Incoming 2019-2020 Officers of the Administrative Board and the Ministries Board were affirmed by Pastor Dave and the congregation at both services.

IUCC is very blessed to have so many capable leaders step up to serve! Thanks to all of you for your willingness to share your time and talents with us.

Photos courtesy of Glenda Wyant & Tricia Aynes
Photos from the IUCC Leadership Retreat on July 20

(Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes)
A Note from Pastor Dave

It starts with a joke!

August 18, we’ll begin a nine-week series of services and sermons, *The Old Story for a New Day*, looking at the formation of Israel and how that story shapes the ministry of Jesus and the development of Christianity.

I’m happy to say that this series starts with a joke! Well, maybe not exactly a joke, but certainly a note of good humor, an occasion for laughter and delight.

The formation of Israel begins with a call to Abraham and Sarah to journey to a distant land and, long past what we think of as the age for bearing children, to become the parents of a new nation living in covenant with God and in witness to God’s will for all nations and peoples. Upon hearing this call, the Bible says that Sarah laughed and asked, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” (Adult readers note: that means pretty much what you think it means.)

The punch line is this… our loving God has more in store for us and, keeping faith with God, “our wildest dreams haven’t been half wild enough.” [Frederick Buechner, *Peculiar Treasures*]

The child did come, Sarah bore a son whom they named “Isaac” which, in Hebrew, means “laughter.” And, in the next generation, Isaac and Rebecca would also have children, one of whom, Jacob, would come to be known as Israel.

We are shaped by story, and this is a good one! I’ll see you in church.

Pastor Dave

Moderator’s Column

July 1 marks the beginning of the new terms of office for the members of the IUCC Ministries and Administration Boards and the various committee chairs. It's a time when we say thank you to those who have served us well during the past few years and welcome those who are ready to take on the privileges and responsibilities of being a leader in this remarkable community of faith.

One of the important parts of this transition is the annual “Leadership Weekend.” The events start with a leadership potluck for all those who are leaving, for those are continuing and for those who are beginning as leaders. Keith and I have been fortunate to host a number of these potlucks. We usually number about three dozen or so. There is always great food and many beverages to share.

The weather cooperates with a lovely breeze and “just right” temperatures. Most importantly, there is a strong sense of community that permeates the atmosphere. We are gathered to share in the joy of getting to know one another, to share a sense of community and to be bound together by a sense of calling and promise to make the love of Christ be alive and thriving at this time and place.

After an evening of fellowship, food, and fun, we gathered together in our new meeting rooms. Last year, at this time, we were still in construction mode and could only imagine what these new spaces would look and feel like. Thanks to the behind-the-scenes work of Pastor Steve, chairs were in place, materials were ready, and name tags and placards were there to be worn and displayed.

On this Saturday morning, with the light streaming through the floor to ceiling windows and the room full of motivated, caring leaders, we began the work of answering the questions “Who are we and what do we want to be?” Pastor Dave led the group in a Bible study focused on 1 Corinthians 12 and the various gifts that we, as leaders, bring and offer. As it says in verses 27 through 32, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are
Moderator’s column continued from Page 3

all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts, and I will show you a still more excellent way.”

With these words in mind, the group began the task of beginning to answer some of the questions posed by the UCC Local Church Profile. The profile is the first step in the process of finding and calling our new settled pastor. Members of the Search Committee: Keith Boyum, Chair; Aidan Mitchell, Vice-Chair; Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi; Tricia Aynes; Connie Jones; Craig Tyrl; and Ken Wyant were in attendance and were ready to get input from the assembled leaders on several key questions:

Consider the universe of prospects who could be our next pastor, what do you want those prospects to really understand about us in regard to the following:

1. Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve?
2. Describe your vision of who the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.
3. Who is God calling you to be as a congregation?
4. Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

After much thought and discussion in small groups, answers were reported out to the larger group and of course, the thinking and discussion continued. Answers were far-ranging and far-reaching - affirmation of what we’ve done in the past, the need for continued growth, the need for programs for youth and families, a strong desire to be more diverse and inclusive. The answers reflected a church striving and not being content with who we are.

The last part of the retreat focused on the area of change and possible conflict occurring as a result of change. To better understand this, the group examined a case study on changing the Sunday Morning Ministry and Worship Schedule. This change took place in 2014 and involved many hours of discussion and planning by Pastor Paul and the lay leadership led by our Moderator, Anne Rosse. We looked at the former schedule and practice and compared it to today. We learned about the recognition of the need for change and the process that the congregation went through. And finally, we discussed the experience of changing and what we learned about change and conflict.

Drawing from lessons learned from this experience, the leaders were asked to begin answering this question:

The aspiration that we be a culturally diverse and inclusive congregation is a widely held value and part of our vision statement, but most people, perhaps all, would say we have not lived into that aspiration. We show promise, but haven't yet broken through to what we really envision. To advance diversity and inclusion, what risks and commitments are you willing to take as leaders, encouraging change that seems likely to involve some conflict?

The answer to this question is an ongoing one that the leaders began thinking about at the retreat. It’s not simple or easy, but I am confident that our leaders are ready to take risks and meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us. I know you will join us in this exciting endeavor. As always, we will do this in faith and community.

Renae
Friends,

We have all been impacted by the news of the mass shootings this past weekend. When will the cycle of violence end? When will our elected leaders stop catering to the gun lobbyists and begin passing meaningful legislation to curtail these tragic events?

Our elected leaders have been dragging their feet on passing gun legislation. Awaiting action is a legislation to ban assault weapons. In addition, there are a number of gun violence prevention measures, including reversing prohibitions on funding National Institutes of Health for studying gun violence as a health and safety epidemic, and provisions in the Violence Against Women Act re-authorization, that would provide critical protections for victims of stalking, dating violence and domestic violence. But time passes and no action is taken.

Family of God, praying is not enough! The church must take its place in history and do its part in stopping hate and violence! Here are a couple of things you can do:

Call your Senators and ask them to act immediately on pending gun violence legislation. The UCC has created a website with a letter that you can sign and email. Here is the link: https://p2a.co/Odl2rJH.

Attend town halls and candidate appearances and ask the candidates what they plan to do to end gun violence. For instance, a strong bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives recently passed background checks for all gun sales. More than 90 percent of Americans consistently support universal background checks. Ask the candidates about their position on passing those background checks, and what action they are taking now to see that the bill is signed into law.

Pastor Dave, Felicity Figueroa, and about 60 other protesters attended an August 4 rally in the City of Orange to advocate for gun control. The rally, sponsored by Brady Orange County, was a demand for action from Senate leaders on the issue of gun violence after a week of mass shootings in Texas, Ohio and California. Protesters dipped their hands in red paint and pressed them to signs with messages holding Senate leadership accountable for failing to act to prevent the deaths of victims of gun violence.

Photos courtesy of Felicity Figueroa
Let’s start with **Big Thank-Yous** to Bil Aulenbach, Al Gumb, and Eileen Vincent for leading adult education sessions in July!

**The Church Library** is now (finally!) cleaned up and organized. There are diagrams on the shelf-ends, labels on each shelf, and a book-cart for returns. Please feel free to use the Library – to the right, just inside the main Plumer Hall doors.

**Adult Sunday School** in August continues the latest DVD series from Living the Questions – “ProFuture Faith: The Prodigal Species Comes Home.” Presenter is eco-theologian, author, and TEDx speaker Rev. Michael Dowd. Each week will have handouts with brief readings and thought-provoking questions. You can also find an introductory video and supplementary readings at: [https://livingthequestions.com/product/profuture-faith-the-prodigal-species-comes-home/](https://livingthequestions.com/product/profuture-faith-the-prodigal-species-comes-home/)

We’ve finished the **New Testament book of Acts** in Tuesday Bible Study and will now begin studying 2 Thessalonians. Join us each week at 4:00 – find out what’s next – and gather afterwards at a local eatery for informal discussion!

**Special Sunday School offering in September: Resurrection: Good News or Ghost Story?**

This is a three-part Sunday morning class for adults, led by Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi on September 1, 15 & 22. Besides being a Ph.D. mathematics professor and published textbook author, Eduardo has begun seminary studies under the guidance of our Southern Association (UCC).

Discussions will explore the possibility of Jesus’ resurrection as discussed by recent Christian theologians. Gerd Ludemann suggested the Gospel resurrection narratives were histories of self-deception. John Polkinghorne (also a physicist) countered that matters of faith are difficult if not impossible to establish by the scientific method.

Starting with the treatment of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, participants will explore possible relevance within their own faith journey, as well as considering the usefulness and limits of “proof” when contemplating matters of faith. Those interested in reading a paper presenting pro and con arguments about the resurrection narratives can contact Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi or Steve Swope for a copy.
CELEBRATING GEORGE’S NEW BOOK

SILENCE IS NOT THE ANSWER
George S. Johnson

YOU ARE INVITED!
Please join us at one of the following events—
and bring your friends

Hosts: George and Vivian Johnson

Celebrations will include:
• Special guest speaking about why this book is important
• Meet some contributing authors
• Ideas for using the book
• Question-and-answer session

1. Irvine United Congregational Church
   4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine
   Sunday, August 25, 2019*
   12:15 p.m. (light lunch)

2. Regents Point Continuing Care Community
   19191 Harvard Avenue, Irvine
   Saturday, September 7, 2019
   3:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)

3. Christ Lutheran Church
   6500 Stearns Street, Long Beach
   Sunday, September 15, 2019
   After 9:30 a.m. service

4. Irvine United Congregational Church
   4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine
   Sunday, September 22, 2019*
   4:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)

5. San Marcos Lutheran Church
   3419 Grand Avenue, San Marcos
   Sunday, October 20, 2019
   After 8:30, 9:45, and 11:00 a.m. services

6. Claremont School of Theology
   1325 N College Avenue, Claremont
   Tuesday, October 29, 2019*
   4:15 p.m. chapel, 5:00 p.m. reception (light meal)

7. Home of Sonja and Steve Johnson-Egertson
   3154 Radcliffe Road, Thousand Oaks
   Saturday, November 2, 2019*
   3:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)

8. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
   1 W Avenida De Los Arboles, Thousand Oaks
   Sunday, November 3, 2019
   After 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. services

*RSVP (at least 48 hours in advance): vivianelaine0@gmail.com

Books will be available at special prices at these events.
Or you can order books from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, your local bookstore, or BCH (1-800-431-1579, orders@bookch.com)

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Pastoral Search Committee Report

Members of the Pastoral Search Committee

Dear Congregation,

Your pastoral search committee is hard at work. The completion of our church profile remains our focus. This is an extensive document that covers all aspects of IUCC: activities, demographics, financials, history, membership, ministries, et al. It is this document which will accompany a detailed job description once an official call for potential candidates is made. We hope to have this completed by October.

A successful leadership retreat on July 20, 2019 helped tremendously with the church profile. Working in small groups, church leaders provided answers to specific sections of the church profile. These answers are faithfully incorporated into the document. The retreat was a wonderful day of fellowship, reflection, and thoughtfulness. Thank you to all who participated. We are fortunate to have the voices of IUCC leadership reflected strongly in our work.

In the upcoming weeks, the congregation will be asked for further assistance in completing the church profile. First, Aidan Mitchell will soon be administering a demographic survey. The collected data is important to both the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force and the Pastoral Search Committee. Detailed instructions about participating will soon follow. Please take the survey! Second, on Sunday, September 8th, all are asked to participate in a group activity to gather the thoughts and experiences of our laity. Following the model of the leadership retreat, members will be divided into small buzz groups and then asked to answer specific questions from the church profile. These answers will constitute part of the church profile. Let your voice be heard, and please join us following the 11:00am service on September 8th.

Our work remains active, efficient, faithful, hopeful, and organized. It is an honor and privilege to serve this community.

--The Pastoral Search Committee

The closing celebration of Jenna McCarty’s Emergence: Tour of Transformation art exhibit on July 5 offered participants a chance to put the finishing touches on a group collage and hear the story of the artist’s journey. Pictured below are Jenna McCarty and Felicity Figueroa.

- Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes
There has been some talk recently about diversity and inclusion here at IUCC. There are groups and organizations that talk about their commitment to diversity and inclusion. And there are groups that put their rhetoric of their commitment to diversity and inclusion into action. One of those groups that leads by their actions is The World Organization of the Scout Movement, of which the Boy Scouts of America is a member organization.

45,000 Scouts and Scouters from 169 Scouting organizations worldwide affiliated with the World Organization of the Scout Movement gathered together at The Summit Bechtel Reserve in Glen Jean, WV, from July 22nd to August 2nd for fun and fellowship. One of the Scouts in attendance at the World Jamboree was Felix T. from our own Troop 602.

While Felix will be submitting his Jamboree report for the September newsletter (Scout’s Honor), I want to share a speech delivered at the World Scout Jamboree by Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General. His speech sums up why we should continue to support great organizations like Scouting despite the divisive political rhetoric that is prevalent in this country. This is why I continue to support this program after being 33 years removed from earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

Speech to the Scouts at the 2019 World Scout Jamboree by Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General

Dear Scouts, thank you for your warm welcome. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening, bonsoir, buenos noches. Thank you. It is a great pleasure and honor for me to speak about what we need to do. I thank Ahmad Alhendawi our Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement. And it is a great pleasure to be here in this beautiful city, Grand Jean, West Virginia.

I take this opportunity to offer my sincere congratulations to the Boy Scouts of America, Scouts Canada, and la Asociacion de Scouts de Mexico. Muchas gracias, bon, merci boku, thank you, for such an important and transformational event.

Dear Scouts, you have discovered the key to live in peaceful co-existence over these last ten days. Rain or shine. If you can do this for 10 days, why not 100 days and 1000 days? Choosing this path is yours. However, the secret of peace and harmony that you have unlocked here is not meant for you to retain simply as a memory. Rather, it is a mission, beckoning you to do your part in unlocking the possibility of peace for our entire world moving forward.

In this regard I am confident you Scouts are now well-equipped to tackle the challenges of both today and tomorrow as engaged global citizens. More than ever before, the world needs a new generation of thinkers and do-ers that are globally engaged and sustainability-minded like yourselves. You are now true global ambassadors. You have to return to your home countries to Unlock a New World – one anchored in co-existence, tolerance, and sustainability for our planet. Can you do that? Thank you.

As you know, Baden-Powell, our Scouting’s founder, had a driving goal throughout his life to ensure that Scouting became a world brotherhood of peace. The mission of the United Nations is very similar: to promote international peace, tolerance, and co-existence between all peoples and nations, as you are.

In the last 112 years, a Scouting program has been adopted in every nation on earth. Tomorrow’s leaders are better through Scouting and the values it instills. Its essential mission is to prepare young people like you to be ethical citizens and global citizens. Ladies and gentlemen, dear Scouts, today I would like to humbly ask you three important ways you can contribute.

First, try to be global citizens as you continue in your own lives, own studies, careers. Global citizenship is a unique tool that can help solve some of our most pressing challenges and assist us in building peace and reaching sustainability. Global citizens are those who identify themselves not as a member of a nation, but as members of humanity. Global citizens must not build walls, but instead build bridges among people. They are understanding and tolerant of other people and cultures. They fight for the protection of our planet. They are committed to service and helping others. I know you can do it! You can be global citizens. Can you be?

Second, dear Scouts, be a Scout championing to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are the most ambitious and far-reaching visions for us, humanity, and nature, that the United Nations has ever presented to

Boy Scout Troop News

By Matt Mirmak, Eagle Scout (1986) and Charteered Organization Representative, Troop 602 and Pack 697
Effective Sept. 4th, Troop 602 will be meeting on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. inside Plumer Hall.

If you child (male or female) is 11-17 years old and wants to be a part of a great Scout troop, come visit us in Plumer Hall on Tuesday nights for the remainder of the month or contact Scoutmasters Keith Bauer at marykeith1@aol.com or Jeri Carey at jeri_mms@dslextreme.com. You can also contact Chartered Organization Representative Matt Mirmak at irvinetroop602@gmail.com.

IUCC member Paul Strasma is serving as a Scouting Ambassador for our local Orange County Council of the Boy Scouts of America. In this role, Paul has been trained to answer questions our Scout parents, volunteers, church and community members may have about recent media attention regarding cases of abuse perpetrated within the organization.

In July, Paul led two meetings for the parents of Troop 602 and Pack 697, the two units chartered by IUCC, and other neighborhood Packs to help families Be Prepared by understanding what has happened and by reinforcing the barriers to abuse that exist within each local unit.

The official Boy Scouts of America position on child abuse follows:

We sincerely apologize to anyone who was harmed during their time in our programs, and we are outraged that anybody used our program to harm a child.

We believe victims, we support them, and we encourage them to come forward.

We pay for unlimited counseling by a provider of their choice, and we believe in fairly and equitably compensating them.

Protecting youth is our top priority.

Please direct any questions you have to Paul Strasma.
Meet the members of IUCC's Mission & Service Ministry, who coordinate IUCC volunteer and financial support for a variety of groups including the OC Human Trafficking Task Force, Family Promise, and Friends of Orange County Detainees. They provide food once a month for Isaiah House, organize aid trips to shelters here and in Baja, plus much more. They also set out bins on a monthly basis for organizations seeking donations such as back-to-school supplies.

IUCC was thrilled to welcome the Northwest Boychoir on July 13. Both old secular favorites and sacred music were featured in this beautiful concert filled with clear, pure voices joined in exquisite harmony. What a treat!

The IUCC Women's Breakfast Group began their Fourth of July celebrating with their regular morning breakfast. A group of women from Shepherd of the Hills UCC began meeting for breakfast before work on Thursdays over 30 years ago. When the majority of them began attending IUCC over 12 years ago, the tradition of sharing, caring and supporting one another continued, welcoming new additions. Check us out some Thursday morning at 7:30 at Paul's Pantry, 27409 Bellogente, Mission Viejo (just east of the 5 freeway at the corner of Crown Valley and Bellogente).

– Barb Carse
FAMILIES FORWARD

BACK TO SCHOOL DONATIONS NEEDED

Low-Income students need our help with back to school supplies and clothing.

We invite IUCC to come together supporting Families Forward to give every student the same "Back to School" opportunity. Grade-appropriate school supplies, backpacks, and clothing will be distributed to low-income elementary, middle, and high school students in July and August, helping them to start on the same foot as their peers - building their confidence for the coming school year.

A full listing is on their website:


- Backpacks 17" or larger
- Highlighters
- Pencil Boxes
- Colored Pencils
- Pencils
- college-ruled spiral notebooks
- Dividers
- erasers
- Pocket Folders
- rulers
- 3-Ring Binders
- zipper pencil pouches
- Scientific Calculators
- scissors
- Pens (red/black/blue)
- index cards

Thank you.

IUCC Mission & Service Ministry
Introducing: Miss Anju Sharma

Ms. Anju Sharma is our Child Care Center Teacher for August. (Well, she is for much more than one month, of course; but she is our newsletter focus for this edition!)

Miss Anju was not born in Orange County, but rather on the other side of the globe: in India. She studied at DAV College of Punjab University, where she earned her Bachelor's degree. At home now in our region, she is continuing her education by taking Child Development courses at Irvine Valley College.

Miss Anju is a married woman with two daughters. About her daughters she says a kind word:

Something that comes to mind after thinking about my “family” is how my daughters are so respectful to each other and to their parents. There is love, and everyone is considerate about each other's needs.

We asked her why she is a preschool teacher. Miss Anju responded:

I love teaching. It is my passion. I am a preschool teacher because I love working with this age group of children. It is a rewarding profession because we, teachers, are in a way helping to lay the foundation of their lives. If the foundation is strong then the building will be strong and long-lasting. I want to help children build a strong foundation!

And then she added this: Also, I feel very happy when my children welcome me with a big hug and a cute smile.

Miss Anju reports that she has been working at our Child Care Center for a year. She says: I like the positive atmosphere with everyone following the required rules and regulations. I appreciate my cooperative co-workers, and I especially appreciate our most caring and thoughtful director, Miss Irma.

Well, readers: you can see for yourself that she is a very positive teacher. So we concluded our interview by asking about Miss Anju's future plans. We're glad she referenced our Child Care Center when she offered this:

In the future, I want to become a lead teacher. Along with working at IUCC, I hope to continue moving forward with my education at Irvine Valley College. Therefore in ten years or so, in 2029, one might see me working as a lead teacher at IUCC because I really like working at this school.

Dear Miss Anju: we really like you too! Please keep us in your future plans!

From DAV College, Punjab . . . to Irvine Valley College

Photos courtesy of Irma Rosales
News & Events

Yoga of 12-Step Recovery
For the summer, Kelly Garrity’s Yoga group will meet on Sundays at 7:30 a.m. in Wisdom Room 108 (closest to Alton).

Isaiah House
Wednesday, August 14, 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.

All Church Picnic
Sun 9/15 at Mason Park
Our All-Church Picnic will be at Mason Park in Irvine. Come with a dish to share and be prepared to have fun! You can sign up online at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050f4aafae2fa75-iucc1

The Seeker’s Summer Luncheon
Tuesday, August 20, 11:30 a.m.
The Seekers will meet for their annual summer luncheon on Tuesday, August 20, at 11:30 a.m. The luncheon will be held on the patio of Laguna Woods Village, and names are needed a week in advance for gate clearance. Contact Reefa Hanenberg to secure your seat (and gate entry) for the August Seekers Luncheon!

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed
Summer is a lovely time to linger on the patio between services - catch up with old friends, get acquainted with visitors and new members. To take part in enhancing this experience, please consider hosting Coffee Hour during the summer. Go to https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f45acab2ca5f49-iucc to sign up online, or sign up on the sheet on the Coffee Hour table on Sunday mornings.

8/02  Mark Allen  8/09  Jim Martin
8/05  Janet Bamper  8/15  Kadence Martin
8/08  Chantel Bermudez  8/07  Nitz Martin
8/20  Keith Boyum  8/15  Kai Mercier
8/13  Josephine Cranston  8/21  Lucy Messerschmidt
8/29  Keith Dillon  8/23  Hunter Mirmak
8/02  Nancy Dreckman  8/05  Tom Moss
8/06  Paul Feick  8/25  Eric Nelson
8/29  Rogene Field  8/09  Glenda Rynn
8/27  Lorraine Fox  8/22  Jean Stewart
8/04  Worth Giller  8/09  Dylan Trout
8/13  Dara Hodges  8/27  Jaren Whitsitt
It's Pastors' Potluck Time
Wednesday, August 14 – 6 p.m.

Picnicking...dining *al fresco*. However you say it, summer means eating outdoors. And that includes our monthly Pastor’s Potlucks!

**Our Family Promise guests will be joining us for this Pastor’s potluck.** This is a wonderful opportunity to socialize with the parents and children. Nothing could be more welcoming than breaking bread together.

The grills will be hot, for whatever meat or vegetarian option you might want to cook. Bring a side dish to share - and your place settings, too; let's be as "green" as we can!

Coordinated by the Mission and Service Ministry, join Pastor Dave, IUCC friends and Family Promise guests on the patio for a meal and fellowship.

It's a great time for informal conversation and an opportunity to get to know each other.

And mark your calendar for the last potluck of the summer hosted by the choir on Thursday, September 12.
Ingrid Bergman
by Keith Dillon

Guess what, folks. The 29th of this month is my birthday. Yeah! So, for this month’s list, I’ve chosen to focus on Ingrid Bergman, an actor who was born the same day, if not the same year, as I was.

Ingrid Bergman was born on August 29, 1915, in Stockholm, Sweden. She was named after Princess Ingrid of Sweden. Her mother, Friedel Henrietta Augusta Louise Adler, died when Ingrid was two years old. Her father, Justus Samuel Bergman, was an artist and a photographer; he died as well, when Ingrid was thirteen. Since her childhood, Ingrid knew she wanted to be an actor. Ingrid received a scholarship to attend the Royal Dramatic Theatre School in Stockholm. During her studies, she made her film debut playing a small part in a Swedish film called Munkbrogreven.

In 1939, she made her premiere in Hollywood. During her next ten years, she made some of the most important American films of the 30s and 40s. On May 24, 1950, she married Italian director Roberto Rossellini and appeared in some of the finest “rubble” films from post-war Italy. She returned to Hollywood on a few occasions after that, and she also made films with important European directors like Jean Renoir and Ingmar Bergman. She died on August 29th, 1982 (her 67th and my 22nd birthday). Her ashes were scattered in the sea near Sweden. Here are just a few of her finest films:

1) Intermezzo (Gregory Ratoff – 1939)
2) Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Victor Fleming – 1941)
3) Casablanca (Michael Curtiz – 1942)
4) For Whom the Bell Tolls (Sam Wood – 1943)
5) Gaslight (George Cukor – 1944)
6) Spellbound (Alfred Hitchcock – 1945)
7) Notorious (Alfred Hitchcock - 1946)
8) Joan of Arc (Victor Fleming – 1948)
9) Stromboli, Terra di Dio (Roberto Rossellini – 1950)
10) Europa ’51 (Roberto Rossellini – 1952)
11) Viaggio in Italia (Roberto Rossellini -1954)
12) Elena et Les Hommes (Jean Renoir – 1956)
13) Anastasia (Anatole Litvak – 1956)
14) Indiscreet (Stanley Donen -1958)
15) Murder on the Orient Express (Sidney Lumet – 1974)

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.
Last month we talked about the reason, the “point,” of correcting unacceptable behavior. Choices of behavior involve our values – our ideas about what is important and “right.” These ideas are in the messages that we convey to our children when we sit down and talk with them about the consequences they are getting for their behavior.

The most important messages are messages for life, and for living, and not just about how we want things done while they are living with us. They will be without us much longer than they are with us. The most important “gift” we can leave with our children is the ability to choose the behavior that will accomplish the goal they want, and meet the legitimate needs they have, in a way that is effective and satisfying. Satisfying because they don’t experience negative, or unwanted, consequences. There are lots of ways to do things, and the ability to choose the best way to do something, not only for ourselves but for others, is what we often call “character.”

Stopping behavior does not build character. Stopping behavior does not teach values. True discipline is about replacing behavior. “Stop doing that” teaches nothing. “I don’t like it when you do that” teaches nothing. The lesson for life is “here’s what I’d like you to do instead,” and, here’s why. Or, can you think of another way to get what you want that would make both of us happy? And because we care about them and about ourselves, what we’d like them to do instead is not only better for us, but for them. This approach allows us substitute thought for anger. It allows us to teach, instead of hurt. It allows them to learn, instead of pout.

When correcting behavior, we want to be careful not to confuse what they were trying do, with what they did. As they mature, it is also important for them to figure out what they were trying to do, and not just what they did. As you know if you are in one, one of the most important aspects of a successful relationship is the ability to explain yourself! None of us always acts the way we should. All of us try to meet our needs in ways that sometimes hurt others. All relationships – between peers (friends, lovers) or between parents/adults and children and between other people with authority and subordinates – are maintained successfully when we can take responsibility for making a poor behavior choice, and make a correction to find acceptable ways to negotiate differences and meet mutual needs.

Recidivism rates for both young people and adults who are incarcerated prove that the major weakness in our so-called “correctional” facilities is that they do not “correct” – they only punish. People cannot learn better ways of doing things if we only stop them from behaving in ways we don’t like. Parents who are ineffective disciplinarians are exactly like our failed correctional systems. Parents who only stop, and punish, fail their children in the same dramatic way. Children, like adults, will continue doing what they know until they learn to do something else.

It would be cruel to punish a child for not being able to play a musical instrument if we’ve never provided the instrument or the music lessons. Likewise, it is probably cruel to punish a child for not using a behavior they haven’t learned yet.

Now, if you have ever been so foolish as to allow your child to take music lessons while living with you, you know that learning to play any instrument is not music to your ears. Early attempts are rather unpleasant. Similarly, teaching new behaviors to a child and watching them “practice” is not always easy. Learning to type means a lot of misspelled words at first. Learning new behaviors requires tolerance for the approximations that will eventually lead to the desired and skillful performance.

Appreciating music – or art – or living well with others - or anything else of value always involves a why and a how. Why it’s important to do it this way proceeds the instruction in how to do it. Helping children with their behavior is the same.

There’s nothing wrong with feeling angry and wanting to express it to let others know you’re angry. But, let’s look at the way you showed me you were angry and see if we can find a way for you to do it without saying hurtful words or throwing things. As soon as you’ve thought of – or written down (older children) – five other things you could have said or done to let me know you were angry we can both resume what we were doing. But not until. Stop. Start.
“I want to go home,” our young daughter said long ago on that first day of school. Her yearning was the same as my husband’s when he was hospitalized in his eighties. “I want to go home,” he said each day as he greeted me. Our daughter voiced these words when she was in the dawn of life, my husband in the sunset of life.

Home is “the doorway that belongs to me,” in poet Mary Oliver’s words. Others may refer to home as “my nest,” or as “a roof over my head.” Kahlil Gibran’s definition, “Your house is your larger body,” gives insight as to the personal nature of home, helping me understand why visitors say, “Your home looks like you.” Whether palatial or modest, for most of us there is no place like home. There is an innate desire in humans and animals for shelter, a place of protection. Our home shields us from severe weather, from hateful people, from anything or anyone harmful. It offers us privacy, a place to contemplate, a welcome opportunity to put ourselves back to order after the whirlwind of some days.

A friend recently said, “The thing that makes me happy at this time of life is my little apartment. I like to socialize, to be involved in a variety of activities, but I am so happy that I can go home.”

I agree with my gentleman friend. One step through my doorway and my body relaxes with a sigh of relief felt in my heart and heard from my lips. My mind releases intensities, and my spirit does a little dance of freedom.

I can’t imagine the pain and fear that a child or adult experiences if their home is anything other than a shelter; rather, it is a place where harm of body or spirit takes place. How appalling, how egregious, how evil to take from one the sweetness of home as a haven of protection.

Home also conjures places other than my own: my parents’ home, our children’s homes, your home. We say, “I feel at home here,” wherever here may be. The point being that home is good, it’s comfortable, it holds me, and I feel safe.

I’m discovering another kind of home as I learn about Alzheimer’s disease. Until now I haven’t considered one’s occupation as home. A study was undertaken where Alzheimer’s patients had opportunities similar to their former employment. Case in point: a former custodian was given a “job” in the facility where he lives and receives care for Alzheimer’s. He sweeps the halls, locks doors and windows in the evening, turns off lights, and performs other tasks. A jumble of keys hangs from his belt as a symbol of his importance. His memory doesn’t improve, but his sense of self-worth and his attitude improve markedly. He is once again home, at home in his profession, a place of security for him.

One may not be able to actually perform the duties of one’s former work, but it might be encouraging just to be able to talk about it. Since my husband was a theologian, I notice that he is most comfortable, and at home if you will, talking about theology. His interest or intent is not to convert, but to discuss, explore, question. He thrives on hearing diverse viewpoints. At his stage of Alzheimer’s, he still has the ability to ponder, offer opinions and ask questions. After sixty years of thinking and breathing theology, why would he, in fact how can he, do otherwise?

Perhaps a way people can engage as we age is to inquire about our life’s work, our second homes. Allow us to pontificate on what we did, what we learned, what we liked and disliked, what we miss, and what we’re happy to drop. Whether our work was as a custodian for a business or as a housekeeper in our own home; whether work was as a CFO at a university or balancing our own budgets, we have many stories to share that may increase our sense of worth and happiness.

My mother didn’t like to cook, but she did bake peanut butter cookies. How well I remember the occasions when I came home to the kitchen table where a glass of milk and a cookie awaited. Is that very dissimilar to the coffee break at one’s employment? There, our colleagues congregated sipping some of that hot, black java; sometimes a treat was shared. There was camaraderie, a homey feeling. Some folks miss that in retirement.

The magic thing about home is that it feels good to leave, and it feels even better to come back. Can this be applied to our work homes as well? We’re glad – some are thrilled – to be retired, but it feels good to go back even if it is only in our dreams – or in our conversations.