Farewell, Pastor Sarah - we wish you all the best in your new call!
I’d been to way too many meetings and events dealing with race issues where the white people just went away feeling guilty and the black people left angrier. The standard approach wasn’t getting us anywhere and, I thought, there’s got to be a better way!

-- The Rev. Ron Buford

You might remember Ron Buford as architect and director of the UCC’s God Is Still Speaking initiative, but more recently you are likely to have read of him in newspapers or heard him on NPR as the founder of Racists Anonymous, a recovery/self-improvement model for dealing with racism that has now seeded groups with more than 90 congregations in four countries. An out and proud African-American gay man and UCC pastor serving a mostly white congregation in Sunnyvale, California, Ron will be coming here to Irvine UCC, Wednesday evening, October 9, to speak and facilitate conversation at an event sponsored by our Diversity & Inclusion Task Force.

The exact timing and other details of the evening will be announced shortly, but this is definitely a “save the date” occasion you’ll want to put on your calendar right now! All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend and to bring interested friends.

One of this church’s leading mission priorities is Diversity & Inclusion and, like all commitments to excellence, it needs to be regularly reviewed and refreshed. For us, as Christians, it's more than just trying to be good or to be right, it's about living into our faith, building up a community that celebrates the truth that all persons carry a sacred worth, made in the very image of God.

The premise of Racists Anonymous is that racism is woven into the fabric of our culture and none of us are free from it, but we can be more mindful of it, exercise and practice it less, support one another in working against it, and pass less along. We can work against the structures of racism to build a more diverse and inclusive community that will be a joy to us, an encouragement to others and a glory to God!
“In wildness is the preservation of the world” - this quote from Henry David Thoreau was recently shared by one of our worship leaders, Kristen Norton. That thought resonated with me as I’ve thought about transitions in personnel and facilities that have occurred at IUCC over the past 14 months. Probably not “wildness,” but certainly change at a remarkable pace. To wit:

- June 2018 we bid a fond farewell to our church administrator, who left to take a well-deserved retirement;
- July 2018 our outstanding Music Director left to take a sought-after college teaching position;
- September 2018 we dedicated and began occupying our new office and classroom space;
- January 2018 we opened a new preschool classroom in our “old” church offices;
- May 2019 we said good-bye and Godspeed to our beloved Senior Pastor;
- June 2019 we welcomed our new Interim Pastor;
- September 2019 we congratulated and said farewell to our wonderful Assistant Pastor.

That’s quite a list of changes! So how are we preserving our world? How are we coping with this “wildness” - these changes? We have welcomed to our staff an administrative pastor and a music director who both bring their considerable skills in a myriad of ways. They enhance and enrich our experiences here at IUCC - at meetings, behind-the-scenes, in worship and workshops. We are indeed blessed to have them here during this time of transition.

The Administration Board adopted a hiring policy and procedure that will be used for all positions here at IUCC (except for our next “settled” pastor). This new policy is designed to insure transparency and to make sure that our procedures reflect our commitment to diversity. As we begin the search for a new Ministry for Young People Director, the policy will be the blueprint we will follow. In addition, a Task Force on Inclusion and Diversity was formed last spring and is ongoing in its efforts. They are planning events for the coming year that will help us to examine who we say we are and where we want to be as an inclusive, diverse faith community.

Our new classroom space has allowed us to have numerous meetings at the same time, especially on Sunday mornings. The new space has made Plumer Hall an even more valuable space for outreach to community groups we support. For example, in August we were able to host families from Family Promise for the first time. In the past, we had provided meals and other support to families staying overnight at other facilities. But our added space enabled us to have the families spend their nights in Plumer Hall for a week, while still having a place for other scheduled activities (AA meetings, our Mosque tenants, and various church meetings including our Administration Board).

Meanwhile, the new office space has meant adequate work space for our office staff and also confidential places for our pastoral staff to meet with members and others desiring assistance. The landscaping in and around our new spaces is drought-tolerant in keeping with our green faith commitment. In addition, these new spaces (particularly the frontage on Alton) are lovely to look at and receive many well-deserved compliments. The new classroom space in our Child Care Center has allowed us to serve more children and be a greater service to the community. This space and other classrooms are bright, cheerful areas staffed by our wonderful preschool director and teachers.

After the announcement by Pastor Paul of his departure in May, we moved quickly to form a search committee for an Interim Pastor. That committee completed its work with the hiring of the Reverend David Pattee by the Administration Board in June. Pastor Dave is leading us through this process of pastoral transition with energy and knowledge, and he is assisting us with ways to make sure our paths forward both now and in the future are strong.

At the June Congregational meeting, we elected a search committee for our new settled pastor. They have been working diligently on the church profile, a document that will be shared with prospective candidates for our settled pastor position. It aims to describe who we are and where we are going. **On September 8, in Plumer Hall, after 2nd service, you will have an opportunity to participate in “buzz groups” to help answer some of the many (almost 100!) questions in the profile.** Plan to join in on that day and be part of the search process.

Finally, a quote from Kristen Norton, “May we draw inspiration from our history, from each other, from all the many forms of life and love as we experience transitions of seasons, of pastors, of personal challenges. May we hold each other up and may we be a beacon, a light in all its beautiful, wild, soft, bright inspiring forms.”

What a beautiful thought as we move through this time of “wildness,” of change, of transition. As always, we will do that in faith and community.  ~ Renae
Starting again with Thank-Yous to Eileen Vincent for leading Sunday adult education in August, and to Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi for his upcoming leadership this month!

Eduardo, who is not only a math professor but now a seminary student, will lead three sessions of discussion on the possibility of Jesus’ resurrection, on September 1, 15 & 22. Different perspectives from contemporary theologians will be considered, as you explore “Resurrection: Good News or Ghost Story?” Join him at 8:45 or 10:00!

I’ll fill in the Sunday-morning gaps (Sept. 8 & 29) with some discussion on the development of the biblical canon – the definitive list of “what’s in and what’s out” of the Bible. On the 8th we’ll look into the Hebrew scriptures (there are more than you think!) and on the 29th we’ll explore the Christian scriptures.

Tuesday Bible Study (4:00 p.m. in the new meeting rooms) is exploring 2 Thessalonians, a “maybe Paul, maybe not” letter (scholarly opinions are divided). Once Ken Wyant leads us safely through that, he’ll direct us into 1 Peter. You don’t want to miss the learning or the laughter!

I’m still searching for “a few good Comma-Group Leaders.” Facilitators, really, because many groups share the leadership duties among the members. And anyone interested in being part of a Comma Group can sign up online now! iucc.org/register

I’ve been promoting John Dominic Crossan’s visit for months, and now registration is live online! He will deliver two lectures on Saturday morning, Oct. 26, at 9:00 and 10:45. You’ll hear about “The Claim of Divine Violence in the Old Testament” and “The Claim of Human Resurrection in the New Testament.” There will be time for questions at each lecture, and his latest books will be available for purchase and signing.

There’s also a special opportunity to have dinner with Dr. Crossan “and a few close friends.” We’re holding a special fundraising dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 26, with proceeds benefiting the Plumer Adult Education Endowment Fund. You can sign up for both lectures and/or the dinner at iucc.org/register!

Al Gumb’s discussions on TED Talks videos have moved to 4:00 p.m., still the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Al shares his experience leading discussion groups, along with his own thoughts on contemporary issues – all built around the always entertaining and enlightening TED Talks videos.

Kelly Garrity’s early Sunday Yoga (7:30 a.m. in the Wisdom Room) will be held every other week for a while, on Sept. 8 & 22 and Oct. 6 & 20. Stretch your muscles and center your mind!

A note about our facilities: with help from a local high-school student offering service hours, we have replaced all the fluorescent tubes in the preschool with LED lights. We could save 65% or more on lighting the preschool! Go Green!

Survey Says...!

Help the Pastoral Search Committee tell our story accurately and faithfully - participate in the Congregational Demographics Survey, which you can take online.

It’s only 10 questions, but the information will be important for potential candidates to know. Here’s the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QGCR5W7

Thanks for your participation!
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

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<tr>
<th>Event序号</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Irvine United Congregational Church</td>
<td>Sunday, August 25, 2019* 12:15 p.m. (light lunch)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Regents Point Continuing Care Community</td>
<td>Saturday, September 7, 2019 3:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Christ Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Sunday, September 15, 2019 After 9:30 a.m. service</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Irvine United Congregational Church</td>
<td>Sunday, September 22, 2019* 4:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>San Marcos Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Sunday, October 20, 2019 After 8:30, 9:45, and 11:00 a.m. services</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Claremont School of Theology</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 29, 2019* 4:15 p.m. chapel, 5:00 p.m. reception (light meal)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Home of Sonja and Steve Johnson-Egertson</td>
<td>Saturday, November 2, 2019* 3:00 p.m. (wine and cheese)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Holy Trinity Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Sunday, November 3, 2019 After 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. services</td>
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*RSVP (at least 48 hours in advance): vivianelaine0@gmail.com

Books will be available at special prices at these events.
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Please Help the IUCC Pastoral Search Committee!

An Invitation to a “Buzz Session” on September 8th

Perhaps you know that the first step in the search for a new “settled” pastor is to fill out a Congregational Profile. Compare it to LinkedIn, or perhaps to Tinder or another dating site. And then multiply by some big number. There are just short of 100 questions to be answered. Some are just the facts, but others require deeper thought and judgment.

The Congregational Profile, when complete, is posted on the United Church of Christ website, which is where persons who think they would like to be a UCC minister look for jobs (or “calls”). The site looks like this [below].

Our Profile will introduce us to prospective candidates for the first time. Needless to say, we are anxious to make a good first impression!

The Pastoral Search Committee would like your input on some of these questions. So, on Sunday, September 8, at about 12:15 p.m., we’ll gather friends and members of IUCC in Plumer Hall for about 45 minutes. Working in small “buzz groups,” we will seek to write an answer, or to edit a draft answer, to one or two of the Congregational Profile questions. This can allow the Search Committee to say, in response to some of the questions: On September 8, 2019, a small discussion group at IUCC generated the following answer.

It should be engaging. Some would say it will be fun!

It will definitely help out your Search Committee, and make our Congregational Profile more authentic and more interesting.

Please plan to join us in Plumer Hall! No RSVP required.
"I am here to say, our house is on fire... I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”
- Greta Thunberg

Today in Orange County, things seem normal, even idyllic. Don't be fooled. In a year, in a month, in a week, we could be refugees. We are living in a global climate emergency, and it's time to start acting like it.

Free Admission
Date:
Saturday
September 21, 2019

Vegan Snacks
Time:
9:30 am - 11:30am

Refreshments
Location:
Irvine United Congregational Church
4915 Alton Pkwy, Irvine, CA 92604

For more information, updates, and to register go to: occlimateaction.org
Space is limited | Register early
Questions? Email: info@occlimateaction.org
Isaiah House
Wednesday, Sept. 11, 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.

Yoga of 12-Step Recovery
Kelly Garrity’s early Sunday Yoga (7:30 a.m. in the Wisdom Room) will be held every other week for a while, on Sept. 8 & 22 and Oct. 6 & 20. Stretch your muscles and center your mind!

The Seekers Women’s Group
Tuesday, Sept. 17, 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.

Pastor’s Potluck
Thursday, September 12
Bring your place settings and a side dish to share and join Pastor Dave and friends on the patio for fellowship!

All Church Picnic
Sunday, September 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 on the patio or online at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050f4aafae2fa5f49-iucc1

9/17 Kiana Austin 9/26 Susie Lang
9/17 Maya Austin 9/14 Laura Long
9/17 Scott Bollens 9/16 JoAnne Mansell
9/20 J.S. Coke 9/29 Iris Mecartney
9/16 Lavinia Cooper 9/25 Don Mineo
9/14 Alyssa Cornett 9/12 Aidan Mitchell
9/14 Judy Curry 9/22 Ava Mitchell
9/26 Ruby Fulton 9/11 Jeff Oleson
9/08 Peggy Goetz 9/20 Sofia Portillo
9/16 Ashley Herndon 9/09 Suellen Rowe
9/20 George Johnson 9/20 Stephanie Sanders
9/19 Vivian Johnson 9/18 Mary Swope
9/06 Cristina Jones 9/10 Paul Thornton
9/07 David Karsten 9/17 Alyssa Wilkens
9/23 Lizabeth Kerr

Visitors and members alike are welcomed at coffee hours at 10:30 and noon thanks to the efforts of the Hospitality Ministry chaired by Teri Olsen and Alex Ingal (at right)

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed
Late summer is a lovely time to linger on the patio between services - catch up with old friends and get acquainted with visitors and new members. To take part in enhancing this experience, please consider hosting Coffee Hour! 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.
And now, just for the autumnal equinox, here's a list of Opera and Ballet films you may enjoy:

2. *The Red Shoes* (Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger - 1948) – A Faustian tale set amidst the ballet world of the 1950s.
4. *Martha Graham: Dance on Film* (Nathan Kroll - 1959) – A documentary about Ms. Graham as she was composing *Appalachian Spring* and *Night Journey*.
8. *Bodas de Sangre* (Carlos Saura – 1981) – The first of three fabled collaborations with Flamenco choreographer Antonio Gades. This one is a backstage tale based on the play by Federico Garcia Lorca.
9. *Fitzcarraldo* (Werner Herzog – 1982) – The story of a madman named Fitzgerald who attempts to build an opera house in the Peruvian Amazon. It is told by one of the maddest of all German film directors, Werner Herzog.
14. *El Amor Brujo* (Carlos Saura – 1986) – The last of Saura's collaborations with Antonio Gades. This one is a complete staging of the ballet by Manuel da Falla.
15. *Farinelli* (Gerard Corbiau – 1994) – A strangely beautiful film, based on the life of Farinelli, the "greatest" castrato singer in European history.

Next month… Dystopias.
We're in the middle of a long stretch of discussions about helping children and teens manage their behavior using principles of discipline. The goal for intervention with behavior at any age is always the same: to teach the person to manage their own behavior in acceptable ways.

As we start a new school year, I want to introduce an intervention concept that can be useful both at home and at school. Very often children are having trouble with their behavior and their school work for some of the same reasons. Understanding why we are having trouble with them or why they are having trouble complying with expectations can make all the difference in reaching agreeable outcomes.

From your various jobs, I know you’ve found it obvious that problems concerning compliance with expectations is not at all a “child” problem! We have all encountered adults who engage in “unacceptable” behavior even when they are getting paid to do something. Supervisors often have to adapt an almost parental role with some employees to achieve compliance with what is expected of them.

With this in mind, I am going to introduce you to a wonderful “leadership” style that is going to be just as effective with your children as it is with non-compliant adults. I think it may also be helpful if your child/teen is having trouble with some of the tasks and expectations at school.

**Situational Leadership**

This intervention model helps people in “authority positions” (and all parents have authority, much to the chagrin of their children). When someone is granted “authority,” they are granted the “right to” intervene with others in particular ways. Unfortunately, authority is not the same as “power.” Power is the “ability” to influence others. While it is possible to designate authority, it is not possible to designate power. Most of us have experienced a teacher or “boss” who was not capable of convincing others to cooperate and do as they are told. I’ve written before that I chose “Powerful” parenting as the title for my columns because my goal has always been to help parents develop the ability to use their parental authority to truly give their children the structure and skills they will need to develop and live successful lives when they are on their own – which is any time they are not with their parents, not just when they move out of the house.

The basic principles of intervening with behavior on a “situational” basis are to:
1. Relate to the specific task or behavior we are asking someone to do;
2. Pay as much attention to how we are trying to be helpful as we do to the person who needs help; and
3. Learn to “match” our style of helping to the exact needs of the “learner.”

Using this framework requires the parent to:
1. Learn as much as they can about the situation which is causing the child to have a problem with their behavior;
2. Clearly define the task or behavior we are trying to influence;
3. Discuss both sides of the problematic situation – why you as a parent are unhappy with the situation, and what are the opinions and concerns of your child; and
4. Determine the “readiness” of the child to do what they are being asked to do.

You’ll want to print or tear this page out of your newsletter for next month and the following months as we delve into using this framework to help children and youth for whom we are responsible cooperate with expectations.

To get your wheels turning, here’s a very brief introduction to “readiness.” Being “ready” to do a specific task, whether it’s a behavioral task or an academic tasks has two features:

**Ability**
- Necessary skills
- Understanding of what is being asked

**Motivation**
- Desire to do what is being asked
- Confidence in their ability to do what is being asked

We’ll keep talking - see you next month!
“Please, Vivian, it makes me feel better if I can be of help,” my friend assured me when I apologized for asking her to read to my ill husband while I ran errands. She gave me permission to release the guilt I felt for intruding on her schedule and helped me understand that people want to help.

Our young adult granddaughter spent six hours with my husband so I could go off and have a carefree day (brunch and a movie!). Her strong young body pushed him in a wheelchair to the park, which is something I’m not capable of doing. She reported that they had a great day: the park, lunch, and reading to him. They ended their time together by both taking naps. She didn’t appear to be any the worse from a day of caregiving; best of all, after time away, I was more eager to resume my responsibilities.

Ask for help, we tell people. Easier said than done. Sometimes we need to be told that the helper feels better by pitching in. Plus, it is good for the care receiver: my husband has the opportunity to see faces other than mine, have conversation that stimulates him, go places where I can’t take him, and just plain have fun.

Whether the Bible is a source of inspiration for you or not, there is a Biblical story that is often quoted to emphasize the importance of putting first things first and, in this instance, it refers to putting aside “busyness” to focus on learning from Jesus. It goes like this: Jesus and some friends are welcomed into Martha’s home. Her sister Mary sits at Jesus’ feet, listening to his words. Because Martha had guests, she is busy being a hostess. She inquires of Jesus, “Do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.” But Jesus answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42)

Ouch! Martha asks for help and Jesus scolds her. Now, I’m not in demand to rewrite the scriptures, but if I were, the story would go like this:

Martha was distracted by her many tasks; she came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me.” Jesus answered, “Martha, you are so kind to be preparing dinner and making us feel welcome. You are right to request help. Mary, Peter, and I will help you. Then, because we’ve helped, you can join us in the family room and enjoy the conversation too. Many hands make small the task, so you will be free to choose the one thing that will not be taken from you, that is, your relationship with me.”

Martha dared to ask for help. If it is true that “in giving we receive,” in my version Jesus and his friends would be living that wisdom by helping out. Also, since relationship with Jesus was the main goal, why not make it possible for all to be involved with him in his visit? My contemporary version will be seen by some as heretical, but I think it shows consideration, inclusivity, and fairness. Besides, this is my take on the story because I’m a person who is learning to ask for help.
My youngest daughter has always loved putting jigsaw puzzles together. She’s been doing this since she was a little girl. Some of the puzzles we bought for her formed a picture of beautiful scenery, while others were fantasy drawings. All were special to her. So special, in fact, that she took to gluing them to a backing so she could put them up on her walls and see them every day. One thing really disappointed her, though: when the puzzle maker omitted a piece or two. So many of her otherwise beautiful puzzles were marred by the gaps left by pieces that weren’t included in the package.

Many years ago, I was asked to give a sermon. I went to a local park and walked around, praying for inspiration. It was a beautiful sunny day, and as I made a circuit around the playing field frequented by children, soccer players, and baseball fans, something caught my eye. There in the grass, almost buried, was a jigsaw puzzle piece, all by itself. I picked it up, looked at it, and thought what a shame it was that someone’s jigsaw puzzle was incomplete, missing a vital piece that made up the whole picture. I thought about how disappointed the puzzle owner would be to find such a key piece missing.

I put the lonely puzzle piece back down in the grass and went on my way, continuing to pray for inspiration. But as I walked, I started to think about how all God’s children make up a big beautiful jigsaw puzzle, and we - as God’s children - are all important pieces. Each one of us helps make the picture beautiful, and the loss of even one of us hurts the picture. Each of us needs to be interlocked with the others to form the whole family of God’s children, and in that process of interlocking, we build a sense of community and belonging that is like no other.

It struck me that there are times when some people are actively excluded from the puzzle that makes up God’s children. When that happens, the whole picture suffers—the whole human race suffers. The more of us who are excluded, the more blank spots there are in the puzzle.

Having gone through this entire train of thought, I decided to go back and retrieve the puzzle piece I’d found earlier. I walked and walked in the area I thought I’d seen it, but it was nowhere to be found. It took me nearly an hour of searching to find it again. That taught me the rest of the lesson: that once one of God’s people is intentionally separated from the puzzle, he or she is cast adrift and alone. That person is rarely reunited with the rest of the puzzle, and both the missing piece and the puzzle itself suffer from the separation.

I came to IUCC because I’d witnessed the failure of my previous church to welcome people who were different. I learned that there was a place in Orange County where people understood the importance of being open and affirming: a place that welcomed those who were hurt and rejected elsewhere, those who were like the puzzle piece I’d found – lonely and separated from the beautiful picture of God’s children.

IUCC is a wonderful mix of people who share a common vision of God’s inclusive church, and we are all richer for the experience. Together, we’ve played a part in making God’s jigsaw puzzle whole again, in all its beautiful colors and shapes. Let’s continue to reach out, encourage diversity, and help others feel invited and welcomed in this place.
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.

Dear Readers,

September is one of my favorite months of the year. Autumn is around the corner. The days are getting shorter and the nights are getting longer.

It is harvest time. Fresh fruits and vegetables abound. I especially enjoy the cherry tomatoes, and I start collecting pumpkins. The sunsets are amazing. Bright orange colors fill the sky. The clouds gently roll by.

It’s time to ready the garden for the winter vegetables. I plant broccoli, radishes, and small pumpkins. I admire the colorful leaves.

It is a good feeling to experience the seasons. I am ready for harvest!

With love,

Miss Lily