



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News - May 2019

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Mother

A mother's love is something that no one can explain,
it is made of deep devotion and of sacrifice and pain.

It is endless and unselfish and enduring
come what may,
for nothing can destroy it or take that love away.

And it never fails or falters when all others are forsaking,
it is patient and forgiving even though the heart is breaking.

It believes beyond believing when the world around condemns,
and it glows with all the beauty of the rarest, brightest gems.

It is far beyond defining, it defies all explanations,
and it still remains a secret like the mysteries of creation.

A many splendored miracle one cannot understand,
and another wondrous evidence of God's tender guiding hand.



How to Know Whether You are Ready to Be a Mother

"Final Assignment"

Find a couple who already have a small child. Lecture them on how they can improve their discipline, patience, tolerance, toilet training and child's table manners. Suggest many ways they can improve. Emphasize to them that they should never allow their children to run wild. Enjoy this experience. It will be the last time you will have all the answers.

For Mother's Day

A mother who always cares, a mother who's always there.

A mother who always prays, a mother who always stays.

When things get rough, when life gets tough,
when all is just too much to bear,

God's word she shares, God's love she shines.

So blessed God made this mother mine. (Anon)

Happy
Mother's
Day



Neon Sign Park

On Saturday, April 13th, the lights were officially switched on at the Neon Sign Park in the Arizona Plaza.

The park pays tribute to the neon and classic signs that are a part of

Casa Grande and Arizona history. The park features 14 signs that have been salvaged and restored. The park will be featured on the Arizona roadside attractions map for travelers looking for unique experiences.

The Arizona Plaza is the location of our Casa Grande sit, with the park just outside our front doors.



A Teya Update

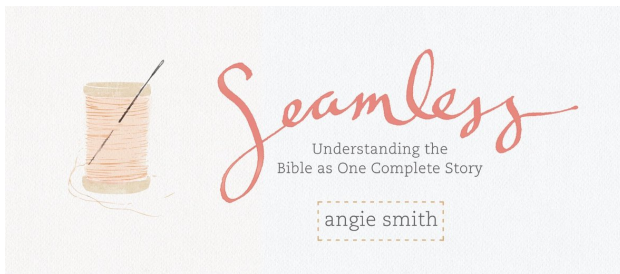
In April, our granddaughter, Teya, made her first return to Arizona to visit family for a week.

She has been busy with cheerleading lessons, assisting her step-sisters' softball team, and exploring other pursuits. Teya is an excellent reader and recently won the 2nd grade Spelling Bee at her school.

This month Alyson and I will be visiting for a week in the Albany area. Also, our younger daughter will have completed her drive across country and will be settling there as well.

Upcoming Events

Study and Discussion



Women's Book Club

Thurs, May 9th

9 a.m. in Casa Grande

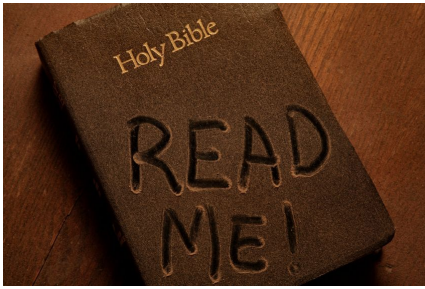
All women are invited to be a part of the study and reflection of "Seamless" by Angie Smith.

Seamless covers the people, places and promises of the Bible, tying them together into the greater story of Scripture. Participants will gain an overarching understanding of the fundamental layout and meaning of God's Word.

Seamless helps replace insecurity that holds participants back with clarity and helping them move forward with confidence in their understanding of Scripture. Each week of study features key information that ties all of scripture together into the seamless truth of the gospel message and is accompanied by maps, general Bible facts, and word studies.

For more information contact Sandy Christopher (520-483-1442) or Dell Hoff (520-252-0488) .

Men's Morning Coffee



Monday, May 20th
8 a.m. Casa Grande

A time for study and discussion: Bible history, teachings of Jesus, Lutheran interpretation of scripture, and the impact on shaping our lives and actions each day.



Friendship Center Ministry

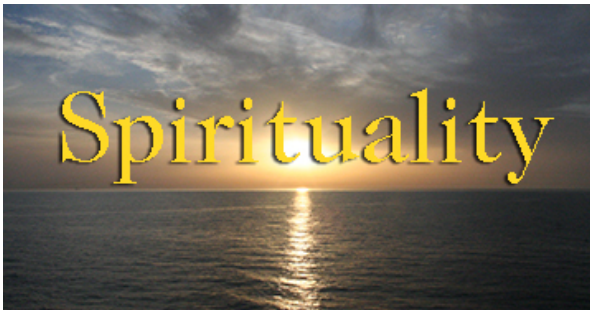
Robson Ranch

Sunday Inter-Denominational Worship
8 a.m. Liturgical worship
9:30 a.m. Celebration service
Laredo Room

Central Lutheran Church is sponsoring and assisting the development of the Friendship Center ministry for the Robson Ranch community under the direction of Pastor Ron

Hunt. The ministry will focus on being a welcoming and supportive spiritual environment for the residents of the community. It will be offering the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus and make a difference in the lives of others through personal callings.

Our congregation can share in prayer, study, outreach, administrative needs and financial support. Specific opportunities will be shared in the coming weeks.



Spiritual Friendship

Pastor Ron Hunt (Psychologist and Spiritual Director) will be hosting gatherings to explore "Spiritual Friendship." This is an opportunity for anyone who wishes to share one's spirituality with other Christians in a

confidential setting to assist devotional life and living out the Spirit's call for life. The group will meet in the Ranch House Fireside Room at Robson Ranch. Contact Pastor Ron at 218-330-5306.

Youth Night Class

Our youth group meets for Bible study, discussion and activities on Wednesdays from 6-7:30 p.m. at our Casa Grande campus.

The program includes our elementary, middle school and high school students.

During the month we will be watching movies depicting the trials, struggles and successes of famous Bible characters, and, discussing contemporary films with a focus on the challenges of relationships.

Classes for the different age groups are led by Kara Cooper and Pastor Thom.



Good Grief

*"Grief never ends, but it changes.
It's a passage, not a place to stay.
Grief is not a sign of weakness,
nor a lack of faith.
It is the price of love."
(Author Unknown)*

Because of all the people and things in life we love, life is full of sorrow, sadness, distress, pain, suffering, and, adversity. Life is full of loss in many different forms. Unique in many ways. Common in many ways.

You are invited to these upcoming opportunities to share grief. To be comforted, to comfort. To be helped, to help. To be supported, to support others.

Meetings are at 2 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in Arizona City. Contact Judy Smith at 520-466-6227.



Shield a Badge

Central Lutheran Church joins with many congregations and organizations in the area participating in the "Shield the Badge" support ministry. Volunteers agree to pray daily for a member of the Casa Grande Police Department.

Pick up an information card and contact Sandy Carpenter (carpesm56@gmail.com) and you will be assigned a badge number.

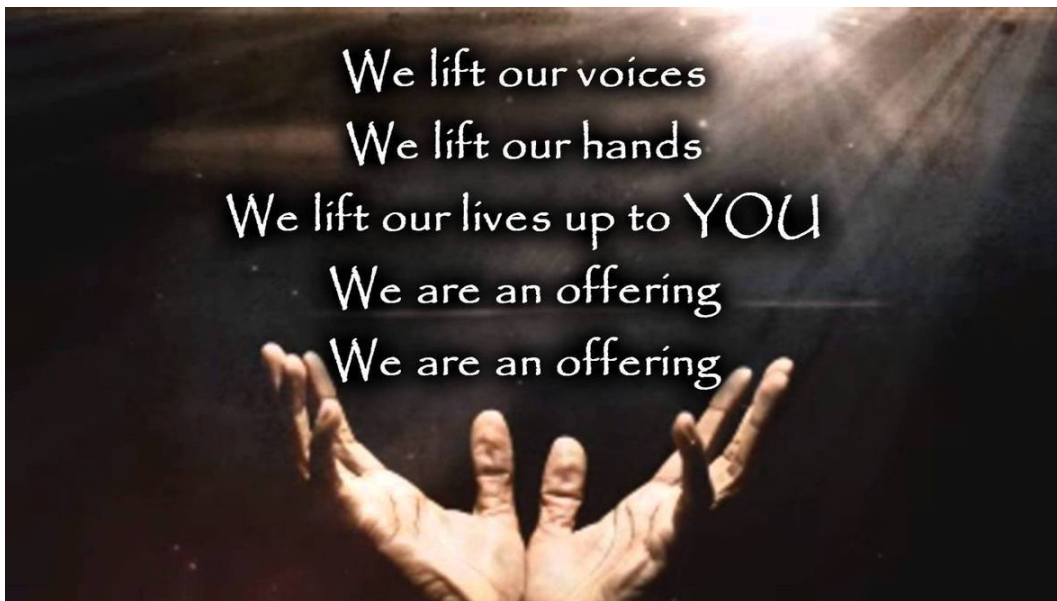
For one year pray for the safety and well-being of the officer using the badge number.

Spring Softball Season

Your "Saints" ended the spring season with a close loss in the first round of the tournament. After a 5 and 10 season the team will look to improve when the summer campaign begins in June.

Games are played on Monday nights at the Paul Mason Sportsplex on Pinal Ave. in Casa Grande.

Special thanks to the fans who come out to support our team.



Our Stewardship

We continue to celebrate our growth reflected in a greater number of worshipers, worshipers who have met their monthly offering goal (even when missing a worship service), and, those who have doubled their offering on the second Sunday of each month.

We have held the belief that many of us have had the ability to grow in our giving. Continuing to ask ourselves, "how come I don't give more?"

Your contributions have made it possible for us to extend our benevolence to many areas of need. This year the council will designate contributions to:

All Hands and Hearts -- assisting the recovery effort of the people of Puerto Rico;

City of Joy Rwanda -- sponsoring a student in Rwanda for an entire school year;

Lutheran Disaster Relief -- the ELCA provides extensive support for the relief and recovery efforts of the impacted regions;

Refugee Program -- Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest supports the resettlement of families from around the world in Arizona;

Florence Immigration and Refugee Rights Project -- providing educational materials, sports equipment, school supplies, pregnancy and new parent support;

Maricopa Lutheran Church -- assisting the congregation's efforts to establish a permanent location in their community;

Friendship Center -- sponsoring the start-up ministry for the Robson Ranch community.

Thank you for your contributions to our growing ministry, helping us to grow our ministry within our congregation, to the Grand Canyon synod and the national church, and to those in need around the world.

A Fragrance Free Environment

We are now encouraging that everyone please avoid wearing scented products, such as perfumes, colognes and aftershaves, during worship and other congregational events held at our two sites.

Many people have sensitivities and respiratory difficulties that are triggered when exposed to personal fragrances.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Council Members for 2019

Our council was set at last month's annual meeting. Members for this year are:

Gary Erickson (Vice President), Paul Garrison, Gary Isaacson, Ina Johnson, Dick Jones, Richard LaPaglia, Gary Linafelter, Leticia Luse, John Pieschl (President), Mary Pietrini, Skip Simes (Secretary), and Carolyn Torr (Treasurer).



Meetings are generally scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month in Arizona City or Casa Grande.

Community Ministries

Number of passed GED tests	Previous Progress	Current Progress
Math	8	9
Language Arts	8	8
Science	8	8
Social Studies	8	8
Civics tests	9	9
GEDs earned	7	8

Community Education Ministry

Our adult students have had many successes already this year in their study programs. We now have 9 students who passed the math test, 8 language arts, 8 science, 8 social studies, and, 9 civics. Two

participants, Eva and Rachel, have recently completed their GED tests.

Our ESL language classes now have 25 active participants with 20 coaches!

Our part time Spanish speaking tutor, Eva, has continued to be a great asset to our ministry.

You can help by volunteering as a GED or English tutor or making a donation -- designate as "adult education." Thank you for the donations received for this ministry!

Education Opportunity: Learn Spanish

Central Lutheran is offering Spanish Language Workshops. Sessions are free for everyone and will focus on learning beginning/ intermediate conversational skills. Dates and times are determined based on the schedules of participants.

Donation of Home Furnishings

Sometimes the families of our participants are in need of furniture, and small and large appliances. You can help them by donating these items. Contact Alyson to help.

For information of all our programs contact Alyson Stephens: 602-721-1673 or alysonstephens@q.com.

Manna Bags

We have joined with the Casa Grande Police Department to provide our Manna Bags for officers to distribute in our community. Twenty bags will be given away each week.

You can pick up a Manna Bag(s) to carry in your car so it can be shared with someone in need that you may meet in the course of your day.

Manna Bags generally include the following items:
two 16.9 oz water bottles, packaged tuna, sausage, crackers (plain, with cheese or peanut butter), energy bars, PayDay candy bars, fruit cups, hand wipes, plastic forks and spoons, in a gallon plastic bag.



Community Food Pantry

Our congregation has donated thousands of food items to the Casa Grande Food Bank. The second Sunday of each month has been designated as a day to support those in need. You are encouraged to make it a practice to bring food items each month for the food bank. Food bins are located at both of our sites.



Hot Lunch Program

You can help the Eloy lunch program on Wednesdays by providing 25-50 homemade or purchased “treats.”

For information call Sandy Christopher (520-483-1442) . You can bring your “treats” to worship on Sunday and they will be delivered to the program site.

Request to Travelers

Contribute shampoo, conditioner, lotion, soap, toothpaste and coffee packets to Helping Hands, which assists families through mentoring, healthcare, nutrition, and emergency programs. A container is located in the entry at both sites.

Ladies Quilting Ministry



The group will be taking a break and resume meeting once again in the fall.

Thanks to all the women who have contributed to this ministry that provides a message of care and comfort to women and children of our community through the sharing of quilts.

A special thanks for the recent donation of several sets of quilt tops and bottoms, fabric and yarn. Such contributions are greatly appreciated!



City of Joy Rwanda

God's grace is on daily display and the Holy Spirit continues to build up the ministry taking place in Rwanda. You can support this inspirational ministry by sponsoring a student and supporting the graduates of the sewing program by purchasing items that have been created.

After visiting with us in January, the

Ellingson family briefly returned to Rwanda and have now settled in the Phoenix area.

Todd Ellingson, President and Founder of City of Joy

todd.d.ellingson@gmail.com

<http://cityofjoyrwnda.org>

<https://youtu.be/oDUbpBEfokk>

"Good Gifts" Ministry

Malawi is a landlocked country in southeast Africa that was formerly known as Nyasaland. The topography of the country is defined by highlands split by the Great Rift Valley and enormous Lake Malawi, which takes up about one-third of Malawi's area.



The population of Malawi is estimated at a little over 18 million. This estimate takes into account a lower life expectancy, and higher infant deaths, due to AIDS.

Malawi is among the world's least-developed countries. The economy is heavily based on agriculture, with a largely rural population. The government depends on outside aid to meet development needs. There are challenges in building and expanding the economy, improving education, healthcare, environmental protection, and

becoming financially independent amidst widespread overpopulation and unemployment.

Our congregational campaign raised \$8,783, which has been increased to \$10,000 by the church council. These funds will allow us to partner with the Malawi Health and Wellness program. Through the direction of the Lutheran Church of Malawi our funds will be used to provide access to clean water, sanitation, livestock, farm equipment, fruit trees, medical supplies and medicines, school materials, and mosquito netting.

This is a specific breakdown of expenses:

- 2 simple water wells
- 4 latrines
- 1 fish farm
- 1 fruit tree nursery
- 4 women attending farming school
- 20 sets of farm tools
- 4 piglets
- 10 chicks
- 5 roosters
- 2 pair of goats
- 4 colonies of honey bees
- 1 month of medical supplies
- 1 classroom of school supplies
- 1 community of mosquito netting.

Thank you for your contributions to this ministry. You can continue to make individual donations to Good Gifts throughout the year. ELCA Good Gifts provide more than 50 different gift-giving options, starting at \$10, that fight disease and hunger, and transform lives around the world.

Remember in Prayer

Harry Brink, Willie Bergren, Harold Bonde, Dale Bothof, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessing, Sandy Carpenter, Carole Crain, Anne Decker, TJ Esco, Ellva Erickson, Pam Gardner, Tom Gearhart, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Harold and Peggy Hall, Ron Jung, Tammy Kempke, Gertie Kenyon, Ruth Kramer, Norma Kringen, Gary and Bev Linafelter, Ken and Lois Morgan, Dick Mueser, Walt Neulieb, Red and Dede Parrish, Ruthann Raitter, Marcus Ramirez, Denise Shepard, Coby Snow, Julie Sternhagen, Linda Ward, Ski Wrybkowski.



Bereavement -- Donna Wittenburg and family following the death of Erv on May 1st.

Military Service -- Grant Davis, Ryan Harrison, Sean Harrison, Timothy Rupp, CJ Squires.

Financial News

“What You Have First Given Us”

Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us - our selves, 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.

Internship Fund

The \$20,848 of contributions received for the internship program have been invested in an ELCA Mission Investment Fund account. The council will continue to evaluate the possibility of participating in the internship program in the futures or applying to other staffing needs.

Special note: At the annual meeting in January, it was approved to use \$6,000 of the fund to support the work of our tutor for our GED program this year.

Casa Grande Land Fund

Our property “growth fund” has a balance of \$14,618 for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 23rd at 6:30 p.m. in Casa Grande.

April Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$26,035

Balance General Fund: \$51,126

Average Monthly Expenses: \$18,000

Capital Fund: \$78,345 (includes \$30,000 savings from General Fund)

Internship Fund: \$20,848

Worship Schedule

Arizona City

Sunday - 8:30 a.m.

For information on Sunday children activities contact Linda Gal (705-1450).

Casa Grande

Sunday -- 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.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday at all services.

Fellowship is held at both sites each Sunday.

Worship Assistants

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

Altar Flowers

Sign-up to provide flowers on the altar for a special remembrance or event.

Name Tags

We would like to have name tags for all of our worshipers. Sign up for yours.

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
-

Church Family Photo Directory

Click here to go to the church [photo directory](#)

Contact Us

Church Office: churchoffice@centrallutheranaz.org
Pastor Thom Stephens: pastor@centrallutheranaz.org
www.centrallutheranaz.org

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Note: for postal service use PO Box 677 Arizona City, AZ 85123

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