

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



## *UNITING NOTES* **JANUARY 2012**

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### **1**Defining Our Terms, Part V *Our Understanding of the Church*

As we take a look at the idea of “Church” through the lens of Progressive Christianity I can’t think of too many other notions in the world of religion that means so many different things to so many different people. Today, “Church” can mean anything from the grand cathedrals of Europe to the humble store front enterprises that have arisen in the past 20 years. For some, “Church” is a quiet walk in the woods or the work of one’s hands in service to another. It is an idea that can be absolutely central to the lives of some and completely meaningless to others. What we are attempting this month is to identify and characterize what this idea of church means from the traditional, progressive point of view. Let’s listen to the conclusion of Prof. Delwin Brown who has thoughtfully examined the concept of “Church.”

The Church is the community of those who come together to discern, on the basis of what they see in the story of Jesus, where in the world God is working today to transform human life and all of creation, and to work on the side of God's redemptive presence and power in the world today.

Progressive Christians affirm personal responsibility, but we also recognize the social nature of personal life. We therefore insist that the maintenance of dynamic and self-aware Christian identity, conviction and action requires community; personal Christian identity rests on the continuing critique, guidance and nourishment within Christian community. The “Church” is that community wherever this quality of fellowship exists, oriented around the questions, “Where is God working in the world today?” and “What must we be doing to participate in that divine working?” This ecumenical Church is not only contemporary Christians; it is also the critique, guidance and nourishment of Christians past as mediated through the tradition. Finally, this Church is more than belief and deliberation about the workings of God; its power to enable lives that are effective in the world requires also the nourishment of the affective life of the Christian. This understanding of the Church is the basis for our decisions about how to order our common life in Christian community, the reason for our educational programs, the underlying logic of our preaching, the point of our social and political outreach. It explains the importance of the Church's liturgical life and determines the shape and goal of Christian liturgy. This understanding of the Church gives purpose and direction to our seminaries.

I leave you with these thoughts to ponder: Does your idea and understanding of the church align with what has been described? How would you define this notion based on your life experience and expectations? Is there anything in particular with which you agree or dispute?

Our concluding contribution in this series will concern *Our Understanding of Salvation*.  
As always, I welcome your feed-back.

Peace,

*Pastor Bill*

† PRAYERS AND NOTES †

*In Our Prayers. . . .*

Vera and Ray King, David Cooper, Katie Pierce, Gavin Martin, Kay Poen, Katie and Dick Kilgore, Ruth and Tom Reid



Prayer Group will meet at noon, **Tuesday, Jan, 3rd**, at Sandy Znetko's.

Lunch will be provided.

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**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- Jan. 1 Jim Kirk
- Jan. 7 Mary Baugh
- Jan. 7 Connie Huffman
- Jan. 11 Vic Page
- Jan. 13 Jim Rodgers
- Jan. 17 Tom Reid
- Jan. 18 Gary Emanuel
- Jan. 19 Susannah Carney
- Jan. 19 Phil Daykin
- Jan. 21 Bobbie Ursin
- Jan. 26 Katie Pierce
- Jan. 31 Este Pope
- Jan 31 Levi Mallery



**JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

- |                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| John and Janet Leung     | Jan. 22 |
| Phil and Stirling Daykin | Jan. 30 |

***Women's Fellowship...***

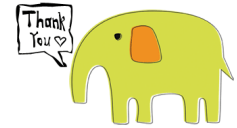
Will meet at noon, Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at the church. Please bring 2-3 dozen cookies to exchange.

**Book Group will be held at Alanna Mallery's Home on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. The book to be discussed is Animal Dreams by Barbara Kingsolver**

**THANK YOU'S GO TO:**

Alanna for getting the January newsletter published and into your home.

Kathy E., Heather W., and Este P. for their leadership and hard work putting together a Christmas Pageant. And to the children and Youth who so elegantly told the Christmas story on stage.



To Steven S., for his choir direction and the Choir for their hard work preparing the Music. For Juhee and her talent on the piano and flute; Logan on percussion, and Julie G.'s willingness to help out at the last minute on the piano and organ. Thank you God for all of these talented people.



**OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

By January 1, 2012 we will already be celebrating the eighth day of Christmas. Finally, a Sunday Worship in which we can sing all of our beloved Christmas Carols. Did you figure out all of the carols from the last newsletter? If not you will find the answers at the church on the bulletin board.

On Sunday, January 8, we will celebrate the coming of the Magi (Epiphany, Jan. 6). It is also our traditional potluck Sunday and the day we will remove the Christmas decorations. So plan to stay after church, eat, chat, and re-decorate.

**POTLUCK JANUARY 8**

What about having a 'baked potato' meal. We'll provide the baked potatoes if you'll bring the toppings or side dishes. Yum!!!! You'll hear more about this idea.

The last Sunday in January is our Health and Healing Sunday, when our H & H minister, Patricia Clarke, will be preaching.



**FROM OUR  
MODERATOR  
ED ZNETKO**

from the Moderator, Ed Znetko

Happy New Year. In January we will hold our Annual Budget Meeting, on the 29th. The budget committee will be meeting very soon and present a budget for approval. In the meantime I found some guidelines for church membership, from another UCC church--just food for thought. Ideas of time and talent.

1. Attend church regularly.
2. Attend "coffee hour" and spend time fellowshiping.
3. Pray for other church members by name.
4. Volunteer to usher.
5. Pray for the growth, health, and mission of our church.
6. Donate regularly to our church and its programs.
7. Pray for or support the people who work with our kids.
8. Attend and/or support special church functions.
9. Tell the choir you appreciate their ministry.
10. Praise, affirm and otherwise encourage our confirmands.
11. Act in love, concern and be a good listener to others.
12. Refuse to gossip.
13. Send cards, call or visit a shut-in.
14. Invite someone to attend worship with you.
15. Be social, warm and inviting to a guest.

16. Pray and work to discover a gift you can offer our church.
17. Volunteer to help with a need, such as gardening, potluck.
18. Participate in the prayer circle.
19. Attend, pray for or otherwise support adult Bible study.
20. Join the choir.
21. Offer to be the lector.
22. Read the Bible regularly.
23. Offer to read the Bible to someone else.
24. Actively look for ways to improve the appearance or condition of the sanctuary or other part of the church building.
25. Write an article for the church newsletter.
26. Thank God for our church.

### Apple Sauce Cookies



- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Crisco
- 1 egg beaten
- 2 cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup apple sauce (unsweetened)

**Cream together sugar, Crisco and beaten egg. Mix dry ingredients in separate bowl. Gradually add flour mixture and apple sauce to creamed ingredients. Drop by teaspoonfuls on baking sheet. Bake 325 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.**

**Optional: Frost with basic powdered sugar icing and sprinkle with colored sugar.**

**FROM OUR UCC NATIONAL OFFICE**

*The world needs the distinct values, vision and voice of the  
United Church of Christ - Continuing Testament.  
Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives.*



The Bethlehem Call:  
Here We Stand--Stand with Us

Written by Kairos Palestine  
December 13, 2011

How long, O God, will they steal our livelihood?  
Oppress, imprison and humiliate our people?  
Deprive our children of their childhood? Indeed  
how long, God, will the multitudes of Christians of  
the world ignore the anguish of our Palestinian  
sisters and brothers and all of the oppressed?

“Come and see,” said the Christians of Palestine.  
“Come and see the olive groves, the bulldozers, the  
ancient terraces, the segregated cities. The situation  
is worsening.”

More than 60 participants from 15 countries heeded an  
urgent call by Kairos Palestine. On 4-10 December  
2011, they joined Palestinians in the Kairos for Global  
Justice Encounter/Conference in Bethlehem.

The aims and objectives of the encounter/conference  
were to:

- Bring awareness of and share a Kairos  
consciousness experienced by all groups  
attending the encounter;
- Strengthen and build ties among Kairos groups to  
form a committed global network for justice;
- Learn from the Palestinian experience the  
urgency of Kairos solidarity and to end injustice  
by implementing concrete actions at the national,  
regional and global level.

On the road to this encounter/conference, there was  
the Amman Call in 2007, which ended 60 years  
without a unified Christian voice speaking against  
the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The next  
milestone was the Berne Perspective in 2008, which  
is illustrated in the statement: “Enough is enough.  
No more words without deeds, it is time for action.”  
The cry for justice in Palestine reached a pivotal  
moment when, in December 2009, Palestinian  
Christians launched the [Kairos Palestine](#) document:  
“A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of  
Palestinian suffering.”

We now say: “Injustice no more. Here we stand. Stand  
with us”

*You may read the full report on the UCC website, [ucc.org/  
globalministries.org/news](http://ucc.org/globalministries.org/news).*

## FROM THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

*Embodying God's  
unconditional justice and love . . .*

### Faith and the Fence:

An Inter-Religious Youth conference on  
Immigration  
Made possible by the Vesper Society of California

**March 4, 2012 - 3 to 8 PM**

**Pilgrim's Rest Church**

**1401 E. Jefferson St.**

**Phoenix, AZ 85034**

There are few issues that have been so  
divisive in our state as immigration. Even in our  
houses of worship. What should be the faithful  
response to a problem that is not only political, but  
touches the very lives of people who are in our  
communities.

Some have suggested more fences to  
prevent illegal crossing. Is that the best solution?  
What happens to us as a people when we build  
fences? These are questions all people of faith are  
asking as we discuss American immigration  
policies.

You may know someone who is without  
proper documentation. You may know someone  
who has been deported. But whether you have  
personal experience in this matter or not, we all  
want to do the right thing, and that means  
knowing the facts.

We are inviting high school teens and  
young adults from our Jewish, Muslim, and  
Christian communities to come together to see if  
there is another way besides building more fence.  
We will hear from immigration lawyers, detention  
workers, people who look hard at racism, and faith  
leaders who have responded to the human need of  
migrants.

There will be role-playing, music, fun  
exercises to help better understand what people  
feel, and a chance to make a difference.  
Register for "Faith and the Fence" today.  
Come with a friend or bring your whole youth  
group and get to know some people from other  
religions. **There is no charge.**

The Lay Academy, scheduled for  
January 27/28, can be registered for on the  
web site. John Thomas is the featured  
speaker. If you are interested please talk to  
me about going. For more information go to  
the conference web site. **uccswc.org**

[Janet Birchenough-Koehn - Lay rep. on MPB](#)

# FELLOWSHIP and MEMBERSHIP Scenes from the Season of Advent

*Photo Montage by Lindsay Wilson with assistance from Randy*



Ethan and Mercy at the Pageant



This ornament reminds us of Christmases past.



Marsha was the acolyte for The Second Sunday of Advent



The manger scene looks Different up close!



Pastor Bill introduced the Christmas Pageant.



Pastor Bill, Julie and Zach

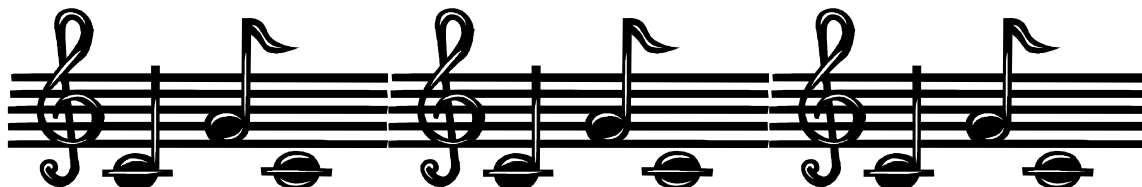


The choir was in fine form as Steven conducted And Nancy and Jim joined us on a recent visit To Flagstaff.



The Christmas pageant manger scene from a distance.

First Congregational Church of Flagstaff  
740 N. Turquoise Drive  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Rev. William J. Guise, Pastor



Please come for the performance of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" on Wed, January 4, 7:30 PM. A one hour opera, in English, about the three kings and their encounter with a crippled boy. A wonderful family show. Tickets on sale now, \$5.00 for adults; \$3.00 for students and seniors. Contact Sandy Znetko for further information.