becoming Church Administrator here. “I’m still holding onto those keys,” he said with a big smile. “It was supposed to be a temporary position, but 18 years later, I look around this room and I’m so very thankful for the time I’ve had here and the impact you’ve had on my life. So many warm and loving gestures were shared! It has been my honor and privilege to be your administrator and fellow member of this church.”

*Photos on pages 1 and 2 courtesy of Tricia Aynes and Felicity Figueroa*
When you read through this issue, you may see that it is about comings and goings, plans for the future, the joy of music and the commitment to show up and be a witness to a better way ahead. There are programs for kids and youth, and a pre-school that is waiting for the church staff to move to their new offices so that they can expand.

There are photos of friendships displayed—members of IUCC coming together with banners at the most recent marches, as well as basking in the joy of one more choir concert that could not possibly top the one before that, except that mysteriously, each one does.

Are you in need of a group to attend in order to learn and find interesting people? Just look inside.

And, will that building ever get built? It turns out that, yes, it will! Last week, it started to come together in leaps and bounds. On my days off, Steve Swope texted me pictures of my office with drywall, which prompted me to turn to Carl and say, “Ooooh, drywall.” After this long, tangible progress drywall becomes a real event!

In all of this, life is happening, which always means that change is coming as well. In approximately six weeks, the church staff will box up their stuff and cross the threshold into a brand-spanking-new headquarters. Educational opportunities and social events will take place with brand new (padded!) chairs and tables in what can be two or three rooms, or even a single hall with soaring glass windows at each end. Last Sunday, our newly-forming theatre group led by Craig Tyrl, ended our meeting by walking up to the entrance of the new space and trying to envision how to bring a theatrical event into this place.

Change happens.

In the midst of this, the Rev. Steve Swope became our Administrative Pastor. Steve and I had been talking about the possibility, and how it would work out for us for a long time. Moderator Renae and Co-Council members, Dave Schofield and Ken Wyant, with Treasurer Mark Allen (with the support of our boards), made the path straight so this could happen, and it should be acknowledged that this was the brain-child of Michael Spindle.

Change happens.

Good-bye to my Administrator and good friend. Take a look at the coverage inside of Michael's retirement party. Such love and respect. He and I made each other laugh every day.

And now, farewell to our Music Director. John is returning to his roots in Louisiana, where he will be Director of Choral Activities at Nicholls State University, where he will also be close to his family. John has left an indelible mark on our church community through his enormous talent, and the friendships we forged with him will make it harder to let him go at the end of the month.

But, the church knows how to handle this kind of change—with a commitment to process and faith in our future. We will have an interim director in place, and we will forge a path from there. We’ve done this very successfully before, and we will do it again.

I know that through all of these changes, we will come ahead strong and ready for our next chapter. I will be here throughout to be your greatest “cheerleader.” I look forward to what lies ahead for us at IUCC.

See You in Church—

Pastor Paul
Moderator’s Column

by Renae Boyum

I am beginning my fourth year as moderator of Irvine United Congregational Church. This community of faith is my church home and family and I treasure the experience of being your moderator. Part of what makes this experience so invaluable is the guidance and amazing examples of previous moderators. Since I became a member of IUCC, I have experienced the leadership of Randy Romine, Diane Rust, Dave Schofield, Keith Boyum, Cindy O’Dell, and Anne Rosse. All of them gave (and still give) of their remarkable time and talents to make IUCC what it is today - thank you to all of them!

Being the moderator entails countless meetings, some challenges, and many opportunities. One of the most important “jobs” of the moderator (as I see the job) is to ensure that the programs and events that our leaders offer have the resources to make those activities successful. Obviously, the financial part of that is most important. IUCC is blessed to have first-rate financial leadership and transparent policies and safeguards. But another important resource is personal support and problem-solving capabilities. Working things out is one of the most important things a moderator does.

Another part of being a moderator is looking ahead - and perhaps seeing around corners. That’s not easy to do, but without doing that it would be easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day details and not anticipate challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us. Let me give you an example. Michael Spindle, our Church Administrator, had indicated to the leadership that his retirement date was imminent. Originally, he was looking at finishing his remarkable stay with us at the end of 2018. Because of this, the Coordinating Council (Pastor Paul; Dave Schofield, the Chair of the Administration Board; Ken Wyant, the Chair of the Ministries Board; and the Moderator, me) met in January of 2018 to begin discussing and thinking about what to do and how to fill the vital job of Church Administrator. After much thought, we came up with the idea of making a new job description and perhaps combining several positions. That thought resulted in a proposed job description that was looked at by staff, the Bylaws Task Force, and the Administration Board. This process finally resulted in the hiring of Steve Swope to be the Administrative Pastor - a position that combines the job of Administrator and Adult Programs Director. Steve and Michael have been working together the last few weeks to ensure a smooth transition. Obviously, we will miss Michael greatly, but I believe we are ready to carry on successfully.

Another plan we are working on is the upcoming Leadership Weekend on July 20-22. The weekend includes a “farewell and thank you” potluck for all of our leaders, a retreat where we plan for the coming year, and Leadership Sunday. This year's retreat will revolve around our new administrative and classroom space and how we can provide new programs, ideas, events, and activities for this new space. Truly this is an amazing opportunity to plan and prepare for a bright future.

One more plan is the work being done by the Dedication Committee. Chaired by Jessie Billings, this committee is planning and organizing the dedication of our new facilities. Mark SEPTEMBER 9 on your calendar. There will be one worship service that day at 10:00 followed by a dedication ceremony. Plan to be there for this important milestone in the life of IUCC.

As you can tell, many plans are being made by our incredible pastoral staff, our office staff, and lay leadership. As all of this planning takes place, I am reminded of one of my favorite quotes: “Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.” Something to think about as we await yet more challenges and opportunities!

In Faith and Community,

Renae Boyum
Moderator

Mark your calendar!
September 9 is the dedication of our new facilities!
There will be one worship service at 10 a.m. followed by the ceremony.
IUCC doesn’t skimp on adult education during the summer! Bil Aulenbach will be leading adult Sunday school, bringing back his popular “Let’s Talk” conversations on progressive Christianity for the five weeks of July.

Bil is also offering another midweek series this month, meeting on Wednesday evenings and Thursdays morning (choose the time that’s convenient for you). His topic, starting July 11 and 12, is “Learning the Art of Midrash Using the Gospel of John.”

Midrash is the Jewish approach to biblical interpretation, and knowing how it works can help you understand a variety of passages in the Bible. Sign up with Bil during coffee hour on Sundays!

Of course, Ken Wyant continues his weekly foray into the Gospel of Luke – we’re about halfway through – at 4:00 on Tuesday afternoons. Just drop in, and you’ll get caught up in the lively and humor-laced discussion! And there’s usually a field trip to Square One Pizza afterwards.

Next month we’ll begin sign-ups for our 9th year of Comma Groups! Watch for more information – you may see some twists and new angles this year, as we enhance and expand IUCC’s program of building community through small groups. And I especially encourage experienced Comma Group-ers to consider being a leader this year! Talk with me soon, especially if you have questions.

You’ll be reading about progress on our building project elsewhere in this newsletter. But as I doff my “Adult Programs” cap to don the “Facilities” hard-hat for a moment, I notice how very few places for storage we have here at IUCC…and how much stuff we have jammed into every nook and cranny.

Once our new addition is finished, we’ll want the rest of our campus to shine as brightly – and overflowing cupboards, closets, and cabinets dull that luster. I kindly ask each group and Ministry with “stuff” in one of our oh-so-rare storage spaces to (a) take inventory, (b) down-size, divest, and discard what isn’t needed, and (c) organize the remainder neatly, and in as little space as possible. Thank you in advance!

Finally, one of the assumptions underlying this new position is a more effective use of volunteers. Right now, we don’t have a lot of space in the office (do you see a theme?), but we will in our new administrative wing. If you have some time during the week, even occasionally, and would like to know more – let’s talk!

As I settle into this new position as Administrative Pastor, here’s how you can find me. I’ll generally be in the church office all day Monday-Thursday (with a late start on Ministries Board and Admin Board evenings) and a half-day on Friday. For general church business, feel free to email iucc@iucc.org – but for Adult Programs stuff, and anything confidential, keep using steve@iucc.org. Thanks!
Building Project Update
by Anne Rosse, Chair of Building Task Force

In last month’s update, I wrote: “Our current timeline has construction wrapping up in late July, with occupancy in early August. Of course, there are still opportunities for delays — the City of Irvine is always a wild card. But we remain hopeful that we can hold to this schedule.”

Well, shoot! My cautionary words about the City proved true. Unfortunately, because it took longer than planned to get approval for our shear walls, we’ve had to push out the target date for occupancy. It is now August 17. But, we believe this timeline is both realistic and achievable -- because we’ve now gotten a lot of the approvals that typically cause project delays. Thanks, IUCC, for your patience. Despite this delay, we’ll be occupying the new offices and meeting space NEXT month. Exciting!

With key approvals now in hand, we’re able to make significant progress, including: Installation of insulation, storefront windows and drywall, along with stucco work. There’s more good news - our main entry will re-open later this month, with more parking spaces closer to the Sanctuary becoming available. We look forward to enjoying our wider driveway and new right turn lane.

We are incredibly grateful for your speedy payment of campaign pledges, which helps IUCC stay financially strong. We are still raising money to reduce our campaign shortfall. So, if you have been procrastinating making a campaign pledge … or you are a new member and haven’t yet joined your church family in supporting this project … or you have made a pledge but can do just a little more, the time is now! Every single gift – no matter the size – will make a difference. Please make your gift or pledge today. You can drop a check in the offertory plate or make a pledge or gift online at iucc.org/giving/. To ensure that we are applying your gift correctly, please indicate “Mini Campaign” on your check or online payment.

Be sure to join us on Sunday, September 9, when we dedicate the new building and thank this church community for its generosity and vision for IUCC’s future. Our thanks to Jessie Billings and the many folks who have stepped up to plan this fabulous celebration. See you there!

Construction Green Practices
by Anne Rosse, Chair of Building Task Force

The design of our new building incorporates many sustainable features, from the use of drought tolerant native landscaping to oversized overhangs to high efficiency LED lighting. But did you know that we have also been mindful of using green practices during construction?

These practices include:
- Use of Construction Best Management Practices (BMP’s) for soil stabilization and run-off control, including:
  - Shaker Plates at the entry drive to Alton Parkway to prevent dust and dirt getting into the street
  - Silt fencing along the sidewalk at Alton Parkway
  - Straw Waddle along the sidewalk at Alton Parkway
- Use of digital drawings by our building contractor to reduce the need for reproduction
- Smaller job site trailer to reduce temporary power consumption

Building Dedication

Planning is underway for the Sept. 9 grand opening of our new offices and meeting space. The committee, under the chairmanship of Jessie Billings, is meeting regularly to plan the event. Step one, led by graphic designer Cindy O’Dell, included creating a logo (see above and below). The goal was to incorporate elements of the design used for the capital campaign that raised the majority of the funds for the building while emphasizing our mission to welcome all who come through our doors. Through the addition of “2018,” this moment in IUCC’s unfurling journey is emphasized, with all the possibilities that lie before us. Look for more information about the event soon!
On Friday, they “flew” AC units onto the roof
*Photo courtesy of Steve Swope*

Window framing was installed for the meeting rooms
*Photo courtesy of Steve Swope*

Insulation was installed
*Photo courtesy of Wieland Construction*
Pastor Paul, Felicity Figueroa, Teri Olsen, Alyssa Cornett, Randy Romine and Ken Matsuyama joined members of other UCC congregations in Orange County in marching in the OC Pride parade on June 23. In all, the open and affirming UCC churches had about 50 marchers.

IUCC also had a table at the OC Pride Festival. Todd Thompson, Lester and Tom Ricks, Moira Ruiz, Cheryl Schou, Allison Singer, Kathy Smith, Aidan Mitchell, Holly Mitchell, members of the youth group, Alyssa Cornett and Cindy O’Dell represented IUCC from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. handing out flyers and talking about IUCC.
IUCC provides monthly meals at Isaiah House

Photos courtesy of Stee Goetz

L-R: Steve Goetz, Tom Ingraham, another volunteer, Susan Sayre, Lyle Norton, Peggy & Bob Stalter

These are the folks who, rain or shine, help prepare the meal each month.
We’re in our sixth year as a group!

L to R: Tom Ingraham, Susan Sayre, Peggy & Bob Stalter

Lee Kesslerwest, Marilyn’s son, & Barb Ruris & her husband serving white bean chili
Seasons change, time marches on, and people come in and out of our lives. As many of you have surely heard, our beloved Director of Music, John St. Marie, has accepted a new position and will be leaving IUCC at the end of this month. He will be the new Director of Choral Activities at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. This is a bittersweet time as John has given us so much of himself these last eight years. Words can barely express what he has meant to the Chancel Choir. He cared so much about each individual choir member, and about bringing out the best in us. His warmth and loving leadership have blessed the choir and congregation. He joined the church not long after arriving and made IUCC his church home. He gave generously in pledges, as well as working many hours more than what he was paid. He is going to be missed more than can be summed up in this article.

John has worked with the same level of dedication in his other multiple jobs. He worked nearly every day for the last five years. He worked seven days a week except for short breaks between semesters, including summer classes. This opportunity for him to work one full-time job is such a blessing for him. I believe that it was necessary for his health! He gets to go back to Louisiana where he was raised, within an hour of where his parents live. He will finally have health benefits and retirement from an employer. For these reasons, we are so happy for him.

We will be celebrating John on Sunday, July 29, with a reception after church in Plumer Hall. Donations for a parting gift can be given to Joni Baker, chair of the Music Ministry, or to Heidi in the church office. Please have your donations in by July 22nd. Checks may be made payable to IUCC with “John St. Marie gift” written in the memo line. Thank you in advance for your generosity as we express our love and appreciation for all that John has meant to this congregation.

On another note, this will be my last article on behalf of the Music Ministry. I am in process of accepting a position to sing in the choir at Anaheim United Methodist Church. IUCC has been my church home for 10 years now. I feel that I have grown up here at this church, even though I was in my late 30’s when I arrived. You have loved and supported me through some big challenges in my life. I have struggled with food and alcohol addiction and have not always been pleasant to be around. I have taken on leadership roles and failed miserably. I have also had some successes! You have been loving and patient with me in this process as I am learning and growing. I have appreciated being involved with Prayer Shawl Ministry, Stephen Ministry, serving on and being chair of Fellowship Committee, serving on and being chair of Music Ministry, Worship Renewal Task Force, worship leading and singing many offertory solos from the chancel. I thank you for your support and love for me these last 10 years.

Change can be difficult, but I am sure that IUCC will continue to thrive moving into the future. Continue to be the loving, supportive people that you are. I’m sure you will see me on an occasional Sunday when my church choir is not singing. Perhaps I can still be involved in some form of service projects or social events that do not conflict with my singing schedule. I look forward to whatever the future holds and face it in faith that God is still speaking in my life and yours.

Joni

Editor’s Note: The loss of John and Joni is a huge one for IUCC, and their shoes will be very hard to fill. Both have given unstintingly of their time and talent to our congregation, and both are greatly loved. While we will miss them tremendously, we wish them Godspeed and every success in their future endeavors.
Nothing attunes us to the Divine Mystery like music. On Sunday night, June 10, our choir presented us with the inspiration and a glimpse of the presence of God in the goals we aspire to as a church - A Just World for all.

The music inspired. We felt the glory and wonder of the world we live in and in its possibilities. A feeling of awe and a recognition of Divine power brought these lofty goals home, into the spiritual realm that is the substance of our worship.

“Oh how beautiful this finely woven earth. We are bound in threads of joy, threads of grief of soul. . . . Give me your sorrow, I will stretch across to you over green pine and sparkling lake. . . . You will feel how my heart beats with yours. It is my own.”

More than the practical benefits we support to promote health, acceptance, opportunity to others in our communities and around the world, we experience the presence of the Divine that envelopes all of our lives.

Essential to nourishing our spirit, the “finely woven earth” with all of its complexity is the essential “home” that we must cherish with all of our strength and wisdom. Without this marvelous “creation,” we have no base from which to reach out for just peace, no chance to provide support to missions, no home to welcome all to join.

The wonders of the complexity of the natural world open to us more with passing time. We recognize that all life forms have complex needs and dependencies. A healthy forest thrives by the abilities of trees to handle water and nutrients in ways that defy our understanding of natural forces and thrive, in part, by communicating with each other through fungi within the network of their root systems. This finely woven web of interdependence is necessary to bring us the beauty, the nourishment, the climate moderating conditions which we cherish. We are inspired to embrace this complexity and to strive to preserve it.

Music inspires our souls to deeply experience that our goals of a just world for all are more than a practical exercise to maintain a healthy environment with opportunities for all people. We are “in touch with the Divine” which controls the complex forces that allow us to thrive.

“For the beauty of the earth. For the beauty of the skies. For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies. Lord of all to thee we raise this our song of grateful praise.”

(GREENfaith team: Judy Curry, Tony Dover, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Martha Hansen, Bonnie Shaffstall, Eileen Vincent, Anita Schwab, and Vivian Johnson)
Some familiar IUCC faces were spotted at the Families Belong Together march in Irvine on June 30

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes & Felicity Figueroa
Families Forward Back to School Drive
Through July 15!
Low-income students need your help with back to school supplies! We invite the community to come together to give every student the same “Back to School” opportunity. Grade-appropriate school supplies and backpacks will be distributed to low-income elementary, middle, and high school students in August, helping them to start on the same foot as their peers - building their confidence for the coming school year. Most needed items:

- Backpacks 17” or larger
- Pencil boxes
- Folders & binders
- Pens, crayons, & highlighters
- Scissors
- Rulers
- College ruled & wide-ruled paper
- Graph paper
- White glue & glue sticks
- Zippered pencil pouches
- Scientific calculators

Want a Cookie? Of course you do!
We love to gather round the snack table after church and visit with friends. The cookies, fruit, cheese, crackers, and other snacks are the perfect complement to our warm and vibrant congregation, and they help make all of us feel warm and welcome. But wait - they do not appear by magic! The tasty treats are provided by smiling and generous volunteers like you. If we don’t have sign-ups, we don’t have snacks - it’s as simple as that. Don’t let it happen here! Won’t you add your name to the calendar? 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.

Isaiah House
Wednesday, July 11, 4:00 p.m.
Volunteers serving a meal at Isaiah House meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month to provide a meal for the residents. Call (949) 436-1946 for more info.

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, July 17, 9:30 a.m.
This dynamic group of IUCC women meets on the third Tuesday of each month to share coffee, discuss relevant religious and theological topics, and morning treats. Contact Reefa at reefahanny@comline.com for more information.

Pastors’ Potluck
Tuesday * July 26 * 6:00 pm *
It’s summer, and that means it’s time for the monthly Pastors’ Potluck! Join Pastors Paul & Sarah on the Patio for a meal and fellowship. Bring something to grill and a side dish to share. Watch for dates in August, too!

Want a Cookie? Of course you do!
We love to gather round the snack table after church and visit with friends. The cookies, fruit, cheese, crackers, and other snacks are the perfect complement to our warm and vibrant congregation, and they help make all of us feel warm and welcome. But wait - they do not appear by magic! The tasty treats are provided by smiling and generous volunteers like you. If we don’t have sign-ups, we don’t have snacks - it’s as simple as that. Don’t let it happen here! Won’t you add your name to the calendar? 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.

7/01 Peyton Campbell 7/28 Jeanne Maag
7/31 Jean Dietrich 7/28 Alessandra Martini
7/01 Tony Dover 7/04 Laurie McComb
7/20 Phoebe Eng 7/09 Kristen Norton
7/04 Eduardo Figueroa 7/16 Louisa Probeus
7/14 Sarah Fiske-Phillips 7/18 Randy Romine
7/13 Lauren Fleming 7/15 Anita Schwab
7/03 Steve Goetz 7/25 Susan Sherman
7/05 Kathie Guth 7/30 Allison Singer
7/03 Donna Haehl 7/28 Jane Smith
7/13 Martha Hanson 7/22 Kerin Wilson
7/11 August Lobato, Jr. 7/28 Scott Zane
7/05 Jonathan Lyman
September has always felt like “New Year’s” to me. It’s the end of summer, the start of school. It’s the end of warm summer breezes, the start of Fall chill. It’s the end of play, the start of work. With that in mind, we’ll end our series on helping our children to use “civil” behavior in their social interactions for the benefit of everyone in society, and specifically, employing assertive responses to uncivil behavior from others. We’ll begin a new series in September.

Benefits of Assertiveness:

- Assertive behavior allows us to respond to difficult situations honoring our own desires, interests, and feelings.
- Assertive behavior allows us to choose for ourselves how we want to act rather than being reactive to the behavior of others.
- It values oneself, and allows others to feel valued and respected.
- It considers, but does not cater to, the feelings of others. It allows us to stand up for our personal rights.
- It is emotionally honest and direct. It allows us to achieve our goals through honest relationships and communication.
- It allows us to shift from habitual reaction to thoughtful action.
- It reduces our fears and anxieties.
- It avoids defensive behavior in social situations.
- It enhances our self-concept and self-esteem. It allows us to say “no” when we want or need to.

Cautions to remember:

- Being assertive is not a license to get your own way.
- You are in control of personal situations; you make the choice of whether or not to be assertive.
- Remember that the need to affirm yourself is a high priority.
- Standing up for yourself will affect your personal relationships, your career, your health, and your over-all sense of well-being.
- Since many people are not assertive, you may be judged as being “aggressive” because others are feeling uncomfortable with your directness. Don’t give in because it will be at your expense.
- Self-assertiveness is linked to self-respect. When you stand up for what you think and feel, when you clearly voice your opinions and reactions, when you openly reveal who you are – you treat yourself as worthy of respect and as someone who matters.

Tips to help you become more assertive:

- Think through your position before you present it. If you are well prepared, others will be more willing to listen than if your ideas are presented in a haphazard, disorganized manner.
Progressive Christianity is alive and well at IUCC.
We have finished our first 2018 summer workshop, “The Historical Jesus” and had some great discussions. This Jesus makes a great deal of sense to some folks, especially if we can accept the following:

1. Jesus was born a Jew, lived a dedicated Jewish life, and died a Jew. He would not have had any idea what a Christian was nor would any of his disciples, Paul, the author of Mark, and maybe not even Matthew. The Followers of Jesus stayed within Judaism until they were expelled in 88 C.E.

2. The first gospel written about Jesus, Mark, was presented some 40 years after Jesus died, while the last one, John, was published some 80 to 90 years after he was crucified. One can imagine how the stories about him might have changed in that expansive interval. Every story about Jesus had 40 to 80 years of oral telling before it was written down.

3. None of the stories were written as history-history but rather as religious history, which means that one has to dig into the history to find the truth the author wanted to share. That’s why we are offering a 4-week workshop in July (Wednesday evenings 7:15 to 9 p.m., repeated on Thursday mornings at 9:30 to 11 a.m., starting 7/11 & 7/12) entitled, “Learning the Art of Midrash Using the Gospel of John.” In these classes we are going to learn and practice rabbinical Biblical interpretation (Midrash) to find the truth inside the many stories John tells. Another way of saying it is that we are going to read the Gospel of John through Jewish eyes.

4. The Nativity and Resurrection stories didn’t appear until five to eight decades after Jesus died, which is why we PCs call them metaphors rather than history-history. We gentiles seem to have a rather difficult time NOT wanting to read them literally, as if a reporter was at each event taking copious word-for-word notes of all that Jesus said. In other words, all the sayings that the New Testament puts in quotes are not necessarily what Jesus said. They are what the authors wanted him to say. In spite of the above, the same message that Jesus shares in the Gospels is the same message that the historical Jesus says. And what a message!

Also in July I’ll be leading the Sunday morning Adult Ed classes, and our theme will be “Let’s Talk!” We’ll be discussing such subjects as: Is the cross the correct symbol for Christianity? Can an atheist be a Christian? Who is the real Mary? Where is heaven in our vast universe? Is the Lord’s Prayer, the Lord’s prayer? And more. Come join us at 8:45 to 9:25 and/or 10 to 10:50 a.m.

Peace Love Joy Hope Bil

Questions? Call (949) 240-2933

The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity:

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

1. Believe that following the path and the teachings of Jesus 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, * Women 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.
May Films - Frank Capra

by Keith Dillon

This movie list this month is brought to you by Cliff and June Kenny. After asking them who my subject should be, June insisted on Capra. You should ask her why, some time.

Francesco Rosario Capra was born May 18, 1897 in Bisacquino, a small village near Palermo, Sicily. In 1903, little Francesco and his family emigrated to the United States, settling in a small Los Angeles neighborhood known today as Chinatown. Francesco worked his way through the California Institute of Technology by, among other things, playing banjo in local Jazz bands.

After leaving Cal-Tech, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. His military service allowed him to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. He took a new name: Frank Russell Capra. After a few difficult years, he got work in Hollywood as a jack-of-all-trades.

He soon found himself working with Harry Cohn, Harry Langdon, Mack Sennett and other lions of the silent era. He even wrote gags for Hal Roach’ Our Gang series for a short time (that one's for you, June). In 1934, he directed his break-out hit, It Happened One Night for Harry Cohn at Columbia Pictures. This little screwball comedy, starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, was the first film in Oscar history to win all five of the major Academy Awards.


Capra’s films are, for some these days, pure hokum. For me, such a criticism entirely misses the point. Capra was a fabulist. His films aren't so much pictures of life as it is as they are gentle illustrations of life as it could be. In Capra's world, people have value, even crazy old ladies who use arsenic to relieve loneliness. In Capra’s world, Democracy is never lost as long as one person has legs and a voice. In Capra’s world, redemption comes with the realization that the world would be profoundly altered if either you or I had never been born. Movie-making like this is called “Capraesque” for good reason.

1) It Happened One Night (1934) - see above
2) Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936) – His first major collaboration with Gary Cooper. A hick named Deeds inherits a fortune, then goes to New York.
3) You Can't Take It With You (1938) – An Oscar winner based on the play by Kaufman & Hart. It was also his first major collaboration with Jimmy Stewart.
4) Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939) – Easily my favorite Capra. Who could imagine that, in these days of political nihilism, a filibuster could make one weep?
5) Meet John Doe (1941) – A parable about how the freedom of the press can be misused to enshrine corruption.
6) Why We Fight (World War Two years) – A seven film series. One of the finest pieces of War-time propaganda in Hollywood history.
7) Arsenic and Old Lace (1944) – A screwball comedy about Cary Grant, his two favorite aunts, a pinch of arsenic and some Elderberry wine.
8) It's a Wonderful Life (1946) – Nothing else need be said.
9) State of the Union (1948) – Tracy and Hepburn headline a rather caustic look at our electoral system. The bite of skepticism in this film is unusual for Capra.
On Sunday morning July 1st, the Scouts of Troop 602 met at IUCC and packed their gear for their annual week-long resident summer camp at Schoepe Scout Reservation at Lost Valley. The Scouts will be earning various merit badges and participate in a wide variety of fun activities with other Boy Scout troops from Southern California. They will also get to see IUCC member Becky Roach, who is serving on the Lost Valley camp staff this summer.

Before leaving for camp, the Scouts and their adult leaders gathered inside the sanctuary and were given a prayer and a blessing from Pastor Paul in front of the entire congregation at the conclusion of the 9:30 a.m. service. This was the first time that the prayer and blessing were done in front of the entire congregation.

Troop 602 meets on Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m. inside Plumer Hall. There will be no meeting July 3rd while the troop is at summer camp. The regular meeting schedule will resume on July 10th. If your child is 11-17 years old, they are eligible to join Troop 602 at anytime during the year. Join us on Tuesday nights inside Plumer Hall and see what the excitement of Scouting is all about.