



# Central Lutheran Church

*Come Share the Spirit!*

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### "The Path of Holy Week"

The events of Holy Week show how Jesus' actions were carefully aligned with the Jewish festivals that had been practiced for over 1,000 years.

Friday was the day of Passover, commemorating the blood of the lamb that was shed so the people of Israel would be "passed over" by death that struck Egypt, leading to their freedom from slavery. With the blood on their doorposts, God said, "I will pass over you." (Exodus 12:13) Jesus is then seen as the sacrificial lamb, whose blood was shed, so that all people could be freed from their bondage to sin.

Saturday was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, symbolizing how God provided bread for the Israelites as they left Egypt and during the years of the Exodus journey. Jesus is seen as the "bread of life". He is seen as the unleavened bread (made without yeast, which represents sin) providing spiritual nourishment necessary for a life of service.

Sunday was the Feast of the Firstfruits, a celebration held at the beginning of the harvest season. The first portion of the harvest was to be returned to God. With the renewal of the covenant with Moses in the wilderness, God said, "the best of the



first fruits of your ground you will bring to the house of the Lord, your God." (Exodus 34:26) The festival was a time of celebration and thankfulness, recognizing God as the giver of all things and trusting in God to provide the whole amount of the harvest after the giving of the first fruits.

The resurrection is a time of celebration of Jesus as God's first fruits, with a promise the rest will follow. Paul writes, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. All will be made alive in Christ, but each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:20,23)

The crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus can be viewed as object lessons in light of the festivals celebrated that week.

## Upcoming Events

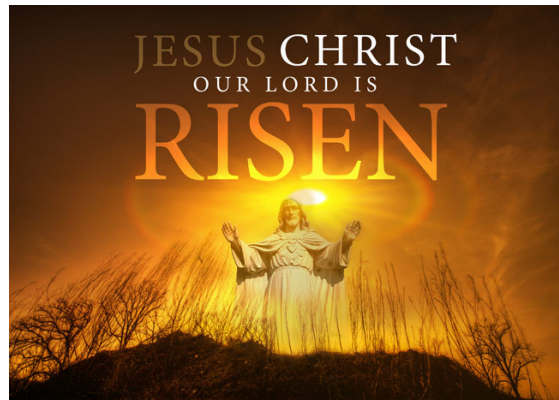
**Easter Sunday**

**April 1st**

**Sunrise 6 a.m. in Casa Grande**

**8:30 a.m. in Arizona City**

**10 a.m. in Casa Grande**



**Give a gift that isn't easy to wrap.**

Shop **ELCA Good Gifts** for 50 different gifts that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives.

[ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts)



 **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

### "Good Gifts" Ministry

ELCA Good Gifts provides more than 50 different gift-giving options that fight disease and hunger, and transform lives around the world.

Our congregational campaign has raised \$8,783, that will provide a new fresh water well (\$2,500) and very much more. These gifts will support communities and strengthen standards of living in many regions of the world.

Thank you for your contributions to this ministry.

You can continue to make individual donations to Good Gifts throughout the year. These gifts, starting at \$10, provide direct support for the worldwide ministries of the ELCA.

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## Study and Discussion

### Women's Book Club

Monday, April 9th

9 a.m. in Casa Grande

All women are encouraged to join in the discussion of "A Shepherd's Looks at the Good Shepherd" by W. Phillip Keller. As a shepherd, Keller shares his insights into the life and character of sheep and into the role of the Good Shepherd who loves and cares for the sheep.



### Men's Fellowship

Monday, April 2nd at 9 a.m.

Casa Grande

Get together for fellowship, Bible study, and discussion of current topics.

### 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 next gatherings will be held on Tue, April 10th and 24th at 2 p.m. at our Arizona City site.

## "Spiritual Friendship"

Pastor Ron Hunt (psychologist and spiritual director) is concluding weekly gatherings on Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m.

"Spiritual Friendship" is for anyone who wishes to share their spirituality with other Christians in a confidential setting. The time is designed to help with devotional life and living out the Spirit's call for our lives.

This month's meetings are at Robson Ranch, call Pastor Ron (218-330-5306) for information.

## **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.

## **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 Gessnes, Lisa Hunt, Dan Kirk, Gary Linafelter, Sue Rhoades.

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

## Winter/Spring Softball Season

Your "Saints finished the month of March with a record of 4 and 6. Play continues on April 2nd and 9th at 6:15 and 7:15 p.m. The season ending tournament will be played on April 16th.

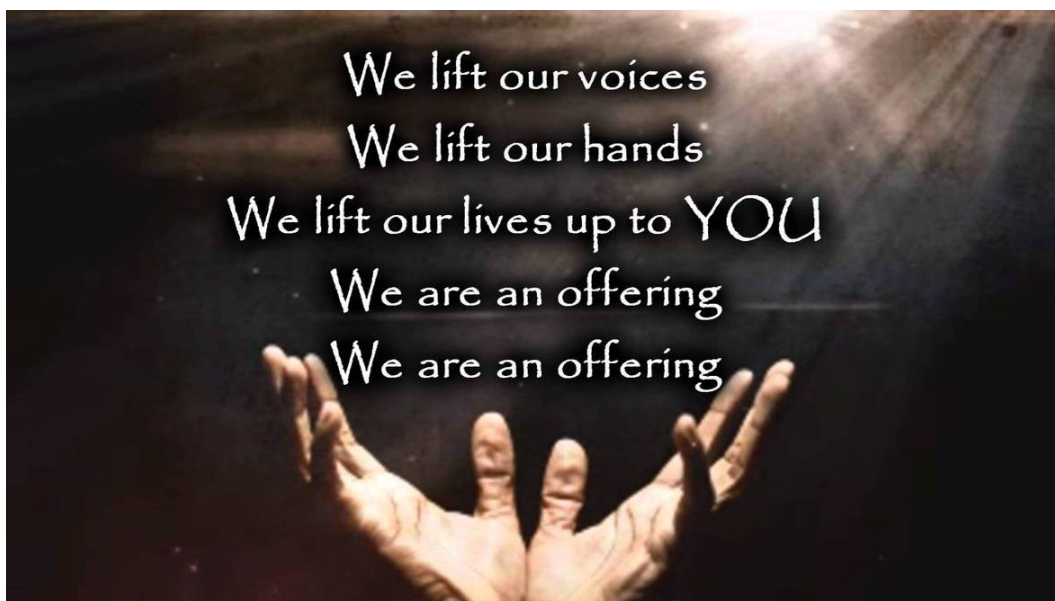
Games are played at the Paul Mason Sportsplex on Pinal Ave. in Casa Grande.

Special thanks to the many fans who have come out to support our team.



## 9 Hole Golf Scramble

Watch for a possible April event for golfers of all abilities at the Arizona City Golf Course. Foursomes of women and men make up our teams. Invite your friends to participate. The cost for each player is \$20+tax. Fellowship with refreshments and snacks follows play.



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## 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. The council has designated \$1,000 contributions to:

Habitat for Humanity -- this fall/winter is to be the first of several planned home constructions in Arizona City, watch for how you can make a donation and participate;

City of Joy Rwanda -- we will be 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 -- with the destruction of the recent hurricanes the ELCA provides extensive support to the relief and recovery efforts of the impacted regions;

Refugee Program -- Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest continues to support 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.

## Community Ministries

### 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](mailto: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 has 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](mailto:todd.d.ellingson@gmail.com)

<http://cityofjoyrwnda.org>



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## Remember in Prayer

Harry Brink, Willie Bergren, Harold Bonde, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessing, Anne Decker, Ellva and Gene Erickson, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Peggy Hall, Lisa Johanson, Tammy Kempke, Gertie Kenyon, Ruth Kramer, Norma Kringen, Gary Linafelter, Ken Morgan, Dick Mueser, Walt Neulieb, Red and Dede Parrish, Marcus Ramirez, Denise Shepard, Linda Ward, Ski Wrybkowski.

Military Service -- Grant Davis, Ryan Harrison, Sean Harrison, CJ Squires.

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## 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 \$26,000 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 \$11,076 for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

## March Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$27,686

Balance General Fund: \$42,292

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

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

Internship Fund: \$26,848

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## 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.

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## 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
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## Church Family Photo Directory

Click here to go to the church [photo directory](#)

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## Contact Us

**Church Office:** [churchoffice@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:churchoffice@centrallutheranaz.org)

**Pastor Thom Stephens:** [pastor@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:pastor@centrallutheranaz.org)

[www.centrallutheranaz.org](http://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

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