



Southwest Conference
United Church of Christ

Embodying God's
unconditional justice and love ...

Building Relationships - Deepening Spirituality - Extending Hospitality

Serving Arizona, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas

In the Loop with the Southwest Conference

JANUARY 27, 2012

Thank You!

We, in the Southwest Conference office, wish to thank you all for your support of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). Because of your sustained commitment to our mission and ministry, as well as the wise stewarding of those precious gifts by your staff and boards, the SWC was able to end the year in the black (yes!) and meet our commitment to the national setting. This follows two years of balancing the budget in tight financial times - something of which we are proud.

Nearly every church in the conference met their pledge for OCWM and Per Capita dues. We know that you all face tough decisions throughout the year and we appreciate your gifts of every kind - financial, time, and talent. With them we are sustaining a gospel, the proclamation of which extends an extravagant welcome, opens hearts to hear the voice of the still-speaking God, and transforms lives.

Thank you!

Thank you to Rincon UCC and Desert Heritage Church for your offers of a communion table to First Samoan Congregational UCC. They are so grateful to you both for your generosity of spirit.

Not Yo Mama's Church: first worship service in the new location!



Not Yo Mamas Church is a brand new faith community of the United Church of Christ in the Southwest Conference. They have been extravagantly welcomed to share space inside VFW Post 9399, located on Apache Trail just west of Ironwood in Apache Junction, AZ. Everyone is invited to a "Y'all come" lunch at noon on Feb 12 at 133 N Saguaro. All are encouraged to bring a toiletry item for homeless Vets. For more info, call Pastor Jaci Scott, 602-300-1918 or revjax@notyomamaschurch.com.

Cokesbury VBS Preview



Two Vacation Bible School Preview events are scheduled in February. This is an opportunity for Christian Educators and VBS Coordinators to see actual VBS materials and hear presentations by Directors of Christian Education who are trained by VBS publishers. A light lunch or snack will be served during the presentations. There is a 20% discount on orders made at the event.

VBS products from the following publishers will be previewed:

Cokesbury - Operation Overboard

Abingdon Press - No Friend Like Jesus

Group - Sky and Babylon
Gospel Light - Sunrise
Standard - Adventures on Promise Island
Concordia - Amazing Desert Journey
UMI - Fishin on a Mission with Jesus

For details, see flyer on the SWC News & Events page.

Feb 3rd Deadline to register for Senior High Sneak Trip

Feb. 17-19, 2012

The theme this year is Beyond the Border because we will be learning and immersing ourselves in border issues with people who live on both sides of our U.S./Mexico border. All forms (Registration, Covenant, and Health Form) must still be sent to the SWC office. **You will need a passport.**

Visit the Senior High Sneak Trip page for all the details.



February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



Faith Trust Institute is a great resource for engaging this topic alongside the UCC's Our Whole Lives curriculum. Stop the cycle of violence by helping teens and adolescents in your congregation build healthy relationships. **Download the flyer from the SWC website.**

First Wednesdays at the Beatitudes Campus

On the first Wednesday of the month, the Beatitudes Campus gathers local community experts to present talks on a variety of topics. On Feb. 1st, from 10 - 11:30 in the Bistro, Amy Caffarello with St. Joseph the Worker, will speak about helping the homeless.

Visit the Beatitudes Campus website for details.

Faith and the Fence- rescheduled to March 4th



Attend this inter-religious immigration forum for youth on the faith response to immigration. We'll hear from immigration lawyers, detention workers, people who look hard at racism, and faith leaders who have responded to the human needs of migrants. We will also have networking opportunities with organizations such as Borderlinks, Promise Arizona, the Peace Corps, Humane Borders and more. THIS CONFERENCE IS FREE and DINNER is provided!

Travel with Church of the Beatitudes to LaFlor, Nicaragua

Saturday, April 14 through Sunday, April 22

Join us as we journey to share in a global mission partnership in Santa Emilia, Nicaragua. We will be living in Santa Emilia--a community of 2500 coffee pickers and subsistence farmers in the mountain cloud-forest near Matagalpa, Nicaragua--and working in the little mountain top village of LaFlor. We will be building relationships, and some latrines! Who wouldn't like to do that! **Visit the SWC News & Events page to download the flyer.**

2012 AEC Annual Banquet and Silent Auction



(contact the SWC office, if you want to sit together)

February 17, 2012 St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

330 W. Coral Gables Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85023

Special guest speaker: **Sr. Helen Prejean**

\$100 per guest / \$750 for table of 8

Faith and Arizona's Criminal Justice System

The ONA/Diversity Team at Good Shepherd in Sahuarita, AZ is hosting a 6-part series on Sunday nights, 4:30 - 6pm, covering topics such as diverse Faith Perspectives on Criminal Justice, Alternatives to Prison, the Human Impact of our Criminal System, Private Prisons, and Prisoner Reentry Programs. The second session will be this Sunday, Jan. 29th. Visit the Good Shepherd's website for more information.



Lenten Fast from Carbon

For hundreds of years, Ash Wednesday has marked the beginning of a time when Christians engage in spiritual disciplines involving repentance, fasting, prayer, study and works of love. Living as we are at a time when our actions - along with the actions of only a few generations - have threatened creation as we know it by the excessive burning of fossil fuel, it is fitting to engage in a spiritual discipline of fasting from carbon.

Here's how it works:

Beginning Ash Wednesday (February 22) and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity. When possible, this will include a quantitative measure of the carbon reduction resulting from the activity. Let's make protecting God's creation by reducing our carbon footprint as fundamental a spiritual discipline as prayer. **Visit the SWC website, home page, to take the pledge.**

Founders Day at Chapman University- March 23/24, 2012

Chapman University in Orange, CA. is our newest UCC college. A Disciples of Christ university, the UCC formalized its association with Chapman in the last year. Founders Day will feature lectures, worship, concerts, and other activities. Meet DOC and UCC students- or bring your potential students to visit the campus. **Visit the Chapman University website for more details.**



Contribute to new Pilgrim Press Resource



If you are interested in learning more about contributing to a new Pilgrim Press resource *From Psalms to Twitter: Worship Resources in a Digital Age* by Maria I. Mankin and Maren C. Tirabassi, please contact us for information at psalmstotwitter@gmail.com. This book will reach out to under-represented voices in the church community and seek new ways to pray together in a world dominated by social media-driven relationships and short attention spans. We are seeking new worship materials and prayers based on contemporary concerns that also are enduring issues in our communities. The two authors have been involved in more than fifteen Pilgrim Press projects over the years and have discovered that opening up possibilities to a wide audience rather than going to previously familiar writers results in the discovery of amazing gifts. We are so grateful to you for helping us with this "evangelism."

On the Southwest Conference website

Websites Every Church Leader Needs to Know



Educational materials, webinars, progressive Christian articles from experts, multimedia sermons resources, resources on current faith and spirituality practices, new ideas in youth ministry and more. These eleven websites offer valuable tools to assist church leaders in practicing effective ministry.

Crusin' Around the Conference



Watch a video by SWC artistic, evolutionary, revolutionary Christians, West Congregational Church reaches out to their neighbors, marathon blocks roads on Sunday to Shepherd of the Hills UCC, Church of the Red Rocks donates 2,680 pounds of food, and more.

Events: Installation, DREAM Act forums, JAAZ Lecture Series, employment opportunity for an associate youth pastor.

Links to news from our UCC national office



New & renewing churches grants for Spring 2012 funding, application due Feb 1.

UCC identifies 3 distinct 'Core Values' - Leading the Church Through 2012 and Beyond.

Upcoming Dates:

Jan 27/28 Lay Academy, "Ecumenism" with Rev. John Thomas
Jan 28 Ordination of Noel Anderson, 2 PM, Good Shepherd UCC, Sahuarita
Feb. 9 COCAM meeting
Mar. 8 Justice Witness Ministry Team meeting
Mar 10 Mission Planning Board meeting
Mar. 17 Executive Board meeting
Apr. 19 Pre-Annual Meeting events
Apr. 20/21 Annual Meeting, Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, AZ
Oct. 20-24 Clergy Retreat 2012, Spirit in the Desert, Carefree, AZ

Next Summer Camp dates:

Feb 17-19 Senior High Sneak Trip
March 9-11 Junior High Retreat
June 17-22 Super Camp
June 24-29 Senior High Camp
July 10-14 National Youth Event

This communication is made possible by your contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission.

[Southwest Conference United Church of Christ](#)

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