



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News -June 2018

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

A Father's Greatness

A man tells a story of his childhood in San Francisco about the time his father was sent to the grocery store. Times for the family were extremely lean, even food stamp lean, for the life of a jazz musician. His father returned with nothing. He had met a homeless man on the way back who asked for something to eat, and his father gave him everything -- the entire shopping cart full of groceries. The father said at the time, "It's what Jesus would do." The son didn't buy the explanation, for his father would have done it anyway, with or without scripture. Such was the son's memory of his father's generosity, to his sons, wife, students, and anyone else who asked for anything, especially music.

Many of us have stories celebrating fathers who achieve greatness. Not a greatness as defined by the world, but greatness defined by service. The giving of time and talent, the giving of themselves.

I have stories of a father who adjusted his work schedule -- arrive early to be able to leave early -- so he could attend every after school game or fit in some practice time. A father who often filled weekends helping with home repairs for relatives and neighbors. One who dried the dishes every night talking with my mother and catching up on the events of the day.

God calls us to join in his agenda to advance his kingdom in the world in which we live. To do so God is calling us to rise to the occasion in great ways. Yet, some problems and struggles may still exist because we are thinking too small. Not thinking about greatness. Or thinking about greatness in ways according to the world.

In Matthew's gospel we read how the brothers, James and John, sought a place of honor in Jesus' kingdom. The other disciples gave them a hard time. However, when Jesus responds he doesn't admonish them for striving to greatness, but how they wanted to go about accomplishing it.

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:25-28)

Jesus didn't tell them not to wish to be great, he told them not to strive for greatness in the way that the world does -- using power, intimidation, fear, and leverage. The leaders of the kingdom are much different from the leaders of the world. True greatness is achieved through service, it is outward focused and others driven.

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Upcoming Events

"Good Gifts" Ministry

This year our congregational campaign raised \$8,783, which has been increased to \$10,000 by the church council. These funds will support communities and strengthen standards of living in many impoverished areas.



Though we cannot designate a specific community for our funds, we are able 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

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 are held on second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 2 p.m. at our Arizona City site.



Youth Night Class

Our weeknight Bible study, discussion and activities offered to our elementary, middle school and high school students are held on Wednesdays from 6-7:30 p.m. at our Casa Grande campus. Current study topics include our review of Jesus in the gospel accounts, the Small Catechism, present day social issues, and what it means to be a Christian.

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

Summer Softball Season

Your "Saints begin the summer season on Monday, June 11th with games at 6:15 and 7:15 p.m.

Other games this month are:

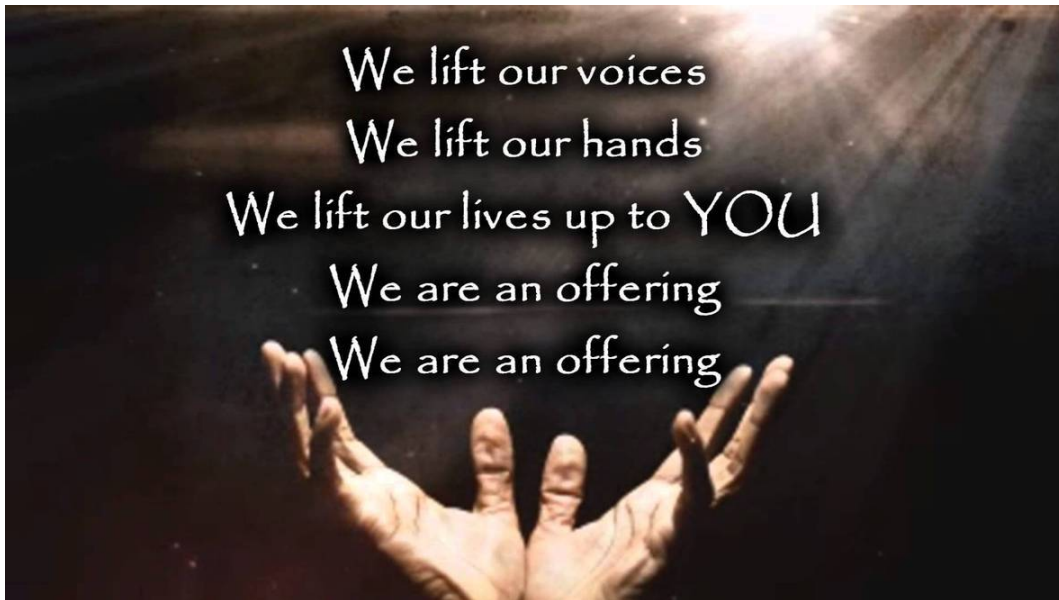
June 18th at 8:15 and 9:15,

June 25th at 6:15 and 7:15.

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 -- the family of Gene Erickson following his death in May.

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 \$13,779 for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

May Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$12,567

Balance General Fund: \$39,314

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$77,036 (includes \$40,000 savings from General Fund)

Internship Fund: \$26,848

Next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 19th at 6:30 p.m. in Arizona City.

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

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(520) 466-5024

Casa Grande Campus

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