



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

The Parish Caller

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Why We Need Advent

by Bruce Epperly

Advent is a curious season in the Christian year. Perhaps before the identification of Christmas and consumerism, the Advent season inspired Christians to reflection, confession, and preparation. Beginning in the fourth century, Advent – like Lent – was seen as a time of fasting and penitence. Although Christmas parties and “hanging of the greens” potlucks keep many of us from fasting during Advent these days, the season is definitely a time of restlessness and reflection for those who take the season seriously.



Advent reveals the ambiguity of Christian hope and history. The Christ whose birthday we soon celebrate has died and risen, but how will Christ come again? How will Christ be revealed in the ongoing historical adventure? Advent calls us to look both at the coming of Jesus, the child in the manger inspired to be God’s saving presence to humankind, and the Second Coming of Jesus, anticipated as the fulfillment of history...

Healthy spirituality lives between radical acceptance of life as it is and a holy restlessness, inspired by what could be in God’s realm of shalom. Advent challenges us to live with the tension of “this is God’s world, filled with wonder and beauty” and “why are we aren’t we there yet? Why haven’t we reached the promised land, the beloved community of wholeness and healing?” We have to start where we are in a God-filled, imperfect universe; but we cannot end our journey in accepting injustice, oppression, inequality, and disease. Advent inspires a prophetic unrest that challenges our current achievements as well as our obvious failures in light of God’s realm of possibility, beauty, and wonder.

How shall we practice Advent? We know that we neither can nor should ban Christmas carols, parties, and celebrations. But, we need not be so caught up in the merriment of the season that we fail to examine our own lives, congregations, and political systems. Advent suggests a different type of spiritual practice in which feelings of peace do not lead to contentment with the way things are. The stillness of meditation inspires us to listen for the voice of possibility within our lives and communities. As an examination

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From the Pastor's Desk by Pastor Jane Cheek



Following the right "path."

A few weeks ago I went to a conference in Pasadena on "The Seven Secrets of Church Renewal." Rev. Diane Thomas from Faith UCC in Dewey went with me, (road trip!) and our goal was to pick up a few more tips to help our churches grow and thrive.

I am happy to say that from what I heard, we're on the right path...we're doing many of the recommended activities and making many of the suggested changes in how things are done in order to encourage our congregations to grow and thrive. In other words, Diane and I didn't get many new ideas to add to our bag of tricks, but we did get some serious affirmation about our respective congregations! And this is good...

Here are the "secrets" we were given, and my feelings about where we are right now.

Assets - Beginning Where You Are:

We have accepted that our church is largely made of adults in their middle-age and older; and it's OK, in fact, it's something to celebrate. We have tremendous energy, commitment, and are willing to invest ourselves in our congregation. And we seem to attract more of the same...

Vision – Seeing Where You Are Going:

We're still working on this one, but I feel that we are very close to more concrete plans. We know we want to impact the world God's Way, and we know our faith and trust in God leads us. Even with a generally older membership, we have many good years ahead of us in God's service. We have a mission statement that will be guiding all we do from this

time on, and we can see a bright future if things continue as they have for the past few years.

Mission – Turning the Church Inside Out:

The recommendation is that we should find two or three focus areas for mission work – and be really good at them. Activities that benefit charitable groups like Prescott Community Cupboard, the Prescott Area Women's Shelter and even our Wheelchair Ministry seem to have our attention; and our Mission Committee is always bringing other ideas to us. The key is to try to limit how many different areas we work in, so that we are most effective in the ones we hold close to our hearts.

Communication – From Identity Formation to Market Saturation:

As we more firmly realize who we are, we are getting the word out into the community. Our banner out front is a beacon to many folk – and being seen and active in our mission work also tells people who we are. We have a web page that is updated weekly and gets hit frequently by people looking for our kind of progressive church, and while we aren't an active presence in social networking (because too many of us still aren't really into computers), the day will come when we expand in this area. For now, we use tools that seem to do the trick with our demographics; advertising in the newspaper, signs out front, word of mouth and being visible at various functions. We're looking into using the local access television station, and we might consider ordering and wearing t-shirts or work-shirts with our logo on it, so when we are out in the community, people see and recognize us by our "brand."

"Pastor's Desk" Continued on page 4

Moderator's Message by Gordon Berghold, Moderator

Greetings from your moderator's chief cook and bottle washer! Gordon came home from Thanksgiving in San Diego, sick as a dog. As I type this out, he's just returned from the doctor and told me he has a severe bronchitis infection. Therefore, since he's in no condition to write up a report, we're letting him off the hook for this month's submission. AND since the mission chair has a particularly lengthy report this month, we'll just slip it into this vacant space...

MISSION MATTERS

Our Thanksgiving wishbone was a beauty. But, alas, I did not get the big end when it was tugged apart. My unfulfilled wish was that everyone in the world with a legitimate roof over their head would read an article called 'The Greatest Gift' in the Fall 2011 World Ark.

So, now instead, I will attempt to condense the salient points into the space that is available. The article begins with a story from Peter Singer's book: **The Life You Can Save**. (this book is in my pile of special books that are headed to our newly weeded and energized church library.) Imagine you are walking by a pond and there is a child drowning in it. Would you jump in to rescue the child if you were wearing your brand new, alligator skin boots? Singer's conclusion is that ethically, we are in just such a position all the time. 30,000 children are dying daily from preventable diseases and malnutrition. Could we be doing more? You betcha!

And Betty Londergan, from Long Island, N.Y., *is* doing more. She lost her job in advertising, and she and her husband watched their investments eddy away. She was angry, frustrated and literally sick. That was not the kind of person she wanted to be. She realized that giving money away *on purpose* would be the

cure. So when she received an inheritance and their daughter received a scholarship to college, she set about giving money away. She committed to give away \$100.00 a day for 365 days, to charities that she researched. And then she blogged about it. Check out: **What Gives 365**. Betty's year of giving is over and she claims to have been blessed beyond belief!

Even in the worst of times, Singer writes, our lives are infinitely better than the 1.4 billion who live on less than \$1.25 per day!

As Rabbi Cowan puts it, "It's about getting you out of that story that's all about you. The more you do, the more you feel a connection to other people."

Then there is the Atlanta Salwen family, authors of **The Power of Half**, who on the urging of their teenage daughter, sold their big house, bought a smaller one and gave away the difference.

Most sources agree that giving 10% is a minimum. If you have a lot, it should be 50%. Julia Wise from Cambridge, MA, says that it is not how much to give away but how much to keep. She and her husband live on \$22,000. a year and give the rest away. Last year they gave away \$35,000. Before they buy anything they ask themselves, "What could this money do for someone living in poverty?"

"Giving away money is the absolute antidote to fear and insecurity about money. Desire and clutching cause suffering--and when you let go it is a beautiful thing." Betty Londergan

Catherine Newman, the author of this article, tells about a shopping experience

"Mission Matters" Continued on page 8

Connection – Creating Transformational Community:

Even though we aren’t into the Facebook trend, we do well at making visitors feel comfortable and not overwhelmed by being too pushy in our friendliness. The notion of “extravagant welcome” is true in our congregation; the word is going out that we welcome anyone who loves God as we do, and many visitors who come to us return to stay. The future will bring more opportunities to provide welcome to many in our community who are marginalized for any number of reasons; the true test of our living faith will be how we enfold all who come through our doors looking for God’s Love.

AdMinistryation – Managing for Mission:

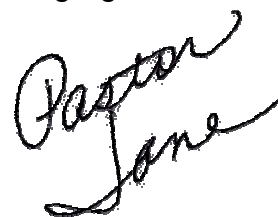
This secret is about how we use our resources. By being willing to try new ways of “doing church” i.e., supporting/encouraging a licensed pastor, inviting brand new members to participate instead of making them wait a year, changing bylaws to reflect the needs of the congregation and our mission, and being open to what God wants us to do (even if we’ve never done it before) is proving to us that a church can be managed more creatively – and everyone benefits. What is happening at our church is fairly new in mainline churches, and we are an example of all the possibilities that come with brave believers who are open to change for the right reasons.

Transformational Worship – The Heart-beat of Vital and Vibrant Church:

We are in a unique situation in that we tend to favor more traditional worship, but we insert modern elements into it with enough frequency that it doesn’t feel staid and stuck in another time zone. In our traditional worship, we laugh a lot; we share our hopes and worries publicly

through prayer, we clearly love and care for one another, and I don’t act much like a traditional pastor. I think the combination of these elements draw people to us. While I absolutely appreciate technology and its ability to make life simpler, I just can’t bring myself to set up a projector in our old church as was suggested in the conference – it works just fine in Perkins Hall for the times when we do an alternative worship of some type. I like the reverence I feel during the more traditional worship in our church - I don’t want to mess with it, and I think there are quite a few people who agree; when they walk in the door and see who and what we are as a package, something resonates within them. Old church, more traditional worship, lots of love, contemporary pastor and message, extravagant welcome – we are reaching folk who are looking for what we offer as a community of God and in our way, and I believe we are transforming lives.

What it all means - As you can see, after a few years spent finding our way, it certainly seems like we are in a good place, moving forward. This doesn’t mean we should sit back and bask in the glow of good fortune, though. We have work to do – God’s Work – and that means we need to keep moving! But, we have come down a long, rocky, winding path, and I think we can safely say there’s a smoother road ahead; we are no longer a “church in renewal,” but a church renewed looking out into a bright future of mission and service in God’s Name. I feel confident that we will continue to grow, thrive and be a presence in Prescott; and I’m honored to be part of the new life this congregation has found! God is Good!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Women's Fellowship

by Joanne Storer,
Women's Fellowship Co-Coordinator

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and that you have dusted off your holiday hat for Grandma's holiday tea on Wednesday, December 7 beginning at Noon in the sanctuary with a program presented by some of the members of the Sweet Adelines, followed by our holiday tea.

We will have our Boutique set up with items left over from our sale in November along with some new items. We have invited ladies from Faith United Church in Dewey, Chino Valley

Community Church, Prescott United Methodist Church and from Temple B'rith Shalom. Let's try to sit with different groups and meet new friends. A Huge thank you to Barbara McClure and her committee for all the work that went into this yearly celebration.

Happy holidays and blessings to All from Joanne Storer and Sherry Hager co- chairs of Women's Fellowship.



“Why We Need Advent” Continued from page 1

of conscience, we need to ask ourselves, “What is our deep restlessness? What unrealized dreams of community and spiritual growth still lure us forward? Where are we complicit in the injustice and suffering of the world?”

While we may not fast in the traditional sense of the word, Advent challenges us to a spiritual fast, a fast of holy mindfulness in which we attend to our values and behaviors. Can we celebrate Christmas with joy and generosity without being caught up in consumerism? Can we experience liberation from hurry and busyness during the “Christmas season” (that is, Advent)? Can we pause long enough to hear God’s voice and attend to God’s vision for our lives and our role as God’s partners in healing the earth? Can we give joyful gifts to loved ones and children without spending beyond our means, encouraging violence and greed, and succumbing to the temptation of useless and ecologically destructive purchases? This is a tall order, but it is the fast that Advent calls us. So, let us sing a few Christmas carols – even in church – for there is no need for liturgical fundamentalism. Let us rejoice in the wonders of a God-filled universe. Let us embrace the exuberance of incarnation. But, let us equally embrace the divine restlessness that calls us to expect more from ourselves as we seek to be fitting companions of the one whose birth and future presence we await.

Bruce Epperly is a theologian, writer, and spiritual guide. He is the author of twenty-one books, including Holy Adventure: 41 Days of Audacious Living, Process Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed, Philippians: An Interactive Adult Study, and The Center is Everywhere: Celtic Spirituality for the Postmodern Age. He may be reached for lectures, retreats, and seminars at drbruceepperly@aol.com.



What's Happening...

DIACONATE:

By Julie McCurdy

No Diaconate Meeting in November.

TRUSTEE:

By Al Beeson

Discussed and Reviewed projects progress/
priority as shown below in Priority order:

1. Sanctuary Cooling Needs: 1. Schedule the in advance running of the evap air prior to events. 2. Work w/AZ Heating [Paul Williams] to determine the advantages and cost of the installation of a new of cupola exhaust fan. 3. Perhaps found a source Walker Glass to bid on low E glass for Sanctuary stained glass window. 4. Look into high efficiency lighting for the Sanctuary [in existing fixtures] to reduce heat and energy use. 5. Obtain bid for installation of 2 more ceiling fans at the back of the Sanctuary, w/ a 3rd possible fan for the choir loft. Paul Sandstrom is not in favor of more fans.

2. Doors replacement exterior Sanctuary/Perkins Hall complex will start with the rear lower door and stage. We will evaluate the work done to determine contractor[s] needed for other exterior door repairs. Renovations Inc. S. Alarcon Street [Owner Tom Reilly]. Mike Bevier submitted a bid of \$5,084; Trustee/Cabinet approved. A partial payment of \$2100 was OK'd tonight. Est. time to order is three [3] weeks, install date is unknown.

3. Chancel wood railing design and installation requires a first class carpenter/furniture maker and efforts to locate found a Gary Cassidy verbal bid of \$3600 and he submitted a design/bid. We are in process of getting another bid [from Renovations Inc.] c/o Mike Bevier.

4. Heating of the basement choir room via addition of vent [heat] deflector will be done by working with AZ Heating [Paul Williams] before October 2011. Al has contacted AZ Heatingno bid install date yet set.

5. Sanctuary bell tower add ladder and modification to trap door for venting purposes. R Brown has already purchased ladder.

6. Light fixtures in basement [CE] repaired by Don Stephens, replaced some ballasts and parts.

7. Investigate the replacement of some of stem wall wood Office Bldg/check for termites/paint to match.

8. Sound system. No major Problems. Need to start and complete a revised manual/lockup duty changes.

9. Basement [unfinished] cleanup work party set for Saturday Nov 19, Bkfst@ 8am Perkins Hall. Still will need to coordinate with Pastor Jane Bill Linson and others to determine what stays [where & how best to store] and what goes? Members wanting to volunteer so we can add helpers to this important and needed project are encouraged to contact Al.

10. Exterior masonry work needed exterior/ chimney Perkins Hall bldg, interior choir room, exterior walls?.

11. Investigate placement and re-build [in Perkins Hall] for choir robe cabinet, with modifications to existing robe cabinet on stage for storage of chancel material.

11. Add rail to north side of chancel platform [wall] to assist those stepping down to Sanctuary floor.

12. Build out unfinished basement: decide what design/when and provide for waterproofing exterior walls. Provide ample storage cabinets etc. for users.

13 Look at replacement of flooring material for existing basement rooms as indicated. Consider floor paint.

14. Need to look at a security camera system for Sanctuary/Perkins Hall complex [4 camera system] cost est. TBD but not expected to exceed \$2K. System capable monitor from Office Bldg. We will contact Spike, for bid install price. Estimates when rec'd will be presented to Trustees/Cabinet for approval.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

by Barbara McClure

No CE Meeting in November.

Bring Your Christmas Tree Ornaments



There are several new ornaments on the tree-did you bring yours? The ornaments can be store bought, handmade, vintage or something from your collection.

Bring them now through Advent, and place them on the tree for all to admire. It's wonderful to see our family tree take shape!



Grandma's Holiday Tea

Join us **Wednesday, December 7, at 12:00** for our annual tea. Enjoy musical entertainment by **Song of Pines, Sweet Adelines** followed by a Holiday Tea. We also need baked goodies.

Joining us will be Faith United Community Church, Chino Valley Community Church, Temple B'rith Shalom, and Prescott United Methodist Church.



Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting?

Beginning in January the "Knit Wits" knitting group will meet in the church office conference room and knit, crochet, for a charitable cause.

Contact Donna Bauman for more information at 778-4153.

First and Third Tuesday of each month at 1:00 pm.

First knitting sessions are January 3 and January 17.



DONATE – *AND DELIVER* – A POINSETTIA



Remember our shut-ins and bless them this Christmas season by donating **and delivering a live poinsettia**. If you wish, you may purchase a poinsettia plant yourself and display it in our sanctuary during Advent. Or make a donation to the Flower Fund and a plant will be purchased for you. Please plan to deliver your poinsettia before Christmas.

Suggested recipients:

Evelyn Bennett, Martha Clark, Naomi Coppock, Mary Gale,
Mardell Hull, Chuck and Larami Jarvi, Mary Northrup,
Erwin and Arlene Relth, or a personal friend or family member

with her 7 year old daughter. Mom was leaning on her shopping cart, considering a box of Streak and Something, when her daughter takes it from her hand. “Ten dollars? Are you kidding me? You are so pretty, Mama. Leave your hair nice and plain and send that money straight to Haiti!” Out of the mouth’s of babes...

“Consider that child in the pond. Whether you give from a place of altruism or

abundance or karmic justice, optimism or duty, or a bleeding loving heart, you can do it too!” Catherine Newman, author.

If you would like to read this phenomenal article in its entirety, contact the Bergtholds. Next month the old format for Mission Matters (What is happening in mission at FCC-UCC) will return. We send our best wishes for a generous new year!

From the Library at FCCUCC

by Ruth Auchenbach, Christian Education Committee

I’ve come very close to worshipping Children’s books’ authors and illustrators. Mostly because they seem to honestly care about and love children – their abilities, emotions, interests. Grandpa’s Hammer by Ronald Kidd, a Habitat for Humanity book in our children’s library is about dreams, faith and a hammer!

Grandpa is a man of strong beliefs, but he suffers a loss. Grandma dies and he sets his hammer aside and retreats deep inside himself. His granddaughter decides to attempt bringing him back again and it takes all she can muster.

She bakes cookies, reads to him, gives numerous hugs. One day they visit a Habitat for Humanity work site: A house being built. A neighbor explains people from her church are helping to build a home for a family who doesn’t have a decent place to live.

Grandpa is curious and the rest of the story is a testament to the power of love and to the strength we give by helping others.



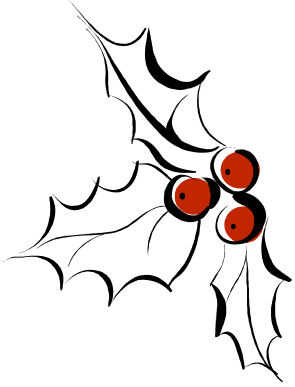
ADVENT SUPPER

Simple Soup/Bread Supper Gathering
Wednesdays, December 7, 14, & 21
Simple Supper 5:30 p.m.

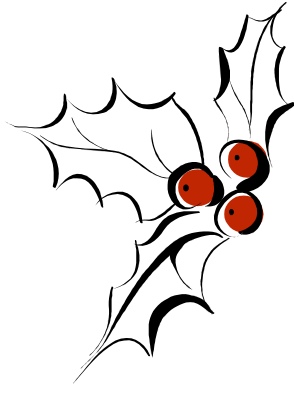
CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.





December 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 12:00 Bell Rehearsal 7:00 pm Taizé Service	2	3 10-2 Pastor Jane ringing bells for Salvation Army at Bashford Court
4 10:30 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 11:30 Coffee Time	5	6 7:00 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	7 12:00 Women's Fellowship's Grandma's Holiday Tea 5:30 Advent Supper 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	8 12:00 Bell Rehearsal 7:00 pm Taizé Service	9	10 10-2 Pastor Jane ringing bells for Salvation Army at Bashford Court
11 10:30 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 11:30 Coffee Time	12	13 4:30 Pastor Jane at Holiday Dinner at Las Fuentes 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	14 5:30 Advent Supper 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	15 12:00 Bell Rehearsal 7:00 pm Taizé Service	16	17 7:00 pm Cabinet Mtg. at Pastor Jane' House
18 10:30 Worship 10:30 Sunday School 11:30 Coffee Time	19	20 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	21 5:30 Advent Supper 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	22 12:00 Bell Rehearsal	23	24 7:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
25 Christmas Day 10:30 Worship	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	28 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	29 12:00 Bell Rehearsal	30	31



December Worship Leaders

LAY READERS

4th: Betty Corn
 11th: Anne Solt
 18th: Don Storer
 24th: Gordon Bergthold

USHERS

6th: Available
 13th: Available
 20th: Available
 27th: Available

GREETERS

4th: Dave & Kris Chatefield
 11th: Pete Norum & Babara McClure
 18th: David & Linda Foote
 24th: Bret & Judy Ely
 25th: Ron & Anne Solt

OFFERING COUNTERS

Pete Norum
 Sherry Hager
 Al Beeson
 Ron Solt

COMMUNION SERVERS

Judy & Brett Ely

COFFEE HOST *(Signup in Perkins Hall)*

4th: Jim, Kay and Destiny Gilpin
 11th: Barbara McClure & Pete Norum
 18th: Pat Welch & Cindy Welch
 24th: Betty Bergthold & Anne Solt

ALTAR FLOWERS/WHEELCHAIR

4th: Poinsettias
 11th: Poinsettias
 28th: Poinsettias
 24th: Poinsettias

STATISTICS

	Attendance	Offerings
10/3	64	3,388
10/9	65	1,940
10/16	72	3,224
10/23	52	951.50
10/30	72	1,730.25
Total	Avg. 65	\$11,233.75



Happy Birthday

12/3	John McCurdy
12/6	Tommie Wildman
12/8	Carole Sue Linson
12/9	Mary Northrup
12/9	Nolan Thomas
12/12	Richard Unkenholz
12/13	Rodger Payne
12/18	Pete Norum
12/19	Charles Hille
12/24	Jay Eby
12/25	Don Stephens
12/27	Kay Gilpin

Church Leadership Team

CABINET

Moderator	Gordon Bergthold
Treasurer	Sylvia Staats
Clerk	Sherry Hager
Trustee Chair	Al Beeson
Deaconate Chair	Julie McCurdy
Christian Ed Chair	Barbara McClure
Church Missions Chair	Betty Bergthold
Pastor Parish Relations	Christy Dinsman
Member at Large	John McCurdy

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Barbara McClure, Chair
Gerri Lyons
Jane Cheek
Ruth Auchenbach

CHURCH VITALITY

Anne Solt
Pete Norum

DIACONATE

Julie McCurdy, Chair
Judy Ely

PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS

Christy Dinsman

STEWARDSHIP

Don Storer
Betty Bergthold
Ron Solt

TRUSTEES

Al Beeson, Chair
John McCurdy, Vice Chair
Chuck Jarvi, Bldg & Grounds
Don Stephens
John Huff, Multimedia System

Church Leadership Team

Continued

CHURCH MISSIONS

Betty Bergthold, Chair
Bev Summers
Sherry Hager

WOMAN'S FELLOWSHIP

Joanne Storer, Chair
Sherry Hager, Vice Chair
Sylvia Staats, Treasurer
Gerri Lyons, Kitchen

FOUNDATION

Tom Lloyd, President
Dr. Billie Alarie, Vice President
Al Beeson, Trustee Chair
Phil Preble, Treasurer
Jay Eby, Secretary

CHURCH STAFF

Licensed Minister	Pastor Jane Cheek
Office Administrator	Holly Houston
Director of Music	Jane Lawler
Organist	Carole Sue Linson
Custodian	Bill Linson
Child Care	Josh Taylor

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First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

To serve GOD with joy;
listening, sharing, acting
with compassion
and fairness for all.