



Irvine United Congregational Church

May 2013
www.iucc.org

IUCC News & Notes
Irvine United Congregational Church
An Open and Affirming – Just Peace Congregation
A Progressive Christian Voice for Irvine and Southern California

IUCC Members Turn Out for Great American Write-In

On April 13, IUCC members were out in force at the 28th Annual Great American Write-In! The IUCC Advocates for Peace & Justice staffed a table, and other IUCC members were there to sign letters and get involved. Our own Felicity Figueroa chaired the event on behalf of sponsor Women For: Orange County, and she did a fantastic job. Matt Mirmak, Susan Sayre, and Tricia Aynes staffed the Advocates table and collected 35 signatures on the Scouting for All petition and 85 letters for various causes. Also spotted at the event: Shirley Lorenz; Stephanie Sanders; Dean Inada; Daniel Blackburn; Lauren Louie; and Liz Smith. It was wonderful to have such a great presence at this worthwhile event!

Pictured clockwise below from upper left: Matt Mirmak & Susan Sayre at the Advocates table; Felicity Figueroa showed the way into the Great American Write-In; Lauren Louie & Daniel Blackburn signed letters; Stephanie Sanders circulated a petition to provide mental health care in juvenile correction facilities; Shirley Lorenz staffed a table; and Liz Smith showed her support.

On Saturday, Pastor Paul and 21 walkers will represent IUCC in the 2013 AIDS Walk OC. THANK YOU for sponsoring this wonderful group! Your support helped our team raise over \$17,000 to assist those fighting HIV and AIDS in Orange County. IUCC has participated in 25 of the last 27 AIDS Walks in OC. And IUCC remains the #1 faith-based group for five years running. Congratulations, everyone!

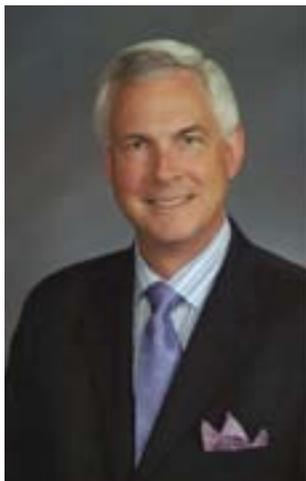
Inside this Issue

From the Pastor's Desk	2
Moderator's Letter	4
Youth Ldr. Column	4
Adult Ed. Report	5
Adult Ed. Ministry	6
Early Childhood Ctr.	6
Adult Ed. Survey	7
Technology Task Force	8
Special Event	9
UCC Synod Events	10
May Birthdays	10
Powerful Parenting	11
Assoc. Pastor's Report	12



From the Pastor's Desk

Rev. Dr. Paul Tellstrom



Part One:

It is going to be hard to say, “Good-bye” to Elizabeth after the three and a half years that she has served IUCC as our Associate Pastor with such passion and integrity. We have been changed as a result of her stay with us—the mission trips in which she took leadership roles helped to pave the way towards our upcoming vote to become a Global Mission Church. Her “Green” attitude

towards life opened up a new garden where our kids and our preschoolers learn how our food is grown and take part in the harvest. Today, there is a blanket of orange nasturtiums that brighten the view outside the window of Plumer Hall, and new vegetables are on their way.

Elizabeth’s fierce sense of justice and clear leadership helped bring a focus to issues that needed to be opened up and examined—from the rights of hotel workers to the support of Planned Parenthood. And, she was representing IUCC at each rally she attended. Her involvement with the Catholic Worker brought our youth (and others) to the soup-kitchens where great needs for basic sustenance were met, both physical and spiritual. She is loved by her colleagues and by those of us who know her great heart here at IUCC. We have all watched her develop into an articulate preacher with much passion, and we have seen her devote her energy to our youngest ones.

On Saturday, May 11, there will be a shower for baby Lilah at the church. And, Elizabeth will be giving the sermon on June 23 on her last Sunday in worship. From there, I have no doubt that it will not be long before she is engaged in her first “solo” tour as pastor—and selfishly, I hope it will be at a church in our Conference. Wherever she, Seth and Lilah end up, I know they will make a real mark on their community as they have done so here. They are a remarkable family!

Thank you, Elizabeth—you have enriched me as you have blessed our church community. You will be truly missed.

Part Two:

Moving forward.

In the last few years, we have added an emphasis to our focus on kids, youth, young families and young adults. We named that focus, “Ministry for Young People.” Elizabeth helped create “Bread for the Journey,” which became an active young adult group. She also pointed out some areas in which we needed help, citing the need for a Sunday School Superintendent as we often struggled to find enough volunteers.

I suggest we honor the time and energy that Elizabeth put into this area by placing even more of our energy into supporting, nurturing and growing our “MYP.” This means moving from a model of supporting a “generalist” ministry into a “specialist” ministry.

In the meantime, Ken Wyant has ably carried our Adult Education Ministry through an interim period, maintaining the same level of high-caliber programs we have come to expect, while making our Comma Groups a staple of our community, through good organization and curriculum. Ken, too, is stepping down as he said he would, and I owe him many thanks for his good work, collegiality and his willingness to serve during this interim period.

Ken is not leaving, by the way—he is a fully invested member of IUCC. He is simply stepping back to his former role as volunteer and member.

This gives us the creative opportunity to take these two staff positions that are responsible for our adult education programs as well as our younger people’s programs and do something new with them.

I invite you to become active in these two ministries at this time and bring your wisdom to the direction in which they will move. I am asking for your help—this is your church, and I want to move in the same direction with you.

That being said, based on what I perceive to be the need for staffing in this next chapter of ministry, this is what I see:

- A part-time (28 hours) Adult Education Ministry Director and a part-time (28 hours) Ministry for Young People Director. Both of the directors in these positions would work as a ministry team with me, and when appropriate, with our Music Director. The AEM Director will have shared responsibility for young adult programming added to the portfolio of duties, working in tandem with the MYP Director. Ordained status for either position would be a “plus.”
- A part-time (8-10 hours) Sunday School Superintendent. This position will report to the MYP Director, and be a part of a deepening commitment to our Sunday school by preparing Sunday activities and lessons, and by teaching one of the classes. This will leave room to have our volunteer Sunday school teachers teach one grade level rather than two, leaving them less stretched.
- The continuing presence (10 hours) of a youth leader as presently defined, reporting to the MYP Director.
- When there is a church activity, it will be assumed that child-care will be available unless otherwise stated.
- A part-time (8-10 hours) Administrative Assistant, to report to our current Administrator.

I realize that this is a different model from the one we have grown accustomed to, and it represents a real “shift” in how we do ministry. But, I am convinced that while IUCC does many things very well, we need to place a concentrated focus on attracting a new generation to the values we hold dear. It becomes a theological imperative. There are churches we simply cannot compete with in terms of the many programs that are offered to young families and opportunities for kids that we have not yet developed to our full potential. But, we must share a theology that encompasses inclusion, social justice, equality, and a love of God and neighbor that makes the circle wider, so that young seekers who are questioning right now may find and grow up with these Progressive Christian values as well. The alternative, despite churches with shiny playgrounds on sprawling campuses filled with food courts and shops, is the impression on a child’s

mind and soul that only some may share in God’s grace (and you know the laundry list of those who are excluded). Our mission is simply too important to become easily resigned to the status-quo.

There is much on our plate at our Spring Meeting on May 19, so if you have some questions or suggestions before then, please feel free to give me a call or send me an e-mail. I welcome your thoughtful reflections.

Yours,
Pastor Paul



Spring Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 19, 2013

12:15 p.m.

Important matters:

Elections to lay leadership positions

Progress report by the Building Task Force

**Modifications to the 2013 (current) budget:
proposal for a modest raise to staff, beginning July 1**

Adopting a Safe Church policy

Becoming a Global Mission church

Moderator's Letter

Cindy O'Dell



It's been said before, and not just by me: IUCC expects a lot of its volunteers. From our talented choir members, to the people who usher, greet and host on Sunday mornings, to the many ministry chairs and admin board members, to those who plan parties or welcome and educate potential new members, to Sunday school teachers, to those who clean up and lock up and fold bulletins, the list goes on.

Being the head volunteer (also known as moderator) this year has reminded me again and again how much we rely on each other to keep IUCC going. It's also shown me that when there are unexpected gaps, such when longtime child care committee chair Doreen Smith moved East in the fall, others, in this case Laura Long, ably step in to carry programs forward and bring new ideas and abilities to those roles.

But sometime the demands are just too much when combined with all the other things life throws at us. And that's the position I found myself in this spring when considering whether to sign on for another year as moderator. While I fully intend to remain an active volunteer at IUCC, the demands of my job and family compel me to ask you to choose someone else as moderator for the coming year.

Fortunately, the very able Anne Rosse is willing to step into the role. Anne is wonderfully organized (I know because she's been my comma group leader for the last two years) and able to commit more time and energy than I can to the position. She will be supported by Martha Selby and Pat Sauter who will continue in their roles as leaders of the admin and ministry boards when the congregation approves the slate of officers at the May 19 congregational meeting. The slate includes many returning chairs and some new members willing to take on the mantle of leadership. IUCC will be in good hands in 2013-14 and beyond.

It will be a challenging year with new people to hire following the departures of Elizabeth and Ken, a building plan to move forward and the always unfinished business of growing this progressive voice in Orange County.

I am very appreciative of the support I received from this congregation as we moved through this past year. I know you will be there for the next round of leaders, willing to lend your time and ideas, for propelling IUCC into the future. Thank you for making IUCC the special place it is for all of us.

Youth Leader's Column

Erika Sanders



Greetings Everyone! April was a great month for our youth group! It was wonderful to see so many of our young people at worship and participating in youth events. Some of the highlights included bowling and a visit to Chapman University for Bruxie waffle sandwiches. I'm looking forward to more fun and meaningful youth experiences during the month of May.

As many of you know, I have been awarded a Fulbright grant to spend the 2013-2014 academic year in Bulgaria as an English Teaching Assistant. Although I am very excited about this opportunity, I will be sorry to have to say goodbye to all of you at IUCC. My time at IUCC has been positive and full of opportunities for growth, for which I am very thankful.



There will be Sunday school and youth group every Sunday, with the exception of the weekend of May 19th. Be sure to keep an eye on the church bulletin for updated information about upcoming youth events. ~ Peace, Erika

SAVE THE DATE!

"The Poet's Art" Concert

The Poet's Art

Presented by the IUCC
Chancel Choir

Directed by Dr. John St. Marie

Featuring the piano artistry of David Clemensen

Sunday, June 9 at 7 p.m.

Sanctuary, Irvine United Congregational Church
General admission donation: \$10 (donations go to the church's general fund)

It's an opportunity for outreach to friends and neighbors
- We hope you feel compelled to share your chancel choir's talents with your friends and neighbors!

Adult Education

Rev. Ken Wyant, Interim Director



Save the Date: Comma Group year-end event after church on June 9th.

Bible Study: Tuesday Bible Study at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. is looking at the Gospel of Mark's description of Holy Week. Our study guide is *The Last Week* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. BYOB (Bring Your Own Bible), or we can share one. BYOIO (Bring Your Own Ideas and Opinions), we like to share them, too.

Sunday Scholars: The theme for Sunday Scholars at 10:15 a.m. is "Environment in Moral Crisis."

Jesus Seminar on the Road

IUCC hosted a Jesus Seminar on the Road during the last weekend of April. Joe Bessler and Stephen Patterson presented "The Historical Jesus In a (Post-) Modern World."

On Friday evening, Dr. Bessler described the history of the "Quest for Jesus and the Rise of Democracy." Philosophies that provided an ideological basis for democratic revolutions also provided an openness to understanding Christianity in new ways. The challenge to centralized authority impacted Churches and States alike. Dr. Bessler has recently published a book, "The Scandalous Jesus," that provides more detail of how the parallel movements stimulated each other to create more participatory government and religion.

On Saturday, Dr. Patterson used statistical evidence to describe recent changes in what people actually believe and what people actually expect from the Church. He defined religion in terms of "attending to transcendent things," such as: love, beauty and compassion. He challenged churches to use the traditions and symbols of Christianity to speak to people who "no longer believe incredible things." He described himself as someone who is "religious but not spiritual."

Dr. Patterson stayed over to preach at both services Sunday morning April 28. He also spoke to the adult Sunday Scholars and provided the Children's Talk during second service. His sermon, "What If You Gave a Party and No One Came?" challenged IUCC to be aggressive about telling people what is "compelling" about our congregation.

It was a stimulating weekend!



Dr. Stephen Patterson and Dr. Joe Bessler at IUCC's Jesus Seminar, "The Historical Jesus in a Post-Modern World."



Adult Education Ministry

Bil Aulenbach

Early Childhood Center

Laura Long

WE NEED YOUR HELP: Every two years, the Adult Ed Ministry surveys the congregational to inquire what sort of AE programs you would like us to design in the future. We would also like to have your feedback about the programs we have presented during the past two years.

In this newsletter (page 6) there is a questionnaire to fill out. It will also be in the Sunday bulletin from 4-28 thru 5-19. Would you be so kind as to share your thoughts with your AEM Committee? It would be most helpful. When you are finished, please put the filled out survey in the green box in the narthex. Forgot your pen/pencil? Thanks to GM we have free pens by the green box that are yours for being so kind as to take the time to fill it out. Many thanks.

IT'S FINALLY HERE...ALMOST!

MAY 19, 2013

It was a year ago when Pastor Paul said: "Let's become a Global Mission Congregation." We have spent a year familiarizing the congregation with what that means. We have had three wonderful luncheons learning more about Global Mission, articles in the monthly newsletter, inserts in the Sunday bulletins, brochures on the

chairs, reports from missionaries who have returned from abroad, a huge bulletin board in Plumer Hall and Paul's sermons.

At the May 19th congregational meeting, the members of IUCC are going to vote on whether we are ready for the designation of GLOBAL MISSION CONGREGATION. If you vote "YES," then the real work will begin as to offer opportunities to every member of our church family to become involved at every level, from praying for projects, to missionaries actually going out and becoming involved in a hands on experience.

As a former missionary, I can honestly share with you that it is a life transforming opportunity to share our time, talents and treasures, both here and abroad, to "the least of these my brothers and sisters."

Vote "Yes" on becoming a Global Mission Church. That will make us the fourth GM church in our Conference, and the 74th in the United Church of Christ to attain such a designation.

Peace Love Joy ~ Bil Aulenbach, Steering Committee Chair

New Marketing Materials Ready for IUCC's Early Childhood Center

Earlier this year, the Child Care Committee initiated a marketing campaign to help the Early Childhood Center build its enrollment. We engaged marketing consultant Linda Hartney-Purdy and set out to determine our program's strengths and niche so that we could improve and target our messaging. Where best to start than with the families currently enrolled?

We surveyed parents in our program and found:

- 2/3 of respondents indicated they are working parents, slightly higher than the 2011 survey;
- Parents value the hot meal program;
- Working parents have greater need for convenient location and flexible hours;
- Social-emotional development and structured curriculum are top reasons for selecting ECC;
- The majority of parents live in Irvine, Tustin, and Costa Mesa. Parents living out of the area work nearby;
- Respondents indicate that beliefs and values are important, focusing on respect and caring for others;
- Parents value the staff's support in helping their child develop social-emotional and academic skills.

Linda, committee members, and ECC Director Irma Rosales applied additional market research and applied the results to a beautiful new information brochure and response card for the school. You can find brochures in the narthex, and response cards are in the red attendance books available at worship services. If you or someone you know is interested in IUCC's preschool, please share these materials with them. Response cards can be placed in the offering plates during worship or returned to the preschool office.

Share the news: IUCC has a fabulous early childhood program that provides social-emotional development, school readiness, and care for children 2 to 5 years of age!

*~Laura A. Long
Chair, Child Care Committee*



ADULT EDUCATION MINISTRY SURVEY

IUCC ADULT EDUCATION MINISTRY

Interest Survey – May 2013

(Please put into "Survey" box by church entrance.)

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help the AEM Committee determine topics and areas of interest for future programming.

- *During the last 2 years have you attended any Adult Ed programs at IUCC? Yes ___ No ___*
- *If "yes", please circle all that apply: Adult Sunday School? Weekly Bible Study? Jesus Seminar on the Road? University Synagogue/IUCC Events? "The Jewish Jesus?" Comparative Religions? Separation of Church & State? Poverty Class? Food Farming and Faith?
Others: _____*
- *If "No", please circle all that apply: No interest in continuing education. Nothing has caught my attention. Conflicts with other commitments. Don't drive at night. Cost.
Other _____*
- *Can you suggest some topics/program that you would like IUCC to present? _____*
- *Is there a particular speaker that you would like IUCC to bring here?(1) _____*
- *Circle any of the following where you would like to have further or continuing education: Progressive Christianity? End of life issues? Spiritual Formation? Just Peace programs? Global Mission programs? Environment? "The Power of the Resurrection"(4 wks. studying each Gospel Myth? Mystery/ Metaphor?) The Jewish Jesus? Watch DVD "Life of Pi" (or other movies) & Discuss? Ethics?*
- *Your suggestions for social justice issues or topics to be presented. _____*
- *Any suggestions for Senior programs. _____*

Please share any other comments you have about the IUCC Adult Education Programs. _____

Use back of this page for further comments, if necessary

(1) Sr Simone Campbell, Nun on The Bus, Spkr Dem. Convention, ExDir "Network" Justice Lobby will be at IUCC on 9-21/22-13

Dr. Amy-Jill Levin: Jewish NT Prof at Vanderbilt Seminary has been suggested. Great speaker, very popular.

Technology Task Force Moving Forward

By Nick Sanders

The Technology Task Force (TTF) is composed of Frank Larkin, Lester Ricks, Michael Spindle, and me. The mission of the TTF is to bring IUCC into the 21st Century. In other words, our goal is to replace our current “ad hoc” audio visual systems with a more technologically up-to-date solution. Let me tell you about our progress to date.

We purged Plumer Hall of some unused equipment that was gathering dust. We also got a commitment that Pastor Paul’s current laptop will be dedicated to Plumer Hall use, once he receives a replacement. Our plan is to permanently mount all equipment on a rack and use the laptop as much as possible to play media such as CDs, DVDs and Internet downloads. Once the set-up is complete, we’ll hold training sessions to make sure that all Ministry leaders know how to work the equipment. And of course we need to train more than just the Ministry Leaders: all will be welcome to attend the training and to become proficient in using the Plumer Hall audio/visual system.

Many people have pointed out inadequacies in the current Sanctuary audio visual system. As you read this, we are reviewing recommendations from several audio visual consultants regarding what can be done and (of course) how much it will cost. We do not have a firm solution right now, but I want to take you on a journey to what might be

Imagine walking into the Sanctuary and finding your seat. On the walls, flat screen TVs scroll through the weekly announcements. When the congregation sings, the hymnal lyrics are broadcast on those same TVs. The Bible reading is shown there, as well. Sometimes, we link via the Internet to another church—perhaps located in Africa or South America—and we exchange greetings or

perhaps hear their sermon, as it is being preached. We can transmit our sermon as it is being preached, as well.

If somebody wants to do a special presentation, it can be pre-loaded onto the dedicated server. Or a flash drive can be inserted into a dedicated computer. Or we can connect to Internet content. However we access it, the content will show up on the Sanctuary’s flat screen TVs and the sound will be broadcast via the Sanctuary speakers. With a little work, we can also push that content to Plumer Hall.

Walking into the Narthex, you see a couple of flat screen TVs on the walls, broadcasting the announcements or whatever is happening in the Sanctuary at that moment. If you want to register to attend an activity, you pick up one of several tablet computers lying around and enter your name, and then touch the activity you want to attend. You can even volunteer to help out via those same tablet computers. The information is sent to a central database and we instantly know who’s registered and who our volunteers are.

The foregoing is obviously a bit of a science fiction fantasy. But it’s not as fantastic a vision as you might think.

The technology is already here—in 2013—to make this

vision a reality. Now, I’m not saying this vision is actually going to happen in 2013. But what I am saying is that we can make this vision happen, if that’s the desire of the congregation. The TTF is exploring what we want to do and what we can do, and how much it might cost. We’ll then present that information to the congregation for a decision.

Stay tuned for future developments.



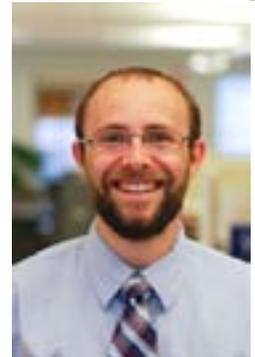
Special Event

The Moral Imperative to Act on Climate Change

A Discussion with Stephen Donahoe,
staff member at the Friends Committee on National Legislation

When: Wednesday, May 8, at 7 pm

Where: Plumer Hall, Irvine United Congregational Church



The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is a Quaker lobbying organization in the public interest. They are the largest peace and justice lobbying organization and the oldest religious lobbying group in Washington. FCNL helps coordinate an informal coalition of organizations in DC working to pass legislation to put a price on carbon emissions. In the last year, it has reached out to groups across the civil and political spectrum, and has witnessed to lawmakers that climate disruption is a moral issue.

In December, FCNL organized a congressional briefing by environmental activists, Jewish, Evangelical and Catholic leaders on the morality of Creation Care and the urgency for congressional action. In March, more than 100 young activists participated in FCNL's spring lobby weekend on "Taking Climate Action from Protest to Policy Change in 2013," kicking off focused lobbying seeking bipartisan support of legislation already introduced and in development to put a price on carbon pollution and support energy efficiency. Climate change legislation is possible, but it will require sustained efforts by informed and committed citizen advocates. Come and learn how you can influence your members of Congress to take action on this critical issue.

Stephen has done outreach work with FCNL for the last 4 1/2 years on global peace and justice issues.



Co-Sponsored by Orange County Friends Meeting and the Irvine United Congregational Church
Advocates for Peace and Justice

Southern California Nevada Conference of UCC Annual Gathering 2013

“GOD’S VISION”
Saturday, May 11, 2013
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Samoan Congregational Christian Church
1717 E. Carson Street, Carson, CA
Cost for adults is \$50

To learn more, call Libby Tigner at (626) 798-8082
ext 18 or see website: www.scnuc.org

A Special Request

Nancy Dittes reached out to us from Connecticut, where all her life she has been an active UCC-er at Spring Glen Church in Hamden. Her son, Jake Dittes, is a sophomore at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont. He has been selected for a fellowship/internship in Irvine for the summer and is looking for a place to live from mid-May until early August. She writes, “He’d be a superb asset to any household, and he is expecting to pay (student-size) rent. He’s very independent and can make himself comfortable in unfamiliar situations. He is unusually resourceful and responsible (and his mother is not the only one who says that!). He could easily provide references.” She would much prefer he find housing through our congregation than with strangers on Craig’s list.

Jake adds, “I am looking for a place from May 15 to early August. I am very flexible and easy going as far as living situation goes. I don’t smoke, don’t have a pet, and will have little traffic/commotion. I don’t know many people in the area, and will be at work from 9-5, M-F. I need to be able to bike or take public transportation to 8105 Irvine Center Dr.@Alton Pkwy.” If you can help, please contact Jake at jdittes@g.hmc.edu

GENERAL SYNOD 29 - JUNE 28-JULY 2, 2013 LONG BEACH, CA

From Pastor Paul:

General Synod

General Synod is fast approaching! This is the time when all of our UCC churches across the country come together to do business, worship, learn about each other, take stands on issues of importance, and in general, celebrate. It happens every two years, and this time it’s in Long Beach.

A number of IUCC’ers are volunteering. Others are baking the cookies that are always available wherever you look. Dates? Friday, June 29-July 2. There is a lot going on--check out the website at: <http://www.ucc.org/synod/> You will see a lot of people you might know, including Pastor Paul, on each of these days.

Here’s a proposition: Let’s carpool up together for the 3:00 worship service on Sunday, June 30. We can leave after coffee hour from IUCC. The worship service is free.

Our Associate Conference Minister, Libby Tigner, is working on getting the exhibition halls to be open for our churches as well. We will update you on that when we know more.

See you in Long Beach!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Carol Ballesty
Johannah Bullington
John Carson
Jeffrey Gaskill
Rebecca Gough
Connie Jones
Terry LePage
Bob McClean
Cindy O’Dell
Ricardo Ramirez-Torres
Mark Rychnovsky
Scott Rychnovsky
Elizabeth Schiller
Ron Steiner

Powerful Parenting

by Dr. Lorraine Fox

BULLYING PART 16: STRATEGIES FOR THOSE WHO WATCH

The school year is about to wrap for this year and we'll be wrapping our series on bullying next month, with hopes that issues we have discussed over the past year will be helpful in providing guidance for our young people on how to deal with this challenging issue. During the year we've discussed many of the issues contributing to the on-going bullying problem; we've talked about kids who get bullied and kids who bully, and we've talked about our responsibilities for providing protection as adults. The final "player(s)" in the bullying scenario are the "bystanders", or kids who watch. It is important to accept responsibility for developing strategies to help them as well as helping bullies and the bullied.

As adults we are familiar with the drastic consequences throughout history when good people do not become involved in evil. For our homework this month we are going to find out what events in history your children have studied that will help you point to the importance of taking action when a wrong is being done to another person. If your children are old enough to have studied slavery, or the Holocaust, or murders involving bystanders, use these events to talk to them about how evil triumphed because people stood by and let it happen. Introduce them to the famous quotation: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing" (Edmund Burke)

Because of the personal dynamics of victims and victimizers, and social norms about "tattling", minding your own business, etc., 64% percent of bullying goes unnoticed by or unreported to adults or people in positions of authority or power. The features that make certain people targets for bullying will be the same characteristics that prevent them from being able to avoid the bullying or from self-reporting.

It is well established that complicity among young people not to share knowledge of incidents of bullying with adults is common, often due to fear of retaliation. This is also true in other settings, such as neighbors who witness bullying and abuse, and employees who witness bullying on the job. Bystanders can be peers at school, colleagues in the workplace, neighbors in the community, a witnessing parent in a home where a child is being bullied by another parent or caretaker.

Interventions and Strategies for Bystanders

The fact is that peers are often more likely to be in a position to intervene than adults. How can we help young people learn to stand up for what's right? Goal = help young people and adults to see reporting bullying and harassment in ways other than "tattletaling."

Teach careful observation skills. Is this really bullying? We need to distinguish bullying from ordinary skirmishes that most children endure at some time. Teach them that whining is not being a victim. It is not healthy or helpful to accept persistent cries of children claiming to be victims who aren't or needn't be. Teach investigation skills: there is not always obvious evidence that someone is hurting, but subtle evidence may be there.

There is a lot of bullying associated with athletics. Coaches are often collusive, oblivious, or unsupportive. These are people with powerful leverage (such as benching) that could create a whole new culture if they take the initiative or are prompted to do so. If they don't, can you help your young person stand up for a peer who is being harassed and not supported? If they fear a direct confrontation, can you convince them to tell you?

Feeling good about getting involved

Many people fear getting involved at the time because they are afraid of escalating the problem, so they wait until it goes too far, leaving them feeling guilty and culpable. Teach them to try to stop things early on.

Victims are often told to "fight back" but that requires self-confidence, physical ability, and a safety net of friends who help. Leaving a bullied person alone tells them they are not worth being safe and implies they deserve what's happening to them, which lowers self-esteem and self-confidence. Loving our neighbor means trying not to let this happen. Further, leaving a person unaided in a bullying situation also creates anxiety in others who may be witnessing the event, so helping one peer actually helps the whole group.

Intervening requires courage and should be presented this way to young people. Going against the bully publicly may put a young person's own status at risk, and we want to be clear that "right" is not always easy. Teach "self-talk" to empower oneself, to be brave and step-up, get involved. Provide examples of courageous actions of others ("Let's roll" on 9/11 – others used each other's courage to take action to save the day)

Talk about values and morality: Doing the right thing is not always rewarded. School may suspend someone who gets involved as if they were part of the problem. Talk about how adults are not always right. We want to support and encourage the belief that all kids, and all people, regardless of who they are or how they look, deserve a safe environment in which to live.

Discuss different ways to get involved. If a person is unwilling or unable to intervene directly they may be willing to report an incident to an adult or someone in authority and thus can still contribute to physical and emotional safety. Tell them to help even if it's anonymous. Helping someone is more important than someone knowing you helped.

Reward moral behavior.

If you are in a position to reinforce – take the young person who stood up to bullying out for ice cream or a steak dinner, even if they were not rewarded in another setting. Praise those who look out for their neighbor in a public way to reinforce the difference between "telling" and "helping." Remind them that being punished for doing the right thing is not a bad thing.

From the Associate Pastor's Desk

Pastor Elizabeth

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?



~Mary Oliver

Three years of seminary, three-and-a-half years of ministry at IUCC, and thirty-something years of life and indeed, I am not sure what a prayer is either. However, especially now as a mother, I feel I am praying all the time through my daily thoughts and actions. And life does seem more precious than ever.

What I will do next with this wild and precious life, I am not entirely sure. I am sure parenting and partnering and pastoring will all be central. Whether I accept a call to another church immediately or not remains to be seen. Seth and I know the time has come for us to find the right location with the right balance of work opportunities and family life options for both of us. I know I am called to be a mother, and I know I am called to be a minister. I am excited about somehow working to faithfully and successfully serve in both these capacities.

For me, this time at IUCC has been such a blessing, such a learning experience, such a time of growth and faith and joy! I am so grateful to all of you for welcoming me with open arms, engaging in ministry right alongside me, and loving this church as much as I do. I greatly look forward to celebrating with all of you at the Baby Shower so kindly offered on May 11 as well as in worship on June 23, when I'll preach for the last time at IUCC.

A friend of a friend of mine, who happens to be a Catholic nun and a committed peace activist, once said, upon being sentenced to years in prison for civil disobedience, "I don't fear going to jail, I don't even fear death. The fear that fills me is not having lived hard enough, deep enough, and sweet enough with whatever gifts God has given me." Though I am still figuring out what prayer is, I pray that we may all know the courage of this sister. I pray that every one of us may share her faith and live with her dedication to bettering God's world. And I pray that we each may live our one wild and precious life to the fullest.

~ In God's peace, Pastor Elizabeth



News & Notes

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