

# The Parish Caller

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

June 3, 2016



First Congregational  
Church, United  
Church of Christ,  
Prescott

FEATURED THIS ISSUE

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***This Week at a Glance...***

- ◆ **Funky Friday Game Night** Friday 7 pm **TONIGHT**
- ◆ **Worship Service and Fellowship** time Sunday 10:30
- ◆ **Knit Wits** Tuesday 1-3 pm
- ◆ **Bell Choir Rehearsal** Resumes this Thursday 11:00 pm
- ◆ **SafeSleep Meeting** Thursday 6 pm

From The Pastor

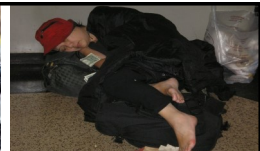

I am really proud our church hosted/will host two events as part of our community ministry. On May 24<sup>th</sup> we hosted the graduation ceremony for Discovery Gardens Preschool in the sanctuary. It was a full house! Carole Sue played the piano and rang a bell as each child's name was read. It was a fitting culmination of our first year of adopting our neighbor school.




**“Wanted: Safe and Legal Sleep”**

On Thursday, June 9 at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary, we will host an important meeting. Paul Mitchell of The Coalition For Compassion & Justice has been meeting with a group of homeless men and women, helping them begin to advocate for themselves regarding having a safe place to sleep. They have produced a video describing what it is like to just try to sleep in Prescott. Come hear their stories of arrest and dangers of humans and animals in the night. We will discuss what next steps might be possible to find safe and legal sleep for all persons.

I attended one of their meetings early on that included about 20-25 homeless persons. After they shared their stories of arrests, fines, and dangers, I said I was not aware of the endless cycle of arrest and fines with no effort to find a solution. At that point one of the homeless men asked me how long our church had been in Prescott. “Since 1880,” I replied. To which he said: “You mean you have been here since 1880, and you were not aware of this?” Well, it was a pregnant moment, one in which I thought I should say that actually I had been here just a year, but I decided to not respond. Maybe he had a point. Blessings—Jay





**WANTED** Safe  
**Sleep** Legal

*Be part of a community solution .*

*Join us at the First Congregational /UCC Sanctuary 216 E. Gurley*  
*to develop safe, legal options*

**Thursday June 9th**  
**6:00 pm**

Contact CCJ 928-445-8382

Summer Activities

Summer Activities Here at FCC



**June 9th: CCJ Safe Sleep** Come and be part of the solution to develop safe and legal sleep options for the homeless in Prescott. Join us at the FCC Thursday June 9th 6:00 pm.

**June 9th: Bell Choir Rehearsal reconvene**

**June 11: Lions Club Pancake Breakfast** here at the church 7:00—1:00 pm. Come and support their benefit.

**June 29: Jazz Vespers** 6:30 pm

**July 2: Our Annual Fourth of July Church Pancake Breakfast.** Lets see if we can beat our over \$3,000 record. To do this we need a lot of hands to make this effort successful. Sign-up sheet in Perkin’s Hall.

**July 2: Frontier Day’s 4th of July Parade.** We are entered in the parade this year and we need help and participants. We need a couple to volunteer to be our pilgrims. We will also be featuring the 100 year anniversary of our troop one boy scouts and the 50 year anniversary of Prescott College. Please see Julie Jaquette or John Huff for more information.



**July 14-17: We are hosting Habitat For Humanity Bike & Build** Group who will be staying at the church (30 participants). We will be providing a hearty grab and go continental breakfast for 30 young athletes before the spend their day building a house for a local family. Please see Julie Jaquette on how you can help with this.

**July 17: Rehearsals for the choir will reconvene.**

**September 25: Church Picnic, more information to come!**

Mission and Vision

Vision Statement:  
What do we want to become?

Mission Statement:  
How do we work towards what we want?

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
And what does the Lord require of you  
But to do justice, and to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Mission and Vision: you have been reading and hearing about this a fair amount lately, and if you read the Caller the past three weeks and were in church on the 29th, you know that the Cabinet is working on ways to get your ideas on what our new mission and vision statements might be. This will be a lengthy, fruitful, and interesting process!

What do you hope for this church and its future? Think about it and write it in a few words on the two tables in Perkins Hall. The Cabinet will gather your thoughts and words and shape them into concise statements that we hope reflect all of us as we move forward in the community. One of the final steps of this process is to then bring those statements back to you for discussion and decisions. All of us will be invested in this ongoing process of communication and growth.



Indeed, this can be done only with a lot of work by everybody moving from the ephemeral hope, to the word on the page, to how we present ourselves as a wonderful church worth becoming part of.

To be an even more viable and important church we need to take our mission and vision into the larger community. Really choosing life, and caring for the body of Christ, and asking for guidance requires that we act with justice, kindness, and

## Mission and Vision continued

humility everywhere. That can be hard. It is easy to preach to the choir. Preaching to the skeptical or indifferent is not so easy. Taking action and then not being acknowledged or appreciated by seemingly anyone outside our doors is demoralizing.

But where to start? We start by remembering what God *requires* of us...he is not just asking us to do him a favor. Then we move on to thinking and sharing what this church means to you and how we want to be bigger in membership and bigger as a community presence. How will we create a church that actively chooses life, chooses Christ, and acts with faith? Think about it. Talk about it. Write down your words for our mission and vision on the yellow-covered tables. They will be set up for at least two more Sundays. We can be living translators of God in the world.

Rev. Marti Garrison, Vice-moderator

## 'Faith Beyond Bars' seeks to educate, advocate for justice in U.S. criminal detention system

Written by **Connie Larkman**

The United Church of Christ is calling on the faith community to focus in June on criminal justice, using social media to call attention to the injustice in the country's system of mass incarceration.

The Our Stillspeaking Voice June initiative, ["Faith Beyond Bars,"](#) is built around education and advocacy, an effort to raise awareness about the need for sentencing reform, and the impact that mandatory minimum sentencing laws are having on the families and communities of those incarcerated.

Through video witness and social media sharing, denominational leaders hope to involve the larger church community in advocacy around mass incarceration.

"Crime and the criminal justice system impact all of our lives and it would be easy to assume that aggressive sentencing policies keep us safe," said the Rev. Traci Blackmon, executive minister for UCC Justice and Witness Ministries. "But we now know this is not true. We now know that a criminal justice system focused on retribution instead of restoration not only ruins lives, but it wounds our families and our communities. As people of faith, we have a moral mandate to care for people that are hurt by unjust policies, and to measure societal impact by narratives as well as by numbers."

A few facts underscore the reasons why the faith community must continue calling for action and accountability around the issues of mass incarceration:

- The United States is the world's leader in incarceration, with 2.3 million people currently in the nation's prisons or jails.
- While the United States comprises 5 percent of the total global population, it alone accounts for 25 percent of the world's prison population.
- One in every 32 adults in the United States is under the authority of the criminal justice system — the highest rate of any country in the world.
- More than 60 percent of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities.
- African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites, constituting nearly 1 million of the 2.3 million persons.

"We are criminalizing too many people and placing them behind bars. We can do better by changing our priorities," said the Rev. Art Cribbs, a UCC pastor in the Los Angeles, Calif. area, and executive director of Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity. "We are building too many prisons and we are creating a future of despair instead of hope. We need to create welcoming communities for formerly incarcerated men and women who deserve a second chance after paying their debt to society. We must remove the stigma and begin to concentrate on the reasons and root causes behind mass incarceration, and work together out of our faith of hospitality and forgiveness to give people a new start."

The impact extends beyond the individuals who are incarcerated to their families and communities.

The Rev. Brooke Taylor, a minister with the Community Church of Washington, D.C., United Church of Christ, said she sees the effects firsthand. She works directly with young black and brown women who have been incarcerated for minor offenses, like skipping school and running away from home in the Richmond, Va., area, and says they are being sucked into the school-prison pipeline, and without change, may continue to offend into adulthood. "I believe it's the duty of the church to intervene in situations like these," Taylor said. "We have a duty to fight to change unreasonable policies that affect our youth at disproportionate rates."

The United Church of Christ has a long history of advocacy and interest in criminal justice. Last summer, its biennial General Synod identified mass incarceration as a critical human and civil rights issue, and resolved to turn the tide of institutionalized racism and economic injustice within the system. On [June 29, 2015, delegates affirmed two resolutions](#) aimed at correcting the racial injustice of the United States criminal detention system, [calling for an end to mass](#)





From UCC.org

'Faith Beyond Bars' seeks to educate, advocate for justice in U.S. criminal detention system

Continued...

[incarceration](#) and [a dismantling of the "New Jim Crow."](#)

Most recently, the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC, a vocal advocate of sentencing reform, has celebrated two significant victories. A comprehensive sentencing reform bill, just signed into law May 19 in Maryland with Conference Minister the Rev. John Deckenback in attendance, seeks to reduce the state's prison population and use the savings to provide for more effective treatment to offenders before, during, and after incarceration. The second occurred when the Maryland General Assembly overrode Governor Larry Hogan's veto and restored the voting rights of more than 44,000 Maryland citizens previously barred from voting because they are on probation or parole. Effective March 10, ex-offenders are now able to register and vote in the state's upcoming elections. The CAC members wrote to their lawmakers and attended rallies to help make that happen. Part of the conference's June annual meeting will focus on the implementation of the 2015 GS resolution, "Dismantling the New Jim Crow."

On June 15, UCC General Minister and President the Rev. John Dorhauer, along with the Florida Conference Minister the Rev. John Vertigan, plan to lobby on Capitol Hill in [support of the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act](#), which seeks to address the mandatory minimum sentencing laws that have contributed to an overwhelming increase in the federal prison population since 1980.

These are just a few examples. There are scores of people across the UCC who are already active in combating the injustice in the criminal justice system, and some of their voices and stories are shared on the June "Faith Beyond Bars" website. The June initiative builds on the work of these UCC members, churches and conferences, calling for education, mobilization, prophetic witness and advocacy on issues surrounding mass incarceration. To start, [change your Facebook profile picture](#).



"But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the 20th century" (The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963).

"We are a people who live our lives in the shadow of a wrongfully convicted ex-con named Jesus," said Blackmon. "As justice has been tempered with mercy for us, we are mandated, by our faith, to work toward a system of justice that moves toward repentance, redemption and reconciliation."

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment.  
Care for the poor.  
**Forgive often.**  
**Reject racism.**  
**Fight for the powerless.**  
Share earthly and spiritual resources.  
Embrace diversity.  
**Love God.**  
**Enjoy this life.**



WHATS HAPPENING AT FCC

Try our SignUpGenius on our website: [www.fccprescott.org](http://www.fccprescott.org)

**CHOIR PRACTICE ON HOLD THROUGH THE SUMMER** 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.

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

**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.

**CALLED TO CARE MINISTRY** meets the 2th 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.

**CABINET MEETING** meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 6:30 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.

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

**EXPLORING FAITH**  
**Living the Questions Study Group**  
Sunday Mornings at 9 am in the Church Library  
~And~  
Monday Evening Discussion Group 6 pm in the Church Library

Contact Us:  
216 E. Gurley Street  
Prescott, AZ 86301  
928-445-4555  
[fccprescott@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:jayfccprescott@gmail.com)