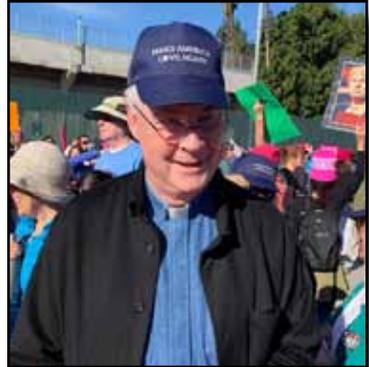
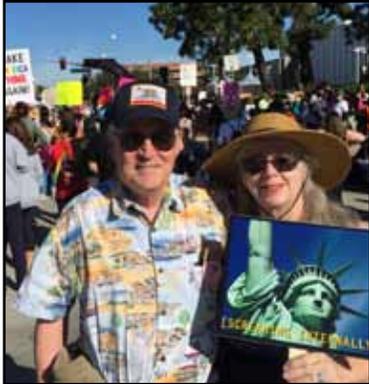


February 2019 | www.iucc.org | Join us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)!
OPEN AND AFFIRMING · JUST PEACE · GLOBAL MISSION · CREATION JUSTICE/GREEN FAITH

IUCC folks spotted at the OC Women's March on January 19!



Photos by Tricia Aynes, Cindy O'Dell, & Pastor Paul

From The Pastor

by The Rev. Dr. Paul Tellstrom



I belong to a Facebook group called “TTDTUIS” – “Things They Didn’t Teach Us in Seminary.” You have to be a graduate of a theological school, and you must be either clergy or a “clergy-spouse.” You would think that a closed group with such a singular focus would be small. Instead, it has over 16,000 members and growing.

We are conservative, liberal, leading large churches, and part-time pastoring in rural areas. We have both people with senses of humor and those who must just have been born humorless. What restores my faith in America’s different expressions of Christianity in this venue, lies in being able to read a colleague’s response to another clergy person who is struggling with an issue, and finding it to be full of grace, wisdom, experience and the desire to be helpful, even when we are of such different viewpoints with regard to theology.

I don’t weigh in frequently. By the time I see a question such as, “What do you do when more and more people are bringing their dogs to church?” there are already over 200 responses, and by that time, there is not much to add. (It does make for a good read.)

One of the more interesting discussions was around how we talk about death in our churches. A member began a thread about acknowledging death by asking if anyone had experience with a concept called, “Let’s Get Together and Talk about Death over Brunch.” This, or variations on the theme, are becoming popular as ways to open up a difficult topic in small groups. Respecting the confidentiality of the Facebook closed group, I cannot offer specific examples here, but they did serve as a springboard for creating our own version.

I was asked to bring a focus on end-of-life issues into our church dialogue by a member whom I greatly respect. I then looked for co-facilitators who have some experience with addressing small groups on this topic. Janet Emery and Laura Long met with me and shared their wisdom and enthusiasm.

Together we found dates in the Sunday calendar to bring you this program. On two Sundays, February 24 and March 3, I will be preaching on the topic in two different ways - one will be about how we talk and theologize on death, and the other will be about our preparations for our own passing.

If you are interested in attending a “Let’s Get Together and Talk about Death over Lunch” session, you must register (reservations are essential). There will be two groups of 12 each Sunday after church. That means we will have four offerings all together, with a maximum of 24 persons per date. Please note that it is NOT grief therapy, and no legal advice will be given. See the article on page 3 for more details about the program and how to register.

If this proves to be more popular than we thought, we can always do it again at a later time for those who missed it. I will be talking a little about planning your own memorial service and a story about making a will, based on an experience I had at my last church, but my focus will be on how we think and theologize about death.

Is this a macabre offering? No doubt about it at all. But, it is also an important topic that we never really talk about for just that reason - it moves us out of our comfort zone. Come with an open mind.

Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Paul





Let's Talk about Death over Lunch ... An Invitation to Life's Most Important Conversation

Have you ever wondered about all those meetings announced in the Sunday bulletin? Are you confused by the variety of activities that you read about in the Friday emails? Would you like to get involved with social justice or service projects within the church but don't know where to begin?

Then you'll want to attend this year's **Ministries Fair** on **Sunday, Feb. 17!** The Fair will be held in the Peace Room after both services, and everyone is invited to come and find out more about the wonderful world of IUCC! Representatives of our many ministries and committees will be available to answer all your questions regarding opportunities to serve the local community, to participate in stimulating group discussions, to sing in the choir, to help beautify our church grounds, to share a meal or simply to hang out with other IUCC members. (PLUS, we'll have refreshments!)

We look forward to seeing you there!

~ Felicity Figueroa



A big thank-you to those who have stepped up to pledge your financial gifts to IUCC for 2019! Our revised pledged budget is \$405,000, and we have met 99% of that goal as of January 31st!

Our gratitude to the budget committee and especially to Mark Allen, our Treasurer, who have worked tirelessly with us this past year.

Blessings to those of you who are helping to make IUCC the church we are called to be!

Susie Lang & Janet Emery,
Co-Chairs of the Fund Development Committee

Although death is a topic we avoid, at any moment the end of life could be imminent - for ourselves or for someone we love. Talking about the end of our lives can draw loved ones together, avoid painful uncertainty in a crisis, and restore some measure of control over the inevitable. Consider these facts from The Conversation Project:

- 90% of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important, but only 27% have done so.
- 60% of people say that ensuring their family members are not burdened by tough decisions is extremely important, but 56% have not communicated their end-of-life wishes.
- Only 7% of people have had a conversation with their doctors about what medical treatment they want toward the end of their lives.
- 82% agree that putting their wishes in writing is important, but only 23% have done it.

Starting that conversation can make all the difference, and IUCC would like to help you get started. In lunchtime sessions from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 24, and Sunday, March 3, Janet Emery and Laura Long, with assistance from Pastor Paul, will help fellow congregants to prepare and initiate this important conversation. These sessions will be identical, and follow-up sessions can be held later in the calendar year.

Based on materials from [The Conversation Project](#), this program will help you:

1. Think about what matters most to you at the end of life, not just medical treatment, but also your emotional, personal, and spiritual needs and concerns.
2. Consider with whom you want to share your wishes, and how, where, and when to start that conversation.
3. Think about how to select a health care proxy/agent who can express your wishes and make decisions for you if you are unable to do so.
4. Identify steps toward completing an advanced directive regarding end-of-life medical care (legal document).

You'll leave with a personal goal in mind and some tools to get started!

Registration is at iucc.org and is limited to 24 at each session. ~ Janet Emery & Laura Long

Moderator's Column

by Renae Boyum



The last Sunday in January is the traditional date for the IUCC Winter Congregational Meeting. Over 90 people gathered to hear reports, adopt the 2019 budget, and come together as a faith community to plan for the future. Among the reports presented was a Pastoral Transition Update.

Since I want everyone to be aware of where we're going on this important decision, I am sharing my remarks with everyone in my moderator's column for the month of February.

This is an exciting and challenging time in the life of IUCC. We have been blessed with music from our choir under the direction of a capable and talented music director. We have been blessed with a wonderful pastor and are so grateful for his service. We have also been blessed with so much other incredible leadership: Pastor Sarah; our administrative Pastor, Steve Swope; Heidi Willcox; Irma Rosales and the wonderful preschool teachers; AND lay leadership (Board Chairs, Ministry Chairs, Committee Chairs, Task Force members and chairs). All of these people are first rate and dedicated to the mission of IUCC.

NOTE: The Bylaws set forth clear procedures and these are the guidelines that have been and will be followed as we move through both the Search for the Interim Pastor and the Search for the Permanent Pastor. What has happened so far:

- December 27 - Pastor Paul sent letter
- January 6 - Meeting of former moderators and chairs of Ministries and Admin boards
- Letter to congregation detailing plans for interim pastor and permanent pastor search
- Approval by Boards of Interim Search Committee - Diane Rust, Renae Boyum, Dave Schofield, Cindy O'Dell, and Anne Rosse
- Discussions with Conference on candidates to consider for Interim Pastor

What happens next: WHY AN INTERIM? Our bylaws prescribe that *"if for any reason the pastoral relationship is dissolved, the Admin and Ministries Board shall appoint a representative search committee whose duty shall be to*

seek interim pastoral leadership." Also, it will be important to have a break after a long relationship with Pastor Paul before we enter into another one. That break will allow us to examine where we are and where we want to be.

Interim Pastor Search Committee *Procedure set forth in Bylaws: Committee chosen by Admin and Ministry Boards*

- Will meet frequently to look at profiles. First meeting scheduled for February 2
- Interview several candidates
- Recommend a candidate to the Administration Board (again from the bylaws)
- (Hopefully) Introduce new Interim Pastor at Spring Congregational Meeting

Permanent Pastor Search Committee *Procedure set forth in the Bylaws:*

- Solicitation of names for Permanent Search Committee - right now till March 1- **go to iucc.org and click on link for pastoral search**
- Nominating Committee (according to Bylaws - Moderator, Chairs of Ministry and Administration Boards, Chair(s) of New Member Development) will look at submitted names to ensure that proposed composition of committee is diverse and representative
- List of candidates will be voted on by the congregation at the Spring Congregational Meeting
Note: the committee will be no more than 9 members
- Once elected, the search committee will follow the guidelines of the UCC Search and Call process
- The time frame for the process ranges from 12 to 18 months

Important Dates to put on your calendar:

- May 19 - Celebration and reception for Pastor Paul (details to follow)
- June 2 - New date for Spring Congregational Meeting

I'm looking forward to working with all of you as we move through these exciting and challenging times. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

In faith and community,

Renae



Adult Education

by the Rev. Steve Swope



Many thanks to Glenna Matthews for leading **Adult Sunday School** through significant social-justice movements in Christianity, including the Social Gospel, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights struggle. She concludes her 3-week series on Feb. 3.



You can register now for our next **Faith & Works** event, with Rev. Traci Blackmon of the UCC's Justice & Witness Ministries! She'll be with us on Saturday and Sunday, March 30 & 31. Go to iucc.org/register!



Then starting on Feb. 10, we'll consider four different perspectives on the book of Revelation with Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi, who not only has a doctorate in mathematics but is currently taking seminary classes. Join us at 8:45 or 10:00 each Sunday morning!

Rev. Blackmon was deeply involved in the response to Michael Brown's killing in Ferguson, Missouri, and she has joined with Rev. William Barber on a new Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival. We also have a tentative commitment from Rev. James Lawson of Los Angeles, a veteran of the Civil Rights struggles, to speak on Saturday at lunch! You don't want to miss this event!

Bible Study



At **Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study**, Ken Wyant leads us through Gospels, letters, and other assorted writings of the New Testament. Right now we're in chapter 9 of the book of Acts, regularly seasoned with insights of context, linguistics, and humor. Join Ken at 4:00 in the comfy

chairs of our new meetings rooms – and afterwards at Square One Pizza's happy hour!

And don't forget that John Dominic Crossan will be with us again on October 26-27. If you're contemplating fall travel, make sure this event is on your calendar first!



TED

Al Gumb began his twice-monthly **TED Talks discussions** last month, and he'll continue on the 13th and 27th of February. Join him in our new meeting rooms at 10:00 a.m., enter the mental

world of a couple TED Talks speakers, and learn from their experiences!

One of the other hats I wear is Facilities Manager. In last month's newsletter you read about our **Bioswale** behind Plumer Hall. One thing we've learned: the mulch in and around the Bioswale is important.



Kelly Garrity will be continuing her **Yoga of 12-Step Recovery** sessions on a revised once-a-month schedule. The new schedule is the 4th Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in Plumer Hall, starting Feb. 24.

And after a rain storm, the mulch needs to be raked back into place so it completely covers the soil, keeping it moist and allowing any water to leach into the ground-water supply. Got an hour or so of time to rake mulch? Please let me know! Thanks!





Notes from the IUCC Early Childhood Center

The Story of the Early Childhood Center Improvements

by Keith Boyum

Excited preschool teachers greeted members and friends of IUCC after services on January 13 for an open house of the Early Childhood Center (ECC), also known informally as the preschool. The teachers had spent three hours after work on Friday the 11th spackling and painting and making the interior look good! Then, all day on Saturday the 12th, they worked on making the space into real classrooms for real children. Teachers moved child-sized furniture, toys and learning apparatus from room A to room B, and from B to C, and ... you get the idea. All of the rooms, including the new classroom that now occupies the former congregational administrative space, went live on January 14th, as children were a-coming.

Tour-takers were uniformly appreciative. Several noted that it was the first time they'd been in the Atwood Building, as the preschool space is called. Others agreed that the space, a converted temporary building dating back more than two decades, had never looked better. Here is more background on our very successful service to the community.

The Big Picture. Reacting to a broad consensus forged by both research and experience, Governor Gavin Newsome's proposed state budget for 2019 includes \$2 billion in new funding for early childhood education. In turn, this priority is a clear recognition of the crucial role that early childhood education plays in childhood (and adult) success. Children with early learning experiences do better in life. Our Center offers child care and early childhood education to a community that will benefit from early learning. Additionally, in that some client families are recent arrivals to the United States, early childhood learning at IUCC comes with welcome opportunities for acculturation.

A New Classroom. Responding to these community needs, IUCC converted its former church administrative space plus senior pastor's office into a new classroom, to be used by the preschool during the week and by the congregation during evenings and weekends. At full capacity, the new classroom will accommodate 12 additional children (two year-olds will be in the room), bringing the preschool to a total of 60 children when fully enrolled. Growth toward full enrollment will occur across 2019, and, given demand, may be achieved quickly.

A Refurbished Kitchen. Within the range of preschool services offered by many providers in Irvine, a key

differentiator for the IUCC ECC is the provision of hot lunches. Client families are pleased that we maintain a kitchen and are excited to see the upgrades that we installed, mostly in December, using ECC financial reserves. We:

- Installed attic fans + a thermostat to regulate HVAC in the kitchen;
- Gutted and rebuilt the cabinets, countertop, and backsplash, while installing a new garbage disposal;
- Replaced the kitchen flooring;
- Repaired wall surfaces;
- Installed a heat shield and moved a gas line to accommodate a relocation of the stove / oven; and
- Updated/replaced twelve electrical outlets and switches.

Other areas of the ECC received attention as well. Ten new bulletin boards are up. New vertical blinds grace the classrooms. A new floor makes the boys' bathroom brighter.

The Finances. The ECC makes important financial contributions to IUCC. The following financial facts are drawn from the 2019 IUCC budget, which was pending congregational approval as of mid-January:

1. The Building Contribution ("rent") budgeted as IUCC income from the ECC for 2019 is \$61,200. (Ten years ago it was \$37,200.) \$61,200 is 11% of IUCC's budgeted income for 2019.
2. The Center also contributes more than \$35,000 each year toward Administrative Pastor and Bookkeeper salaries. This is a fair levy in exchange for direct services that Steve Swope and Heidi Wilcox provide.
3. Even while planning and budgeting conservatively, IUCC may anticipate a somewhat larger Building Contribution when the new classroom is fully utilized.
4. In all, the IUCC Administrative Board approved spending about \$30,000 on the kitchen makeover – the first-ever in the life of our ECC; and the Board approved a little more than \$50,000 to build and equip the new classroom. Given a healthy program and much demand for child care in the community, the return on investment time seems sure to be short.

Photos from the Early Childhood Center's Open House on Jan. 13

Photos courtesy of Keith Boyum



IUCC to Host Homeless Families in August



Family Promise of Orange County is a local non-profit that helps to rebuild the lives of families experiencing homelessness by providing emergency shelter, case management, tutoring, rental assistance and other support. IUCC has supported Family Promise for several years with a special offering and by helping the Church of the Foothills as it hosted the families three weeks each year.

Now that our new building has been completed, **the Mission & Service Ministry wanted to try a pilot hosting of the program for one week starting August 11.** In early January, the Administration Board approved the M & S plan to pilot a hosting week with Family Promise participants. We will evaluate the experience and decide if we as a congregation would like to host on a regular basis three weeks each year.

As a host church, we will be responsible for sheltering up to four families (14 adults and children) each evening and providing dinner and breakfast. The families will arrive at Plumer Hall at 5:30 p.m. each evening and depart at 6:30 a.m. the next morning after breakfast. We want to make the experience as warm and inviting as possible.

The room dividers in the room will be located to provide some privacy for each family. Family Promise will provide blowup mattresses, sheets, pillows and blankets. Before the adults and children leave each morning, their mattresses and supplies will be stored behind the dividers so that the room can be utilized as always for church and community meetings.

Volunteers will be needed to help in the overall planning, to stay overnight in the church with the participants, to provide evening meals, to shop for breakfast items, to help the children with homework on one or two nights, and to plan a movie night on the weekend. **Please watch for sign-up opportunities at the Ministries Fair on February 17th or after Sunday services this spring.** This is your

opportunity to directly help these struggling families. Love and kindness always make a difference.

The stories of two families below are examples of the good work that is being done by Family Promise and the churches that provide shelter and volunteers.

Carina, a hardworking and devoted mother of four, called Family Promise of Orange County seeking shelter as she and her children were sleeping in their car on a “dark scary street,” having fled a situation involving domestic violence. Carina and her children were extremely grateful to be in our Emergency Shelter Program and they thank all the staff and volunteers who welcomed them to their congregations.

Although homeless, Carina managed to successfully maintain full time employment while driving an unreliable, old vehicle, and raising loving and respectful children. Wendy, who met Carina and the children at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, one of our host congregations, decided Carina needed her old Corolla, known as “Ruby,” far more than she did. **So, Wendy donated her car to Family Promise for Carina, which was a tremendous help for the family. On August 1st, the family moved into their own apartment.**

Elijah’s parents, LaShona and Elijah Sr., became homeless this year when LaShona’s mom passed away suddenly. At the time, LaShona was only 18 years old, pregnant and heartbroken. This family was in the depths of despair and thought there was no hope. Fortunately, Elijah Sr. and LaShona were led to Family Promise and in the 50 days they were in our Emergency Shelter Program, the faithful volunteers and the Family Promise team restored their hope. LaShona texted to express her gratitude, saying; **“I love you, so happy you came into my life. You brought back the love that I thought I had lost.”**

Please volunteer and get involved!!

Contact Sharon Lynn (571-236-9517) or Colleen McNamara (949-558-8029)

News & Events



Let's get together on social media!

Did you know? You can check for updates on our website (www.iucc.org) and look for pictures and videos on our Facebook page and on Instagram!



Members of the Fellowship Ministry sell tickets to the Winter Party - photo courtesy of Cindy O'Dell

IUCC's Hawaiian-themed Winter Party Saturday, Feb. 9, at 6:30 p.m.

The IUCC Fellowship Ministry reminds you of our Annual Winter Party, starting at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 9. It will be held in the **Woodbridge Village Community Center** adjacent to IUCC. Enjoy a Hawaiian dinner, your choice of a beverage, and an evening of fun and fellowship!



2/06	Jim Aynes	2/23	Kris Miaco
2/22	Iris Bjorklund	2/02	Donna Picard
2/21	Cooper Campbell	2/04	Elizabeth Rodriguez
2/28	John Emerson	2/03	Matthew Ruiz
2/03	Annika Evensen	2/08	Rachel Selke
2/10	Greg Guth	2/15	Karen Smith
2/21	Jim Hamilton	2/21	Steve Sprenger
2/13	Kaytee Macdonald	2/15	Peggy Stalter
2/25	Brian McComb	2/21	Lynn Terry



Women's Fellowship

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 6:30 p.m.

Tom Getz will share photos of the Northwest Passage. Sign-up on the patio or contact Pat Sauter.



Yoga of 12-Step Recovery

4th Sunday each month at 1:30 p.m.

Kelly will be continuing her Yoga of 12-Step Recovery sessions on a revised once-a-month schedule. The new schedule is the 4th Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in Plumer Hall, starting Feb. 24.



Isaiah House

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 4 p.m.

Volunteers serve a meal to homeless women at Isaiah House on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Call (949) 436-1946 for more info.



Ministries Fair

Sunday, Feb. 17, after both services

Find out more about the ministries at IUCC! Representatives of our many ministries will answer questions. See page 3 for more info.



The Seeker's Women's Group

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 9:30 a.m.

The Seekers meet on the third Tuesday of each month for theological and spiritual discussion. Newcomers are welcome! Call Reefa for details - (949) 859-7091.



Coffee Hour Hosts Needed – Funds Provided!

Thanks to those who served us warmth, friendship, and yummy snacks in January. To serve as host for an upcoming Sunday, use this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f45acab2ca5f49-iucc> to sign up online, or sign up on the sheet on the Coffee Hour table any Sunday. And let us know if you intend to make use of the donated funds we have in reserve. Thanks! ~ Sandy Exelby & Jan Wilson

The 8 Points of Progressive Christianity

Counting the Homeless



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.



Kathy Smith, Steve Goetz, Tommie Kozlov, and Rob Thornton (not pictured) participating in “Everyone Counts,” the official count of our homeless neighbors conducted every two years.

The count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in order for the county to receive federal funding to plan for and provide services to the homeless.

Our IUCC folks were among the 1000 or so volunteers who stepped up at the end of January to participate in this vitally important endeavor.



Powerful Parenting

What should I do when you do what you do?

by Dr. Lorraine Fox

We're devoting this year to examining various ways in which parents can respond to behavior they consider "unacceptable" in ways that are both effective in changing behavior and motivated not by a need to punish children but by a wish to *teach* them acceptable ways to meet their needs. With this in mind, we also want to be sure that we have good reason to be concerned about the way a child is behaving. Sometimes, we may not like the way a child is acting, but on examination there is really nothing about it that needs to be corrected. On the other hand, sometimes adults are very pleased with behavior that really should concern us. For example, adults generally prefer quiet children to very loud children. However, sometimes children who are annoyingly loud are actually joyous, enthusiastic children who bring a lot of feelings of good will into their group, and who can provide strong motivation for others to get involved. Quiet children may just be quiet, but they may also be fearful, insecure, or - even worse - hiding something that is hurting them. So we never want to assume that "loud" is to be corrected and "quiet" is to be praised. We want to find out what is behind the behavior before we decide what to do about it.

Adults generally prefer "compliant" children to "defiant" children, but again, before we decide how to respond we want to explore the cause of the behavior. Some very compliant children are afraid to stand up for themselves because they are never permitted to assert themselves or to experiment with independence. Doing everything you're told to do is not safe for children and over-compliance can be a sign of a problem, such as being victimized somewhere like their home or at school. So as we prepare to outline specific ways of responding to behavior, we want to introduce something we'll be talking about again later. Finding out from a child/teen *why* they are doing what they are doing is a response. It will lay the groundwork for decisions about how we may be able to help them learn how to get along better. I can tell you from personal experience that many times I have been accused of "not doing anything" because I was sitting and talking with a child or young person about what they were trying to accomplish with a behavior I did not like. Some adults feel they have to immediately slap some consequence on a child to appear "in charge" when a consequence that is not related to the *motive* for the behavior risks not being helpful at all.

Knowing that the most important task in behavior intervention is finding out what a child is trying to accomplish with their behavior, we'll move onto considering our options for responding.

Planned ignoring

Sometimes the best response to even unacceptable behavior is no response. If we want to be sure a child is not "rewarded"

for unacceptable behavior by not getting too much attention for it, we sometimes look at them, let them know we see what they are doing, and just let it go. It is crucial that the child knows that we see what they are doing so they feel safe: ignoring is not the same as not knowing what's going on. Give a look or a prompt so the child is assured they are not "getting away with something." Only when adults are aware of what's occurring can children feel safe and adults be respected. But if a child is trying to get attention by being silly, we may want to teach them other ways to get our attention so they don't develop patterns of behavior that cause them to be made fun of by their peers. Sometimes we choose to ignore a minor infraction by one child if there are major problems occurring with others. Adults in group settings or with multiple children can't do something about everything all the time, so it may be necessary to "triage" and tend to the critical problems in lieu of non-critical things we'd rather not see but are not causing harm to anyone. At other times, we may decide not to intervene with a behavior problem because we are not in a good place to do so in a way that is helpful, because we're too stressed and fear we would over-react. We can tackle it next time.

There are some children who seem to need constant correction and intervention. We may want to "pass" on a correction to avoid demoralizing the child and causing them to feel that everything they do is "wrong." After a long day of "being in trouble" we may show care and concern for them by letting some minor infraction "slide," just looking and rolling our eyes and giving the gift of one less criticism.

Of course we all know that when a child or teen is attempting to "manipulate" by throwing a tantrum or become overly dramatic, anything we do hooks us into an unhelpful interaction and reinforces their unhealthy attempt to get their way. This is probably the hardest time to "disengage" and requires skill in assessing whether their behavior is dangerous or just annoying. We know that the only way to break manipulative behavior is to have it not work, and it is often an extreme test of wills between a parent and a child or adolescent who is testing an extreme method of trying to get their way. Remember, manipulation is a game for two or more players (and some children are skilled at getting the whole household involved!), but you cannot manipulate alone. Not "playing" by not engaging with the behavior requires lots of practice and strength, but eventually leads to opportunity to engage in a healthy and helpful way when the child shifts into a more acceptable attempt to get what they want. We'll engage then.

Doing nothing is doing something if it is planned and the child knows that it is our decision and not our neglect or ignorance of what is going on, or lack of care. In fact, sometimes ignoring behavior is not only all right, but is the best choice we can make with a particular child or in a particular situation.



Connections

by Vivian Elaine Johnson

I walk into my husband's room in the Assisted Living facility. He is visibly upset.

His soft blue eyes harden as he says, "*Do you realize how disappointed you make me?*"

His words sting. "*Do you realize how sad you make me?*" Ouch. "*You didn't come to see me right when you got home.*"

I am stunned. I just returned from two days away with our daughters, a needed respite from caregiving. The night before I left, I was distraught over my husband's disconcerting comments to two young visitors. I was glad to go away. When we returned, our daughters visited their dad so I could take a nap before spending the evening with him.

Now, I attempt to redirect his negative comments: "*I'm sorry you're upset, honey. Did you enjoy the afternoon with our daughters? I needed a nap, but now I'm here to have dinner and spend the evening with you.*"

My explanation didn't satisfy him. Is this the same man who urges me to take time away to care for myself? The kind man who cares about the suffering people of the world? Yes, this is that same man but with a new voice, the voice of Alzheimer's. I'm trying to understand. Perhaps he was distraught because he perceives me as his anchor, his mediator, his connection to the world.

I sense a growing disconnect, a detachment, as his Alzheimer's brain changes. I watch as he disconnects from his **body**. Once a tennis and golf enthusiast with good body coordination, now he is unbalanced and walks with a shuffle. Occasionally, he tries to correct that, but soon returns to the walk with which he is comfortable. He is slow, only as fast as his elderly limbs can carry him. He no longer attends the morning exercise classes he enjoyed three times a week, as he requires more sleep in the morning.

Another disconnect I notice is a detachment from **people**, from conversation and activities, a shrinking within himself. Not always, but often. It is as if the Alzheimer's brain arbitrarily says, *Today will be a good day. Tomorrow? Maybe not.* While part of his disconnect is likely due to his diminished sight and hearing, it appears that his interest in people and his motivation to reach out have changed. He rarely uses the skills he's been taught to help him hear, that

is, to lean forward and to look at people, to read lips. There is a disconnect with the **past**. I've learned to avoid saying, "Do you remember ...?" Instead, I choose an event, recall the details, then end with something like, "You enjoyed that so much." He likes to hear about the activity, even if he can't recall it. On our way to gatherings of family or friends, we go over the names of attendees to aid his memory. He likes to review places and events as though attempting to hold on to them. In reviewing his life story, is he hanging on to his existence? Is he authenticating his life?

His frustration increases when attempting to use **technology**. I can relate to that. However, his disconnect with it is greater than that experienced by many of the elderly. My help is essential, and believe you me, I am not an expert! Numerous times, when he is seated in front of the desk top computer, I hear, "*Vivian! Come here. Find my email. Make the print larger. How do you send this? I can't find ...*" The same is true with his Kindle. I can explain a function, but it disappears in the clouds of the Alzheimer's brain.

My husband's clearest connection is with his lifelong profession. His dreams almost always center around his work as a clergy person. He continues to enjoy attending clergy meetings, talking about religion and politics, and wrestling with philosophical issues – sometimes to the consternation of others!

I grieve for him in his many disconnects. It appears, however, that I am more distraught over this than he is. Perhaps Alzheimer's softens the emotional impact of his losses. He does recognize his memory loss and says, "*You are lucky you can remember so well.*"

I look for some positives: Alzheimer's isn't physically painful. My husband is in his mid-80s, whereas many patients are much younger. Our family is aware, with no denials of the situation, and unselfishly give love and care to both of us. We live in a continuing care community where people are understanding and supportive. He retains the ability to carry on a conversation. He is grateful for my help, not always, but mostly. We continue to have a connection. I have some me-time as he sleeps more hours now. That is when I pray for courage for the coming days.

My beloved has fading memory, his eyes and ears have grown dim, his limbs are weak; yet, there *is* something for which to be grateful: he still recognizes my face.

The Beauty of Diversity

by Vivian Elaine Johnson

I suppose almost everyone has seen a peacock: those rainbow-colored feathers presented in their beauty as the peacock walks with perfect posture, head held high, long legs stepping forward with grace. A sight to behold. I especially like the diversity of colors; how much less striking the peacock would be with all brown feathers.

Our local church, the one we attend and in which we hold our membership, is as diverse as a peacock's feathers. Some might find the diversity threatening or at least uncomfortable. I love our church, especially its diversity.

One church member, a Venezuelan immigrant, is elegant and charming. Each Sunday I search for a glimpse of him. He is so well put together that I envision him as stepping out of a Bloomingdale or Neiman Marcus advertisement. Only better. A mathematics professor by profession, one wouldn't guess that such a numbers person could leave his left-brain work world to express his right-brain artistic side through his fashion statement attire.

Our Venezuelan friend reminds me of the diversity of dress found in our church: there's the person who wears flip-flops and shorts; there's the tee-shirts only person; there's the tidy, prim elderly woman; there's the shirt, tie, and suit man; there's the toddler whose attire includes the ubiquitous stuffed animal. And don't forget the teens and young adults with their holes-in-the-jeans look.

Fashion isn't our church's only diversity. One of my favorite weddings was that of our pastor, a gay man, and his partner of 30 years. The joy found in being allowed to marry – finally – palpitated throughout the sanctuary. This joyful exuberance was repeated numerous times as other gay and lesbian couples said their vows. The love expressed captured all of the attendee's hearts, reminding us that love is more powerful than hate.

Our congregation is also blessed by the presence of transgender persons. They have taught me so much. (They probably tire of being the daily teachers of Transgender 101 education.) The conflicts within and without which they are confronted are enormous. They are among the most courageous persons I've met. To see the ebullient gratitude they express to not only being accepted, but

also cherished and affirmed in their giftedness, results in attitudes of humility on the part of straight folks.

In addition to varying sexual orientations, our church includes people of differing financial means - some are well off, other folks deal with lack of funds. We have people of diverse religious backgrounds and those with no church experience. There are people from other countries and cultures, in addition to those of us who are deeply planted in American soil from birth. The shades of skin from various races enhance the beauty of our gatherings. Yes, we have members who are white, straight, and middle-class. Our ages range from infants to the elderly. Singles, couples, widowed and divorced: all are welcome.

Interpretation of scripture is another area in which we are diverse. We don't need to think the same, nor believe the same, in order to worship and work together. I am uncomfortable with those arrogant enough to believe that they have the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. Of course, we have differences of opinion and procedures. As the saying goes, "When you have two people together, there are a minimum of three different opinions." If we can't handle differences, many of us would have left our spouses the day after we married.

We are so fortunate in our diversity! The children's song I learned when I was six comes to mind: *Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in God's sight.* Diversity may be precious in God's sight, but it sure has taken humans a long time to agree.

I'm so glad I didn't give up on the Church at large. I could have, due to earlier policies. After my husband finished seminary and wanted to marry me, the national Church said, "No. A man cannot be ordained as a pastor if he marries a *divorced* woman." I was divorced. George married me anyway, serving two years as a lay minister until the church changed its policy. Another issue: my friend believed that she was called by God to be a pastor. The Church said, "No. A *woman* can't be a pastor." Eventually the church changed its policy. Likewise, gay and lesbians heard the call to be clergy. The Church said, "No. *Homosexuals* can't be pastors." Finally, the Church changed its policy. Think of the talent and blessings we would have lost had the Church not changed its mind!

At the beginning of our worship service each Sunday, we say our church's credo: "*Whoever you are, and wherever you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here.*"



Robert Rounseville

by Keith Dillon



This month, I offer an essential performer of 20th Century culture. Robert Rounseville possessed a shimmering lyric tenor that was versatile enough to take on both modern opera and American musicals. He premiered some of the essential works of both American music and theatre of the 20th Century. He also made a small number of films that continue to hold our imaginations.

Mr. Rounseville was born on March 25, 1914, in Attleboro, Massachusetts. He made his Broadway debut in 1937, playing a small role in Rodgers & Hart's blockbuster *Babes in Arms*. His early Broadway years included an appearance in the premiere of Kurt Weill & Maxwell Anderson's *Knickerbocker Holiday*. In 1974, Mr. Rounseville passed away from a sudden heart attack that occurred as he was giving a master class at Carnegie Hall. The following productions are a few arguments for my holding Mr. Rounseville in such esteem.

- 1) *The Tales of Hoffman* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger-1951) – Mr. Rounseville played E.T.A. Hoffman in Powell & Pressburgers' delightful ghost story based on Jacques Offenbach's great opera *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.
- 2) *The Rake's Progress* (Igor Stravinsky -1951) – Despite his misgivings, Igor Stravinsky himself chose Mr. Rounseville to sing Tom Rakewell in the premiere of his neo-classical masterpiece. The cast included Elizabeth Schwartzkopf and Jennie Tourel. It opened at La Fenice and was later recorded by Columbia Records. This is easily my favorite Stravinsky.
- 3) *NBC Opera Theatre* (1950s) – In the days when opera was broadcast live on the commercial networks, Mr. Rounseville appeared in such productions as an English-language *Carmen* and the American Television debut of Francis Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites* (a young Leontyne Price also starred in this production).

- 4) *Candide* (Leonard Bernstein-1956) – The great theatre director Tyrone Guthrie chose Mr. Rounseville to play the title role in this new musical based on Voltaire. The cast also featured a young coloratura soprano named Barbara Cook. The show failed in the 1950s, some say due to the harsh quality of Lillian Hellman's book.
- 5) *Carousel* (Rodgers and Hammerstein-1956) - Next, Mr. Rounseville played Enoch Snow in Henry King's film version of *Carousel*, released by Twentieth Century Fox in 1956.
- 6) *The Mikado* (Norman Campbell, Marty Green-1960) - This production of Gilbert and Sullivan's perennial was produced for the NBC Bell Telephone Hour. It featured the inimitable Groucho Marx as Ko-Ko the Executioner.
- 7) *Man of La Mancha* (Mitch Leigh & Joe Darian-1965) – Rounseville originated the role of the Padre in this standard based on Cervantes.
- 8) *From the House of the Dead* (Leoš Janáček-1969) – A Janáček classic based on Dostoyevsky's novel of the same name. National Educational Television, a forerunner of PBS, was the producer.

Next month, we look into the career of one of the most underappreciated directors in Hollywood history: George Cukor.



Robert Rounseville