



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News -January 2018

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Happy "New Year"

Happy New Year from the Stephens family. This recent picture includes: back -- Jordan, Alyson and myself; front -- Mckynzie, her dog Quentin; granddaughter Teya and her mother, Kirstin.

Did you know that New Year's Day, observed on January 1, is the first day of the Julian calendar year, established by decree of Julius Caesar in 45 BC. In pre-Christian Rome the day was dedicated to Janus, god of gateways and beginnings, for whom January is named.

However, in medieval Europe, the celebrations accompanying the new year were considered pagan and unchristian like. So, in 567 AD, the Council of Tours abolished January 1 as the beginning of the year. At various times the new year was then recognized on December 25, March 1, and March 25.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII, reforming the Julian calendar, proclaimed January 1 the beginning of the year in the modern Gregorian calendar.



In the calendar numbering system of years, 1 AD is preceded by 1 BC. There is no year "0" between them.

Scholars agree that Jesus wasn't born in the year 1 AD. The birth of Jesus is believed to have taken place between 6 and 4 BC, and that Jesus began his public ministry around 27-29 AD. The death of Jesus is calculated as having taken place between 30 and 36 AD.

Perhaps, this history of the calendar is new for you and you've gained a new understanding of the origins of the new year. As we look ahead to this new year before us, may the new year be filled with discovery, understanding, and growth.

-- One last note, because it is interesting: Each New Year begins just east of New Zealand's tiny Chatham Islands. It is there that "the world begins and ends each day."

Upcoming Events

All Year Birthday Celebration

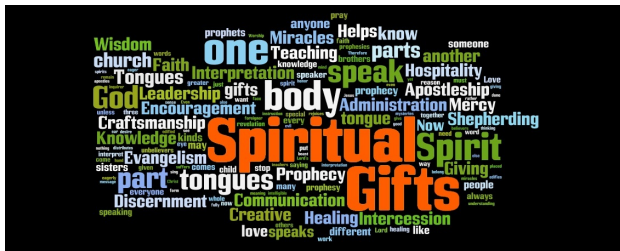
Annual Meeting

Sun, Jan. 28th at 2 p.m.

Casa Grande



Everyone is encouraged to participate in our annual meeting. Council members will be elected and the 2018 budget will be discussed and approved. Following our short meeting we will join in the celebration of everyone's birthday for the new year. You are invited to share a cake to recognize your birthday month. Refreshments will be served.



"Spiritual Friendship"

Pastor Ron Hunt (psychologist and spiritual director) will be hosting a weekly gathering on Wednesdays at 10:30 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.

The initial gatherings are Jan. 10th in Casa Grande and then Jan. 17th in Arizona City.

Shaping Our Ministry

Feeding the Homeless

Pastor Ron will convene an organizational meeting on Monday, Jan. 8th at 1 p.m. at our Casa Grande campus.

All individuals with an interest in this ministry are invited to bring their ideas to help the homeless in our community.

9 Hole Golf Scramble

Saturday, January 27th at 2 p.m.

Golfers of all abilities are encouraged to sign-up for friendly competition 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.

Study and Discussion

Women's Book Club

**Beginning Mon, Jan 8th at
9 a.m. Casa Grande**

->All women are encouraged to join in the discussion of "A Shepherd's Look at Psalm 23" 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.

The book gives new meaning to the ageless Shepherd Psalm, enriching one's trust and love for the Lord who watches closely over all.



Men's Fellowship

Get together on Monday, January 8th at 9 a.m. in Casa Grande 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, January 10th and 24th 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.

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.

Feeding the Homeless: Arlo Cairo, Sandy Carpenter, Karen Debold, Al and Becky Gessnes, Lisa Hunt, Dan Kirk, Gary Linafelter, Sue Rhoades.

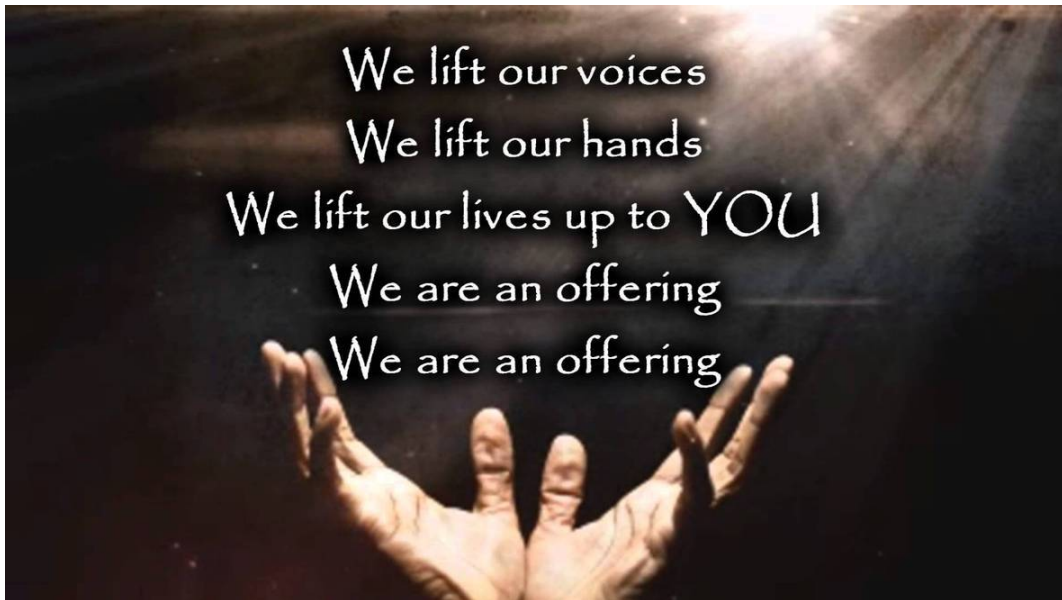
Worship Nursery Care: Louise Cannon, Karen Debold, Lisa Hunt

Sign-up now for any of our several proposed ministry opportunities. Forms are available to indicate how you would like to participate.

Winter Softball Season

Your "Saints" will return the entire team for the upcoming season which will start in February. Special thanks to the many fans who have come out to support our team.

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



Our Stewardship

As we conclude 2017, 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

You can take part in our program by donating the following items:

16.9 oz water bottles, packaged tuna, sausage, and crackers (plain, with cheese or peanut butter), energy bars, PayDay candy bars, fruit cups, hand wipes, plastic forks and knives, gallon plastic bags. Bring items to either worship site.

Once the bags are compiled everyone can help by carrying one in your car to be shared with someone in need that

you may meet in the course of your day.



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

Community Education Ministry

The latest chart shows our adult students are continuing to succeed in their ongoing study programs. We have had 5 students pass the math test, 3 language arts, 4 science, 5 social studies, and, 7

civics. Three participants are on the verge of taking their next exams. Two have completed their GED tests and another is on track to earn his 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!

Special thanks to Ron Jung, Judy Smith, and Kara Cooper for opening and locking the building as needed.

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 takes place every first and third Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in Arizona City. Everyone is invited to assist with the program. Bring your lunch for the midday break.

Many women have continued to contribute to this

effort and help with this contribution to our community. Their message is one of care and comfort through the gift 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

Todd and the family are with us once again on January 6th and 7th to share how God's grace is on daily display and the 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 a purse or an apron.

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, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessingl, Ruby Craun, Anne Decker, Ellva and Gene Erickson, Deb Gardner, Rachel Grack, Gerre Graves, Peggy Hall, Lanny Johnston, Jean Kalish, Gertie Kenyon, Ruth Kramer, Norma Kringen, Gary Linafelter, Dick Mueser, Walt Neulieb, Marcus Ramirez, Denise Shepard, Joshua Ward, Ski Wrybkowski.

Bereavement -- Inge Buchholz and family, death of Mickey in Montana; Mary Klukas and family, death of Will; Ann Wilson and family, death of Bill; and, Marvel Alexander and family, death of Bob.

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 \$28,000 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.

December Finances

Account information:

Offering Income for the Month: \$39,313

Balance General Fund: \$59,012

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$37,269

Internship Fund: \$26,848

Balance of Mortgage with Thrivent: \$257,144 (12/31/16)

Worship Schedule

Arizona City

Sunday - 8:30 a.m.

For information on Sunday children activities contact Linda Gal (705-1450).

Casa Grande

Saturday -- 5 p.m.

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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