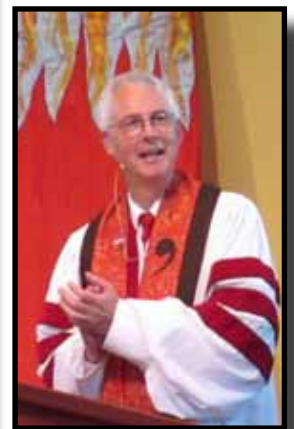
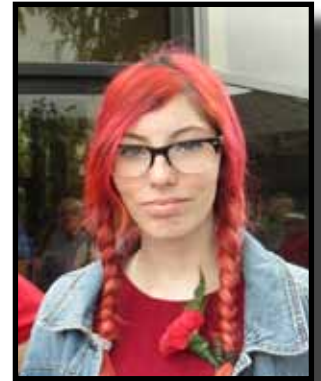


June 2015  
www.iucc.org  
Editor: Tricia Aynes

**IUCC welcomed 10 Confirmands on Pentecost Sunday!**



*Photos by Tricia Aynes ~ see article on page 5*



# All Church Bon Vivant May 30, 2015

photos by Tricia Aynes



A special "Thank you!" to all the Table Hosts, Dessert Bakers, Wine Donators, Auctioneers and Attendees for helping to make Saturday's 2nd Annual All Church Bon Vivant such a huge success. And a big thank you to all the worker bees who helped set up and tear down Plumer Hall, especially Matt Mirmak and the Boy Scouts, for their Saturday morning assistance.

Thank you all!

~ Pat Sauter & Alyssa Cornett,  
Event Coordinators



## From the Pastor's Desk

the Rev. Dr. Paul Tellström



Ralph Vaughn Williams, John Rutter and our own Natasha Bratkovski—there is a lot to look forward to this Sunday as John St. Marie directs our choir in their latest concert, *Toward the Unknown Region*. I hope to see you there.

Sunday's Communion services might be described as "toward the unknown" as well. We will be doing something that I cannot reveal until Sunday—but it will demonstrate how our sister churches covenant with each other to assist at critical times in the lives of congregations. All I can say is...come Sunday morning and watch and support our process in motion.

This week is Annual Gathering for our Conference of 133 churches. Matthew and Sarah have been hard at work on the planning committee for the event at Chapman University. IUCC will be represented by the Rev. Dr. Terry LePage, Dawn Price, Matthew Redrich and Sarah Fiske-Phillips. I will be there as well.

Following last year's revelation at Annual Gathering that there was a sea of red ink in the budget, some panic floated back to our churches. I am convinced that our Conference leadership is handling this with a plan and in a straightforward manner. For those of you who are following this, I want to post some links to what will be discussed this week at Annual Gathering. We should just remember that the Conference is us—and we are the Conference. The support of all of our churches is crucial to our ongoing mutual ministries in Southern California-Nevada.

On average, our churches give 2.9% of their budgets to Our Church's Wider Mission. It was originally built on a model of tithing. Some tithed...and many give nothing. If you'd like to see how we fit in with our sister churches, visit here: <http://www.scnucucc.org/resources/documents/2014%20Contributions%20by%20Church.pdf> OCWM represents what we give to support our denomination's work, and the other offerings are targeted more directly. For example: One Great Hour of Sharing is money we collect that gets released when disasters strike or when there are projects around the world where we can really make a difference.

Here is a resolution that moves more of Our Churches Wider Mission dollars to our Conference—and unfortunately, away from our national church setting: [http://www.scnucucc.org/Annual\\_Gathering/AG-2015/resolutions/RESOLUTION%202015%20OCWM.pdf](http://www.scnucucc.org/Annual_Gathering/AG-2015/resolutions/RESOLUTION%202015%20OCWM.pdf)

Finally, if you would like to read our Executive Associate Conference Minister's Report, it is here: <http://www.scnucucc.org/voices/2015/05/ucc-conference-church-life/2015-annual-gathering-report-from-the-executive-associate-conference-minister/>

In late June, Matthew and I will be delegates at General Synod in Cleveland. GS happens every two years, and it is where "the church" meets to conduct the business of the United Church of Christ. This year, I am thrilled to be able to vote for one of the most centered and forward-thinking individuals in the UCC, the Rev. John Dorhauer, as our new President. He was our Southwest Conference Minister, the author of *Steeplejacking*, and his D.Min. thesis was on white privilege and its effects on the church.

There will be 16 resolutions that will go to the floor, and I include the titles here. Some are thought-provoking, others obvious, and still others are in the eyebrow-raising department. All delegates will be spending much time in committees on these resolutions for 30th General Synod:

1. Commemorating 100 Years since the Armenian Genocide
2. Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in the United States
3. Resolution to Change the Racially Demeaning Name, Mascot and Imagery of the Washington National Football League Team
4. A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
5. Transition from Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy
6. A Call for Peace, Justice and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula
7. Dismantling the New Jim Crow
8. Resolution on Full Communion Relationship between the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada
9. Developing Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged Congregations for Mental Health
10. Resolution to Support Legislation Requiring Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods on Food Packaging

11. Resolution Marking the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Just Peace Pronouncement by Recommitting Ourselves to be a Just Peace Church
12. Calling on the United Church of Christ to Recognize the Actions of Israel Against the Palestinians as Apartheid
13. Responsible Stewardship of the Outer Space Environment
14. Calling the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Ethical and Compassionate Treatment of Undocumented Immigrant Children Seeking Refuge in the United States
15. A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict
16. Resolution Urging Socially Responsible Investment Practices

You can read them in their entirety here: <http://synod.uccpages.org/>

And of course, there will be the usual conventioning that takes place when 4,000-6,000 UCC nerds get together. "What represents Southern California?" asked our Associate Conference Minister at a training session the other week.

"Disneyland," offered Matthew, quickly, with the offer to outfit the entire delegation in mouse-ears. So now I'm off to Cleveland, where I'm going to be seen walking around in Mickey-Mouse ears as part of our delegation garb. (There's simply no dignity left in this job.) Thank you, Matthew!

As it turns out, Sarah Fiske-Phillips will be there, as will Annie Mellott and Tricia Abouabdo. So, we had to do a quick reality check—"Who's minding the church?" As it turns out-it is being led very well. That Sunday, June 28, the Rev. Ken Wyant will be preaching, John will be leading music, and Brian Percy-Schofield will be doing the kids' programs with back-up.

If I might end with something that isn't about the UCC...I was so proud of our Confirmation class a couple of weeks ago. Chantel, Jules, Faren, Emme, Nanna, Brian, Katie, Sophia, Cameron and Dylan all took the process very seriously, while having fun when it was appropriate. It was a big group, but we moved rather seamlessly through the classes and the outings over the year. I always think that I'm the one who is enjoying it most, but that Sunday, I could sense real joy and a sense of accomplishment all around. Tricia, Annie and Sarah make it all so easy, too!

Yours,  
*Pastor Paul*

## Spring Congregational Meeting May 17, 2015



*We thanked Moderator Anne Rosse & Administration Board Chair Martha Selby for their outstanding service*

100 of our corporate members were on hand for our Spring Congregational meeting on May 17. It was a great opportunity to review the achievements of the past year and look forward to new challenges.

Pastor Paul explained the proposed deacon program, which will provide a place for people to serve and build community as they help our Sunday morning activities flow more smoothly. He announced that he will be approaching the Association about having MYP director Sarah Fiske-Phillips designated as a "licensed pastor," which will grant her more pastoral authority, such as performing the sacraments and assisting with more preaching duties.

Anne Rosse provided a recap of our progress with the Building Project and presented a slide show detailing the three phases of the plan, the proposed landscape and hard-scape, and the re-envisioned Alton frontage. The Capital Campaign Committee anticipates a campaign launch vote in January 2016.

We voted to approve the 2015-16 slate of officers presented by the nominating committee and thanked our outgoing officers for their service. The meeting concluded with a hilarious presentation to Anne Rosse (outgoing moderator) and Martha Selby (outgoing Administration Board Chair). They were given what appeared to be reams of paper representing all the paperwork they had created, but the boxes actually contained lovely floral arrangements. Both Dave Schofield and Renae Boyum spoke to their outstanding planning, thought, and intentionality in the performance of their duties.

*~ Tricia Aynes*

## 2015 Confirmation Class

It was a joyous and emotional Pentecost Sunday as ten IUCC youth were confirmed and became members: Chantel Bermudez, Juliana Burley, Faren Eng, Emme Exelby, Nanna Gailiun, Brian McComb, Katie Mirmak, Sophia Portillo, Cameron Steiner, and Dylan Trout (see photos on front page and at bottom right). Four of them were baptized as well: Chantel, Emme, Katie, and Cameron.

Confirmands completed a course of study that included a visit to the Museum of Tolerance, participation in Shabbat services at University Synagogue, and a guided field trip to Hsi Lai Temple. Each confirmand had the courage to say a few words about what the experience had meant to them. Their comments included:

- “I feel like this church is a home to me and I’d like to stay here longer.”
- I’m so happy to join this congregation full of loving and caring people.”
- “I feel so blessed to be here. What I love about this church is we’ve never labeled each other. We understand the power of words ... this church has influenced me to love people for who they are.”
- “I’ve learned to accept differences, and I’ve learned the importance of peace in daily life.”
- “I love the spirit we all have. We’re all so connected and intertwined.”
- “Confirmation was a riveting experience - I got to learn about this religion and other religions. We got to do many unique things.”

Pastor Paul presented the confirmands with journals and told them, “The Bible is never to be used as a weapon. Let it be a source of support and illumination. Let this be a place where you see visions and dream dreams. Let faith make you more open and accepting of others.”

“This class took confirmation seriously and respected the process,” he added. “We have seen what happens when a society is led down a path of prejudice and ignorance in our trip to the Museum of Tolerance, and then danced the Hora during services at the synagogue with people who might have been the recipients of that prejudice the following Friday.”

We could not be more proud of these young people and all that they have accomplished. It is a pleasure to welcome them into full membership at IUCC!

~ Tricia Aynes

## New Members - May 17, 2015



L to R: Linda Haghi, Tom Ingraham, Sandy Ingraham, Andrea Woodford, Beth Probeus, and Tobias Probeus.

## New Members - May 24, 2015



Confirmation Class of 2015

Front Row L to R: Chantel Bermudez, Juliana Burley, Brian McComb, Cameron Steiner, & Sofia Portillo  
Second Row L to R (next to John Carson) Dylan Trout, Emme Exelby, Faren Eng, Nanna Gailiun, & Katie Mirmak  
(photo from Sarah Fiske-Phillips)



Pastor Paul baptizes confirmands/new members  
Cameron Steiner, Katie Mirmak, Chantel Bermudez, & Emme Exelby



On Saturday, May 9, IUCC's *Walk the Walkers* team participated in the 29th annual AIDS Walk Orange County and 5K Fun Run. Fifteen walkers raised over \$12,500. Many thanks to our team captain, Felicity Figueroa, our walkers, and our donors!!

~ Photos courtesy of Felicity Figueroa



## In The Life of IUCC ...



*Sarah Fiske-Phillips wowed with her insightful sermon on May 17*



*Dale Lang, Carol Getz, Ken Wyant, Jim Aynes, and Susie Lang provided goodies during coffee hour on May 31*



*Lester Ricks & Kelly Garrity sang "The Prayer" on May 17*



## Mark Your Calendar



### **CHOIR SPRING CONCERT SUNDAY \* JUNE 7 \* 7 p.m.**

Please join the IUCC Chancel Choir for our Spring concert, "Toward the Unknown Region." A freewill offering will take place.

## Coming Soon!



### **GANDHI BONHOEFFER KING Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice**

**Beginning July 12, 2015  
5 Sundays - 9:45 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.**

**OR**

**5 Mondays - 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Light salad supper at 6 p.m.  
Led by the Rev. George S. Johnson, DMin**



### **ISAIAH HOUSE SHELTER WED. \* JUNE 10 \* 3:30 p.m.**

IUCC volunteers meet this month at Steve Goetz's house at 3:30 p.m. to carpool to Isaiah House to help serve meals to the homeless. RSVP to Steve at [sgoetz53@gmail.com](mailto:sgoetz53@gmail.com).



### **CHOIR LITE SUNDAYS \* JUNE 14-JULY 12 \* 10:15 a.m.**

Calling all singers! If you love to sing, sign up for Choir Lite - no weekday commitment, just show up on Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m. and learn the anthem.



### **SEEKERS FOR WOMEN**

**TUESDAY \* JUNE 16 \* 9:30 a.m.**  
We meet on the 3rd Tuesday for friendship and spiritual growth and to share our experiences. Discussion is sparked by a video.

## June Birthdays

6/10	Jerrod Anderson	6/13	Matthew Redrich
6/14	Jennifer Blackburn	6/21	Lester Ricks
6/28	Sarah Bogen	6/19	Joan Thompson
6/19	Howard Emery	6/15	Cheryl Trobiani
6/12	Melissa Gaskill	6/06	Jonathan Trout
6/10	Reefa Hanenberger	6/08	Jeanne Villacorte
6/12	Cliff Kenny	6/17	Joseph Villacorte
6/08	June Kenny	6/17	Katherine Vollacorte
6/12	Shirley Lorenz	6/27	Don Weir
6/16	Judy Lucas	6/17	Emily Wetherby
6/06	Eric Lutz	6/26	Lesley Wheland
6/06	Rachel McCallum	6/08	Carl Whidden
6/18	Sara McComb	6/09	Greg Woolfson
6/30	Sylvia McDonald	6/09	Ken Wyant
6/06	Chris Redrich	6/02	William Zane



### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 6 - 10**

Enrollment for Vacation Bible School has begun! Contact Tricia Abouabdo or Sarah Fiske-Phillips for details.



### **NORTHWEST BOYS CHOIR CONCERT JULY 18 \* 7:30 p.m.**

Mark your calendar! More details to follow soon.

## Moderator's Column

Anne Rosse



It happens far too often – headlines that share depressingly familiar stories of prominent figures engaged in sexual misconduct or unethical behavior. I've been tracking the story of Josh Duggar, who recently admitted to molesting children, including some of his sisters. He gained fame through the television show, "19 Kids and Count-

ing," which features a deeply religious Christian family that homeschools, shuns birth control, and condemns premarital sex. They are politically active, supporting like-minded conservative candidates, and have publicly lobbied against marriage equality and for anti-LGBT legislation, stating that transgender folks are a danger to children. Although he has admitted to the molestations, no charges were formally filed. And, in the family's public response on Facebook, they wrote at length about God's forgiveness, grace, mercy and redemption (but devoted far fewer words to concern for the victims).

As a Christian, I want to be able to offer grace and forgiveness to others, no matter what the sin. I am mindful of Matthew 7:5: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." But, darn, that's sometime easier said than done. And, I can't help but feel like forgiveness without accountability is cheap grace. Yes, Jesus teaches us that we should forgive the unforgivable but we are also taught to stand with the oppressed, the marginalized, the victimized and the abused. In our modern culture of celebrity idolization, it is hard not to feel like the leaders and celebrities get protected while the less powerful suffer.

Earlier this year, I read a column by author and blogger Ana Marie Cox entitled, "Why I'm Coming Out as a Christian." In it, she describes herself as "a progressive, feminist, tattooed, pro-choice, graduate-educated believer" – incidentally, all words that I would use to describe myself. She speaks of feeling intimidated by "a conservative culture that seems intent on creating boundaries around Christianity rather than open doors." Trying to combine Christianity and progressivism makes her feel like her religion is "fashionably rebellious." But, then, she realizes that "God does not see charming dissonance in being a liberal who follows Christ. I do not get to see myself as 'edgy' for being just another believer."

After I read her column, I couldn't help but think, why does a fellow progressive feel the need to "come out" as a Christian? Being both liberal and Christian shouldn't require a proclamation, should it?

Well, to supporters of the Duggar family, it might. That family is loosely associated with the Quiverfull movement – adherents believe God won't give them more children than they can handle. They cite Psalm 127: "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." This movement emphasizes the importance of women submitting to their husbands and fathers, an antifeminist backlash that holds that gender equality is contrary to God's law and that women's highest calling is as wives and "prolific" mothers. Proponent Nancy Campbell contends that the womb is a weapon against Satan, helping to build an army for God.

As an aside, having only brought one child into this world, I clearly would be a failure in the eyes of Quiverfull followers!

It is just this type of sensibility – needing to create armies for God, the whole notion of taking sides, being in opposition – that frustrates me so much about modern Christianity. Isn't God's tent supposed to be big enough for us all? And, I try not to get too frustrated when I see negative coverage of prominent Christians but it can be challenging, especially when flagrant hypocrisy is part of the mix. I want to remind them of the words of Gene Robinson, the Episcopal Church's first openly gay bishop, who stated, "It seems to me that if God calls us to anything, it's to a life of integrity."

He goes on to say, "God calls all of his children to the table. We can disagree and even say a lot of hateful things, but what we can't do in good conscience is leave the table. Or demand that someone else not be at the table."

Amen, brother, amen. That's why I think churches like IUCC play such an important role – making sure that everyone is welcome at the table. I worry that the trend identified in the Pew Research Center's 2014 survey, the U.S. Religious Landscape, will continue. It states that the number of American adults who do not identify with any organized religion is growing. While the drop in Christian affiliation is occurring among all ages, it is particularly pronounced among young adults. And, the declines are most apparent among mainline Protestants and Catholics. I know that IUCC can buck this trend. We have a long history of dialogue toward reconciliation. Who shall we invite to the table?

Because I am stepping away from the Moderator's role, this will be my last column. But, please know how much I have treasured the gift of sharing my thoughts with you each month – as well as the resulting conversations with many of you. It has been a great privilege to serve as your Moderator and I feel so blessed to be part of this vibrant, loving, and faith-filled community.



## Farewell to Choral Interns Val, Natasha, & Zach



*Choral Interns (L to R: Val Shuberto, Natasha Brotkovski, and Zach Aldana)*

Parting is such sweet sorrow! It is time to say goodbye to all three of our choral interns. As a music ministry, we wanted you to know more about these great young people before we bid them farewell. It is also an opportunity to share the fruits of the IUCC Choral Intern Program. The program gives music students the opportunity to sing in the choir and gain experience in a music ministry setting that they can take with them as they embark on music careers of their own. All three interns were asked to share what has been their favorite part of being an intern at IUCC, what they have learned, their future plans, and something fun that we should know about them.

Natasha Bratovski shared that her favorite thing about IUCC has been all the wonderful people. She said, "This church is so unique in its openness and the people are just so lovely and kind. I've been so lucky to work with so many amazing people in the choir, as well as get to know other people from the congregation between services." She believes that "no matter what your musical experience is, music affects everyone in a positive way, whether you are singing in a choir or listening in the audience." She said that she has learned "so much about nuance and musicality from John St. Marie. He values the musical element over correctness, which I think is so important." She also explained that singing in a church choir, she has learned the value of being efficient in rehearsals since we have much less time to

rehearse than in a university choir. A fun fact about Natasha is that she can do the moonwalk...in socks.

Val Shuberto has been with us the longest of any intern. He came to IUCC just after John St. Marie joined us. Val described what he has learned this way, "There's more than one way to be an effective choral conductor. IUCC gave me an opportunity to find my way." Val also has learned that, "a congregation doesn't just want to hear notes. Intention and expression in music goes much further." He also said that it's important to give a choir honest feedback, which can be accomplished without hurting peoples' feelings. Val has most enjoyed the opportunity to conduct and lead services in John's absence. It was the most nerve-wracking, but fulfilling parts of his internship. Val was accepted into the credential program at Cal State Fullerton and will be student teaching for a middle school and high school in Santa Fe Springs. He hopes to teach choir in the public school system. One fun fact about Val is that he never sang before he entered college.

Zach Aldana expressed that his favorite part of the IUCC experience has been, "getting to be a part of such an open, honest, and loving community who is always there for you." He went on to say, "I've learned the necessity of having chemistry within your ensemble and community, the value of putting hard work into the things you do, and mostly the importance of having fun." He also thinks that his experience will help him create a thriving program as a conductor someday. Moving forward, Zach will be continuing his Music Education degree at University of Illinois and wants to start a vocal academy of his own someday. He shared that he has to play a game of Pokémon every night before going to bed to achieve his other life-long dream of becoming a Pokémon master!

It has been such a wonderful journey watching these three wonderful young musicians grow in their craft and develop skills that will carry them forward in their musical pursuits. They have given freely of their gifts and talents and we have embraced them and helped them to grow stronger – our congregation has been deeply blessed by them and I know we will continue to revel in their future successes with great pride knowing that we've contributed in a significant way in shaping and growing strong, dynamic church leaders.

*~ Joni Baker & John St. Marie*

## A letter from Paul Madariaga, Scoutmaster of Troop 602

**To the members of Irvine United Congregational Church,**

First let me take the time to thank you for your hospitality in hosting our Scout troop. Although we are relatively small and new to the council, we have benefited our youth members immensely. Already I have seen them gain greater skills, confidence and ethics under our watch. I was very grateful that we could assist in ushering for the funeral of Austin Brazille. Our troop and I thank his family for their generous gift to our organization as a result of our participation. Scouting made me the man I am today, as an Army officer and filmmaker, adventurer and husband. I am honored that I can allow those under my charge to reap the benefits from Scouting that I and countless others have in the past century.

The main reason I am writing to you all is to inform you of the speech made by the President of the Boy Scouts and former Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, at the recent national annual meeting. In his speech, he stated that the current policy banning openly gay adult members was “unsustainable” and called for an end to the ban. Even though Irvine United Congregational Church, as an Open and Affirming congregation, welcomed us after the ban on gay youth was lifted on May 23, 2013, there were some members that still expressed reservations about the continued ban on adult membership. Although there has always been momentum for allowing gay adult leaders among our local membership, it is now gaining traction at the top. Since 2014, more than 300 troops have allowed gay adult members. The call to action by Dr. Gates means your concerns will soon be alleviated.

Dr. Gates expressed approval for a policy allowing each chartered organization to set its own membership standards and said that the National Council will not revoke the charters of those units who allow gay adults to serve. This means that, looking forward, we can expect in the coming year or two that full inclusive membership will be granted to adult men and young men alike, and that those units and chartered organizations wishing to allow gay adult leaders in the meantime will be allowed to do so. The UCC in particular has sought to reach an agreement with the BSA National Council that it would be allowed to select leaders as it sees fit already, which implies that sexual orientation will not be a factor. With Dr. Gates’ words, that agreement has been tacitly approved. The bottom line is, our troop has been given official sanction to continue our policy of inclusion regardless of sexual orientation. This is excellent news.

Our Chartered Organization Representative, Matt Mirmak, and I have made it our policy since the lifting of the ban on gay youth in Scouting, that any further change must come from within and undertaken by inclusive units simply doing the work of Scouting and setting an example, rather than boycotts or confrontational activism. Both he and I remain committed to providing a troop where youth and adults, regardless of sexual orientation, religion, race, color or creed, shall be allowed to participate in learning the values of Scouting. Every boy a Scout, every man a leader.

If any of you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Paul Madariaga, Scoutmaster, Troop 602  
714-718-6720 cell



## A letter from Matt Mirmak, Chartered Organization Representative of Troop 602

**To the members of Irvine United Congregational Church:**

Troop 602 shares the values of Irvine United Congregational Church by being intentionally inclusive and extending an extravagant welcome to all youth and families who wish to participate in our program. Although we are inclusive in our membership policies for youth and adults volunteers alike, we are like any other Scout troop in the Orange County Council. We camp, hike, fish, kayak, shoot arrows and rifles, build campfires, and eat s’mores (and other healthy and nutritious meals too). We do not participate in boycotts, activist campaigns, or media publicity stunts. We prefer to lead and show our support for inclusive Scouting through quiet humility as proscribed by the principles of the Boy Scout Oath and Law. Even though we are inclusive, we are not “easy” on our Scouts. Our Scouts earn their merit badges and their ranks.

Part of my duties as the Chartered Organization Representative of Troop 602 is to approve the adult leader and volunteer applications for Troop 602 and represent Irvine UCC and Troop 602 at the annual business meeting of the Orange County Council as a voting member. The adult

*Letter from Matt Mirmak continued on Page 11*

volunteers that help with Troop 602 are some of the most dedicated, hard working volunteers that I have ever met. I am very grateful for their help in the weekly meetings and our outings. Our requirements for adult volunteers for Troop 602 are simple. As long as any adult volunteer with Troop 602 takes the required Youth Protection training, passes the criminal background check with the Orange County Council, and pays the registration fee, I will not turn away any adult volunteer who wishes to help out our troop. Troop 602 does not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, gender identity, economic status, disability, or sexual orientation when it comes to selecting its adult leaders and adult volunteers.

I would like to address some of the comments made by BSA President and former Secretary of Defense and CIA director Robert M. Gates at this year's BSA National Annual Meeting regarding the current adult membership policy. While Troop 602 has made no secret about being intentionally inclusive in its membership policies, Dr. Gates, in his speech, specifically stated that no council or troop under his watch will lose their charter as a result of defying the current adult membership policy. This is encouraging news for our troop and for the other troops sponsored by progressive faith congregations such as the United Church of Christ, which sponsors 1,154 troops nationally. The bottom line is that we get the opportunity and privilege to deliver the promise of Scouting to more youth and more families. To the families who have reservations about enrolling their son in the Boy Scouts because of the current and imperfect membership policy, we want to extend an open invitation to your son and your family to be a part of our Scouting family here at Troop 602. We believe that every youth should have an opportunity to experience the joys of the Scouting program. Our troop Scoutmaster, Paul Madariaga, and I know firsthand the good that the Scouting program has done for us and for our Scouting peers. We wish to pass the lessons that we learned on to the next generation of leaders.

In addition to my work with Troop 602, I have also been working with a national committee of registered Boy Scout leaders within the United Church of Christ seeking to engage the leadership of the Boy Scouts in a constructive and civil dialogue on the current adult membership policy. This two year old initiative is being led by the Rev. Michael Schuenmeyer, the UCC's Executive of Health and Wholeness Advocacy and national liaison to the Boy Scouts, and Brian Conn, the Chartered Organization Representative of Troop 511 of the Denver Area Council, sponsored by United Church of Broomfield which is also an Open and Affirming congregation. This dialogue has resulted in the formation of a written Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) between the Boy Scouts of America and the United Church of Christ. The MOU specifically requests that the BSA recognize and respect our religious values of extravagant welcome and intentional inclusion. In addition, the MOU states that all Scouts troops sponsored by UCC congregations be allowed to choose their own leaders without regard to sexual orientation. The language of the MOU has already been approved by the national UCC board, the general counsel of the UCC, and our national leader, Rev. Geoffrey Black. Some of the members of our committee are scheduled to meet with the BSA's national leaders in June to discuss and hopefully gain BSA's endorsement of our MOU. I have submitted a copy of the BSA/UCC MOU to the IUCC newsletter for all to review (see next page).

As of now, the current BSA adult membership policy has not changed. The earliest any action will be taken on this issue will be in October at the next meeting of the BSA Executive Board. The latest would most likely be at the next National Annual Meeting scheduled in May 2016 in San Diego. Regardless of when a final decision will be made on changing the adult membership policy, Troop 602 will continue to "Scout On" as it does every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. inside Plumer Hall. If you have any questions regarding the adult membership policy, the MOU between the UCC and the BSA, and our troop, please feel free to ask me or our Scoutmaster Paul Madariaga.

Thank you IUCC for your support of Troop 602. I believe that this is a cause worth fighting for because of the good that Scouting does in our communities and for our environment. We look forward to continuing to serve our youth and deliver the promise of the Scouting program for all who wish to participate. We are grateful for the support and positive feedback we have received from IUCC members and look forward to a brighter future for Troop 602 and the Boy Scouts of America.

Yours in Scouting,  
Matt Mirmak, Eagle Scout (1986)  
Chartered Organization Representative, Troop 602



## Memorandum of Understanding between Boy Scouts of America and United Church of Christ

Whereas, The United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have worked together to provide leadership and character development programs to serve the needs of boys, young adults, and their families through the member congregations of the United Church of Christ, chartering more than one thousand units, over more than one hundred years; and

Whereas, The Declaration of Religious Principle of the Boy Scouts of America states, “The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life”; and Whereas, the twelfth point of the Scout Law teaches, “A Scout is reverent. . . . He respects the beliefs of others,” and Whereas, the mission of the United Church of Christ is grounded in scripture, joins faith and action, and serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world; giving witness to the continuing testament of the still-speaking God, extending extravagant welcome to all, no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, and changing lives through the power of God’s love and by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, it is the mission and vision of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law; and

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America provides family-centered programs related to leadership and character development for youth where the programs are delivered through and according to the values, aims, and objectives of chartered organizations; and

Whereas, membership criteria for adults in Boy Scouts of America units appropriately includes certain background information reviews to protect the health and safety of the youth and adult members of the units; and

Whereas, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting; and

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation; and

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that chartered organizations be responsible for the selection of adult leaders according to the chartered organizations’ values, policies, and guidelines, and the Boy Scouts of America’s standards, with at least one adult leader for a unit being a

member of the chartered organization for such unit; and Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that each chartered organization “Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America;” and

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America agrees “to respect the aims and objectives of the [chartered] organization” in the Annual Charter Agreement; and

Therefore, Be It

Resolved, That the United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America will work cooperatively with each other within the policies and regulations of each organization to establish and nurture scouting units as an expression of the nurture and outreach of the ministry of the United Church of Christ and its member congregations so that boys, young adults, and adults may grow in their relationships with God, develop into responsible citizens, serve the needs of others, and develop personal fitness to achieve their greatest potential; and be it further

Resolved, That the United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America will work cooperatively to establish and nurture safe environments for all those participating in units chartered by congregations of the United Church of Christ, by fully implementing the Youth Protection standards, the Guide to Safe Scouting, and other methods prescribed by Boy Scouts of America and by the United Church of Christ to protect the health and safety of the members of the units; and be it further

Resolved, That the Boy Scouts of America will respect the spiritual and moral responsibility of the United Church of Christ’s chartering congregations with the understanding that there is no Boy Scout authority which supersedes the authority of the local pastor and the congregation in any phase of the program affecting the spiritual welfare of those who participate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the United Church of Christ recognizes\* the membership standard of the Boy Scouts of America, including the stipulation that membership in Scouting may not be denied to a child on the basis of sexual attraction alone, and the further stipulation that the local pastor of the chartering congregation and the leaders of the local troop have the authority to set boundaries, including the determination of whether a Scout is promoting a particular social or political agenda, advocating for a moral view that is inconsistent with the church, or becoming a distraction to the troop, and take such action to enforce set boundaries up to and including removal from the troop.

Resolved, That it is agreed all member congregations of the United Church of Christ may rely on the stipulations in this Memorandum of Understanding in operating under any charter they sign with the Boy Scouts of America.

\* The United Church of Christ neither validates the membership policy of the BSA nor agrees to participate in any form of discrimination against the members of its congregations or the communities we serve.

# Powerful Parenting

*Dr. Lorraine Fox*

## ME: PUTTING THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER

The “puzzle pieces” that make up the assortment of ideas that lead us to believe we know who we are, are comprised of the variety of non-verbal and verbal “messages” we receive from others over our developing years. These various messages are collected into a “picture” we paint of ourselves to ourselves, sometimes referred to as “self-image.” The image we develop of who we think we are becomes our “truth”: our idea, our concept, our “self-concept.” We’re going to continue this month on our homework assignment given at the end of the last column. I encouraged you to have your children talk about themselves and listen for clues that reveal how well they actually know themselves, or clues that let you know they really don’t know themselves very well. To be honest, this assignment can be quite difficult, for reasons we’ll be discussing in future columns.

The difficulty in asking people to describe themselves comes from the fact that not everyone is comfortable with who they think they are. People who are comfortable with themselves tend to be honest when talking about themselves – their strengths and weaknesses, their talents and challenges, their physical and mental attributes. However, people who are not comfortable with who they are sometimes describe themselves in ways that are not accurate. The task here for the parent is this: Do your children paint a picture of themselves that is not accurate because they really don’t know themselves very well, or, are they uncomfortable with what they think is true about themselves and trying to “cover up” their truth with unrealistic bragging and distortions? This is very important because the way you are going to help them is quite different depending on whether they need a lesson in realism, or help with their self-esteem. Next month we’ll talk about self-esteem. This month we’ll talk about whether your child’s ideas are being shared realistically.

A child or young person can have false ideas about themselves for two reasons: 1. They may have been given false information by other people, whom they believed; 2. They may not be willing or able to tolerate what they think is actually true, so they create another, more tolerable truth for themselves.

I suggest you make “tracking down” one’s self-concept interesting, by helping kids figure out where they collected

their various ideas about themselves. This works as well with teenagers as it does with younger children. The reason is because we are never as interested in anyone else as we are in ourselves and making “us” the center of the conversation is usually appealing. (It can also be interesting and fun for adults.)



Have your child (each of your children) write a list of all the people they have spent a lot of time with from when they were born until now. For young children the list is shorter, but they will be surprised by how many people they have interacted with. For adolescents the list may take both sides of the paper.

Then, for each person they listed, have them remember some things that each of these people told them about themselves: good and not-so-good. (Notice if they have trouble admitting that not everything they hear about themselves is wonderful.) You’ll need a few pieces of paper and it doesn’t have to be done all at once. It’s a puzzle with a LOT of pieces. Afterwards, look for common words that end up describing who other people think they are, and talk about whether they agree. If they don’t, talk about why others might have described them the way they did.

In the end, we are each – to ourselves - a collection of ideas and information we have stored in our heads from our mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, priests, ministers and rabbis, friends, teachers, classmates, neighbors, relatives, etc. There are some “themes” that emerge, and these themes help us to make sense of ourselves. Wherever we go, we take ourselves with us. It’s nice to travel with someone who knows us, and sometimes that person is us.

Helping your children to know themselves well is a gift that will serve them well all of their lives. And no one has a better opportunity to give the gift than a parent. The only “cost” for the gift is your time - and they are worth it, aren’t they?

# Is faith a thing of the past in the 21st century?

You're invited to join the conversation at  
The Irvine UCC Fall Conference featuring

**Rachel Held Evans**  
and a special message from UCC General  
Minister nominee Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer

**September 11 & 12, 2015**



more info at [iucc.org/conference](http://iucc.org/conference)

**iucc** Irvine United  
Congregational Church

## Building Plan Update

by Anne Rosse

As we discussed at the Spring Congregational Meeting on May 17, we are still waiting for approval of our Modified Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from the City of Irvine, the next step in planning for IUCC's future and legacy. Submitted almost a year ago, our plan continues to make slow but steady progress through the approval process and we are finally nearing the finish line!

A year has passed since the congregation approved the Master Plan, so we did a quick refresher at the Spring Meeting, showing the proposed administrative/meeting space, flexible fellowship facilities with a modern kitchen, the new preschool with a play yard designed to encourage creative and collaborative play, enhanced outdoor social space, and dedicated youth/recreation facilities. If you would like to review these slides, please click to: the "Congregational Meetings" tab at <http://iucc.org/portal/documents/>.

In April, we finally got approval for the required traffic study's scope of work. Our traffic engineers immediately began the study, which included the installation of road tubes to survey our various driveways in late April. The counts were submitted in mid-May to the City – we are currently waiting for a response. Meanwhile, in response to an electronic version of our "final" master plan, we heard back from the City of Irvine

with some very minor corrections -- these have already been made and the City updated. They also sent us additional paperwork to complete and our architects, Domusstudios, are in correspondence with the City about this paperwork.

In April, the Capital Campaign Pre-Planning Committee convened to reflect on where we are with the project and discuss possible timeframes for moving forward with asking the congregation if they are ready to undertake a capital campaign. Two major factors are impacting our timeline: (1) we need CUP approval from the City; and (2) it would not be prudent to launch a capital campaign in the second-half of the calendar year – when it is likely to negatively impact our annual stewardship campaign.

Therefore, the committee recommended using the second-half of 2015 to make sure we have CUP approval in place and to start providing the congregation with information about what a capital campaign would involve - toward a probable vote at the Winter Congregational Meeting in January 2016. If approved, the capital campaign could start as early as February. In September, we look forward to welcoming Priscilla Bizer from UCC's Capital Campaign Services to help educate us about campaigns. We'll look forward to being able to share news of our CUP approval with you soon!