



Central Lutheran Church

Come Share the Spirit!

Central News - February 2017

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"A Child Shall Lead Them"

Walking hand in hand with my 5 year old granddaughter through "Fantasyland" of Disneyland, I reflected on what it means to be a child. To follow our child-like impulses and feelings. Thinking how children are filled with wonder, curiosity, abandon, and, adventure. How only the dreams of a child could picture a kingdom described by the prophet Isaiah.

"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11:6)

Only in the mind of child could such a picture be possible. It is the imagination of a child that is able to form the existence of such peace. It is the child that can see that there could be such relationships.

There would need to be the breaking down of old images and pictures. It would be necessary to nurture new relationships, to engineer new introductions and encounters. For there to be peace it is important to know and to be known. To gain understanding and knowledge, and move beyond ignorance.

Children want to be assured that they are loved. That they are noticed. That they matter. That they have worth. That they are cared for. There is great importance to these assurances, and that they are carried out in relationships. With this new found understanding there can be peace.

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3)

It is in the mind of the child that there can be a picture of the "magic" of Jesus' kingdom.

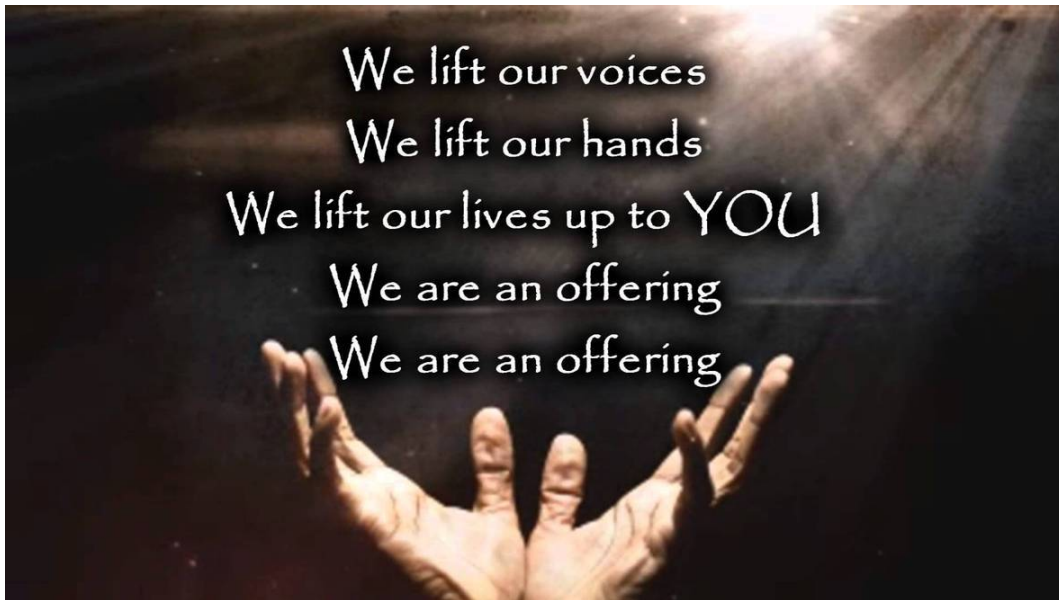
Our Stewardship

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.



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Upcoming Events

Valentine's Party and Dance

Saturday, Feb. 11th - Arizona City

6:30 p.m.

You are invited to come share in the fellowship while enjoying pizza, appetizers, refreshments. Kick up your heels with live music!



9-Hole Golf Scramble

**Sunday, Feb. 19th 2 p.m.
Arizona City Golf Course**

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

Study and Discussion

Spirituality and Gifts

Join Pastor Ron Hunt in the exploration of our understanding of the work of the Spirit in our lives. Reflect on the gifts and blessings that we have been given and how they are to be expressed in our life and ministry.

Feb. 5th and 19th in Casa Grande at 9:15 a.m.

Feb. 12th and 26th in Arizona City at 9:45 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, February 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, February 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

Monday, February 27th

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

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

February 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, 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.

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 mutual fund account. Next year we will evaluate pursuing an intern for 2017-18.

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.

January Finances

Account information:

Offering Income: \$33,069

Balance General Fund: \$32,756

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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