



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

- Chancel Singers Rehearsal: Sunday 9:00 a.m.
- Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Sunday 7:00 p.m.
- Alter-Notes Rehearsal: Sunday 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday Prayer Chapel: 11:00 a.m. Meeting Room 2
- Pastor's Bible Study: IS CANCELED THIS WEEK
- Thursday Chancel Singers Rehearsal: 5:00 p.m. Chancel

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### **FROM THE PASTOR**



*The Annunciation* by El Greco, c. 1590-1603,  
Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan

Merry Christmas! This Sunday, Christmas Eve, we will gather for worship at 10:30 am and 7:00 pm. Whether you come to one or both, there will be plenty of cards to sing and the traditional singing of “Silent Night” with our individual candles. We decided to add it to the morning service for those not returning at night. The sanctuary is decorated in “post card like” Christmas beauty, and it takes on an almost magical feel at night.

In Bible Study on Thursday, I talked about French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's concept of a first and second naivete' - useful as we come to the Christmas story. The first naivete' is our youthful belief in the birth of Jesus. Many move from that child-like faith to critical thinking and doubt and disbelief. Ricoeur suggested a second naivete' -

*In Ricoeur's words, criticism creates a 'desert', and it is not a happy or satisfactory state to live in. Ricoeur particularly relates this to the way we read texts, and in particular biblical texts. Anyone who has engaged in a course of study of academic theology, thinking that it might strengthen their faith, has experienced this process as a rude awakening. 'Don't study theology at university' some have been told 'because you will lose your faith.' This is the desert of criticism. But Ricoeur goes further: 'Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called again.' Ricoeur says there is a possibility of naiveté, but it is a 'second naiveté', one that is found on the far side of the critical process. In spite of all the questions we have, and the judgements we render, at the end of the process (if we are actually going to live our lives rather than just thinking about them) we need to take a 'wager of faith' and commit to believing in a particular meaning for what we read. Without this kind of naiveté, we are powerless to construct meaning and live our lives with significance. ("The Lost Virtue of Naiveté" by Ian Paul)*

So, join me Christmas Eve as we experience the mysteries and impossibilities of the Christmas story, and take a leap of faith and hear the angel Gabriel say to Mary: “For nothing is impossible with God.”

Merry Christmas!

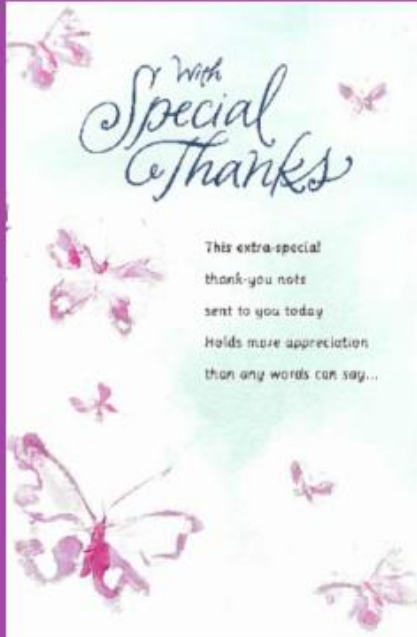
Jay

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### **Christmas Eve Services**

- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service





Dearest Friends,  
Howard and I, and the Millie Perkins Family want to thank you for your loving presence in prayers, cards, flowers, visits and hugs of sympathy in the loss of our mom, Millie Perkins. We are grateful for your kindness and compassion that softens the pain and calms the spirit with peace. We are most thankful for Pastor Jay's many hospital and house visits, prayers and phone calls of care. All most gracious gifts of God's presence for the whole family. You are each treasured friends indeed! Thank you! Marilyn and Howard Kerstine and the Millie Perkins Family

## 2018 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

- TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE PLEDGED: 65
- MEMBERS: 54
- FRIENDS & REGULAR ATTENDERS: 11
- TIME AND TALENT SHEET: 9
- TOTAL FUNDS PLEDGED: \$95,420

It isn't too late to turn in a pledge if you have not already,  
No pledge is too small.



[DOWNLOAD YOUR PLEDGE CARD HERE](#)

## MISSION NEWS

- Until the end of this month, we will continue to receive donations to the denomination's "Christmas Fund" supporting retired clergy/families living on limited retirement funds.
- Also, the denominational headquarters has established a So. California Fire Relief Fund. Checks can be made payable to our church, with the memo line of: "Fire Relief Fund".
- Until the return of our Coffee Hour Hostess, Debbie Staats, we need volunteers to help: (1) set-up & take-down tables/chairs (2) set-up refreshments/coffee (3) provide snacks [this is an on-going need] (4) clean-up kitchen area following Coffee Hour. If you can help, please sign your name to the Coffee Hour Help List found in Perkins Hall.



As always, thank you for your support of our outreach to people in need. We are blessed to be a blessing. Gary Gard, Chairperson ([928 910 2455](tel:9289102455))



*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [Isaiah 9:6]*

Friends,

As I began to think about what I wanted to share with you this Advent season, my mind was immediately flooded with thoughts of expectation. I began scouring the internet in search of some profound quote that I might share about the joy of expectation, some inspiring word about hope.

But most of the quotes easily discovered were not about the joyful. The vast majority were about the disappointments of hopes unrealized. Many advised us to lower our expectations, or, better yet, to not have expectations of people at all. After all, it is difficult to be disappointed if things don't happen in the way we would like if we never believed they would in the first place.

I suppose this is a safe and practical way to live, but who needs safe and practical in a world still filled with wonder and miracles?

Lately, the wonder has been difficult to fathom and the miracles more difficult to see, but they are still happening. The miracles of joy and love and peace and hope are still springing forth. Amidst the confusion and the mean spiritedness of our days, the spirit of the Christ-child is still being born again and again.

We are the beneficiaries of Hope Incarnate.

We who wait in this Advent Season with great anticipation. We who are breathed and born in Hope of the coming of the Christ child.

We must expect Joy! We must expect Love. We must expect Peace. We must expect the in-breaking of Christ among us.

- We must expect Light to show up in the midst of darkness.
- We must expect Peace to show up in the turbulence of our storms.
- We must expect Hope to show up in the desolate of places.
- We must expect Generosity to show up where scarcity abounds.
- We must expect Life to spring forth from where death has been pronounced. The in-breaking of the Christ is to be expected. Because we know that Christ has come!

For unto us a child has been born. Unto us a Son has been given. And authority rests upon His shoulders. And He is named Wonderful. Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace.

May this Advent Season fill our hearts with Great Expectation of what is possible when Hope is born anew. May we expect Joy and Love and Peace and the in-breaking of Christ through our hearts and feet and hands as we care for one another. May the Light of the Christ within us shine through.

Reminding us...we are the Christmas we are waiting for and when we serve, Joy is to be expected. Merry Christmas!

Rev. Traci Blackmon  
Executive Minister  
Justice & Witness Ministries  
United Church of Christ

## ALTER-NOTES

Do you like to sing? Do you play an instrument? Would you like to be a part of bringing alternative styles of music to our worship service? Come join Alter-Notes! We rehearse at 12 p.m. on Sundays, after social time. Music styles vary - calypso, spirituals, folk, celtic, pop, rock, and everything in between.

Show up and/or call Melissa Gates, [207-391-3276](tel:207-391-3276).

## THE CHANCEL SINGERS

You do not have to be able to read music or be a great singer to join us! The Chancel Singers are seeking people who love to sing. Anyone interested is invited to join us on





Sunday mornings at 9:00 in the Chancel. We also practice on Thursday evenings at 5:00. You may attend one of both of these times, depending on what suits you.

For more information, please contact the Music Director, Jane Osborn, at 928-713-4752 or [prescottsong@hotmail.com](mailto:prescottsong@hotmail.com).

KEY DATES

- **Christmas Eve Services:** 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
- **Annual Reports Due:** Dec. 31st
- **Annual Meeting:** Jan. 28th after worship service.
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CHURCH SAFETY & SECURITY

The Cabinet is reviewing our security in light of the Texas church shooting.

- Entry doors may be locked - please come to the Gurley Street sanctuary entrance door after worship begins.
- We are looking into ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) security training for our church. If you are interested in being part of a team, let Julie J. in the office know. 928-445-4555

VAN MINISTRY

- Bill Rouse has agreed to be one of our van drivers to pick up and take home those needing a ride to church. If you would like the church van to pick you up Sunday morning, please let Bill know by Saturday. His number is 602-769-5770. Our thanks to Bill for this ministry.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ralph Wagner	01/01
Ralph Dinsman	01/03
Pat Welch	01/07
Hanna Lusk Chambers	01/10
Rachel Lusk	01/10
Brent Walker	01/10
Darcy Walker	01/10
Nitaray Thomas	01/15
Marilyn Lummel	01/18
Katie Bradstreet	01/19
Royce Viklund	01/22
Charline Payne	01/23
Julie Jaquette	01/28

STEWARDSHIP

Offerings			Attendance Monthly Average		Outreach Gifts					
December		YTD	January	102	January		July		Undesignated Missions	
Offerings	\$ 6,835	\$103,360	February	89	Prescott Comm. Cupb.	\$ 590	Pancake Breakfast	\$ 1,337	YTD	\$ 975
Facility Use	\$ 1,341	\$ 12,566	March	89	February		August		OCWM	
Foundation	\$ 6,500	\$ 67,798	April	108	PASS	\$ 140	Discovery Gardens	\$ 65	YTD	\$ 350
Other	\$ 100	\$ 5,611	May	101	March		September		Coalition for Compassion and Justice	
Total	\$ 14,776	\$189,335	June	79	Habitat for Humanity	\$ 165	Neighbors in Need	\$ 495	YTD	\$ 354
Expenses, Actual			July	96	April		October		Famine Relief	
	December	YTD	August	91	One Great Hour Share	\$ 1,683	Warm for Winter	\$ 160	Special Offering	\$ 795
Expenses	\$ 17,413	\$272,598	Sept	90	May		November- December		Hurricane Relief	
Annual Budget Needs			Oct	91	Church World Service	\$ 319	CCJ Family Christmas	\$ 720	Special Offering	\$ 4,600
	Annual		Nov	103	June		December		Fire Relief	
Expenses	\$	254,276	Dec	130	Strengthen the Church	\$ 280	UCC Christmas Fund	\$ 285	Special Offering	\$ 200

HELP US BUILD OUR SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT WITH OUR COMMUNITY, LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!



REGULARLY SCHEDULED

PASTOR’S BIBLE STUDY

An informal study group meets on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in Hazeltine room. All adults are welcome.

EVERY WEEK COMMUNION

BELL CHOIR PRACTICE

If you would be interested in playing with us, we will train you! This is a fun and rewarding contribution to our worship.

We meet for rehearsal at 11:00 a.m. on Thursdays.

“Every Sunday Communion” takes place in the sanctuary after worship on Sundays. Communion is open to all.

#### ONCE A MONTH COMMUNION

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

#### PRAYER CHAPEL

Called to Care holds a weekly prayer time at 11:00 am on Tuesdays in the Chapel downstairs. Place your prayer requests in the prayer box in Perkins Hall.

#### PASS MEAL

Once a month we provide a meal for the Prescott Area Shelter Services the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet is in Perkins Hall.

#### CABINET MEETING

Meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm in the Office Conference Room.

#### VAN MINISTRY

If you need a ride to church on Sunday mornings, please let Bill Rouse know by the Saturday before. 602-769-5770

#### CHANCEL SINGERS

If you like to sing, the Chancel Singers are eager to increase its membership. We meet Sundays at 9:00 a.m. before worship services and Thursday nights at 5:00 p.m. Come when you can.

#### ALTER-NOTES

Alter-Notes is an alternative music group that meets at 12:00 for rehearsal in the Hazeltine Room each Sunday. If you like to sing or can play an instrument, we are looking for new members. We play folk, pop, Celtic, spirituals and anything else. Contact Melissa Gates phone:207-391-3276

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL OPTIONS

Parents may take children to Sunday school downstairs before the service begins, or wait until the children’s time with the pastor and then go to Sunday school. Children are also welcome to stay in the worship service at the discretion of the parent(s).

## CONTACT US

#### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

##### PRESCOTT, UCC

216 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

Office: 928-445-4555

Pastor Jay: 928-899-9066

Julie: 928-710-1379

#### ADMINISTRATION

Monday - Thursday 9:00 - 4:00

Friday 9:00 - 1:00

##### PASTOR JAY

Monday - Thursday 9:00 - 1:00

other times by appointment



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 a.m.

