



The Always New Beginning

By PASTOR ERIC O. LEDERMANN

The term “apocalypse” creates conjures mental images of fire raining down from heaven, people mysteriously being “taken up” or raptured, or some other violent dystopian scenario like Tim LaHaye’s and Jerry Jenkins’ *Left Behind* series. But, “apocalypse” actually just means “to uncover” or “reveal.” The thing being revealed, or unveiled, could be something new or ancient, but previously hidden.

Richard Rohr suggests, I think rightly, that in order for something new or previously hidden to be revealed, old things must be peeled away or removed. To reveal a diamond or nugget of gold in the ground, layer upon layer of earth must be carefully and methodically removed.

Rohr further suggests that “[a]pocalyptic literature ... is not meant to strike fear in us as much as a radical rearrangement. It’s not the end of the world. It’s the end of *worlds*—our *worlds* that we have created.”¹

What are the things hidden that the writers of our holy scriptures were trying to unveil? Luke offers a series of allegories and parables about lost (or hidden) things that certain characters go to extravagant efforts to find: the lost sheep (15.1-7), the lost coin (15.8-10), the prodigal son (15.11-32). After these stories, Jesus laments over Jerusalem, responding to the threat on his life from the local

governor, Herod. Jesus says, according to Luke, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill prophets [those who speak truths, often hidden truths] and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that. Look, your house is abandoned” (*Common English Bible*, 23.37-38).

Apocalyptic literature attempts to offer a new or alternate reality (or way of seeing things) which can bring light into the darkest of times or situations. In the 2010-2011 *Horizon’s Bible Study* published by Presbyterian Women, the Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing suggests that one of the most famous apocalyptic literature, the *Book of Revelation* (an English word for “apocalypse”) is actually a love letter with a message of hope.

Yes, the same book that LaHaye and Jenkins use as the basis for their *Left Behind* series, which, in my opinion, has little to do with what John of Patmos wrote in the *Book of Revelation*. LaHaye and Jenkins take great liberties with the scripture. In the *Book of Revelation* the author begins by introducing Jesus as “the one who loves us” (1.5). In the *Left Behind* series, it’s all about rapture and the end of the world (as opposed to the end of “these” times).

Rossing writes, “*Revelation* takes us

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This issue of the
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the word...

Gratitude

From Medieval Latin *gratitudinem*, meaning “thankfulness” from Latin *gratus* “thankful, pleasing.” It stems from the Proto-Indo-European root *gwere-* meaning “to favor.” In the mid-15th century gratitude meant “good will.” The meaning of thankfulness is from the 1560s. It is the hypothetical source of/evidence for its existence is provided by: Sanskrit *grnati* “sings, praises, announces;” Avestan *gar-* “to praise;” Lithuanian *giriui, girti* “to praise, celebrate;” Old Celtic *bardos* “poet, singer.” (From <https://www.etymonline.com/word/gratitude>)

November in the U.S. is known for the Thanksgiving holiday when we consider all for which we may be thankful. In the Christian tradition we seek to have a spirit of gratitude as a form of prayerful acknowledgement of God’s grace.

APOCALYPSE

Continued from page 1

on a journey into the heart of God's own dreams for our world."² It is the unveiling of a new Jerusalem, a new world, a new way of being in the world that invites us to live into God's hope and vision—a world of peace, abundance, and true relationship (not the pseudo relationships we so often build on social media). Rossing even encourages readers to begin at the end—read chapters 21-22 first, then read the rest of the book through that lens.

Returning to Rohr, he writes that everything is temporary. Nothing is permanent. Specifically, he writes, "Jesus' use of apocalyptic language is his way of showing that everything is passing away. God puts us in a world of passing things where everything changes, and nothing remains the same. ... Apocalyptic literature helps us make room for something new by clearing out the old—old ideas, old stories, old ways of thinking, especially if we've become too attached to them."

This past year, Rohr suggests, has been an apocalyptic time. He offers the words of author Neale Donald Walsch: "Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that" (Facebook post by Walsch, July 22, 2014). We have been forced to let go of a lot of old ways as we navigated and adapted to the new reality of the pandemic. And though millions have received vaccinations, it looks as though the virus

that causes COVID-19 will be with us for a long time. The Spanish Flu of 1918 is still with us over 100 years later—that's why we get flu shots every year.

We cannot keep putting our lives on hold. We cannot keep shutting things down. We are going to have to discover new ways of doing things that allow us to live our lives *and* keep one another as safe and healthy as possible. For this to work, our hyper-individualism is going to have to give way to re-learning how to trust and depend on one another—which also means re-learning how to *be* trustworthy and dependable *for* one another. I'm not only talking about the bubbles of friends and family we have created to stave off infection. I'm talking about how we choose to be with and for strangers at work, at stores, at the coffee shop, and in our daily lives. I'm talking about wearing masks not for ourselves, but for the benefit of those who may be at risk or who *believe* they are at risk, whether we agree or not. I'm talking about erring on the side of caution for the sake of the vulnerable. For ninety-nine percent of us, it doesn't hurt to wear a mask. But it *may* hurt not to. ■

*Be of good courage
and know that you are loved!*

¹ Richard Rohr, "Apocalyptic Hope: This Is An Apocalypse," April 26, 2021, <https://cac.org/this-is-an-apocalypse-2021-04-26> (accessed May 3, 2021), emphasis in original.

² Horizons Bible Study, 3.



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MONTHLY DRIVE 'n' DROP

November 7, 2021, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Normally First Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!

TCAA has requested **breakfast items** for the homeless and those needing food boxes. Here are the items needed for TCAA and UPC Refugee Ministry



- tuna
- beans
- canned Meats
- ramen noodles
- canned vegetables
- soups
- breakfast items
- towels/washcloths
- baby wipes
- travel snacks

Financial contributions may be sent to the office.
Make checks out to "TCAA" and reference "Food Pantry"
or to UPC and reference "Refugee" in the memo

UPC NEWS & Current Events is published monthly. Submissions of announcements, stories, op-eds, and reflections on recent events at UPC are welcomed.

Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less
Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space available.

**Send submissions
by the 20th of each month to:
newsletter@upctempe.org**

Book of the Month

A Book Club Event Not to Miss in November

By ROANN MONSON

November 12, 2021, 7:00 pm, via Zoom

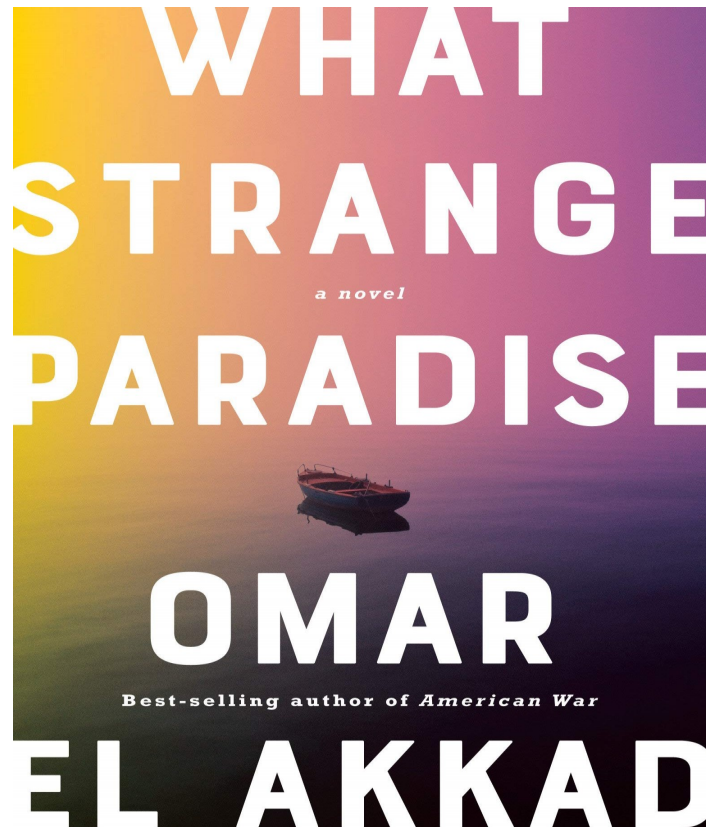
The chosen book for this month is “What Strange Paradise” by Omar El Akkad.

The story is about the Global Refugee Crisis. This fiction story is told through the eyes of a child. The novel begins with the sinking of a boat which is overfilled with the weight of Syrians, Egyptians, and Lebanese people trying to escape their homelands. Hope and kindness endure throughout the tale about migration on a global scale

More bodies have washed up on the shores of a small island. Another overfilled, ill-equipped, dilapidated ship has sunk under the weight of its too many passengers: Syrians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Lebanese, Palestinians, all of them desperate to escape untenable lives back in their homelands. But miraculously, someone has survived the passage: nine-year-old Amir, a Syrian boy who is soon rescued by Vänna. Vänna is a teenage girl, who, despite being native to the island, experiences her own sense of homelessness in a place and among people she has come to disdain. And though Vänna and Amir are complete strangers, though they don’t speak a common language, Vänna is determined to do whatever it takes to save the boy.

In alternating chapters, we learn about Amir’s life and how he came to be on the boat, and we follow him and the girl as they make their way toward safety. *What Strange Paradise* is the story of two children finding their way through a hostile world.

But it is also a story of empathy and indifference, of hope and despair—and about the way each of those things can blind us to reality. ■



“RiseShine Bread” Shares Love

UPC Bakers Invite Congregational Support and Involvement

By ANDREA WHITE

Board of Deacons

November will be a big month for Rise & Shine Bread...we have weekly commitments to bake bread for I-HELP at University Presbyterian, about 200 mini-loaves!! We need help!!

Sign up at the website, riseshinebread.org. You’ll need to be registered (most of you are!!) signed in and go to the I’ll Help>Volunteer Calendar. I’d be happy to orient any of your friends, family or neighbors if they want to help!

Here is a link to a video you can view for more information: <https://youtu.be/Go5IILJTuw>

Please contact Andrea White at info@riseshinebread.org or (480) 580-3021 for more information. ■



Presbyterian Women

News and Upcoming Events



By CAROL RICKEL and HELEN GRIFFIN

Sanitary Supplies for Haitian Girls

Haiti has been hard hit this year with weather, disease, and politics. Never before have needs been greater. Pastor Luc at Harmony Mission has pleaded with us to continue to make and send sanitary hygiene kits for girls and women. He has assured us of a reliable method of transporting the kits into the country and to the recipients. The reusable supplies are designed to last three years. We get to offer our hands and resources to this project. This project is sponsored by PW but ALL are welcome to participate. I continue to serve as team captain for the process. Any communication can go to me at helen.e.h.griffin@gmail.com or (480) 695-5128.

We will use a hybrid production process to allow people to work at home or to gather together to cut, measure, sew, serge, chat, and enjoy each other's company. I will courier any materials to your homes or we can arrange drop-offs at church. It was amazing how

well 80 kits came together last year when we all worked on" progressive sewing" at home.

Here's how you can help:

Non-sewing tasks:

1. Trace shield pattern onto cotton and/or waterproof PUL fabric. Cut out the pieces.
2. Clip shield pieces together in a particular order.
3. Donate! We only need 12 more yards of cotton fabric. We need fabric that works well culturally, physically, and durably. *Here are the requirements:* 100 % cotton, appealing medium/dark colors, preferably with patterns and botanical, geometric, batik, etc. patterns
4. NO light colors, NO prints with faces or eyes such as animal prints or people, NO prints with insects or snakes, except butterflies, NO camouflage, NO Cartoon, TV, pop culture, national symbols, words, or glam.

Sewing tasks:

1. Serge small flannel pieces for the pads (machine and lessons provided).
2. Sew one piece of flannel to another with two lines of sewing.
3. Serge all around the larger flannel pieces.
4. Sew shields together.
5. Serge around bag edges.
6. Sew bags together.

Thank you so much for your willingness to be part of this worthwhile project. Let me know how you would like to help. We need lots of hands to meet the Haitian needs. ■

Thank Offering

"Presbyterian Women" has long been synonymous with mission. The PW mission focus for November is the Thank Offering. This gives women a tangible way to express their gratitude for the special blessings in their lives. The grants generated by this offering range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 with at least 40% going to health ministries. In 2020, twelve projects were chosen. Nine of the projects serve people in the U.S. and three are international. UPC members gave \$980 to the Thank Offering in 2020. If you would like to contribute, make checks payable to University Presbyterian Church and in the memo indicate PW Thank Offering.

Christmas Boutique

In lieu of our traditional Christmas Tea, we are putting together a Christmas Boutique where you can purchase holiday décor, gifts and sweet treats. Be on the lookout for details in the coming days. We are thrilled to announce Sue Legg has made another fabulous quilt to be raffled off during the event..

Christmas Angel Tree

November 22–December 12

University Presbyterian Church believes that every child deserves to know the joy of a new toy at Christmas. To help make the holidays brighter for the less fortunate, we've partnered with Tempe Elementary School District to provide Christmas gifts to children in need.

Taking part is easy to do. Stop by the Christmas Angel tree in the Narthex after Nov 22nd,

1. Pick up the Angel tag,
2. Purchase the gift or gifts,
3. Wrap them,
4. Return them to the tree **with the tag attached.**

We will also be accepting gift cards in any amount from any store. Our goal is to pick up 60 tags this year.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Cheryl Hardy at Cheri@TempeAgents.com or (602) 920-5176. ■



Circles of Hope, Healing, and Humanity Nov. 17 - 7 p.m. (Zoom)

Please join AFN for our collective healing in a virtual space. These healing spaces are for Social Justice & Movement Practitioners Caretakers, Teachers, Community Members and Faith Leaders. We explore the use of somatics - embodiment work - breathing, storytelling, art, and even movement to unite to create positive change for the common good.



Details: <https://www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/annualmeeting>.

The Arizona Faith Network is excited to invite you to join us for our 2021 Annual Meeting. We will gather virtually to pray, connect, and redefine justice together through the lenses of hope, healing, and humanity. Reserve your spot or sign up to be a sponsor today!

**Learn more about the Arizona Faith Network by
subscribing to the newsletter at:**

www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/subscribe



Christmas Dinner Box Project

Walking in Beauty has maintained a consistent delivery of donated necessities and basic supplies to the Native communities of Northern Arizona. This Christmas, by working together as a community of various faith and community groups, we will provide a box of non-perishable Christmas Dinner staples to 450 families. Boxes will be collected from the Phoenix area by Knight Transportation and delivered to central locations on the reservations in Mid-December. Community organizations will be responsible for publicizing, collecting, and storing boxes until that date. If you are interested in helping out, please call Carla Miller at (480) 334-9945.



Join the anti-hunger and food systems advocacy calls with the Arizona Food Bank Network and the Arizona Food System Network, held every other Friday. More information and recordings of past calls are available at: <https://www.azfsn.org/>

Wiping Away Tears of Injustice

May God's will be done, and may we be part of it



Desirée Fawn/Unsplash

By CHIP HARDWICK
Presbyterians Today

A friend and I, who both lost our moms suddenly and tragically during seminary, recently had the chance to talk about it with one another for the first time. As we did, all the feelings of anguish, pain and hopelessness came back a little too easily. Perhaps it was that hopelessness that made me value the first words of Mom's funeral so much. The pastor read several short passages of Scripture, including words from Isaiah 25 that I most longed to be true: *He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces.*

As Isaiah composes his dream, Israel is under direct threat from Assyria, the combative superpower next door. They need hope that the destruction that awaits them will not be the last word — that despite their hardship, one day God will indeed swallow up death forever and wipe away the tears from all faces and

that one day they will again “be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

The church calendar includes this passage on Nov. 1, which is All Saints' Day — a day when we remember the faithful who have gone before us. As we grieve, we need Isaiah's words of hope for the victory that will one day come. On All Saints' Day, like all other days, we pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven.” We pray God will take away our tears, now, and not just one day at the end of history.

Even beyond our grief, we can look to the rest of this passage and pray for God to make all of Isaiah's promises come true. We yearn for the disgrace of God's people to be taken away. We hunger for the day all people will feast on amazing food and well-aged wines in an awe-inspiring celebration. We look forward to God's destruction of “the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is over all nations.” Isaiah addresses Israel, but his dream gives hope to all peoples.

A wedding at a church I once served showed that we sometimes see glimpses of how Isaiah's dream already comes true. The bride, from a wealthy, established white family, spent a season in Kenya, where she fell in love with the groom. He moved to the states to walk with her toward a marriage that was not welcome by her family. It caused confusion, hurt, disappointment and tension in the days leading up to the ceremony.

On the big day, the pastor looked at the wedding party and guests, and proclaimed that what he saw before him was a foretaste of Isaiah's dream — a feast of all peoples. He pointed to the hope of the union, as it signaled a day when the shroud of racism that is cast over all peoples would one day be gone. He expressed gratitude for the gift of the couple, who helped him see the future that would one day come, on Earth as it is in heaven. The skeptics in her family joined Isaiah's dream and began to celebrate their union.

Of course, God's vision for all peoples includes interracial relationships, but it is so much broader than this. The feast the Scriptures describe is filled with both peace and justice. The amazing love celebrated between the wedding couple will not preclude, I suspect, their having “the talk” with their teenage boy about what to do to stay safe in interactions with police officers. Their daughters will probably still face what a Rutgers University 2020 study found: five acts of racial discrimination per day, on average.

One day, the prophetic tradition of our Scriptures tells us, there will be no more tears over racial injustice. One day, God will take away this disgrace from among us. Meanwhile, what can we do so that more of us see a glimpse of this coming day right now? Let's join God's work, so that Isaiah's dream for all people comes true on earth, as it is in heaven.

Isaiah 25:6-9 is a lectionary text for Nov. 1, All Saints' Day. ■

Practice of Stewardship Through Your Connection to University Presbyterian

By KATIE RAINES

Stewardship Chair

The Book of Order emphasizes stewardship. "Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God's creatures." Our stewardship supports our local congregation and efforts beyond.

University Presbyterian Church has just placed special emphasis on stewardship through the annual campaign. This campaign and your pledges help UPC plan its operations for next year. We use pledges as an important component of the budgeting process which will be under-

taken by the Session in the next couple of months. Part of the budgeting includes our local church's per capita to the denomination and support for the Presbyterian and Synod mission work. We have received pledges totally about \$297,000 as of October 19th. Thank you for your pledges.

We hear about special offerings. The denomination has four special offerings throughout the year. The post recent was the Global Witness and Peacemaking Offering. These special offerings connect to the denomination and its work beyond our congregation.

If you are like me, your mailbox is receiving solicitations for donations and sponsorships for local charities and national and international organizations.

You may give to these groups as part of your practice of Christian stewardship. I recently learned of a similar effort available through the PCUSA, the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. It is available on-line at <https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org/gifts/>. Explore a wide variety of gifts that provide real and positive impact around the world.

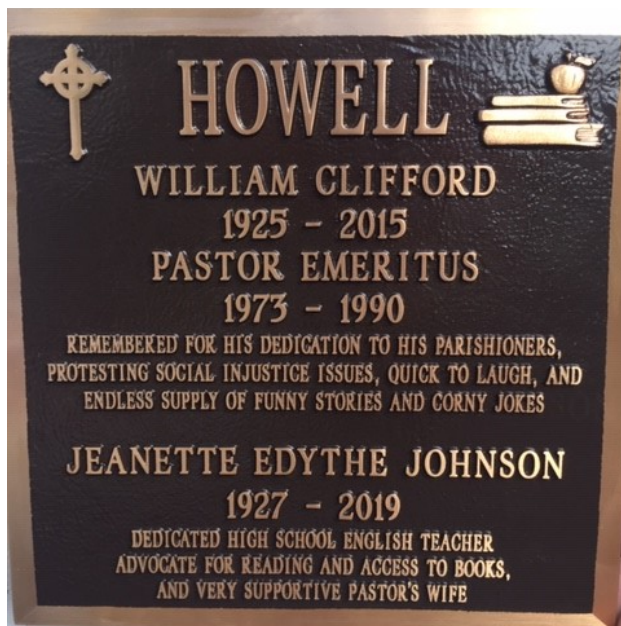
And of course, there is the additional support the congregation gives by donations of time, money and material to the local UPC work. Each week we hear of the generosity of our community for refugees, the homeless, the local food bank, school children and military. This continues to be a blessing.

The practice of stewardship continues. ■

Paying Tribute to Pastor Emeritus Bill Howell

By LAWN GRIFFITHS

A new bronze plaque was installed in UPC's columbarium to pay tribute to the late Pastor William Howell, minister 1973 to 1990, and his wife, Jeanette Howell, a beloved Tempe High School English teacher and fierce advocate for literacy. Pat Gallagher and Pete Godfrey, right, installed it October 18. ■



Don't Sidestep Advent

Commit to a prayerful — and extended — season



By **SCOTT SZABO**
Presbyterian Today

In the first year of our marriage, my wife and I created a nontraditional Advent wreath, forsaking the liturgical purple and pink candles for more muted earth tones. As our then-home of Los Angeles provided scant access to evergreens, we used river rock instead of festive boughs. We were delighted, and each year we have dutifully erected it at the start of the season, even as the design choices we once made now feel overwrought and dated.

We light the candles of our Advent wreath as part of a devotion at the start of Sunday evening meals. Though this has long been our practice, it was not until COVID-19 prevented an in-person gathering on Christmas Eve that we first lit the “Christ candle” at the wreath’s center. Prior to that, we were always away from home on Dec. 24. Truth be told, there have also been years in which other candles have gone unlit, as our noble intentions to genuinely observe Advent frequently fall victim to the cultural enticements to revel in early Christmas cheer.

Sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas, this season of anticipation for God’s shalom often buckles under the saccharine-sweet sentimentalism of Hallmark movies and a culture of excess consumption that is especially pronounced during the holiday season. The impact on the Church’s faith can be extensive when Advent is overlooked.

For starters, since Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity, its role in shaping our perception of what is to follow is significant. During Advent we hear from ancient voices awaiting the coming of the Messiah. This emphasis on anticipation reminds us that our world has not arrived. God’s plan is still unfolding. It is to declare a message that brings comfort to the afflicted and affliction to the comfortable. It is also a time in which we need to critique our propensity for merrymaking as a means of denying the presence of pain.

Further, to short-circuit Advent by filling its days with Christmas glee is to risk undercutting the integrity of the latter as well. It is akin to eating too many sweets, where at a certain point they lose their flavor. As the days of Lent and then the observance of Maundy Thursday,

Good Friday and Holy Saturday, known as the Triduum, make the proclamation of Christ’s resurrection at Easter all the more joyful, so too does a robust Advent aid us in appreciating the Christmas season more fully.

So how might we become better at observing Advent? The comparison of Advent to Lent is a helpful starting point. In earlier times, Advent, like Lent, was a 40-day period. Known alternatively as the Nativity Fast or Winter Lent, these 40 days carry with them the benefit of beginning in early November. As a personal discipline, one could begin a period of fasting and prayer on Nov. 16, which allows for a full 40 days of prayer and fasting until the Feast of the Nativity.

On the congregational level, in recent years several faith communities have experimented with a seven-week cycle for Advent, following the guidance offered by the Advent Project. Noting a thematic change in the readings of the Revised Common Lectionary in early November, this proposal uses the seven messianic names of the O Antiphons, which are also recorded in the Latin hymn “Veni, Veni Emmanuel,” as the focus for each Sunday between All Saints’ Day and Christmas. In churches that have adopted this practice, a modified Advent wreath of seven candles is often used.

Now I admit that the irony of encouraging more weeks in Advent when I began this column confessing my struggle to observe even four is not lost on me. I don’t mean to insist we abandon the many lovely traditions leading up to Christmas that we hold dear. Perhaps by allowing Advent an earlier start, though, we can embrace both somberness and celebration, simply by allowing the former its due. With any luck, we’ll come to find we appreciate both a bit more as a result. ■

The Mitchells — Installment No. 28a

By ERIC O. LEDERMANN

It had been about a year since Alex had cast his shadow on the doorway of Faith Presbyterian Church. That woman, Ms. Gentry, had cornered him last time. It scared him. He isn't used to that kind of attention. Trust was a precious and rare commodity living on the streets. Yet, he felt the most welcome of any other community he had visited. Most of the time church people either ignored him, watched him like he was going to rob them, or ran him off. The emptiness in his heart left a great big hole of loneliness. And hunger.

Alex found himself back at Faith Church. He waited nearby and watched as people walked in to the sanctuary for worship. They all wore masks of various types: surgical looking masks, masks with bright flowers, and one even said "vaccinated" in bold letters across the front. He didn't have a mask. Maybe they won't notice, like most places.

As soon as everyone was in, Alex slowly left the shade of a tree across the street and walked across the parking lot toward the door. As he walked into the narthex, a man in a very fine three-piece suit approached him—complete with vest and watch chain hanging out of the vest pocket under the coat. Alex froze. This was it!

"Welcome to Faith Church," the man said gently. It wasn't what Alex expected. The man had a nametag on his shirt: Stan Johnson. "We're glad you're here. We are requiring everyone to wear masks."

Alex said nothing.

"Do you have a mask?" Mr. Johnson asked without even a hint of judgment or damnation.

Alex said nothing.

"Sir, do you have a mask?" Mr. Johnson asked again.

Again, no answer.

"You can't go in unless you have a mask."

Alex started to turn around.

One of the side doors to the sanctuary swung open and he suddenly heard a

familiar voice. "Alex!" It had been a while, but it was definitely familiar. It was Ms. Gentry. She saw him through the windows in the doors. "Where have you been? We've missed you."

Alex stood there, frozen, not sure what to do. He looked at Ms. Gentry, and then at the man asking him about masks.

"Does he need a mask, Ms. Gentry?" Mr. Johnson asked. "We have some here."

"Thank you, Stan," Ms. Gentry responded, taking the blue surgical-like mask from Mr. Johnson's hand and holding it out for Alex.

Mr. Johnson stood there in his three-piece suit, a stack of worship bulletins in his other hand. He always wore a suit to church—he was the only one. Standing at 6 feet 2 inches with broad shoulders that looked like they could burst the seams of his coat, he could be intimidating. His voice was deep, but gentle.

Alex took the mask from Ms. Gentry. As he placed it over his face and stretched the elastic behind his ears, Ms. Gentry took him by the arm and led him through the sanctuary doors. She found a seat for him in the back where he remembered sitting over a year ago. Ms. Gentry thought he might be more comfortable there. Everyone else was spread out, obviously keeping their distance from one another. But Ms. Gentry sat right next to him with no fear. She tried to help him through the service with the bulletin. For the most part he was figuring it out. He remembered going to church as a child with his grandmother. She used to do the same thing, pointing in the paper bulletin where they were in the service.

After the service Pastor Cobb spied Ms. Gentry standing with a young man in front of her. The young man looked familiar, but Pastor Cobb wasn't sure why. The man was dressed in obviously old and very worn clothes. His beard was quite bushy and his thick, light brown hair disheveled. The sun had not been kind to his skin. It was a deep tan and

lines of a difficult life.

"Pastor Cobb," Ms. Gentry said in a raised voice through her mask as she pulled the young man outside toward Pastor Cobb.

"You remember, Alex," Ms. Gentry said as she looked at Alex.

"Yes, I do." Pastor Cobb said confidently, though not quite sure.

Ms. Gentry explained anyway. "He visited us last year, but, sadly, hasn't been able to come back until today."

It slowly clicked in Pastor Cobb's mind. He remembered. It was one of the last services they had in person. Alex had slipped in after the service started, like today. Ms. Gentry had intercepted the young man's attempted escape. Probably much like today.

"Alex," Pastor Cobb began, still trying to follow virus safety protocols, "it's good to see you again. It has been a while."

Alex responded hesitantly, "Pastor, it's good to see you, too."

"How have you been holding up with everything?" Pastor Cobb asked with genuine concern.

Alex didn't know how to respond. Every day seems to blend into the next and the one prior. He paused a moment, surprised: they actually waited for an answer. He wasn't used to conversing with people. He quickly tried to muster something, "It's been okay. Just trying to be safe." Words were in short supply as he became overwhelmed by the attention.

"I can understand that," Pastor Cobb said, realizing that for Alex "safe" meant more than the pandemic. Pastor Cobb knew well that food was often the first priority for people who were homeless, with safe places to sleep being a close second. "What brings you back today?"

Alex didn't have an answer for that. He just felt like he needed be there. He subtly shrugged his shoulders.

Ms. Gentry interjected quickly, "It doesn't matter. I'm just glad that Alex came back to us."

See THE MITCHELLS on page 10

THE MITCHELLS

Continued from page 9

Pastor Cobb quickly caught on and added, "Of course, me too. Alex, you're always welcome here. If there is anything we can help you with, let Ms. Gentry or me know."

Alex hoped they had some refreshments like last time. But the doors were closed to the small kitchen where snacks were served last time.

"No coffee today?" Alex asked.

"I'm afraid not," Pastor Cobb answered with disappointment. "With the virus we're trying to be extra cautious. So, no refreshments or food at church events for the time being."

There was a lull in the conversation. Then Pastor Cobb added, "However, if you'd like something, I may have something in the office."

Pastor Cobb realized he was breaking protocol but felt, under the circumstances, it was warranted. Alex nodded. The three of them headed for the office, Ms. Gentry still holding Alex's arm.

Pastor Cobb fixed a pot of coffee and grabbed some pastries that someone had dropped off the week before for staff. They all sat in the conference room. While Ms. Gentry sat next to Alex, Pastor Cobb put a muffin and some other small pastries on paper napkins in front of Alex and Ms. Gentry and then sat down a few seats over with his own pastry. "Coffee should be done in a couple minutes."

"Thank you, Pastor," Alex said politely.

"Of course," Pastor Cobb responded. He noticed Alex wasn't eating yet. "Please, go ahead."

Alex took the blueberry muffin, pulled his mask down, and ate the top off in one bite. It was very moist and almost stuck to the roof of his mouth. Realizing Alex may have bit off a bit more than he expected, Pastor Cobb quickly got up and poured a cup of coffee before the pot was finished brewing. He placed the coffee mug in front of Alex hoping it helped.

Alex couldn't say thank you with his mouth full, but nodded as he drank a sip

of the freshly brewed liquid. It helped.

They all sat there in quiet as Alex enjoyed his muffin and coffee. He hadn't had fresh brewed coffee in a long time—maybe since the last time he visited the church?

Within a few minutes the coffee maker beeped indicating the coffee was done brewing. Pastor Cobb rose, poured two more cups, delivered one cup to Ms. Gentry, and then sat back down with the other cup.

"So, Alex," Pastor Cobb said breaking the silence, "tell us about yourself."

Alex wasn't sure where to begin. He hesitated for a long moment and decided to start at the beginning. "I'm from L.A. My family still lives there, I think." He paused again as the memories of his estranged family flashed across his mind. "But we don't talk anymore. When I graduated from high school I went into the Marines to see the world. I served two tours in Afghanistan." He felt his face turning red as he tried to hold back tears. He hadn't thought about his service in a long time. He missed the comradery of the Marines, but not the experience he had in Afghanistan. The memories of family were quickly replaced by flashes of gun fire and explosions amidst heavily bombed neighborhoods.

Alex's head began shaking back and forth in short jerks. Pastor Cobb quickly realized what was happening. He had seen it before when he was a hospital chaplain. They used to call it shell shock. In the post-Vietnam War era it was renamed Post Traumatic Stress, or PTSD. "It's okay, Alex," he said as he leaned forward. He knew better than try to touch Alex right now. He saw Ms. Gentry tighten her hold of Alex's arm. Perfectly done.

Alex looked up sharply at Pastor Cobb, then at Ms. Gentry. The images of the war kept flashing, but he felt a warmth at the same time. He felt Ms. Gentry tighten her hold of him. It was oddly comforting. He put the muffin down on the napkin and slowly took another sip of coffee.

"Alex," Ms. Gentry said as she put

her other hand on Alex's arm, the same one she was holding, "it's okay. You're safe."

Ms. Gentry was a retired emergency department nurse. Nurturing and soothing was her gift. She also had no fear, as was evident by her interactions with Alex. Pastor Cobb was glad she was there.

"Look at me, Alex," Ms. Gentry said firmly but quietly.

Alex looked at her, his eyes wide.

"You're okay, Alex," she said.

He nodded slowly. The images slowly faded away, but he still couldn't relax. His entire body had tightened.

"I'm sorry, Alex, if I caused you any stress," Pastor Cobb said softly and compassionately.

Alex slowly shook his head and said, "It's okay, Pastor. I know you meant no harm." A moment passed. "I have thoughts. Memories. Like pictures. I was in Afghanistan."

"Yes," Ms. Gentry said, "you told us."

Alex remembered he had said that. "Yes, I said that. I was wounded. Twice. Once shot and then blown up. I wasn't blown up. My convoy was. I was thrown. My back hurt."

"Alex," Pastor Cobb said, "you don't have to tell us anything you don't want to. We're here and not going anywhere. Is it okay if I send a text to my family just to let them know where I am?"

Alex nodded.

Pastor Cobb texted his wife to tell her he would not be home anytime soon. She understood that meant he was involved in a pastoral situation. He set his phone face down on the table in front of him.

They all sat there in quiet for a moment.

"Thank you for your hospitality," Alex said. "You are being very kind to me."

"Because you belong here," Ms. Gentry said. "You belong here." ■

Gifts for Alternative Giving

Consider what a gift says about both giver and recipient

By LINDA RISSEEUW

Global Fair Trade

WHEAT 4000 N. 7th St., Suite 126, Phoenix, AZ; 602-241-0372 Shop their Fair Trade Market online www.hungerhurts.org

SERRV International: Sustainable, fair trade crafts, jewelry, toys and food items. Order a catalog or select a gift online: www.serrv.org.

Fair Trade Federation: Links to dozens of catalogs of fair trade gifts and products. Search under Find products by category: www.fairtradefederation.org.

Etsy: Buy handmade and vintage décor, clothing and jewelry direct from makers and collectors around the world. The site also allows you to search for local craftspeople and give gift certificates: www.etsy.com.

Just Coffee: Buy great coffee from Dan Abbott at UPC, or order online or by phone: (866) 545-6406 or www.justcoffee.org.

Presbyterian Coffee Project/Equal Exchange: Fair trade coffee, teas, chocolate, olive oil, and almonds: <http://equalexchange.coop/pcusa>.

Good Works

Presbyterian Gift Catalog: Give live-stock, tools, education, and so much more: <http://presbyteriangifts.org>.

Alternative Gifts International: Gifts of education, sustainability measures, and medical assistance in countries around the globe: www.alternativegifts.org.

KIVA: Micro-loans to alleviate poverty. Repaid loans are re-loaned. Give a KIVA gift certificate and let your recipient choose the project to which he or she lends: www.kiva.org.

Habitat for Humanity: Donations and a small gift catalog on their website. Click on "Donate" or "Habitat Store": www.habitat.org.

Heifer International: Give live-stock to families that will in turn share it with others. Select "Gift Catalog": www.heifer.org.

Oxfam America: Give a gift of an alpaca, a water pump, dig a well, a can of worms, or books for kids in third world countries: www.oxfamamerica.org.

United Food Bank: In the east valley, one of several in the Phoenix area: www.unitedfoodbank.org.

Season for Sharing: Arizona Republic's annual campaign to support charitable organizations in Arizona: <https://www.azcentral.com/local/season-for-sharing>.

Books for Africa: Puts much needed high quality books in the hand of student in sub-Saharan Africa: www.booksforafrica.org.

Experiences

In addition those listed below, consider a gift certificate to a local restaurant, salon, movie theater, or sports venue.

Museums: Heard Museum, i.d.e.a. Museum (formerly Arizona Museum for Youth), Musical Instrument Museum, Phoenix Art Museum, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West, ASU Art Museum.

Parks and Recreation: Butterfly Wonderland, Desert Botanical Garden, OdySea Mirror Maze, Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix Rock Gym, Skateland, Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park, Boyce Thompson Arboretum,



Performing Arts*: ASU Gammage, Ballet Arizona, Mesa Arts Center, Phoenix Symphony, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Tempe Center for the Arts, Desert Sonora Chorale.

**Most box offices will generate gift certificates if they don't offer them on their website

Local Shops and New Ways to Give: Local First Arizona Online directory of shops and businesses: www.localfirstaz.com.

Gift Rocket and Gifty will generate gift cards and e-gifts, and let you suggest where the recipient spends it. This is a great way to create a gift certificate for a location that might not offer its own, such as a local farmer's market or a city recreation center. www.giftrocket.com and www.giftly.com.

UPC World Market

Our usual Annual World Market once again will be online and virtual. Please visit WHEAT this year online for the beautiful and fun gifts we are used to shopping for. WHEAT has appreciated our support in the past, so let's keep it up again this year. Who can resist one more nativity scene or angel ornament. Shop their Fair Trade Market online www.hungerhurts.org. ■

WHEAT, 4000 N. 7th St., Suite 126, Phoenix, AZ, (602) 241-0372



I-HELP

Until there's a place called HOME

UPC now hosts I-HELP every week, Friday through Sunday. Our faith partners and Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) help provide meals. UPC provides meals the third Friday and the following Saturday of each month.

For info on volunteering, contact Jill Russell, Bonnie Henry, or Cathy Richardson



ONLINE WORSHIP

REGISTER TODAY!

(In-person Worship began Aug 15th)

www.upctempe.org/worship

A confirmation email will be sent with a login link that is unique to you!

Services also live streamed to www.upctempe.org/YouTube.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255)

Talk to someone.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.

En Español: 1-888-628-9454

Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

MORE THAN JUST COFFEE

CAFÉ JUSTO

Discover the Difference

The official coffee of choice at UPC

For sale by contacting the church office

\$10 / lb.

MEXICO

THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE ROASTING

100% Pure Arabica Coffee

Provided by Edna Cisneros

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next month. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Sada Reed, co-chair of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, Sada Reed! Thank you!

November 2021

Sanctuary Readiness Team.....Larry Seubert

Nov. 7—32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time / Proper 27

Liturgist Katie Ranes
Children's Moment Suzanne Niemann
Worship Tech Vacant

Nov. 14—33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time / Proper 28

Liturgist Rev. Ken Moe
Children's Moment Rev. Shelly Moe
Worship Tech Vacant

Nov. 21—Reign of Christ

Liturgist Jan Felton
Children's Moment Jan Felton
Worship Tech Vacant

Nov. 28—1st Sunday of Advent

Liturgist Jean Luce
Children's Moment Jean Luce
Worship Tech Vacant

WANTED: Anyone interested in learning about audio and video production and to serve as worship techs for upcoming hybrid in-person/online worship services. Training provided. Contact Chris Trella or Pastor Eric to volunteer!

December 2021

Sanctuary Readiness Team.....Larry Seubert

Dec. 5—2nd Sunday of Advent

Liturgist Helen Griffin
Children's Moment Helen Griffin
Worship Tech Vacant

Dec. 12—3rd Sunday of Advent

Liturgist Kathy Wagner
Children's Moment Pastor Eric
Worship Tech Vacant

Dec. 19—4th Sunday of Advent

Liturgist Joyce Godfrey
Children's Moment Joyce Godfrey
Worship Tech Vacant

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve

Liturgist Vacant
Children's Moment Vacant
Worship Tech Vacant

Dec. 26—1st Sunday after Christmas

Liturgist Molly Winkler
Children's Moment Molly Winkler
Worship Tech Vacant



We're a
Matthew 25
church

pcusa.org/matthew25



3	Holly Silcox	15	Lori Saager
6	Jean Luce	16	Sam Ledermann
7	Ann Ewen	19	Eric Ledermann
	Andrea White	21	Jon Winkler
8	Elaine Hayes	22	Becky Bannister
10	Pat Gallagher		James Phillips
12	Jo Lewis	23	Braden Kemp
	Kara Asher		Roann Monson
13	Colleen O'Connor	25	Mark Krause
	Nan Beams	29	Molly Winkler
	Catherine May		Courtney Kemp
14	Jim Hershauer		
	Allison Youngs		

If you see a birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please let the office know as soon as possible.

Stay Informed on All-Things-Presby!

PC(USA) News

Available in a daily or weekly digest format. www.pcusa.org/newsupdates

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views from our presbytery. pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus.

PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Housed across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court in what is referred to as "the God Box," the OPW is the PC (USA)'s advocacy and information center in Washington, D.C. Sign up for OPW Alerts and be an advocate! www.votervoice.net/pcusa/home. Learn

more about the OPW at:

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington.

Presbyterian Historical Society

Organized in 1852, the PHS is the oldest denominational archives in the U.S. and serves as the national archives for the PC (USA) and its predecessor denominations. PHS exists to collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian and Reformed experience. www.history.pcusa.org.

The Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian — \$19.95/year, 18 issues. pres-outlook.org

Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available in a free twice monthly e-newsletter. *Get a free 1 year subscription!*

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today



Remember prayer...

- ✘ **Homebound:** Evelyn Colby, Elaine Murray, Helen Alderson
- ✘ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** in the U.S.
- ✘ **Communities** bearing the weight of violence in their streets and neighborhoods
- ✘ **All affected by COVID-19**, especially those who are hospitalized and their families, and the families of those who have died.
- ✘ **Medical personnel** and first responders who continue to be on the front lines of battling COVID-19
- ✘ **Indigenous People** who are especially suffering under the weight of COVID-19 and hundreds of years of subjugation.
- ✘ **Teachers and students** as they continue online and in-person.
- ✘ **All of creation**, and for the strength to stand up for environmental conservation
- ✘ **Elected & community leaders**, that they can bring peace to our nation and world
- ✘ **Military personnel**, stateside and abroad
- ✘ **Peacemakers/Mission Workers**, particularly the Rev. Leslie Vogel and the Rev. Mark Adams, Jocabed Gallego, and all at Frontera de Cristo.
- ✘ **Our nation and world**—praying for peace
- ✘ **Immigrants**, especially those separated from families
- ✘ **UPC Officers:** elders, deacons, trustees
- ✘ Those who are **suffering and are marginalized**
- ✘ Those struggling with **mental illness**

UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at (480) 966-6267 or upc@upctempe.org.

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:

www.upctempe.org/calendar

November 2021

Mon, Nov 1

4:30 pm ACE Team
7:00 pm Administration Committee
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Nov 3

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour
6:00 pm Bel Choir Practice (S)
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice (S)
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Nov 4

7:00 pm CE Meeting (ZU)

Fri, Nov 5

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Nov 7

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Nov 8

8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Nov 9

7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)
7:00 pm Finance Committee (S, ZU)

Wed, Nov 10

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Nov 11

11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)
7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Nov 12

7:00 pm Book Club Night (ZU)
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Nov 14

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Nov 15

7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Nov 16

6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)
7:00 pm Board of Trustees
7:00 pm Stated Session (S, ZU)

Wed, Nov 17

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
1:00 pm Chinle Circle Bibly Study (MR)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Nov 18

11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (ZU)

Fri, Nov 19

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Nov 20

Sun, Nov 21

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Nov 22

7:00 pm PW Kayenta Circle (MR)
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Nov 24

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Nov 25

Thanksgiving Day
Office Closed
11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Nov 26

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sun, Nov 28

1st Sunday of Advent (RCL C)
8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Nov 29

8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Dec 1

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
1:00 pm Chinle Circle Bibly Study (MR)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Dec 2

11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (ZU)

Fri, Dec 3

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Dec 4

ALL DAY I-HELP

Sun, Dec 5

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Dec 6

2:00 pm I-HELP
4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
7:00 pm PW Kayenta Circle (MR)
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

See CALENDAR, page 16

Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MR)-Meeting Room (N) Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary

UPC NEWS & Current Events

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CALENDAR

Continued from page 15

Wed, Dec 8

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Dec 9

11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)
7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Dec 10

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sun, Dec 12

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Dec 13

8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tues, Dec 14

7:00 pm Finance Committee (S, ZU)
7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)

Wed, Dec 15

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
1:00 pm Chinle Circle (FH)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice

Thu, Dec 16

11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (ZU)

Fri, Dec 17

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sat, Dec 18

ALL DAY I-HELP

Sun, Dec 19

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZU)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)

11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZU)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Dec 20

7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tues, Dec 21

6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)
7:00 pm Board of Trustees (ZU)

Wed, Dec 22

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZP)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chandel Choir Practice

Thu, Dec 23

11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Dec 24

6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service (S, ZU, YT)
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sun, Dec 25

Christmas Day