

**A Message from Pastor Jay**



**THANKS TO TOM THE  
SANCTUARY IS BEAUTIFULLY  
DECORATED FOR CHRISTMAS!  
STOP BY AND SEE IT!**

**Pastor Jay will open the sanctuary this  
Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9-11am.**

**Tom will open the sanctuary this  
Wednesday, Dec. 9 from 9-11am**

**Check Out The Christmas Tree Out Front  
On Gurley. Stop By And Add Your Own  
Ornament!**

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 6**

The virus is beginning to spread again in Arizona so we will no longer have in-person worship and transition back to virtual Zoom fellowship Sunday mornings at 10am and recorded worship available on our website.

This Sunday is the Second Sunday of Advent. We continue our Advent series "Dark is Good and Godly" with a focus on the story of Cain and Abel. Rev. Ralph Wagner is our guest preacher and shares a sermon entitled "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" We are Cain - the blood of brown and dark bodies cry out from the ground. What will be our response? Brian, Linda, and Jane will share their musical gifts with us. Susan will give a stewardship minute. Deana performs our Advent theme song "Into the Dark" by Melissa Etheridge. Dave leads the children's time.

I decided on this Advent series after watching the treatment of George Floyd and others during this summer's experiences of racism. I tried to imagine a white man with a knee on his neck for over eight minutes - and I could not.

Advent usually celebrates the light. If we are not careful, we can begin to think light is good and Godly and dark is bad and evil.

This Advent series seeks to broaden our appreciation of darkness as just as important as light. The genesis of my thinking comes from an article by Andrew Prevot entitled “Divine Opacity: Mystical Theology, Black Theology, and the Problem of Light-Dark Aesthetics.”

Here is a condensed summation of some of his case: “...The problem is thus that the dark and the black do not seem dissociable from the negative even in those Christian traditions that appear best equipped to challenge such an aesthetic assumption...I seek to address this assumption by pursuing a phenomenological disclosure of the night and of darkly colored human flesh, as well as a theological interpretation of these positive phenomena as beautiful avenues of possible encounter with God. A positive theology of this kind, which includes darkness and blackness in its affirmative praises, is crucial to any potential overcoming of the aesthetics of white supremacy. Although mystical theology and black theology have made strides in this direction, they have not sufficiently specified the need for such a *via positiva* of darkness and blackness or developed it phenomenologically.

Dark is good and Godly! May our Advent journey open our minds to this truth.

Stay safe, and give and receive grace,

Jay

### **EMAIL SCAM**

Our church and others are experiencing fake emails being sent with an email just a little off from what it ought to be - for example, adding a 1 or another letter. Information is taken from the website and not a personal email. They are not getting into my personal email but creating one close to mine. I will never ask you for money! Check the email closely for the right address.

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## **BULLETIN**

### **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**DECEMBER 6, 2020**

### **GATHERING TO WORSHIP GOD**

Prelude: “BESANÇON” French traditional Advent carol

Words of Welcome – Announcements - \*Passing of the Peace – Rev. Ralph Wagner

Minute for Mission – Susan Lemons

Lighting the Second Advent Candle – Linda Foote

There are some blessings that are only revealed to us when the day is darkest. There are some mercies that only shine when the shadows are deepest. There are some graces that are only glimpsed when the night is the longest.

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.  
The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus  
it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

In Advent, we remember the darkest days and await the brilliant light of hope. (The candle of Hope is lit)

In Advent, we remember the thirsty days and await the quenching light of peace. (The candle of Peace is lit)

\*Hymn: “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” New Century Hymnal  
#144

### PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD

A Time for Children of All Ages – Dave DeVille

Call to Worship (*from Isaiah 40: 1-11*) – Linda Foote

Listen! The voice of God calls out across the ages.  
**We hear and respond. We rise up to worship God from the valleys, the mountains, and the plains.** Like a shepherd God leads us and tenderly gathers us together. **Comfort, comfort O my people, says our God of love. The grass withers and the flower fades; But the word of our God will stand forever!**

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” NCH 126 Vs 1,2,4

Call to Confession (*Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13*) – Linda Foote

God is love; the compassionate parent that holds the world tenderly in a warm embrace. God desires that we love each other as a mother loves her child, as a father embraces his own.

Prayer of Confession – Linda Foote

**All too often we fail in our efforts to live as God would have us live. We**

**push away turning cold shoulders to God and each other. We express anger and resentment instead of compassion and grace. We seek revenge instead of reconciliation. In these moments, we ask you to forgive us and set us upon the right path; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Affirmation of Forgiveness – Linda Foote

When we turn to God with faithful hearts, God hears and responds. Our failings and shortcomings are forgiven. Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. God gives what is good and spreads the path of righteousness before us. Walk in confidence forgiven and forgiving in Christ's name. **Amen.**

Hebrew Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-16 Rev. Ralph Wagner

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" NCH #131

Sermon: "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" Rev. Ralph Wagner

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE**

The Lord's Supper – Rev. Ralph Wagner

Prayers of the People / The Lord's Prayer (use trespasses) Rev. Ralph Wagner

Offering of Ourselves and our Gifts – Susan Lemons

\*Prayer of Dedication – Linda Foote

**Holy God, the love we receive from you is beyond our comprehension. Accept these gifts of love returned to you from grateful hearts. As your love has no limits, may this offering be infinite in compassionate outreach to others. Amen.**

\*Hymn: "What Child Is This" New Century Hymnal #148

\*Benediction – Rev. Ralph Wagner

\*Postlude: "Into the Dark" – Melissa Etheridge – Performed by Deana Wilson

### **Serving the Church**

Ministers All the People of the Church  
Pastor Rev. Dr. Jay Wilcher

Guest Preacher Rev. Ralph Wagner  
Pastor Emeritus Rev. Robert Bradstreet  
Worship Leader Linda Foote  
Alter Notes Director Melissa Gates  
Organist Brian Moore  
Moderator Rev. Ralph Wagner  
Minister of the Building Rev. Bill Linson  
Facilities Coordinator Tom Macy  
Video Technician James Logsdon

**First Congregational Church of Prescott  
United Church of Christ**

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[www.facebook.com/FccUccPrescott](https://www.facebook.com/FccUccPrescott)  
928-445-4555

**Founded September 26, 1880**

## NOVEMBER MISSION NEWS

### **Mission Outreach Update:**

Following our November mission emphasis project, a check is being sent to the Coalition for Compassion and Justice (CCJ) for \$530. Additionally, a check for \$1,150 from our on-going DACA Fund has been given to our “adopted” DACA college student, Franceny, to assist with her Prescott College tuition and with the expense of applying for her DACA renewal.

Our December mission emphasis is the UCC national Christmas Fund Offering. Donations to this Christmas Fund will help provide financial support for active and retired clergy and church lay employees needing financial assistance. Checks can be made payable to the church, with a note on the memo line, Christmas Fund. Undesignated mission checks will be used at the discretion of the Mission Outreach team.

Prescott Community Cupboard (PCC):

Since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic in March, our team of volunteers has helped 13,262 people receive food bags. Besides being our team captain, Angela Imbierowicz is now also serving as a new member on the PCC Board of Directors. Our thanks for Angela and for all those serving as food bag packers.

## PASS Update:

An update on the Prescott Area Shelter Services (PASS) activities includes the following excerpt from the PASS November newsletter submitted by Carmen Frederic, PASS Executive Director.

Thank you for receiving our newsletter, we are so grateful for your support! As we look back on our 2020 year, especially during this month when we celebrate gratitude, we are in awe of the support we have received, especially during these challenging times!

PASS has maintained an 87% transition rate, even with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to make adjustments that allow us to support women and families in need. Maintaining healthy housing per the CDC COVID-19 recommendations is a priority. Our integrated programming allows us to work with guests and create a plan for their successful move to permanent housing. Current programming includes: Case Management and Advocacy Program; Wheels to Work; Homeless Transition Project; Education to Employability Program; and PASS Transitional Housing Program. Our recent challenge is that it is taking additional time and resources to stabilize our guests as they face the challenges of today's world. We envision a community without homelessness and continue to strategically work towards that goal, but it is because of YOU that this is possible and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

We wish you and your family nothing but the best this Thanksgiving and throughout the holiday season.  
Thank you!

Carmen Frederic

We are blessed to be making a difference.

Currently, we are in need of volunteers to help with our next PASS meal to be delivered on Wednesday, December 16th. As most of you know, we prepare and deliver a monthly meal to the PASS shelter on the third Wednesday of each month. Typically, the shelter runs at full capacity with 25 guests (women and children). We meet in the church parking lot at 5:00 and the food items (3 main courses, 2 salad dishes, rolls and 2 desserts) are collected and taken to the shelter.

If you would be able to help, please contact Patty Gard at 928-460-3042.

Thank you...

Our Mission Outreach Team, Becky & Bill Bryant, Helaine Berman, Linda Moore, Patty and Gary Gard  
thank you for remembering that we have been blessed to be a blessing.  
[Genesis 12:2]

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## NOVEMBER UPDATE

This is how things look, financially, as of October 31.

Year-to-date income is more than \$150,000 and expenses are \$148,000. So, we have a net income of nearly \$2,000. It appears that we are on target to end the year with a positive net income. Our original budget projected a year-end deficit of more than \$32,000. Having revised the budget in June, it was still anticipated that expenses would exceed income—by about \$7,000. The greatest impact to the net income has been the reduction of employment expenses by more than \$5,000 per month since June. Other cost reductions are seen in utilities, office supplies, and marketing, mostly due to the church building being closed.

Thank you for your continued support of our church.  
Julie McCurdy, Treasurer

As the end of the year approaches, you may be thinking ahead to planning for filing your tax returns. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about contributions.

What Every Church Member Needs to Know about Contributions -

- Question: If I make a contribution in early January 2021, can I claim it on my 2020 taxes? Answer: No, contributions must be claimed in the year in which they are delivered.
- Question: If I mail my contribution in December 2020 but it doesn't reach my church until January 2021, for which year should I claim it? Answer: You would claim it on your 2020 tax return. A check that is mailed to a church or charity is deductible in the year the check is mailed (and postmarked), even if it is received in the next year.
- Question: I decided I wanted to designate \$1,000 to my church. I insisted that this money be spent to purchase some new microphones for my church sound room, which the church had not even thought about purchasing. Is the money a contribution? Answer: No, an individual cannot designate money to a fund of his/her choosing, but if the fund is already in existence then this gift would be a contribution.

□ Question: Is there a limit to the amount that I can contribute to my church and still count it as a contribution on my tax return? Answer: Yes, a contribution usually cannot exceed 50% of the donor's adjusted gross income for the year. Donors who exceed this limit may be able to carry over their excess to future years, but you need to consult a tax lawyer for clarification on this.

□ Question: I'm a volunteer in my church. Can I deduct the value of the volunteer work I do for my church? Answer: No, the value of volunteer work you do for your church can never be a contribution.

□ Question: I purchased some items to paint the Sunday School classroom and then did the labor myself. Can I just ask them to add these expenses and my labor costs to my contribution statement at the end of the year? Answer: No, the church is not allowed to add this amount to your contribution statement at the end of the year but they can cut you a check for the materials and labor and then you can give that money back to the church. It's better to cash the check you received from the church and then write a personal check to the church, but you can just endorse the church check back over to the church.

## ADVENT WORSHIP SERIES THE PROBLEM WITH LIGHT/DARK AESTHETICS

### DARK IS GOOD & GODLY

Nov. 29 - Dark is Good & Godly - "The Via Negativa"  
Dec. 6 - Dark is Good & Godly - "Am I My Brother's Keeper?"  
Dec. 13 - Dark is Good & Godly - "Light Burns & Blinds"  
Dec. 20 - Dark is Good & Godly - "Beyond White Jesus"

## COME AND SEE CHRISTMAS SANCTUARY!

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Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9-11am.**

**Tom will open the sanctuary next  
Wednesday, Dec. 9 from 9-11am**



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## **140TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CHURCH**

### **FCC History**

Pamela Libby Foss Otis was born December 31, 1835 in Limington, York County, Maine. Pam attended Parsonfield Seminary in Maine and taught for twelve years at Westside High School in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1869 she married Theodore W. Otis in Ohio. Their only child Mary Kate was born in New York in 1870. With her new baby they moved to California in 1872 and on to Prescott in 1874. It was at her home on North Pleasant Street that the meeting was held with Dr. Warren to begin the Prescott's Congregational Society in the fall of 1880.

A young Chinese woman Jun Moy escaped from her owner and ran to Pamela Otis for refuge. The Otis' made her a part of their household. The Women's Fellowship at First Congregational Church collected clothing and funds to help get her started in her new home. The Otis' put away funds to provide for her education when she came of age or was able to function on her own. The local newspaper said of Pamela "Mrs. O. is said to be one of those noble ladies who never tire of doing good things". She organized the local WCTU was active in the Arizona Federation of Women's Clubs and Prescott's Monday Club. Mrs. Otis died September 19, 1911 and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery.

## **COVID-19 UPDATE FROM CABINET**

**At the Cabinet meeting Thursday night, Dec. 3, the decision was made to suspend in-person worship through the rest of 2020 at least. A decision for January 2021 will be made at the end of December**

**SUPPORT YOUR CHURCH DURING**

# CORONAVIRUS!

- Online – go to our website: [www.fccprescott.org](http://www.fccprescott.org) and look for the tab on the front page
- You can set up regular, ongoing giving or one-time giving.
- Use your credit card and get some points!
- Your bank may have free online bill pay. You find the tab on your online account, fill in the details of the check as you would a regular check, and the bank mail will mail it for you! You can set up a one-time check or recurring scheduled check amount.
- Mail a check out to the church and mail it to 216 East Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

The church office is closed going forward, however, someone will pick up the mail on a daily basis to place checks into the safe.

Visit our website

Watch Services  
Here



Celebrating YOU!!!

**Anniversaries**

WAGNER, Ralph & Susan Lemons	09/05
GILGES, Ralph & Cheryl	09/09
BRYANT, Bill & Becky	09/22
JAQUETTE, Julie & Sandra Johns	09/24
FONE, DJ & Marita Callaway	09/28
GESSERT, Jeni & Ben	10/21
JORDAN, Bruce & Jennifer Cortez	11/11
OSBORN, Alex & Jane	11/11
STEVEN, Ritch & Janet	11/23
MCCOLLOUGH, Dennis & Barbara	11/27

**Birthdays**

BROUSSARD, Suzanne	09/06
DINSMAN, Christy	09/07
MCCOLLOUGH, Dennis	09/09
MACY, Tom	09/14
MATSUMOTO, Yoichi	09/18
RELTH, Arlene	09/22
WILSON, John	09/28
KAUL, Linda	09/29
GILGES, Ralph	10/09
GATES, Melissa	10/13
MONSKA, Paul	10/13
DEVILLE, Dave	10/15
FOOTE, David	10/17
GATES, Elizabeth	10/21
LOBAUGH, Hal	10/22
LOBAUGH, Suzy	10/23
MCFADDEN, Michele	10/24
LANTRIP, Patty	10/25
GARRISON, Marti	11/01
JOHNS, Sandra	11/01
MCCURDY, Julie	11/01
STAATS, Debbie	11/01
GALE, Nancy	11/03
PROHASKA, Carolyn	11/10
ELY, Judy	11/11
ROUSE, Bill	11/15
WALLACE, Andrew	11/18
HUFF, John	11/23
WILSON, Fay	11/24
TAYLOR, Josh	11/25
BRADSTREET, Bob	11/28
LINSON, Bill	11/28
CICHON, Patti	12/03
MCCURDY, John	12/03
WILDMAN, Tommie	12/06
LINSON, Carole Sue	12/08
BERMAN, Helaine	12/15
WILCHER, Jay	12/17
NORUM, Pete	12/18
EBY, Jay	12/24
STEPHENS, Don	12/25