

The Parish Caller

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

December 11, 2015

First Congregational
Church, United
Church of Christ,
Prescott



FEATURED THIS ISSUE

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This Week at a Glance...

- ◆ **Acker Night** Friday 5:30 pm
- ◆ **Exploring Faith** Sunday Discussion Group 9 am
- ◆ **Choir Practice** Sunday 9 am
- ◆ **Exploring Faith** Monday Night Discussion Group ON HOLD TILL JANUARY
- ◆ **Outreach Meeting** Tuesday 10 am
- ◆ **Knit Wits** Tuesday 1-3 pm
- ◆ **Special Choir Practice** Wednesday 5:30 pm
- ◆ **PASS** Wednesday 5 pm
- ◆ **Las Fuentes** Thursday 10 am
- ◆ **Bell Choir** Thursday 11 am
- ◆ **Cabinet Meeting** Thursday 6:30 pm

ACKER NIGHT IS TONIGHT!!

December 11 5:30-8:30 pm

Tonight is a big night at the Church where this year our church is hosting musical performances by "The Prescott Opry" and the Girl Scouts in the Acker Night "Tips for Scholarships" event. Many of you have volunteered to help us this night, thank you! Please let Julie in the office know if you would like to help us out, 928-445-4555.

From the Pastor

A Merry Christmas to all of you! We celebrate the Prince of Peace as violence seems to be in the news each day. I just returned (Wednesday 1:15pm) from participating in a brief service at the corner of Summit and Beach Streets as we remembered the life of David Rodrigues, the man murdered by three homeless men as they spent the night in his backyard. All had participated in our "Operation Deep Freeze," an effort by churches, organizations, and individuals to provide housing for the homeless on cold nights. We mourned his loss and the senseless violence that grips our world.



From the Pastor Continued

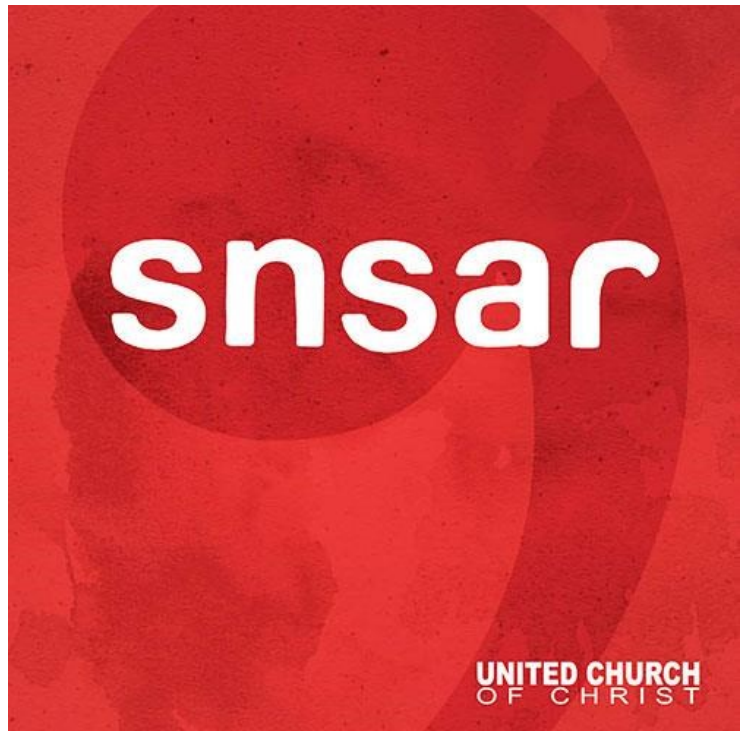
On a more cheerful note, we are preparing for Acker Night this Friday. We will host The Prescott Opry and the Girl Scouts. Both groups should bring many visitors our way and show off our beautifully decorated Christmas sanctuary. The best in town, if you ask me!

The Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7 pm will be a service of lessons and carols. If you would like to take part and do one of the readings, please let me know.

I look forward to seeing you in church Sunday. As we say: "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!" Believers, unbelievers, doubters, Muslims, Jews - we are all God's children gathered for worship!

In this crazy season of fear and exclusion, I am happy to be part of a church that has a different perspective to offer our country.

The UCC looks at religion a little differently. We spin it around and turn it upside down. Are you ready to look at faith with a fresh perspective?



Operation Deep Freeze Winter 2015- 2016

Operation Deep Freeze Winter 2015/2016

Operation Deep Freeze will operate again this winter in Prescott as an emergency winter shelter for men who are homeless in the Prescott and quad-city area, thanks to the work and donations of many. Last year, the FCC acted as a funding collection agent for the Quad-City Interfaith Council where thousands of dollars were collected. We also provided meals and staff for a few selected dates thanks to the donations of our congregation.



This year, we are scheduled to help again Several nights in December and January. See the sign-up sheet in Perkins Hall.

How does Operation Deep Freeze work?

- On the nights the temperature dips down to 25 degrees or less, 30 degrees or less when it is wet outside or any night when there is two or more inches of snow on the ground, the shelter is open
- Meals will be needed for every night the week of December 27 through January 2
- Provide a meal and shelter for 20+ homeless men
- 3-5 volunteers needed to prep and serve

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| Operation Deep Freeze Continued from Page 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in with the Salvation Army by 1:00 pm on our selected dates to make sure the shelter will open that evening• Purchase commercially made food from places such as Costco/Sam’s Club (any food made off-site is not permitted)• Bring food to or begin preparing dinner at the Salvation Army as early as 5:30 pm on these nights• Dinner is served at 7:00 pm <p>A sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall. The church has funds to purchase food.</p> |
| Holiday Schedule | Holiday Schedule |
| Christmas Family Dinner | <i>Christmas Family Dinner December 20 after Worship Service</i> You won’t want to miss this Christmas Family Dinner! Bring a festive dish or dessert to share! This is your chance to get decked out and wear your favorite Christmas sweater or holiday outfit! Sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall! |
| Christmas Eve Service | <i>Christmas Eve Service December 24 7 pm</i> We will be having a Christmas Eve candlelight service here at the church at 7 pm! This service is well attended by our local community. |
| Receiving New Members | <i>Receiving New Members Soon!</i> We will be receiving new members soon, if you are interested in becoming a member of the First Congregational Church, let Pastor Jay know. |
| Men’s Fellowship | <i>Men’s Fellowship Gathering January 8</i> There will be a men’s fellowship night on Friday the 8th of January. More information to come! |
| December Outreach Ministry | <i>December Outreach Ministry</i> During the month of December we will be taking a collection for the Southwest Conference Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund provides for retired and active clergy and lay workers of the church who are in financial need. One of the United Church of Christ’s four Special Mission Offerings, the Christmas Fund provides supplements to small pensions, assistance with retirees' health insurance premiums, grants in emergencies, and “thank you” checks to remind retirees that they continue to be remembered and held with affection by their wider church family. We will be joining congregations of the UCC across the country as we receive the Christmas Fund Offering during worship on Christmas Sunday, December 20. Please share generously on behalf of all those who have given of themselves in service to the church! |
| Prescott Food Pantry Collection | <i>December Outreach Prescott Food Pantry Collection</i> Baskets are available at each entryway of the church for your food donations. Thank you! |
| From the UCC: Christmas Fund | From the UCC: Christmas Fund <p>For the Rev. Chuck Yoak, the help he receives from the UCC Christmas Fund is “nothing short of a lifesaver.”</p> <p>Yoak, 77, began his ministry at 18, serving small churches that did not contribute to the UCC Annuity Plan. At one point, despite coming out of retirement to work again, his monthly bills exceeded his income by \$900. Today, thanks to the UCC Christmas Fund, Yoak receives a monthly grant to supplement his pension, plus a Christmas gift check.</p> <p>He also received an emergency grant for fuel and medical expenses after he needed hip replacement surgery in 2014.</p> <p>“Every Christmas Eve in churches I served we took the offering,” said Yoak. “I never</p> |

**From the UCC:
Christmas Fund
continued**

dreamed that someday I would benefit from it.”

Since 1902, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and Emergency Fund — today one of four UCC Special Mission Offerings — has provided assistance to clergy and lay employees who, after years of service to others, now find themselves facing unexpected needs. In addition to pension supplementation, Christmas “thank you” gift checks and emergency grants, the Pension Boards-administered program also grants quarterly health premium supplementation to individuals and families in need.

“The theme of the 2015 Christmas Fund Offering is ‘Love Shines Through,’ with a giving goal of \$1.7 million,” said Brian R. Bodager, president and CEO of The Pension Boards–United Church of Christ. “In the spirit of love, I invite and encourage you to prayerfully consider and support this year’s appeal, and to spread the word so that others will join in this essential ministry.”

In 2014, more than \$1.4 million was provided in pension supplementation, almost \$496,000 in health premium supplementation, \$203,000 in “thank you” gift checks, and about \$91,000 in emergency grants.

The Rev. Charles Busch found his call to ministry in rural parish work. The founder of the [Peace Village](#) program that teaches nonviolence to children, Busch retired after a long career in small-church ministry in order to spend more time with his family, who had challenging health and disability needs. He found retirement to be financially difficult, but is managing today thanks to annual Christmas “thank you” gift checks.

“I remember taking the Christmas Fund Offering each year in my churches, and now I am the recipient of that heartfelt gift,” Busch said. “The dollars matter, but even more, it is the impact of being remembered by my wider church family.”

That feeling of being part of the wider church family led Lydia Morrow, widow of the Rev. John W. Morrow, to establish the John and Lydia Morrow Fund, a charitable gift annuity for supporting widows and clergy families. “As I have been blessed, I hope the income from this fund will be a blessing to the many faithful servants in the United Church of Christ,” said Morrow, “especially widows and clergy families.”

Indeed, the Christmas Fund’s most valuable asset may be renewed faith. Today, the Rev. Chuck Yoak belongs to Amery (Wis.) Congregational UCC. “I’ve been so terribly grateful for all the Pension Boards has done for me,” he said. “The assistance programs give real hope to people like me who may have given up hope at some point.”

Ongoing & Weekly Events

CHOIR PRACTICE meets
Sundays at 9 am in the
Sanctuary. See Jane Osborn if
you would like to join the choir!
BELL CHOIR PRACTICE at 11 am
on Thursdays

KNIT WITS meets
the 1st & 3rd
Tuesdays of every
month from 1-3
pm in the Office
Conference Room.

LAS FUENTES
1035 Scott Dr., Prescott
SPIRITUAL LIVING Class is
held the 3rd Thursday of
every month at 10 am, led
by Called to Care Ministry.
~And~
Worship Service is also held
the 2nd Sunday of every
month at 3 pm, led by
Pastor Jay.

**Living the Questions
Study Group**
Sunday Mornings at 9
am in the Church
Library starting on
November 8
~And~
Monday Evening
Discussion Group ON
HOLD TILL JANUARY

**First Congregational Church,
UCC**
216 E. Gurley Street
Prescott, AZ 86301
928-445-4555
fccprescott@gmail.com
Administration Office Hours
Mondays: 9:00 - 4:00
Tuesday - Friday: 9:00 - 1:00
Pastor Jay
Monday - Thursday
9:00 - 1:00
Other times by appointment
Cell: 928-899-9066
jayfccprescott@gmail.com

**PFLAG SUPPORT
GROUP** meets the 3rd
Friday of every month
at 6:30 pm in the
Church Library. See
Julie J. for more details.

**Funky Friday
Game Night**
Hosted by PFLAG
Everyone
Welcome! 7-9 pm
1st Friday of
every Month
starting in
November

CABINET MEETING
meets the 4th
Thursday of every
month at 6:30 pm in
the Office
Conference Room.

CALLED TO CARE MINISTRY meets
the 4th Tuesday of every month
from 2-4 pm in the Office
Conference Room. If you are
interested in being part of this
ministry, see Marilyn Kerstine.

PASS MEAL is a once-a-month ministry
where we provide a meal for the
Prescott Area Shelter Services the 3rd
Wednesday of every month at 5:30
pm. Sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall.