



**Hillcrest Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ**

Ministers.....*All Members of Hillcrest Church*  
Interim Pastor.....*Rev. Dr. Loletta M. Barrett*  
Director of Youth Ministry.....*Sally Schacht*  
Director of Children's Ministry.....*K.C. Coonis*  
Director of Music.....*Debbie Carter*  
Organist/Pianist.....*Colleen Keith*  
Country Day School Director.....*Joan Edgerton*  
Country Day School Director.....*Danielle Darlow*  
Moderator.....*Gail Stier*  
Vice-Moderator.....*Doris Lynch*  
Church Secretary.....*Howard McCoy*  
Treasurer & Financial Secretary. .*Laurie Gjoraas*  
Wedding Director.....*Alison Ferguson*

**HILLCREST HILITES"**

**"REVERENDLY" SPEAKING**

*March 28, 2010*

Holy Week is coming. According to some, this is the most important time of year in the Christian calendar. The week begins at a high note with the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It falls to the Last Supper with the disciples, betrayal, arrest, crucifixion and the confusion of an empty tomb. It rises again to the joyous revelation and realization of resurrection. It is an important week in the life of Jesus, his original disciples, and the life of us in his church. It is important that we re-create it, re-live it, re-member it.

I have been thinking that, just like Advent, it is important it is that we not trivialize Holy Week. Some people think that we trivialize Advent with Santa Claus, trees and materialism. "The reason for the season IS the birth of Jesus," after all. Some people think that we trivialize Easter with the Easter bunny, baskets, and sugar. "The reason for the season is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus," after all. Yet, we can trivialize in a different way if we limit our understanding and experience.

I am re-reading *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus' Final Week in Jerusalem*, by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. In their preface they mention Mel Gibson's 2004 movie, *The Passion of Christ*. One of their critiques of the movie was that it "reinforced a widespread but much too narrow understanding of the "passion" of Jesus," to Jesus' suffering. Instead, they believe, "...the first passion of Jesus was the kingdom of God, namely, to incarnate the justice of God by demanding for all a fair share of a world belonging to and ruled by the covenantal God of Israel." They believe that it was this "passion for God's distributive justice that led inevitably to the second passion by Pilate's punitive justice." They assert, "...to narrow the passion of Jesus... is to ignore the connection between his life and death." (Page VIII)

Many of us understand that there are meanings of Advent that go beyond the story of the birth of a child, to the ongoing revelation of God and God's love into human consciousness. There is also more to Holy Week. If Jesus did not die upon a cross, and the early Christians did not have an experience of resurrection, there would be no church 2000 years later. But there is more to Jesus than his death and resurrection. There is his life.

Just as we endeavor to take the spirit of Advent- the experience of the unlimited and overwhelming love and peace of God- into our lives year round, we must endeavor to take the spirit of Easter- the experience of new life where there was death, and hope where there was despair- into our lives year round. In order to truly do that, we must try to understand the piece in the middle. The passion Jesus had for living in, becoming part of, and helping to create, the kingdom of God. He gave his life for that passion; so that we would know what he taught about it was true, beyond the shadow of a doubt or death. As we re-member the events of Holy Week, as we go into the weeks and months beyond, I encourage us to explore together what it was that made Jesus so passionate- building the kingdom of God, here and now.

*Peace, Pastor Loletta*

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RUN A CHURCH?

Outreach! Evangelism! Ooooh no! Not the “E” word! Many of us shy away from it, for good reason. It has come to be negatively stereotyped. It has often been interpreted to mean proselytizing and attempting to convert people through some extreme and sometimes bizarre means.

There is a group of people from a church near where I live that stand on busy street corners with signs and bullhorns. They use the bullhorns to scream “God LOVES you!” at the cars going by. But their signs read: “Without Jesus, HELL.” This form of evangelism often chases away more people than it encourages; the message is contradictory, the medium seems comical. I am sure their hearts are in the right place. They think they are being loving by sharing their beliefs. I confess their method and interpretation of “Evangel” makes me cringe. So as contemporary disciples of Jesus, how do we interpret the directive to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation?” (Mark 16:15).

Evangel means good news, glad tidings, and gospel. If we look at the Gospels According to Mark, Matthew, and Luke, when we hear the good news being preached by Jesus, it is the good news of

the kingdom of God (Mt 4:23, 9:35, Mk 1:14-15, Luke 4:43, 8:1, 16:16). There was no coercion or fear of hell, there was only the amazing image of the Beloved Community of God, where all were invited, welcomed, accepted, and loved. There was no conversion, only the movement of the Spirit bringing healing to minds, bodies, hearts and spirits.

Evangelism therefore is spreading the good news that the kingdom of God is near. And where is this kingdom? Everywhere. But it especially exists where people intentionally gather to teach and follow as best they can in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth. Like here at Hillcrest. And Jesus promised that he would be with those who taught and followed his Way always, to the very end of the age. (Mt 28:20) How fantastic is that? Who wouldn’t want to be in the kingdom of God, in the presence of the spirit of Jesus? And why wouldn’t we want to invite people to come to this kingdom?

One definition of evangelism is an “ardent or zealous enthusiasm for a cause.” Why wouldn’t we be evangelists- enthusiastic about the kingdom of God here at Hillcrest- and excited about inviting others to share in it?! Can you invite someone to come and enjoy being with the amazing Beloved Community of God here at Hillcrest, for a movie night, a concert, a dinner, a service of worship? Then you are an evangelist and you are helping to run your church.

## GIVING AND RECEIVING THANKS

To My Hillcrest Family,

I would like to thank all of you for such a wonderful baby shower, and cards and gifts that followed. We were overwhelmed by all of your love and support. We are so lucky to have such a caring church family. *Wyatt Jameson Coonis* was born four weeks early on February 3, 2010, and is doing just fine. Thanks again everybody!

Love,  
*The Coonis Family*

Dear Friends,

It takes special people to reach out a helping hand to those in need. You are just such people!!!! On behalf of the Officers, Board, and clients of WCCS, I want to thank you for your donation of 7 baby quilts made by the women’s sewing group and Girl Scout troop. Last year more than 3,000 women and children benefited from our services – all at not cost to themselves or their families. We are very grateful that we can provide temporary crisis shelter, hotline assistance, children’s programming, client advocacy, transitional housing, life skills workshops, and many other outreach services. We know that we make a difference in the lives of our clients. We help them rebuild their lives and give them back hope and dignity. We want you to know that you and your support are a significant part of this process. We honestly couldn’t do it without the generosity and thoughtfulness of our wonderful supporters.

Yours truly,  
*Lori Hentcy*, Board President  
Women’s and Children’s Crisis Shelter

## FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS WRAP-UP

Three cheers and many thanks to everyone who helped make the 50<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Festival of Fine Arts a success this year. As always it took many hours of work by many people working together to make it happen.

*There will be a wrap-up/evaluation meeting after worship on Sunday, April 11, 2010. We will have a final financial report at that time, but we anticipate being*

*happily in the black. Plan to come  
and share your thoughts and ideas.  
Lyn Sandahl*

**GREAT DECISIONS  
DISCUSSION GROUPS**

Hillcrest & Temple Beth Shalom will be hosting **Great Decisions Discussion Group** on Wednesdays at 7 – 8:30 p.m. from April 7 through May 26. The April sessions will be at Temple Beth Shalom and the May sessions will be at Hillcrest. Study books are available for \$18.50 and can be purchased by calling (562) 692-8018. *Pastor Loletta* has a sample of the workbook that will be used for the discussions if you want to look at it. You do not need to be able to attend all the discussions. Each one will be a new topic. However, you'll want to come to all 8 sessions. Topics at Beth Shalom, 14547 Mulberry Street in Whittier are:

- Globalized Crime  
7 April
  - Russia & Its Neighbors  
14 April
  - The Persian Gulf  
21 April
  - Preventing Genocide  
28 April
- Topics at Hillcrest, 2000 West Road in La Habra Heights are:
- Global Financial Crisis  
5 May
  - US-China Security Relations  
12 May
  - Special Envoys  
19 May

Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution  
26 May  
**Pastor Loletta will drive from Hillcrest at 6:30 p.m. if anyone wants to carpool with her.**  
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**ADULT STUDY GROUP**

The Adult Study Group meets on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. This group combines bible study and adult Sunday school. Choose the time most convenient for you.  
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**TAI CHI ANYONE?**

The Tai Chi class meets Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the patio area. Tai Chi is designed for anyone wishing to gain flexibility and balance, while learning a short form of shadow boxing. All ages and abilities are welcome - no experience is necessary! This is an open class and is FREE.  
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**MEMORIAL PLAQUE**

If you wish to have the name of a loved one added to the Memorial Plaque in the Memorial Garden, please call the church office, (562) 947-3755, with the full name, year of birth and death. The bronze plaques are 8" x 1" and cost about \$81, at least for the last one we got.

**WONDERFUL WORSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Details are still being worked out, but watch for Earth Day, blessing of the animals, a visit by the director and choir of Peppermint

Ridge, and other fun worship events to come in April and May. This is what we have concerning upcoming sermons and worship events:

**April 1, 2010 – Maundy Thursday**

Sermon title: "A Remembrance of the Last Supper." A simple soup supper at 6:30 p.m. in Barwick Hall, where we will recreate the last meal Jesus ate with his disciples, his prayers and arrest in Gethsemane, and other events leading to his crucifixion.

**April 2, 2010 – Good Friday**

Sermon title: "The Seven Last Words of Jesus." We will join other Whittier area congregations at the First Christian Church in Whittier at 12:00 noon, to meditate on "the last seven words" of Jesus. *Pastor Loletta* will have the "last word."

**April 4, 2010 - Easter**

Eastern Sunrise service will be led by our youth at 6:00 a.m., followed by a continental breakfast in Barwick Hall. Then at 10:00 a.m., the sermon title will be: "Who Will We Believe?" A joyous celebration of the risen Christ focusing on Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, and Luke 24:1-12.

**April 11, 2010**

Sermon title: "Witnesses." Our worship will focus on the witnesses to the risen Christ through Acts 5:27-32, Psalm 118:14-29 and John 20:19-31.

**April 18, 2010 – Earth Day**

"A Celebration of the Earth." We will join the celebration of Earth Day (April 22), with music and Acts 9:1-6; Psalm 30; John 21:1-9.

**April 25, 2010 – Hymn Sing**

Back by popular demand and acclamation, we will continue with your favorite hymns and Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; John 10:22-30.

Come to these worship opportunities and invite your family and friends.  
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**QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – MARCH 21, 2010**

A congregational meeting was held to review the budget and to hear recommendations from the taskforces on Fundraising, Fundraising, and Marketing & Growth. Our income continues to fall short of our expenses. Your prayers and continued giving are needed. The Marketing & Growth Taskforces reported ideas for getting the word out about programs, and worship here at Hillcrest.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP  
LUNCHEON

Please join us for the next women's luncheon. It will be Monday, April 19, 2010, at the Olive Garden Restaurant at noon. The restaurant is located at 13500 E. Whittier Blvd. in Whittier near Painter Avenue. Please let Sally know, (562) 902-6539, if you are planning to come.

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CHILI COOK-OFF

Even if you are not from Texas, but you still like chili - don't miss the Hillcrest Chili Cook-off at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2010, in Barwick Hall. Yes, there will be fabulous prizes and not only for the chili, but also for side dishes and desserts. I haven't been told there will be any fee for this fabulous evening, but if you bring enough chili, or a lot of a side dish, or even enough dessert for more than just myself, there should be no further cost. If there is, your church secretary will cover the cost assuming he gets enough

dessert that he really likes. Anyway, be sure to be there on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

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OXYMORONS

When it get very late on the Friday before the Hi-Lites are due on Sunday, I grasps at most anything to either fill up the pages or figure out what I have to remove. It is that time on Friday and I came across these oxymorons from my airline pilot son, Mike, in Texas. I have deleted some of them because even I think they might not be appropriate for a church newsletter.

1. Is it good if a vacuum really sucks?
2. Why is the third hand on the watch called the second hand?
3. If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
4. If Webster wrote the first dictionary, where did he find the words?
5. Why do we say something is out of whack? What is a whack?
6. Why do "slow down" and "slow up" mean the same thing?
7. Why do "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the

same thing?

8. Why do "tug" boats push their barges?

9. Why do we sing "Take me out to the ball game" when we are already there?

There are more, and if I have room next time, maybe I'll print them if I don't have too many complaints about these. Anyway I wanted to do one of my own that I have thought about for sometime. That is, car dealers speak about used cars as "pre-owned." Shouldn't "pre-owned" mean before-owned? It seems to me that "pre-owned" should mean a new car. Why not call used cars "post-owned."

**HILLCREST COUNTRY DAY  
SCHOOL**

**Hillcrest Country Day  
School Mission Statement**

The Hillcrest Country Day School believes that each child is a unique being loved by his creator and, as such, should have an atmosphere where love and respect for others and self is held primary. This school endeavors to promote that as well as well as a place where children develop their creativity, their thinking skills, their ability to make decisions and experience consequences in a nurturing environment where he/she may know forgiving and forgiveness. As a Board of Directors, we feel it is our mission to support, guide, evaluate and help make it possible for this church-related day school to continue to achieve its goals.

We are proud of this mission statement that was developed in 1998 by the Hillcrest Country Day School Board. It hangs on a plaque in our school office.

Love, Joan & Dani

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**THE HILLCREST BOOK CLUB**

Normally the club meets the third Thursday of the month. The next meeting is Thursday, April 15, 2010,

at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Newcomers are always very welcome. The book chosen for April is **The Last Week** by Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan. These top Jesus scholars join together to reveal a radical and little-known Jesus. As both authors reacted to and responded to questions about Mel Gibson's blockbuster, **The Passion of the Christ**, they discovered that many Christians are unclear on the details of events during the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

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**MESSAGE TO HILLCREST  
GROCERY SHOPPERS**

The sales of the Albertsons gift cards have been a big success. In only five weeks we have sold \$1,835 in gift cards. Hillcrest has realized a profit of \$91.75 on those sales. In addition to buying your groceries at Albertsons, you can purchase gasoline at the Beach & Whittier Blvd. store. You must take the card into the convenience store at the gas station and pre-pay before pumping your gas (similar to paying cash). We could really increase our profits through these gasoline purchases.

Don't forget to register your Von's card and various credit cards through the eScrip program at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com). Hillcrest's Group ID # is 136559149.

Also, everyone must re-register their Ralph's card at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com). Hillcrest's NPO # is 84062. (See last month's Hi-Lites.)

Instructions for registering Von's and Ralph's cards for those without internet access are in the narthex.

*If you have any questions, contact Gloria Karam at (714) 992-1473.*

**EASTERN ASSOCIATION  
MEETING**

The Eastern Association will meet at Bethel Congregational Church in Ontario, California on April 17, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The topic of the meeting will be: *Reflections on the Nature of Ministry, Whose Ministry Is this Anyway? Exploring the Gifts of Laity & the Covenant of Clergy*. There will also be Ecclesiastical Councils for persons who have heard the call to ministry. These councils are held to hear the ordination papers, and discern together as a community whether the candidates should be ordained. Hillcrest can send two voting delegates, but as part of the Eastern Association, all members of Hillcrest are invited to attend. Lunch is \$10. If you would like to go as a delegate, please let *Gail Stier* know, (562) 943-5676. Otherwise, please RSVP to Bethel

Congregational Church:  
(909) 984-9111 or  
[info@bethelucc-ontario.com](mailto:info@bethelucc-ontario.com).

**SCNCUCC ANNUAL MEETING**

The Southern California Nevada Conference of the UCC will hold its annual meeting on June 11 & 12 at the First Congregational Church, UCC in Santa Ana, California. The theme this year is: *From One Foundation to New Creations*. This two-day conference includes great worship and wonderful workshops, and may include introduction of a candidate for Conference Minister. More information can be found at <http://www.scncucc.org/AnnualGathering.htm>. Hillcrest can send two voting delegates, but as part of the Southern California Nevada Conference, all members of Hillcrest are invited to attend. If you would like to be considered to be a voting delegate, please let *Gail Stier* know, (562) 943-5676.

**THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**

The Irvine United Congregational Church will host scholars from the Jesus Seminar to discuss the Gospel According to Thomas. In 1945, a new Gospel was discovered that would alter the way scholars look at gospels, the origins of Christianity, even Jesus himself. The Gospel of Thomas challenges just about everything we have assumed to be true in the story of Christianity began. More information can be found at: [http://scncucc.org/email\\_news\\_calendar/documents/IUCCJesusSeminar1010RegistrationForm.pdg](http://scncucc.org/email_news_calendar/documents/IUCCJesusSeminar1010RegistrationForm.pdg) or (949) 733-0220, ext. 205.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE E-NEWS  
& UCC INFORMATION**

Did you ever wonder where information about our conference, association and other churches and events can be found? Check out the SCNCUCC E-NEWS at <http://scncucc.org/enews.htm>. You can even become a subscriber for free! There you will find information about luaus, youth events, interesting classes, mission projects and gatherings open to everyone. The UCC also has a website where you can find information on how the national church is working for us, our international missions, and about our UCC churches across the nation. Go to [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

**AVOCADO FESTIVAL**

It's almost here! Please put May, 22, 2010, on your calendar for the La Habra Heights Avocado Festival. We will have a booth at the festival. Wouldn't it be great if we could all be there too with our red t-shirts, "ask me about my church" buttons, name tags, and bookmarks, so we

can invite people to Hillcrest? Get ready for another opportunity to invite our friends in the La Habra Heights to join us!

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**SONORA BIRDS AND MUCH MORE IN BARWICK HALL**

The Whittier Area Audubon Society and Hillcrest's 9 members invite you to their gala Conservation Dinner in Barwick Hall on Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. You'll be delighted by a tasty dinner, good company, a photo presentation which includes the birds of Sonora, Mexico, the Salt Box's Celtic Fiddle Band performance during dinner plus a fun raffle with unique prizes - all for \$25.00 per person. Make reservations by April 1, 2010, with Conservation Dinner Chair *Diana Jimenez* at 14002 High Street, Whittier, California 90605, (562) 698-7010 with a check made out to Whittier Area Audubon Society. You may also give the check to

*Grace or Yosh Nakamura.*

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**WHITTIER MUSICIANS' WORKSHOP**

*This will be the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Concert (Celebrating National Music Week) on May 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Hillcrest Congregational Church. **Free Admission.** For more information, call afternoons at (714) 562-0860.*