

The Parish Caller

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

December 4, 2015

First Congregational
Church, United
Church of Christ,
Prescott



FEATURED THIS ISSUE

PAGE ONE:

- ◆ This week at a glance
- ◆ From the Pastor

PAGE TWO:

- ◆ From the Pastor continued
- ◆ Holiday Schedule

PAGE THREE:

- ◆ Holiday Schedule continued
- ◆ Still Speaking Campaign

PAGE FOUR:

- ◆ Still Speaking continued

This Week at a Glance...

- ◆ **Funky Friday Game Night** Tonight 7 pm
- ◆ **Exploring Faith** Sunday Discussion Group 9 am
- ◆ **Choir Practice** Sunday 9 am
- ◆ **Pastor's Office Open House** Sunday following Worship Service
- ◆ **Lil Jorgenson Memorial** Monday 11 am
- ◆ **Exploring Faith** Monday Night Discussion Group 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Agape Soup** Wednesday 5:30 pm
- ◆ **Washington School Volunteer Orientation** Thursday 10 am
- ◆ **NO BELL CHOIR THIS WEEK**
- ◆ **Acker Night** Next Friday 5:30 pm

From the Pastor

My thanks to Rev. Marti Garrison, Julie, Rene, and Xanthi for leading the World Aids Day service this past Tuesday night. Members of the community attended to remember a loved one or express grief in the midst of the "happy holidays." It was an important gift we provided to the community.

I invite you to an open house at the pastor's office this Sunday after church.

Stop by the green house on Gurley next to the church for a moment after worship to view the new look of the pastor's office. Some of you may not have seen the house to this point. We are blessed to have this historical home for offices and a conference room.

The office renovation has some lessons to teach us about being open to adaptive change. This type of change is what many suggest is needed in our day. The church is not what it used to be, and it is not going to return to the glory days of the 1950's when we opened the doors and people flooded in. No one is sure where we are headed, and no magic bullet exists to turn things around. Technical solutions (operations, strategies, structures) that try to tweak the current situation and turn the church around produce minor results. Adaptive change requires new learning, new attitudes, risk, failure, and courage. It requires us to have shared vision and values. And the toughest part, it probably requires us to experience loss.

So, the office renovation started with a vision of what could be; risk was taken — to remove the carpet without knowing the condition of the wood floor – to hang grass-cloth wallpaper with no previous experience; a lot of work was involved to move from the status quo; and I had to live with two months of chaos waiting for it all to be done. As they say, change is not easy, but as I sit in the office and look around, it has been worth all the effort.

I invite you to a volunteer orientation for Washington School Thursday at 10 am in Perkins Hall.

We have "adopted" Washington School next door and will be hosting an orientation with the volunteer coordinator of the school system which and who will be here to show us how to get involved. She will also do fingerprints at that time as well. We are a small church and cannot do everything, so we have to pick our mission projects that fit with our resources. I think it makes sense to adopt our neighbor school and do what we can to be a blessing to them.

Continued on page 2

From Pastor Jay continued

Finally, our national denomination, The United Church of Christ, has launched an ad campaign – Stillspeaking 2.0 – that provides social media post cards for us to use. You may view them all at our Facebook page. We will be using them to promote our church as we have opportunity. I have included one here.

Merry Christmas –Pastor Jay



And hijacked his universal message of love and acceptance.
Won't you help us get it back?

Holiday Schedule

Holiday Schedule

Pastor's Office Open House

Pastor Jay's Office Open House

You are invited to see the renovated Pastor's office in the Church Office, the green house next door after worship today.

Christmas Outreach Thank You!

Christmas Outreach Gift Collections for Coalition for Compassion & Justice
Thank you to everyone that contributed generously this year to CCJ's Family Christmas! Your gifts and donations have been delivered! —Outreach Committee

December Outreach

December Outreach Ministry

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!

December Prescott Food Pantry Donations

December Outreach Prescott Food Pantry Collection

Baskets are available at each entryway of the church for your food donations. Thank you!

Lil Jorgenson's Memorial Service

Lil Jorgenson Memorial Service December 7 11 am

A Thanksgiving for the Life of Lillian Jorgenson will be at 11 am on Dec. 7, at our church, with a luncheon to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Yavapai College Foundation, 1100 E. Sheldon St., Prescott, AZ 86301 for The Lillian M. Jorgenson Nursing Scholarship.

Agape Soup

Agape Soup December 9 5:30 pm

Agape Soup Supper is back! Join us for soup and fellowship December 9 at 5:30 pm. Sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall.

Acker Night

Acker Night December 11 5:30-8:30 pm

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!

Continued on page 3

Acker Night continued
Christmas Family Dinner
Christmas Eve Service

We need a few more volunteers to act as hosts and helpers. Sign-up sheet for hosts and cookie donations is in Perkins Hall or please let Julie in the office know if you would like to help us out 928-445-4555.

Christmas Family Dinner December 20 after Worship Service

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 December 24 7 pm

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.

The Rev. Dr. William M. Lyons is our Designated Conference Minister

Dear Colleagues and Churches of the SWC,

It is with a great deal of enthusiasm that I inform you that the SWC Executive Board has unanimously called the Rev. Dr. William M. Lyons as our Designated Conference Minister. Dr. Lyons is scheduled to be in place to begin his ministry with us on January 1, 2016.

Bill, his preferred name, comes to us with 30 years of pastoral experience. He is currently the pastor of St. John's U.C.C. in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served for the past 11 years. He was ordained in the U.C.C. on October 13, 1985. A more extensive bio will be in tomorrow's *In the Loop* newsletter.

While he will officially be on board in January, Bill will be present in the SWC for two significant meetings. It is my hope that his presence at these two pivotal meetings will encourage the attendance of those eligible.

I would be remiss not to thank both the Search Committee and the Executive Board for their intense and diligent work during this search process. Special thanks is extended to Dana Bender, the Chair of the Search Committee; to Holly Herman, the SWC Office Manager; and to the Rev. Dr. Lee Albertson, the SWC Acting Conference Minister.

I also want to thank each of you in advance for your continued support for our Southwest Conference and the United Church of Christ. As we step into the future, let us do so in the belief that God is already there waiting to greet us in Jesus' Name.

Shalom, George A. Ault SWC Moderator



God is Still Speaking Identity Campaign

By: Connie Larkman

God is Still Speaking, the identity campaign that branded the United Church of Christ in a distinctive way and helped define its progressive voice in the faith community, is getting an upgrade/refresh in 2016. In fact, the UCC launched the pilot phase of Still Speaking 2.0 on December 1 in anticipation of a full rollout after the first of the year.

"We are asking what the new edge is for the United Church of Christ," said the Rev. John C. Dorhauer, UCC general minister and president. "It is clear that the brand still works, but we are all using the same language that we have used for ten years. In addition, the edge ten years ago was clearly built around commitments to ONA and marriage equality." But since the world has changed and marriage equality is the law of the land, Dorhauer says the UCC is working to identify what now sets it apart. "So, what's our new edge? What will new commitments call us to? What does a refreshing of the brand identity of being a Stillspeaking church look like in 2016? That is what we are testing."

The test involves a media toolkit for churches, created in partnership with the 31 Lengths advertising firm, owned and operated by Michael Jordan, the same marketing executive who helped develop the original Stillspeaking campaign. This project, Still Speaking 2.0, is being tried out in seven UCC Conferences — each

**Here's A
Revelation:
God didn't end
in Revelation.**

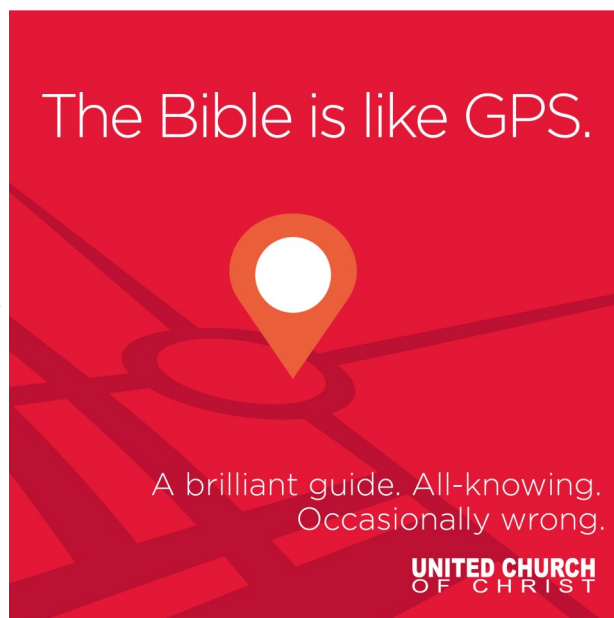
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

of which agreed to help fund the initiative.

“We needed a refresh!” said the Rev. Michael Denton, conference minister of the Pacific Northwest Conference, one of the groups involved in the pilot. “The ongoing identity pieces have been great but the timing is right for a large, denomination-wide identity campaign again.”

The Rev. John Deckenback, conference minister of the Central Atlantic Conference, is looking forward to seeing this one unfold. He pointed out that the original identity campaign, which had origins in the Central Atlantic Conference, still resonates across the denomination, and that he believes this one will, too. “I still wear my Stillspeaking comma and the distinctive red/black banners adorn many of our churches,” he said. “I like [the toolkit’s] flexibility and that it intentionally seeks collaboration from local churches.”

While the first Stillspeaking campaign centered around national advertising, banners, billboards and TV commercials, the 2.0 version will rely on partnerships with those local UCC churches for its success. The seven conferences — Central Atlantic, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pacific Northwest, and Southwest — and their congregations are already using the first 16 social media graphics, or postcards, created to share on social media outlets and on websites. Users can gauge the interest in the messages, and provide feedback on how the messages are being received and shared.



“The toolkit is a smart idea,” said Denton. “The last campaign’s focus on more traditional media was important, but we were on the cutting edge of viral campaigns then. It makes all the sense in the world that we solely focus on inviting our churches and church members to participate in this campaign as promoters of these materials.”

“I’m thrilled to see it,” said the Rev. Shari Prestemon, conference minister of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, another pilot participant. “The Stillspeaking campaign ten years ago infused the United Church of Christ at every level with fresh life and enthusiasm, and I expect this will have a similar effect. It gives us a way to lift up and celebrate our unique voice and embrace our identity as a Stillspeaking Church.”

The images, which help brand the UCC as a place of extravagant welcome, will also deal with new themes identified by key leaders of the denomination — issues that could be new edges, like climate change, immigration or interfaith religion. “The postcards are witty, clever, cheeky, sometimes a bit edgy,” said Dorhauer. “The idea is to have fun, to be playful, and to utilize both the partnerships we have and value with our local churches AND the access we all have with social media to tell the world who we are.”

“I got a good chuckle out of several of the postcards and tried to imagine how creative folks will utilize them, said Deckenback. “I suspect they will be around for quite a while, just like the banners.”

“Not all of them will resonate with everyone, and I expect reactions will be diverse,” said Prestemon. “But they will create conversation.”

Denton thinks so, too. “This campaign welcomes a conversation,” he said. “It’s sometimes hard for UCC folks to talk about their faith in a world where religious extremism and religiously justified bigotry grab so many headlines. This campaign gives us the opportunity to have a Good News conversation deeply rooted in the radical love of a liberating Christ.”

The United Church of Christ has ordered six social media toolkits, which will be delivered every two months to local congregations through their Conference offices throughout 2016.

“It gives our congregations options,” said Prestemon. “They have choices about which images and messages they utilize and how they do that. And the fact that every congregation has direct access to the toolkit is wonderful!”

“What I most love about this method is that it gives every single member of the United Church of Christ agency,” said Dorhauer. “We are not doing this to or for our members — we are doing it with and through them. They don’t just get to stand on the sidelines and watch this unfold — they get to do act, and react, as their viewing audiences weigh in on and respond to their posts.”

“It offers a way for all of us to claim who we are as a progressive denomination,” Prestemon said, “and invites others to consider that we might be just the kind of church they’re looking for.”