



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News - March 2017

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

"Follow Me"

"Akolouthein" is the common Greek verb which means "to follow." It is a word with many uses and with many meanings, and all of them add something to the meaning for one who is a follower of Christ.



In classical Greek its usage includes: soldiers following their leader; slaves attending to their master; following someone's advice or opinion; following the law; following the thread of an argument; and, following someone to extract a desired favor.

Each of these usages shed light on the Christian life. The Christian follows the commands of Jesus, obeys the words of the master, asks for the advice and for the ruling of Jesus, desires citizenship in the kingdom and acts accordingly, listens to the wisdom of Jesus and wishes to be taught, and, desires the favor and grace that Jesus alone can give.

By studying the gospels we learn what following Jesus involves. First, following Jesus involves "counting the cost" (Luke 9:59-62). Jesus seems to discourage people from following him until he has made sure they know what they are doing. Jesus does not want anyone to follow him on false pretenses nor does he accept an emotional offer of an unconsidered service.

Second, following Jesus involves "sacrifice." Repeatedly the gospels point out what people left to follow him (Luke 5:11; Matthew 4:20-22, 19:27). In our day following Jesus can be considered a "whole-time" job. Following Jesus involves serving him within our work and all aspects of our lives.

Third, following Jesus involves a "cross." To follow Jesus may mean the sacrifice of pleasures, habits, and ambitions which are woven into our lives. Following Jesus involves this act of surrender.

The gospels also show what following Jesus gives. There are two great promises from John. First, to follow Jesus means to walk not in the darkness, but in the light (John 8:12). Rather than the uncertainty of the darkness, following in the light makes sure the way. Though the light illuminates our sinful blemishes we can walk in the company of Jesus with the certainty of God's grace.

Second, to follow Jesus is to be certain of sharing the glory he himself is (John 12:26). Jesus never promised an easy way, but he did promise the hardness of the way would be forgotten.

The season of Lent is a time of personal reflection, of what it means to hear the words of Jesus when he says to his disciples, "follow me" (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17; John 1:43).

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Upcoming Events

Ash Wednesday

March 1st

5 p.m. Arizona City

7 p.m. Casa Grande

Services will include the disposition of ashes and the celebration of Holy Communion. The offering will be given to Lutheran Social Ministries.

Bingo Night

Saturday, March. 11th - Casa Grande at 6:30 p.m.

You are invited for an evening of fun competition for numerous prizes. Refreshments will be provided.

Spaghetti Dinner Benefit

Sunday, March 12th at 4:30 p.m.

Arizona City

All proceeds will benefit Yelena Paraschiv and her family, following the death of her husband, Mihai.

Cost for the dinner is \$10 per plate. A silent auction will feature many generously donated items. A cake auction will include delicious, homemade, and unique cakes. Donations can also be made to the church to be shared with the family.

9-Hole Golf Scramble

Sunday, March. 19th at 2 p.m.

Arizona City Golf Course

For the "golfers" in the congregation and invited friends. Fellowship will follow after play.

Study and Discussion

Adding Spiritual Practices

Lent is meant to be a season for attending to and deepening our relationship with God.

Besides giving up things for Lent, we might consider adding spiritually healthy things for Lent. Letting go of spiritually unhealthy things is not the only aspect of Lenten practice.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. You might consider for the 40 days of Lent, ways you might make room for the things of God.

Here too are some of the additional opportunities here at CLC to assist you.

Saturday Night Worship: Pastor Ron will introduce a new spiritual practice to try for the week ahead and review them again the following week. He will introduce the practice and then we will actually practice it briefly in worship together each night of worship.

Sunday Morning Worship: Pastor Ron will continue his Spiritual Experience and Spiritual Gifts series. There will be opportunities to join in discussion on:
March 5th and 26th in Arizona City at 9:45 a.m.
March 19th in Casa Grande at 9 a.m.

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.

Talk with Pastor Thom or Judy Smith (520-840-4038) for more information about meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 4 p.m. at the Smith home.

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, March 4th and 18th at 8 a.m. Casa Grande

Come join in the opportunity for fellowship, Bible study, and a discussion of current topics.

Ladies Book Club

Monday, March 13th at 9 a.m. Casa Grande

Share in the discussion of "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World." (chapters 1-4) A copy can be purchased at Amazon.com or at a local book store. Coffee will be provided. For more information contact Dell Hoff (520-836-2243) or Sandy Christopher (520-316-9083) .

Revelation Study

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Arizona City

Revelation is probably the most misunderstood and misused book of the Bible. Martin Luther commented that it didn't belong in the Bible because he "Couldn't find Christ there." If you are curious about this last book of the Bible you are

invited to a study with Pastor Bob Kleinke. Join in an interesting and enlightening discussion that promises a better grasp of this fascinating book.

Spring Softball Season

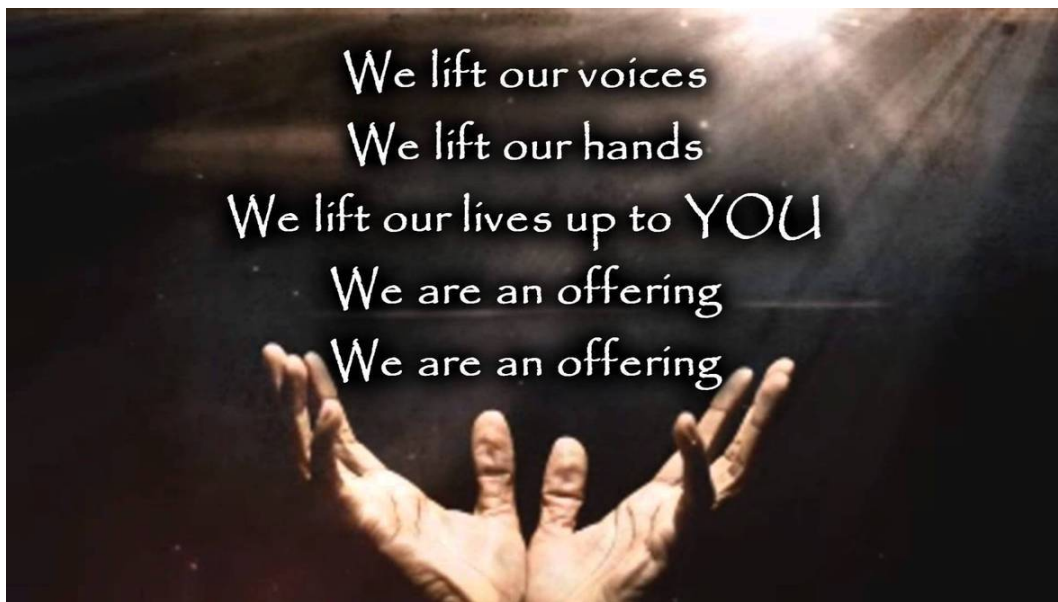
Your "Saints" are back in action this month at the Paul Mason Sportsplex on Pinal Ave. in Casa Grande. The schedule for the season is now available. Look for the article, "Out at the Ballgame," in the Winter 2016 Pinal Ways magazine that features our "Saints."

March 6th -- 7:15/8:15 p.m.

March 13th -- 6:15/7:15 p.m.

March 20th -- 7:15/8:15 p.m.

March 27th -- 7:15/9:15 p.m.



Our Stewardship

Through the year of 2016 our worship offerings have increased over last year from \$205,589 to \$240,105, this shows a growth of over 15%!

The increase reflects a greater number of worshipers, our 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?"

Thank you for your contributions to our growing ministry, helping us to meet our annual requirements to our congregation, synod and national church.

Community Ministries

Community Education Ministry

Many students are currently succeeding in our adult study programs. As of this date, 3 students have passed the math test, 2 are almost ready, and, 4 others are preparing. Three have passed language arts, and 1 is preparing; while 2 are preparing for social studies.

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

March 1st and 15th in Arizona City

The women gather on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 9:30 a.m. Invite your friends to participate, everyone's help is appreciated. Bring your lunch.

Many thanks for the contribution they make to our community, a message of care and comfort through their 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>

Love & all its glory IS

Wendy Landers has completed the second installment of her series "Dieting After She Died."

After setting up her recording studio, Manon started writing rock songs again. Traveling to a recording seminar, she met a film producer, Jacob. Yet the plague that harassed her continued. Can her original rock band, A Slip of the Cue, help her make it end?

Her blog is www.wendylanders.com

Remember in Prayer

Ada Biese, Harry Brink, Marlita Buchholz, Trent Blessing, Ruby Craun, Rev. Bekah Davis, Ellva and Gene Erickson, Mark Gerrish, Rachel Grack, Ray Grant, Jack and Faye Harrison, Lanny Johnston, Ray Johnston, Rolland Karlin, Gertie Kenyon, Norma Kringen, Dick Laudahl, Gary Linafelter, Bob McGregor, Dick Mueser, Walt Neulieb, Neil Northey, Art Pritchard, Marcus Ramirez, Jon Schmidt, Denise Shepard, Gary Towle, Ski Wrybkowski.

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

Bereavement -- Yelena Paraschiv and family with the death of her husband, Mihai and, Arlo Cairo following the death of her mother.

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

We will not be participating in the internship program in 2017. Over \$26,000 of contributions have been received for this program, and will be placed in a 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 \$9,566, for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

February Finances

Account information:

Offering Income: \$28,532

Balance General Fund: \$55,607

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$68,261 - includes the 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 School for children 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

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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