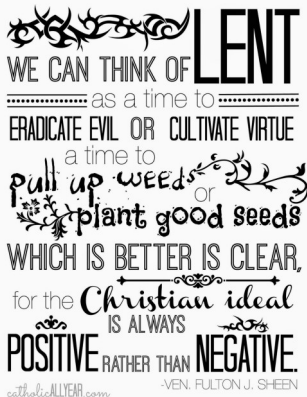


The Parish Caller

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."

February 24, 2017



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This Week at a Glance...

- ♦ **Choir Rehearsal:** Sunday 9:00 am
- ♦ **Sunday Worship Service and Fellowship time:** 10:30 am
- ♦ **AltarNotes Rehearsal:** 12:00
- ♦ **Ash Wednesday:** 5:30 pm
- ♦ **Bell Choir Practice:** Thursday 11:00 am

FROM THE PASTOR

Transfiguration Sunday

We gather in worship Sunday on the mountain between Epiphany season and Lent. Fat Tuesday is coming, so Sunday will be jazz Sunday. We welcome Denise Nasso as our musical guest to jazz things up. A highlight is always ending with "O When the Saints..." and dancing down the aisle. The sermon is titled "The Cloud of Unknowing" (Matthew 17:1-9).

San Antonio Trip

I witnessed a rare agreement between Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and progressives in San Antonio last week. The Koch brothers, Republican elected officials and state representatives, and progressives all came to agreement that the prison build up in Texas was unsustainable due to costs. It turns out that jailing people is really expensive, and it does not lead to many positive outcomes for the nonviolent offenders. I joined a group that included our police chief, city manager, county probation officer, US Vets director, and Salvation Army lobbyist. I was invited as a board member of the Coalition for Compassion and Justice (CCJ) and as pastor of our church. Our task was to learn about the successful jail diversion program in San Antonio and to see how a "sobering center" operates. We learned that San Antonio is not the only place where these jail diversion programs are in place. Many states and cities are looking at the same data and coming to the same conclusions – throwing drug addicts and the mentally ill in prison or jail does not make sense, and again, costs a lot of money. Of course, no one is talking about not locking up those who are a danger to society.

Haven for Hope



A place of Hope and New Beginnings!

And the great thing is I do not have to justify the jail diversion idea. The Texas movement all began with looking at the facts (yes, facts still matter!). The conservative Texas Public Policy Foundation gave birth to the "Right on Crime" website where one can learn how victim support, public safety, and opportunities for offender restitution are advocated.

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From Pastor Jay
continued

Here is just one example from their website:

Incarceration is a significant and necessary factor in public safety, but conservatives understand that there are also other factors. A strategy of vigorous, data-driven law enforcement that results in more crimes being deterred and solved — coupled with effective probation strategies that emphasize restitution, work, and treatment — is essential for protecting communities.

Conservatives know that certain law enforcement techniques enhance safety, others have little effect on safety, and some may actively diminish public safety because law enforcement dollars are being spent inefficiently or in counterproductive ways. Ultimately, the question underlying every tax dollar that is spent on fighting crime ought to be: Is this making the public safer?

According to National Review, “40 percent of low-income men who father a child out of wedlock have already been in jail or prison by the time their first son or daughter is born.” The family unit is the foundation of society. In a society in which too many young men are incarcerated, marriage rates are depressed and far too many children grow up in single-parent homes. Instead of harming families, the corrections system must harness the power of charities, faith-based groups, and communities to reform offenders and preserve families.

On the local level, a sobering center would make sense to save money (taxes) and police officer time. The San Antonio sobering center allows police officers to drop off nonviolent inebriated or high persons there for the night. The officer saves time that can be allotted to more important public safety work. We learned if the officer takes the person to be booked into the jail or taken to the emergency room, the officer can be tied up for hours. When the officer takes someone to the sobering center, the officer is back on duty in 5-10 minutes. The cost savings to the jail or hospital can be calculated. At CCJ, we are looking at the possibility of incorporating a sobering center into the Madison Avenue facility. We shall see, but at the very least, there is a growing movement toward bringing civic and faith-based organizations together to care for and seek to restore people rather than just throw them in jail. Let me conclude with this hopeful quote from conservative oilman Tim Dunn, who has helped fund the Texas Public Policy Foundation: “conservatives are wrong on crime...scripture would not call us to build prisons and forget people.”

Amen, Jay



A message from
our Moderator,
Marti Garrison

**Our SW United Church of Christ: Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, Threats**

A discussion of the 2016 SW conference at Faith United Community Church in Dewey, January 28, 2017, led by Dr. George Ault, retired pastor of The Church of the Red Rocks, Sedona. Eight people attended.

George Ault asked attendees and supporters what they think the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are to our SW conference churches from their ministerial and congregant experiences and from what they learned at the March conference.

Strengths: One is the new conference minister, Bill Lyons, who showed

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**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. You may also contact Pastor Jay, Marilyn Kerstine, Rev. Shirley or another Called to Care minister to add your request.



**EVERYWEEK
COMMUNION 10:00—
10:25 SUNDAYS
OTHER THAN FIRST
SUNDAYS OF THE
MONTH
10:00– 10:20 PRAYER
CHAPEL
10:20 IN PERKINS
HALL**

his willingness to help local congregations with resources and to answer questions. “He is a good resource.” A broader strength is our progressive and experiential leadership, meaning that church leaders are out in the field and involved with social and political issues. An example is contributing to a planned conference on border and immigration problems.

Weaknesses: Churches may not get information from the SW office if it is not also sent in print. Some congregants not comfortable with the internet, plus the website is not easy to use. “There is too much emphasis on technology and too many links on the site.” Several noted that the national documents are hard to read. “They need to simplify and make them more direct and accessible.” Churches can feel left out and want better communication between SW board, ministers, and congregants. “We don’t know what we don’t know....or can access.”

The size of the conference is also a weakness and a challenge. It is a huge geographical area, so it is hard for churches to relate to each other. Churches tend to be isolated and they are too far apart for people to travel to events and workshops. Of the 50 churches, 12 are in decline, and four are closing.

Opportunities: Border and immigration issues to be involved in. Using all media including social media to “combat/correct fake news” about us, our identity and mission, both locally and nationally. Listening skills: relating to young and old, relating faith to daily life, valuing the wisdom of our elders. We have opportunities to market ourselves and educate people on what UCC means. We have opportunities to reclaim the message of Jesus.

Threats: many churches struggle with lack of funds and dwindling membership. In 1990 there were 16,000 members in the SW; in 2016 there were 7,000. George Ault stressed this as a “real threat.”

This was an interesting and thoughtful debriefing and summary of what we can pay attention to by communicating conference-wide. These are four ways of looking at our churches that need to expand into further discussion and then acted upon.

Marti Garrison



LENT BEGINS NEXT WEDNESDAY MARCH 1ST!

Join us Wednesday, at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary for a brief worship service, the imposition of ashes, communion, and an opportunity to participate in a healing service of prayer for yourself or someone you are concerned about with our Called to Care team.

STUDY GROUP FOR SUNDAYS IN LENT, STARTING MARCH 5

Meet in the downstairs large meeting room (former library), 9:30-10:15.

Topics from the Series “Great Figures of the New Testament” by Amy-Jill Levine.

- March 5: Judas Iscariot
- March 12: Pilate
- March 19: Barabbas
- March 26: Centurions

These topics (parallel to those to be given the following Wednesday evenings by Rev. Harry Strong) are scheduled for those who prefer the Sunday morning time.

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT LENTEN SERIES BEGINS MARCH 8 – 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Each Wednesday we will gather at 5:30 pm for a meal and then watch a video of Rev. Harry Strong portraying a character from the passion narrative – Judas, Pilate, Barabbas, Simone of Cyrene, and the Centurion. Discussion will follow. For the meal each week, sign-up sheets are in Perkins Hall to sign up to bring soup, chili, stroganoff depending on the week.

NEW MEMBER / INQUIRER CLASSES APRIL 2&9

After worship, Moderator Marti will meet with those joining the church, and also anyone interested in learning more about the church for about 45 minutes. All are welcome. New members will be received on April 16.

PLEASE SHOWER JOSH TAYLOR WITH LOVE, CARDS AND LETTERS

Josh is now a Marine Corporal deployed to Saudi last December. For anyone who doesn't know him, Josh was our beloved staff Childcare provider for years, our dedicated staff security guard who lived in the church parsonage and our compassionate one who was always "there" with a smile and a hug whenever any of us had a need. Now he needs, not our care packages, but our caring notes, letters and cards from home to cheer his "Mail Call" moments! Just let him know how you are doing, what's happening, or introduce yourself! Fun cards are great too! Military rules are strict so please address all mail like this with first class postage:

CPL TAYLOR, JOSHUA R
SPMAGTF 17.1 CE
UNIT 89033
FPO AP 96610-0001

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

Regularly Scheduled

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!!!



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STAR TRIBUNE
S&K

