

November 2016

www.iucc.org
Editor: Tricia Aynes

Trunk or Treat is a very popular tradition at IUCC!





Photos on pages 1 and 2 by Tricia Aynes and Sarah Fiske-Phillips



From the Pastor's Desk

the Rev. Dr. Paul Tellström



I met with Rabbi Rachlis in my office today to talk through our joint Thanksgiving Service. While I always enjoy being at the synagogue, I receive great enjoyment from hosting, which we will be doing this year. For many members of University Synagogue, IUCC was their “home” as they nested with us until they grew into being ready and able to purchase their own space.

This year, our guest speaker is Dr.

Eric Handler. Our Adult Program Director, Steve Swope, reached out to him to be our speaker and reported back that he is very happy to be with us.

Dr. Handler is the Orange County Health Officer, and his topic will be, “Hunger Never Takes a Holiday: Waste Not OC Coalition Ending Hunger in Orange County.” Orange County is one of the top ten counties in the nation in terms of food insecurity.

I have noticed in the last ten years that the number of people needing assistance at our doors during the week has grown. It is very frustrating, because when I go outside to “the benches” (a sunny and pleasant space just near our office door) and meet with people who are just about out of gas, hungry or homeless, I know that I am not going to be able to fulfill their needs beyond today.

When I served a church in Hollywood, we built an interfaith coalition of houses of worship that either had food pantries, or collected food for them. We built a multiple unit housing structure, and sponsored lunch programs and even a thrift shop. There was always a place where people could go to get assistance.

We are more spread out in Orange County, and getting from here to there can be a problem for people who have lost most everything, including a working vehicle. This is why our Administrator, Michael, goes out and buys a small amount of bus passes that we can give out until they are gone.

Over the years I have come to know some of the people who arrive at IUCC during the week seeking assistance and I have been privileged to hear their stories. They have made me more open, receptive and patient, and I find that I am willing to just sit down and let them talk. I suspect that

finding someone who doesn't treat you dismissively when you arrive for help restores a little dignity as well. All of our staff members are polite and attentive to our guests. I came in last week to find that Heidi (our Bookkeeper) had already made a sandwich for one of our visitors who was facing her second or third day of being homeless.

What does your church do? When a mother arrives in an old mini-van with kids inside, she might receive a gift card for a grocery store, and maybe a little gas to get her around. The recently unemployed refugee (a Professor of Sociology in Iran) needed some food and some gas to get to an interview. I know that in the rainy season I am going to see a few people who will ask for a Motel Six. Sometimes there is enough in my Pastor's Discretionary Fund (or the new Kanwal Yodh Fund) to help in that way.

Regular guests might be asked to wait a while before coming back, as our ability to help is limited. In the end, we are giving out Band-Aids to apply to larger issues in our country—why we allow homelessness to exist and why a family with heads of households working full time cannot afford housing or food for themselves or their children.

Stewardship Season is upon us. We stretched pretty far with our Capital Campaign last spring. Now your leadership, through Bill Lawrence and his team, is asking all of us to step up to reach our goal so that a budget can be made that meets the needs of your congregation. Carl and I pledged early, and increased our pledge, because we believe in what is happening here.

As I ask you to pledge before the end of the month, I hope that when you think about everything that you remember seeing in our budget (worship, music, education, staff, our buildings and their upkeep, etc.) that you also recall what we do in the community—most recently, for example, we continue to be the strongest supporters of the Crop Walk and the AIDS Walk.

Please also think of what happens here on the campus during the week, and by all means, help me with suggestions (or even grocery/gas cards to give away!) so that we live up to the “Whoever you are and wherever you are, you are welcome here” statement that we hear on Sundays when we are gathered together.

See You in Church!



Adult Education

by the Rev. Steve Swope

Midweek Salon

Lorraine Fox, IUCC's own "wise woman," presented a humorous and informative program about laughter on Oct. 26. Did you know that laughter is (a) an uncontrolled reaction and (b) a counter-action to stress? So yuck it up; it's good for you!

The Greenfaith Team will present Jim Martin on Nov. 9, with research on climate change. Stay tuned for Midweek Salon opportunities in 2017!

Adult Sunday School

During November and December, the adult Sunday school classes will explore the Infancy



Narratives – stories of the birth of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Are they history or theology, and why do the two Gospels tell completely different versions? We'll bring some insights from Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, and Raymond E. Brown. (Please note: there will be NO adult Sunday school on Nov. 27 or Dec. 25.)



Comma Groups

Comma Groups have begun to meet – but it's not too late for you! If you wanted to be part of a Comma Group this year but haven't gotten around to signing up, talk to Adult Program Director Steve Swope soon. There are still spaces in our groups!

Bible Study

The Tuesday afternoon Bible study continues to meet, with Ken Wyant's capable leadership. The group is currently exploring the Passion story (Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection) as it appears in the Gospel of John.

Bible Study



Thanksgiving

Don't forget our annual Thanksgiving Service with University Synagogue, held this year in our sanctuary at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, Nov. 22. Guest speaker will be Dr. Eric Handler, Orange County Health Officer and co-founder of Waste Not Orange County Coalition (wastenotoc.org). And of course, we'll welcome our friends from University Synagogue! If you're bringing items for the reception, please remember to keep them kosher-friendly – no pork products or gelatin, for instance.

Information of Interest

From *Connecting Voices*, the Southern California Nevada Conference E-News dated 11/1/16



Gratitude for the Spirit – Retreat Offering

Saturday, Nov. 12, 2016

9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Norman P. Murray Center in Mission Viejo

\$35 (includes lunch and materials)

This half day retreat will offer time to reflect on the blessings of the soul. We will spend time in safe space enjoying fellowship, conversation, reflection, prayer and gratitude. We will enjoy the beauty of nature that surrounds us, a bounty of simple foods to nurture us and the presence of God to guide us. Please contact Robinmarie McClement for more information at:

Robinmarie@a-flowing-spirit.com

www.a-flowing-spirit.com



Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center

Once Again Debt Free

Thanks to the hard work of the Outdoor Ministries Team and generous donations from churches in the Southern California Nevada Conference, the mortgage on Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center was burned – literally! On Saturday, October 8, 2016 - Pilgrim Pines Fun For All Family Camp and Apple Pie Day - those in attendance gathered around the fire pit for a short celebration, during which we put a copy of the mortgage in the fire.

Congratulations!!

Photos from Youth Sunday on October 23

Photos courtesy of Pastor Sarah Fiske-Phillips





Capital Campaign Update

by Anne Rosse, Chair of the Building Task Force

During these weeks in October and November, IUCC's hearts and minds are on stewardship as we pledge our annual gifts to support the core staff and programs that make this faith community such a vital one.

A few years ago, I spoke about the importance of stewardship using this tagline:

"We'll leave the light on for you."

While this is, indeed, the slogan of a rather well-known motel chain, it also represents IUCC. We are such a vibrant community, with an open and welcoming heart -- a place that proclaims that God is still speaking and offers abundant and radical hospitality to all those seeking a church home. Jesus teaches us to live a generous life, to grow intentionally in our welcome by breaking down barriers, creating and sustaining a community of compassion and care. Here at IUCC, we turn the light on so folks can find their way to us, and we leave it on as a sign of our concern and hospitality toward one another.

While our pledges certainly help pay the electric bill, they also enable choral voices to be raised in praise; worship thoughtfully prepared and prayerfully led that speaks to our intellectual, emotional, and spiritual lives; justice seeking where now there is oppression; complacency challenged by thoughtful speakers; progressive Christian values shared with a generation coming of age in often divisive times; and the countless other ways that we seek to engage in meaningful ways with each other and our broader community.

In September, this faith community thoughtfully reviewed and approved the proposed path forward to add much needed new indoor and outdoor space to our aging church campus. This new space will help us shine an even brighter light out to the world as we take another step on our path to becoming the church God is calling us to be.

After you've made your 2017 stewardship pledge, I invite you to consider your 2016 end-of-year giving to maximize tax considerations. Your generous campaign pledges toward the new building are payable over three years (through July 31, 2019). For those who can, we would deeply appreciate

generous pledge completion by December 31, 2018 to help lessen our debt needs.

When submitting a paper or electronic check, please note "building" on the memo line. When submitting a check that includes both your annual offering ("stewardship") and campaign pledge ("building"), please also indicate the split on the memo line. These actions will make sure we are applying your gift correctly. For pledge payments that involve the transfer of stocks or securities, or if you are doing an IRA distribution, please contact the Church Office.

Please contact the Church Office or capitalcampaign@iucc.org if you have any questions, need additional information or would like assistance.

Your new Building Task Force (BTF) is already at work with our architects, domusstudio architecture. The goal is to be back in front of this congregation in May 2017 with bids and permits in hand, ready to break ground on the new building. Task force members represent the congregation and are your eyes/ears/voices for this project. These members are: Mark Allen, Keith Boyum, Cindy O'Dell, Jim Raver, Anne Rosse (chair), Pat Sauter, Michael Spindle and Pastor Paul. Contact any task force member with your building questions and be sure to stay tuned for regular BTF progress reports.

Thank you for your generosity with your annual pledge and for your vision in embracing our future. You are making sure that IUCC is leaving the light on, now and into the future!

Anne

Moderator's Column

by Renae Boyum



Gracie Allen's phrase, *Never place a period, where God has placed a comma* is an important part of the United Church of Christ, and of our own IUCC culture. The *comma* can be found on our letterhead, on our logo, on stickers, on information we distribute to visitors, and it also is part of one of our important small group ministries -- the Comma Groups.

The idea of Comma Groups began with a leadership retreat over 7 years ago. Our moderator at the time, Keith Boyum, and Pastor Paul realized that as IUCC was growing we needed to make sure there was a way for members and friends of our church to connect in a meaningful way. We invited Michael Piazza, an expert on small group ministries, to lead the summer leadership retreat. Rev. Piazza stressed the gains from such ministries and encouraged us to begin some small groups. Robinmarie McClement, our Adult Programs director at the time, set out to work planning a small group model that would incorporate food, fellowship, discussion based on spiritual topics, and prayer support.

Originally the groups were to be called "conversations around the table," but that title soon evolved to Comma Groups. In an initial pilot program year, there were about 40 participants and 5 groups. Keith and I were part of that first wave. Our lively group included Jim and Barb Carse, Anne Rosse, Nancy Dreckman, Susan Sim (who has since moved to Canada), and Susan's infant son Leo came along for the ride. He was our mascot, in a way. I will always treasure the great times we had together and also how much Leo added to the bonding of the group. We liked the group so much that we kept on meeting after the Comma Group cycle ended.

Since then, Keith and I have been part of five other Comma Groups. The composition of those groups has varied, as have the ages, backgrounds, and life situations of participants. In four of those groups we were fortunate to have "the Joans" (Joan Thompson and Joan McDonald) with us -- their "youthful" vibrancy and take on life has surely enriched my own. One year, our group was actually named, "Keeping up with the Joanses." The topics we have discussed (both part of the "curriculum" and other conversations) have been too numerous to

mention. I've led several of our Comma Groups and have always been impressed with the thoughtfulness, openness, and willingness to participate that truly make these conversations meaningful.

Yes, there has been food -- great food and "refreshing" beverages shared around a table. But most importantly, there has been support as we have shared our life stories and told about recent events, and by offering a prayer of love and support for the needs of group members. I remember the year that Keith and I were struggling with the health issues of his twin sister. Our Comma Group listened, let us shed a tear or two, held our hands (both literally and figuratively) and reminded us that there is power in prayer and community.

This year, Keith and I have joined our 7th group! We are looking forward to discussions centering around the topic of Green Faith/Creation Justice. We are also looking forward to being part of a group that has both new and familiar faces. Over the next six months, in the words from the book, *The Little Prince*, we will "waste time together." And through that spending of time together we will eat good food, share our stories, discuss meaningful topics, and pray and care for each other. The members of that group will become an even more important part of my IUCC family than they already are. I'm excited about the year to come!

Comma groups are just one of the many ways to connect here at IUCC -- I hope you will find a group or ministry or activity or committee that makes IUCC a deeper and more intimate part of your life. Check out the bulletin, our web site, talk to others on the patio about the many ways this vibrant faith community comes together in faith and community!

Renae





GreenFaith Team

Committed to Environmental Justice



Food Waste

(from the Sierra Club: <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2016-4-july-august/green-life/10-innovative-solutions-food-waste>)

The Problem

If food waste were a country, its greenhouse gas emissions would rank third in the world after the United States and China, according to a United Nations report. The biggest contributors to the problem? Developed countries.

Experts estimate that U.S. citizens trash a full half of all the food we grow and produce. Seventy million tons of it get tossed annually, occupying 18 percent of the space in our landfills. Overall, we are responsible for a quarter of global food waste. The statistics are hard to swallow, considering one in seven Americans are food insecure and 90 percent of us don't get enough fruits and veggies; even more so given that we trash much of our food because of unrealistic cosmetic standards for produce and overly stringent expiration dates. (Italics and bold are mine)

Solutions?

Legislators are finally trying to address the problem with a series of new initiatives that also carry the potential to create jobs, conserve water, and combat climate change.

Last September, the Obama administration issued the nation's first-ever call for a reduction in food waste, vowing to cut it in half by 2030. Two months later, Congress authorized landmark legislation to loosen restrictions and increase tax benefits for restaurants, grocery stores, and other institutions that donate food. The Food Date Labeling Act, proposed by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) last May, calls for a new, uniform system of labels that would differentiate between "sell by" and "use by" dates. It's a companion to the Food Recovery Act that Representative Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) introduced to the House last December, which aims to incentivize school cafeterias to buy "ugly" produce and fund large-scale composting and waste-to-energy facilities in states that restrict landfill-bound food scraps, such as California, Massachusetts, and Vermont.

The nation's leading advocacy groups are joining the fight. Last April, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) teamed up with the Ad Council to launch Save the Food, a national media campaign consisting of TV spots, billboard ads, and social media videos that included a website detailing easy ways to cut kitchen waste and extend food's

shelf life. The goal, says Dana Gunders, NRDC staff scientist and author of the Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook, is to show consumers that they can make a difference. "A huge amount of food gets wasted because people don't understand that expiration labels and wilted lettuce aren't necessarily indicative of food that's gone bad," Gunders says. "Once food waste is on your radar, you kind of wake up to it."

What about us?

Once again we confront an issue far larger than ourselves; however, we all contribute to the problem. May we be mindful of our responsibility to reduce food waste, especially as we approach the holiday season.

Every day is EARTH day!

Vivian Johnson for the GREENfaith team (Judy Curry, Nancy Dreckman, Howard Emery, Carol Getz, Eileen Vincent, and Vivian Johnson)



GREENfaith meets with IUCC Children's Center

The GREEN team is interviewing IUCC ministry leaders inviting ideas for the care of creation. Irma Rosales, administrator of the Early Childhood Center, said in a recent interview, "Our children learn about the environment by working in our center's garden. They help till the soil, plant seeds, prune and water the plants. We've grown radishes and tomatoes that we let the children pick and taste. This promotes healthy eating." In addition, the center has plants in each classroom. Children take turns being plant helpers, pruning and watering as needed.

When asked how the congregation might assist, Irma suggested the following:

- a garden arch would add to the beauty
- benches for sitting and reading
- donations of plants

Perhaps you or a group you belong to could take on one of these projects. Such help would be gratefully accepted.

IUCC Chancel Choir Concert on December 11



It's hard to believe that I am already writing about the Winter Solstice concert! Where has this year gone? The choir began working on the music at our retreat on October 8th and has continued working every Thursday since. We trust you will thoroughly enjoy the music John has selected for us. The music explores the many moods of the season, and you are in for a real treat. We are performing music by English composers, so no lengthy translations to wade through at this concert!

I think I speak for the whole Chancel Choir when I say that we love singing to a full house. Concerts are a wonderful way to introduce your friends to IUCC. We will have cards available soon that you can hand out to friends and family, as a way of invitation. While it is a labor of love, we do work very hard to share this music with you. Please help us fill the sanctuary. Thank you for your continued support of the Chancel Choir, and we look forward to a lovely evening together. Below you will find all the pertinent information:

- December 11th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary
- No ticket needed! A free-will offering will be collected after the concert.
- The concert will be followed by a reception to socialize and bask in the post-concert glow.
- DVD's of previous concerts will be for sale, as well as pre-sales for this concert.
 - \$10 DVD
 - \$15 Blu-ray
- Childcare will be provided. Please contact Suellen Rowe if you will be needing childcare to ensure adequate staffing.
- We don't want anyone to miss out because they are unable to drive at night. Let us know in advance if you would like a ride, so that we have ample time to coordinate transportation. Please contact Suellen Rowe for more information or to reserve a ride.
- Suellen Rowe: 949-857-5689 or suellenrowe@cox.net



Green Tips by Miss Lily



Dear Readers,

Every year on the day after Thanksgiving, I start a Gratitude Jar. I fill it with scraps of paper, listing what I am thankful for; and, I open the Jar on Thanksgiving to read the Grati-tudes. I include them in the dinner blessing.

This year, I am grateful for the fresh tomatos in my garden, the purple eggplant flowers, pumpkins and gourds. I am grateful for my niece and for my church. I am grateful for music and movies.

May you have a blessed Thanksgiving, dear Readers!

Love,
Miss Lily



**THANKSGIVING SERVICE WITH
UNIVERSITY SYNAGOGUE**
Tuesday * Nov. 22 * 7:30 p.m.
“Hunger Never Takes a Holiday:
Ending Hunger in Orange County”

Orange County Health Officer, Dr. Eric Handler, will join us to speak about ending hunger in Orange County. Our service will be led by Rabbi Arnie Rachlis and the Rev. Dr. Paul Tellström. Join us in sharing this tradition with our friends from University Synagogue! If you're bringing items for the reception, please remember to keep them kosher-friendly – no pork products or gelatin, for instance.



NOVEMBER

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Ben Allen | Matt Mirmak |
| Nick Allen | Beverly Nelson |
| Nicole Bermudez | Ben O'Dell |
| Jennifer Bullington | Roni Portillo |
| Eric Burley | Jean Raymoure |
| Beverly Deshler | Christina Ruiz |
| Janet Emery | Tom Silk |
| Emme Exelby | Michael Spindle |
| George Fulton | Irene Thornton |
| Kelly Garrity | Rob Thornton |
| Dean Inada | Robert Zane |



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday * Nov. 2 * 6:30 p.m.

Women's Fellowship is meeting this Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 6:30 p.m. at Square One Pizza in the Gelson's shopping area across from Orchard's Hardware.

Our December meeting will be in Plumer on December 7, details to follow. We are having a Christmas Pillow exchange to start the holiday decorating early. For details contact Pat Sauter.



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Tuesday * Nov. 8 * All day

Be sure to exercise your right to vote!



FALL Back!

Sunday * Nov. 6 * 12:01 a.m.

Don't forget to set your clocks back prior to hitting the pillow on Saturday night.



ALL CHURCH WORK DAY

Sunday * Nov. 13 * IUCC Campus

Please plan to stay after second service to help spruce up the campus for fall. Light chores will be assigned to everyone who wants to pitch in.

SAVE THE DATES!

Advent Workshop

Sunday * December 4 * 4:00 p.m.
Plumer Hall

Christmas Concert

Sunday * December 11 * 7:00 p.m.



Progressive Christianity at IUCC

by Bill Aulenbach, retired Episcopal priest

Last month I shared how after being broadsided by a fire engine, I quickly became an A-Theist which means I became a firm believer that the concept of a Master-Puppeteer Up There no longer existed in my mind or theology. But I do believe in a Creative Force that permeates the Universe. I just can't define it or describe it in total. So, I simply call it "Creation" which exists not only out in space beyond my human comprehension, but also exists within every fiber of my being and in the world surrounding me. One of my jobs as a human being and a lover of Creation is to take care of the Creation within me as well as the world in which I live.

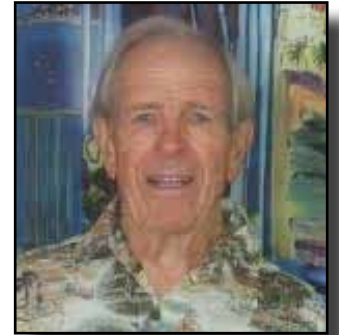
With that in mind now let me, as part of the Progressive Movement, suggest that a demotion might be in order. I call it "Creation." Other Progressive Christians (PCs), such as the great theologian Paul Tillich and Bp. John Spong, call Creation "The Ground of all Being." No longer is the Force referred to in anthropomorphic (human) terms, so PCs are going to have a problem which goes back to what Jesus became shortly after his execution.

Within a few years after Jesus' death, some followers felt he might be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1, less than 20 years after Jesus' death, calls him, "God's Anointed, whom God raised from the dead." (1:10) "who died for us....so that we might live together with him." (5:10.) By the time the Gospel of John was written, 60 to 80 years after the crucifixion, Jesus had become God. (See John's prologue, 1:1). Now remember, this was the same Jesus who went around teaching and preaching, but by 110 CE his supernatural powers had grown to unbelievable proportions, all by folks just saying so. Many PCs have a problem with all this elevation and have "demoted" Jesus back to being the human prophet/sage who taught and preached the doctrine of agape or love. For the past ten years, I have lived with this human Jesus who taught me the power of agape and have found my life, at 85, exciting, fulfilling and rich. This Jesus is my Christ.

The idea that "Jesus died for our sins" is a problem for PCs for a couple of reasons. If Jesus did die for our sins, it was a waste of a nice Jewish man. We all still sin. Secondly, why would a PC ever be interested in a God who planned the execution of his son? In the 21st century this would be considered child abuse at its worst. PCs believe that Jesus died because he was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong people. However, I suspect that his

followers would never have thought that this Jesus would revolutionize the world the way he has.

I repeat: the thinking of PCs simply is "Food4Thot" for our church family which "welcomes everyone, no matter where they are on their life's journey." That makes IUCC a very rich church family who can work together regardless of where we are on that journey. I am so thankful for that because it makes IUCC unique.



For questions or comments, please feel free to contact Fr. Bil at (949) 240-2933 or bilaulenbach@yahoo.com

The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity

By calling ourselves Progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who...

1. *Believe that following the path and the teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;*
2. *Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of the many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;*
3. *Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to: * Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics, * Believers and agnostics, * Women and men, * Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities, * Those of all classes and abilities;*
4. *Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;*
5. *Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;*
6. *Strive for peace and justice among all people;*
7. *Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;*
8. *Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion and selfless love.*

Powerful Parenting

Dr. Lorraine Fox

HOLDING UP THE MIRROR: HELPING THE BLIND TO SEE

This month we'll consider the third "condition" for effective feedback. **Feedback is non-judgmental: It is an observation, not a judgment.** This condition is often very challenging because we are often motivated to provide feedback to someone whose behavior we do not like. That is, personally we **are** making a judgment: there is some personal reason for us to disapprove of how someone is acting. Being clear about why you do not approve of a behavior is a good idea, as we will see later when we outline the fifth "condition." However, if we begin our feedback with any words that have negative judgment attached, the person we are trying to reach will immediately shut down. "I want to talk to you about your rude behavior with your teacher," for example. The child may indeed have been "rude," but if this is the first word they hear, they will lose their ability to hear **why** you think they were "rude" because they will be upset by what sounds like an accusation. This is true not only for children, but for friends, spouses, and subordinates in the workplace if you are a supervisor.

The task for the person providing the feedback, then, is to be clear within themselves about why they feel the need to bring something to another person's attention, while at the same time finding a way to **describe** what they did without attaching a negative judgment. When we don't take the time to do this as a courtesy for someone we care enough to give feedback to, we are almost certainly going to end up with an argument, withdrawal, or hurt feelings, rather than the "insight" feedback is meant to provide.

Two psychologists, Joe Luft and Harry Ingham, developed a model for understanding people's "windows" of awareness as they relate to interactions between people. This model is called the "Johari Window." (Clever, yes?) It demonstrates that there are four "windows" of awareness that interact between people. The first window is called the "Open" self, referring to what a person knows about themselves that is also known by the others they are relating to. This window will be different in each interaction since different people have different amounts of information about each other. The second window is called the "Hidden" self: those parts of us that we know about but choose not to share with others. Again, this window will be different in each interaction since we have shared different amounts of information about ourselves with different people. This window can be a difficult one in that it may contain information that is causing us pain: abuse that we know about that others don't know about; being gay and being

uncomfortable sharing this part of ourselves; having trouble in a relationship that others assume is okay, etc. When we had our discussion about truth a couple of months ago we talked about how "intimacy" is really about being honest and open with others to create trust. Most of us are careful about what to disclose to others, for understandable reasons. Trust between people develops when we take the chance to share a "hidden" part of ourselves and when that information is treated with respect and acceptance. While this window may be uncomfortable in some situations, it is under our control and thus leaves us in charge of when and to whom we disclose our inner selves.

The window requiring "feedback" is referred to as the "Blind" window: those parts of ourselves that others know about us that we are unaware of. Everyone has some "blind spots" but some have many more than others. Because it is very unnerving to learn that others have a different opinion about you than you do of yourself, the interactions that reveal these differences in perception have the potential to cause great anxiety in the person hearing things about themselves that they don't believe to be true. This is why trust is crucial between the person giving the information and the person hearing the information. It is also why it is so important to give the information in a considerate way, knowing it will be hard to hear. And that is why we want to stick to observations of behavior and eliminate all judgments. Judgment words will cause people's defenses to come up immediately and prevent them from being able to hear what we want them to learn about themselves.

Learning to give feedback without judgment requires discipline on our part, and respect and kindness for the other person. Even with our pets it seems easy to fall into judgment language: "bad boy." And of course people use the same language with children. The problem is that once a child hears the word "bad," that's all they hear. Once we hear words like "rude," "critical," "cold," "cheap," "liar," "phony," "arrogant," or any other word conveying judgment of who we are, we immediately feel the need to defend our self-concept and/or shut down. To help someone increase their self-awareness, we want to be heard. To that end, we must find a way to convey the behavior that concerns us without attaching a negative judgment. It's not easy, but it's possible. My experience with "team building" in the workplace was that giving non-judgmental feedback and being willing to listen to it always presented the greatest challenge.

We are not who we seem to be; we are not who we wish to be; we are not who we believe ourselves to be. Hearing from others who know us, spoken with kindness and concern, will let us know who we really are, and help us learn to love our true selves.