



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News -September 2018

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A Life of Love

The gospel of Jesus puts all of life in a new light. Christians are freed to be living expressions of God's goodness in the world.

Paul explained the significance of the Jesus' message when writing to the early Christian community in Rome:



"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

Paul understood Christian life to be an all-encompassing process of transformation. Nothing of our life is to be excluded from the lordship of Jesus. All issues, roles, and values are examined from the perspective of the gospel of Jesus.

The gospel of Jesus describes the basic intention of God for our lives in terms of love. A love that is selfless, to be passed on to others. It is a power that initiates and sustains relationships. Love takes responsibility for others and is expressed

through commitment to their welfare; always binding and keeping people together in spite of the effects of sin, weakness, and human failings.

Jesus teaches God empowers us so that our love be complete and undivided, and that we love our neighbors to the same degree that we would love ourselves.
(Mark12:28-34)

Love for one's neighbor goes far beyond feelings for those who are familiar to us. Love reaches out and overcomes the things that separate persons from each other. Love is to be genuine, complete, and specific. It is not possible to love God and at the same time hate our neighbors. Those who love God prove themselves neighbors to others.

Our love can do these things because it is rooted in God, who remains faithful to the commitment to all people of creation.



Joining the Recovery in Puerto Rico

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

All Hands and Hearts is committed to

effectively addressing the immediate and long-term needs of communities impacted by natural disasters. By listening to local people in order to identify their greatest needs volunteers are tasked to rebuild safe and resilient homes, schools, and other community infrastructure.

The program has volunteers working alongside homeowners and living in the community to share new ideas and ways to help, in an effort to find creative solutions

During our time there we hope to keep you informed of our work through personal accounts and pictures.

Visit the organization's website for more information: ["allhandsandhearts.org"](http://allhandsandhearts.org)
You can make a donation at: ["give.allhandsandhearts.org"](http://give.allhandsandhearts.org) or place your check to Central Lutheran or cash in the offering with a note to direct it to "Puerto Rico." A congregational donation will be given in October.

Pastors Bob Kleinke and Ron Hunt will be available for all ministerial responsibilities in September.



On the Move

On August 23rd, Teya celebrated her 7th birthday in Averill, NY, outside Albany. Yes, our daughter was married in August. Her husband works for the governor of New York. (you can see the new couple on the left side of our softball team picture below). Teya now has two "sisters," ages 8 and 11. She will be starting 2nd grade in September.



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 of September, the group 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.

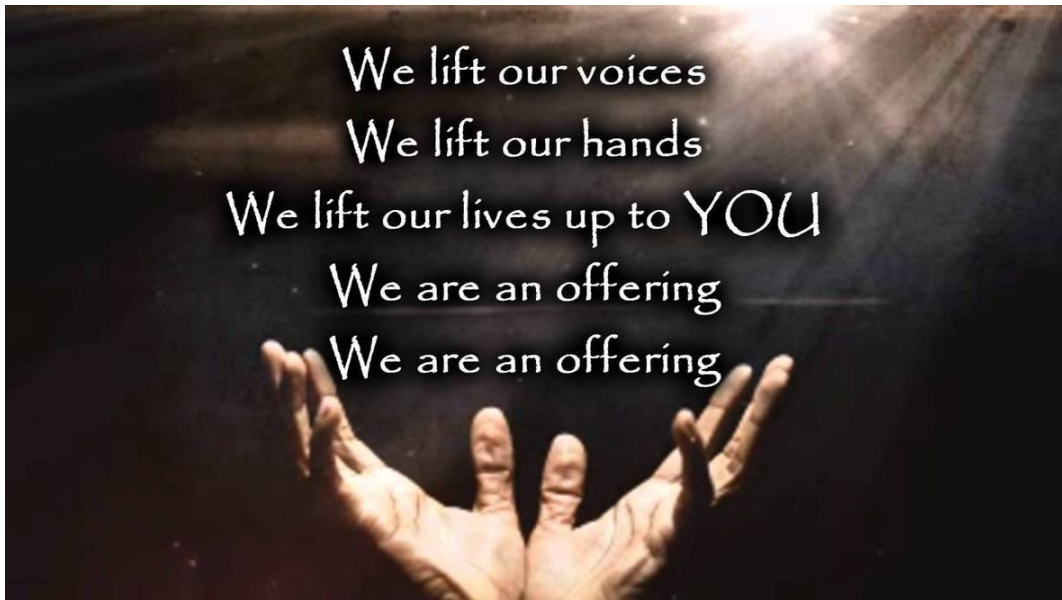
Summer Softball Season

Your "Saints" completed the season with a record of 8 and 6.

In the season ending tournament the "Saints" won and, then, were eliminated with a loss. Our team had a successful season at 9 and

7.

The Fall season will begin on Monday, September 17th. 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

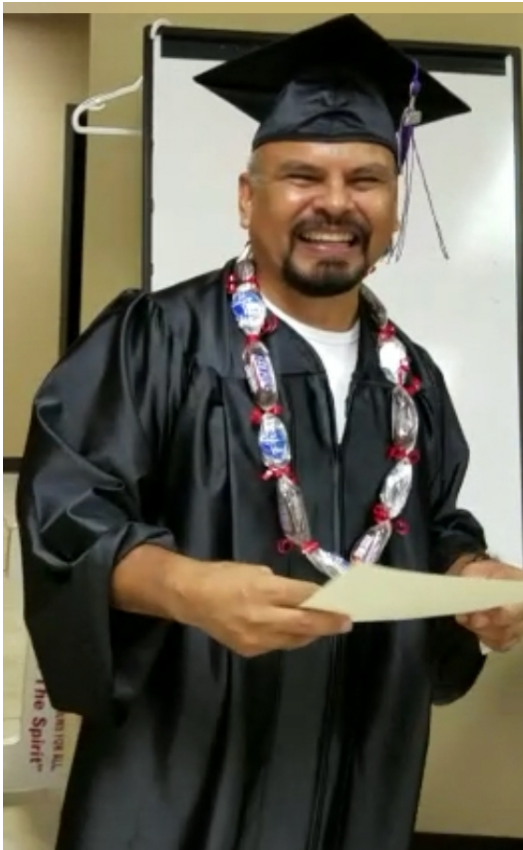
Hispanic Leadership Insitute

Congratulations to Leticia
Luse, who recently



completed her participation in The Hispanic Leadership Institute-Pinal (HLI-Pinal). With a practical business and community orientation, the program develops participants to realize their fullest potential as leaders so they may take an active role in the community by serving on a nonprofit/government board or commission.

Leticia will be joining our church council as one of her next community service commitments.



Community Education Ministry

Our adult students continue to have success in their ongoing study 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.

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

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://cityofjoyrwanda.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.

August Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: August \$10,502

Balance General Fund: \$19,311

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$77,036 (includes \$40,000 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

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