



The Parish Caller

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Prescott Established 1880

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

December 23, 2016



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This Week at a Glance...

- ♦ **Christmas Eve Carol Sing and Candle Light Service:**
Saturday 4 and 7
- ♦ **Choir Rehearsal:** Sunday 9:00 am
- ♦ **Christmas Day Worship Service and Fellowship time:**
Sunday 10:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR

While on vacation last week, I found the perfect winery at which to take a picture. No great new epiphanies occurred on the trip, but a profound gratitude for the mysterious workings of God that brought me to First Congregational Church in Prescott - and gratitude for all of you and how far we have come in 2016. I am grateful for the growth of the congregation and the completion of the renovation project. We will turn our attention to spiritual growth and mission in the new year. In addition to our traditional first Sunday of the month communion during worship, we will begin offering the opportunity to receive communion before the worship service each Sunday on January 8. Wednesday noon and evening Bible study opportunities will be offered. A Lenten Wednesday meal and series of Holy Week character studies will be offered by Rev. Harry Strong. Marilyn Kerstine will continue to lead a weekly prayer team. And the Martin Luther King Jr. day remembrance will include the following schedule:



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - MLK Week of Events:

Thursday, January 12th from 6-8 pm Book Discussion at Prescott College.

Friday, January 13th from 6:30 – 9pm Movie "Freedom Riders" at Sacred Heart Church.

Saturday, January 14th from 10 am – 1 pm Cultural Appreciation Potluck at PC. 10 – 11:30 am March Song Practice & 6:30 – 8:30 pm Non-violence communication workshop both at Granite Creek Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Sunday, January 15th at 6 pm Movie "13th" at First Congregational Church.

Monday, January 16th MLK Day at 10 am Peace and Justice March starting at PC Parking lot. 10:30 am Prescott United Methodist Church – Breakfast; Ceremony; Children's Program and Interactive Area.

Our family - Cherie, Roscoe, and I wish you a Merry Christmas and blessed new year!

CALLED TO CARE NEW WEEKLY PRAYER CHAPEL OPEN FOR PRAYER

Called to Care is meeting for weekly prayer at 10:00 am Mondays in the Prayer Chapel (downstairs). This is open to whomever wishes to pray with us. Please see the Prayer Box in Perkins Hall for open or anonymous requests. Our Bulletin Prayer list and other known needs will be prayed among us each week. You may also contact Pastor Jay, Marilyn Kerstine, Rev. Shirley or another Called to Care minister to add your request.

MISSION OUTREACH NEWS

December’s mission emphasis will address both national and local needs. On the national scene, we will participate in the denomination’s Christmas Fund, which supports low-income retired clergy and their families. Special Christmas Fund offering envelopes can be found in the pew racks. Or, you can simply make your check payable to the church with a memo line marked, “Christmas Fund”. Additionally, our local mission emphasis will be the CCJ “Family Christmas”. A donation box for toys and clothing is in the front of the sanctuary. Or, you may make a check payable to the church with a memo line of, “Family Christmas”.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE NEW YEAR

Thank you to the many volunteers that signed up last week! Your help is much appreciated!

This coming year we have a few projects underway that need some helping hands

- ♦Remove snow off church walkways and steps (Christmas Eve if it snows)
- ♦Move office furniture and take old office items to local charity
- ♦Organize and sort Sunday school room supplies
- ♦Host: Movie “13th”

If you are interested in helping with any of these projects, or would like more details about them, see Julie J. in the office. 928-445-4555 or email: fccprescott@gmail.com

BOOK DISCUSSION

Thursday, January 12th from 6-8 pm Book Discussion at Prescott College.

FREEDOM RIDERS

Friday, January 13th from 6:30 – 9pm Movie "Freedom Riders" at Sacred Heart Church.

NON-VIOLENCE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

Saturday, January 14th from 10 am – 1 pm Cultural Appreciation Potluck at PC. 10 – 11:30 am March Song Practice & 6:30 – 8:30 pm Non-violence communication workshop both at Granite Creek Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

MOVIE “13TH”

Sunday, January 15th at 6 pm Movie "13th" at First Congregational Church.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Monday, January 16th MLK Day at 10 am Peace and Justice March starting at PC Parking lot. 10:30 am Prescott United Methodist Church – Breakfast; Ceremony; Children’s Program and Interactive Area.

ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 22 AFTER WORSHIP SERVICE

This is an important meeting to start off the new year. We will be reporting on 2016, members will be voting on the 2017 budget and new leadership team members. Everyone is welcome!

CHURCH RENOVATION PROJECT OPEN HOUSE – JANUARY 29

We will celebrate our renovation project with all who helped make it happen and the public on January 29, from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. During worship from 10:30 – 11:30, acknowledgements will be made for all involved, and the time before and after worship allows the public to come

Name	Birthday
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EBY, Jay	Dec 24
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OSBORN,	Dec 25
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STEPHENS,	Dec 25
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DE JONG,	Dec 26
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GILPIN, Kay	Dec 27
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DINSMAN,	Jan 3
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WELCH, Pat	Jan 7
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CHAMBERS, Hannah Lusk	Jan 10
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LUSK,	Jan 10
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WALKER,	Jan 10
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WALKER,	Jan 10
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DALY, Judy	Jan 12
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THOMAS, Nitaray	Jan 15
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LUMMEL,	Jan 18
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BRADSTREE T, Katie	Jan 19
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VIKLUND,	Jan 22
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“GO AND DO THE SAME”

Many of you have turned in your “Pledge” and “Time & Talent” cards, thank you! If you have not turned yours in yet, there is still time. There are blank copies in the foyer next to Perkins Hall on Sunday. The budget committee will be meeting soon to outline the programs and budget for 2017. This is the time to prayerfully consider how you can be a part of the many important ministries here at the First Congregational Church.

'Burned down but not burned out' church finds new sense of community at Christmas

December 19,
2016
Written by **Connie
Larkman**



"The fire changed everything for the congregation and my relationship with them in a very positive way." Brownell

This is a Christmas story six months in the making, one of a congregation coming together, with a bond forged by a tragic fire. While the people of First Congregational Church UCC, Vancouver, Wash., won't be worshipping in their sanctuary on two of the holiest days of the year, it isn't stopping them from being the church. The members of the distinctive structure, known in the community as the 'ark on the hill' have spent more than six months as nomads, displaced by a devastating blaze believed set by an arsonist on May 25.

"The way the congregation has come together after the fire is really remarkable," said the Rev. Jennifer Brownell, First Congregational UCC's assigned pastor. "This is really a living example of how the church is not the building—it's the people who make up the congregation who are the church."

The congregation, celebrating its 125th year as a church in 2016, has been dealing with the challenge of putting their building back together during a time of massive change.

In a period of months, their music director of 25 years retired, their pastor announced he was leaving to take a position with the UCC national office, they welcomed a new choir director and called an interim minister.

"Our congregation was in various places emotionally—in relation to all things," said Kristina Martin, First Congregational CE Coordinator/Youth Director. "And then, the fire happened."



"This was to be a simple interim position," said Brownell. "The fire changed everything for the congregation and my relationship with them in a very positive way."



First Congregational lay leaders had to focus their energies into reconstructing their building, so the search committee recommended that Brownell stay on so the church could suspend the search and call process while rebuilding. Restoring the heavily damaged structure is more complicated than the group originally thought. No one could even enter the building until the asbestos was abated, just weeks ago. And the reshuffling—finding places to hold classes or choir

practice, relocating renters, arranging space to worship. But it didn't deter them. It made them stronger.

"I think that the best thing we did was hold services under a big white tent on our labyrinth," said Martin. "The chairs had to be set close together, the lectern was carried down and smelled of smoke and charred wood, and the burnt remains of our sanctuary sat just across the parking lot. It was good in that it gave us a tangible reminder of Jennifer's statement the Sunday after the fire: you can burn us down but you can't burn us out."

"The fire, interim operations and plans for rebuilding, (which we call re-imagining), have forged a renewed spirit of unity and determination in our congregation," said John Greenauer, a church member acting as building

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CONTACT US:

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

**WHATS
HAPPENING**

PASS MEAL

Once a month we provide a meal for the Prescott Area Shelter Services the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 5:00 pm. Sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Meets 9 am before worship on Sundays. See Jane Osborn if you would like to join the choir!
BELL CHOIR PRACTICE
at 11 am on Thursdays

CABINET MEETING

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

PFLAG SUPPORT GROUP

Meets the 3rd Friday of every month at 6:30 pm in the Church Library/Chapel. See Julie J. for more details.

KNIT WITS

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

EXPLORING FAITH

Discussion Group
Looking into new topics, please let Pastor Jay if you are interested
~And~
Monday Evening
Discussion Group
6:30 pm in the Church Chapel.

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

Called to Care
Music
Van Ministry
Congregational Care
Ministry of the Building

JUST ASK!!!

‘Burned down but not burned out’ church finds new sense of community at Christmas

manager liaison between the congregation, the restoration company, insurance adjustor and architect. "Our Sunday attendance has markedly increased since the fire despite worshipping in a variety of rooms and halls throughout the community. At one point after the fire we worshiped in a different location four weeks in a row. Many of the weekly activities such as Bible study are held in the area churches. Some activities and meetings are held in a temporary office trailer on site. An increase in volunteer participation and leadership involves most if not all of the congregation."

Church members have convened in 8-10 different places over the course of the last six and a half months, leasing locations for different activities. The congregation will worship on Christmas Eve at the Trinity Lutheran Church and Christmas Day in a local Senior Center.

"Being displaced during the holidays is basically the same—just trickier," said Martin. "Every Sunday, I carry boxes of stuff from my garage or the trailer into the senior center...but it is amazing just how little it takes to make a space feel sacred. I'm actually excited to be at Trinity Lutheran for Christmas Eve. Of all the services that I 'need' to feel sacred and soul-filled, it is Christmas Eve with our singing of Silent Night by candle light. As much as I truly believe you can be the church in the middle of a sterile community room, I'm looking forward to having one 'traditional' service after all these weeks of change and needing to be flexible."

"There are so many of our Biblical stories that speak about a people in exile, and we have really leaned into those messages during the past six months," said Brownell. "The notion of the Christ child being born in temporary quarters, to parents on the move, has a special resonance for us this year."

And this Christmas, they are embracing that new spirit of community.

"While we have always been a friendly, welcoming congregation with established social groups, such as book club, movie night, cards and board game night, since the fire our church community has been even closer," said Ken Rowe, former moderator and the church's communication director. "Attendance since the fire has been up. We have regular visitors attending now, people who had not seen the inside of our church before the fire."

"There are people who found us because of the news who never realized there actually is a church that loves everyone, invites everyone, takes communion with everyone," said Martin. "And now, post-election, we continue to have people find us —folks hungry for affirmation that goodness exists in the world. And for many, the burnt shell of the ark on the hill that continues to do God's work is a great revival of faith."

"Overall we have learned that we are the church and we can meet, worship and share fellowship despite the loss of our building," said Greenauer. "We have benefited from a generous community giving us support, sharing space and caring for us. Our Pastor Jennifer Brownell's can-do attitude, loving spirit and effective leadership during this trying time have been key to our managing the many changes required."

"How will we be tomorrow's church? I don't know," said Martin. "But I do know that we are a stubborn, resilient bunch and we are determined to not lose what makes us special: our glorious, generous God-filled community. We are still here, doing the work, even if we wear hard hats and safety goggles sometimes."

As Brownell said, "Having literally been through fire together, I think we trust and rely on each other more than we ever did before."