



A few short moments...

Life is like a mesquite tree

My mesquite tree grew like a weed last month. All of a sudden, the branches were over my neighbor's house and over the roofline of our house. One branch even broke off and was caught high up. When we got rain in July, the branches bowed down nearly touching the sidewalk. That is when I get the friendly notice from the City of Phoenix telling me my tree has to be trimmed up to 16 feet of clearance for the sanitation trucks.

You know this better than I do: mesquite trees are hardy, drought-tolerant, thorny and hard to kill. They have both a deep tap root and surface roots that draw water away from the water table. To some, they are a nuisance.

They also grow quickly (I know that to be true) and provide shade where nothing else will grow. They fix nitrogen in the soil. Their bean pods can be ground into flour. And what is better than mesquite flavored barbeque?

Which outweighs the other?

Maybe it is a parable: life is like a mesquite tree...

There is not any mention of mesquite trees in the Bible. There are oaks, cypresses, fig, pomegranates, acacia, cedars and lots of other species. There is also mention of a tree of Life and a tree of Knowledge. I am so grateful that Eve ate from that tree. She opened up to all of us the immensely complicated world of being human, not just animal. She showed us that choices will confront us all of our lives and while there will be difficulties, there will also be great satisfactions.

For now, the mesquite tree will stay.

~ Pastor Nancy

To learn more, read *How Good Do We Have to Be*, by Rabbi Harold Kushner.

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Administration

Spotlight on the congregation — Alan Cochrane

Every month, *The Grapevine* will share personal stories of how some of our members found Church of the Beatitudes, and why they embrace this Church as their faith community. This month, Alan Cochrane, MOA secretary, shares his story.

“My dad was a Congregational pastor, so I started out as a PK (preacher's kid). But when I reached high school, I was tired of being a PK, so I promoted myself to MS (minister's son). By the time I finished college and got a Master's degree I was a TO (theologian's offspring). My father was in favor of the merger between the Congregational Christian churches and the Evangelical and Reformed churches, but all the parishes he served voted against it. He retired without ever preaching in a UCC church.

“My journey to Church of the Beatitudes began in Toledo, Ohio, after my father's death in 1976. We were members of Pilgrim UCC in Toledo, which happens to be

where Dosia Carlson grew up. Her father, Alex Carlson, was the long-time pastor at Pilgrim church. My mom was suffering from arthritis and after Clarke died, she told me that she wanted to move to a



warmer, drier climate than Toledo... somewhere that had a church-based retirement center. When we asked at Pilgrim church, everyone said, “Go to Phoenix, Arizona, and talk to Dosia Carlson. She will take care of you.”

“We visited for a weekend in May of 1978 and mom put her name on the six-year waiting list for an apartment at the Beatitudes campus. In the meantime, she

rented the house in Toledo and we drove to Phoenix over Labor Day and rented an apartment on Camelback Road, across from Alhambra High School. Once we heard Bill Nelson preach and heard the choir sing, we knew we had found our new home. I joined the choir and the singles group and mom started a Spanish conversation group. We joined the church in November.

“One of the criteria for buying a townhouse at 11th Street and Northern Avenue was that it must be close to church. When mom's name came to the top of the list for an apartment at the campus, she turned it down, saying she was quite happy living at home with me. We moved to Phoenix because of the Beatitudes Retirement Center, but she never moved in, and never regretted it. Mom died in 1986, and Dosia did her memorial service.”

Summer is a time to make improvements to our property

While many of you have been escaping the summer heat by going to the mountains or beaches, we have been busy making improvements and necessary repairs to our campus. We planted grass, trimmed trees and improved the landscaping on the Flynn Lane property. We upgraded the electrical circuitry in the wing occupied by Center DOAR. New controllers and timers were installed on the chillers along with other HVAC repairs. We installed new locks on many doors, including the Chapel and Education Wing, to make the rooms more secure. In some cases, we placed protective covers on them. The annual review of our fire extinguishers, suppression systems and emergency lighting was completed and they are all up to standards. New sensors were installed in both of the automatic doors to the sanctuary. Obviously, none of this work was free. We remind you that expenses to keep our campus looking attractive and safe do not take a vacation.

Administration

Michele Mellott's faith journey

Michele Mellott has traveled a road of twists and turns, of smooth sailing and bright skies. The next leg of her faith journey is "exciting, scary and life-affirming" as she becomes a worship intern with Scottsdale UCC, as part of her studies at Claremont College.

"Church of the Beatitudes has been a wonderful foundation and has been a springboard for me to become an intern at Scottsdale UCC," says Michele.

Michele has been part of Church of the Beatitudes since her grandfather, Rev. Ted Knotter, was the pastor. She grew up in our Church, but stopped going when she was 14 years old. "I became involved in Catholic fellowship while I was in high school," she says. "Church of the Beatitudes was still in my heart, though, and I used to sit in the Church parking lot, praying to be

reconnected with our Church."

When her children were born, her prayers were answered. Fran Godwin approached her and asked her to come back, and she became a member within a month. She became deeply immersed in Church life and was active in small groups, women's groups, retreats and prayer groups. In 2001, Michele became the Church's youth leader. "It was a huge joy being with the junior and senior high school youth. We had a thriving youth group, who were involved with fellowship and mission trips," she says.

Two years ago, she was asked to be part of the Church's welcome ministry. She fostered relationships with newcomers and members alike and provided them with an extravagant welcome. Michele started the Bridging Brunch, where new members can meet and talk with members who

have been with the Church a long time.

Michele was called to Claremont College three years ago. The decision to attend seminary, while juggling family and two jobs is mind boggling to most people, but it energizes Michele. Her eyes sparkle when she talks about her experiences. "It has opened up new revelations for me and what I can do," she says. Then she jokes, "Maybe I can be the Minister of Pirates!"

Michele is leaving Church of the Beatitudes beginning September 1 to continue her new internship. "This church is really my family. I am not leaving the Church, I am taking you with me. I am so grateful for the support and experiences I have had here. You have showed me what it is to be a child of God."

Let's have a *Pirate Party* for Michele!

Party like a Pirate and give your best wishes to Michele on Saturday, August 23, 3-4:30 pm.

Michele's new journey is taking her to Scottsdale UCC where she is completing a worship internship while

continuing her studies at Claremont College. We want to give Michele a good send-off, so dress like a pirate and bring your love offerings, cards and memories as we celebrate her new adventure.

Now and then we had a hope that if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates.

~Mark Twain

Families and Children

Senior High Youth *gear up* during the summer

The Senior High Youth have had a fabulous summer, full of faith and fellowship. It's been a privilege to work with these extraordinary kids – they have taught me so much! We have been meeting every Sunday and Wednesday nights and blogging about our questions and new insights at the end of our sessions. We have also participated in a lot of special activities, like camp and the UCC National Youth Event. It is fun to watch this program grow. We have expanded our staff of Senior High advisors, and more parents are participating in activities. Thank you for loving these kids as much as I do.

~Pastor Ted

Here's a rundown of activities planned for August:

Saturday, August 2	Youth preaching
Sunday, August 3	Youth preaching
Sunday, August 3	Camping at Bear Canyon Lake
Monday, August 4	Camping at Bear Canyon Lake
Wednesday, August 6	Scavenger Hunt
Sunday, August 10	Water Night
Wednesday, August 13	Abortion: What choice would you make?
Sunday, August 17	Movie night
Wednesday, August 20	What do you do? Music
Sunday, August 24	TBD
Wednesday, August 27	Sharing songs
Sunday, August 31	TBD
Wednesday, September 3	What is prayer? Labyrinth experience



Church of the Beatitudes received numerous calls about flocks of flamingos appearing in people's yards. Were you visited by these lovely pink birds?

Pastor Ted, Michele Mellott and nine senior high youth attended the UCC National Youth Event at the University of Tennessee. It was a time of worship, fellowship and spiritual enrichment.



Families and Children

Children's Fair kicks off Open House weekend

Bring your family and friends to our annual Church of the Beatitudes Children's Fair on Saturday, September 6, from 9 am to 12 noon. There will be

food, games, bounce houses and slides, a climbing wall, face painting and more! If you've been away a lot this summer, you can re-connect with your church

friends at the Children's Fair. In fact, the fair is a perfect reason to invite others to church. This event is FREE to the public!



Arts Camp at Church of the Beatitudes



Teacher training is coming August 24

A thousand thanks go out to those people who have committed to teach church school this year! We have had an overwhelming response to the plea we made in church in July. If you are working with children or older youth, please plan on attending a teacher training on Sunday, August 24, from 11:30 am to 1 pm. A light lunch will be served. Curriculum will be passed out and you will get to know the other people teaching with you this season. It's going to be a great year!

Speaking of curriculum...if you are interested in serving on a committee that looks at our current curriculum and the ways we might make changes to it, please come to a meeting on Sunday, August 17, at 10:30 am in the Patio Room.

Judy Green-Davis talks about a lesson in faith

No topic makes a seminary student's stomach churn more than the subject of money. Seminary is frightfully expensive. The average seminary student these days graduates with \$70,000-\$100,000 in debt. And frankly, the ministry is a low-paying career choice.

Currently, Claremont School of Theology tuition cost per unit of study is \$600, which is on the low end of seminary tuition. To graduate with a Masters of Divinity, a student must take 90 hours of credit. That's a total of \$54,000 over a three- to six-year period—and that's not counting books, fees, and commuting. I'm starting my second year of seminary. So far, seminary has cost \$7,170 (the per-unit cost was lower when I started). God has been very good to me and I have been able to

pay for this past year through scholarships and the generous gifts of thoughtful people.

The next two semesters will cost \$9,600. I have a scholarship for those semesters for \$2,830. I

addition, when I preach at other churches in Phoenix, I receive an honorarium that I apply toward my tuition.

I am praying that the next two semesters will be covered by scholarships. If that's not to be, it may be necessary for me to ask for consideration for a scholarship from our church. Seminary has certainly been a lesson in faith for me. I'm learning how to truly "lean into the everlasting arms" of God. Some days are easier than others.

What makes people willing to endure such awful financial stress? Ministry is not a job; ministry is a calling. God's persistent call is not to be denied or ignored. God insists that we take the risk and be not afraid. God requires that we serve others even at the expense of ourselves.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mark 8:34b

have applied for other scholarships as well. Also, our sister denomination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), gives me a scholarship that pays for my books. In

Who is your neighbor?

This is NOT an ad for insurance, but there is an appeal in the slogan, "Like a good neighbor, like a good friend." The attraction is that in our impersonal world we are longing for someone who truly cares. If you are not currently counted among the elderly segment of the population, chances are good you will be there—sooner rather than later! A good neighbor can make a huge difference in whether an aging person is able to continue living at home where there is comfort in what is familiar.

Beatitudes Center DOAR (Developing Older Adult Resources) urges you to become that "good neighbor, good friend" to a person who may live close to your home or workplace. Come to an orientation session to learn more and choose which service you'd like to provide (such as shopping, visiting, computer training, etc). Guidelines are very specific so you won't become overwhelmed. An hour or two per week is needed, or less if you'd like to be a substitute or provide short-term help. Call 602-274-5022 for a list of upcoming orientations or check out www.centerdoar.org.

Our Partners

Beatitudes Campus Construction continues

The Campus is excited about the tremendous public interest in the Promenade and our redevelopment project. We are looking forward to the addition of many new residents, with the first move-ins planned for early fall of this year!

Construction of the Central Park phase is proceeding right on schedule, including new residential buildings, a new swimming pool, and the new Town Plaza.

The Central Park North and South buildings have reached their full height, including the framing and exterior sheeting. Central Park West has reached the fourth floor, including the masonry. Digging of the swimming at the end of August 2008.

New patio homes along Myrtle Drive are also moving right along and exterior colors on the buildings are visible – make sure to drive by soon and see all of the changes!

Here are some highlights regarding construction that may affect visitors to the Campus:

- The 17th Drive Campus entrance (main entrance) has re-opened. Please use this

entrance for visitor parking.

- Parking for the Garden Apartment residents and visitors is available using the Myrtle Avenue entrance until 11:00 pm. If access is needed after 11:00 pm., please call the Campus Service Center at 602-995-2611.
- The Age Link parking lot is complete and reserved for Age Link parents and staff only.
- The parking lot in front of the Administration Building/Information Center has been re-opened after a water line installation.
- Planning has begun to repaint the blue balconies on Campus buildings over the summer months.

For more information about the Promenade at the Beatitudes Campus, please call the Information Center at 602-995-6100. For parking and construction info call the Campus Construction Update Hotline at 602-336-2914.

Support and fun for grandparents and children

Grandparents raising grandchildren may join in many free services and activities at Beatitudes Center DOAR (Developing Older Adult Resources), including:

Back to School Bowling – visit with other grandparents as your grandchild bowls on Tuesday, August 19, from 5 to 7 pm, at Peoria Bowling Lanes

Powerful Families – a nine-part series meeting every Saturday from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm (lunch included), beginning on September 20 at Church of the Beatitudes

Grandparents Day at the Ballpark (Chase Field) on Sunday, September 13 at 5:10 pm. Reservations are required for all activities. Call 602-274-5022 to register or to learn about support groups and many other available services.

Fellowship

It's **NOT** easy being **GREEN!**

Get ready for the Open House on Sunday, September 7, from 9 am – 12 noon. Our theme is sustainability – How do we become a “green congregation?” How do we become better stewards of the environment? At the Open House, you will find out how just a few changes in your everyday living can make you be a better consumer of the Earth’s resources. All the ministries and our partners will be participating by giving us information on keeping the Earth in good

shape, and we want the entire congregation to join in.

We have placed big, green boxes in the Church office and on the patio for your input! Please give us your ideas, brochures, artwork, handouts, tips in the box, and we’ll share them at the Open House.

If you would like to be on the Open House task force or would like to volunteer to help, please call Carol Morse at 623-933-7202.



Taste & See

Summertime fun

We’ve turned Nelson Hall into a roller skating rink, climbed walls and sung songs together, even had a water balloon fight! Don’t miss our August activities! Come between 5:30 and 6:30 pm for dinner and conversation, then join the fun at 6:30 pm.

August 6—Scavenger Hunt

August 20—Volleyball

August 13—Bingo (with prizes!)

August 27 — Talent Show

Environmental Prayer

Gracious God, your amazing love extends through time and space, to all parts of your creation, which you created and called good. Your covenant with the human family is remembered in every rainbow in the sky, symbolizing your promise of love and blessing to every living creature, and to all successive generations. In Jesus, you invite us to enter into a new covenant, in communion with all who seek to be faithful to you and to do justice. As people of faith, we are called into covenant. Your covenant of faithfulness and love extends to the whole creation. Today we pray for the healing of our planet that present and future generations may enjoy the fruits of creation, and continue to glorify and praise you.

by Carlos J. Correa Bernier, Minister for Environmental Justice, United Church of Christ

The Arts

Arts Council plans upcoming Narthex art shows

Church of the Beatitudes has a valued history in showcasing Arizona artists through the Narthex Art Exhibits. The Arts Council has been hard at work this summer to create the art shows for the Fall and Spring seasons. Be sure to visit these exhibits.

September 12 — Teri McDarby and Sandy Camp

October 24 — Sarah Kriehn

December 5 — Raleigh Kinney and Mary Arendt

January 16 — Diane Kent

February 27 — Diane Bykowski, Deb Kresnicka and Joan Waters



Book Club reading *A New Christianity for a New World*

Join the Book Club on Thursday, August 28, at 7 pm to discuss *A New Christianity for a New World*, by retired Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong (HarperOne, September 2002, 304 pages).

Publisher's Weekly says the following (paraphrasing): Religious reformer Rev. Spong builds upon the program he initiated in *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* as he outlines what he believes is an authentic faith

for a new millennium. Taking cues from the works of John A.T. Robinson, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Rudolf Bultmann, Spong proclaims that theism, the view that a supernatural deity creates and provides for humanity is a “human coping device, created by traumatized self-conscious creatures to enable them to deal with the anxiety of self-awareness.” The theistic God for Spong is a projection of our own

desires and wishes. Spong's “new Christianity” is rather old, though. Just as in 19th-century theological liberalism, Jesus is God-presence and God is the ground of all being. Moreover, Spong recycles the central ideas of his previous nine books. Spong openly reveals his honest struggles to fashion a living faith that transcends what he sees as the sterility of the Christianity in which he was formed.

Thursday Night at the Movies: *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*

This seemingly claustrophobic story of a man imprisoned in his paralyzed body becomes a dazzling and expansive movie about love, imagination and the will to live. After a stroke, Jean-Dominique Bauby (French editor of *Elle* magazine) can only move his left eye — and through that eye, he learns to communicate, one letter at a time. With the help of his speech therapist and a stenographer, Bauby writes his stunning memoir, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. The movie won a Golden Globe for Best Director (Golden Globe) and was nominated for an Oscar (2008).

The Third Thursday Movie Group will meet August 21, in the Lounge at 6 pm. Bring your own snack or meal, watch the movie and join your friends in a good discussion.

Service

Special friends at Maryland School help kids succeed

“Is she here yet?” queried a bright-eyed youngster peeking around a bookshelf in the library. Jake was eager to see his “special friend” for their weekly time together, reading, chatting, writing, maybe doing a little math. Jake’s special friend is an adult who comes to school and spends 40 to 50 minutes a week mentoring him in academics and life skills, being an adult buddy. Teachers have reported that these one-to-one “interventions” (current education-ese) are a key factor in helping students move from performing *below* grade level expectations to being right on target. “I didn’t realize what a difference an hour a week could make in Jake’s progress,” reported Bonnie. “He was

having some trouble reading this book at the beginning, but by the end he was just sailing along. He felt so good about his improvement, and that really made a difference in my day! What fun it was to be greeted by his happy smile and know that he looks forward to our time together.”

Who are these “special friends”? Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds – business, construction, parenting, teaching – no special expertise is required. They are



simply folks who like the idea of making a difference in a child’s life. Some even work with more than one child. Some have arranged with their employer to take time off from work for this community service opportunity. Last spring, Pastor Ted became a special friend to some great children. Maryland School, Church of the Beatitudes’ partner school, is very much in need of more tutors, more “special friends,” and we are asking for YOUR help with this. Orientation sessions are available to assist you in making this a positive, productive experience. Please contact Cathy Kim at 602-248-2848 and let her know you would like to be a “special friend.”

Innovation teams working hard this summer

Church of the Beatitudes is well into its visioning and planning process through Appreciative Inquiry. Fifteen innovation teams have been working through the summer, building action steps and details to envision their dreams, and putting together a budget, which will help achieve their goals.

In June, at the congregation-wide meeting with consultant

Larry Peers, we were asked “Why?” The answers were varied, but held a common theme – love and extravagant welcome. Some of the things you said:

“So we thrive and stay vibrantly alive as a congregation.”

“To share our faith with everyone and be a reflection of God’s love.”

“Christ calls us.”

“To be an oasis for justice and integrity in the world.”

*Without vision,
people perish.*

Proverbs 29:18

Staff

Nicholas Wenham will use technology to connect young adults

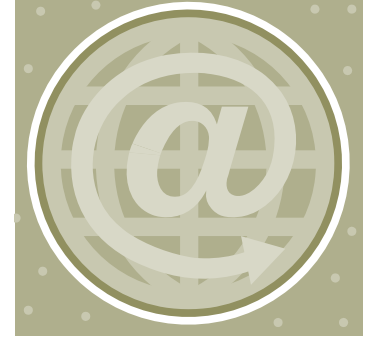
Hello! My name is Nicholas Wenham, and I joined the Church staff on August 1. So we may get to know each other a little bit better, here are some quick and easy facts about me:

- Native of Phoenix, Arizona
- Graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Music and Sociology Minor (2003)
- Have five nieces and two nephews
- Have a passion for God, people, canines, spirituality, meditation, good food, fine wine, reading, exercise and spending time with friends and family
- Will be a full-time seminary student at Claremont School of Theology this fall

The focus of my ministry within the congregation will be with young adults. There are many people between the ages of 22 and 35 moving into the Phoenix area and searching for a spiritual community.

My goal will be to locate, gather, engage and empower young adults to become active and visible members in the church.

I will be creative in my endeavors to reach this population, and much of my energy will be spent connecting through the Internet, email, Facebook, MySpace and other various forms of communication. You may see me online or in a nearby coffee shop more often than a traditional office on the church campus.



As this ministry kicks off to a running start, please keep us in prayer. As you begin to see new faces in worship on Sundays, extend a warm welcome to them. As we grow and blossom together as one community of faith, the face of Christ is revealed in our midst.

Contact us

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Our church's *mission*

Church of the Beatitudes United Church of Christ is a community of faith-keeping and faith-seeking people grounded in stories and truths contained in the scriptures. We are open to insights and interpretations of God revealed to us through new experiences, different faiths, and diverse cultures.

Our purpose is to provide opportunities for the formation of Christian disciples through worship and spiritual enrichment, to offer the education and training for this discipleship and to encourage the practice of this discipleship in the world.

Senior Co-Pastors

Rev. Dr. Theodore Elsenheimer
Rev. Dr. Nancy Nelson Elsenheimer

Associate Pastor

Rev. David Weaver

Christian Education

Dana Bender

Seminary Student/Intern

Nicholas Wenham

Summer Intern

Andria Davis

Health and Wellness

Sandy Marion

Music

Joel Rinsema
Terry Smith
Brenda Mulkey
Ron Rhode

Operations

Ken Porter
Linda Nilsson
Enrique Mendez
Gilbert Escalante

Communications

Barbara Wood
Dawn Bailey
Marcia Lorona

**CHURCH OF THE BEATITUDES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Change Service Requested

Women's Retreat will focus on *Spirit of the Living God*

Feel the Spirit at Church of the Beatitudes Women's Retreat on October 11-12 at the beautiful Spirit in the Desert Retreat in Carefree. Singing, sharing, journaling, meditating, dancing and purposeful movement are just some of the activities in store for you.

The retreat is a time to gift yourself with spiritual understanding and to nourish your body, mind and spirit. You will explore the spirit of the living God and how that encompassing spirit can surround you and mold you

and help you carry forth in the world.

You will be able to explore what you believe and how your belief affects your life. Journals will be given to you to use throughout the weekend.

Please bring something to share about your spiritual practices and stories of faith.



Feel the Spirit **A Woman's Retreat**

When? Saturday, October 11, 2008 (8 am registration and check in) to Sunday, October 12, 2008 (10 am—12 noon checkout)

Where? Spirit in the Desert Retreat in Carefree

Cost? Registration fee, \$50; total retreat cost, \$130 for 3 meals and 1 night lodging.

Scholarships are available.

RSVP to the Church office.