

The Parish Caller

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

January 22, 2016

First Congregational
Church, United
Church of Christ,
Prescott



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- ◆ **Exploring Faith** Monday Night Discussion Group Announcing new topic next week

January Lay Academy Report

Terri Gamble

The foundation of our Christian religion is based on immigration stories. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, all led the Hebrews on migratory journeys to foreign lands, looking for homes, sustenance and security. The Hebrew word *ger*, the closest word to our concept of an immigrant, appears 92 times in the Old Testament. Here are two examples:

Exodus 23:9 You must not oppress foreigners. You were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Deutronomy 10:17—19 The Lord your God is the God of all gods and Lord of all lords the great, mighty and awesome God who doesn't play favorites and doesn't take bribes. He enacts justice for orphans and widows and he loves immigrants, giving them food and clothing. That means you must also love immigrants because you were immigrants in Egypt.

Jesus must have felt the sting of unacceptance. Matthew 25 describes Jesus' words to his disciples: For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me... When His disciples asked him *when* they had done these things, Jesus replied: ...to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.

Our nation is a nation of immigrants, yet we seem to have forgotten that heritage. With the change from a national to a global economy and the impact of Free Trade agreements and other money-driven efforts, immigrants have been pushed from their countries of origin. As our country began to experience the wave of immigrants, we reacted with fear and greed. We built fences, beefed up our border patrol, and enacted legislation that discriminates against people because they are poor and that tears migrant families apart.

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The church has a critical role in the immigration discussion. Several members of our congregation began the discussion when they participated in a Lay Academy this month. The journey took us to Sahuarita, a border town south of Tucson. The complexities of the immigration issue are almost overwhelming. Migrants are suffering from hunger and dehydration, exposure and injuries, fear and abuse. They are victims of drug gangs, desert guides for hire (coyotes), and sexual violence. Hundreds die in the desert each year. The border is a wound. But there are church-based organizations that are working to aid migrants and to influence a more humane and Jesus-centered approach to their cause.

What can I do?

The weekend was a heartbreaker for me. From my perspective, I feel compelled to help. I found it important to disregard the man-made legal and political issues and to consider the basic, humanitarian needs of these fellow human beings who are in crisis: water, food, warm clothing. I'm knitting caps, donating to Green Valley Samaritans, and educating myself on the many issues orbiting around the "Immigration Issue." Also I'm writing this report in the hope that our congregation will be stimulated to join the discussion.

I encourage you to visit www.ucc.org where you will find our church's official position. On this site, click on Immigration or go to www.ucc.org/justice/immigration/general-info. Other enlightening websites include: Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans www.gvsamaritans.org

www.borderlinks.org

www.humaneborders.org

www.nomoredeaths.org

Please feel free to contact me directly. Terry Gamble

**Dorhauer April
installation going
coast to coast in
series of worship
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Dorhauer April installation going coast to coast in series of worship services

One weekend, three cities. The Rev. John C. Dorhauer will be formally installed as the ninth general minister and president of the United Church of Christ in April, in a weekend of worship services in New York, Chicago and Seattle. The three-day installation, April 15, 16 and 17, underscores

Dorhauer's pledge as the leader of the denomination to forge a greater connection between the United Church of Christ national offices and the local churches.



"The whole of the United Church of Christ is engaged in mission together; and the work of the national setting belongs to us all," said Dorhauer. "We are literally going coast to coast with this as a way of giving testimony to that

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shared mission."

"This three-day sacred celebration is a rare opportunity for the United Church of Christ to come together liturgically to celebrate a general minister and president," said Cheryl Joseph Williams, UCC chief strategic officer. "A service like this doesn't happen often."

The Riverside Church in Manhattan, New York City, Trinity United Church of Christ on Chicago's South Side, and Plymouth Church United Church of Christ in Downtown Seattle will be the host congregations on April 15, 16 and 17. Each of the churches is firmly rooted in the UCC national mission of social justice, civil rights and national activism.

"It is an opportunity for church leaders to be present in places where church is," Williams continued. "The national setting of the UCC is located in Cleveland, but the Office of the General Minister and President exists to serve the church in its entirety in all of the places where church is. In collaboration with UCC Board leadership, we have sought to find meaningful ways to shape John's installation as invitation. We believe that the three-day series of services will help people feel invited to celebrate across the country, and model new ways of being church together."

"The style of worship is going to reflect our commitment to changing times," said Dorhauer. "Instead of one preacher, there will be nine: three locations, three preachers — all in short, digestible bites, rather than each delivering a full meal."

Participants in the three services will include UCC Board officers and UCC national officers, who will be engaged in worship with members of our local congregations. Each of the participants, with the exception of Dorhauer, will be involved in one service. The installation celebration opens with the service in New York, will continue in Chicago, and close with communion in Seattle.

A core installation service planning team — the Rev. Sue Artt, Acting Conference Minister for the Rocky Mountain Conference and United Church of Christ Moderator, the Rev. Ivy Beckwith, UCC team leader for Faith Formation, and the Rev. Susan Blain, UCC curator for Worship and Liturgical Arts — is already working with a liturgical contact in each host congregation.

"The three of us are tremendously honored and excited to be planning this important and joyous event for the United Church of Christ," said Beckwith. "Our hope is to create worship services linked by theme, scripture and sacrament that reflect both Rev. Dorhauer's deep faith and vision, and the excitement stemming from our belief that the United Church of Christ matters in God's future. While we're eagerly anticipating the work of God's spirit in these worship services, we see them as a springboard, allowing God's spirit of change and hope to infiltrate all corners of the denomination."

While the series of three services will be more expensive than the traditional single service, Williams said that costs are being kept to a minimum, with the planning team using congregational resources in each host community. The three locations around the country were intentionally selected so that livestreaming can be provided during each service, giving people across the UCC an opportunity to be present at Dorhauer's installation.

"While we may be slightly increasing costs, we are greatly increasing participation in and ownership of the mission of the wider church, increasing attendance at and participation in one of the more celebratory moments in the life of the church," said Dorhauer.

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The Rev. Brigitta Remole, senior minister of Plymouth Church, said she is "thrilled Rev. Dorhauer accepted the invitation to be installed at Plymouth. John is both a mystic and social activist. I look forward to his leadership as we lean into how we may all be one. What does it mean today that all can be one, and how can we the UCC live that out? Extravagant welcome, a core UCC value, means something different now."



"We want installation weekend to lift up this new beginning for the church as a holy opportunity for members of the UCC and the communities we serve to establish stronger connections — not only with the general minister and president, but with each other," said Williams.

"I don't see this as simply a means of affecting my Installation into the office to which I have been called and elected," said Dorhauer. "I see this as a way of giving voice and visibility to the narrative themes that will call us together into mission: themes of collaboration and interdependence; themes of shared mission across all boundaries; themes of come one, come all; themes of a national setting rooted in and connected to the full width and breadth of this remarkable denomination; themes of access to and presence with leaders from all settings of the church; themes of a worship style less committed to ritual and form than to a sacred presence and substance."

"I see the UCC becoming an increasingly safe harbor for those whose voices are being lost in their faith traditions and for those without faith," Remole said. "This is what excites me — that we can become catalysts, and partner with John's vision in a world where God's voice is still speaking."

Ongoing & Weekly Events

CHOIR PRACTICE meets
Sundays at 9 am in the
Sanctuary. See Jane Osborn if
you would like to join the choir!
BELL CHOIR PRACTICE at 11 am
on Thursdays

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

LAS FUENTES
1035 Scott Dr., Prescott
SPIRITUAL LIVING Class is
held the 3rd Thursday of
every month at 10 am, led
by Called to Care Ministry.
~And~
Worship Service is also held
the 2nd Sunday of every
month at 3 pm, led by
Pastor Jay.

EXPLORING FAITH
Living the Questions
Study Group
Sunday Mornings at 9
am in the Church
Library
~And~
Monday Evening
Discussion Group

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

**PFLAG SUPPORT
GROUP** meets the 3rd
Friday of every month
at 6:30 pm in the
Church Library. See
Julie J. for more details.

PASS MEAL is a once-a-
month ministry where
we provide a meal for
the Prescott Area Shelter
Services the 3rd
Wednesday of every
month at 5:30 pm. Sign-
up sheet is in Perkins
Hall.

Funky Friday
Game Night
Hosted by PFLAG
Everyone
Welcome! 7-9 pm
1st Friday of
every Month
starting in
November

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

CALLED TO CARE MINISTRY meets
the 4th Tuesday of every month
from 2-4 pm in the Office
Conference Room. If you are
interested in being part of this
ministry, see Marilyn Kerstine.