



Heartwarming IUCC and University Synagogue Thanksgiving Service Featured Sir Bruno Serato

“She always put children first. She was the mom of everybody. Today, she is the mom of a million kids around the world. This March, we celebrated the one millionth meal served.” That is how Bruno Serato described his mother, Caterina, during a November 24 Thanksgiving Service hosted by University Synagogue and IUCC. It was an uplifting talk by a generous man who has achieved widespread honor through his humanitarian efforts to feed motel kids in Anaheim over the past ten years.

Bruno Serato was one of seven children raised in Italy and France. Although they were poor, his parents helped others whenever they could. In 1970, his sister married a GI and moved to Southern California. He called her to ask if he could visit for a few months to learn English. He never left. He started work at a French restaurant as a dishwasher and worked his way up to general manager. Eventually, he purchased the restaurant and turned it into the highly successful White House restaurant.

One winter when his mother Caterina was visiting from Italy, he took her to the Boys & Girls Club of Anaheim. She noticed that a child was eating potato chips for dinner and asked why. The director said that many of the kids lived in motels and their parents had no kitchen. Caterina said, “Bruno, why don’t you feed them pasta?” He started feeding the first 72 Anaheim motel kids on April 18, 2005, and has fed them pasta ever since. The program has expanded to feeding 1200 children, five nights a week.

It hasn’t been easy. In 2009, the country was going through a recession and Bruno’s restaurant business was suffering. His chef suggested they save money by cutting the food program. At the same time, the director of the Boys & Girls Club said they needed to double the pasta to serve 300 kids

instead of 150. Bruno told his chef to double the amount of food. “I have faith, I’m a strong worker, and I’m not scared. I can’t stop feeding the children,” he said. “Then God called CNN and suggested they pick me as a hero. Everyone God called answered the phone. I was not by myself anymore. God stepped in and others donated money.”

Caterina’s Club is now in 25 locations and growing. “I realized the power of pasta,” he said. “Think about what pasta can do – one box of pasta feeds five to seven kids. Imagine if every church around the world got involved. If we worked together, how many millions could we serve? Action is what makes a difference, what makes a better world. You don’t have to be rich to feed the starving kids. There are 4500 Boys & Girls Clubs in the U.S. If everyone followed Caterina’s project, there would be no starving kids in America. You can do it in your own back yard.”



Rabbi Arnie Rachlis, Sir Bruno Serato, and the Rev. Paul Tellström

“I am very rich,” he continued. “Not in my bank account, but in my heart. My love of compassion came from Mama Caterina.”

Bruno is still not finished carrying on her legacy. He discovered that many families live in motels because they can’t raise the first and last months’ rent needed to live elsewhere. His current project “Welcome Home” helps families move out of the motels and into homes of their own. “So far, we have helped 89 families – over 500 people – to have a home. When you see a kid have his own room and be able to play on the stairs, it is worth a million dollars,” he said.

The entire service was heartwarming, poignant, and moving. Pastor Paul and Rabbi Rachlis set exactly the right tone with their remarks, conveying genuine warmth and affection. It was a lovely, emotionally satisfying service that reflected wonderful cooperation all around. ~ *by Tricia Aynes*

Congratulations to Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips!

Sarah Fiske-Phillips is an officially licensed pastor! She was recognized by the congregation on November 22 and presented with a new stole. She will be preaching quarterly, taking part in the beginning of worship, and assisting in Communion. Congratulations, Pastor Sarah!



Bread for the Journey End-of-Year Party Photos



(All photos this page courtesy of Sarah Fiske-Phillips)



From the Pastor's Desk

the Rev. Dr. Paul Tellström



Advent: to come. The season of watching and waiting is what begins the new year in the church. Not the party hats, noisemakers, dropping balls and popping corks that will arrive on the secular calendar, but the church begins its year by lighting a candle called “hope,” followed by one for “peace,” “joy” and “love” before lighting the Christ candle on Christmas Eve in celebration of

the arrival of something and someone new in the birth of Jesus.

Somewhere on a homeless night where rooms could not be found, a child was born, and angels knew to announce it not to the courts of power, but to the humblest amongst us so that they could see the one who would take up the cause of peace and teach others how to bring peace into the world. They sang, “Gloria in Excelsis Deo” and “Peace on Earth—Goodwill to All.”

Peace would spring from unexpected places. Jesus would grow up to be the one who would lead us. Every year we bend forward in the candlelight on Christmas Eve to be reminded of the wonder in this story that continued as his parents took him at great peril into Egypt as Middle Eastern refugees in peril for their lives.

Again at this time of watching and waiting, we are reminded that Jesus walked the path of non-violence, counseled “Blessed are the Peacemakers,” confronted authority where there were injustices, and by so doing was arrested, tried and crucified, even forgiving his executioners before taking his last breath.

It was his way of “Ahimsa” (or non-violence) and peace-building that both Gandhi and MLK Jr. took as models for their own means of addressing the injustices that surrounded them. Although peace was not the initial result, the kind of peace that eventually comes with justice more-or-less began to arrive.

A colleague named Fr. John Dear writes: “Two thousand years later, the world continues to reject ‘the things that make for peace.’ It remains stuck in the old cycle of war, militarism, empire, poverty and injustice.

“This time, however, the empire’s weapons have the power to destroy the entire planet. The money spent funding our wars and weapons bankrupts us and leaves millions in hunger. On top of that, our greed and systemic violence destroys the environment. Catastrophic climate change is upon us, and looks to bring unprecedented new levels of violence and destruction in its wake.

“But that’s not the way of Jesus, the meaning of Christmas, or the call of the Gospel. Indeed, support for war, weapons or killing in any form is a complete betrayal of the non-violent Jesus. It mocks his life, Christmas and the God of Peace.”

The Lessons from the Manger this year are once again about non-violence and peace. The Syrian refugees fleeing drought and religious fanaticism are not that unlike Joseph and Mary escaping Herod with the baby Jesus across the sands of Egypt. It is only our reactions to each of these situations that are diametrically opposed.

We are adamantly against gun control, yet we turn on our televisions at least once a week now to the “new normal” of the latest mass shooting involving semi-automatic weapons. I’ll give you an early Christmas gift and stop with the examples here.

Instead, let’s be reminded that Jesus was born to be “The Prince of Peace.” As followers of this child, let’s be renewed in our vision of a non-violent world, a just world, a peaceful world where we are good stewards of it and of each other. Jesus said, “Blessed are the Peacemakers.” May it be so with us in our commitment to be a “Just Peace Church.”

Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Paul



Moderator's Column

by Renae Boyum



Christmas! A time to give and receive - a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus - a time for family and friends to gather together. My greatest gift is the one of family. As some of you may know, this was a difficult year for us with the loss of Keith's sister Dee and the ongoing illness of his twin sister, Kay. Your prayers and support made a huge difference during these tough times.

We celebrated the gift of family this Thanksgiving with our two wonderful children - Nicole, who is married to Mike, and their three children - Blake, Colin, and Gavin - and Andy, who is engaged to Lauryl with a wedding planned for August 2016. Kay and her husband, Bob, also were there for Thanksgiving, as were their son Scott and his wife Jennie, and ten month-old son Shane. This gift of family brings me great joy every day of my life - it truly is the gift that keeps on giving!

One of my other greatest gifts that I treasure daily is my IUCC family! Keith and I joined this special faith community almost 20 years ago. We have shared great joys and some very sad times with this congregation.

With Randy Romine, I have led the new member classes for many years. Those in attendance share what brought them to our church, and we hear many stories, many motives. Often, people are seeking a church that will accept them for who they are regardless of their sexual orientation or

past beliefs. Other folks are looking for a church that will allow them to ask questions and continue to probe, rather than having to embrace a pre-formed doctrine. Sometimes parents are looking for a progressive Christian community in which to raise their children. Life events enter, too: a marriage or a divorce, or a move from home, can trigger a search for a new beginning and new spiritual home. Finding the right worship experience is mentioned as well - people seek a place to hear thought-provoking sermons or majestic music.

My own such story involves leaving a lifelong identification as Lutheran. But the Irvine Lutheran congregation where Keith and I had been active members became increasingly conservative theologically, and it no longer felt like home. We had to leave, even though some of our extended family has stayed there.

So we left and found this new church home and family, though it wasn't all simple and easy. I remember standing in the front of the church during the joining ritual with tears streaming down my face. The thing was, I was glad to become a part of IUCC, but my Lutheran identification was ending permanently. Looking back, I realize the feelings of sadness were very real, but temporary: sadness has been replaced by joy, contentment, fulfillment, pride and love.

Whatever reason brought you to IUCC, I hope it is a gift that has blessed your life at Christmas and throughout the year. Merry Christmas to you and yours!

In faith and community, *Renae*





GreenFaith Team

Committed to Environmental Justice

By Vivian Johnson

El Nino: Did you know that “El Nino” not only refers to a monster weather event exacerbated by climate change, but also the Christ child? Back in the 1960s, fishermen along the coast of South America observed warmer temperatures around the time of Christmas, and so they named this weather pattern after the holy infant. Today, El Nino is a window into the devastating effects of climate change because it exacerbates extreme weather by further warming already heated waters. The result? There are super powerful hurricanes and increased hunger due to scarce water and diminished crop yields.

Human Activity: The average world temperature is already at the highest level in recorded history, and it is rising at a rate much faster than ever known. The evidence that global warming is caused by human activity comes from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that includes 1,300 independent scientific groups working under the auspices of the U.N. They found that not only is the level of heat-trapping atmospheric carbon dioxide 40 percent more than the highest natural levels over the past 800,000 years, but this additional carbon dioxide contains a unique fingerprint that shows it comes from the burning of coal and oil. The IPCC concluded there is more than a 90 percent probability that human-produced greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide have warmed our planet.

Consumerism: One of my husband’s favorite hymns is “God of Grace and God of Glory.” A phrase from the hymn that causes me pause each time it is sung is “rich in things and poor in soul.” As we approach Christmas with consumerism being our national focus, “rich in things and poor in soul” rings loud and clear.

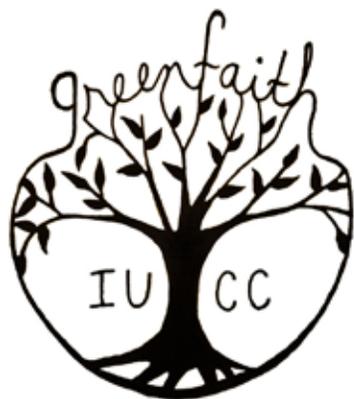
To address consumerism, one Christmas our family chose to give only thrift-store gifts. It turned out to be delightful. Another year we gave gifts of food, some homemade, some purchased. We all enjoyed receiving our favorite foods.

Other years George and I gave our grandchildren the Heifer catalogue and other similar ones, asking them to choose a gift for us. This was our method of introducing them to the giving of gifts that benefit people in need. We were pleasantly surprised that the grandchildren were astute enough to choose gifts they knew we would appreciate. Our team encourages you to be thoughtful and creative in your gift giving this Christmas.

May you have a Merry Christmas as you care for the earth and the people within.

Green Team: Judy Curry, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Eileen Vincent, and Vivian Johnson





*Miss Lily's
Green Tips
By Miss Lily*

Dear Readers,

For me, December marks the Winter Solstice. Short days, long nights. Holidays abound. I love gathering pine cones, sorting through old decorations,

and creating cookie recipes. My afternoons are spent reading a good book, with a cozy handmade afghan on my lap, and a cup of hot cocoa on the table.

I shy away from shopping. I wonder "How will you celebrate the spirit of Christmas without buying out the store and cutting down all the trees?"

I must confess that I do love the hustle and bustle of holiday shopping. I am grateful that this season I can shop for Las Memorias, Vanessa's family, and purchase poinsettias at IUCC. At night, I gaze up at the evening sky and look for the Star of Wonder. I make a wish. I pray for peace on earth.

Blessings,

Miss Lily

How will you celebrate the spirit of Christmas without buying out the store and cutting down all the trees?



Nancy: I am shopping at Arts & Crafts Faires. I enjoy paperwhite narcissus plants during the holidays.

Lesley: I use decorations that have been in my family since before I was born! I make gifts. Instead of buying things, my friends and I plan a day of fun activities to do together.

Sandy: Giving family-experience gifts.

Marilyn: Each of us "foregoes" \$50 of gifting and does a random act of kindness. We share about it during gift-opening--all of us look forward to the creative ideas more than any gifts.

Ruby: Sharing, as a friend taught me, and I've passed this thought on to my grandkids. Keep some \$ in your pocket & share.

John: Since my mother died, I only put a wreath on the door and just a few decorations out. My mother loved all the decorating, but I now keep it simple.



Miss Lily's hat and chair

Debbie: I watch my Christmas cactus bloom. I make my gifts. They are gifts from the hands and the heart. I appreciate the fake trees. They are better for the planet and less of a fire hazard.

Laura: We only do presents for the grandchildren. As a family, we decorate the tree and have dinner. We use the money that we save as a donation to a Food Bank.

Joan: Our family makes donations to a charity of our choice. Mine is Doctors Without Borders.

Sandy: No sugar. We keep a limited budget for gifts and the grandchildren know it.

Linda: I will help my sister at the Friendship Shelter in Orange during the children's party with gifts and food.



Photos courtesy of Miss Lily



Irvine Living Wage Coalition



Harris Kershner from University Synagogue and Ken Wyant from IUCC gathered signatures at the joint Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 24

The Irvine City Council has rescinded the Living Wage Ordinance. By a vote of 4 to 1, they eliminated the City's requirement that contractors doing business with The City of Irvine must pay their employees a living wage that is currently about 20% higher than the California minimum wage.

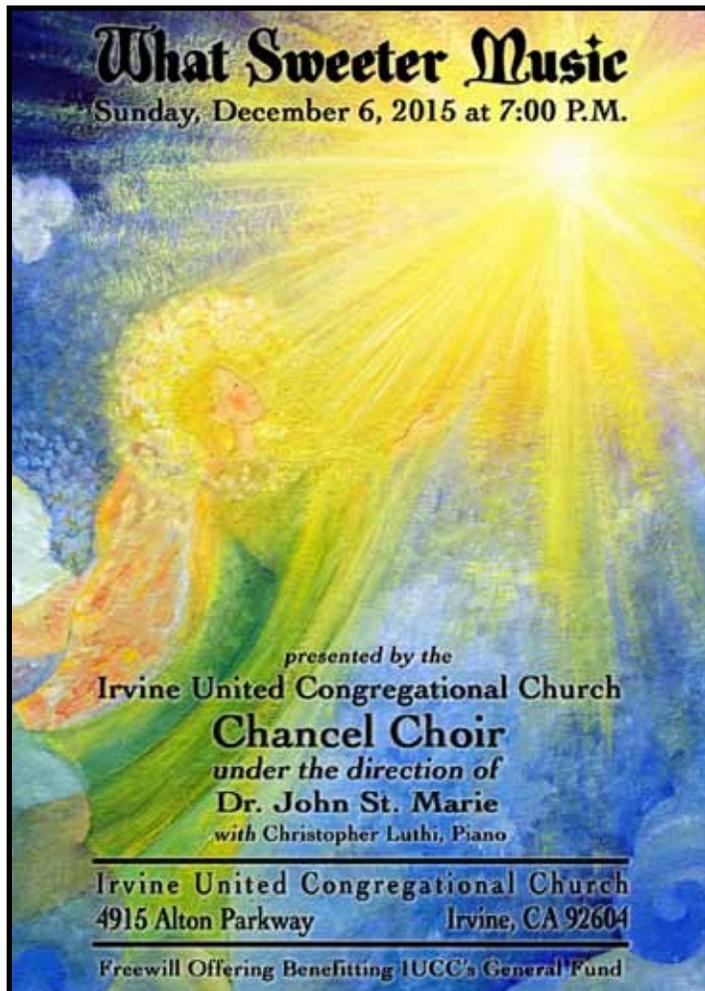
Many of us strongly opposed this pay cut for the lowest paid employees. We support the Irvine Living Wage Coalition, a group that is gathering signatures to place the Living Wage Ordinance before Irvine voters. We gathered signatures during our joint Thanksgiving service at University Synagogue on November 24. More signatures are needed to put this issue on the ballot.

If you haven't yet signed the petition, please contact me at kenwyant@earthlink.net and I will bring a petition to you. If you would like to help gather signatures from family, friends and neighbors; I will bring more petitions to you.

Only registered voters living in the City of Irvine may provide a valid signature, but anyone over the age of 18 may circulate a petition and solicit signatures from Irvine voters. If you would like to register to vote, or change your registration to reflect a new address, I can bring that form to you as well. (You can also register online at ocvote.com with the Orange County Registrar of Voters.)

For more information about Irvine's Living Wage Ordinance, please visit the website irvinelivingwage.org.

~ Ken Wyant



It's that time of year again! Sunday, December 6, 2015, at 7 p.m., the Irvine United Congregational Church Chancel Choir is pleased to present our Annual Winter Solstice Concert, "What Sweeter Music." The title piece by John Rutter is one of many well-known and beloved Christmas carols which will be performed under the direction of John St. Marie. As a member of the choir, I am truly grateful for the experience of preparing these musical offerings.

We begin rehearsing the music during a choir retreat in October. The Christmas spirit comes early as we have these texts in our minds and hearts for months before the actual celebration of Jesus's birth. In anticipation, I often think about what the impact on the listeners will be, always hoping and praying that all will be blessed by what is heard and felt the night of the concert. Music has a way of touching the soul like nothing else, and it is a divine privilege to provide these experiences for others.

Please join us and bring your friends and family. It is a wonderful opportunity to introduce them to the extravagant welcome we provide at IUCC. A freewill offering will be collected to benefit the IUCC General Fund.

~ Joni Baker

Capital Campaign Planning Update

by Anne Rosse, Capital Campaign Planning Team



Not too long ago, someone stopped me after service and shared her concerns about IUCC launching a capital campaign. She was troubled that IUCC is falling short of its Stewardship goal – so how do we expect to raise enough money for a campus expansion? We sat and chatted for a few moments as I did my best to respond to her concerns. I told her that these types of conversations are exactly what we should be doing right now as we prepare for a congregational vote in late January. I’ve captured the gist of our conversation in a “Q&A” format below.

Q: What is the congregation being asked to decide?

A: With all of the necessary approvals and planning nearly complete, the IUCC congregation will be asked on January 31 (at the Winter Congregational Meeting) if we are ready to undertake a capital campaign to raise an approximate \$1.5 million, with the remainder of the projected \$2 million (approx.) Phase I costs being met through a loan. Between now and the meeting, we will strive to make sure this congregation has the information it needs to make a well-informed decision. Forums have already been scheduled in January to discuss: Phase I of IUCC’s Master Plan, the proposed capital campaign, and the proposed 2016 budget. As well, additional information will be disseminated through IUCC’s newsletter, bulletin, and website.

Q: What does Phase I entail?

A: In the first phase, we would build an administrative building with staff offices, volunteer work space, and configurable meeting rooms (with a total capacity of 100 people), an expanded Narthex with a new entrance, an enhanced patio for fellowship, and a welcoming new church frontage.

Q: How many phases are there in the IUCC Master Plan and when would the other phases be undertaken?

A: In Phase II, Plumer Hall would be torn down and a state-of-the-art preschool/education center (with a play-ground designed to promote creative and collaborative play) built in its place. During this phase, we would use the meeting rooms in the new administrative building for

fellowship. In the final phase, a configurable fellowship hall, with indoor/outdoor and dedicated youth space would be built. Each phase was designed to cost approximately \$2 million. It would be up to the congregation to decide when we are ready to undertake fundraising for the next phase. To review the Master Plan, please click to the “Campaign” tab at: <http://iucc.org/portal/documents/>.

Q: What is the timeline for Phase I?

Our projected timeline looks something like this:

Dec 2015	Conditional Use Permit Approval and Celebration
Jan 2016	Vote on Capital Campaign (Winter Meeting)
Feb-May 2016	If Approved, 15-17 Week Capital Campaign Launches
May 2016	If Capital Campaign is Successful, Vote on Proceeding (Spring Meeting)
Early 2017	Shovels in the Ground
2018	Occupancy

We’ve been advised that from the time we decide to move forward with building (May 2016?), it will be 6-9 months for planning/permitting/bidding and 18-24 months to occupancy (from the original decision date).

Q: What are the proposed costs for this campaign?

A: This will be a mostly lay-laid process, thanks to the dedication and commitment of IUCC congregants, working with Pastor Paul and other staff. There would be an approximate \$5000 budget to pay for project renderings, mailings and other campaign-related expenses. If approved by the congregation, UCC’s Capital Campaign Services, represented by the Rev. Priscilla Bizer, would be hired to provide campaign expertise and guidance. Through two visits and multiple conversations with leadership and staff, Rev. Bizer has become very familiar with IUCC. Costs for

these services would be calculated at 10% of IUCC’s annual giving (or approximately \$40-\$45,000), with 30% of that fee being retained by Capital Campaign Services and the remaining 70% flowing to philanthropic purposes, including UCC’s Wider Mission and any IUCC-designated charity. By working with Capital Campaign Services, IUCC would have the advantage of working with the UCC while being provided a very high quality, low cost campaign service with a tremendous philanthropic benefit. It’s a win-win-win for IUCC.

Q: How will IUCC raise \$1.5 million?

A: Raising this money will require everyone’s best giving, a shared commitment to this fundraising goal. IUCC won’t be successful if we all assume that someone else is going to fund this project. To reach \$1.5 million, we are going to need gift commitments ranging from \$150,000 to a few thousand (payable over 3 years). These gift commitments would be on top of annual Stewardship commitments.

Q: If we can’t reach our Stewardship goal, how do we expect to raise \$1.5 million?

A: When Rev. Bizer preached at IUCC in September, she made two really important points. First, we all need to step fully into the “offering basket,” giving generously of our time, talents and treasures – no just dipping our toes in. And, second, gifts to Stewardship typically come from one pocket – the pocket representing our annual income/paychecks. Gifts to a campaign typically come from the other pocket – the one representing accumulated assets. Based on her interviews with congregants and a wealth of expertise with church-based campaigns, Rev. Bizer advised that the giving capacity to successfully reach \$1.5 million is within this congregation. It is a matter of faith. . .of entwining the generosity and commitment with people’s capacity for giving.

Q: Why should IUCC do this campaign?

A: There are lots of answers to this question! As a congregation, we looked around at our aging campus, realizing that it does not reflect the church we are striving to be – one that wants to have a greater significance in our community and in the lives of our members. We want to honor our legacy and provide for our successors as IUCC’s early founders did for us. A capital campaign can be the greatest faith-raising experience in the life of a church. For members, it can be an experience that energizes the spirit and results in a deeper understanding of generosity. It can lead to new folks joining the church, increased participation by current members in the ministries of the church, and an increased commitment to the church’s ministry and mission.

Building Plan Update

by Anne Rosse

Coming together as a faith community, IUCC developed a shared vision for a new church campus. We recognized that our aging campus does not reflect the church we are striving to be - one that proclaims our extravagant and inclusive welcome, that we are committed to serving our neighbors while having more significance in the lives of our members. At IUCC, we want to walk the walk.



More than a year ago, we submitted that vision for a new church campus (the IUCC Master Plan) to the City of Irvine for a Modified Conditional Use Permit, the final step in our planning process. The protracted review process involved working with Woodbridge Village Association to obtain their endorsement, multiple exchanges with the City to provide them additional information and respond to their questions/concerns, and a traffic study to analyze the potential impact of our proposed new campus. These months and months of waiting are finally coming to end on December 9!

On that date, IUCC’s project will come before the Zoning Administrator for final approval. Every aspect of the project has been extensively reviewed so there should be no further roadblocks to approval. But, part of the purpose of the hearing is to provide an opportunity for anyone “with standing” (e.g., an IUCC neighbor) to express any concerns. We don’t anticipate any objections.

Assuming approval, we look forward to celebrating this milestone on Sunday, December 13. Please join us as we recognize this achievement and all of the folks who helped make it happen!



Thanks to Coffee Hour Volunteers

I would like to say a big “Thank you” to all the volunteers who provided such tasty treats for coffee hour all Fall. Your efforts are much appreciated! Please note that the sign up sheet for the first part of 2016 is available on the patio. Get a buddy and pick a date to share the fun of hosting our church family! Any questions, see me or Nancy Dreckman.

~ *Pat Sauter*

Lorraine's Column



Note to faithful readers of Powerful Parenting: Lorraine is back to being a “bed number” for another stay in rehab. We miss her wise words and hope to see her again soon!

Mission & Service Projects

Mission & Service is sponsoring a clothing drive for Las Memorias, an HIV/AIDS shelter in Tijuana. Needed items are T-shirts, new socks, and new underwear for men and women. Monetary donations are also appreciated.

Mission & Service is collecting donations for Vanessa, “an inspiring and motivated” scholarship recipient and her family members through ACCESS’ Warming Hearts for the Holidays program. We are collecting cash, checks, gift cards and/or actual gifts over the next two Sundays.



12/1	Danny Sanders	12/17	Todd Thompson
12/2	Nat Rynn	12/17	Nick Sanders
12/3	Jessie Billings	12/23	Andrew Figueroa
12/3	Taelor Exelby	12/26	Pat Sutcliff
12/5	Marie Trout	12/29	Pat Sauter
12/11	Bill Dietrich	12/30	Carol Welsch
12/11	Tommie Kozlov	12/31	Paul Figueroa
12/11	Sean Larkin		

Mark Your Calendar



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

is not meeting in December. Join us on January 6 when we will have a special program featuring Tom Getz, photographer extraordinaire. Details in January newsletter!



CHANCEL CHOIR CONCERT SUNDAY * DEC. 6 * 7:00 p.m.

Come join us for an evening of beautiful music. This concert is always a highlight of the season! No admission charge - freewill offering will be collected to benefit the IUCC general fund.



ISAIAH HOUSE SHELTER WED. * DEC. 9 * 3:30 p.m.

Contact Steve Goetz for details and to RSVP: sgoetz53@gmail.com.



CHRISTMAS GATHERING & CHILI COOK-OFF

“12 DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS”
SUNDAY * DEC. 13 * 4:00 p.m.

Join our for our annual Christmas gathering and Chili Cook-Off. Bring a side, dessert, or drink to share! Contact Sarah with questions.



SEEKERS CHRISTMAS PARTY TUESDAY * DEC. 15 *

Once again Pat Sauter has opened her beautiful home for the observance. If you wish to attend and have not signed the party list, call Joan McDonald.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES THURS. * DEC. 24 * 5:30 & 9 p.m.

Join us for one of our annual Christmas Eve services, which are always lovely!