

HILLCREST HILITES"

"REVERENDLY" SPEAKING

October 25, 2009



**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.....*Diana Ford*
Vice-Moderator.....*Gail Stier*
Church Secretary.....*Howard McCoy*
Treasurer & Financial Secretary *Laurie Gjoraas*
Wedding Director.....*Alison Ferguson*

I wanted to share a story with you that I read on the internet recently at www.Spiritual-short-stories.com. It is titled, "Children and Prayers" by Paulo Coelho.

A minister, having started a family, no longer had any peace for his prayers. One night, when he knelt down, he was disturbed by the children in the living room. "Have the children keep quiet!" he shouted. His startled wife obeyed. Thereafter, whenever the minister came home, they all maintained silence during prayers. But he realized that God was no longer listening. One night, during his prayers, he asked the Lord: "What is going on? I have the necessary peace, and I cannot pray!" An angel replied: "God hears words, but no longer hears the laughter. God notices the devotion, but can no longer see the joy." The priest stood and shouted once again to his wife: "Have the children play! They are part of prayer!" And his words were heard by God once again.

This story reminded me that God is wants to hear our joy, our laughter, and our fun! In our prayers and worship, there are times for sitting in solemnity, awe, silence, candlelight and contemplation. There are also times for bright lights, laughter, joy, movement and fun. Our rituals of prayer and worship, of gathering each week together, become more meaningful when we think about what is important in them to us. Worship is about expressing our deepest emotions, our most important dreams, our fondest memories; sharing them with God in the company of friends and family.

Some churches (the people), have "high church" worship: standard, elaborate rituals and traditions in ornate buildings. Others might appear to be "low church" with few obvious rituals and buildings of simple design. Yet all churches have rituals - ways to create a sacred space and time. Sometimes we become unaware of them, take them for granted, or forget they are only one part of the church as the people of God.

A pastor told me about his experience with worship at a new church. He asked the music director what the church did for Advent. The music director told him that they changed "everything" in worship. Excited about presenting something new for the church to experience, the pastor set about designing a whole Advent season of worship that was very different.

After the first Sunday he had a crowd of totally irate people in his office - how dare he change the worship?! He then found out: when the music director said "everything" what he meant was the music!

(Continued on next page)

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Undaunted, the pastor reassured the vocal crowd that, after the four Sundays of Advent, everything would return to "normal." Later in January, some folks who were much less assertive just happened to mention that they had really enjoyed the changes in Advent. They wondered if he would be doing anything like that again. With that encouragement, the pastor announced he was starting a worship committee. The committee would help design Lenten worship that would be a little different, to encourage engaging with the spirit of the season. Lent was wonderful and this time there was no angry crowd!

There are many lessons from this story, a few being: different perspectives, participation, communication, openness, and patience. And, ten years later, that church still changes their worship style each season. The people who like one style are satisfied for a time. The ones who do not like that style understand that while it may not be their cup of tea, they know and care about someone in the congregation for whom it is! Besides, it is only for a season.

Most important, they have learned that in giving up something for others, some sacrifices are worth it. Because they have grown in graciousness toward each other in worship, many other areas of church life such as education and mission have blossomed and grown. In addition, they received another amazing blessing: from less than two hundred souls, the church is now 10,000 members strong.

As we worship together I encourage you to

think about what it is that makes space and time sacred to you. Then share it with each other, with me, and especially with the members of Koinonia 3-Care for our Worship. Know that what feels worshipful, what helps you feel the presence of God, is important- to you, to others, and to your whole church family. We all want you to feel welcomed and at home. Then, listen to others who attend here, but neighbors, family and friends, too. What might draw them to worship, and what might you be willing to sacrifice or try, for a season, so that others may feel welcomed and at home too?

WORSHIP EVENTS

All Saints Day Celebration – Sunday, November 1, 2009, 10:00 a.m. We will remember and celebrate the lives of friends and family who have joined the ranks of the saints and are the angels who watch over us. Please call the office by October 30th if you have a saint you would like to remember.

SANCTUARY ADVENT DECORATION

Start the season off right, preparing our sanctuary for our celebration of coming of the Light! We will begin decorating at 6:00 p.m. and follow up with dinner together afterwards. Come deck the halls!

FLY ME TO THE MOON

Hillcrest is throwing a bash! "*Fly Me to the Moon*," an evening of dining, dancing, and other amusements, on Saturday, November, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. The music will be Sinatra, Bennett, Como, Crosby and other cool cats of the 1950's. There will be a silent auction offering everything from antiques to weekend getaways and other booths boasting fun and fortune. Tickets are \$20.00.

SILENT AUCTION

Do you have a beautiful tea set you haven't used in years? Why not offer a tea party as a donation to the silent auction? How about season tickets to the Angels or the Hollywood Bowl? Could you spare a few to give for a good cause? Are you a good baker or a good cook? Do you know a lot about wines or computers or photography? How about giving the gift of yourself as a picture taker, a chef or a baker of a dozen cookies joyfully wrapped. We need your help with donations to the Silent Auction. Last year we raised more than \$2,000 through the auction and we hope to top it this year. Let *Sally* know, (562) 902-6539, if you have an item or an idea.

YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES

November is almost here and the Youth Group has a busy month planned. On November 1st, we're off to pick apples up in Oak Glen. Then the kids will be making kaleidoscopes on the 8th. Next comes trying swing dancing on the 15th and the Youth Group will end the month by going indoor sky diving on November 22nd.

GIVING AND RECEIVING THANKS

Thank you to the many people who have signed on to be greeters and lay leaders this year. We have only a few spots left. Hurry to get your name on the '09 list! I am so grateful for all of you. Call *Beverly*, (562) 693-0453, or *Howard*, (562) 947-3755, to get your name on the list!

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference center, I want to thank you for your thoughtful donation of \$58.00. Your considerate offering is very much appreciated. Pilgrim Pines Camp is grateful for your support, as it helps the camp to provide a safe haven where people can follow their spiritual path in order to discover and discern God.

With blessings from the mountain,
June Boutwell, Executive Director

WACA THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The Whittier Area Clergy Association Thanksgiving Service will be Sunday, November 22nd at 5:30 p.m. Come and give thanks! This worship gathering will allow us to celebrate with people from the many different faith traditions in our community. In addition, member of our choir will join with the voices of other choirs in a musical display of human harmony. The celebration will be at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints located at 15265 Mulberry Drive in Whittier, 90604.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY!

As part of an exploration and celebration of our community, you are invited to consider these questions. Please return the filled out inquiry to the church office as soon as possible. No name is necessary!

1. What memory of Hillcrest brings you the most joy?

2. What time or activities/events have made you feel the most accepted/motivated to participate/be involved in the community here?

3. When do you feel we are most a community?

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.

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.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RUN A CHURCH?

The answer to this question last month was: "One thing that is necessary is a budget, consisting of both planned expenses and income." One of the expenses is ongoing operations and day-to-day maintenance. But there is long-term maintenance as well. Just like your house – God's house needs things like painting, roof repairs, driveway patching, heater replacement and on and on. Just like your house, these things need to be planned, saved for, and paid for over several years. It seems just as you get one thing fixed, the next thing needs replaced right?! So what jobs are in store for God's house here at Hillcrest? And just how do we go about completing these jobs?

The good news is that we have a wonderful group of people in the Koinonia 2 – Care for Our Legacy, that stays on top of the list of these projects. More good news is that we completed replacement of the carpeting last year, and have

some resources from the McCabe Foundation for heating repairs. The other (not so good) news is that there will never be an end to these projects or the need for more money to get them done. Here is a sample List; Replace heaters in church school, school and fellowship hall buildings, paint the outside of sanctuary, replace/repair office air conditioning, repair bell tower bell mechanisms, remove ficus trees along West Road, asphalt lower parking lots, kitchen repairs and maintenance.

So how do we go about taking care of these projects? First the K2 group regularly reviews the condition of all of our property and works to stay on top of all the building code and health and safety requirements – a big job! Second, the group asks for input from other groups to make sure they have not missed anything, and they keep on top of special projects such as preparations for the 50th Art Festival! Third, they work on determining exactly what needs done – repair, replacement or upgrade, as well as new building and health and safety code requirements. Fourth, they get expert advice and estimates on how things should be done – to save money, to reduce inconvenience, to maximize efficiency, to ensure the projects are done well, thoroughly, and will last. Fifth, they present the project to the church council and congregation. Six, finally, the congregation considers how the projects can be funded and scheduled. (Are there grants we can apply for? Can the projects be spread out in the operating budget over several years? Do we need to do a capital campaign to raise funds?)

K2 is currently in the process of developing a list of projects for the future (step four above). They are a hard working group of people who keep track of the ongoing needs of our facilities. They look to the future for projects to ensure our health and safety and the beauty of our campus. When you get the chance, please thank them for their dedication.

EASTERN ASSOCIATION MEETING!

Las Vegas anyone? *Pastor Loletta* is looking for adventurers to join her on a road trip to Las Vegas! The Eastern Association will hold its fall meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2009, from 9:00 – 12:00. We need two delegates, but more are invited to go!

WILL YOU JOIN THE TEAM?

What a team it takes to run the worship committee! Thank you to all who have participated. The new "team" officially takes over on February 1, 2010. Who would like to join Koinonia 3 to help with worship life? We have just a skeleton crew on the K3 committee and more would be better. This is your official invitation. There are so many who are helping with other duties. Please let *Beverly Ball* know if you would like to continue at the Welcome Table, communion, altar flowers, hospitality, users, greeters, lay leader, etc. A chairman for each of these categories would be most welcome! As you know *Bob Casjens* has coordinated hospitality and communion for the last 2 years, while *Beverly* has been pleading for acolytes, greeters and lay leaders. We'd love to share . . . it is fun and a great way to get to know the congregation.

ADVENT WORSHIP

Advent includes four Sundays and begins on November 29th through December 20th. We invite your family to volunteer to join in the traditional celebration by reading the Advent devotions and lighting the Advent candles. Please contact *Beverly Ball*, (562) 693-0453 or *Pastor Loletta*, (562) 947-3755 if you would like to participate.

MESSAGE FROM KOINONIA #4

Hillcrest Church is proud to host another Heifer International Project on Sunday, November 8th. You will have the opportunity to choose a meaningful gift to give a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animal gifts that help them become self-reliant. Heifer's mission is to end hunger and poverty while caring for the earth. For more than 60 years, Heifer International has provided livestock and environmentally sound agricultural training to improve the lives of those who struggle daily for reliable sources of food

and income. Since 1944, they have helped 48 million people! Every gift of an animal provides direct benefits such as milk, eggs, wool, fertilizer, as well as indirect benefits that increase family incomes for better housing, nutrition, health care and school fees for children. Recipients "pass on the gift" of offspring of their livestock to others in an ever-widening circle of help. Heifer currently works in more than 57 countries, including the U.S. Please join us on November 8th – we'll have some live animals to entertain you while you donate to this very worthy cause!

HILLCREST COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

We are happy that the preschool children began attending chapel on October 21 & 22. *Pastor Loletta* led this program with the children. We are looking forward to our times with her! Thank you *Pastor Loletta*

The annual preschool Halloween parade will be held on Thursday, October 29th and Friday, October 30th. It will be held on the front play ground promptly at 9:15 a.m. Come and join us for the fun!

Our School Age Program is now picking up morning kindergarteners at Ocean View. If you know anyone that's interested, have them call *Dani* at (562) 943-8332.

Love, *Joan & Dani*

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We have had another exciting month filled with learning and fun! The children are off to a great start learning their bible verses and the Lord's Prayer. We have had a very successful movie night (drive-in style) in the upper parking lot showing "*Monster vs. Aliens*" and look forward to another one in the very near future.

RANGERS

Rangers are winding up the end of their first season, which as more successful than we could have hoped for. They look forward to the start of their new season in January, so keep your eyes open!

FLOWERS

Poinsettias are coming . . . poinsettias are coming! Christmas is fast approaching, so we have already started taking poinsettia orders. Please contact *Pat Nommay* at (562) 943 -8663 for all your flower needs. We also have a change in our florist; *Mary* from *Mary's Plants and Things* is back and feeling great! We look forward to working with her again.

THE HILLCREST BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the Hillcrest Book Club is Thursday, November 19, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. We have an informal discussion of recent fiction and non-fiction books, but occasionally they do an older classic. Newcomers are always very welcome. The book chosen for November is "*The River of Doubt*" by *Candice Millard*. A national bestseller about Theodore Roosevelt's darkest journey. *Candice Millard* examines just one fascinating year in Roosevelt's life. After a painful loss running as an independent for a third presidential term in 1912, TR needed something dynamic to keep his mind occupied. He decided to take on an ambitious South American tour. The destination? "The River of Doubt," a 600-mile long waterway in the heart of the Amazon only recently discovered, completely uncharted. The river turned out to be full of rapids, waterfalls, cannibalistic Indians and malaria not to mention starvation.

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 \$96, at least for the last one we got.

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF LIFE

We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors....but they all exist very nicely in the same box.

I. List three of four problem area confronting our community that you feel our churchy should address.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

11. Identify the most challenging faith experience or event in the life of our church in the last three years and what you believe we learned from that experience:

II. Identify major trends you envision in our church in the next five years:

12. Describe the strengths or positive qualities of our church:

III. Identify the three most important faith experiences or events in the history of our church:

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

Describe the style and content of preaching which you value:

STATER BROS. HOMETOWN/GIFT CARDS

It's once again time to start thinking about the extra groceries we'll be purchasing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Why not think about shopping at Stater Bros. this year and purchasing their Hometown/Gift Cards on the patio following worship on Sunday mornings.

Hillcrest has been selling Stater Bros. gift cards for many years. Sales through September totaled \$17,220 with Hillcrest realizing a profit of \$1,033.20. We've already exceeded our sales for 2008, which totaled \$17,030 and we still have more than two months remaining in the year. We've acquired several new Stater Bros. supporters this year. Way to go Hillcrest.

We're always looking for new Stater Bros. customers who want to support **Team Hillcrest**. Just purchase the cards on Sunday mornings. It won't be any additional expense to you, although you might have to drive a little further to the grocery store. Many of Stater Bros. prices are less expensive than their competitors.

You might be wondering what to give those individuals who provide services to you throughout the year as a Christmas gift. Those individuals include your hair stylist, barber, babysitter, house cleaner, newspaper delivery person, gardener, teacher, etc. One suggestion is to purchase the Stater Bros. cards at Hillcrest on Sunday mornings. You can even use the cards to purchase postage stamps.

The gift cards are available in \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100 denominations. Hillcrest makes **six (6) percent** on Stater Bros. gift card sales.

In reviewing eScrip (Von's program) sales records through August this year, sales amounted to \$42,037.36. Hillcrest only received \$342.72 or 0.8 percent on the sales. If we had purchased that amount at Stater Bros., we would have made \$2,522.24.

If you have any questions, contact *Gloria Karam* at (7145) 992-1473. Thank you for your support

SEARCH COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRES

The Search Committee has had two meetings. The Conference Minister attended the first meeting. The Search Committee members want and need your input so that we can develop the new Church Profile. It is not necessary to put your name on the questionnaires. Please complete the "Family Questionnaire" (one per family unit) and the "Leadership Expectations: Called Pastor" (one for each adult or youth) questionnaires that are located in the Hi-Lites. Additional copies of each questionnaire are available in the narthex. Please return completed questionnaires to the box in the narthex or mail them to the church to arrive **no later than November 10, 2009**. Thank you for your active participation in this process. The questionnaires are on the next three pages once the calendar page is removed.

**LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS:
CALLED PASTOR**

**COMPLETE ONE PER EACH
ADULT/YOUTH**

Please take a moment to respond to the following.

Leader Expectations (Question #32 in the Local Church Profile): Read through the list below and **mark only 12** of the items that you think are the most important qualities for our settled minister. If you do not see one you would like included, write it in at the end.

Our church needs a person who . . .

1. _____ is an effective preacher/speaker
24. _____ regularly encourages support of Our Church's Wider Mission
2. _____ continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills
25. _____ reaches out to inactive members
3. _____ Help people develop their development
26. _____ works regularly in the spiritual life of stewardship growth
4. _____ Helps people work together in relationships
27. _____ is active in ecumenical solving problems and encourages the church to
5. _____ is effective in planning and leading
28. _____ participate worship is a person of faith
6. _____ has a sense of the direction of
29. _____ writes clearly and well his/her ministry
30. _____ works well on a team
7. _____ regularly encourages people to
31. _____ is effective in working with youth
32. _____ participate in United Church of action organizes people for community
33. _____ Christ activities and programs is skilled in planning and

8. _____ helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice
34. _____ plans and leads well organized meetings is a helpful counselor
9. _____ is a helpful counselor
10. _____ ministers effectively to people in faith encourages people to relate their crisis situations to their daily lives
11. _____ makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and views
36. _____ is accepting of people with divergent hospitals and nursing homes and views
37. _____ those confined to their homes encourages others to assume and carry out leadership
12. _____ makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes
38. _____ is mature and emotionally secure
13. _____ is a good leader
39. _____ has strong commitment and loyalty
14. _____ is effective in working with children
40. _____ maintains confidentially
15. _____ builds a sense of fellowship among
41. _____ understands and interprets the mission
42. _____ helps people develop their leadership
43. _____ abilities deals effectively with conflict
17. _____ is an effective administrator
18. _____ is effective with committees and
44. _____
19. _____ is an effective teacher
45. _____
20. _____ has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church
- If there are other comments you wish to make about
21. _____ is effective in working with adults expectations, include one or more paragraphs on a
22. _____ inspires a sense of confidence separate sheet of paper.

23. _____ works regularly at bringing new members into the church

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

COMPLETE ONE QUESTIONNAIRE PER FAMILY UNIT

Please take a moment to respond to the following confidential questions. Responses will help the Pastoral Search committee create a Local church Profile for our church. You may view the complete document on the national web site, www.ucc.org. This profile will be used to describe our church to potential pastors.

PROFILE OF CONGREGATION:

1. Age: list the total number of members in each age group that are in your household including yourself:
 _____ 0-5 years _____ 19-34 years _____ 50-64 years _____ 75 years
 or older
 _____ 6-18 years _____ 35-49 years _____ 65-74 years
2. Education of adults in your household, list all adult members in your household including yourself:
 _____ Did not complete high school _____ Some college/vocational
 _____ Graduate school
 _____ High school graduate _____ College graduate
3. Family units, check one:
 _____ Couple with children at home _____ Single
 _____ Couple without children at home _____ Single parent with children at home
4. What is the occupation of each adult in your household:
 _____ Business _____ Farmer/rancher _____ Professional _____ Tradesperson
 _____ Clerical _____ Laborer/Manufacturing _____ Student _____ Other
5. What is the current employment information of each adult in your household.
 _____ Employed _____ Not currently employed _____ Retired

PLEASE RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS YOU WISH

6. Describe three distinctive attributes of our community:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

c.

7. Identify major trends you envision in our community during the next five years:

a.

b.

c.
