Lots of IUCC folks were spotted at the OC Women’s March on January 18th!

Photos by Cindy O’Dell, Glenda Wyant, Tricia Aynes, Sharon Lynn, & Facebook friends
ASH WEDNESDAY

At 7 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, February 26, in our sanctuary, you are invited to share in an ancient liturgy that still speaks, fresh and true in our time.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent, a period of 40 days. Through these 40 days we remember: 40 days in an ark, riding out a flood; 40 years in a desert sojourn from bondage to freedom and responsibility; 40 days with Jesus, facing down the temptations that distract us, staying the course by which our humanity is fulfilled. Through these 40 days we engage ourselves in journeys of faith, travelling through storm and across wilderness into the renewal of God’s purpose and promise for our lives.

To begin the season of Lent, the Ash Wednesday liturgy, which dates back to the seventh century, includes a ritual with branches and fronds from last year’s Palm Sunday burned down to ash. Believers are invited to come forward for the sign of the cross to be made on their foreheads, with those ashes, as these words from Genesis are said aloud: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Remember that you are dust... words not meant to be frightening or discouraging, but a reminder of the truth that what makes us human is God’s love, what makes us more than dirt and dust and ash is God’s love, what holds us through the journey of our living and our dying is God’s eternal love, forever full and free.

I’ll see you in church,
Pastor Dave

PASTOR DAVE LEADS LENTEN STUDY GROUP

A lot of people who otherwise take the Bible seriously will confess, “I kind of hate Paul.” Progressive Christians especially may associate him with an anti-woman, anti-gay, pro-slavery, anti-sex system of guilt and shame that corrupts the Jesus message. But the truth is that the Apostle Paul – passionate for justice, honesty, reconciliation and inclusion – is one of our most articulate and persuasive allies. It’s time for us to reclaim Paul and his writings from the evangels of fear!

Beginning March 11 and continuing on Wednesdays through April 1, Pastor Dave will lead a study group, offering daytime and evening sessions, making use of Paul the Progressive?, a new book by Eric C. Smith. Each Wednesday, you can attend either from Noon to 1:15 p.m. (bring your lunch) or from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Books are available for purchase ($12.50) from the church office.

It turns out that the Paul most of us have come to know “and kind of hate” isn’t the real Paul who emerges from a fresh and honest look at his writings and the historical context. Along with consideration of Smith’s book, there will be close reading of Paul’s letters too, so we’ll be using the Bible a lot. Bring yours with you or, if you haven’t got a Bible you like, we’ll be happy to provide one for you.

Sign up at www.iucc.org/register where you can also request a copy of Smith’s book.
I’m really grateful for the folks who are volunteering to lead Sunday Adult Exploration* this year! And because of them, you get some great discussions on a wide range of topics.

This month, Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi and Craig Repp are reviewing The Power of Forgiveness, a film by Martin Doblmeier featuring stories on the Amish, Northern Ireland, 9/11 and other tragedies. Commentators in the film include Thich Nhat Hanh and Elie Wiesel.

The season of Lent begins on February 26 with Ash Wednesday, and we will have two special opportunities for learning and discussion. Al Gumb will lead 6 Sundays on Beyond Belief, a new Marcus Borg DVD featuring his wife, Rev. Marianne Borg; this starts on March 1.

Pastor Dave will lead daytime and evening sessions on Wednesdays during Lent, beginning March 11, on a new book about the apostle Paul, Paul the Progressive, by seminary professor Eric Smith. You can get a copy in the office now, for only $12.50. Sign up online at www.iucc.org/register!

And of course, we’ve got guest speaker John Pavlovitz coming on March 15! Sign up online at www.iucc.org/register, for his Sunday afternoon lecture and book-signing. You can also “Add On” lunch on Sunday, and a limited-seating dinner with John Pavlovitz on Saturday evening, March 14!

Ken Wyant has led us nearly all the way through 1st Timothy. What’s next for Tuesday Bible Study? Why, 2nd Timothy, of course! Join Ken and a lively discussion at 4:00 p.m.

And you can also participate in Yoga of Recovery with Kelly Garrity, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 7:30 am in the Wisdom Room, and TED Talks discussions with Al Gumb at 4:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the Peace Room.

Putting on my Facilities hat for a moment…lots of people are wondering when we’ll get a new shade-cover for the Patio. The Administration Board just approved a bid, and we’re aiming – fingers crossed! – to have it up by Easter, April 12. Of course, delays can happen, but you should see the first signs of what’s coming in about a month.

The Administration Board has gratefully received two gifts that will fund the removal and replacement of the patio cover, from Keith & Renae Boyum and from the estate of Kanwal & Gaurang Yodh. A proposal was approved at the Jan. 27 Administration Board meeting, with work scheduled to begin as soon as possible.

*I like this name for “adult Sunday school.” It’s a better description of what we do at IUCC – exploring different ideas, new information, etc. Join us at 8:45 or 10:00 on Sunday mornings for Sunday AdultEx!
Prior to my becoming the moderator of IUCC, I was co-chair of the New Member Development Ministry (now called the Membership Ministry). One of the responsibilities of that ministry was to hold classes for those interested in learning more about our church and perhaps joining IUCC in the future. One of the topics we presented was a brief history of the United Church of Christ (UCC).

Pastor Paul always remarked that the UCC was one of the oldest churches in America, hearkening back to the days of the Pilgrims and their arrival in New England and subsequent settlement into towns and villages. Out of that sense of community and participation came the New England town meetings with the leader of that group being known as the moderator. Sound familiar?

While we don’t have “town meetings” here at IUCC, we do have two congregational meetings a year. And my title is moderator, not president as it is at most churches I’ve been a part of. And if you’ve looked at the organization chart for IUCC, you will see that the congregation is shown at the top of the chart - not the pastor, not the moderator, not other leaders. The congregation approves the budget, the congregations calls ministers, the congregation approves changes to the bylaws, and the congregation elects the leaders of the church.

On February 9, the members of IUCC will gather in the sanctuary for the Winter Congregational Meeting. We will begin shortly after the end of the 2nd service. A quorum of 25% of the members is required to conduct and enact official business (that’s 80 members). As moderator, I work with the pastor and the chairs of the Administration and Ministry Boards to make the agenda for the meeting. The official notice of the meeting must go out at least 14 days before the meeting and must state what the items for discussion and voting will be.

The most important item for every Winter Congregational Meeting is a review of the previous year’s budget and financial condition of IUCC and a presentation and approval of the current year’s budget. That budget sets our priorities for the year. We also discuss and approve the Child Care Center budget.

In addition to the budget, there will be a report from Pastor Dave, update on the status of the search process for our next settled pastor, and an update on the efforts of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force.

Since the congregation is responsible for approving any bylaws changes, you will also vote on a motion to change the name of the Ministry FOR Young People to the Ministry WITH Young People. A final item will be discussion and voting on a resolution called “We are still in,” that IUCC be on record for continued support of the Paris Climate Accords.

We are Irvine United CONGREGATIONAL Church - honor that name by your attendance and participation in the meeting on February 9. I look forward to seeing you there and being with you in faith and community.

Renae Boyum, Moderator

Winter Congregational Meeting
Sunday, Feb. 9, at 12:30 p.m.

Due to the change in the stewardship campaign, the Administration and Ministries Boards voted in December to move the Winter Congregational Meeting to Sunday, February 9, 2020. We will take care of the following business:

- Presentation of the 2020 Budget
- Update on the Pastoral Search process
- Report from the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- Change in IUCC Bylaws to rename MYP
- Vote on “We Are Still In” — a resolution to join a statement of continued support for the Paris Climate Accords.

The meeting will be held in the Sanctuary, following the 11:00 worship service. Please plan to attend!
Pastoral Search Committee

Dear Congregation,

Our work as a committee remains collaborative, exciting, optimistic, and prayerful. All of us are grateful for the blessings of friendship and stewardship gifted by you. Thank you!

As we celebrated the holidays, the first phase of our work was complete. Many of you attended the forum on November 3, 2019 where the church profile was presented for feedback. We are particularly grateful for the discussion about cultural and ethnic diversity. Supported by the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, committed members of our congregation shared an important voice which challenges our beliefs, faith, and understanding. After incorporating almost every suggestion, our church profile was finalized and posted on the UCC website. We are now live! See at right the ad posted on the UCC website.

The arrival of 2020 marks the beginning of phase two. We are now actively reviewing résumés. We recently met with conference minister, Rev. Felix Villanueva, who shared best practices to guide our process. In a nutshell, our process is a multi-stage conversation where candidates will either move forward or not. To move forward, candidates must demonstrate commitments to Progressive Christianity, LGBTQ+ community, cultural and ethnic diversity, environment, social justice, and youth programming.

Moreover, candidates must display strengths in civic engagement, communication, homiletics, management, and pastoral outreach. Our process is deliberative and rigorous. Of course the confidentiality of our work is paramount.

We are unable to discuss the details of our candidates or our conversations within committee. Please know we are meeting regularly. Potential candidates are submitted each Friday. Rev. Villanueva reminds us that the process takes as long as it takes. However, we remain hopeful that our next settled pastor will be in place this spring.

Thank you for your prayers. We are both honored and humbled.

- The Pastoral Search Committee

Pastoral Search Committee blessed on Jan. 26

The Pastoral Search Committee was blessed at both services on January 26. Now that they have completed the Church Profile, they are starting to evaluate candidate profiles with the goal of selecting a new settled pastor. Pictured from L to R above are: Ken Wyant, Tricia Aynes, Keith Boyum, Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi, Aiden Mitchell, Pastor Dave, Connie Jones, and Craig Tyrl. - Photo by Jim Aynes.
Mission & Service’s 2020 Schedule

The Mission & Service Ministry seeks to meet human needs both in the community and in the world. These are the service projects which we will be supporting in the coming year:

**February**  
Friendship Shelter bin collection

**March**  
One Great Hour of Sharing* (4th Sun. of Lent, March 22)

**April**  
Family Promise hosting April 5-19  
Family Promise offering  
Families Forward food bin collection

**May**  
Strengthen the Church* offering (Pentecost Sunday)  
- May 31  
Third World Crafts sale

**June**  
Friendship Shelter bin collection

**July**  
Families Forward school supplies bin collection

**September**  
Family Promise hosting Sept. 13-27

**October**  
Neighbors in Need* offering on Sunday, Oct. 4

**November**  
Families Forward Christmas gift bin collection  
Toiletries for Women in Prison collection

**December**  
Concern America Craft – Artisan sale  
Christmas Fund* offering on Christmas Eve

*UCC special offering

Friendship Shelter Bin Drive-Feb. 2020

For most months each year, Mission and Service Ministry is honored to place bins in the narthex and give the congregation an opportunity to support worthwhile local non-profits.

Friendship Shelter has been added to our list for 2020. They help homeless adults achieve self-sufficiency and become more productive members of our community. Since its inception, it has worked with more than 10,000 people to end their homelessness. And each night more than 160 homeless and formerly homeless people sleep safe, are warm and cared for in one of their programs.

Many of you know its director, Dawn Price, who was a valued IUC member and Chair of the Ministry Board. One of Friendship Shelter’s programs is their Residential Shelter Program. This program provides housing, meals, and a variety of supportive services for 32 homeless adult men and women, for roughly 90 days, at no charge. While they accept all kinds of hygiene items, food, warm clothing, etc., following are their most needed items:

- Reusable water bottles
- large bath towels
- blankets
- comforters
- shampoo
- socks
- razors

Your participation is simple and easy. Just bring any of these items and toss them in the bin during February. We will deliver the donations.

Thank you for promoting the value of love and giving hope to the future for the most vulnerable homeless people in our county!
In January, we recognized our Child Care Center teachers in worship, and then the teachers hosted an open house where tours were offered to interested IUCC members and friends. We did this because the preschool is important to IUCC in terms of both mission and financial support. This brief article recaps the signs that were posted at various locations in the preschool facility.

## Mission

With both our former and current treasurers in the lead (Mark Allen and David Carruthers), and of course in consultation with our Child Care Center Director Irma Rosales, we make enrollment projections from time to time. How many kids, and at what levels, do we expect in the fall, in the spring, in the summer? Here are some important takeaways:

- Ours is truly a community that is hungry for high-quality child care, and demand from the community has meant a full school, with waiting lists.
- Specifically, when we opened a new classroom 13 months ago in January 2019, it filled more quickly than projections had indicated. The new classroom, occupying space that had previously accommodated our senior pastor, administrator, and bookkeeper, allowed the Child Care Center to move from serving 48 children to 60.
- Fire regulations and state of California preschool licensing standards set those ceilings, mostly on a basis of number of square feet per child [per hour / per half day / per full day].
- Now, in February 2020, we can quickly expand the school again, because we raised the number of toilets and sinks in each of the children's bathrooms. We have a waiting list of parents anxious to take these newly-available slots.
- We will move from a ceiling of 60 children to a ceiling of 63, as soon as we have agreements of fire, state licensing, and the city of Irvine (which grants us our Conditional Use Permit, setting a maximum number of children).

## Financial Support

The Child Care Center is important to the overall financial health of the congregation. It provides dollars to the congregation in three ways:

- **First**, the preschool pays “rent.” The annual contribution for 2020 is budgeted to be $66,000, up from $61,200 in 2019. Those dollars are income to the congregational budget.
- **Second**, the preschool reimburses the congregation for direct services provided by our bookkeeper and our Administrative Pastor. The 2020 budgeted amount is set at $34,244, slightly more than the 2019 actual payment of $33,724.
- **Third**, the preschool has a consistent record of ending each year with a surplus, a “profit” if you will, and that results in a substantial cash reserve. That cash reserve is available to the congregation. It is IUCC’s money, albeit that we show in on the books as a Child Care Center reserve. At year’s end 2019, that reserve stood at $174,700. In 2019, a portion of the reserve was tapped by the Administration Board to pay for new air conditioning in Plumer Hall, an expense that came to about $16,000.

## Other Good Things to Know

IUCC’s Child Care Center offers more services at a lower tuition charge than other nearby Irvine preschools.

- Our hours for half-day children are 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The preschools affiliated with the Irvine Presbyterian and Good Shepherd Lutheran congregations are open for half-day kids from 9 to noon.
- IUCC offers a hot lunch for both half and full-day children. The comparison schools do not.
- Our Child Care Center teachers will potty-train two year-olds. The comparison schools do not offer this service.
- Our monthly tuition for full-time care for two year-olds is $1,344 for 2020. The comparison Irvine preschools charge $1,550 and $1,500, respectively.

And now you know the story - or at least, part of it. Our teachers serve the community, and they love these children!

- Keith Boyum
Photos from the Early Childhood Center Open House on Jan. 12 to recognize our teachers and display the remodeled bathrooms!

Photos courtesy of Tricia Aynes

ECC Director Irma Rosales proudly displays the remodeled bathrooms

Keith Boyum, Chair of the ECC Ministry (standing behind teachers in photo at right) talked about the renewed facilities.

ECC teachers (at left with Pastor Dave and below in their classrooms) were introduced to the congregation and were available to answer questions.
IUCC members recently toured Republic Services Material Recovery Center in Anaheim. The tour, conducted by Recycling Coordinator Cathy Nguyen, was an eye-opening experience for everyone. The facility's scale was truly impressive, covering over 35 acres.

The recovery center receives over 2,500 tons a day collected from 11 cities plus Disneyland. Sorted recyclable materials are compacted into bales weighing about 1,500 lbs. The facility outputs about 500 bales per day. Bales are picked up daily by third party recyclers. Contaminated trash and materials not acceptable for recycling are sent to the landfill.

The tour starts with 40 foot trailers arriving from transfer stations unloading large volumes of trash into a collection area called the “tipping” floor. A skip loader pushes the materials back to make room for more loads arriving minutes later, while other skip loaders push trash onto conveyor belts for the start of a complex sorting process.

Pre-sorting is the important first step, removing hazardous and other contaminated materials plus non-recyclable materials that may have made it into the recycling bins, such as Styrofoam and loose plastic bags. The pre-sort area is labor intensive with workers removing materials by hand.

The conveyor belt next moves the materials to a screening machine separating out large cardboard pieces while all other materials drop to a conveyor belt below. The belt continues to a process that breaks and crushes glass containers. Crushed glass particles fall through a screen to their own conveyor belt. The remaining materials move to the next process where newspaper and other light paper float to a top conveyor belt from blowers while plastic bottles, containers, and cans drop to another conveyor belt. Workers pull out any box board and small cardboard that remain for separate processing and any non-recyclable material that may have been missed earlier.

Plastic and metal containers are sent through a screening machine that weeds out any remaining fiber. Plastic then moves to a manual process of separating out different types of plastic, i.e. milk containers, water/soda bottles, and detergent containers. Metal is removed by passing through high-powered magnets to remove ferrous metals to a separate conveyor belt. The last sorting process looks for remaining aluminum cans, pie tins, etc.

The crushed glass still needs another process to remove any metal before being dumped into large piles of material used for road building and drainage projects. Each type of recycle output is then baled into large cubes ready for shipping.

The tour guides provided an insider's view on the challenges of recycling and shared what currently should and should not be placed in our residential recycling bins. Guidelines vary between waste management companies and within each city’s environmental policies.

The following guidelines provided during the tour helped answer many questions. After the tour, we checked with Waste Management and City of Irvine. Most of the guidelines are the same with few exceptions.

**General Guidelines**
Empty, rinse, and let dry glass and plastic containers before placing in the recycle bin. They do not have to be perfectly cleaned, just free of food residue, rinsed, and dried.

Do not put recyclables in plastic bags. Keep recyclables loose in the recycle bin.

**What can be placed in the residential recycle bin:**

**Cardboard and Paper**
- Cardboard - flattened
- Newspapers and magazines, bulk/junk mail, envelopes, catalogs
- Office paper, file folders
- Paperboard cereal boxes, tissue boxes, shoe boxes, egg cartons, beverage boxes, dry food boxes
- Frozen food boxes, pizza boxes, clean components (no food residue or grease)
- Shredded paper (must bag & tie before placing in cart)
- Soft bound books, hard bound books (inside only, no cover)
- Telephone books, directories

**Metal**
- Aluminum cans
- Aerosol cans (must be empty)

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*Recycling article continued on Page 10*
Recycling article continued from Page 9

- Hangers
- Pie tins, cans from soup, vegetables, juice, coffee

**Plastic** (rinsed and dry)
- Beverage containers – juice, milk, soda, water (with lids)
- Plastic containers (#1-7) such as laundry detergent, ketchup, mustard, hair products
- Plastic bags – must be bundled inside a bag and tied, do not place loose in bin * WM Irvine
- Plastic tubs, buckets (#1-7)

**Glass** (rinsed and dry)
- Food jars – sauce, jelly, pickles (no residue)
- Beverage glass bottles, wine, beer, liquor, juice

**What should not be placed in the recycle bin:**
- Wax coated paper containers and cups with wax or plastic coatings, plastic cup tops
- Soiled or wet items, including wet cardboard or wet paper
- Polystyrene foam and plastic
- Ceramics
- Loose plastic bags
- Diapers (do we have to say this…)
- Drinking glasses, window glass, Pyrex glass, auto glass, mirrors
- Pet-soiled paper
- Foil wrapping paper, paper with glitter, most ribbons and bows
- Clothing and shoes
- Rubber/latex items

When in doubt, it is best to toss in the garbage bin or contact your local waste management company.

The tour was very helpful in clearing up the many questions of attendees. Everyone came away with a renewed desire to be better at trash recycling. The more habitually the trash can is half full, and the recycle can is bulging with properly sorted and prepared recyclables, the better it will be for our community. The even better goal is very little trash. That will involve a much larger community.
The Green Faith Committee, a subcommittee of the Advocates for Peace and Justice Ministry, has been working with the other ministries and of our congregation to make Creation Justice an active part of our congregational ministry.

IUCC recently completed an addition to our church campus with the addition of new office space for the ministerial staff, three new meeting rooms, and a new facade and landscaping facing the street, with xeriscape landscaping reducing water use. In addition, improvements were made to the child care center and Plumer Hall for energy efficient lighting and temperature control.

The new construction, which was completed in September 2018, was built to California-mandated green building standards. Included are:

- “Low E” tinted glass windows to minimize heat from sunlight
- Light colored exterior for the new offices, meeting rooms and child care center including the roof of the new construction which reflect light and reduce heat gain
- High quality insulation and sealants
- New energy efficient air-conditioning/heating unit in Plumer Hall
- New patio cover to shield child care center east facing windows
- New thermostats throughout the campus, programmed to match regular usage patterns. These can be over-ridden for a set period for unusual activities. The thermostat timing and programming has been set to be as energy-efficient as possible while still providing expected comfort
- Light switches and plugs which are timed to turn on only when natural light is not sufficient and “motion controlled” to turn on with activity in the room
- Child care center lighting - 92 fluorescent bulbs were replaced with LED lights and motion sensor light switches
- LED lighting around the perimeter of the sanctuary, using only 25% Kwh of previous lighting
- LED lighting is planned for the parking lot and the “star” at the top of the sanctuary dome
- New storm water detention to mitigate runoff including “bioswale” to collect runoff and filter drainage from our main and back parking areas allowing it to leech back into the groundwater
- Use of construction “Best Management Practices (BMP’s) for soil stabilization and runoff control, including: Shaker Plates at the entry drive to Alton Parkway to minimize street drainage, and silt fencing and “Straw Waddle” along the sidewalk at Alton Parkway
- Recycling of construction materials whenever possible
- Recycling has improved by notices to the congregation and added recycle containers

The Green Faith Committee meets monthly and is actively exploring new ways to involve the congregation and to partner with like-minded faith communities. One of these interests is involvement in the national UCC program “A Kairos Call to Action” which was launched in January of this year. The action items included are introduced weekly in the on-line newsletter, The Pollinator, which is available to all interested parties through the UCC website. (UCC.org: The Pollinator: register: A Kairos Call to Action)
Hello IUCC Family!

Did you notice new coffee hour beverage cups during GREENFaith Sunday? That is because they are biodegradable! So, what is wrong with the paper products? It isn't like they are made of plastic … well, turns out they kind of are. Paper plates like the old Dixie plates take roughly 80 years to biodegrade at your local landfill. Once they finally degrade, they leave behind a harmful microplastic residue that decimates plants and animals, but hey! At least the paper plates don't leak.

With these new revelations, inspired by the suggestion of the GREENFaith Committee, Coffee Hour has officially switched to biodegradable products. So what exactly are these 'biodegradable' products? For starters, each product will decompose in less than 90 days at a commercial compost or less than 4 years in the local landfill (way better than 80 years) and ZERO microplastics! To make these products even better, they typically take 50 to 70% less energy to produce than their paper/plastic alternative.

Compostable PLA Laminated Hot Cup - Premium SFI paperboard lined with Natureworks Ingeo biopolymer made from all natural plant sugars. Basically, the paperboard used is not only biodegradable but also the trees used were responsibly harvested. Ingeo is biodegradable plastic made from plant resin. These cups will not melt, so they can hold boiling water.

Biodegradable PLA Cold Cup – Made out of polylactic acid made from corn grown here in the USA. These cups are only able to handle up to 110 degrees, so don't leave them in your car on a hot day or they will melt, unless that is your goal. Plant-Based CPLA Fork – This is made similar to PLA but CPLA can handle higher temperatures and is not see-through. These forks are made with no trace of BPA, chlorine, or toxic chemicals.

Natural Sugarcane Bagasse Bamboo Fibers Sturdy Paper Plate – Saved the best for last. These plates make the previous products look irresponsible. These plates are made with Bagasse, a natural by-product from sugarcane that, before this, was just thrown away! This makes them 100% byproduct produced with zero trees or plastics used. These plates are also microwavable.

Like everything healthy or beneficial, these biodegradable products cost twice as much as their paper/plastic alternatives. Unfortunately, this sudden product change is not in the budget and can't continue without YOUR support! For only 19 dollars and 15 cents a week, you can adopt your very own biodegradable products. Donations can be given to your hospitality co-chairs or placed in the donation box at the coffee hour table. While there, check out available dates to host coffee hour and sign up. Your donation can help save the planet, one small snack at a time!

Thank you!
Alex and Teri
Hospitality Co-Chairs
jalexingaliucc@gmail.com
Save the Date!
ANNUAL IUCC WOMEN’S RETREAT
MAY 1-3

“Mystic Masters”: Annual IUCC Women’s Retreat at Pilgrim Pines
Friday, May 1, through Sunday, May 3, 2020

Planning is underway for this year’s Women’s Retreat at Pilgrim Pines, with a theme of “Mystic Masters.” We will look at the lives of mystics such as Rumi, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, Rabia of Persia, Meister Eckhart, Hafiz, and others, and find ways to apply their revelations and teachings to our daily lives.

Returning as retreat leader is the Rev. Jill A. Kirchner-Rose, senior minister at Redlands United Church of Christ, who led the retreat in 2018. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from the University of California at Riverside, a Master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School, and a Doctorate of Ministry in Preaching from Chicago Theological Seminary.

Jill is married to Karen Rose. They have an 8 year old daughter, Daniella, and a cocker spaniel puppy, Ace.

Retreat attendees are encouraged to obtain the book, “Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from East and West” by Daniel Ladinsky. However, obtaining the book is not required for attendance.

Watch for more details soon! Registration will begin in March.

MAGI ACTORS HONORED

Throughout the stewardship campaign, we were regaled by the very clever and amusing antics of our resident “magi” actors Craig Tyrl, Lesley Wheland, and Keith Dillon (L to R above). They were honored with these very apt T-shirts on Sunday, Jan. 26. Thanks, Magi Trio – you made pledging fun! - Photo by Tricia Aynes

We love to share our IUCC family story with others, and so you’ll see a lot of photos and videos being taken and shared in many ways. If you don’t want your image used in our story telling, please turn in a Media Opt Out form, which is available through our church office by calling us at 949-733-0220 or by e-mailing us at iucc@iucc.org. Thank you!
Coffee Hour hosts needed!

Coffee hour is about fellowship and giving back! Help spread the joy of fellowship by signing up! Get to know someone new! More than one person can sign up for any date. Part of an IUCC group? Promote yourselves by hosting as a group!

So “what do I do?” you may ask. YOU (and a co-host) supply the snacks, keep the table refilled, and visit with congregants! Approximate time commitment: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You can attend the 11 a.m. service.

Donated funds are available for reimbursement. Sign up online or at the Coffee Hour table on Sunday. Thanks!

Women's Fellowship
Wednesday, Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m.

Women’s Fellowship has planned a two month discussion of the documentary “RBG” (Ruth Bader Ginsburg). We will have our usual salad and soup supper, then watch half the documentary, with breaks to discuss the events covered in the film. The discussion will continue at our next meeting on Wed., March 4.

Isaiah House
Wednesday, Feb. 12, 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 on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Stretch your muscles and center your mind!

The Seeker’s Women’s Group
Tuesday, Feb. 18, 9:30 a.m.

The Seekers meet on the third Tuesday of each month for theological and spiritual study and discussion. Newcomers are always welcome!

Coffee Hour hosts needed!

When: Saturday, March 7, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Woodbridge Village Center building next to IUCC.
Cost: $30 for appetizers, catered buffet dinner, entertainment and a drink of your choice (specialty cocktail or mocktail, wine, beer or selected soft drinks). Additional drinks will be available for $5 each at the event. Water provided free of charge.

Silent auction: Members of the Fellowship Ministry led by August Lobato will put together baskets of treats based on the Beatles/Love theme. Bidding begins at 6:30 p.m.

Ticket sales begin Feb. 9 on the patio.

For more information, see a member of the Fellowship Committee: August Lobato (chair), Debra Banwell, Wayne Banwell, Pat Sauter, Jon Ingal, Jenn McCarty, Trina Mangione or Cindy O’Dell.

Thank you!

Thanks to all at IUCC! The contributions made to Families Forward in November & December made such a difference for these children. Our continual community outreach is one of the many reasons why IUCC is so special.

-Tommie Kozlov
YOUR GIFT OF TIME AND TALENTS

All churches rely on support beyond finances, but for congregational churches it is particularly essential. Our church mission and programs bubble up from the interests and goals of our vibrant church community, and the quality of that mission and those programs cannot be properly sustained without the generous contribution of time and talents from all in our faith community.

There are so many opportunities to be generous in spirit in supporting our ministries. Some ways to give back to IUCC require as little as 1-2 hours per month. We ask everyone to be involved, to serve one another, so that the burden does not fall on just a few. Our church family needs help from all its members so that it is nourished and renewed.

The generous gift of your time and talents will lift up the warmth and hospitality of our church community. It will also magnify your personal connection to IUCC and enhance your worship experience. Please take a look at all our ministries and programs during this post-stewardship season and reconnect with our community to strengthen our church and give you a stronger sense of belonging. And we hope you will come to the Ministries Fair on February 16 to re-engage with IUCC.

We are counting on each and every one of you!

Randy, Tommie and Kaytee
Membership Ministry
I met a couple of angels on January 18. They weren't dressed in white robes, and they didn't have wings or haloes, but I knew them just the same. From all appearances, they were ordinary ladies participating in the Women's March in Santa Ana, two of about 12,000 others. Like many of the marchers, they were gray haired with a few wrinkles - two nice people out to support women's rights.

Halfway through the march, my husband Jim tripped and fell face first onto the sidewalk. These two angels (retired ER nurses) ran to him and immediately began rendering aid. One of them yelled for someone to call 911. Jim just lay there, unmoving and unresponsive. It was pretty scary - I thought he might be dead. With one at his head and one at his feet, the nurses supported his neck as they ever so gently rolled him over onto his back. His face was all bloody. They checked his pulse and his vital signs, which were normal. One of the nurses left to rejoin her group, but the other stayed with me until the fire truck and ambulance arrived. I thanked her and asked her name: it was "Peggy."

About the time the paramedics arrived, Jim finally opened his eyes and was able to answer basic questions. Peggy said goodbye and left. Because Jim had been unconscious, he never tracked on the two nurses at all. The first thing he saw was the two paramedics, and he was pretty sure THEY were the angels! Further testing at the hospital determined he had a broken nose and a cut lip that required stitches. He's a bit bruised and battered now, but basically okay.

The thing is, though, that we have to be in synchronicity with the spark of the divine to recognize it and spring into action when we get the call. If we're too busy or too stressed to hear it (or worse yet, if we hear it and disregard it), then we miss an opportunity to be God's hands and heart in this world.

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This whole experience got me thinking about angels - not celestial beings with gently flapping wings, but ordinary people who heed the call of God and step up to help someone in need. I believe that each of us has a little piece of our psyches that is earmarked for angelhood: the God within each of us, if you will. Sometimes God triggers this spark of the divine in others to help us, and sometimes He triggers the spark within us to serve OTHERS. It's like God deputizes people to serve in His stead. I think it's especially cool when WE get to be the angels.

Years ago, I was sitting in a meeting in Plumer Hall when a homeless woman came in and started talking on and on about a transportation problem she was having. Most of us sat glued to our chairs, hoping she would leave. Then one dear man stood up and walked over to her, put his arm around her shoulders, and gently led her out and did his best to resolve her issues. He came back about 20 minutes later and sat down like nothing had happened. I have no doubt that God deputized him as an angel in that moment.

I like to think of it as a kind of radio frequency. There are a lot of different stations on the dial, featuring various kinds of music. We turn the dial around slowly and carefully, trying to find a station or a tune that we like. A lot of the stations are scratchy and hard to hear, while others come through crystal clear. If we stay tuned to the clear one - the one with God's still, small voice speaking through it - we can turn up the volume a bit and hear what He is calling us to do: sometimes they're big things, but mostly they're quiet whispers to do small acts of kindness for random strangers.

We have lots of angels on the right radio frequency at IUCC. They appear in the form of deacons, ministry members, church leaders, worship leaders, staff, choir members, greeters, coffee hour hosts, workday volunteers, and comma group leaders. They lead Bible study and Sunday school, help with youth activities, chat with visitors, conduct new member classes, contribute to local charities, plan the women's retreat, knit prayer shawls, start book groups, visit shut-ins and detainees, and help out when IUCC hosts homeless families. All are angels in my book!

Whenever I've gotten the call to angelhood, I've tried to heed it. The quiet voice has enriched my life, led me down new pathways, and widened my world. And there have been plenty of times when others have been angels to me in times of need - good samaritans who appeared out of nowhere to help.

I wish Peggy had given me her last name. I wanted to send her flowers. I'm pretty sure her act of selflessness messed up her day and made it impossible for her to find her group again. But she and the other nurse didn't hesitate to run to the aid of another - they accessed that divine spark in their psyches and became angels for the few moments it took to bring comfort to a stranger. For that, I am very grateful - to them and to the countless other angels amongst us. Let's stay tuned to that frequency, my friends.
We’ve been working our way through strategies for helping children and teens with both learning (school) and behavioral expectations using a “situational intervention” approach. We’ve outlined four distinct “levels” of a child/teen being “ready” (motivated and confident) and “able” (having both the skills and understanding) for a particular task. In December we looked at an approach for helping young people at Readiness Level 1 (unwilling and unable), and last month we considered those at Readiness Level 2 (willing but unable). This month we’ll talk about those at Readiness Level 3: Able, but Unwilling.

Sometimes a child is insecure about their ability, which will interfere with their motivation. For a task to be done successfully, both the adult and the child must believe they can do it. In other situations the adult may be convinced that they are “able,” but we are asking them to do something they’ve never done before which makes them hesitant to try. There are occasions when a young person is very enthusiastic about learning a skill initially (such as doing math, learning a sport, or playing a musical instrument), but after gaining the skill they become disenchanted and thus lose their motivation to continue.

We’ve been discussing how the situational intervention approach stresses deciding how much we should focus on the “task” at hand, and how much we should focus on providing an encouraging relationship. At Level 3, since the ability is there, we don’t have to focus much on the task, but instead will focus on providing high relationship, consulting and supporting them if necessary to engage in the task despite their disinterest. In this case, the adult is “participating” in the task with the child rather than “leading” them. Although we’ll need to communicate about the task – due to their poor motivation – we don’t need to provide any feedback about actually doing the task, but rather why they’ve lost interest or enthusiasm.

When a child is skilled at a task they need to do, the adult will engage with them asking a lot of questions if they are not doing what they should, rather than providing answers and direction. The good news is that since the young person already has the basic ability, they are open to suggestions about ways to make it more interesting and/or challenging. Questions from the adult will focus on “why” rather than “how.” The why may be about why a particular task is important, or why it needs to be done. We may have to help them understand the importance of a task in terms of their future, or in terms of how it helps others in the family or other group. They know the how.

When a young person is struggling with motivation the adult can act as a “collaborator” with them, helping them figure things out rather than just asking them to follow directions. We may have to collaborate with them about setting new objectives to make the task more interesting to them. We want to engage them and allow them to participate in decision making, giving them a lot of personal support and encouragement. They will welcome our role as a “consultant” rather than as a “boss.”

The parent/adult may have to look at themselves to see if they are responsible for a lack of enthusiasm. For example, have you been giving directions over and over when they aren’t needed? This can cause a child to be disappointed that you haven’t even noticed that they are doing what you want them to and doing it well. “Why bother?” they say to themselves. Have you put any effort into making a task that a child is doing well more interesting or challenging, to keep their interest? Have you been stingy with praise for the skills the child has developed in order to keep them motivated to get even more praise and recognition?

When a child is doing what they are being asked to do, when a child is doing what we tell them they “need” to do – at home or at school (and doing it well) – they deserve some recognition and reward. This is true even for adults in the workplace, where we find that good work going unnoticed and unrewarded often starts to “slide.” In this case it is the supervisor who is often responsible, not the worker. Pay attention to yourself as well as to your child/teen to be sure they are being recognized and rewarded for good work. Praise is a very powerful motivator, too often unused by harried parents, teachers, and others who work with children and teens. Moreover, it’s very affordable and always at hand. Try it, they’ll like it. And when they like what you do, you are more likely to like what they do.
Forgiveness
by Dr. Eduardo Jesus Arismendi-Pardi

The process of forgiveness is something that can be extremely difficult and cannot, in my view, be accomplished overnight. Forgiveness in terms of the severity of wrongs done unto others or unto oneself is a function of time for ultimately converging to a state of forgiving oneself or being forgiven by those whom we may have wronged. There are situations where forgiveness of wrongs done onto others may be very difficult or perhaps impossible to accomplish. For example, some Holocaust survivors, at least one that I had the pleasure to meet, may find it difficult or impossible to forgive those who were involved—directly or indirectly—in the extermination of the Jews by the Third Reich.

Behavioral scholars at the forefront of forgiveness research postulate that the inability to forgive is akin to being subjected to a mental prison of resentment. Forgiveness is an arduous journey. As such, it is highly inappropriate for anyone to suggest to a victim or victims of wrongdoing to forgive the person or persons who wronged that victim or victims. Forgiveness is a personal journey. There are persons who have suffered unspeakable wrongs that violated the core of their humanity or human dignity. These violations of humanity or violations of human dignity are often linked to horrific actions resulting from severe emotional, physical, or psychological pain—acts of evil that have, in many cases, ended in loss of life. Recorded history provides ample evidence of unspeakable evil deeds done onto others such as the Holocaust or the genocide of the Inca, Mayan, and Aztec cultures by European conquerors.

Forgiveness of those who inflicted actions that caused emotional, physical, or psychological harm require, in my opinion, the victim or victims to grant such forgiveness. The fact that forgiveness is exponentially difficult may be the reason why victims may have to try to forgive those who wronged them many times over before they can find closure and inner peace as the genesis for the development of a forgiving, compassionate, empathetic, and merciful heart.

Forgiveness, in my view, is a healthy way of dealing with the wrongs, intentional or non-intentional, done onto others as well as to oneself. Forgiveness as a theological construct can be classified into three broad categories: forgiving oneself; forgiving another person with whom we may not have familial ties; or forgiving a spouse, partner, or family member. Forgiveness of oneself requires an honest and fearless examination of our own personal actions, words, conduct, or behaviors which may have caused or led to outcomes that we may later regret but unfortunately cannot take back. How does one deal with such a personal challenge from a Christian perspective as well as from a secular perspective? Dealing with forgiveness of oneself from a Christian perspective, in my opinion, requires forgiveness from God followed by forgiveness of those whom we may have wronged. Forgiveness of oneself, from a Christian point of view, may require some form of confession—to God and to another person whom we can trust—of the wrongs we have inflicted onto others.

Such confession is an internal admission of the wrongs we have done followed by actions to repair or restitute those wrong deeds or actions. Simply feeling sorry for what we have done is not enough to achieve forgiveness because, in my opinion, an action to repair the damage is required in order to achieve true forgiveness. Secularly, forgiveness is about letting go of one’s past shortcomings that led to hurting others followed by a committed and concerted effort to change the behavior or conduct that resulted in the wronging of others. From a secular perspective, forgiveness provides an opportunity for personal growth by accepting one’s humanness and by coming to terms with the fact that growth is the direct result of the process of letting go of past shortcomings while searching for opportunities to be committed to corrective action as a way to move forward as one is able to let go of the past.

The forgiveness of oneself reminds me of the story where Jesus commands an adulterous woman to “… Go and sin no more” (cf. John 8:11). Within the scope of John 8:11 one should contemplate the question, “Why would Jesus say this if it were impossible to stop sinning?” Forgiveness of oneself from a broader perspective requires a U-turn of our conduct, behavior, words, or actions. Within the Jewish tradition this U-turn is referred to as t’shuva or תשובה (pronounced teshuva). T’shuva can be exegetically interpreted as making a U-turn, which is, changing one’s course of action. Finally, forgiveness—from either a Christian or secular perspective—simply means letting go. By letting go, we increase the probability of healing. This healing allows for spiritual growth in one’s journey while following the teachings of Jesus Christ. If we are unable to practice self-forgiveness, we sabotage our lives and end up being a prisoner of our own mind.
Let There Be Light!

by Vivian Elaine Johnson

I read the story of an elementary-age student who had no money to buy a present for her teacher. She loved and admired her teacher so much that she yearned to give her a present. One morning her creativity solved the problem: she took the mini marshmallows from her cereal at the free school breakfast, carefully placed them in the plastic napkin-utensil bag and, with a big smile, gave her precious gift to her teacher. (Pass a tissue, please.)

This gift-giving little girl brought light into her teacher’s life. Into her own life, as well. You’ve heard the oft quoted words, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5) The symbolism of light is powerful.

How can you and I be creative in bringing light to others? Shakespeare has a suggestion in the words he wrote in The Merchant of Venice: “How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.” In comparing good deeds to the light of a candle, Shakespeare helps us visualize the beauty, warmth, and inspiration that both the recipient and the giver of a good deed may experience.

A personal example. Recently I was feeling overwhelmed by the news that my husband was to remain on hospice care. (I had hoped he would improve enough for it to be temporary.) While I fully realized that this was good news in terms of receiving comfort care for him and caregiving assistance for me, it meant a change of schedules and more people diving in and out of our lives: nurses, doctor, social worker, chaplain, and other caregivers. Most significantly, it meant that I needed to face that my husband’s mortality is real.

A friend learned of our situation, called, and said, “My husband and I would like to come and stay with George so that you can take some time away. Would Wednesday work? You can feel free to do whatever you want. Take the full day. We don’t want to intrude, but if you would like us to come, we will.” Intrude? No way. What an offer!

They came. I went. I had seven hours, seven hours, to myself. I preferred to be alone; I didn’t want to talk to anyone. I ran errands, ate a delicious croissant sandwich (turkey, cranberry sauce, avocado), and then I went to two movies. Two movies, uplifting ones! It was wonderful. I felt free as a butterfly. Upon my return, it pleased me to learn that our friends and George also had a good day.

So shines a good deed – marshmallow size or full-day size. The light of our friends’ good deed shone into my darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The light won out and beamed brightly into my heart.
Bong Joon Ho’s brilliant movie *Parasite* reminded me that I know next to nothing about Asian cinema. I must confess that, up until now, I’ve basically boiled Asian cinema down to one name: Akira Kurosawa.

This list is a group of films from throughout the Far East that I’ve discovered in *Parasite*'s wake. Some of these I haven’t yet seen, but rest assured they’re in my queue. I’ll make sure you know which films these are.

**South Korea**

1. *The Housemaid* (Kim Ki Young - 1960) – Kim’s early masterpiece about an angry young woman who uses sex to destroy a middle-class family. This film echoes throughout *Parasite*.
2. *Secret Sunshine* (Chang Dong Lee - 2007) – A young woman comes to terms with her dead husband's legacy.
3. *The Host* (2007) & *Mother* (2010) – Haven’t seen either of these, but they’re both by Bong Joon Ho and that alone makes me want to seek them out.
4. *Right Now, Wrong Then* (Hang Sang Soo - 2015) – A love story between an artist and a filmmaker. The story is retold twice, with different choices leading to different endings for each telling.

**Japan**

5. *Fires on the Plain* (Kon Ichikawa – 1959) – The story about a small group of Japanese soldiers who keep fighting World War Two, even though it’s over.
6. *Gate of Flesh* (Seijun Suzuki – 1964) – An *Oliver Twist*-type story about a gang of feral prostitutes in Tokyo during the immediate aftermath of World War Two.

**Martin Scorsese’s World Cinema Project** (I haven't seen any of these films yet, but I will)


Next month?...we'll see.