



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

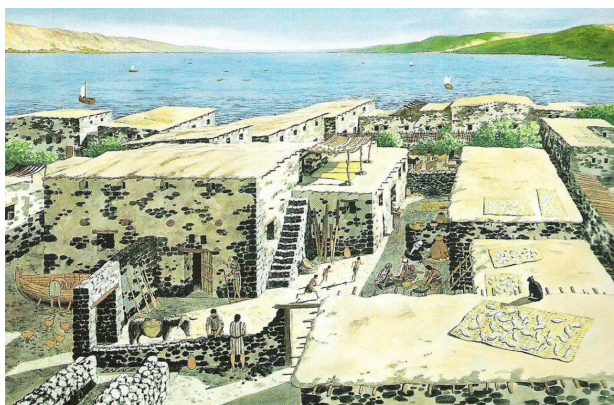
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A Love Story

Several times in his ministry, Jesus alluded to the typical 1st century marriage practices to illustrate his relationship with us. Not all scholars agree on the details of courtship and marriage in Israel at that time, yet it is important for us to take from this discussion that

Jesus often described his love for us with the metaphor of a marriage celebration.



People in Galilee often lived in family units called "insulae." (pictured) Although not everyone lived in this way, it was common for people, particularly extended families, to combine several living units around an open courtyard.

It is possible Jesus and his disciples lived in such a compound in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-2; 7:17). This is not definite but the reference to "household" would indicate the house size needed from him and his disciples makes this likely. The practice of living in such a complex is the basis for one of Jesus' pictures of heaven (John 14:2-4).

The metaphor of marriage is one of the most compelling of Jesus' teaching ministry. An engagement at the time was as serious as marriage. The families agreed on compensation for the loss of a daughter, usually a large sum. The life commitment of bride and groom was sealed by drinking a cup of wine.

The engaged bridegroom returned to his father's household and began to construct a new living unit to the family compound. The groom to be would work tirelessly, eager to complete the dwelling so he could claim his bride. His father would oversee the work, perhaps to make sure the anxious young man would use good building practices. When the father determined everything was ready, he gave his blessing for the wedding ceremony to proceed. Generally, the engagement period was one year, though no one knew exactly when the wedding would take place.

Then the groom brought his friends and family to the bride's town. They would announce their coming with singing, dancing, and shouting. The bride and her attendants would be taken to the new home together. When the marriage was consummated the wedding feast would begin.

We can grasp the depth of Jesus' love for us based on the metaphor of the loving marriage relationship. The great joy of the marriage relationship gives us the ability to comprehend what personal, powerful love Jesus has for us and what he wants us to have for him.



Upcoming Events

"Valentines Concert and Dance"

Friday, February 15th

6-8 p.m. in Arizona City

The "Time Bandits" will be performing once again. You and your friends are invited to enjoy the music and try out your dancing shoes.

Refreshments will be served.





Friendship Center Ministry

Robson Ranch

Sunday Inter-Denominational Worship

8 a.m. Liturgical worship

9:30 a.m. Celebration service

Laredo Room

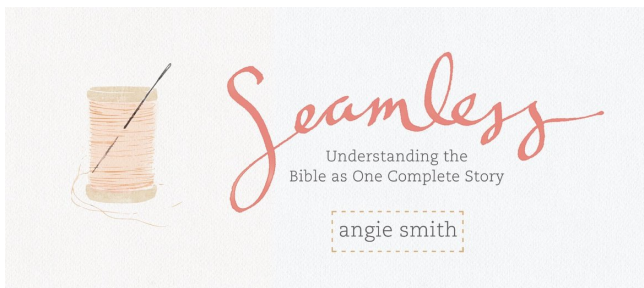
Tuesday Study -- Jesus' Greatest Teachings

4 p.m. 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.

Study and Discussion



Women's Book Club

Thurs, February 7th

9 a.m. in Casa Grande

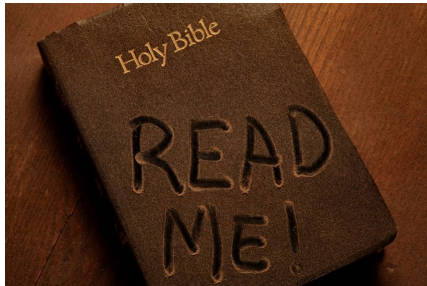
All women are invited to be a part of the study and reflection of "Seamless" by

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) .



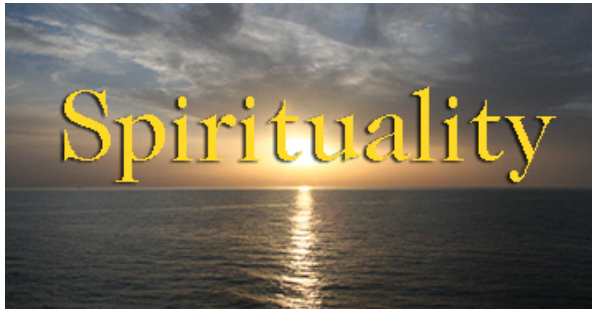
Men's Morning Coffee

Monday, February 4th and 18th

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.



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.

9 Hole Golf Scramble

Sunday, February 10th at 1:30 p.m.

Arizona City Golf Club

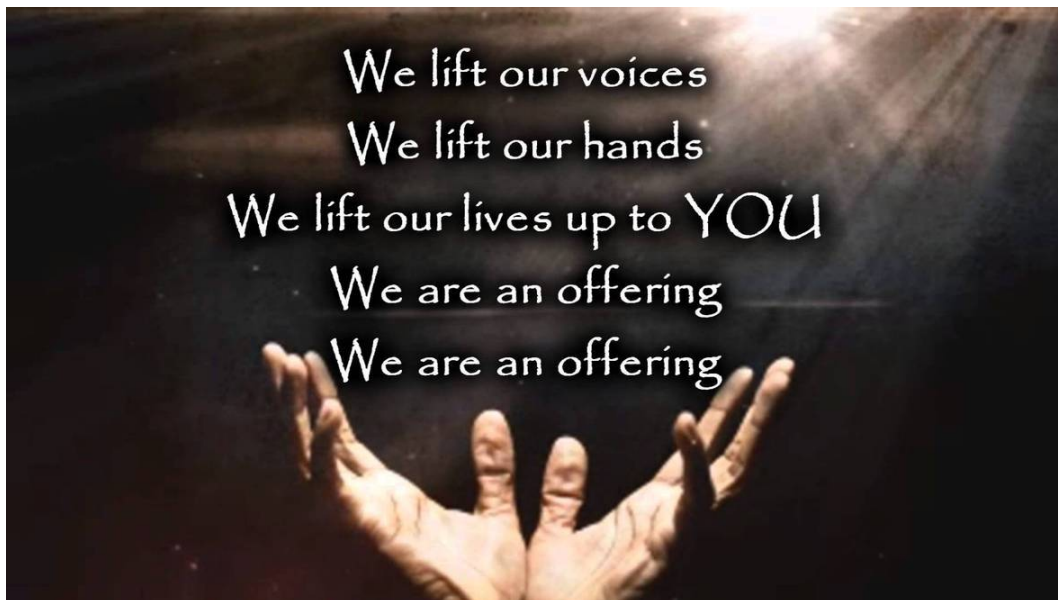
Golfers of all abilities are encouraged to participate. Invite your friends. Cost for play is \$30. Fellowship follows play.

Winter Softball Season

Your "Saints" will take the field again this month. Schedules will soon be available. 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.

Council Members for 2019

Our council was set at last month's annual meeting. Members for this year are: Gary Erickson, Paul Garrison, Gary Isaacson, Ina Johnson, Dick Jones, Richard LaPaglia, Gary Linafelter, Leticia Luse, John Pieschl, Mary Pietrini, Skip Simes, and Carolyn Torr.

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

Shaping Our Ministry

Our ministry teams are beginning to form as many of you have shared your interests.

Welcoming New Residents

Phone call: Sandy Carpenter, Sandy Christopher, Pat and Francis Harrison, Paul and Susan Garrison, Bonnie Murphy, Keith and Arlyss Radabah, Connie Schelske, Carolyn Torr.

Visit: Paul and Susan Garrison, Dick and Pat Jones, Connie Schelske, Carolyn Torr.

Providing Transportation: Sandy, Christopher, Al and Becky Gessner, Pat and Francis Harrison, Dick and Pat Jones, Marjorie Lamkin, Carolyn Torr.

Home Assistance

Repairs: Paul Garrison, John Pieschl, Roger Smith.

Computers: Karen Debold, Francis Harrison.

Bereavement Support

Visit: Sandy Carpenter, Kara Cooper, Carolyn Torr.

Fellowship Following Service: Sandy Christopher, Karen Debold, Pat Jones, Mary LaPaglia, Bonnie Murphy, Judy Smith, Carolyn Torr.

Providing for the Homeless: Arlo Cairo, Sandy Carpenter, Karen Debold, Al and Becky Gessner, Lisa Hunt, Dan Kirk, Gary Linafelter, Sue Rhoades.

Community Ministries

Community Education Ministry

Number of passed GED tests	Previous Progress	Current Progress
Math	6	8
Language Arts	5	7
Science	7	8
Social Studies	7	8
Civics tests	8	9
GEDs earned	4	6

Our adult students have had great success in their ongoing study programs. We have had 8 students pass the math test, 7 language arts, 8 science, 8 social studies, and, 9 civics. Two participants, Yazmin and Hector, have recently completed their GED tests. Four new students have recently joined the program.

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 now offering Spanish Language Workshops. Taught by Ricardo Romano, one of the dedicated volunteer tutors who serves with our ongoing Community Education Ministry, sessions are free for everyone and will focus on learning beginning/ intermediate conversational skills. Dates and times are to be determined based on 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 Judy Smith (520-466-6227) . 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 women's quilting ministry will begin on Wednesday, November 7th in Arizona City. The group will meet at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. Bring your lunch and invite a friend.

Many women have continued to contribute to this effort and help with these gifts to our community. Their message is one of care and comfort 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!

Serving Meals

You can help serving meals at "Seeds of Hope" in Casa Grande on Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For more information contact Jayne Schneuer (520-840-4038) .



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://cityofjoyrwanda.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, Anne Decker, TJ Esco, Ellva Erickson, Pam Gardner, Tom Gearhart, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Harold and Peggy Hall, 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.

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, February 19th at 6:30 p.m. in Casa Grande.

January Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$21,998

Balance General Fund: \$22,357

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

Saturday -- 5 p.m.

Sunday -- 10:05 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

Arizona City Campus

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PO Box 677

Arizona City, AZ 85123

(520) 466-5024

Casa Grande Campus

324 N Sacaton Street

Casa Grande, AZ 85122

(520) 316-9659

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

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