

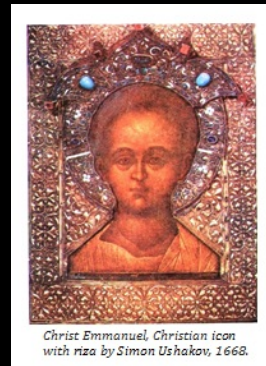
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
2020

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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



I had several requests for the following mediation I quoted from last Sunday, so I wanted to share it with everyone in this Parish Caller. In this post-Christmas time, it is a good reflection on what Christmas can mean for all of us. Scott is with Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. On Christmas Day, I was in the elevator at our local hospital, and a woman greeted me with: "What a weird Christmas! I have been in the emergency room all day." This is for her and all who have had trouble finding the "merry" in Christmas this year:



Matthew 1:18-25
Author: Scott Hoezee

Suppose that one day you were reading a story in which an elderly woman is talking to her pregnant granddaughter. "Now listen, my dear," the old woman says, "I would ask that you name this child after your grandfather and so give him the name Nelson." Suppose the young woman agrees. "OK, Grandma, his name will be Nelson." But what would you think if the narrator of the story then wrote, "And so this fulfilled a prediction once made by the pregnant woman's father that her firstborn would be named 'Wallace.'"

Well, which is it: Nelson or Wallace? And if it ends up being Nelson, then what does Wallace have to do with anything?

So also in Matthew 1: the angel says to name the baby "Jesus," and Matthew turns right around and says, "That's right: he's little baby Immanuel." And no sooner does Matthew write that and we are told that when the baby was born, Joseph did as he was told and named the little fellow "Jesus."

Jesus. Immanuel. Immanuel. Jesus. Must we choose? Was Matthew just not noticing his inconsistencies here?

No.

Apparently, you cannot speak the one without invoking the other. Jesus = Immanuel.

Jesus = God with us.

God with us in all our flesh-and-blood realities and messiness.

God with us in diapers.

God with us nursing at Mary's breast.

God with us in learning to eat small pieces of bread and drinking from a cup without spilling milk all down his chin.

"Christ among the pots and pans" as Teresa of Avila put it. Christ among the barn animals and then those quirky magi astrologers and then all the rest of the Gospel's curious cast of characters.

God with us.

God with the prostitutes and the lepers and the outcast in whose company Jesus would delight again and again. God at the dinner table with a chive stuck between his incisors. God lifting the cup of wine to his lips.

God with us.

God with the little children whose warm brows he touched and blessed. God smiling when a baby was shown to him by a proud new mother.

God with us in all our ordinary times and days. God with us, as Jesus would say to bookend Matthew's gospel, even unto the end of the ages. Always. With us. Immanuel.

Immanuel is God-with-us in the cancer clinic and at the local nursing home where bodies slump pitifully in wheelchairs pushed up against the hallway walls.

Immanuel is God-with-us in the Hospice room and when life's final breath slips past a dear one's teeth and lips.

Immanuel is God-with-us when the pink slip comes and when the beloved child sneers, "I hate you!"

Immanuel is God-with-us when you pack the Christmas decorations away and, with an aching heart, you realize afresh that your one son never did call over the holidays. Not once.

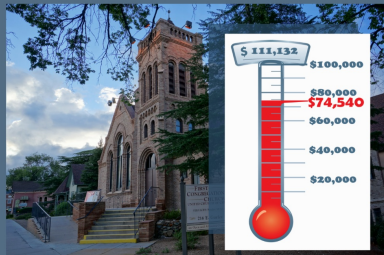
Immanuel is God-with-us when your dear wife or mother stares at you with an Alzheimer's glaze and absently asks, "What was your name again, dear?"

Ever and always Jesus stares straight into you with his two good eyes and he does so not only when you can smile back but most certainly also when your own eyes are full of tears. In fact, Jesus is Immanuel, "God with you" even in those times when you are so angry with God that you refuse to meet his eyes. But even when you feel like you can't look at him, he never looks away from you.

He can't.

His name says it all.

2020 Estimated Gifts Goal



Stewardship Update

We are still collecting "Estimate of Giving" Cards. Help us plan our budget for 2020. No Pledge is too small.

Click on the link and download your pledge card. Place in the box in Perkins Hall or mail to 216 E. Gurley Street, 86301

[2020 Stewardship](#)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Pledge Units (individuals & couples)	38	46	64	26
# of Members that Pledged	55	54	47	30
# of Friends & Regular Attendees that Pledged	8	12	17	7
Total Amount Pledged	\$ 65,462	\$ 97,020	\$ 97,274	\$ 74,540



FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE	2020
Linda Kaul & Michele McFadden	5-Jan
Hal & Ronda Hatfield	12-Jan
Jim Christopher & Christy Dinsman	19-Jan
CHURCH MEMBERS	Jan 26- Annual Mtg Potluck
Henry & Linda Dahlberg	2-Feb
Staci Robbins & Andre Shrimpton	9-Feb
Patty Lantrip & Muri Preble	16-Feb
Gary & Patty Gard	23-Feb
Paula & Mike Parker	1-Mar
Lloyd Evans & Alice Kring	8-Mar
Dave Deville & Patty Lantrip	15-Mar
Julie Jaquette & Sandra Johns	22-Mar
Dennis & Barbara McCollough	29-Mar



YEAR END GIVING

Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA - Gifts from your Individual Retirement Account can be given to an eligible charitable organization. Up to \$100,000 of the gift is excluded from your gross income for tax purposes. These gifts also apply to your required minimum distribution.

How it works:

1. You make a distribution directly from an IRA by December 31.
2. The distribution counts toward your required minimum distribution.

Are you eligible?

- You are at least 70½ years of age
- The distribution must otherwise be included in gross income
- The distribution must otherwise be fully deductible as a charitable contribution.

Benefits

1. Up to \$100,000 is removed from your gross income for income tax purposes.
2. The distribution counts toward your required minimum distribution.

• EVERY-WEEK COMMUNION

We have communion each week right after worship at the front of the sanctuary, everyone is welcome to participate.

• MONTHLY COMMUNION

Our regularly scheduled communion is held the first Sunday of each month. Communion is open to all.

• PASS MEAL

Once a month, we provide a meal for Prescott Area Shelter Services, the third Wednesday of the month.

• CABINET MEETING

Meets the 4th Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Office Conference Room unless otherwise announced.



New 2020 Office Hours
Mon-Thur: 9-3
Fri: 9-1

Contact Us:
www.fccprescott.org
fccprescott@gmail.com
928.445.4555

BIRTHDAYS

Ralph Wagner 01/01
Don Hull 01/09
Brent Walker 01/10
Darcy Walker 01/10
Nitaray Thomas 01/15
Paula Jo Parker 01/16
Katie Bradstreet 01/19
Jane Cheek 01/25
Julie Jaquette 01/28

- **BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL**

We will train you! We meet for rehearsal at 9:00 am. On Thursdays in the Hazeltine Room downstairs.

- **CHANCEL SINGERS**

We meet Sundays at 9:00 a.m. before worship service to rehearse. All are welcome.

- **ALTER-NOTES**

We meet at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday after Coffee Time in the Sanctuary Chancel. Contact Melissa if you are interested in joining: 207-391-3276

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Children may participate with Sunday School downstairs after "Children's Time".

