



# Central Lutheran Church

*Come Share the Spirit!*

## Central News: December 2020

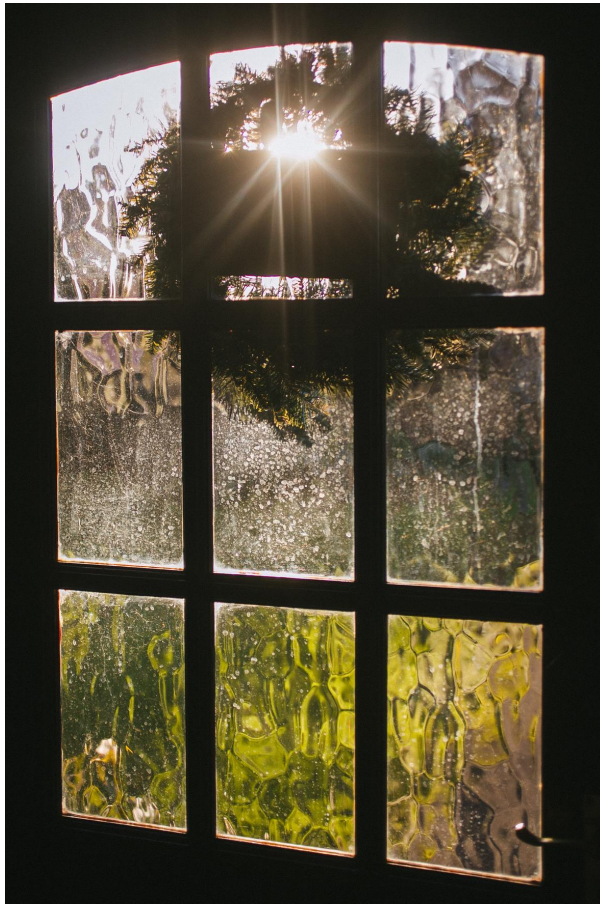


Photo by Phil Hearing on Unsplash

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.” Isaiah 9:2*

In this new church year ahead of us, the scripture readings in our worship services will draw largely from the Gospel of Mark. That Gospel begins with these words: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). This opening title is loaded with loaded words for its first hearers in that time and place. “Good news” referred to a military victory; “Christ” and “Son of God” were titles for an anointed conquering king, almost a superhero of the day. But the story to follow tells of

the One whose victory came not through force but sacrifice, the ultimate humility of crucifixion, for our sake. And we disciples who follow in that Way must follow humbly in love for the sake of the other.

As we hear the story of Jesus through the Gospel of Mark in these days of December 2020, as we face the reality that families and friends will not be able to gather for Christmas because of the pandemic in ways that we are used to, we experience in one way what following Christ is about: sacrificing our wants and desires out of love for the neighbor.

And so for many people, this December will not be a bright and happy time of seasonal cheer. Many are feeling sharp disappointment that Christmas will be very different than what they want. But more than that, many have lost loved ones and are facing a first Christmas without them. Many are struggling financially. Many are struggling emotionally because of loneliness or strife in relationships. The lengthening nights may echo the darkness that many are feeling inside.

December 21 is the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. After that, the sun begins to set a little later each day, the sun rise a little earlier; the days longer, the nights shorter. We celebrate Christmas around this time because it symbolizes the Light of Christ entering the world, the dawn of Hope.

But as the saying goes, “it’s always darkest before the dawn.” The longest night can be difficult to get through and even harder to approach, knowing that it is on the way. So the church has a tradition of offering a worship service for “the longest night,” sometimes called a “Blue Christmas” service, providing a shared space for those who are having a difficult time or simply need to acknowledge some pain or loss they are carrying in the midst of this season of celebration.

**On December 21**, Bishop Deborah Hutterer and our synod staff will provide for us and all congregations of our Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA a pre-recorded worship service for “**Blue Christmas**,” a space for reflection on the life-giving word of God and the sure and certain hope we have in the Light of Christ, the promise of God that came to us in the manger and lives among us still, no matter our circumstances.

May we walk together in this season, holding high the Christ Light for our neighbors who are struggling to see it for themselves, our every word and action reflecting the hope and joy of the coming Christ.

God’s peace and grace be yours.

Pastor Annemarie

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# Volunteer for Angel Tree®.

**Central Lutheran Church  
is going to help the kids!!**



## **Angel Tree tags are available NOW!**

Angel Tree Tags will be at both Arizona City and Casa Grande services on **December 6th** for you to help out by choosing a tag or donating \$\$.

Buy gifts and return wrapped to church on **December 13th** or you can donate dollars to help out.

At Christmas we connect with the ones we love. But what if you are a child with a parent in prison—feeling lonely, abandoned, and hurt? Through Angel Tree, you can connect a child with their incarcerated parent and offer joy and hope to a prisoner's family. It's simple.

Central Lutheran Church receives names/ages/gift ideas—along with a message of love and the Good News about Jesus—in the name of incarcerated parents. We will buy and wrap Christmas gifts OR mail gifts OR send thru Amazon. We will deliver to front porches or do a drive-thru pickup. Maybe even an online option. All the details will get ironed out!

**The Prison Fellowship program is on track to help 215,000 children. Central Lutheran Church is going to do our part to support the 2020 Angel Tree program! We will figure out a way to help these children.**

**[www.centrallutheranaz.org/church/angel-tree-ministry](http://www.centrallutheranaz.org/church/angel-tree-ministry)**

You are welcome to contact me, if you are able to help donate or would like more information: **Email Pat or Linda.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!!**

**CLC Angel Tree Team**

Pat Jones

BJ/Jerry Edwardson

Barb/Ron Morger

Linda Gal  
Karen/Larry Nelson

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## Oh Come All Ye Faithful!

Come, let us worship God for the gift of Christ, the gift of Life!

At this time we are planning two  
**Christmas Eve Outdoor Worship Services:**

**3:00 p.m. at Arizona City**

**4:30 p.m. at Casa Grande**



*Photo by freestocks on Unsplash.*

*If this should need to change due to social distancing measures in effect at that time, we will adapt as necessary and keep you informed.*

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## FM Transmitter for Drive-In Worship: 97.3 FM

On Sunday, November 29, we worshiped for the first time using our new short-distance radio transmitter at our Arizona City location. A number of us worshiped from our vehicles and the broadcast came through loud and clear. As of this writing, we are fine tuning our equipment and we hope to be fully up and running very soon. The station is 97.3 FM

**At this time we are worshipping in-person OUTDOORS at both locations:  
8:30 at Arizona City and 10:00 at Casa Grande.**

### Reminders:

**1. Masks must be worn at all times if you are outside your vehicle.**

Disposable masks will be available for those who arrive without one. Those who do not wear a mask may worship from inside their vehicle by tuning to 97.3 FM.

**2. Bring your own lawn chair.**

If you need help getting your chair out of your car or setting it up, let us know. If you do not have one, someone will be standing by to bring out a chair for you.

When you arrive, please place your chair a minimum of six feet from those of another household.

If your health requires the caution of further physical distancing, you may place your chairs in the back or to the side at a greater distance. You may also remain in your vehicle and tune your radio to 97.3 FM.

Offering and attendance cards will be received via a box at the entryway as you arrive or depart.

When you come to worship, you may bring your own bread and wine/grape juice from home, or you may take one of the individually wrapped communion kits as you arrive.

The service will be video recorded on a weekly basis for those unable to attend in-person. (Only the worship leaders will be in the video, the congregation will not be seen.)

Whether you attend in-person or participate through the recorded service at home, let us all join together through the Holy Spirit who makes us one. Let us pray for one another, support one another, love one another, in the name of Jesus. See you in worship!

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## A Teaching Ministry

One of the unique benefits of the Community Education English as a Second Language (ESL) program is the individual language coaching that it offers the participants. Each tutor works one-on-one with a learner, tailoring the learning experience to their abilities and goals. In this way, the program can serve students at all levels. Some students are beginners and need to start with the basics. Others have some speaking and reading skills, but either lack the opportunity or confidence to achieve fluent conversation skills. The Community Education ESL tutor meets the student where they are at. Think of it as an individualized teaching ministry.



*Michele Picou*

For example, Michele Picou tutors Jessica, a native Spanish speaker who speaks very little English even though her entire family, including her husband and teenage daughters, are fluent. One would think that having English-

speaking family members to learn from and practice with would make learning the language a breeze. However, the reality is busy family routines leave little time to wait for a beginning speaker to form sentences, to improve their pronunciation or correct grammar. Unlike the gradual way children develop language while they interact with family, as a 30-year-old adult, Jessica doesn't have the luxury of an entire childhood to learn English. According to Michele, Jessica previously had a job in customer service in a Cancun resort and needs to learn English so she can get a job here in the U.S. "I'm sure she feels isolated and wants to broaden her world beyond family and build new relationships."

So, how do the Community Education ESL tutors go about this individualized teaching ministry? The approaches are as unique as the students. Michele explains just how different each student can be. "One of my students, Luis, can read and pronounce written English perfectly. Yet, even though he works around English speakers every day, he just couldn't hold a basic conversation." With Luis, Michele built on his ability to read by using a book that provided both the English and the Spanish way to say things that are commonly said at work and in daily life. That helps him build vocabulary and really understand what he is hearing at work. In turn, it encourages Luis to practice with coworkers.

Michele's approach with Jessica is different. Jessica needs to practice the basics she has already learned just by listening. Due to the pandemic, they started meeting outdoors on Mondays and Fridays at a park near Jessica's home. Building a good rapport with Jessica is important to help her feel comfortable enough to practice with Michele. "I make it a point to ask her about herself, so she knows I'm a friend she can trust." They also meet on Wednesdays by phone, using FaceTime. "You really can't learn a language by meeting just once a week for an hour," Michele explains. "So, short sessions several times a week made more sense." Beyond the park meetings and FaceTime calls, Michele also has Jessica studying English using a computer-based language learning program called *Babble*, which she can work on between tutoring sessions. "Jessica is a very motivated and dedicated student," Michele observed. "So, I assign her lots of homework that helps her focus daily on her language learning." Then, at the beginning of each tutoring session, Michele makes a point to review Jessica's homework and confirm that she understands everything. Soon, Michele plans to take Jessica to stores and restaurants to give her opportunities to converse with others and build her confidence.

One surprising fact is that Michele doesn't speak Spanish. Inevitably there are times in her tutoring sessions when Michele and her Spanish-speaking student have no idea what the other has said. Michele has creatively found other ways

around that communication challenge when it arises. She relies on an app on her phone to translate as needed. Sometimes she pantomimes words and phrases to explain the meaning. Other times, she draws pictures on a dry erase board. Apparently, it's true that a picture is worth a thousand words!

Most ESL tutors, like Michele, find the Community Education teaching ministry grows out of a desire to help others succeed. Many adults get easily frustrated when learning a second language. After all, they speak one language confidently and communicate with ease. The contrast of learning a new language so they can speak just as clearly and confidently takes time and patience. "When Jessica gets down on herself, I try to encourage her to relax and to be more comfortable with making mistakes. I tell students to think of it like learning a song," she explains. "First you have to learn the words, the basics. You might sing a bit off key while getting those basics down, but eventually you memorize the words and can focus more on singing in tune, using more musical phrasing and rhythm. It all comes with practice and I just try to cheer them on."

If you are interested in knowing more about the Community Education program or becoming an ESL tutor, go to <http://centrallutheranaz.org/church/education/gedesl> or write [CommunityEd@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:CommunityEd@centrallutheranaz.org).

| Number of passed GED tests | Previous Progress | Current Progress |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Math                       | 13                | 13               |
| Language Arts              | 12                | 12               |
| Science                    | 13                | 13               |
| Social Studies             | 12                | 13               |
| Civics tests               | 15                | 15               |
| GEDs earned                | 12                | 12               |



## Shield A Badge Support Ministry

Central Lutheran Church, along with other churches and organizations in the area are being invited to renew their participation in the "Shield a Badge" support ministry. Volunteers sign up to pray daily for a member of the Casa Grande Police Department praying for their safety and well-being.



The coordinator for Central Lutheran Church is Sandy Carpenter and she can be reached via phone or text at (703) 509-5651 or e-mail: carpesm56@gmail.com. In-the-past, approximately 20 members of CLC have signed up to pray for an officer, but she would like to double that listing. If you would like to volunteer to pray for an officer please contact Sandy and she will assign you an officer's badge number.

The commitment is to pray daily for the safety and well-being of the officer for one year. Only the officer's badge number is provided to the volunteer (no names or personal information is provided). Please feel free to contact Sandy with any additional questions you may have about the ministry.



*Click image to update. Even if no changes, please complete.*

### **Help Us Connect!**

Click this image to update your contact information. Even if you've had no recent changes, you can fill out the form with all your current information to make sure what we have is complete and correct. Thank you!

## **Financial Report**

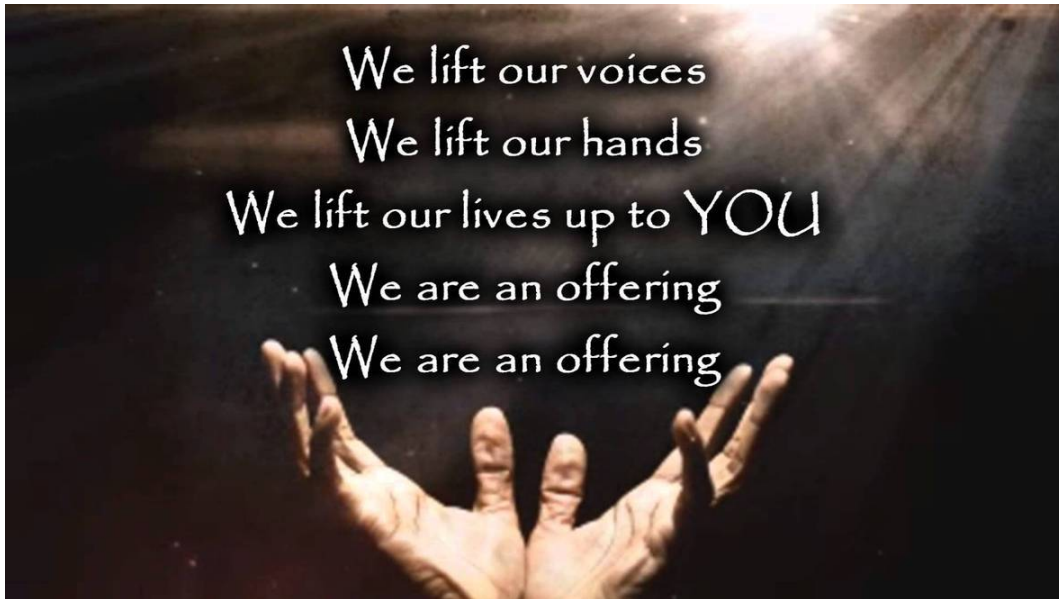
Gods Blessings and Merry Christmas to you all! I want to take a moment and thank each and every member/visitor to our congregation over the last month for your generosity to Central Lutheran Church. I am happy to announce this was the first month out of the last eight we were able to meet out actual expenses. As you all know this has been a very difficult time financially for our congregation. Again, THANK YOU!

During this past month, the Budget for 2021 was put together and was submitted to The Church Council for approval. It was unanimously approved. I look forward to presenting it to the Congregation at the annual meeting in January. The budget is based on actual expenses and what is necessary to run our two church sites. I look forward to meeting with you at the Annual Meeting or sooner if you have any concerns or questions.



In closing, I wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New year.

Steve Gal, Church Council Treasurer



### **“What You Have First Given Us”**

*Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us  
– ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love.*

*Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

On the **second weekend of each month** we continue to prayerfully consider the challenge to double our offering. The reason for this proposal is the need to increase offerings and the belief many people have the ability to fulfill such a request. As we consider this challenge, we can ask ourselves, “how come I don’t give more?” Thank you for your contributions to our growing ministry.

During this pandemic, please continue to support CLC.

**MAIL your offerings (Casa Grande or AZ City) to:**

**Central Lutheran Church, PO Box 677 Arizona City, AZ 85123**

**Also consider setting up REGULAR, AUTOMATIC GIVING through your financial institution or PayPal.**

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**Can you supply cookies or dessert to help out?**

## **FREE Hot Lunch Program (for all ages)**

You can help support this outreach program in our community! Baked or bought - supply some finger-food dessert goodies!



Did you know that veterans, elderly, parents, children can get a good meal at the Eloy Hot Lunch program? No questions asked. This is a community outreach program for CLC where you can help! St. Vincent de Paul serves a hot meal to 60+ people who need a meal three days a week! We provide dessert for the Eloy Hot lunch program on Wednesdays. Can you bake or buy treats for the hot lunch? Treats do not need to be individually wrapped, but they do need to be “finger food”. Once we are back at church in Casa Grande or AZ City you can stick your treats with a “hot lunch” tag in the church fridge or freezer (plate, bags or boxed) for the ladies to deliver to the program site (just let them know they are there). Ideally we would like to stock our freezer with treats for the program! You do not deliver directly to lunch - all donations go to Sandy Christopher or Judy Smith. Questions? Contact Sandy Christopher (520-483-1442) . During our suspended service time contact Sandy directly to figure out pickup/delivery options.

## **Casa Grande Food Bank**

You can help alleviate hunger in our community. You may bring your donations of food directly to the Casa Grande Food Bank at:

235 E 4th St

Casa Grande, AZ, 85122

(Cross Streets: Marshall St & 4th St)



All non-perishable, non-expired, food items are welcome. They are open to receive donations of food from Noon to 4:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. For questions, you may call them at 520-560-0525.

Thank you for helping to feed our neighbors!

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## **Share your gifts**

During this time of worshipping from home, your participation is needed! Contact Pastor



Annemarie or a Council Member if you can help in any of these areas:

- Video recording and editing
- Read the lesson from home
- Musical interlude/singing or instrumental from home or at church
- Preparing paraments, banners, decorations and flowers for worship
- Providing office assistance in creating newsletter, taking phone calls and messages (a couple hours a week)
- Do you know WordPress? Can you help update information on the website? (email [webmaster@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:webmaster@centrallutheranaz.org))

Keep your eyes, ears and hearts open to how you can help with this transition. Prayerfully remember everyone in our congregation during this time of change.

Send your newsletter or website information to [webmaster@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:webmaster@centrallutheranaz.org)

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**Click on images below to find out more about the program! You can help in so many areas of CLC outreach!**



Senior Center



Grief support



Community Food Pantry



Eloy Free Hot Lunch Program



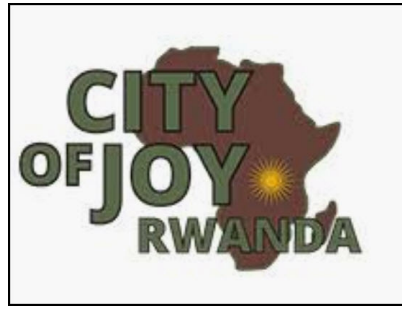
Manna Bags



Travel samples



Good Gifts Ministry



City of Joy



Youth Night



Shield a Badge



Prayer Requests



Volunteer - ESL



GED training/volunteer opportunities



Church Photo Directory

## Remember in Prayer

Harry Brink, Willie Bergren, Trent Blessing, Butch Burke, Sandy Carpenter, Carole Crain, Anne Decker, Wayne Eliason, Ellva Erickson, TJ Esco, Azure Sullivan Gal, Pam Gardner, Tom Gearhart, Ken Going, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Naomi and David Grobe, Darcy Hunter, Penny Jacobson, Marty Jones, Dwight Jorgensen, Ron Jung, Tammy Kempke, Ruth Kramer, Gary and Bev Linafelter, Ric Moser, Dick Mueser, Maria de Nazare, Walt Neulieb, Red and Dede Parrish, Ruthann Raitter, Marcus Ramirez, Jacquelynn Decker Regan, Sue Resch,



Ragen Shein, Denise Shepard, Coby Snow, Michele Rios & Marcus de Souza Lima, Julie Sternhagen, Iranice Tavares, Linda Ward, Ski Wrybkowski.

Bereavement:

The Family and Friends of George Brady

Military Service:

Caleb Ball, Grant Davis, Ryan Harrison, Sean Harrison, CJ Squires.



[Click for Prayer Request option on website](#)

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## CONTINUING TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

*"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*John 13:34-35*

For the good of our neighbors and ourselves, we continue to practice physical-distancing due to the COVID-19 coronavirus. It is an airborne respiratory illness that can easily spread from person to person. As Christians, it seems strange to show God's love by keeping physical distance from each other, but this is precisely what we are called to do at this time.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God calls us to care for the most vulnerable among us to make God's love for them known through our actions. So we continue to wear cloth face coverings, keep a minimum of 6 feet between us, washing our hands frequently and for a minimum of 20 seconds, covering our mouth and nose with a tissue or our sleeve (not our hands) when coughing or sneezing, etc—all to keep our neighbors safe. Loving our neighbor as Christ has called us to do happens in context, in this age and every age.

Thank you for your faithfulness as we follow this call to love and serve. Thank you for all you have done and are continuing to do. We've been doing this for months now, and we're not out of the woods yet; you may be feeling the fatigue of this constant vigilance. Many of us are. You might be experiencing the feelings of sadness, grief, fear, annoyance, anger, relief, guilt, confusion. God knows what you are feeling—talk with Him about it honestly. God will receive you in love and mercy.

Let us be united and let us not grow weary in this shared commitment to love our neighbors. The Holy Spirit is with us, and it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be inspired for continued commitment.

We continue to suspend indoor gatherings in our church buildings. We are now offering in-person worship services outdoors, and those worship services will be recorded for those whose health prevents them from gathering in-person with others. As the medical and scientific communities continue to learn about COVID-19, it has been found that this airborne virus spreads most effectively where people gather in enclosed spaces for extended amounts of time. This calls us to be particularly vigilant about gathering in-person for worship or other events. Our decisions will be based on scientific and medical information, and in conversation with the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the churchwide and local levels.

Let us continue to hold one another in mutual love, caring for the most vulnerable among us. Let us join together in worship, whether in-person outdoors or from our homes; continue sending in our offerings by mail, PayPal, or through our financial institutions; continue reaching out to one another through phone calls, emails, a caring note in the mail; continue showing our compassion and understanding to all.

For more information go to the websites for the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19) and the Arizona Department of Health Services [www.azdhs.gov](http://www.azdhs.gov). For information from the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA visit [www.gcsynod.org](http://www.gcsynod.org).

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## **Worship at Central**

**We are at this time worshipping OUTDOORS at:**

**Arizona City ----- Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Casa Grande ----- Sunday at 10 a.m.**

### **Our Worship**

Our focus is on the good news shared by God through Jesus Christ, and is celebrated through the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.

### **Worship Assistants**

You are needed to help as accompanist, greeter, usher, reader, communion server, offering counter, and nursery care. Sign-up to help.

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## **Our Mission**

*“We are a Spirit-filled community of loving and caring, light-hearted people who joyfully invite all to share, through the Gospel, the love of Christ.”*

## **Multi-Site Ministry**

- Draw upon resources to meet the needs of each campus
  - Use of congregational resources based on needs
  - Programs at one or both sites
  - One governing body, one budget
  - Staff active on both campuses
  - Capital projects at both campuses
- 

## **Contact Us**

Midweek office hours **Tuesdays and Wednesdays:**

**9:30 - Noon at Arizona City**

**1:00 - 3:00 at Casa Grande**

Church Office: [churchoffice@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:churchoffice@centrallutheranaz.org)

Pastor Annemarie Burke: [pastor@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:pastor@centrallutheranaz.org)

Website: [www.centrallutheranaz.org](http://www.centrallutheranaz.org)

### **Arizona City Campus**

12921 S. Sunland Gin Road (PO Box 677), Arizona City, AZ 85123

PH: (520) 466-5024

### **Casa Grande Campus**

324 N Sacaton Street , Casa Grande, AZ 85122

PH: (520) 316-9659

**For postal service use PO Box 677 Arizona City, AZ 85123**

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