

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL & NURSERY 10:30 AM

From the Pastor

This Sunday is the Third Sunday of Advent. We continue our Advent journey with a sermon entitled "Dark is Good and Godly-Light Burns and Blinds." 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. In the sermon, I will seek 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. The children will play chimes and do a brief skit. Music will be provided by The Ringing Bells, Linda, Brian, and Thomas.

We are still receiving estimates of giving for 2024. These are needed to help us prepare a budget for 2024. You can place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office: 216 East Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ. 86301. The estimates are kept confidential and known only to our treasurer and financial secretary. Thank you to everyone that has turned in an estimate of giving for 2024. Because of you, we will live into our 144th year. And because of you, our church changes lives!

CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS FOR OUR STAFF

We have placed four large Christmas stockings on the wall by the pulpit so "Santa" can leave gifts of appreciation for Jeni, Audra, David, and Tom. We ran out of stockings, but you can also remember our other staff members - Melissa, Brian, Carole Sue, Mark, Mary Beth, Jean, Andy, Mary, Carolyn, and Thomas.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING DEC. 17 AT 1PM

Caroling 12/17/23, 1:00-2:00 at the Pioneer Home.

Anyone is welcome to participate.

If interested, see Morgan after the service on 12/17.

I will bring caroling song books to use. We should meet outside the entrance at Pioneer Home so we can sign in and enter as a group.

(Morgan)

CHRISTMAS COOKIE/CANDY EXCHANGE

The Welcoming Ministry is planning a Christmas cookie/candy exchange following the **Dec. 17 worship service**. Please bring a dozen or 2 (or more) of your favorite holiday treats - homemade or store bought to share with your church community, and don't forget our gluten free folks, if you are so inclined. Please take home only the amount of cookies/candy you have brought in exchange. Donated cookies are also appreciated. if you don't wish to take any home. Please bring baggies or plastic storage containers to take home your goodies! Thanks, as always, for your participation.

DECEMBER 17

THE CHILDREN WILL PLAY CHIMES AND PERFORM A BRIEF SKIT

**AND WE WILL DEDICATE THE GIFT FROM MANUEL LUCERO
OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MUSEUM**

Come one, Come all, to our FCC COFFEE HOUSE! Last Friday of every month - December 29 - 4 to 6 pm - Perkins Hall - Serving: good conversation, light beverages and snacks, lots of games, music of all kinds, dancing if you want it, and any other creative ideas you can come up with. Please use the Alarcon St door to enter. See you then!

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 28
There will be a congregational potluck lunch as we gather to vote on church officers and a budget for 2024.

VIDEO SERIES

"When Black Female Preachers Speak - Seven Important Discussions with Black Female Theologians" A part of our decentering whiteness efforts (not to mention patriarchy)

The next gathering will be Friday, January 19 at noon in the church office conference room. Bring your own lunch / snack and drink.

When black female preachers speak, we should all listen. The insight and intention provided by black theologians illustrate their ability to bring the history of black culture and religious experience into the life of Christians and the liturgical life of the church. For centuries black mothers have passed on wisdom – in the white world, in the black community, and with men. This wisdom has illustrated how God reveals prophetic word and action for Christian living.

We have brought together some important themes coupled with visionary insights from Rev. Jacqui Lewis, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown, Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglass, Rev. Traci Blackmon, Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, and Bishop Yvette Flunder.

**CHURCH DIRECTORIES ARE ON OUR WEBSITE
FCCPRESCOTT.ORG
UNDER THE RESOURCES TAB – PASSWORD PROTECTED
EMAIL THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR PASSWORD
fccprescott@gmail.com**

**SATURDAY FAITH FORUM OPEN TO ALL
SATURDAYS AT 10AM ON ZOOM
A NEW TOPIC EACH WEEK - BIBLE, CURRENT EVENTS,
THEOLOGY, ETC.**

A LIVELY DISCUSSION
EMAIL PASTOR JAY TO BE ADDED TO THE ZOOM INVITE
jayfccprescott@gmail.com

MUSEUM OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING
PUEBLO HALL
DECEMBER 27, 10:00AM -3:00PM
REFRESHMENTS & COOKIES

Attendees will enter thru museum, pay museum rates, receive a ticket or sticker to go to Storytellers. Rates vary from high of \$10, children 12 or under free.

[Watch Worship Services Here](#)



*First Congregational
Church*

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**Christmas Eve Morning
Worship Service - 10:30am**

**Christmas Eve Service
of Lessons & Carols - 7:00pm**

**Virtual Worship services are
recorded each Sunday**

fccprescott.org

**216 East Gurley Street,
Prescott, AZ
928-445-4555**



Don't Spend Christmas Alone!

Be Our Guest for Christmas Dinner!

JOIN US IF YOU CAN!

We will be serving food,
fellowship, and fun from
11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
on Christmas Day
(At no charge to our guests)

OR WE CAN DELIVER!

Home Bound Deliveries!
To have your meal(s)
delivered on Christmas Day,
call the church office at
928-260-6300 by
Friday, December 15th!

Get a Ride to and from the Church!

From Prescott

Leaving Sprouts Parking Lot
Pickup Every Half Hour: 10:30 - 1:00

Leaving Prescott United Methodist
Church Parking Lot
Pickup Times: 10:30, 11:30, 12:30

Leaving Coalition for Compassion
& Justice Parking Lot
Pickup Times: 10:45, 11:45, 12:45

From Chino Valley

Leaving Safeway Parking Lot
Pickup Times: 10:30 & 11:45

Leaving American Legion
Pickup Times: 10:45 & 12:00

From Prescott Valley

Leaving CASA Adult Center
Pickup Times: 11:00, 12:00, 1:00

Leaving Safeway Parking Lot
Pickup Times: 11:20, 12:20, 1:20



2000 Shepherds Lane
Highway 89 and Ruger Road
(1 block north of the Airport entrance on
Ruger Rd.)

QUESTIONS

Call **928-260-6300**
10 am - 3 pm

If you would like to volunteer to help on Christmas day, during
the dinner, please call **928-260-6300**.

FACEBOOK UPDATE

"We have a new Facebook group, First Congregational Church Prescott FCC - which you can join. We will be posting events, and meetup information for the community, as well as exploring ways to bring back our outreach partners; the LGBTQ community youth, AA, etc. and other groups who have used the church pre-Covid for meeting spaces. Please join the group, and join in the discussion! If you have any questions, you can email Brit and Mike Flores at bafwriter@gmail.com, our current group admins. All event questions and suggestions should be directed to the church email at FCCprescott@gmail.com.

Church Security

It has come to our attention that some people have concerns for their safety while at worship service here, on Sundays. Rest easy. Not all are aware but WE DO HAVE A SECURITY TEAM IN PLACE EVERY SUNDAY. Every Sunday we have a complete team consisting of highly trained current and retired law enforcement in addition to a retired emergency room medical care giver. Not only do we come to serve this church already trained but we continue to have current training sessions specific to responses in this particular church. Our intention is to carry out our function as low key as possible so as not to detract from your purpose of being here, to worship in peace, comfort and safety. (Melissa)

DECEMBER MISSION NEWS

MONTHLY FOCUS: Each month throughout the year, our Mission Outreach team identifies particular mission programs to which we might choose to donate.

This month we're highlighting the **Christmas Fund**—an annual UCC special offering.

The **Christmas Fund** has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

If you would like to show your continued gratitude to our UCC clergy needing support, please make your check payable to the church, with the memo of **Christmas Fund**. Mission donations which do not specify a particular project will be disbursed as determined by our Mission team members.

Recent mission disbursements of \$400 each have been made to: People Who Care, The Launch Pad Teen Center, Giffords, St Luke Ebony Church, CC&J, Museum of Indigenous People, and Temple B'rith Shalom.

As always, thank you for remembering that we are blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:2).

Mission Outreach Committee members are Patty Gard, Carolyn Christians, and Becky Bryant, chairperson. If you would like to serve with us, or have any other outreach matters to discuss, please contact Becky at (928) 910-2820 or beckybryant2255@gmail.com.

SUNDAY WORSHIP BULLETIN

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2023

10:30 a.m.

**Those who are able may stand*

GATHERING TO WORSHIP GOD

Prelude: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” arr. Patricia Sanders

Ringling Bells

Words of Welcome – Announcements - *Passing of the Peace

Gather Song: “Away in a Manger” arr. Patricia Sanders.

Ringling Bells

Lighting the Third Advent Candle

One: There are some blessings that are only revealed to us when the day is darkest.

Many: There are some mercies that only shine when the shadows are deepest.

One: There are some graces that are only glimpsed when the night is the longest.

**Many: 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.**

One: In Advent, we remember the darkest days

Many: and await the brilliant light of hope. (The candle of Hope is lit)

One: In Advent, we remember the thirsty days

Many: and await the quenching light of peace. (The candle of Peace is lit)

One: In Advent, we remember the silent days

Many: and await the singing light of joy. (The candle of Joy is lit)

One: Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

"Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God...who will come and save you."

Many: Our souls magnify the Lord and our spirits rejoice in God, our Savior.

*Hymn: "Joy to the World!"

New Century Hymnal #132

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Children's Chimes & Skit

Gathering Prayer

Leader: The joy of the season is upon us. The time is almost here. We are here to sing praises to God, the Holy One in whom we place our trust.

People: We have come to praise the Lord! God opens our eyes and lifts us up. Let us praise God who reigns forever.

Leader: We gather, O God, in this worship space mindful of your presence. We are here to rejoice as we wait to see your glory. Help us proclaim the joy you promise.

People: In this hour of worship, we ask that you bless us through the inspiration of your Holy Spirit and through Christ's ministry among us. Amen.

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

*Hymn: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

New Century Hymnal #125

Sermon: "Dark is Good and Godly – Light Burns and Blinds"

Pastor Jay

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE

Anthem: "God Has Done Great Things for Us" by Marty Haugen. Thomas and Brian

Prayers of the People / The Lord's Prayer (use trespasses)

Offering of Ourselves and our Gifts

Offertory: "My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise" by Ruth Duck Linda Foote and Brian

*Doxology for Advent (Peter A. Norum, 2012)

Tune: New Century Hymnal #17

Sing! Praise the Source of love and grace; Thanks for our lives in time and place! Singing Praises! Alleluia! Look for the Gift of Truth and Light, Be new! Be bold! Walk forth with sight! Singing praises! Singing promise! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Prayer of Dedication**

As we bring these gifts, guide us in ways that we might bring your light to the world. Help us to bind up the brokenhearted, bring healing to the sick, hope to the lost, welcome to the marginalized, and uplift to the oppressed. Help us to share that there is no one so far lost that cannot be found, no one so far removed that cannot be brought in, no one in utter darkness that cannot be shown the warmth of your light. In the name of Jesus, the Light of the World, the Joy of our Salvation, we pray. Amen.

***Hymn: My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise”**

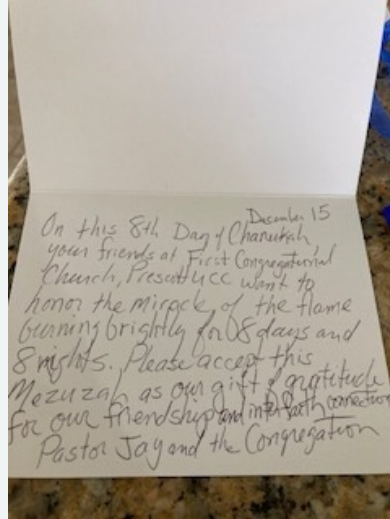
New Century Hymnal #106

***Benediction**

Pastor Jay

***Postlude: Psalm 126: The Lord has done great things for us Jaime Cortez Brian Moore**





This note is on our commissioned note card. The card and the Mezuzah will be delivered on Friday to Temple B'rith Shalom. The rabbi had suggested a mezuzah would be a gift from our congregation that would be meaningful and appreciated. This wraps up our expression of gratitude for the chairs they donated and our interfaith friendships.

Co-Moderator Linda

TREASURER REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2023

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER – JULIE MCCURDY

Financial activity, year-to-date as of November 30, 2023

Income: \$169,487

Expense: \$179,635

Net shortfall: \$10,148

\$12,843 of reserve funds have been used to pay for repairs to organ and parking lot.

ESTIMATES OF GIVING FOR 2024 NOW TOTAL

\$120,244! THANK YOU ALL! – WE ARE STILL RECEIVING THEM

UNTIL JANUARY 7TH – THE CABINET WILL MEET JANUARY

8TH TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE BUDGET FOR 2024.



Because of You our church changes lives.

STEWARDSHIP SEASON IS HERE!

Let us enter stewardship time prayerfully and with grateful hearts. Loving God, thank you for this opportunity to participate in the on-going mission of this church, your church. Help me to remember that everything I have comes from you. Open my heart and hands with generosity as I promise my support. Use my talents and financial commitments to continue your work in this church and in the world. Amen.

ESTIMATES OF 2024 GIVING ARE BEING RECEIVED THESE ESTIMATES ARE NEEDED TO PREPARE A CHURCH BUDGET FOR 2024

WHAT IS A STEWARD? WHO IS A STEWARD? HOW DO I BECOME A STEWARD?

The answers to these questions are easy: A steward is a person who, with regard to a property both physical and functional, keeps it, cares for it, watches over it. As to who is a steward, well, we're hoping YOU are, or that YOU will want to become one. How you become a steward involves the act of you giving to our church of your time, your skills and/or your finances. There is another question to be answered.

IMMEDIATE NEED

Why give to our church? First Congregational Church occupies a unique position in Prescott. We are the only historically rooted and progressive congregation in the city that follows the way of Jesus. We are both open and affirming to all. Our sanctuary evokes historic church connections and the presence of God. The God

one finds here is the One Jesus modeled for us – a God of love and grace. Many have given testimony to finding healing here from other church experiences, where God was presented as judgmental and exclusionary. Other churches have retreated to locations out of town. We have remained here on Gurley Street, downtown, easily seen, accessible and welcoming to all.

Another answer to why you would want to give to your church revolves around need, both yours and this Church's. You obviously have any number of personal reasons or needs that lead you into church participation here, where you find those needs met. Your church also has needs and right now those needs are financial. We are in unprecedented times. How do we create a church budget for 2024 with so many unknowns? How do you decide what to give to this church for 2024? These questions have no immediate answers, so our church budget and your offer of financial giving are not set in stone. They are estimates. Your estimate of giving for 2024 will help us begin to understand what might be possible for the next year. So, with a thankful heart full of hope we are asking you to help us right now, to get through our 144th year here in Prescott.

LEGACY ANSWERS THE LONGTERM NEED Our church is blessed to have THE FOUNDATION as a safety net. It was formed in 1992 to manage legacy gifts from our members and friends. Legacy giving is not about death. It's about giving and continuing life. It's an affirming experience that celebrates the people, values, and goals that you cherish most. You don't have to be rich to make a bequest or legacy gift. With a will or legacy gift you can give the way you want to live, by making a better or sustained future for your loved ones and a lasting impact on your faith community. If you are interested in leaving a legacy to our church, or have questions or concerns, you can send a note to the church office and a member of the Foundation will contact you.

IT'S ALL ABOUT STEWARDSHIP - PLEASE BE OUR STEWARD!

SUPPORT THE CHURCH

Online – go to our website: 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 will mail it for you! You can set up a one-time check or recurring scheduled check amount.

Make a check out to the church and mail it to: 216 East Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

Use the QR Code below:



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United
Church of
Christ

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First Congregational Church Prescott, UCC | 216 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

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