We dedicated our new building on September 9!

UCC Conference Minister Felix Villanueva congratulated the congregation

Building Task Force Chair Anne Rosse & Moderator Renae Boyum were driving forces behind the project

Rabbi Rachlis from University Synagogue presented Pastor Paul with a new mezuzah

Pastor Paul

Anne Rosse thanked domusstudio architecture (architect) and Wieland (builder) for their extraordinary efforts

Administrative Pastor Steve Swope showed off a new bench

Sofia Portillo and some of our young people

Bookkeeper Heidi Willcox & former Administrator Michael Spindle played a big role
There was special music before the service ... 

Our amazing chancel choir was back (and in great voice!) ... 

There were tours of the new building ... 

Dedication photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
There were wonderful “behind the scenes” helpers...

And there were many happy people enjoying the reception!
Fall is my favorite season of the year. I grew up in Minnesota where September and October were full of days with a special crispness and bright with trees arrayed in their fall foliage. I think you would agree with me that this is not an apt description of fall in Southern California. Nevertheless, fall is still a special season here with many beginnings and many holidays and gatherings to look forward to.

One of the hallmarks of fall here at IUCC is our annual stewardship campaign. Under the leadership of the Fund Development Committee (Susie Lang, Janet Emery, Linda Haghi, and Connie Jones), we will ask all of the members and friends of this faith community to make a financial pledge for 2019. Why do we ask you to do this?

A story . . . I grew up on a farm in rural Minnesota. My Dad was a dairy farmer, there were six kids, and by today’s standards we would certainly be considered poor. My dad prefaced many sentences with this phrase, “I may not know everything, but …” and then he would proceed to share his opinion with us. One of his opinions was that pledging was wrong, was risky, and was unnecessary. I can remember him sitting at our kitchen table arguing with our minister about this. A surprising story for your moderator (and former chair of several stewardship campaigns) to tell you, but here are some reasons that I hope will compel you to pledge and do the exact opposite of what my dad believed.

Your individual pledge may not make a huge difference, but many individual pledges will make an enormous difference in the life of the church. If each of us do our part, no matter how small, the goal can be met.

Your church cares about you through both the good and bad times. Your church will always be there for you. So, if like my Dad you worry about not being able to honor your pledge, your church will understand and it will continue to care for you and support you.

Finally, your church needs your pledge so that it can make plans for the future. Plans that include even more programs for youth, young adults, and families. Plans that will help all of our ministries to grow and offer even more programs for our community. Plans to make our new meeting space a gathering place for all. In short, your pledge means the future will be bright and exciting for this vibrant faith community.

A few last words on stewardship, ones said by Pastor Paul in 2010: "Our dreams are about building and maintaining a community of people that are diverse in all ways, including how they seek faith and understanding of God in their lives. Our dreams are about having people who are there for us when we need them . . . Our dreams include building for a future that holds room for more to share our joy with. It’s about being ready to be open to playing a positive role in the positive change that can make us better, more compassionate people. And this I know is true: A church that knows who it is and why it exists will find the way (the financial resources) to be the church God is calling it to be. We know who we are. We know why we exist. Help us now to be the church God is calling us to be."

I look forward to the upcoming stewardship campaign and to joining you in giving of your time, talents and treasures.

In faith and community,

Renae Boyum
There's still time to sign up for Comma Groups! This is IUCC's program of small groups that let members and friends develop deeper relationships, share support through the events of daily life, and explore new ideas of faith in dialogue with others.

Comma Groups meet once a month from October through April, and this year we're offering three options for each group's study materials. At the first group meeting in October, you'll share samples from the 8 Points of Progressive Christianity, the UCC's Global Ministries, and In the Shelter by Padraig O'Tuama. Then your group will decide which one to follow for the rest of the year.

Sign up now – online at iucc.org/register, or on the Patio after worship!

Thanks to Zen Honeycutt, founder of Moms Across America and a new IUCC member, for September’s Midweek Salon! Zen shared her journey toward advocacy for natural foods as a way to fight illness and build community, the subject of her new book Unstoppable. We're planning another Midweek Salon for Wednesday, Oct. 24 – watch for more details!

Ken Wyant continues to lead Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study through the textual thickets of the Gospel of Luke. We're almost at the end, and we'll follow up with “Luke's” second volume, the book of Acts. Join us at 4:00 p.m. every Tuesday – we often adjourn to Square One Pizza for more discussion!

Faith & Works returns this month! On Saturday, Oct. 13, we'll gather with people from throughout the community to discover what it means to provide “A Just World for All.” Two speakers will open our day at 10:00 a.m., followed by your choice of hands-on workshops before and after lunch – all of it ending at 2:00 p.m.

The focus of this year’s event is moral-ethical policymaking. What public policies will best reflect the values of our nation (like equality, fairness, welcoming those escaping oppression) and of our faith (compassion for the suffering, justice for the downtrodden, support for those in need)? And how can we advocate for our values to those who make public policy? Join us on Saturday, Oct. 13, for information and tools to help make “A Just World for All.”
While it took nearly a year from our Ceremonial Groundbreaking last October, we are finally moving into our fabulous new offices and meeting rooms. Supported by these strengthened facilities, we can grow in community significance through strong programs and service. We look forward to using these new spaces as resources for reaching out, for serving, and for standing tall for our shared progressive Christian values!

It did, indeed, take a village to get to this point so there are many people to recognize:

- This church community - for your generous financial support, patience during construction and vision for IUCC’s future. Thank you, thank you, thank you!
- domusstudio architecture (architect) and Wieland (builder) – for their extraordinary talent, professionalism, competence and care.
- The Building Task Force – for their devotion and commitment, meeting month after month, then week after week, to thoughtfully plan these new spaces, constrained by limited funds but dedicated to maximum utility.
- The Capital Campaign Team – for raising the funds that made this project possible.
- The Building Dedication Committee – for one heck of a dedication celebration!

With this project, we’ve added approximately 2500 sq. ft of new indoor space and 2100 sq. ft of new/reconfigured outdoor space. It includes: three meeting rooms; two staff offices; one church office; one future office used in the near-term as flexible work space; our Fellowship Patio; and the Pastors’ Patio. Our new frontage features beautiful water-wise landscaping, along with new signage so that visitors and neighbors alike can find us.

With operable partitions, our new meeting rooms can be configured into different room sizes. When the three rooms are combined into one large meeting room, it will have a capacity of approximately 75 seated and 160 standing. Each meeting room comes equipped with a screen. A portable device, compatible with our Sanctuary system, will provide hearing assistance, if needed.

#106 – The Peace Room
(The Sharon Holdt Room)
Direct access to the Fellowship Patio
Approx. sq. ft: 415 SF
Max seated capacity: 28
Max standing capacity: 60

#107 – The Justice Room
Direct access to the restroom
Approx. sq. ft: 380 SF
Max seated capacity: 26
Max standing capacity: 55

#108 – The Wisdom Room
Direct access to the Pastors’ Patio
Approx. sq. ft: 340 SF
Max seated capacity: 23
Max standing capacity: 49

Two new outdoor spaces have been added – an expanded Fellowship Patio, complete with attractive low-water-use plantings, and a smaller enclosed patio with direct access from the offices and one meeting room.

Fellowship Patio
Approx. sq. ft: 1,661 SF
Max seated capacity: 110
Max standing capacity: 238

Pastors’ Patio
Approx. sq. ft: 407 SF
Max seated capacity: 27
Max standing capacity: 59

The newly-vacated previous Church Office will be remodeled into another classroom for our busy preschool, thereby increasing the number of students we can serve – sharing our open, affirming and inclusive values with the next generation.

Congratulations and thank you, IUCC, for coming together to update our aging campus, bringing much-needed new spaces to support our efforts to nurture tomorrow’s leaders and follow Christ’s teachings to love and care for our neighbors, be good stewards of our environment and live in peace. Now, finally, we can start putting these new facilities to good use!
On September 12, our church hosted a screening of the film “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville” followed by a panel discussion featuring representatives of various organizations working to combat hate crimes in Orange County: CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations); ADL (Anti-Defamation League); The LGBT Center Orange County; Irvine Police Department; OC Human Relations; and the Ocean View School District. It was a sobering, powerful, and enlightening evening. The call-to-action message was clear: Stand up to hatred and bigotry in your community. Understand privilege and use your voice to speak for those who don’t have that privilege. Teach your children how to combat hateful speech and hateful acts. Notify law enforcement when you witness a hate crime. Be an ally to your neighbors.

IUCC Pastor Paul Tellstrom welcomed the panelists and guests.

Katie Porter, a UCI law professor and mother of three children, spoke in advance of the film about how we can help young people recognize and react to hate incidents. “We must model for them, show them, give them the words to combat hateful acts. We cannot be silent. Let’s find a strategy. Children are afraid in a way they weren’t two to three years ago. We must model what it is to stand up for our values. We must be willing to have conversations with our children and practice what to do.”

The documentary, narrated by A.C. Thompson, offered an unflinching look at what happened when hate groups that had been isolated for years felt emboldened enough to come together from at least 35 states to express their neo-Nazi and white supremacist views. “Charlottesville was not a place to listen or understand,” he said. “It was a crime scene.” What followed were scenes of bloody confrontations where mobs attacked protesters in the streets, largely without interference from police. Many people were injured, and one woman was killed when a car rammed a group of peaceful protesters.

Michael Kent, an Irvine police department commander who oversees patrol and traffic incidents in the city, pointed out the difference between hate incidents and hate crimes. “Hate incidents are things that don’t rise to the level of a crime. If we can pursue criminal charges, we will. I urge you to stay engaged – if you hear something, contact us. From a public safety perspective, if you see something, law enforcement needs to be notified.”

Peter Levi, Regional Director of the ADL, said his organization maintains an interactive, searchable H.E.A.T. map that details extremist incidents across the nation. It is meant as a resource for law enforcement, journalists, and organizations. “We are the largest institution doing education for law enforcement,” he said. “The challenge is now to do advocacy such that every student knows they belong in school. We need resources and time to provide a future where there is no hate. We try to take a pro-active role so we are not just reacting to incidents. We need radical re-education to show students that diversity in our schools is a strength, not a weakness.” He pointed out that “Recruiting [for extremist groups] has gone up massively online. They put up posters on college campuses, then post photos of the posters online to show they were there. We’re seeing massive increases in podcasts in an attempt to mainstream their ideas.” His advice to all of us: “Say ‘ouch’ whenever someone tells a sexist joke or makes an insensitive comment. Don’t be a bystander. Stop it at the earliest level. Let’s disrupt it early on so they don’t find allies in extremist attitudes and it escalates.”

Laura Kanter, Director of Policy at the LGBT Center OC, focused on the murder of Blaze Bernstein. “This was very close to home,” she said. “I’m also Jewish and gay. After his death, we provided a place for the community to come together and heal.” She believes the growing extremism...
is an outcome of what’s happening in some homes and religious spaces. “Some parents are teaching hate without knowing it by saying ‘Love the sinner, hate the sin.’” She urged advocates to go to school board meetings and city council meetings and speak up.

Miliana Singh, Health Care and Transgender Services Coordinator for the LGBT Center OC, offered this call to action: “Be vigilant, be aware. Understand privilege and use your voice to speak for those who don’t have that privilege. Band together in unity.”

Don Han, Hate Crime Prevention Program Coordinator at OC Human Relations, said he gets calls from victims and also reaches out to victims. “They feel so vulnerable. I want to make sure law enforcement is involved when indicated.” OC Human Relations teaches others to embrace diversity and inclusion by conducting bias workshops. “Education is key,” he said. “Support each other in every capacity you can. Be an ally.”

Marwa Rifahie, Civil Rights Managing Attorney, CAIR, said her organization gets calls from victims and also gets hate mail on a regular basis. There have been incidents where Muslim women have had their hijabs removed forcibly. “Hijabs are worn for modesty,” she said. “If they are removed forcibly, it is like someone else getting their shirt ripped off. We want our community to live the life they deserve to live.” When CAIR receives a report, they interview the victim and gather details. When indicated, they pursue a legal process. “We do trainings at schools to help educators realize their own biases… we need to rethink how we define how we support children to speak up, let them know they don’t need to hold it in.”

Gina Clayton Tarvin, Trustee of the Ocean View School District, described her personal battle with a trash disposal company that allowed its dump to release noxious odors onto a nearby school composed largely of Latino children. When she raised objections, she became the target of a smear campaign and people came to meetings and berated her for being an immigrant sympathizer. It grew so bad that she had to get a protective order. When asked for what action she’d like to see, Tarvin responded, “Stand up to hatred and bigotry in your community. Stand up for those who are victims, especially if you are Caucasian. We are the allies of our neighbors. Go to public meetings. Write articles. Be online. Be the eyes and ears of the community. Be an advocate.”

Special thanks to Felicity Figueroa who helped organize this important event and bring it to IUCC!
There's an HIV shelter in Tijuana, Mexico that brings me close to Jesus. Our Global Missions partner, Albergue Las Memorias, is an amazing place of men, women, and children who live in community caring for one another. When people first arrive, often quite ill, given a bed, and nursed back to health by other residents. Once they are restored to health they do the same for the next incoming folks.

Church groups can see bible stories come alive with every visit. Prodigal drug users are welcomed back “home,” given blankets, food, love, and encouragement. Physical bodies are resurrected with their first steps down the hallway and out of the infirmary. Modern “lepers” whom family members and society have abandoned are held and touched. And Jesus can be seen in about 100 faces hanging out, eating meals, and providing healing and acceptance.

There are many emotions that come about in a typical visit. On a recent visit, some of us from the Irvine and Tehachapi UCC arrived and offered our usual “spa” day. We washed feet, rubbed on lotion, and provided massages to residents, beginning with those most ill. People in the tuberculosis unit nearly always die and sadly, there is about one death per week. The residents and those of us who visit, try to provide some amount of comfort to the bedridden. Then we offer up the same acts of service, including facials, to the ambulatory residents and we paint little girls fingernails bright and sparkly. It is an afternoon of healing touch and joy.

Sometimes we play games or do crafts and get to know their stories. Beautiful and bright eight-year-old, Maria, (not her real name, all other names have been changed as well) enjoyed arts and crafts and shared some hugs. This little girl’s dad held two university degrees, but he died from a heroin overdose. Look out world, Maria, is going to take you by storm, thanks to the love and care she gets living at the shelter with her little half-sister, “Mary.”

During our visit, we were happy to hear that 20-something, “Isabel,” recently married and no longer lives at the shelter. She was discovered positive for HIV as a young girl, but nobody knows why. Her parents were afraid of HIV and they dropped her off, never to see her again. The residents cared for her and made sure her beau was worthy of her hand.

There are as many unique stories as there are people at this mission partner of ours. Beautiful trans-female, “Joanna,” was shunned by her father and previously affected by self-hatred. Now, Joanna is no longer willing to be a street worker. She has dignity and self-worth and feels the love of God.

Several of the residents have suffered strokes related to their addictions, HIV and health status, and they are mostly paralyzed on one side of their body. They didn't think they could manage making paper flowers, with only one good hand, but wanted to throw a great fiesta for their retiring Disciples of Christ missionary, Jerri Handy. So, some of the guys paired up and together used pairs of two good hands to make flowers. One of the men, “Juan,” who has lost a leg, speaks six languages, only he can't speak any of them since his stroke. Instead, he writes in multiple languages on his wipe-off board. He wrote about his deep appreciation for all that Jerri has meant to Las Memorias.

During Jerri’s nearly four year tenure, churches have visited and some, especially those at the Irvine UCC, have provided funds and assistance to build a whole new dormitory for residents. It was blessed during the going away fiesta. Jerri also leaves behind a furnished apartment for visiting missionaries and pastors plus an active 12-step healing program she began for residents. She has touched many lives and any church would benefit by inviting her to come and tell them about this incredible place.

Certainly, Jesus was there with us, amongst the outcasts, the sick, the poor, the living and the dying. If you wish to see Jesus, it seems easy at this place, where children enjoy a piñata on one side of the dining hall and someone else is slipping into death in the adjacent infirmary. We who visited, got to share our blessings, touch and be touched, and intensely experience being disciples of Christ.
Photos from All-Church Picnic on September 16 at Mason Park

Photos courtesy of Cindy O’Dell

August Lobato & Steve O’Dell worked the grill
News & Events

Let's get together on social media!

Facebook: iucc
Instagram: iucc

Reminder
Did you know? You can check for updates on our website (www.iucc.org) and look for pictures and videos on our Facebook page and on Instagram!

Trunk or Treat
Time to get your car ready for IUCC's annual Trunk or Treat, taking place in our parking lot after the 11 a.m. worship, on Sunday, October 28. Talk to Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips for more information.

Women's Fellowship
Wednesday, October 3, 6:15 p.m.
Our first Wednesday Women's Fellowship will resume on Oct. 3 at 6:15. Optional sign-up on patio. See Pat Sauter with any questions.

Knitters and Crocheters
Saturday, October 13, 2-4 p.m.
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. See Pat Sauter or Nancy Dreckman with any questions.

The Seeker's Women's Group
Tuesday, October 16, 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 Signups now online!
Thank you to the faithful members who have hosted our Sunday morning Coffee Hours this past month. We are so glad to be able to enjoy coffee, snacks, and fellowship in a new, wider, more welcoming space – with umbrellas, even!

And we have a new way to sign up to be coffee hour hosts, too! Now you can easily sign up to bring snacks on the date of your choosing from the comfort of your home, office, or car. Just click on this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f45acab2ca5f49-iucc and check it out! And while you are there, how about seeing if there is a date that you would like to commit to as Coffee Hour Host?

(Don't worry, we will continue to use the paper signup list on the snack table, too – and if you have already signed up on paper for the rest of October and into November, we have signed you up online as well.)

I am so thrilled to be the newest member on the IUCC Leadership team, and I want to thank everyone in the congregation for being so welcoming and kind to me during my first month at the church. While I have been a choral music educator and choir director for over 30 years, I haven’t been a church choir director since I led a Methodist Church Choir program in South Portland, Maine, back in the early 1990’s. My transition back into church leadership has been time consuming, yet smoother than I expected, and the support of the congregation has helped me so much. Those of you who know my wife Tina probably also know that she has been the Director of Music at the Church of the Foothills for the past four years, and we are proud to be a husband and wife team leading the music programs at two of Orange County’s most progressive churches!

I want to invite everyone to our December concert with the Chancel Choir. This will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m. This 60-minute free concert will be called “The World Sings at Christmas: A concert of seasonal music inspired from diverse world cultures.” We will be preparing choral music from Africa, Spain, Ireland, England, Latin America, and Hawaii, and we will include a congregational Sing-a-long that will feature familiar Christmas carols from all over the world. You won’t want to miss this evening of musical celebration, and I hope you will not only attend, but that you will invite a friend to be there with you too.

Finally, I would like to extend an invitation to anyone in the congregation who is in any way “Choir Curious” to consider singing with us this fall. You do not have to have any choir experience (or music reading ability) to sing with us. The choir is a place where anyone who loves to sing can find a safe and supportive environment to make music and connect to spirit. Everyone contributes with their diverse talents and abilities, and I will teach you the basics you will need to be successful. Of course, anyone with choir experience will be welcomed as well. The time is perfect to join us and express your love of music. Feel free to contact me with any questions, or just come sing with us any Thursday from 7:15 to 9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Have a wonderful October.

Sincerely,
CHRIS (chris@iucc.org)
Music Ministry - Meet our Choral Interns

Welcome back Brianna Finnell, soprano!

Brianna Finnell finished her undergraduate degree last spring after performing her senior recital. She is currently a graduate student at UC Irvine studying vocal performance. She was born and raised in the Coachella Valley and moved to Irvine three years ago to study. She says, “I’ve been singing at IUCC for two years and it’s been a blessing. My passion is to share music with the community and to sing for God.”

Welcome Jacob Hall, countertenor!

Jacob Hall is a third year at California State University, Fullerton, currently studying vocal performance as a Countertenor. Jacob started singing in his junior year in high school, mostly doing musicals and choir. He now performs with multiple groups on and off the CSUF campus, such as their University Singers and opera program, as well as an early music ensemble named Jouyssance in Los Angeles. Jacob hopes further his education with a musicology degree, to become a music history professor.

Welcome Steven Amie, baritone!

Steven Amie is currently studying vocal performance at California State University, Fullerton where he sings with the University Singers under Dr. Robert Istad, and is training to be a professional singer as a baritone. He is presently a Bass Section Leader/Soloist at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, and is a former Bass Section Leader/Soloist at St. Boniface Catholic Church. Steven has attended Riverside Community College and Cal State Long Beach, and graduated from Rancho Verde High School. He lives in Long Beach and is originally from Carson, California. Steven will be joining us in two weeks.

Heartfelt thanks to some heroes in the choir

Suellen Rowe received a big “thank you” from the Chancel Choir for her 8 years of dedication to the Music Ministry.

We thanked and said goodbye to Joni Baker, who has shared her lovely voice with us for years. She has accepted a position to sing at another church.

(photos & bios courtesy of the interns)
I’m in the midst of writing a book geared to professionals who work with children who have been abused or neglected or who have developmental challenges. Along with some new material, it contains many of the publications I’ve written over the years. Chapter 2 was written in 1985. The last chapter was published in 2018.

Between those two dates I can tell you that every time I’ve met with parents, foster parents, or adoptive parents, the topic of choice was: Behavior. Every time I have been pulled aside by a parent at IUCC for an on-the-go quick consultation it has always been for the same reason: “Lorraine, let me tell you what s/he is doing,” and then, “What should I do?” Of course, I am not popular on those occasions when I say, “Interesting, I have no idea.” But frankly, sometimes I have no idea. The behavior of children and adolescents never stops being challenging, whether you’re a new parent, have a house full of kids, or are a grandparent. Chapter 2 is about behavior.

No child is quite like another child, and no child is quite like us. Unfortunately, the result of this is that there is no “formula” you can memorize that will tell you what you should do when your particular child does something that you find unacceptable. When I was a “boss,” new employees would often become angry and frustrated when I did not provide them with the “manual” telling them how, exactly, to respond when they encountered behavior that was unacceptable for some reason, sometimes just because it was “against the rules.”

There is no manual, because you would have to create a separate manual for each child, and no one has time for that. So we are left with some “approaches,” some ways of thinking about behavior, and some “options” for adult interventions with behavior. The rest is up to each parent, as it is up to each professional, whether it’s a day care provider, school teacher, community service provider, or professional child and youth care worker dealing with troubled and troubling children and young people. It’s always work and it’s always challenging.

I want to say all of this as we begin our year-long series on “Interventions with Unacceptable Behavior” because I don’t want anyone reading this column to be waiting for any “magic” answers from the old lady who’s worked with children and teens for over 50 years. I gave up looking for those answers decades ago and I invite you to do the same. That is my goal for this first column in the series: to relieve you all from the search for “the answer” to solving the behavior problems presented by your particular child or teen. There are “some answers,” but it often takes a while to happen upon them, and it takes a willingness to give up the search for “easy answers” and dig in for the task of raising emotionally healthy people, which is always complicated but always rewarding.

I’ve learned some things over the years and I will share them with you as we go along. One of the things I’ve learned is that no one has all the answers. It’s God’s way of keeping life endlessly interesting. What “works” with one child goes nowhere with another child. “These kids” is never about “these kids,” but always about this kid, and this kid, and this kid.

It’s also true that just as kids are endlessly different from each other, parents are the same. I’ve tried to “copy” things I’ve seen other people do that were very effective, and I’ve had NO success. Because I wasn’t them. Some people can be successful with kids using a “style” that absolutely won’t work for another adult. Learning to use who we are is just as important as learning what to do.

Interventions are a relationship: a particular adult with a particular child or young person. The “mix,” or chemistry, is always different. You can say or do something that would never work for me, and vice-versa. We’ll begin getting specific next month, but relax and don’t worry that you will have to change who you are. I’m hoping that I can help you use who you are to help those you love.
I carry the envelope with its precious contents into the local Office Max. The clerk is busy, but looks up and says, “You’ll have to wait. I have three customers before you.” Her tone is clipped, brisk, a bit snippy. She’s probably thinking, “Why doesn’t somebody come and help me?”

Finally, it’s my turn. “Yes,” Miss Crisp says, “I can copy and enlarge your photo. Yes, it will be in color. Yes, it will be on glossy paper.” She sighs as she takes the photo and clomps over to the machine. Her attitude says, “Why doesn’t this woman use the self-help machine? Old people just don’t get it.”

Miss Crisp returns with my copied photo in hand. My eyes linger on it. I look up, smile, and say, “Perfect.” Miss-not-so-crisp now is pleased that her customer is satisfied. “Who is that?” she asks, raising her sculptured eyebrows and pointing to the photo.

“My husband,” I respond.

Squinting to get a better look, she says, “He looks young.”

“Yes, that’s him 40 years ago. I want to hang it in our bedroom. He has Alzheimers now. He needs to see himself as he used to be. “And,” (a kink in my throat) “I need the picture to remind me of the man I fell in love with.”

This stranger, this snippy young clerk comes out from behind the counter. She comes close, reaches out and surprises me with a generous hug.

“How kind you are,” I whisper, as I feel her strong child-woman arms.

I gently pull back and ask, “What do I owe you for the photo?”

She shakes her head and says, “Nothing. My name is Jessie. I’m your new friend.”

Wonder of wonders. Why does this brief exchange fill me with gratitude of greater proportions than one would guess? Kindness is always appreciated, but when we are vulnerable – hurt, frightened, ill, trying to make ends meet – the smallest positive intervention has great power. It can give someone a boost, the energy needed to carry on.

A neighbor offered another positive: “I’d like to wash your car for you.” He might just as well have said, “I made your car payment this month.” To me, it seemed that big a deal.

In addition to Alzheimers, my husband has diminished sight; he misses being able to read. A friend of 50 years came to read to him. She read portions of a book by Brueggemann, one of his favorite theologians. I was free to leave, to run errands, and to have valuable respite time. A positive intervention.

Unfortunately, when we are vulnerable, the smallest negative intervention is powerful as well. When our 15-year-old son died, a friend who took the Bible literally, including the verse, “Rejoice always. Give thanks in all circumstances,” said to me, “You should praise God for Todd’s illness and death.” Give me a break! Have I forgotten her words? No. We long remember situations when someone said or did something negative, or that we perceived as negative. How about the time when a medical professional had poor bedside manners? Or the blunt, sharply expressed criticism? How about the mean things someone said or did when we were children or teenagers? We carry these negatives like boulders in our memories. Do I believe that with God’s help we can forgive and be released from such injury? Yes. But I want to honor the significance of positive and negative interventions. I ask myself, “How many rock piles have I left in another’s head?”

I agree with a saying I heard recently: Be kind to those you meet. You never know what they might be going through. When we are vulnerable, the strength of that positive or negative is humongous! We don’t forget. Thinking back on Jessie’s small act of kindness, I realize it remains BIG in my mind. I know it’s big, because I even remember her name.
Update on female Scouts BSA Troop 602

We are beginning the process of organizing female Scouts BSA Troop 602 starting on Tuesday, October 2, at 7 p.m. inside Plumer Hall. These meetings with their fellow male Scouts in Troop 602 will give our future female Scouts and adult leaders a chance to get acclimated to the Scouts BSA culture and an opportunity to participate in troop meetings and monthly overnight activities before the official Feb. 1, 2019 registration for female youth Scouts BSA members.

I need to have at least 10 females ages 10-17 and 5 adult volunteers registered by February 1st to make female Scouts BSA Troop 602 a reality. One of the leaders must be female and over 21 years old. I would prefer 2-3 female leaders if possible.

If your family is interested in being a part of this troop, please come to the next Troop 602 meeting or any Troop 602 meeting on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

You can also contact Matt Mirmak at irvineeaglescout1987@gmail.com or Becky Roach at eaglemom3x@yahoo.com.

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

Tips for saving the planet
(collected from various sources by Eileen Vincent)

1. **Turn Your Computer Off Overnight** - If you turn your computer off every night, again you will reduce the power you use. You will save an average of $14 a year. It’s not a huge amount, but better in your pocket than your energy supplier’s, right?

2. **Don’t Pre-Rinse the Dishes** - If you can’t live without your dishwasher, then at least cut the pre-rinse. With a decent detergent, your dishes will be just as clean and you can save an average of twenty gallons of water per load.

3. **Don’t Pre-Heat Your Oven** - Unless it’s absolutely essential (for example if you’re making bread), you don’t need to pre-heat the oven. You can just set it when you are ready to start cooking. Bonus tip: When checking the food, look through the door rather than opening it until the final check.

4. **Always Recycle Glass** - Did you know that un-recycled glass can take up to a million years to decompose? Always make sure to recycle your glass. It can reduce related water pollution by up to fifty percent and related air pollution by up to twenty percent.

5. **Choose Your Diapers Wisely** - Wherever possible, choose cloth diapers – this aids the environment and is kinder to baby’s skin. If you desperately need the convenience of the disposable diaper, use an environmentally friendly brand. The average child uses between five and eight thousand diapers – which equates to 3.5 million tons of landfill waste. And makes a huge dent in your pocket!
We have finished our four-week class about getting ready for the Reformation and came up with some interesting changes that the church of the future might consider. For consideration:

1. Let go of the God who lives in his mansion above the third tier of the flat earth. Promote God to oversee the universe (all 2 – 4 trillion galaxies) and call this higher power “Creation” or “Ground of all Being.” With this forward step, our liturgies, prayers, hymnals and mission statements need to be updated.
2. Demote Jesus from the mythical, magical, mystical, fantasy figure to be a fellow human-being who preached the powerful, transforming message of “agape” love. (See Luke 15:11-25 for Jesus’ definition of “agape.”)
3. The ancient dogma and doctrine of the institutional church needs to be put on the bookshelves and marked “Obsolete.”
4. Recognize that Christianity is an evolving religion that needs to keep changing with the times.
5. The idea of Jesus dying for our sins, as developed by Paul, needs to be shelled. Freud reminds us that we need to “grow up” and be totally responsible for our own lives.
6. The major thrust of the reforming, evolving church is to become the “ombudsman” (is there such a word as an “ombudswoman”?) to the poor, the oppressed, the disabled, the lonely, the elderly, the prisoners and the neglected of our communities…all in the name of Agape.
7. There must be continuing education for the clergy, all adults and the children in our communities. This is how our church families keep growing and evolving.
8. Small groups (i.e., Comma, Bible Study, Men’s, Women’s, Choir, governing bodies, etc.) are the basic structure of the 21st century church. Then weekly, we need to come together for corporate worship.
9. The structure of the new church ought to be more of a theater than the traditional building so that the facility can be used by other faiths, denominations and community gatherings.
10. Food and food services (well-equipped kitchens) will play a major role in the church’s ministry.
11. Trained missionaries need to be sent to all parts of the world to start schools, teach new ways to survive, provide medical services and build facilities. Our role is not to give people “fish” but to teach folks how to fish.
12. The words God (Creator), Jesus, holy Spirit need to be changed from “nouns” to action verbs.
13. Any church that has Jesus’ idea of agape as its foundation stone will never go out of business.

These ideas are simply food for thought. What do you think?

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.
Everyone needs a hero. In these gruesome times, when our public lives are filled with chaos and our private lives are filled with doubt and fear, we’re all looking for someone (anyone) who will fight to defend truth, justice and beauty. So, I’ve put together a list of films about superheroes. No, these superheroes don’t wear capes or masks or gold lamé panties. They’re simply human beings, some actual, some fictional, who, in some small way, help create a world that’s more just, more truthful and more beautiful.

1) *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (Frank Capra-1939) A naive Jimmy Stewart uses parliamentary procedure to break the corruption in the senate. I love this film.

2) *Seven Samurai* (Akira Kurosawa-1954) With the help of seven Ronin Samurai, a village of farmers vanquishes a gang of brigands. It's four-hours long, but well worth the investment. Still, if you'd rather, there's *The Magnificent Seven*.

3) *Twelve Angry Men* (Sidney Lumet-1957) A jury of twelve Euro-American men consider the case against a Latino defendant. As deliberations proceed, Henry Fonda uncovers the latent racism in that jury room. A classic.

4) *Inherit the Wind* (Stanley Kramer-1960) A fictional dramatization of the 1925 Scopes Trial. The film features powerful performances by Fredric March and Academy Award nominee Spencer Tracy.

5) *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Robert Mulligan-1962) Based on Harper Lee's novel, it features a newcomer named Robert Duvall and an Academy Award winning performance by Gregory Peck.

6) *Norma Rae* (Martin Ritt-1979) The story of Norma Rae Webster, a young mother who fights tirelessly to unionize the textile mill she works in. Sally Fields won her first Academy Award for this performance.

7) *Gandhi* (1982) & *Cry Freedom* (Richard Attenborough-1987) A pair of historical epics. The first, of course, is about the man who freed India. The second is about the preservation of the legacy of South African activist Steven Biko.

8) *Silkwood* (Mike Nichols-1983) The story of Karen Silkwood, a whistle-blower in a plutonium processing plant who is slowly tortured by the plant's owners. Meryl Streep received her fifth Oscar nomination for this one.

9) *The Thin Blue Line* (Errol Morris-1988) A documentary about Randall Adams, a young man who was wrongly convicted of the murder of a Dallas police officer. The real hero here is the filmmaker Errol Morris. Based on Morris’ painstaking deconstruction of the case, Adams was released from jail.

10) *Bread & Roses* (Ken Loach-2000) Adrien Brody and Pilar Padilla fight to unionize the janitors at an urban high-rise office building.


12) *The Incredibles* (Brad Bird-2004) If I had to recommend a cape-and-tights movie, this would be it. As it turns out, these heroes aren’t so super after all.