There was something for everyone at our Ministries Fair on February 17!

- Hospitality
- Childcare Center
- Advocates
- Adult Programs
- Young People
- Music
- Communications
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Friends of OC Detainees

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
More photos of Ministries Fair
From The Pastor
by The Rev. Dr. Paul Tellstrom

I was so impressed with Traci Blackmon when we voted at our last General Synod to have her lead the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries. She is kind, articulate and passionate—first as a pastor who served a local church in Missouri, and then in the work of justice in the community around her, which helped sparked a national movement.

From ucc.org, “Rev. Blackmon, the 18th installed and first woman pastor in the 156-year history of Christ the King United Church of Christ, became nationally recognized as a prominent voice for social change when Michael Brown was shot in Ferguson, just miles from her church. She immediately got involved in organizing the Black Lives Matter movement, effectively assisting and collaborating with the people in the community working for justice. Blackmon says it's very important to figure out the desire, direction and priorities around social issues, and listen to all the voices involved so to not leave anybody behind. She hopes to bring that reasoning and direction to the UCC’s mission.”

I remember the excitement that stirred on the floor of General Synod both after she preached and after we enthusiastically voted for her leadership. And, it was no secret that Traci was thrilled in return for this opportunity. She has been traveling the country looking for ways to help engage our churches in issues of social justice.

I invite you to bring guests on both Saturday and Sunday, March 30-31, to be a part of this special presentation from IUCC to the community around us. We are hoping to be joined by civil rights icon, Dr. James Lawson. More to come as we get closer. You will learn more in Pastor Steve's column inside.

I’m looking forward to watching as IUCC’s Adult Programs move forward, too. Next fall; the return of Dominic Crossan. And, probably new to you, John Pavlovitz will be here next spring. I tested Steve by inserting myself just one more time into the programming process, and he more than kindly asked Pavlovitz to speak. Find him on Facebook or Amazon.

At left is a photo of me with Traci—just look at the radiance on her face!

Pastor Paul
IUCC’s Hawaiian-themed Winter Party on Feb. 9 was great fun!

Many thanks to our wonderful Fellowship Ministry for all their hard work and creativity!

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
This congregation can hula! More photos from the Winter Party!

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
Keith and I have lived in our home in Irvine since 1980. Like many homeowners, we’ve had our share of repairs and ongoing maintenance. Recently we had to fix a small leak in the roof, and while not a “fun” way to spend our money, the expenditure was certainly a necessary one.

Ongoing maintenance and repairs are also a part of life at IUCC. The Administration Board, chaired by Daniel Blackburn, meets on a monthly basis to “do” the business of the church - personnel, managing the budget, overseeing building facilities and making sure that IUCC is efficiently and effectively run. The members of the Board - the Moderator (me), Treasurer (Mark Allen), Clerk (Laura Palen), and Congregational Representatives (Scott Bollens, Randy Brown, and Penny Portillo) - give many hours of careful thought to their responsibilities. In addition, the Administrative Pastor, Steve Swope, plays a key role in overseeing the maintenance of our facilities and grounds. Building and Grounds Committee Chair, Teri Houston, also plays a vital role in ensuring that repairs are made in a timely manner. Both are invaluable and greatly appreciated!

IUCC is some decades old and just as with our home, we’ve noticed a leak in the roof of Plumer Hall and also in the narthex. The leaks in both places were substantially bigger than anything I’ve had to deal with! So as a result, the Administration Board approved monies to repair the leak in the narthex and to replace part of the roof and the skylights in Plumer Hall. Some of you may have noticed the cranes or work going on. ↓↓

This CAPEX (Capital Expenditure) was budgeted for and will come out of the general fund. Costly, yes - but necessary - YES.

Another area of concern has been the need for fencing around the bioswale behind Plumer Hall. This bioswale was mandated as part of the recent construction project. It’s an important way to live out our commitment to green faith, but with the recent rains (certainly more than expected), the bioswale went from an area of mulch and plants to a lake and with that came concerns about safety. So a temporary fence was installed by our Building and Grounds chair, Teri Houston. ↓↓

Our Administrative Pastor, Steve Swope, has been exploring options for a more permanent solution. We are hopeful that in the next few weeks new fencing will be installed.

In addition, with our new building and the added space, we’ve hired a new cleaning service and also a new gardener. Both of those costs were greater than in the past and were part of the 2019 budget approved by the congregation. Of course, let’s not forget the remodeling of the kitchen in the preschool building, along with a new classroom created out of our old office space.

It’s been a busy time for construction, repairs, and maintenance here at IUCC! We are blessed to have amazing staff, dedicated leaders, a caring congregation, and meaningful programs to make a difference in the world around us - the sign of a vibrant, bustling faith community!

In faith and community,

Renae
The Bible Study safari continues to follow guide Ken Wyant through the thickets and across the plains of the New Testament book of Acts. Join us on Tuesday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. - new faces and questions are always welcome!

Al Gumb, a familiar face in Bible study and Sunday school, offers insight and discussion from TED Talks, at 10:00 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays; he leads a well-attended similar group in Laguna Beach. Watch the Friday email for his next viewing selections!

And Kelly Garrity offers a way to make your emotions – as well as your muscles – flexible with Yoga of 12-Step Recovery, in Plumer Hall at 1:30 on the 4th Sunday of each month.

IUCC has a Library!
It’s in the small room on the right as you enter Plumer Hall. And I confess: it’s looked a little worse for the wear lately. Organizing it keeps getting pushed to the bottom of the to-do list.

But I recently got a start on it, in earnest. As you enter, the first bookcase on the left is in order, and the one next to it is a “work in progress.” Right now, you can find books by IUCC members like Bil Aulenbach, George Johnson, and Fred Plumer.

You can also find lots of books by our many guest speakers, from Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, to Sr. Helen Prejean and Rachel Held Evans, from Bp. John Spong to the Jesus Seminar. There are also quite a few from other progressive Christian authors.

There is a shelf dedicated to the history and theology of the UCC, including its Congregational and Evangelical & Reformed ancestors. Plus there are a few books related to Judaism. I hope to report more progress next month!

It’s not exactly “adult education,” but I’m excited that we’re beginning a New Pictorial Directory this month! Janet Bamper is coordinating the project (thank you, Janet!), and family/household photos (including pets) will be taken March 8-17. You can sign up online at https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/yv2m89tk/ - or check the Friday email for a direct, clickable link. You can also sign up at coffee hour on Sunday mornings. Make sure YOU are in our new pictorial directory!

If you haven’t already signed up for Rev. Traci Blackmon’s visit at the end of this month – you know you’ve been meaning to – please do it now! Meet and hear from one of our UCC national officers and social-justice leaders! Rev. Blackmon will present two different talks on Saturday, March 30, at 10:30 and 2:00.

We’re also expecting Rev. James Lawson to be our luncheon speaker. He was a close colleague of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and keeps alive King’s message of nonviolent action for social justice.

In Adult Sunday School this month: Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi will finish his series on interpretive frameworks for the book of Revelation on March 3. Thank you, Eduardo!

On March 10, I’ll begin leading conversations based on John Dominic Crossan’s latest book, Resurrecting Easter: How the West Lost and the East Kept the Original Easter Vision. Choose either 8:45 or 10:00 each Sunday morning.
Photos from Scout Sunday on Feb. 10

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
Congratulations to Pastor Sarah on passing her ecclesiastical council on Sunday, February 24, at Community Congregational Church of Chula Vista (United Church of Christ)! Over 20 IUCC members attended to cheer her on (see photo below).

Sarah wrote this on her Facebook page: “Beyond blessed to have been approved for ordination in the United Church of Christ! My deepest gratitude to my family & IUCC family pictured here who made the trek all.the.way. to Chula Vista! And to all of you, who have been an amazing part of this journey to ordination ... thank you!”

Our Preschool hosted a multicultural event on February 15, which featured dinner items from many cultures. Participants, including parents, children, friends, gathered in Plumer Hall. Here are some photos provided by our ECC Director, Irma Rosales:
**Family Promise of Orange County** is a local non-profit that helps to rebuild the lives of families experiencing homelessness by providing emergency shelter, case management, tutoring, rental assistance and other support. IUCC has supported Family Promise for several years with a special offering and by helping the Church of the Foothills as it hosted the families three weeks each year.

Now that our new building has been completed, the Mission & Service Ministry wanted to try a pilot hosting of the program for one week starting August 11. In early January, the Administration Board approved the M & S plan to pilot a hosting week with Family Promise participants. We will evaluate the experience and decide if we as a congregation would like to host on a regular basis three weeks each year.

As a host church, we will be responsible for sheltering up to four families (14 adults and children) each evening and providing dinner and breakfast. The families will arrive at Plumer Hall at 5:30 p.m. each evening and depart at 6:30 a.m. the next morning after breakfast. We want to make the experience as warm and inviting as possible.

The room dividers in the room will be located to provide some privacy for each family. Family Promise will provide blowup mattresses, sheets, pillows and blankets. Before the adults and children leave each morning, their mattresses and supplies will be stored behind the dividers so that the room can be utilized as always for church and community meetings.

Volunteers will be needed to help in the overall planning, to stay overnight in the church with the participants, to provide evening meals, to shop for breakfast items, to help the children with homework on one or two nights, and to plan a movie night on the weekend. Please watch for sign up opportunities after Sunday services this spring.

This is your opportunity to directly help these struggling families. Love and kindness always make a difference.

The stories of two families below are examples of the good work that is being done by Family Promise and the churches that provide shelter and volunteers.

Carina, a hardworking and devoted mother of four, called Family Promise of Orange County seeking shelter as she and her children were sleeping in their car on a “dark scary street,” having fled a situation involving domestic violence. Carina and her children were extremely grateful to be in our Emergency Shelter Program and they thank all the staff and volunteers who welcomed them to their congregations.

Although homeless, Carina managed to successfully maintain full time employment while driving an unreliable, old vehicle, and raising loving and respectful children. Wendy, who met Carina and the children at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, one of our host congregations, decided Carina needed her old Corolla, known as “Ruby,” far more than she did. So, Wendy donated her car to Family Promise for Carina, which was a tremendous help for the family. On August 1st, the family moved into their own apartment.

Elijah’s parents, LaShona and Elijah Sr., became homeless this year when LaShona’s mom passed away suddenly. At the time, LaShona was only 18 years old, pregnant and heartbroken. This family was in the depths of despair and thought there was no hope. Fortunately, Elijah Sr. and LaShona were led to Family Promise and in the 50 days they were in our Emergency Shelter Program, the faithful volunteers and the Family Promise team restored their hope. LaShona texted to express her gratitude, saying: *“I love you, so happy you came into my life. You brought back the love that I thought I had lost.”*

Please volunteer and get involved!!

Contact Sharon Lynn (571-236-9517) or Colleen McNamara (949-558-8029)
News & Events

Let’s get together on social media!
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!

IUCC Garden Party!
Sunday, March 10, after 2nd service

We will have things to do for all abilities, and you needn’t plan on shoveling or kneeling to help. Bring gloves and garden tools if you have them. We need succulent and cactus donations over the next two weeks. Tall ones if you have them!! All low water plants are welcome!! There will be a sign outside of Plumer Hall to drop off donations at any time over the next two weeks.

Ash Wednesday service
Wednesday, March 6, at 7 p.m.
New Meeting Rooms
Our annual Ash Wednesday service will take place on March 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the new meeting rooms. Come and discover another creative use for our new spaces!

NOTE: Because of the service, there will be NO Women’s Fellowship this month! We will resume the first Wednesday of next month (April 3rd).

Yoga of 12-Step Recovery
4th Sunday each month at 1:30 p.m.
Kelly will be continuing her Yoga of 12-Step Recovery sessions on a revised once-a-month schedule. The new schedule is the 4th Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in Plumer Hall.

Isaiah House
Wednesday, March 13, 4 p.m.
Volunteers serve a meal to homeless women at Isaiah House on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Call (949) 436-1946 for more info.

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, March 19, 9:30 a.m.
The Seekers meet on the third Tuesday of each month for theological and spiritual discussion. Newcomers are welcome! Call Reefa for details - (949) 859-7091.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed
In February, Coffee Hour brought us Chinese New Year, the Boy Scouts’ birthday cake, Ministries Fair goodies, and nutritious snacks from Jim Martin’s Comma Group. Thank you to all! To serve as host for an upcoming Sunday, use this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f45acab2ca5f49-iucc to sign up online, or sign up on the sheet on the Coffee Hour table any Sunday. And let us know if you intend to make use of the donated funds we have in reserve. Thanks! ~ Sandy Exelby & Jan Wilson
Community Choice Energy Workshop

Electricity rates keep going up - are you ready for a choice? Join us to learn how over 160 cities in California are controlling electricity costs by forming local, not-for-profit Community Choice Energy programs. We will be providing lunch. Please RSVP on eventbrite.com or sign up with Judy Curry at church.

More information about the program is available at www.occleanpower.org
34th Annual Great American Write-In

Women For: Orange County, a non-partisan women’s group, is pleased to present the 34th Annual Great American Write-In on Saturday, March 23, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Delhi Center in Santa Ana. This free event is offered to the public every year to provide attendees with the means to influence policy decisions by writing letters to their legislators. Over 70 different organizations and advocacy groups will be represented with information regarding some of today’s most vital issues, including education, health care, human and civil rights and the environment. There is no cost for this event; Women For: Orange County will supply the post cards, stationery, postage, refreshments and parking.

The IUCC Advocates for Peace and Justice will have a table at the event. Please stop by and say hello!

The Pen Is Mightier Than The Sword!

At the Write-In:

- MEET representatives of local and national advocacy groups!
- LEARN about today’s vital issues!
- RAISE YOUR VOICE by WRITING to the decision-makers who can make a difference in health, the environment, peace, human and civil rights, education!

www.facebook.com/events/2178165812446768

For more information, please contact
Felicity Figueroa 949-733-0850 or felicitynf@aol.com

FREE ADMISSION! FREE PARKING!

FREE REFRESHMENTS! FREE POSTAGE!
The 8 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.

The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity:

IT’S TIME TO PLAN FOR THE IUCC WOMEN’S RETREAT
MAY 3-5, 2019

Facilitator: Rev. Jennifer Strickland (Claremont UCC)

Theme: “Stories Untold: Women of the Bible”

Location: Pilgrim Pines

We will look at different women in the Bible, including obscure women, read their stories and ask questions: How are these women subverting the system? How might this text and woman's story guide us today?

Rev. Jen will incorporate a personal reflection aspect to the retreat during which she will lead participants in journaling, making art, writing prayers, and sharing their own personal stories of triumph, heartache, challenges, and future hopes. The goal will be to use the narratives of the women found in Scripture as a framework for us to tell our own stories with honesty and openness.

For more info, contact Lorraine at 949-916-0176.
We began reviewing a “menu” of options adults have for responding to unacceptable behavior from children and teens. Looking back, I’ve never met an adult who didn’t remember with great clarity how their own parents/guardians responded to what was considered “unacceptable” behavior when they were children. Some adults realize they were lucky and that no responses ever fell into the “abusive” category. Other adults remember with both current and remembered emotion how hurtful some of the responses were. That these memories persist when we often can’t remember what we had for breakfast speaks to the power and lasting effects of early interventions with behavior.

Earlier we talked about how we never want to lose sight of why someone is behaving as they are, because behavior is never “pointless.” Looking back, perhaps you realize that when you received consequences for behavior that was disapproved of, no one even bothered to wonder what your behavior was trying to accomplish. Do you remember saying something like “I was only trying to…..?” Or you told the adults what happened to you before you acted as you did and they displayed disinterest in what was motivating you to do what you did, and only harped away about how what you did was “bad.” Our children feel the same way when we focus exclusively on what they do without trying to understand the why.

Last month we considered the option of “ignoring” the behavior by not giving it any attention which might reinforce it and cause it to continue. Perhaps you’ve heard the term “negative reinforcement,” which seems peculiar. We usually think of reinforcing as doing something good, building strength, etc. Negative reinforcement results from a child interpreting something we do as “positive” even when we intend it to be “negative.”

For example, when we single a child or young person out and correct them in front of a group, we usually mean for it to signal that what they are doing is wrong, or something we don’t want/want to stop. But if a child or young person is ignored at home and starved for attention, they will receive any attention as positive! Hey – I finally got noticed. Now I know what I have to do to get attention. At the same time, the adult is thinking “why are they persisting in this negative behavior when I am correcting it every time?”

We can get confused when our intention is for the intervention to be uncomfortable for the child, yet the child appears to take comfort in getting the attention. This is the reason why sometimes not correcting a young person may be the best way to get a behavior to stop. For some behaviors we want to give the message that “this is not the way to get my attention, so I’ll wait for you to do something right and then give you attention.”

I mention this because I’ve often been consulted by a parent/teacher/youth leader who is confused about why continual negative responses are not having any effect in changing an unwanted behavior. It is usually because the child/teen is receiving the correction in a way that feels good to them, and so they continue. Sometimes a child gets so used to being corrected it feels natural, and not uncomfortable. This is the time to sit down with them and try to figure out why the negative attention is not helping them change the behavior. Sometimes you can make a “deal” with them that you are going to try to not pay too much attention to them when they are “acting up” and will wait for them to act as they know they should, and then you will lavish them with positive attention. In this way, as we stated last month, “doing nothing can be doing something.”

Most adults will remember hearing the term “punishment” applied to the negative consequences they received for disobeying. If you heard the word often, you learned to think that “punishing bad behavior” was the way to get it to stop. We’ll pick up on this topic next column because it is complicated. It is true that punishment is often “effective” in stopping unacceptable behavior. However, like medicine that is “effective” in treating some conditions, there are usually unwanted side-effects. When something is bothering us and we want to “take something” to feel better we usually start weighing out the benefits of the medicine to what we’ve learned to anticipate as unwanted side effects.

I want to suggest that we take the same approach to responding to a child’s behavior. The fact that “it works” doesn’t mean that it’s good. When we decide that we are going to administer a consequence for unacceptable behavior rather than ignoring it, we are faced with the dilemma of doing it the easy way, with the possibility of many unwanted and unnecessary effects, or doing it the hard way, and taking the time and trouble to respond in ways that are not only effective but respectful and more helpful in the long run. See you next month.
If you are uncomfortable contemplating death, then read no further. However, spoiler alert: death comes to everybody.

I’m attending a music recital by university students. Two young women share a piano bench, and play a piano duet, F minor Fantasia, composed by Schubert, written shortly before his death at age 31. The pianists explain that it consists of four parts, all seemingly Schubert’s expression of saying goodbye to all the things he loved. The beauty of his rich music floats into my body and mind; it speaks to me, entering some of the innermost chambers of my thoughts. I ponder, with Schubert, the people and things I will miss as I leave this earth.

Tender tears accompany my thoughts, especially as I contemplate a farewell to my husband, our children, and grandchildren. Whomever leaves first – my husband or myself – that final leave-taking will be, well, so final. We experienced many separations in our long marriage, usually due to George’s work. This separation will be different. There will be no “I’ll call you when I get there.” There will be no “I’ll bring you a gift from my travels.” Not even a “Don’t forget to file our tax returns.” The finality of the separation is difficult to grasp. Even if one believes in heaven, the physical presence is still gone. And it is through that physical presence that we have related. We are body people.

One friend confided that after her husband’s death, she even missed the things about her husband that irritated her. Will George really miss my ever-present neat streak? Another said that he missed the back-scratching that had replaced sex in their later years. Yet another yearned for her husband’s young self, the strong and protective man she married, the one who made her laugh. Yes, that final “adios” will leave a trail of memories and longings.

In Norway, my deceased relative’s tombstone was carved with the words, Takk for allt, meaning Thanks for everything. It seemed reciprocal: thanks to the deceased from the living, and thanks to the living from the deceased. Our friend, a seminary professor, who in the categories of saint and sinner lived heavily on the saint side, said as he was dying, “Forgive everything. Remember the best.” At my death, those are the words I’d like etched on the mourners’ hearts: Forgive everything. Remember the best. And, thanks for everything.

George and I are elderly. We can imagine that final day will come. But, must we leave our children and grandchildren? Oh dear, the thought of a final “au revoir” pierces my heart. Though we raised our daughters to be independent, not needing to cling to their parents, in my illness and death I may want to cling to them. I will not want to let go. Have I finished being a parent? No. And our grandchildren, as I write I can hear them call me MorMor, the Swedish word for grandmother. I want to see them as responsible adults, as wise parents, as … whatever. I want their hugs and affirmation of me to go on forever.

To say goodbye to all my extended family, as well as to my dear friends, sounds like a difficult and wrenching task. I think of how they have impacted my life. Many people have been to me like God with skin on: they have comforted, guided, and partied with me. Best of all, they have loved me no matter what.

Beyond saying “auf wiedersehen” to people, I think of just some of the things about life that I enjoy. Eating: what a pleasure! The crunch of almonds, the sweetness of tapioca pudding, the spicy tingle of barbequed chicken, the tang and saltiness of pickles – on and on. Oh, yes, the elegance of champagne, as well as the smoothness of a good Chardonnay.

I will miss nature’s delights: the color of purple worn by violets, iris, and lilac blossoms. The aromas of sycamore trees, the ocean, a field of alfalfa. I will miss the sounds of life: a drum, a humming bird, or a loon on a Minnesota lake. And touch, the soft hairy coat of a dog or cat, the sharp edges of a sea shell, the velvet of a baby’s skin. I will sigh as I say farewell to these and countless other pleasures.

I don’t have the talent of Schubert to compose music expressing my feelings about death. Neither do I have the writing talent to put such intense and deep thoughts into words. Fortunately, others have. Once again, I turn to the intimate writings of May Sarton:

I would like to believe when I die that I have given myself away like a tree that sows seeds every spring and never counts the loss, because it is not loss, it is adding to future life. It is the tree’s way of being. Strongly rooted perhaps, but spilling out its treasure on the wind.

In the midst of contemplating death, may I truly live by sowing seeds that enrich the lives of the living. Perhaps by giving ourselves away, we are never really gone.
This month, I’d planned on introducing the work of George Cukor. While listening to NPR on September 22nd, however, I learned that Stanley Donen had passed away. When movie musicals are discussed these days, names like Busby Berkeley, Vincente Minnelli, and Bob Fosse arise over and over. Yet, in my estimation, discussing this subject without mentioning Stanley Donen is to pay the subject short shrift. So, whether I like it or not, I’m forced to put poor George Cukor off for another month and put Stanley Donen in his place.

Stanley Donen was born on April 13, 1924, in Columbia, South Carolina. Acting on his mother’s advice, he left Columbia at sixteen to pursue a career as a dancer on Broadway. In 1940, fairly soon after arriving in New York, Mr. Donen was cast in the chorus of a new show by Rodgers and Hart called *Pal Joey*. The star of that show was a young dancer from Pittsburgh named Gene Kelly.

By 1943, Mr. Donen was in Hollywood, working as an assistant choreographer for Arthur Freed at MGM. Mr. Donen was quickly enlisted by Gene Kelly as an assistant choreographer on the film *Cover Girl*. That was only the beginning. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Donen would collaborate on such masterpieces as *Anchors Aweigh*, *Take Me Out to the Ballgame* and *On The Town*. In 1952, they co-directed *Singin’ in the Rain*. The American Film Institute has declared *Singin’ in the Rain* to be the finest American Movie Musical ever made.

Mr. Donen went on to make films (not always musicals) with such notable talent as Fred Astaire, Audrey Hepburn and George C. Scott. Admirers of Mr. Donen’s work include master filmmakers of the past like Jean-Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut, as well as titans of today’s Hollywood like Guillermo Del Toro and Damien Chazelle. Stanley Donen died on February 21st of this year.

1) *Anchors Aweigh* (1945) – In this one, Gene Kelly dances with Tom and Jerry. Incredible! Donen was assistant choreographer.

2) *On the Town* (1949) – His first co-production with Gene Kelly. Based on the Leonard Bernstein musical of the same name. Unfortunately, it doesn’t contain a whole lot of Bernstein’s music.

3) *Royal Wedding* (1951) – Made to honor the wedding of Queen Elizabeth II & Prince Philip. Fred Astaire dances on both walls and the ceiling. Must see to believe.

4) *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952) – Co-directed by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Donen. Nothing more need be said.

5) *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954) – Michael Kidd’s choreography for this one was so dangerous, the dancers were paid hazard pay.

6) *It’s Always Fair Weather* (1955) – Another Kelly/Donen co-production. Featured a script by Comden & Green and a score from a young Jazz pianist named Andre Previn.

7) *Funny Face* (1957) – This one offers us a Gershwin score, Fred Astaire at his finest and a joyous little pixie named Audrey Hepburn. It’s to make the angels weep.

8) *The Pajama Game* (1957) & *Damn Yankees* (1958) – Adaptations of two Adler & Ross classics from Broadway. Both were co-produced with Broadway director George Abbott and both featured choreography by a young Bob Fosse.

9) *Charade* (2000) – One of the finest of Donen’s non-musical films. This comic spy thriller featured a score by Henry Mancini and performances by Cary Grant, Walter Matthau and Miss Audrey.