



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News -July 2018

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Our Christian Mission

The early Christians could not keep quiet about what God had done in Jesus. From the very beginning, the church responded to God's love by becoming a vehicle for Jesus' mission in the world. The presence of the Holy Spirit guided the people and created the church, the church that exists for the sake of the world. The church is a communion of saints that cannot keep its faith, its love, and its gifts to itself.

Concern for the world is not something added to the mission of Jesus. The message of what God has done in Jesus is meant for all persons in all times and places. The

mission of Jesus is not just one of the church's many activities. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the church not only engages in mission, it is mission.

The mission of Jesus is making the good news known and caring for the needs of the people. The story of the early church makes it very clear that genuine love for God will express itself in love for one's neighbor.

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has never seen." (1 John 4:20) Love for God and love for one's neighbor have always been interconnected.

Since the early church the understanding of mission has meant attending to the needs of others as a result of a relationship with Jesus. The world is full of people who are in need: the poor, the hungry, the unemployed, the addict, the refugee, the victim, the lonely. Some needs are clear to us, others draw little attention, and many suffer alone.

On a national level, Christians press for the government to respect basic human rights, and for honesty and responsibility for all who hold public office. The laws of a nation are to protect the helpless and restrain abuses by the powerful.

Around the world, Christians join together to advocate for those things that express God's concern for creation and for all people. There is a great need to protect the environment, promote economic development, distribute resources, provide disaster relief, and find true peace based on respect and justice among all nations.

Carrying out the mission of Jesus to all people is not an option for Christians. It is an essential part of being Jesus' disciples. Christian service goes beyond alleviation of ills to the eradication of conditions that create ills and the planting of the kingdom of God on earth. Christians are to be an ongoing presence to bring blessings to all people all the time in all places.

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 will be off on their biannual trip to Disneyland later this month. Thanks to everyone who has donated to our youth program that makes our trips possible.



The weeknight Bible study, discussion and activities offered to our elementary, middle school and high school students will continue on Wednesdays in August from 6-7:30 p.m. at our Casa Grande campus.

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" have begun the summer season with 3 wins and 3 losses. Games are played on Mondays:

July 9th at 8:15 and 9:15,

July 16th at 6:15 and 7:15,

July 23rd at 8:15 and 9:15,

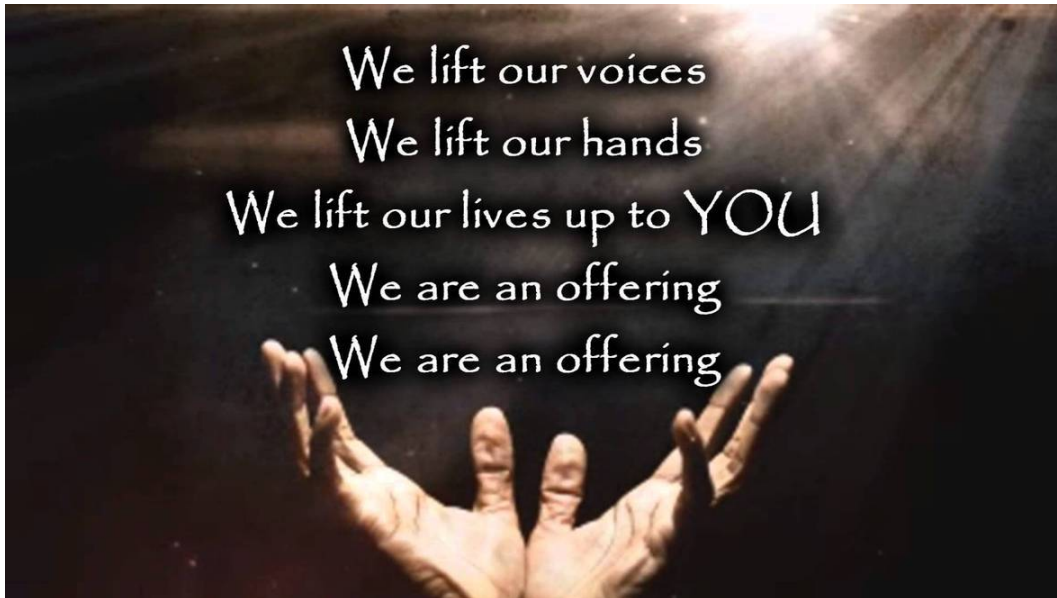
July 30th at 6:15 and 7:15.

The season ending tournament is on August 6th.



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 Institute

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.

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.



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

Community Education Ministry

Progress continues to be made as our adult students succeed in their ongoing study programs. We have had 6 students pass the math test, 4 language arts, 5 science, 7 social studies, and, 8 civics. Three

participants have completed their GED tests and another is on track to earn a GED by the end of the year.

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.

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, 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.

Bereavement -- Becky Gessner, Cindy Yates, the family and friends of Mardy Shager.

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.

June Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$10,830

Balance General Fund: \$38,879

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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