



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News - September 2017

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What Do We Say About Racism?

Racism is one of the most destructive powers in today's world. Racism is abusive and expresses itself in many ways. It can be patronizing or cloaked in euphemisms. It may be so open and exposed that no one can miss it or so subtle and covered over that only the victims feel its destructiveness.



The presumed superiority of members of one race over those of another provides the foundation for racism. Power is exerted through the control of institutions, systems, resources, and customs within society. Racism destroys the dignity, integrity, and positive self-image of a group of people created in the image of the living God. Such abuse of power dishonors God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

Even though integration has become a key legal emphasis for many decades, the practical effect has been muted. Too often integration has meant the minority is expected to take on the values, goals, life-styles, and culture of the dominant majority. This then denies a minority group to take pride in their own ethnic identity.

Our response in the gospel is to recognize and rejoice in the diversity and variety of experiences among all human beings. We are to respect the aspirations of all ethnic

groups. Christians rejoice in the the gospel that breaks down all barriers between persons and unites all people as members of God's creation.

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

A brief summary of an ELCA social statement adopted in 1993

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) teaches that there is one God and one humanity created by God, as expressed in Scripture. Our oneness in Christ, the one who breaks down dividing walls, connects all people. The whole church looks forward to God's future when people will come from everywhere to eat together in the reign of God (Luke 13:29).

This church names racism as sin and affirms that the diversity of cultures throughout history is a God-given gift and a glimpse of the future. Plurality of culture (the attitudes and patterns of life) is a blessing to be appreciated, not absorbed by assimilation. The ELCA opposes discrimination, supports legislation that guarantees equal rights, and promotes international respect for human rights.

The statement makes the following key points:

- Racism — a mix of power, privilege and prejudice — is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity. Racism deforms relationships and harms sense of self. Its effects vary, depending on factors such as gender or economic situation.
- The ELCA is in mission in a multicultural society and has made commitments to welcome cultural diversity. This church, while taking some steps, has faltered in living up to its commitments, but will persist with repentant hearts.
- Those with access to opportunities, power and institutions remain separate from those without such access, whose cultures often have been ridiculed and reviled, or destroyed. The ELCA expects our leadership to name the sin of racism and lead us in our repentance. In a hostile and divided world, the church must insist on justice, resist cynicism, and refuse to blame victimized people. To pursue justice, the church must address how racism affects society, political decisions and economic forces as well as individual lives.
- Participation in public life is essential to doing justice. The ELCA encourages public witness and insists on a public forum accessible to everyone. In living up to its commitment to deliberation, the ELCA will model honest engagement on issues of race.
- The ELCA received from its predecessor church bodies a solid foundation for advocacy. Advocacy will look for change and fair distribution of the social costs of correcting past wrongs. Advocacy will work for respect of cultures and oppose language-based discrimination.

- The ELCA will support legislation that guarantees to all individuals equally: civil rights; access to quality education, health care, and nutrition; opportunity for employment with fair compensation; opportunity for business ownership; access to legal, banking, and insurance services; the right to purchase housing in any place; and access to public transportation. The ELCA will advocate for just immigration policies.
- The ELCA will promote international respect for human rights, and support the international movement to eliminate discrimination.

(The statement and other supplemental materials can be downloaded at www.ELCA.org/socialstatements)



6th Birthday Celebrated

Granddaughter Teya celebrated her birthday with three separate events that included her family members and friends.

The "party" in the picture included her great-grandmother, Carolyn, and her grandparents, BG and Big T, who presented her with gold hoop earrings - among other later things.

Manna Bag Ministry

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.



Upcoming Events

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 next gatherings will be held on Tue, September 12th and 26th 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. Study topics include our scriptures, 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.

Men's Saturday Fellowship

Saturday dates will be scheduled

Watch for the opportunity to join in fellowship, Bible study, and discussion of current topics.

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

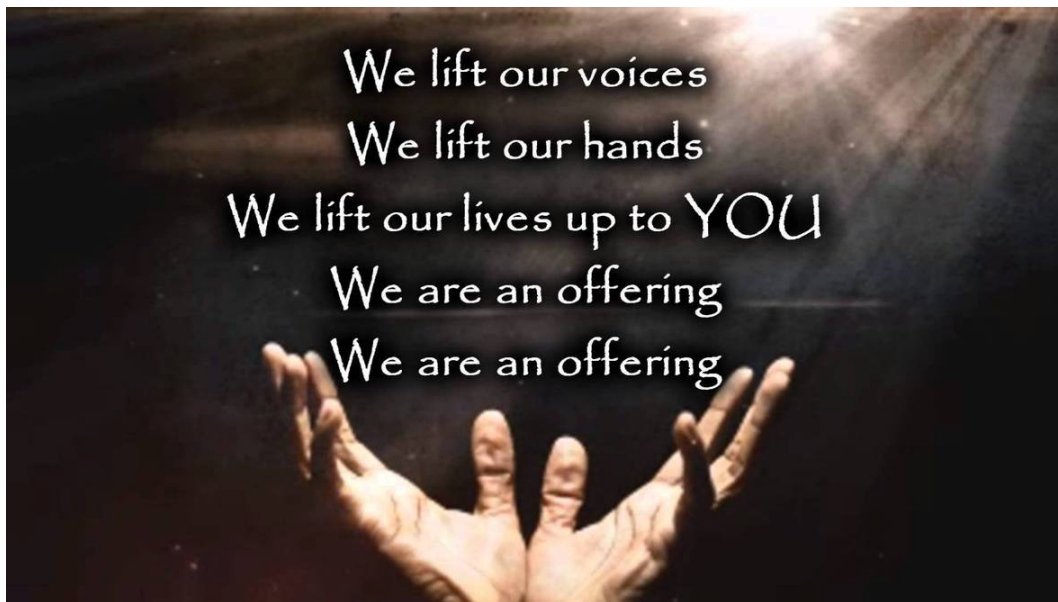
Sign-up now for any of our several proposed ministry opportunities. Forms are available to indicate how you would like to participate.

Fall Softball Season

Your "Saints" are back in action beginning Monday, September 18th. Game schedule has not been determined.

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





Our Stewardship

Through August 2017, we celebrate a 10% increase above offerings from last year, which had grown from the previous year.

Our continued growth reflects 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 -- we will be sponsoring a student in Rwanda for an entire school year;

Sonlight 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.

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

| Number of passed GED tests | Previous Progress | Current Progress |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Math | 4 | 5 |
| Language Arts | 3 | 3 |
| Science | 2 | 3 |
| Social Studies | 2 | 4 |
| Civics tests | 3 | 5 |
| GEDs earned | 1 | 2 |

Community Education Ministry

Our adult students continue to succeed in their study programs. We have had 5 students pass the math test, 3 in language arts, 3 in science, 4 in social studies, and, 5 in civics. Two have completed

their GED tests.

You can help them develop their English skills, or prepare for the GED math, science, language arts, and social studies exams. Please consider volunteering as a tutor or making a donation -- designate as "adult education."

For information, contact Alyson Stephens: 602-721-1673 or alysonstephens@q.com.

Thank you for the donations received for this ministry!

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.

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 will resume their quilting ministry later this year.

Many thanks to all the women who contributed to this effort and helped with this contribution to our community. This is a message 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

You can support this inspirational ministry by sponsoring a student, \$40 covers one-half of the monthly expenses.

Once again you can support 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://cityofjoyrwanda.org>

<https://youtu.be/oDUBpBEfokk>

"Just Let Time Pass By"

Wendy Landers is having a book launch party at the Artisan Village in Coolidge (www.artisanvillageofcoolidge.org) on Saturday, September 30th at 7 pm. Her book, "Just Let Time Pass By," is available on Amazon.

John Sutton's band will be providing entertainment. Light refreshments will be served. RSVPs are appreciated, www.wendylanders.com

Artisan Village of Coolidge
351 N. Arizona Blvd.
520.723.3009

Remember in Prayer

Harry Brink, Willie Bergren, Harold Bonde, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessing, Carla Carroll, Ruby Craun, Rev. Bekah Davis, Anne Decker, Ellva and Gene Erickson, Mark Gerrish, Rachel Grack, Peggy Hall, Jack and Faye Harrison, Ryan Harrison, Lanny Johnston, Jean Kalish, Gertie Kenyon, Will Klukas, Ruth Kramer, Norma Kringen, Dick Laudahl, Gary Linafelter, Bob McGregor, Dick Mueser, Walt Neulieb, Neil Northey, Marcus Ramirez, Jon Schmidt, Denise Shepard, Leona Shilling, CJ Squires, Joshua Ward, Gary Towle, Colleen Wiles, Ski Wrybkowski.

Bereavement -- Ruthann Raitter and family following the death of her mother's husband, Ray.

Military Service -- Grant Davis, Ryan 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 future.

Casa Grande Land Fund

Our property “growth fund” has a balance of \$10,691 for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

August Finances

Account information:

Offering Income: \$11,369
Balance General Fund: \$55,330
Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000
Capital Fund: \$40,249
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

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

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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