



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News -October 2018

- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Study and Discussion](#)
- [Community Ministries](#)
- [Remember in Prayer](#)
- [Financial News](#)
- [Worship Schedule](#)
- [Our Mission](#)
- [Church Family Photo Directory](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



All Hands and Hearts -- Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, USA

Alyson and I joined "All Hands and Hearts - Smart Response" in Yabucoa for the month of September.

The program uses volunteers to address the immediate and long-term needs of communities impacted by natural disasters. The task is to rebuild safe and resilient homes and other community infrastructure.

Visit the organization's website for more information: "allhandsandhearts.org"

Puerto Rico Night

Wed, October 24th at 6 p.m.

Casa Grande

Learn more about our adventure at this special presentation and question/answer time.

The youth group will host the gathering and serve dessert.

September 3rd

Downtown San Juan seems to have recovered from the damage of Hurricane Maria. Many of the buildings are old and worn, but have withstood the ravaging power of nature and continue to stand tall above the shoreline. What is more impressive is how the people have endured the suffering with resilience.

During the ride from the airport our taxi driver shared some of his experiences from last year. His home was without power for three months and for two months there was no opportunity for work. His neighbors shared the same struggles and he told us how his neighborhood came together.



People began gathering outside. He said he got to know his neighbors better, and met many for the first time. They grilled meals together and shared with one another. The children played outside. With no computers, television, or any handheld devices, which they had grown up with, they met together and played. They found new and simple ways to entertain themselves. Time was passed with games and bicycle riding. They survived together and grew closer to one another. They were neighbors.

Tuesday we travel across the island to Yabucoa. Puerto Rico is only 50 by 100 miles in size, with 3.5 million people. The median income is less than \$20,000 and 45 percent live below the poverty line. We will begin to see how the people are doing in the smaller communities and outlying area. We will have the chance to be their neighbors.

September 7th

Upon arrival at our base of operations we met many of the volunteers working at our site. There are about 50 participants, almost all seem to be under the age of 35. Most are from all parts of the states, but others have come from the UK, Spain, Lithuania, Germany and Australia. Many of the leadership have been on site since January.

In many ways our nation has failed to provide for our fellow citizens of Puerto Rico. It makes quite an impact appreciating the thought of people coming from around the world to support the recovery effort.

All Hands and Hearts have projects scheduled for the next year, and may continuing their work for years to come.



September 9th

This is the home on which the we have been currently working on the roof. The couple live with an elderly mother in failing health. They were without electricity from September to May (I complain when power is lost for 30 minutes).

Once power was reestablished the ceiling lights and fans did not work because of the water damage. The electricity is now

accessible only from the wall outlets.

Repair of the roof begins with stripping off all materials to reach the concrete base. All lose material is power washed (see Alyson in photo below) or scraped off. Cracks, holes and other damage is patched with cement.

Finally two coats of 100% silicon is applied to the surface. One roof requires an average of 8-10 five gallon buckets, which cost \$200 a piece.

On Monday, repairs will be completed and the sealant will be applied.

September 10th

As we have had the opportunity to return to San Juan on the weekends, we witness the contrast between



the city and the countryside.

In San Juan, there is little evidence of the storm and the residents are trying to return to a sense of normalcy. For Yabucoa the aftermath of the storm continues to have a daily impact. Electricity has not been restored to 40% of the community, and has been unreliable throughout the area.

The base for All Hands and Hearts is in the barrio of Martorell, the poorest in a poor city. Last week five suicides were reported in the

area. Health care is difficult to access, which was witnessed by a team of our volunteers. Arriving at a work site the male resident was resting after an apparent heart attack. He lived alone, had no neighbors to provide help, and no means to get medical assistance. Normalcy here is a day-to-day challenge of getting by.

September 15th

Following roof repair, the second phase of a home project is the removal of mold in the ceiling and walls. Mold is a result of the rain that has penetrated the interior of the home due to roof leakage.

Mold in the home can make a person sick, especially for those with allergies or asthma. Whether or not one is allergic to molds, mold exposure can irritate eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs.



These spores, if ingested or inhaled, can cause a range of unpleasant and even dangerous symptoms in humans. The most common mold effects are associated with respiratory response. Severe cases of prolonged exposure to mold can be fatal.

Before work begins, each volunteer puts on a Tyvek HazMat coverall suit, particulate respirator, goggles, and nitrile gloves for personal protection.

When treating the home, every effort is made to protect personal property. Furniture and other household items are removed or covered with plastic before the areas with mold and loose paint are scraped. These areas are sprayed with chemicals and then brushed to work in the chemicals into the scraped surfaces. The mold removal efforts are repeated when necessary.

Once completed the home is swept and personal items are put back in place. These cleanup efforts can take hours or days, depending on the severity of the mold.



September 23rd

September 20th marked the one year anniversary of Hurricane Maria hitting Puerto Rico. Many residents of the Yabucoa community gathered for a time of remembrance, reflection, and renewal near the shoreline where the hurricane made landfall. The

event, led by Yabucoa municipal leaders, included music, prayers, and speeches that described the resiliency and strength of the people.

A Personal Account

A man living in Yabucoa shared with me how he and his family sat in their home when the hurricane Maria arrived.

The wind and the rain began in the night. The full force of the hurricane struck at 3 a.m. and the community went dark when the power went out. Through the tremendous roar of the wind, shrill screams could be heard from the people in the surrounding homes. The cement houses vibrated and shook violently from the storm pressure.

At 6 a.m. it was light enough to see what was happening around them. Utility poles and trees were littering the streets.

Shade structures, fences, and personal property had been taken by the wind.

The full force of the storm raged until 10 a.m. The people of the neighborhood emerged from their homes and began to check on the welfare of one another. The man made the journey to to home of his wife’s parents on foot through the destruction to make sure they were not harmed. A natural support system developed, but the struggles were just starting. The effort to get by day-to-day had just begun.

The people worked together to clear the roads so when service vehicles arrived they had access to areas of need. Yet, many places in the surrounding homes could not be reached.

Gasoline was needed for cars and generators and long lines formed. The wait could take as long as five hours. Gas was rationed so this process was repeated several times every week.

With no electricity, cash was needed for all purchases. Once banks opened (no ATMs were available), again long lines formed and the wait would take hours. Withdrawals were limited, so the wait for money was necessary many times each week. Standing in line for cash and gas became a daily routine that lasted for months!

A form of normalcy has returned for his family, but only after an extremely long period of struggle. His story is one of thousands that was lived by the people in this rural community.

September 30th

I only worked on one roof from start to finish. The three stages include removal of old materials, surface preparation which includes cement work, and finally sealing. So, several days were spent at one home.

Each day the homeowner (pictured on the left) was a representation of many others in the community expressing appreciation for the work being done. She welcomed us in the morning, provided coffee during breaks and prepared a home cooked lunch.

One afternoon her neighbor (also in picture, known as “CNN” because she knew everything going on in the community) brought the afternoon coffee from her home across the street. Instead of disposable cups she served coffee in mugs she carried on a tray. Later she gave away the mugs decorated for Christmas to the three women on our team as a gift.



Following the serving of coffee she returned to her home and came back with old books prints in English. The books spanned a variety of topics, such as cooking recipes, gardening, financial planning and history. She wanted each of us to have one to be sure we each received a gift.

The spirit of the community was infectious in the ways so many people with so little could give us so much.



September 30th

Friday was our last day of work. Alyson's team completed a week long demolition effort. The team removed an addition that had been built on top of the home's roof.

This included block walls that had fallen, fixtures from a nonfunctional bathroom and a 4 inch cement floor.

All this was necessary to reach the original concrete roof.

The debris was taken down stairs from the roof in 5 gallon buckets and piled along the road for removal. Alyson was responsible for removing more than half of the material!

My final day was spent doing the cement work to prepare a roof for sealing next week. This gave me the opportunity to travel to a home in the mountains outside of town.

I am moved by experiencing the beauty of the country, the people and the volunteers in Puerto Rico.

Upcoming Events

"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.

Study and Discussion

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.

The gatherings will continue in the fall, watch for date and time.

Fall Softball Season

Your "Saints" have begun the season with a 1-3 record.

In October games are:

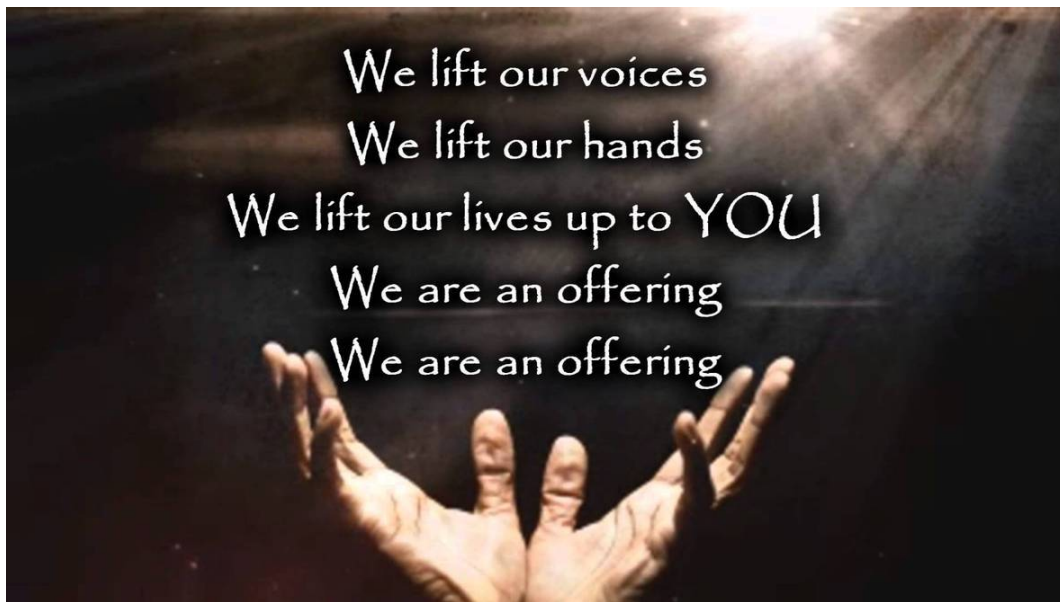
8th at 8:15/9:15 p.m.

15th at 6:15/7:15 p.m.

22nd at 8:15/9:15 p.m.

29th at 6:15/7:15 p.m.

The season will conclude in November.
Games are played 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. Last year the council has designated \$1,000 contributions to:

Habitat for Humanity -- the first of several planned home constructions is planned for Arizona City;

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

Sonlight Christian Camp -- since 1979 students from the southwest and across the nation have participated in this Christian camp experience outside Pagosa Springs, CO;

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

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, Jan Menefee, 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, Kathy Davis, 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.

Worship Nursery Care: Louise Cannon, Karen Debold, Lisa Hunt

Community Ministries

Community Education Ministry

Our adult students continue to have
success in their ongoing study

Number of passed GED tests	Previous Progress	Current Progress
Math	5	6
Language Arts	3	5
Science	3	7
Social Studies	4	7
Civics tests	5	8
GEDs earned	2	4

programs. We have had 6 students pass the math test, 5 language arts, 7 science, 7 social studies, and, 8 civics. Four participants, the latest being Martin (pictured here), have completed their GED tests. Three new students have recently joined the program.

Our ESL language class has increased from 12 to 16 hours a week. Presently, there are 12 active participants (an increase from 10).

We currently have a Spanish speaking part time tutor, who has proven 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!

New 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 created 80 quilts that will be distributed throughout our community later this year.

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.

The donation of materials and blankets 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.

Todd Ellingson, President and Founder of City of Joy

todd.d.ellingson@gmail.com

<http://cityofjoyrwnda.org>

<https://youtu.be/oDUbpBEfokk>

Remember in Prayer

Harry Brink, Willie Bergren, Harold Bonde, Dale Bothof, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessing, Anne Decker, TJ Esco, Ellva Erickson, Rachel Fuller, Pam Gardner, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Peggy Hall, Lisa Johanson, 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, Linda Ward, Ski Wrybkowski.

Military Service -- Grant Davis, Ryan Harrison, Sean Harrison, 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 \$26,848 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.

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.

September Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$17,495

Balance General Fund: \$28,551

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$65,252 (includes \$30,000 savings from General Fund)

Internship Fund: \$26,848

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

Arizona City Campus

12921 S. Sunland Gin Road

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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