Congratulations, IUCC! Thanks to your generosity and vision for our future, we’ll be having a day of celebration on September 9 to dedicate our fabulous new indoor and outdoor spaces. Typical of construction projects, not everything will be quite done. But, the interior spaces are virtually done and nothing will stop us from celebrating what this church community has achieved!

I found a quote online, author unknown, that represents rather well our process of planning, raising money, building and now soon occupying Phase 1A of our campus master plan:

*Patience is not about doing nothing. Patience is about constantly doing everything you can. But being patient about results.*

We started talking about updating our aging church campus back in 2009, the same year as Barack Obama’s first inauguration. At times, it has been a Sisyphean journey but we made it!

Supported by strengthened facilities, we can grow in community significance through strong programs and service to our regions. We look forward to using the new spaces as resources for reaching out, for serving, and for standing tall for our shared progressive Christian values.

So, we hope to see you on September 9 for this very special celebration in the life of this church!

~ Anne Rosse
There was a lot of great energy at our All-Church Work Day on August 26!

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
New Beginnings. There has been a lot of change around here. We started talking about a new building nine years ago. Soon, we will celebrate the culmination of our dreaming and planning with a celebration.

Please come to church on September 9, where we will all be here together at one service in order to be lifted up by music at 9:30 before we begin an upbeat worship service, and then process outside to sit under a big tent and have a Service of Dedication. Afterwards, join in the tour of our 95% finished addition. Our Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Felix Villanueva, will bring us greetings and congratulations. Our neighboring churches will send written greetings, and our Rabbi Rachlis will be with us to present a gift from University Synagogue in the form of a new mezuzah for our main entry. Our relationship with the Synagogue is now so long that this is the second one they have chosen to give us!

What we have done together is truly a marvel. What we do now with this new space needs to reflect our values as a gathered community that wishes to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. I’ll wait until the day to lift up names of the special people who brought us to this moment in thanks, but you know who they are. Be sure to thank them yourselves.

And still more New Beginnings! Have you met Chris? Dr. Chris Peterson may be better known to our choir members as “Tina’s husband,” but in fact, he is also a well-known Professor at Cal State Fullerton, a choir director, an instrumentalist, and a singer. Please see his bio at right. On the next page, you will see the process used by our Search Committee to come to the conclusion that Chris was “the one.”

I’m looking forward to being with you as we celebrate these new beginnings and move into our future.

See You in Church!

Pastor Paul
1. John St. Marie announces he will be leaving at the end of July.

2. Pastor Paul reaches out to Chris Peterson for advice on getting the word out and for recommendations.

3. Admin Board meets to discuss the process and job description.

4. Search committee, chaired by Connie Jones, (BA Music ’69 UCI charter class, MA Music ’71 Occidental College), is formed. Members are chosen so that the entire church is represented as follows: Cindy O’Dell, Laura Long, representing choir, served on previous DM search committee; Janice Johnson, Don Bjorklund, Tricia Aynes, all representing congregation plus Janice served on previous DM search committee; Penny Portillo, representing Admin Board; Pat Sauter, representing Music Committee as Chair.

5. Larry Gates discusses a process with Connie and encourages her to think about looking at a candidate for the permanent position right away, thus foregoing an interim search.

6. Dr. Chris Peterson, nationally recognized as a teacher and educator of choral music and a Professor of Music at California State University, Fullerton, indicates he would be interested in being considered for the position of Music Director. CSUF hired Chris 12 years ago to share the choral responsibilities of a growing music program.

7. Moderator Renae Boyum informs the Admin Board of the change in the Search Committee’s process.

8. The Search Committee interviews Chris, and they decide to unanimously recommend him.

9. Pastor Paul has a two-hour meeting with Chris. It’s clear they would have an outstanding working relationship.

10. 33 members of the Choir participate in a rehearsal with Chris. At the end of the rehearsal, the choir asks Chris several questions. Comments were overwhelmingly in favor.

11. Given recommendations from the Search Committee and Pastor Paul, the Admin Board meets to consider the hiring of Chris Peterson as the Director of Music and votes to approve.

12. Dr. Peterson accepts the position and agrees to be introduced on Sunday, Aug. 26.

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From a Member of the Search Committee

As a member of the search committee, I was very impressed with Chris Peterson. While I could see that he had a stellar resume, I wanted to know more about the man himself and see if he was a good fit for our congregation.

He told us that he’d grown up in a Congregational church and attended a Unity church after college. He indicated that he was a very spiritual person and believed in God. When asked about his vision for the music program, he said it was to achieve “the highest possible artistic expression, connecting with people of spirit.” His goal was “to challenge the group as far as they can go.”

When we asked about the kind of music he preferred, he responded, “I’m always searching for music that’s expressive and will connect. My programs are quite varied. I have stacks of openers and closers. I like a program that makes sense in the way it flows.”

We asked about what he thought motivated people to be volunteer choir members. He said, “They’re here because they want to get something out of it, whether it be artistic, connection, or spiritual. Everyone wants to belong to something that’s good and is supportive. I want to be cognizant of what they’re working for and how to help them achieve it. I want to meet people where they are and make them better.”

I asked what about IUCC in particular drew his interest. “I miss the connection of church, and I am interested in returning to church music,” he answered. “I like your views, especially your open and affirming stance. My friend Rob (Istad) liked it here and hated to leave.”

Chris is devoted to teaching music and says his passion is music education and training teachers. He said he “teaches people through music, not the other way around.”

I believe that IUCC is most fortunate to have a choir director of Chris’s background and caliber to fill John’s very large shoes. When he had his first rehearsal with 33 choir members, their responses mirrored the enthusiasm felt by the Search Committee. You can read about our process in the opposite column. I think that when you watch Chris direct, you will see why we are so pleased to have him working with us to make beautiful music!

~Tricia Aynes
I was a history teacher for 30 plus years in the Garden Grove Unified School District. One of the questions I always asked my students was to describe an event they thought would be in the history books someday. Of course, many of them commented where they were on September 11, 2001. That date 9-11 resonates with all of us.

In a less substantial way, the weekend of September 9 to September 11 also has historical significance for IUCC. Let me take you back to September 2016 when I wrote:

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

At that meeting we voted a resounding YES to move forward with Phase 1 of the master plan. Fast forward to September 2017 when I wrote:

But there’s even more planned for September 10. After 2nd service, beginning at about 12:15 there will be a Special Congregational Meeting for the purpose of voting on a motion to proceed with Construction and Construction funding of Phase 1A. This vote is the culmination of years of dreaming, planning, working on committees and task forces, working with the City of Irvine, fundraising, budgeting, meetings and more meetings. It truly has taken a village to make this day happen. Thanks to the members of the many task forces that worked through the years to see this effort to its fruition -- Long Range Planning, Capital Campaign Team, Building Committees (more than one). Special thanks to Anne Rosse who chaired both the Capital Campaign Team and the Building Task Force. Her tireless efforts, persistence, and expertise have truly been a gift to us all. Thanks to the members and friends of IUCC who have supported this project with their financial gifts and with their prayers of love and support.

At that meeting, we once again voted overwhelmingly to move forward.

Now we have one more special date in September - September 9 - to mark on our calendars and put in the history of IUCC. The special milestone is the dedication of our new office and classroom space. It will be a joyous occasion beginning with special music at 9:30. The special music will be followed by ONE service at 10:00 a.m. where we will celebrate with word and song this key moment in the life of IUCC. Immediately after the service, a dedication ceremony will be held on our new patio space. After the ceremony, tours and refreshments will be available. The dedication committee, chaired by Jessie Billings, has been hard at work making sure this is a joyful day for all!

One of the hymns that I think encapsulates where we are at this momentous time in our life as a community of faith is In the Midst of New Dimensions. The refrain from this hymn says what I think is true right now.

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

I hope you will join in on this journey and help to make this new space more than just a building but a place where God is truly still speaking as we reach out to make an even greater difference in the community.

In faith and community,

Renae
A big Thank You to all who gave time and effort during the August 26 work day! The whole campus looks spiffed up and ready for business – and our sparse storage areas are better organized and assigned. Many thanks – especially to Teri Houston for pulling it all together!

Hard to believe it’s September already, but that means lots of good stuff is about to begin for IUCC’s adult education. First up – adult Sunday school; we’ll be looking at some of the Bible passages related to Israel and Palestine and asking whether they’re still relevant. This will lead into Bil Aulenbach and Scott Bollens’ next Israel-Palestine forum, on Sunday, October 21.

It’s also time to sign up for Comma Groups! We gather together every Sunday, but it can be difficult to make real connections in those few moments after worship, when so many people are moving around or heading home. Comma Groups give you the chance to get to know a small group of people – deeply, personally, and in a safe environment.

Join a Comma Group, and meet once a month from October through April. Get better acquainted with other IUCCers, and talk about how to enhance and live out your faith through one of our three group-study options: Global Missions with the UCC, the 8 Points of Progressive Christianity, or stories and poetry by Padraig O’Tuama. For more about our Comma Groups, here’s a brief video: http://iucc.org/ministry/small-groups/

And Midweek Salon is back! New member Zen Honeycutt will be our presenter, talking about her new book Unstoppable: Transforming Sickness and Struggle into Triumph, Empowerment and a Celebration of Community. Join us at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 26, for an hour of discovery and conversation.

Don’t forget about Tuesday afternoon Bible study, every week at 4:00 p.m. Ken Wyant leads us lightly and with good humor – okay, sometimes a real groaner, too. We’re heading toward the end of the Gospel of Luke, as we explore all the books of the New Testament in the order they were written, supported by Marcus Borg’s Evolution of the Word.

And we’re finishing up plans for our next Faith & Works event, on Saturday, October 13. After highlighting contemporary biblical scholarship with Amy-Jill Levine in the spring, we’re taking fall to focus on IUCC’s commitment to social justice. Our theme will be “A Just World for All.”

What does it mean to make public policy from a moral-ethical standpoint? How do the founding principles of our nation and the values of our faith provide direction for our leaders and legislators? This will take place right after vote-by-mail folks receive their ballot information, so we’re including a ballot-issue forum the next day after worship. Look for details and sign-up info soon!

AMY BIEHL’S LAST HOME

Amy Biehl’s Last Home, by Steven D. Gish, is the newest addition to the IUCC library. Everyone at IUCC should know this story because it personifies the very best of Christian teaching and faith, and it is a life from our own community and in our own time.

Amy Biehl was a Fulbright scholar who went to South Africa to work with the black population ahead of the election that marked the fall of apartheid, and resulted in the election of Nelson Mandela. Two days before she was to come home, she was killed by young blacks who were riled up with hateful ideology at a political rally, and saw Amy only for the color of her skin.

Not only did Amy’s parents forgive the four young men who were found guilty of killing her, but they devoted the rest of their lives to continue Amy’s work in helping the people who were so cruelly disadvantaged in the S. African apartheid society.

The book was personally signed by Linda, Amy’s mother, at a Hsiang family’s celebration of Tiffany and Stanley’s wedding.
Have you ever heard the criticism that the congregation, or a sermon, or a ministry (Mission & Service or Advocates for Peace and Justice?) or even an announcement is:

**Too political?**

Well, I have. I nearly always reject the criticism. Here are a few ideas why.

To begin with: *political* and *partisan* are different ideas, though many people will say “political” when they have “partisan” in mind.

*Partisan*, of course, is to adhere to the positions of a political party, or to support the goals of a political party.

But in a deeper and perhaps older sense of the word *political*, we may all want to plead guilty to “being political.” That deeper sense of the word *political* connotes standing for and defending deep and fundamental values as we engage our communities, as we live our lives. It is standing tall for values that matter.

Followers of Jesus, Christians, bring values to communities. Here are just a few:

- Thou shalt not kill. [Exodus 20]
- Let justice roll on like a river. [Amos 5]
- Love your neighbor as yourself. [Matthew 22]
- Do unto others as you would have them do to you. [Matthew 7]
- Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Assist the poor. Visit the imprisoned. [Matthew 25]

People in other religious traditions do the same. None of this is surprising, and none of this is doing a wrong thing.

Our congregation seeks to lift up Christian values as they take on life within our communities. And we should do that, and we should especially do that when our values may shine a light on matters of public policy. What should this country do about healing the sick? About feeding the hungry? There are plenty of sick and hungry people in the United States, and – risking that we may get it wrong sometimes – it is a high calling to address such topics from a Christian standpoint.

Now, with all that being said: I agree that as a congregation in an official capacity, we should avoid most partisanship, and I think we try to do that at IUCC.

- We should not, and I think we do not, proclaim *as a congregation* that one political party is right and the other is wrong, although we may argue at times that a party has done a good thing, or a bad thing.
- We should not, and I am convinced that we do not, speak on behalf of the congregation with encouragement to vote for or against particular candidates for public office.
- We should not, and I think we do not, as a congregation, proclaim that a president or other leader is good or bad, although we may argue at times that a leader has done a good thing, or a bad thing.

In the end, if we are not being political, we are not following Jesus. So, we should be political. And let us also be nonpartisan.

**Keith Boyum**

*Keith Boyum is Professor of Political Science Emeritus California State University, Fullerton*
Friends of Orange County Detainees (FOCD) is an organization sponsored by Tapestry, A Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and IUCC is one of their affiliates. Its primary mission is to provide humanitarian friendship to immigrants and asylum seekers while they are in detention. Some volunteers also assist with transition after a detainee is released.

I recently had the experience of visiting two female asylum seekers from African countries. Both had been persecuted in their home countries, one for the “crime” of being a lesbian, and one for problems she encountered while being forced to be in the military. They both left their families and homes under life threats, and managed to get to the U.S. border after harrowing journeys through South and Central America and Mexico.

I am happy to report that both women received asylum, but not before spending months in jail where they were treated the same as other inmates, even though their request for asylum was not illegal. They were the lucky ones, because they had a good judge and pro-bono lawyers, which is rare.

You may wonder what it is like to visit detainees. Visiting hours are Friday through Monday, and inmates may only have one visit per day, for about 30 minutes per visit.

They put their names on a list to get visits from FOCD, and the wait list to get a visit is long. Several detainees have told me that I am the first person to visit them after months in jail, and they say it makes them so happy. We talk about whatever they bring up. Often it is their legal cases, but they also like to talk about their families and their lives in their home countries.

As a FOCD volunteer, you have the option of visiting the same person regularly, or visiting a different person each time. The biggest daily problem for them in jail is boredom, so anything we do to alleviate that is so appreciated. You go through security and check-in before going to the visiting area. At one facility you sit across from the detainee at a long table alongside other visitors. At another facility, you communicate by phone in a visiting booth. You cannot touch the person or give them anything, but you can write to them later. Mostly, you are someone who lets them know they are not forgotten and that you care about them.

FOCD does a great job of providing orientation and ongoing support to its volunteers. Recently, over 100 people came to an orientation held at IUCC (see photo above) looking for a way to help following the revelations about the administration’s zero tolerance policy and separation of families. I encourage anyone interested to go to the website www.friendsofocdetainees.org

Karen Smith
While we may not have traveled far for our service trip, we were grateful to be exposed to a community very different than ours. When I initially heard we would be going to LA for our service trip, I frankly lacked excitement, for I reflected upon my limited experience in LA which consisted primarily of memories of overcrowded streets and overhyped tourist spots.

The first day we were in LA, we visited Homeboy Industries, an organization that provides free services and operates social enterprises such as a bakery and cafe which employ at-risk youth, people who were recently incarcerated, and former gang members. As we received a tour of the headquarters, I was filled with a sense of awe: awe at the people formerly incarcerated who had changed their lives around, awe at the love I saw being shared between two “macho” looking men, and awe that so many people had walked in through the same doors we just had and had been given a second chance.

Later that day, the youth group went to All Peoples Community Center and Church. We stuffed backpacks with school supplies and organized donated clothes into boxes. While the act of organizing isn’t as impactful on its own, it was a wonderful way for us to get acquainted with community members and learn about All Peoples Community Center, which has a long history of providing a multitude of services which enrich and support the community. The following day, we took a walking tour of downtown Los Angeles led by the LA Conservancy. It was interesting learning about historical architecture and art pieces, but admittedly, it was a very hot day to be roaming the streets of LA. We later visited the California Science Center and the California African American Museum, both of which had intriguing exhibitions, including an exhibit on gospel music.

That night, we volunteered with an organization called Share A Meal. Each of the youth made several burritos and then our group was sent off to Echo Park to deliver the food, water, granola bars, and feminine products to those in need. For me, this was one of the most rewarding experiences. We talked to many different people; one man played the guitar for us, another couple had an adorable dog that greeted us, and another man told us about his family. What I enjoyed so much was interacting with these community members, and being exposed to a demographic I am often sheltered from in “the bubble” of the OC. As I saw regular volunteers greeting people in the park with a warm embrace just like old friends do, I finally realized why people love the city. I have a newfound appreciation for LA, but more importantly, for the community members that make it what it is. Seeing our youth group grow together and push ourselves out of our comfort zones was beautiful.

Typical of every IUCC youth service trip, our mission was not to come in as saviors, but to come in realizing our privilege, and ready to learn about the experience of others. And I think we did just that.
Youth Mission Trip
Photos courtesy of Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips
News & Events

Building Dedication on Sept. 9!
September 9 is the date for the dedication of our new facilities! There will be special music at 9:30 followed by ONE worship service at 10 a.m.

Request for help on Sept. 8
The prep squad for the dedication service refreshments will meet Saturday, Sept. 8, in Plumer Hall from 1-3 p.m. All ingredients will be supplied for chopping and skewering, so bring only your sharp knives and melon ballers and any other tools you might find helpful. Sign up on the patio and check out other options for helping with this big event. On Sunday, we’ll need pourers and servers, as well as set up and clean up crews. See Pat Sauter with any questions.

Choir back to practice on Sept. 6
The choir will be back at practice on Thursday, September 6, in preparation for the dedication service. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 7:15-9:00 p.m. and Sunday mornings promptly at 9:00. This Thursday evening, members of the choir will gather at 6:00 p.m. to get acquainted with our new choir director, Chris Peterson.

Women’s Fellowship
Wednesday, Sept. 5, 6:15 p.m.
Our first Wednesday Women’s Fellowship will resume on Sept. 5 at 6:15. Optional sign-up on patio. Come with your favorite beverage and an ingredient for our “super” supper salad; greens and dessert provided. All are welcome to help make plans for our Fall meetings. See Pat Sauter with any questions.

Church Picnic
Sunday, Sept. 16, 12:30 p.m.
Our All-Church Picnic will be at Mason Park in Irvine. Come with a dish to share and be prepared to have fun!

Knitters and Crocheters
Due to the busy Saturday planned for Plumer Hall on Sept. 8, our regular 2nd Saturday meeting is cancelled and we will resume our handiwork sessions on October 13 from 2-4 p.m. in Plumer Library. Please keep up your good work and put any completed shawls in the library bin. More news on the October meeting next month. See Pat Sauter or Nancy Dreckerman with any questions.

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, Sept. 18, 9:30 a.m.
This dynamic group of 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.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed!
Coffee Hour is an every-Sunday “happening,” and hosting Coffee Hour is a loving way to help nourish our bodies and strengthen our relationships. Thank you to those who provided Coffee Hour snacks and good cheer this summer, including several choir members who marked their choir vacation by volunteering as Coffee Hour hosts. Now that the program year has begun, it is time for the rest of us to help out in this ministry. Please sign up on the patio on Sundays and help make Coffee Hour “Happen.”

9/28 Andrew Adkins 9/07 David Karsten
9/16 Lauren Adkins 9/23 Lizabeth Kerr
9/26 Susan Allen 9/26 Susie Lang
9/06 Cristina Arce-Jones 9/14 Laura Long
9/17 Kiana Austin 9/16 JoAnne Mansell
9/17 May Austin 9/12 Michele McCormick
9/17 Scott Bollens 9/29 Iris Mecartney
9/20 J.S. Coke 9/25 Don Mineo
9/16 Lavinia Cooper 9/12 Aidan Mitchell
9/14 Alyssa Cornett 9/22 Ava Mitchell
9/14 Judy Curry 9/11 Jeff Oleson
9/26 Ruby Fulton 9/20 Sofia Portillo
9/08 Peggy Goetz 9/09 Suellen Rowe
9/16 Ashley Herndon 9/20 Stephanie Sanders
9/20 George Johnson 9/10 Paul Thornton
9/19 Vivian Johnson 9/17 Alyssa Wilkens
Midweek Salon
7 p.m., Wednesday, September 26

Midweek Salon is back! New member Zen Honeycutt will be our presenter, talking about her new book Unstoppable: Transforming Sickness and Struggle into Triumph, Empowerment and a Celebration of Community. Join us for an hour of discovery and conversation.

The Israeli/Palestinian Discussions

On Sunday, August 19, some 55 people met in Plumer Hall to hear UCI professor Dr. Scott Bollens share his extensive knowledge about the real situation in Israel, especially in the Jerusalem area. Bil Aulenbach shared some of the experiences he and Anne had when they visited Israel in the late fall of 2017. There was a very healthy discussion afterwards. As a result, the four ministries who collaborated on the event (Advocates for Peace & Justice, Mission and Service, Global Mission and Adult Programs) want to continue the conversation.

The next gathering will happen on Sunday, October 21 with a light luncheon after the 11a.m. service when we’ll hear from a group of Palestinians, Christian and Muslim, about their perceptions about what is happening in Israel. This will be followed by a question and answer period. We promise that we’ll stop the formal program by 1:30 p.m., but will continue with informal discussions for those who want further information.

There will be a sign-up after church about a month before the event. It helps to have a number for planning, but we’ll always have enough extra food for those who, at the last minute, wish to attend.

Incidentally, this session will be open to the community: all faiths, denominations and those folks who are just interested. For more information, call Bil Aulenbach at (949) 240-2933.

New member from June 2018

Sharon Lynn

New members from July 2018

L to R: Ben Honeycutt; Todd Honeycutt; Zen Honeycutt; Lynn Carpenter; and Bronson Honeycutt (in front)
Our IUCC Newsletter is getting so juicy that you might not have even noticed that I took one month off from writing entirely, and last month I just posted a “commercial” for a resource I have available for those interested in topics specific to infants. Now it’s time to begin another “academic year” (I always think of “years” as September – June) of parenting columns. I’ve put out quite a few requests for suggestions for topics but have heard from no one, which leaves me again to my own devices.

I’ve been writing this column for the IUCC newsletter for almost 20 years and have 215 columns in my computer! To prepare for a new “theme” for this year I reviewed the past themes to see how long it’s been since we last talked about some things. People who were reading Powerful Parenting 15 years ago now have children heading for or in college! With that in mind, I’m thinking there is no need for me to invent new ideas but maybe re-visit some previous topics for a new generation of parents.

I also recognize that many people who read this column are not currently parenting children and do so because: a. it’s in the newsletter and they read the entire newsletter; b. they were parents of young children at one time and now reflect on how they did; c. they are grandparents; d. they are involved with children in ways other than parenting; e. they were children and want to reflect on how they were parented. All of these are good enough reasons for me to continue writing, I suppose.

Over the past two decades I have addressed 18 different “themes” which were carried over into a number of monthly columns. The very first columns were about dealing with child/teen behavior. Other themes included: preventing child abuse by empowering children; holiday themes; dealing with emotions and emotional issues; parenting adolescents; values and moral development; helping children accept and deal with change; helping children avoid violence; dealing with power-control struggles with children of all ages; helping children manage stress; using humor in parenting; explaining personal spiritual choices to children; parenting infants; bullying; sexual diversity; issues of the “self”; motivation; and lessons in civility.

You are all welcome to write to me at pgfsc@cox.net with your requests or suggestions for the next series of powerful parenting columns. You can also chase me down at church.

If I don't hear from anyone, I will choose the theme of “Dealing with Challenging (difficult, unacceptable) Behavior” for our next series of monthly columns. If you like this theme, you are also welcome to write to me with your questions or problems and I’ll fit them into the columns – anonymously, of course. If you want me to talk about something else, I suggest you contact me before the Behavior Intervention Strategies train leaves the station.

We’ll talk again next month.
The Wayward Artist

Our own Craig Tyrl (shown in top photo below next to Pastor Paul) is Artistic Director of a collaborative group of graduates of California State University, Fullerton. They call themselves *The Wayward Artist*. They will be sharing a piece from their collaborative at our services on September 16th.

The Wayward Artist’s director of dance, Natalie Baldwin, and music composer, Ryan Whyman, combine live music, modern dance, and present-day storytelling. Experience a once-in-a-life-time event which explores expressions of human faith, diversity, existential hope & fears, and a wayward world. Don’t miss this deeply moving and profoundly expressive dance collaborative.


*     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *     *

Photos from a memorable Sunday in August

The Rev. Frank Lyman’s sermon on Ruth and Naomi included a wonderfully entertaining play with some very colorful characters!

*Photos courtesy of Cindy O’Dell*
Dear Readers,

September is one of my favorite months. The days become shorter, the children go back to school, and the harvest comes richly. I love the corn on the cob, the sunflower seeds, and the peas. Food is a wonderful treat. It’s a pleasure to sit at the dining room table!

Take time in September to notice the moon and the stars. Go on a picnic. Barbeque squash. Think of your friends and family. I think of my readers often.

With warm regards,

Miss Lily

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We should also consider “pre-cycling,” that is the practice of seeking to reduce consumer waste by buying unpackaged, reusable products or using one’s own bags, etc. “Pre-cycling” can help us to think about packaging and products before making their purchases.

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

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Recycle! Keep waste out of the landfills!

At IUCC, we intend to be good stewards of the environment and do our part by recycling whenever possible. We have recycle bins for materials which are picked up each week by Waste Management of Orange County. Waste Management’s answer to What Can I Recycle?

**PLASTIC**
- Beverage Containers – juice, soda, water - (must be empty or dry)
- Food Containers - ketchup, mustard, baked goods
- Household products Containers - detergent, hair products
- Plastic bags - (ONLY when bundled inside a plastic bag, tied and placed in cart) - OR, eliminate plastics by taking your own bags to the store.
- Toys - OR, donate to a local charity.

**GLASS**
- Food Jars – sauce, mayo, pickles (no residue)
- Beverage glass bottles wine, beer, liquor, juice

**PAPER**
- Bulk/junk mail, envelopes, catalogs
- Mixed paper (printer, color, all types accepted)
- Cardboard Boxes (flattened) - cereal boxes, egg cartons, beverage boxes, milk cartons
- Paper towel and toilet tissue rolls
- Pizza boxes (no food residue)
- Shredded paper (must bag before placing in cart)

For more information go to City of Irvine's recycling information page: [http://www.cityofirvine.org/recycling-hazardous-waste](http://www.cityofirvine.org/recycling-hazardous-waste)

We have been working on making our recycling bins more available and easier to use properly. It is most important that we each recognize that cans, bottles, paper, cups and plates must be free of any food contamination to be recycled. Contaminated product will not be recycled and food or moisture in containers may contaminate the whole bin.
With George's permission, I'm sending my thoughts regarding his recent diagnosis. Thanks for your concern and love. - Vivian

The neurologist in her starched white coat says, “We have the results of your extensive neurological test.” She looks with a steady gaze into George’s eyes. “It concludes that you have dementia.” A long pause as she waits for this to sink in. “We suspected so, but now we have the proof.”

“Do I have Alzheimer’s?” George asks in a small, husky voice.

“Yes,” she replies. The kindness expressed in her face comforts us. At least the bearer of bad news does so with gentleness. I hear it. I don’t hear it. I believe it. I don’t believe it.

“What should I do,” George asks, appearing somewhat perplexed.

“Nothing,” she responds with a smile. “Keep enjoying your life by being active socially, physically, and mentally.”

“Enjoy each moment? Each day?” I inquire, my throat dry.

“Yes,” the neurologist affirms, “do as your wife suggests, George, enjoy each day.”

George sits quietly, and then asks, “What will happen?”

“Your memory will gradually get worse,” she responds in an even, unemotional tone.

“Will I die from it?”

“You will not die from Alzheimer’s. It doesn’t kill people, but complications can.”

In the car on our way home, I want to discuss the news without being intrusive. I want to respect George’s need to process. I venture, “How is this for you?”

My question hangs in the air. George, looking straight ahead, says, “She didn't beat around the bush. She was very frank.”

“Yes,” I say. “I’m glad she had the courage to tell us the truth. Now we know what we’re dealing with.”

George nods, his face blank, free of emotion. My heartbeat is rapid. I remind myself to be calm, to drive carefully. “I’m here for you, sweetheart,” I say, as I reach for his hand. “I’ll be with you all the way.”

“Thank you,” he says. George is quiet, quiet, quiet, finally asking, “When did this start?”

“About four years ago I observed some beginning signs,” I respond. “As the neurologist said, it’s more evident to the person closest to you than it is to you yourself. I noticed several behavior issues as well as memory loss. Two years ago you were diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment. Now that diagnosis has changed to Alzheimer’s.” (I notice that I don’t like to say the word.)

George says, “Dementia sounds better.”

I recall the words of author Faith Baldwin, “Time is a tailor, specializing in alterations.” We have been altered, all right, both the man I married and his wife.

We arrive home. George goes to lie down in the bedroom. I look at the description of his new medication:

**Memantine is used to treat moderate to severe confusion (dementia) related to Alzheimer’s disease. It does not cure Alzheimer's disease, but it may improve memory, awareness, and the ability to perform daily functions. This medicine works by blocking the action of a certain natural substance in the brain (glutamate) that is believed to be linked to symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.**

Tears come easily. My strongest response is sadness: Sad for George. Sad for our children and grandchildren. Sad for extended family and friends. And, yes, sad for myself.

My apprehension rises: What next? Am I able to cope with this? Am I capable of being his daily caregiver? How many years do we have left? Will I live long enough to care for him? I’m reminded of something I read, “Always carry a dream in your heart. It will keep you warm on cold days.”

On this emotionally chilly day, my dream is that we become other-focused as opposed to self-focused. With bad news it is easy to become self-absorbed. Also, my dream is that we intentionally look for the beauty in little things so our souls will be blessed with inner peace. Is that too positive a spin? I need it. That is how I cope.

In the midst of sadness and apprehensions, life goes on. I glance at our patio. A single yellow rose stands tall and gorgeous as it reaches for the sun. Thank you, rose, for reminding me to look for the beauty in each day.
Where's God? Some 20 IUCC members are involved in our final PC offering for the summer: Charting the 21st Century Reformation. I would like this Reformation to start at IUCC because I feel that this PC congregation has so much going for it that this Reformation needs. More later, but right now our Reformation plans have a BIG problem.

It starts with our antiquated perception of “God.” This stumbling block dates to about 1,000 BCE when folks perceived that God lived in His “mansion,” above the third tier of a flat Earth around which the sun revolved. He, and his Son, could flit back and forth at will. God ran Earth with an iron fist. Some 2,000 years ago, he sent His Son (also God) “down.” Then, in the 15th century, Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler and Galileo threw ice-water on this 3-tier formula when they pronounced that the sun doesn’t revolve around the earth (it’s the other way around) and that there were lots of other planets out there too.

These findings rendered God as “Homeless” and his “mansion(s)” destroyed. This played havoc with the church’s theology, and for 500+ years the church ignored it. The next “party pooper” was Isaac Newton and his theory about natural law, which says the universe operates in a predictable, fixed, and precise way (implying that people can’t walk on water, have virgin births or make premium wine out of tap water). Does that make God “Unemployed?”

The next “spoiler” was Sigmund Freud, who suggested that God as BIG DADDY is out and that we need to grow up and be responsible for ourselves. The next theology “killer” is the Hubble Spacecraft, which tells us that there are two to four trillion galaxies out there, each with 100 billion stars plus so much more unknown. Yikes! Where’s God?

We do know that if Jesus had ascended, as reported, he would still be in orbit. But this class thinks we have an idea that could move the Reformation closer. Suppose we promote God to be in charge of the whole Universe, not just us and earth?

Perhaps we could call God “the Ground of all Being,” or Higher Power or Creation? It’s a fun idea but with a BIG problem: almost every bit of the church’s dogma and doctrine disappears. That works for me because then Jesus’ message of agape love, as he shared in his parable about the Prodigal Son, becomes The Foundation Stone for us Followers. It’s a great idea - except I suspect the Church isn’t going to like it. Let’s see what we end up with in September.

But there are a couple of “for sures.” First, our PC classes are never dull. Second: There are hardly any other churches in the USA who promote such open thinking and free expression.

Why shouldn’t IUCC start the 21st century Reformation?!

PeaceLoveJoyHope

Bil

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.
Riddle: What do the Academy Awards and a Presidential Election have in common? Answer: In both cases, the campaigns begin months, even years before the actual event.

This year, as always, the Academy began awards season by announcing a few changes to their awards show. First, they plan to keep the Academy Awards broadcast to three hours maximum. Best of luck with that. Second, starting in 2020, the show will be broadcast on the second Sunday in February. The biggest change is the addition of a new category: Best Achievement in Popular Film. It's finally happened. After years of carping about the “popularity” of Best Picture nominees, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has finally created a category in which box office receipts matter more than artistic achievement. Who knows? In the future, perhaps the only films eligible for an Academy Award will be Comic Book thrillers and *Star Wars* retreads. And for serious filmmakers, well…there's always Sundance.

Here's a list of films that, at this early date, I believe to be front runners for the Academy Awards. I base my opinions both on information gathered from such websites as indiewire.com and awardswatch.com, and on articles taken from such show biz periodicals as *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Vanity Fair*.

I'd like to make something clear. As of this writing, I have not seen any of these films. Therefore, it is impossible for me to comment on their quality. This list is merely an early attempt to handicap this year’s Oscar race. If I’m right, we'll know what to look for when they start hitting the theatres. If I'm wrong, you're on your own.

1) *BlackKkKlansman* (Spike Lee) - Spike won his Palme D'or with this one. It's already been released in the U.S., but there will, no doubt, be an Oscar campaign at Christmastide.
2) *Won't You Be My Neighbor* (Morgan Neville) – By the same guy who made *20 Feet from Stardom*. It's everybody's favorite doc this year, and it's a shoe-in for the doc award.
3) *First Man* (Damien Chazelle) – Damien's take on the moon landing. Big buzz about this one. But there was big buzz about *La La Land*, too. Don't get me started.
4) *Roma* (Alfonzo Cuaron) – A neo-realist fantasia on middle-class life in 1970s Mexico City. Calls to mind a Fellini's fantasia of the same name. It's Netflix, though.
5) *If Beale Street Could Talk* (Barry Jenkins) – Based on James Baldwin's novel of the same name. It's the story of a young woman who battles the law for her love.
6) *Welcome to Marwen* (Robert Zemeckis) – Steve Carell as a World War Two veteran who uses photos and action figures to conquer his PTSD. Directed by Bob Zemeckis.
7) *Beautiful Boy* (Felix Van Groeningen) – Based on a father/son memoir about a family dealing with addiction. Stars Steve Carell & Timothee Calamet.
8) *Boy Erased* (Joel Edgerton) – A story about a young man's attempts to survive gay conversion therapy and his family's inability to come to terms with his truth.
9) *Widows* (Steve McQueen) – Based on Gillian (*Gone Girl*) Lynne's novel. It's the story of the widows of three gangsters who team up to beat off a gangster threat. The cast is loaded with star power.
10) *A Star is Born* (Bradley Cooper) – The latest revival of an old Hollywood saw about stars. This one stars Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga. Mr. Cooper directs.
12) *Hereditary* (Ari Aster) – A frightening look at family dysfunction. Likely to land Toni Collette a Best Actress nomination. She may even win; who knows?