

July 2013

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Editor: Tricia Aynes

IUCC News & Notes

Irvine United Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming – Just Peace - Global Mission Congregation
A Progressive Christian Voice for Irvine and Southern California

Elizabeth's Farewell Picnic on June 23



Photos by Mark Fowler and Tricia Aynes

From the Pastor's Desk

Rev. Dr. Paul Tellstrom



From the Supreme Court Decisions to the rallies on the courthouse steps to the excitement of General Synod (which saw its first same-sex wedding) there is a true feeling of liberation and a move towards equality in the air.

Last Sunday, I was able to announce the weddings of five couples in our congregation, and those were just the ones I heard about. I suspect we

will be very busy celebrating in the weeks and months to come. I found myself overcome with emotion at first service that day, and had to work hard to make it through second service. We have been on a long road for justice together.

You made a difference, IUCC! Thank you for walking this walk all the way to where we are today.

There was a very good turnout from our churches at General Synod, and ours was no exception. I won't start naming names for fear of forgetting one, but we were very well represented in terms of volunteers and I ran into several more members who were visiting on Sunday. On Saturday, I listened as Ken Matsuyama and Randy Romine led a discussion on our Global Mission efforts in Sendai, Japan. On Tuesday, IUCC was recognized at the *Our Churches Wider Mission* (OCWM) luncheon as one of the top 5% of giving churches.

Back here at IUCC things are moving as well. On Sunday, July 7, we will be welcoming Marianne Pearlman onto our staff as our Sunday School Coordinator. Please take a moment to read about her in this issue.

On the following Sunday, we will be thanking Ken Wyant for his service as our interim Adult Ed Director. Ken has been such a good colleague and friend to me, and I have watched him move our Comma Groups

forward while supervising no end of events here at the church. Ken will remain as a member of our church, but as he steps into retirement, he will be able to teach a class or preach on his own schedule. Please join us on the 14th to say, "thank you."

In the meantime, some résumés will be examined as interest is expressed in our Ministry for Young People Director and Adult Education Director positions that we need to fill. We have a hiring committee in place, and July 8 will be our "cut-off date" for submissions.

Our Leadership Retreat is coming up soon. I am working with our new moderator, Anne Rosse, to look to our future together as church leaders. My single greatest focus at this time will be on filling positions while asking what we might do to keep a greater concentration of energy and creativity around our Ministry for Young People. How can we better serve our children, youth, young adults and families? This will be my question at the Leadership Retreat, but I am also asking our church community to re-energize and re-commit to building this area of ministry into something that will attract a new generation. Our Progressive Christian message is simply too important—we must share it with enthusiasm so that our unique Christian voice is heard in our community.

It is my strongest desire to have new people in place on the staff with this new emphasis on the Ministry for Young People and our Sunday school in particular, as we move into a new church year in September. In the meantime—I know it is summer...but we are putting the pieces together and need your support even by simply attending on Sundays and spiritually sustaining our newest staff members, Annie Mellott and Marianne Pearlman, as they reach out to our youth and children.

See you in church!

Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Paul

Meet our new Sunday School Coordinator ~ Marianne Pearlman

An introduction from Pastor Paul ~

I am pleased to be able to say that one of our newest positions has been filled by exactly the person I had hoped would be interested. Marianne Pearlman has been doing child-care for us for a while now, and I have heard wonderful things about her from parents. She has had experience with preschools--both teaching and administration--and she will now be acting as our Sunday School Coordinator.

Marianne will work with the new Ministry for Young People (MYP) Director and our Youth Leader to help build a stronger Sunday school for IUCC. Parents of our youngest ones will have a choice: At first service, Marianne will teach basic Bible stories. At second service, one of our volunteer teachers will teach from our regular curriculum while Marianne helps to supervise the childcare and three classrooms. Our new MYP Director and Annie Mellott will teach the higher grades. Marianne will be the public "face" of the Sunday school.

While our Sunday school will teach a progressive Christian theology, Marianne comes from the Reform tradition of Judaism, and brings an authentic voice that will help us understand the Jewish Jesus better.

Please welcome her on Sunday--I will introduce her at both services. Here is a note from Marianne--

Hello IUCC members,

Allow me to start by saying what a tremendous honor it is to be your new Sunday School Coordinator. I come to this position with a degree in Early Childhood Education and over 25 years of teaching experience both in and out of the classroom. Children are my world! I have tutored in multiple subjects, taught swimming and art (to mention just a few).

I believe children are our most precious possessions; they deserve our trust and respect. My goal is to welcome new and continuing families to an environment rich in religious knowledge presented in the most exciting way possible. In addition, I will strive to keep all lines of communication open and invite parents to come to me with ideas, comments, concerns and compliments.

Thank you for entrusting me with your most precious possession, your children.

B' Shalom,
Marianne Pearlman



Outreach Ministry

Dawn Price



Extend the IUCC Welcome at the OC Pride Festival! Volunteers are needed August 10, 2013, from noon to 10 p.m. to staff IUCC's table at the OC Pride Festival. OC Pride should be especially festive this year in light of the recent Supreme Court decisions -- join the fun and make sure those attending are aware of our open and affirming congregation. To sign up for a 2-hour shift, call Dawn Price, Outreach Chair, at 949-371-1996 or e-mail iuccoutreach@gmail.com

An additional tabling opportunity will be held September 28, 2013, at the Irvine Global Village Festival -- let Dawn know if you're interested in helping out there.

Staffing tables at events like this helps our congregation reach out to people who may have decided that no church will welcome them. Spread God's welcoming, affirming love by dispelling that myth -- join us at the IUCC tables!

Music Ministry

Dr. John St. Marie



Calling All Shower Singers! Choir Lite continues through July 21!

The choir is on a well-deserved break. Don't worry, the music ministry will still be active for another month with your help. If you love to sing, join us for CHOIR LITE – no weekday commitment, just show up on Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m., learn the anthem and sing to your heart's content with us in the service.

You don't have to be a professional musician to make a meaningful contribution, just bring a willingness to learn, a desire to sing, and the ability to listen and respond with an open heart and a willing voice!

Who knows, you might just find a fun and fulfilling way to serve the church by continuing in the choir ministry when we return in September.

In the meantime, come and join the fun-loving, dynamic, enthusiastic singers through July 21st.

Bread for the Journey

Meredith Anderson



Bread for the Journey is a group for young adults (20s and 30s) that meets weekly to share food and discussion. This photo was taken at the summer potluck; the group will be taking a few weeks off, but will start meeting again in August. For information, contact Meredith at anderson.meredith.k@gmail.com

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Carol Welsh

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will be taking time off from our usual meetings in July. Vacation, travel and visiting friends and family are filling most of our hours. We will resume on the second Tuesday in August - the 10th at 2 p.m. in Plumer Hall. Meanwhile, the need continues so we urge all our creative members to Keep Calm AND COOL and Carry Yarn.



Moderator's Column

Anne Rosse



As I sit down to write my first column as Moderator, there are so many topics that come to mind – gratitude, transitions, programs, planning, change – just to name a few. But, what I am most anxious to share is how excited I am about the coming year and how much I look forward to working with our church staff, volunteer leaders, and each one of you.

Being part of “that” church enriches my life every day – through close friendships, trying to walk the walk (not just talk it), constantly striving to evolve my faith and how I practice it, and being part of a vibrant and active church. IUCC is, indeed, a blessing for me, my family, our church community and the wider community. I take seriously IUCC’s role as an oasis of progressive Christianity and am committed to reaching out even more to those who are seeking a community like ours.

Toward that goal, we have opened two recruitments, seeking part-time directors of our Adult Education Ministry and Ministry for Young People. These positions will work closely with Pastor Paul and our other wonderful staff members, along with our energetic and committed volunteers, to build programs that serve the needs of our

current members while attracting like-minded folks through our doors. Our goal is to keep doing what we are doing well but augment that with sustainable programming to meet the diverse educational, service, faith, fellowship and Social Justice interests of our congregation.

In mid-July, your leadership team will gather in retreat for intentional reflection and dialogue, taking stock of where IUCC is and where we want to go. I look forward to sharing the outcome of those discussions with you in my August column. Future columns will also address important topics for our congregation, including building plans, stewardship, technical upgrades, etc. Until then, let me invite you to share your thoughts. You can catch me on the patio, pull me aside at one of our fabulous events, send me an email or give me a call. I welcome your comments.

And, finally, I would like to close with some heartfelt expressions of gratitude. To SCOTUS for recognizing that love is love – that there is no them, only us. For the gracious and generous transition with Cindy O’Dell, who will continue to be actively involved in so many different aspects of IUCC’s life. For the abundant welcome and patient answering of my endless emails from Pastor Paul, Martha Selby and Pat Sauter. And, to the many of you who have wished me well and thanked me for serving our church. Extravagant welcome – something that IUCC does rather well. Let’s keep up the good work!

July Birthdays

May Chan
Sarah Cook
Jean Dietrich
Eduardo Figueroa
Randy Garber
Donna Haehl
Erica Hicks
Doug Kitchen

August Lobato, Jr.
Jonathan Lyman
Carly Maris
Laurie McComb
Randy Romine
Susan Sherman
Dennis Webster
Kerin Wilson

Stephen Ministry

by Tricia Aynes

As a fledgling Stephen Minister in training, I thought you would be interested in hearing more about what we are doing. We are congregation members who are learning how to give compassionate one-to-one care to people struggling with life events and crises.

We receive 50 hours of intensive training that will strengthen our ability to connect, to empathize, to listen without judgment, to be assertive, and to maintain appropriate boundaries. We have reading homework, and we attend training sessions that are entertaining and lively because we get to enact various scenarios and engage in role play. My fellow trainees are engaging, fun-loving, compassionate people, and the classes go by quickly.

Stephen Ministers are paired with care receivers/partners in the congregation who are struggling with a crisis such as a death in the family, a health issue, separation from a spouse, or a job loss. Some problems are outside the scope of Stephen Ministry (like addictions and mental illness) and would be referred out to a more appropriate outside source.

A Stephen Minister provides care to one person at a time, meeting with that person once a week for about an hour. The hour may include listening and prayer,

because we want to assure our care receivers of God's love. The caring relationship can be as long or as short a time as is necessary to help the care receiver achieve equilibrium again.

Our Stephen partnerships are confidential. Only Pastor Paul and David Schofield, our Stephen Ministry Leader, are aware of the names of the care receivers with whom we are paired.



A big part of our training is devoted to stressing how important the issue of confidentiality is. Once we are commissioned, we will meet regularly with our peer supervision group (a Stephen Leader and several other Stephen Ministers) to discuss any issues we are having, but we will stick to generalities so confidentiality is protected. There are only three situations where we would breach confidentiality: if the care receiver expresses suicidal thoughts; if s/he threatens harm to others; or if there is abuse involved.

If you are struggling with a crisis, you don't need to face it alone. Talk with Pastor Paul or David to see if your problem is appropriate for Stephen Ministry. We are here to provide you with emotional and spiritual help if you are going through a particularly difficult time in your life, but you need to ask.

AED Class



IUCC will be offering an AED class after service on July 14.

Each year approximately 350,000 people in the US die from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA). The risk is highest soon after experiencing a heart attack.

With every minute that passes without a shock to the heart, an SCA victim's chance of survival decreases by 7-10%. After 10 minutes, few SCA victims survive.

IUCC has an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on-site on the back wall of the sound booth. We would love to train as many people as possible in how to use it. Come and learn - you could save a life!

We will be offering a class on using an AED after service on July 14. In the 30 minute session, participants will learn how to operate this life-saving device.

What is an AED?

An automatic electronic device that analyzes the heart's electrical activity and if necessary prompts you to deliver a shock to a person in sudden cardiac arrest.

How does it work?

By re-establishing an effective rhythm by delivering a shock that disrupts the chaotic electrical activity of the heart long enough for the heart to re-establish an effective rhythm on its own.

Identify precautions with use.

AED's are safe for lay persons to use as the AED will not deliver the shock unless it is needed. It guides you with voice prompts, senses and adapts to your action and provides CPR coaching.

Demonstration

You will be given the opportunity to practice at the training.

If you have any questions or concerns about taking this class and/or being responsible to respond, please discuss them with Cindy or Janet.

Thanks, Ken!

Those of us who have been privileged to attend Bible study with Ken Wyant know him to be knowledgeable and wise. He has held his own with all our questions and challenges (and there have been many) while leading us through stimulating discussions that were far-ranging, thought-provoking, and yes – even mind boggling at times.



Ken has an amazing ability to refer back and forth from one Bible passage to another, showing many connections and linkages that we never dreamed possible. He has the breadth and depth of training to point out the instances where the New Testament mirrors the Old and the Old foreshadows the New. Under his tutelage, we have become true biblical scholars.

What really caught us off guard, though, was Ken's wry, quirky sense of humor. He had us laughing nearly as often as he had us thinking. Of course, his comedic timing was perfect.

We appreciate Ken's faithful leadership in Bible study and in the myriad of other ways he served our church as Interim Adult Education Director. He did a great job of working behind the scenes to make the Women's Retreat such a success, and any of us who participated in a Comma Group were blessed to have his fine hand guiding our discussions and showing the way.

We are so glad he will continue as an active member of IUCC and look forward to many more years with him in our presence. Thanks, Ken!

~ Tricia Aynes, on behalf of the Tuesday Night Bible Study group.

Powerful Parenting

by Dr. Lorraine Fox

A “Funtastic” Set of Columns for the Summer



It's been almost four years since we reminded ourselves how important it is for parents to include fun and laughter in their parenting toolkit. Last time we devoted a series was after a long series on dealing with stress, so it seems like it might be time again after a long series on another stressful childhood experience – bullying. So let's bring out the “good humor” truck for the next two months and just do a refresher.

Stressful events produce a chemical change in our bodies, including an increase in heart rate and an increase in the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol is a steroid-like chemical and thus is linked to aggression and other harmful (to self and others) tendencies.

The wonderful research that has been done on the benefits of laughter provides us with scientific motivation for including large doses of fun and laughter in our lives and relationships with our children. Science has demonstrated that laughter, like exercise, also produces chemical changes in our bodies. Specifically, laughter releases two chemicals – endorphins and enkephalins which have been shown to counter-act cortisol. So, the more stress and unpleasantness one has in their life, the more need for the “happy juices” nature provides.

If children aren't laughing, it's the fault of adults. Humor is a universal, trans-cultural phenomenon which is manifest before cognitive thought processes. Laughter is a uniquely human characteristic and occurs naturally. Babies do not have to be taught to laugh; they can only be taught not to laugh.

Humor is a highly individual “taste,” like music. What's funny to one person is not to another. Some people have an easier time finding the “funny” in life than others. Some people are “funny” themselves, and others are people of good humor, meaning that they are not inclined to “be” funny themselves but they appreciate humor when it is introduced by others.

As with so many things we've talked about, it means we have to fall in love with each of our children individually, and learn

with them and from them what their particular humor-style is. Only mistreated children have no humor-style. Some children can have fun all by themselves; others do better when they are around others who are having fun. The same is true for adults.

Think of learning to “find” humor in life as a wonderful gift to give children. Life is not always funny, but one can learn to use humor as a way to make the not-so-fun times more bearable. Humor makes the good times better, and it also makes the unpleasant times better.

Good times do not necessarily cost money. This is very good news since many families have found bonus-money in short supply recently. So you may not be able to afford treating your children to an “amusement park,” but you can build in some amusement around your own home. I'll give you a couple of fun-homework assignments for July, and a couple more for August. Do them again if you did them before and see if you can come up with different laugh lines.

1. Everyone in the family writes their name on a piece of paper vertically down the side of a page. Then, for each letter in their name, have others in the family say something that is true about them that starts with that letter.
2. Think of a name for your family other than your real last name. Make up a new last name that “fits” the people in your family (including pets) that is also funny.
3. Make a “bumper sticker” that says something funny for each member of the family (including pets).
4. Make up the name of a “class” you'll take in school next year: Creative Tooth Decay; Packaging and Selling Your Child/Parent; Bonsai Your Pet; Psycho-ceramics; Creative Suffering; Tap Dance Your Way to Social Ridicule.

That's it for this month. More fun in August.



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