

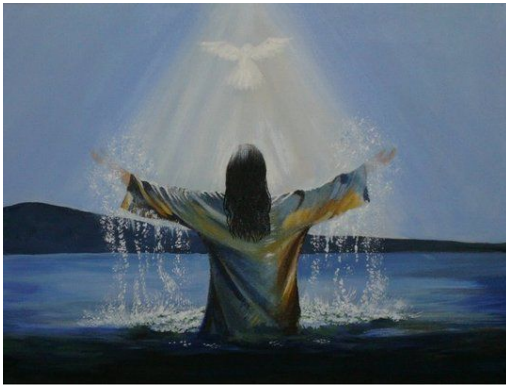


# Central Lutheran Church

*Come Share the Spirit!*

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## "Spirituality"

The Holy Spirit connects us to God, and much more. Spirituality is that profound experience of connection. It is experienced in life when connected to all things, lived out everywhere with everyone and everything. At the heart of a Christian practice of spirituality is Jesus' teaching. Everything Jesus taught and did was grounded in God.

"God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him." (1 John 4:9)

Love was the beating heart of everything Jesus said and did, so love is the beating heart of Christian spirituality. Love is the way of knowing God. There is no knowing of God without love. To love is to discover and become who we are "in God." Love is not what we do, love is who we are. Love is more than a display of empathy. Love does what can be done to enhance the joy or alleviate the suffering of another. Christian spirituality is doing justice, loving-kindness, and walking humbly with God.

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

In a world where we are instilled with the Spirit of God, all acts of compassion, kindness, justice, and love are done in the Spirit. The most spiritual of people may be unaware of their spirituality. It is possible to be spiritual and have little consciousness of it. In Jesus' story of judgment in Matthew 25, the surprising part is that the "righteous" have not recognized the significance of their compassion. They live spiritually without recognizing it.

Then the righteous will answer him. "Lord when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?" (Matthew 25:35f)

To be spiritual is to let the Spirit be the Spirit. The life-giving Spirit of God within us cannot be controlled. We are to give up control and be open to experience the power of the Spirit.

"When we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25)

**Note: Watch for the opportunity to meet with Pastor Ron Hunt to learn and discuss spirituality.**

## 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.



## Get to Know Pastor Ron Hunt

The church council has invited Pastor Ron Hunt to work with Pastor Thom on a part-time basis through Easter.

Ron was born and raised in Faribault, MN. He graduated from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1987. He is experienced as a pastor, psychologist, marriage/family therapist, and spiritual director

Ron and his wife, Lisa, split their time living in Robson Ranch and Bay Lake in Brainerd, Minnesota. He and Lisa were married in 1987, and also lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for 18 years.

Ron has many interests in ministry, in particular individual spiritual direction and small group ministry.

Please take the time to meet Pastor Ron and his wife, Lisa.

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## Upcoming Events

## **All Year Birthday Party**

**Sunday, Jan. 29th - Arizona City**

**2 p.m. Annual Meeting**

**2:30 p.m. Party**

You are invited to celebrate your birthday for 2017. Before the party our annual meeting will be hold to plan for the year. Sign-up according you're your birthday month, and if you'd like to provide a cake.

## **9-Hole Golf Scramble**

**Sunday, Jan. 15th 2 p.m.**

**Arizona City Golf Course**

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

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## **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.

Talk with Pastor Thom or Judy Smith (520-840-4038) for more 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. 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, January 7th and 21st 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, January 9th at 9 a.m. Casa Grande**

FLASH, the homeless donkey, taught author Rachel Anne Ridge about life, faith and second chances. Check Amazon.com book stores or the library. 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.

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## **Community Ministries**

### **Community Education Ministry**

Many students are currently participating in our adult study programs. You can help them learn English and develop basic math skills. 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](mailto: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**

**January 4th and 18th 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 learn more about this inspirational ministry  
and hear how God's Spirit is leading lives to Christ  
when Todd returns to visit on January 7th and 8th..

Once again you can support the graduates of the  
sewing program by purchasing a large purse or apron; or other artistic items.

**Todd Ellingson**

**President and Founder of City of Joy**

[todd.d.ellingson@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.wendylanders.com)

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## 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.

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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**

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 \$8,600, for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

### **December Finances**

Account information:

Offering Income: \$25,497

Balance General Fund: \$16,422

Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000

Capital Fund: \$68,292 - includes the Internship Fund: \$26,848

Balance of Mortgage with Thrivent: \$323,908 (12/31/14)



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## 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.

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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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