



The Oasis

March 2024

Cross in the Desert UMC

Where God's Love Transforms Lives, building a just and joyful community.



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 24	Palm Sunday	10:00 am
March 28	Maundy Thursday	7:00 pm
March 29	Good Friday	7:00 pm
March 31	Easter Sunday Sunrise	6:30 am
March 31	Easter Sunday	10:00 am

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Pastor's Corner



As we continue our journey toward Holy Week, I want to encourage all of you to continue deepening your faith by asking questions and seeking a deeper understanding of our beliefs. It is often said that faith without questions is blind faith, and I truly believe that what makes our faith stronger is when we actively engage with it and seek to understand it more fully.

Throughout this Lenten season, we have been reflecting on our lives and examining our relationship with God. We have been challenged to confront our weaknesses and sins and humbly seek forgiveness and grace. But as we approach the final days of Lent and prepare to enter into Holy Week, we must reflect on our own lives and ask questions about our faith and the teachings of the Church.

We can deepen our understanding of God and His plan for us through questioning and seeking. By asking questions, we can challenge ourselves to grow in our faith and truly live out the Gospel message daily. So, as we journey toward Holy Week, I urge you to take the time to ask questions, seek answers, and continue to deepen your faith.

May this Lenten season be a time of growth and transformation for all of us as we seek to follow in the footsteps of Christ and strengthen our relationship with God. Let us continue to ask questions, seek answers, and deepen our faith as we prepare to walk through the sacredness of Holy Week in preparation for the joy of the Resurrection.

Pastor G





Noah Foster	March 2
Kathie McCarty	March 4
Dorothy Wilson	March 5
Brody Cahill	March 10
Vivian Gayner	March 12
Arlene Roop	March 12
Madhu Gavini	March 15
Karen Lonon	March 21
Julie Wagner	March 21
Sally White	March 23
Sue Wilson	March 27
Carolyn Halloran	March 28

Tom & Mary Botts

March 5

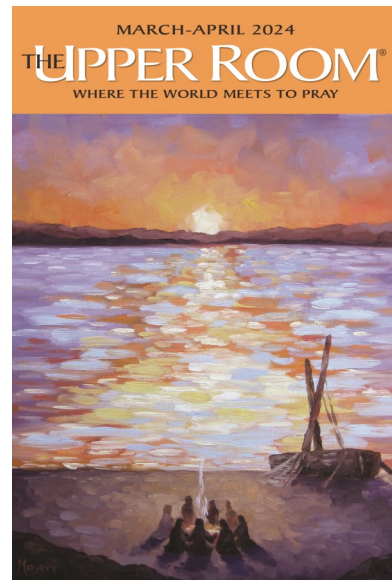
We apologize if we have missed your special day. It means that the office does not have your information. Please notify the office if we need to update your information.



Have you seen me?
Where am I hiding?

Have you been looking for a devotional? Did you know that *The Upper Room* is available in the narthex. Regular and large print versions are available.

A small donation is appreciated if you are able, but feel free to take one even if you can't donate.



The Leadership Board is Working Hard for CITD!

By: Karen Bulkeley

At the second Leadership Board meeting held on February 27th, the board members really started to get to work on fulfilling the mission of CITD. Task forces are being formed in three important areas where there are current gaps: memorial funds; building safety and inventory; and finance administration. To ensure the success of the one board model, it is critical that everyone get involved to do the work of the church. Below are brief descriptions of the three task force areas and contact information for reaching out if you can help in any of these areas.

Memorial Funds: There has not been a memorial funds coordinator for the church for a couple of years. The consequences of this are that no one is sending notes to contributors thanking them for donations nor are family members who individuals being honored made aware of a gift. Opportunities to educate church and community members about the fund are lost, resulting in reduced memorial giving. And, use of the donations given to the fund may be delayed. Mary Nell Woodward has agreed to work on getting us back on track with this critical ministry. If you would like to assist, please get in touch with Mary Nell.

Building Safety and Inventory: It is important that we ensure everyone who comes to CITD is safe when on our campus and that we account for the myriad pieces of equipment that belong to the church so that they are properly insured, kept in working order, etc. It's been a little while since these tasks were done. If you have any knowledge of risk assessment, liability and/or inventory control, or if you don't but want to help anyway(!), please contact Karen Bulkeley or Ada Thompson who will be leading this effort.

Policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in practice or improved processes. Eugene O'Bryan will be updating our finance-related policies and procedures and looking into a couple of processes related to finances and could use some help. Please let him know if this is something you can support.

And speaking of finances, of course, one of the most important tasks of the Leadership Board is to ensure that we have enough funds to pay our bills and carry out the ministries of the church. In lieu of a Finance Corner that has previously appeared in the Oasis, look for your financial updates here. The board passed a 2024 budget at the January meeting for \$243,996. It is important to note that this DOES NOT include paying apportionments. Our 2024 apportionments are \$48,012 (down from \$51,179 in 2023). In order to meet our obligations, including apportionments, we are looking for weekly donations of \$5616; monthly donations of \$24,224. January total income received was \$17,241. All the church leaders continue to pray for guidance and work diligently to prudently use our resources and seek additional resources to help us meet our obligations and fulfill our mission. Thank you for diligently supporting CITD with your pledge.



This year's Lenten theme is "Seeking: Honest Questions for a Deeper Faith."

The Bible offers us many stories of Jesus encountering people who are seeking: Nicodemus comes to him in the veil of night, he approaches a Samaritan woman at a well, he heals a man born without sight. In these stories, each person is seeking a new beginning, a different life, a deeper faith. What unfolds is an exchange filled with questions and exploration. Often, an unveiling occurs—assumptions are disrupted, a new perspective is revealed, mystery grows.

On Wednesday evenings, we will use *visio divina* to view Lenten art and discover what we see as we move toward Resurrection Day.

Visio Divina, Latin for "divine seeing," is a method of meditation, reflection, and prayer through a process of intentional seeing. Visio Divina extends the 6th-century Benedictine practice of Lectio Divina by the use of visual imagery. Traditionally, Visio Divina was accompanied by Benedictine iconography and illuminations. However, different faith traditions have adapted the process over time, utilizing both secular and nonsecular images.

Join us for a soup and bread dinner and spiritual discussions with great conversations about seeking and find your faith. We will meet Wednesdays through March 20; 5:15—6:45 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Please contact Arvilla Jungman if you are able to bring soup.



Canaan
in the
Desert
March 25
10:00 am



United Women in Faith invite you to join them on a Holy Week Pilgrimage to Canaan in the Desert, a prayer garden located at 9849 N. 40th St. in Phoenix. The garden features sculptured reliefs depicting Jesus' Passion and Resurrection along the peaceful walking paths. A perfect place for a quiet moment of reflection.

You are encouraged to bring sunscreen, a hat and water. Meet at the garden at 10:00 am. Parking is limited, so contact the office if you want carpooling information.

Prayer Corner

The prayer corner this month is dedicated to the memory of Rev. Sharon MacVean, who passed away on February 10, 2024. Sharon was instrumental in writing this page for CITD's monthly newsletter, and her beautiful prayers were appreciated by all.

Sharon was born in Beloit, Kansas on April 6, 1943. She graduated from Glasco High School and Kansas Wesleyan University, both in Kansas. She married John M. MacVean on June 1, 1968 and they celebrated over 50 years together before he passed away in 2019. She taught at junior high and high schools in Lindsborg, Kansas and Phoenix, Arizona, as well as serving as a school librarian. In 1979, she graduated from Arizona State University with a Masters Degree in Social Work and had her own psychotherapy practice in Phoenix, Arizona for several years. She also taught adult classes at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Phoenix. She was consecrated as a diaconal minister in 1996, and began serving at Cross in the Desert UMC. She was admitted on probation in 1998 and continued her role as an associate pastor. In 1999, she received a Masters in Divinity from Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California, and began an appointment at First UMC in Mesa, Az. She was admitted as an elder in full connection in 2001. In 2005 she was appointed to serve at Red Mountain UMC in Mesa, AZ as an associate pastor. In 2007 she was appointed to Sunrise UMC in Phoenix, AZ. She entered retirement in 2008.

She retired, but she continued serving! She was a member of the Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church, attended Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, and was deeply involved in groups at both churches. Her life revolved around her family, including extended family, and church activities such as prayer groups and knitting, crocheting, and sewing groups. She made quilts and blankets that she generously shared with family and friends, as well as donating many to church service projects. She loved music, reading, and playing cards and games. She found the positive in people, building strong relationships and friendships that lasted for decades.

Remembering God's words for us, we give thanks to God who gives us the victory over death through Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the life and witness of Rev. Sharon MacVean.

East District Prayer Focus **for March**

Spirit of Joy UMC—Coolidge
Pastor Tracy Perry

St. Paul's UMC—Globe
Pastor Gary Gene Simons

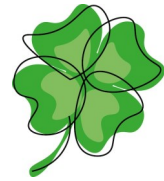
Sun Lakes UMC
Rev. Marvin Arnpriester



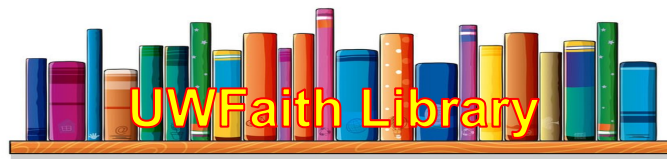


United
Women
in Faith

March Meetings of UWFaith



March 7	Leadership Team	3:00 pm	Fellowship Hall
March 9	Unit Meeting	8:30 am	Fellowship Hall
March 14	Mary Martha Circle	4:00 pm	
March 19	Devotions and Dinner	6:30 pm	
March 21	Bookworms United	10:00 am	Zoom
	Author Study: Choose any book by Jodi Picoult		
March 23	Happy 155th Birthday to United Women in Faith!		
March 25	Canaan in the Desert	10:00 am	
March 28	UWFaith Outreach	11:30 am	Fellowship Hall



NEW TO THE UWFAITH LIBRARY

The Land Is Not Empty by Sarah Augustine . . . Following Jesus in dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery

Glory in the Margins - Sunday Poems by Nikki Grimes . . . poetry for worship

Carved in Ebony by Jasmine L. Holmes . . . Lessons from the Black women who shaped us.

Book feature of the month:

Gum Moon: A Novel of San Francisco Chinatown by Jeffrey L. Staley

In 1898, three-year-old Chinese-American girl Mei Chun Lai is sold to a brothel keeper, where a sympathetic prostitute befriends her. Two years later, at the height of a plague quarantine, a young Methodist woman rescues Chun and places her in a home for abused and trafficked girls. Chun (renamed Maud) and a group of seven other Chinese children embark on a cross-country singing tour. When the matron breaks down, now 13-year old Maud must lead the children home. *Based on a true story.



Sunday April 14
3PM
Spring Tea and Style Show
Speaker topic: "Discipleship and
Trafficking Outreach"

FOOD WITH FRIENDS POTLUCK

SATURDAY, MARCH 16 AT 5:00 PM

Join us for dinner and fellowship at the next potluck.

This month's theme is BBQ. Meat will be provided. Plan to bring a side dish or dessert to share, and your own table service. No child care provided.

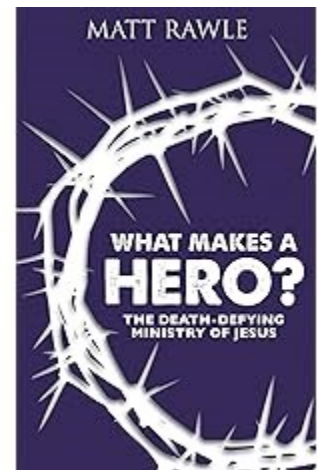
Any questions? Contact Rhonda Mortenson



Tuesday Women's Bible Study

The Tuesday Women's Bible Study group doing a study for Lent. Please join them on Tuesdays at 11:00 am in Fellowship Hall.

The study guide will be "*What Makes a Hero? The Death-Defying Ministry of Jesus*" by Matt Rawle. The study offers us an image of what it looks like to be victorious over trials and temptations.



It's Time for a New Church Directory

Please mark your calendar for Tuesday April 16th. Unique Church Solutions will be here that day to take photos for our new church directory. Watch for sign-up information coming soon!

MISSIONS



UMCOR Sunday is March 10.

Previously known as One Great Hour Of Sharing, this special day enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. Please consider making a contribution to this worthy cause during our time of offering

March 10 is Gift Card Sunday

The Missions Committee continues to sell gift cards during fellowship time on the second Sunday of every month. Don't forget to bring cash or your checkbook to stock up on gifts for friends and family, as well as gift cards for places where you normally shop or eat. The profit from these sales goes to mission projects.



Remember that the shopping cart in the church lobby is for your non-perishable donations to the Food Bank. Pick up a couple of items the next time you are shopping! Let's fill it up!

Coming Events—Mark your calendar

Life Line Screening—Saturday May 4

There is a simple, convenient way for you to get preventive health screenings and learn your risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions. These painless screenings go beyond your regular checkup to identify dangerous plaque buildup or blockage, a major risk factor for stroke and heart disease. The screenings are accurate, affordable and will give you valuable information about your health that you can share with your doctor.

We are pleased to host Life Line Screening, who will be on site Saturday, May 4, 2024, at Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church to conduct these valuable screenings. These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete.

Register by calling toll free 1-844-591-7160, text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607 or online at <https://lisa.social/HC>.

Blood Drive—Sunday May 5

Save the Date! On Sunday, May 5, Vitalant will have their mobile blood donation unit parked at CITD from 8 am until noon. If you or someone you know would be willing to give the gift of life, please put this date on your calendar and watch for more updates.

Caregivers Workshop

On Saturday February 10 Cross in the Desert welcomed caregivers to a mini-retreat designed to educate them about the resources available to them, and to pamper them with a gift bag and a lunch provided by the Desert Southwest United Methodist Foundation. The event was planned and organized by Rhonda Mortenson and Kristin O'Shaughnessy. The keynote speaker was Charlotte Holiday, MBA, who is the Arizona Lifespan Respite Project Coordinator. Her presentation was entitled "Helping Caregivers Protect the Place They Cherish—Home". Several vendors were on hand to provide information to the guests.

**Heart Keepers:
Care for the Caregiver**

8:30 - Fellowship Hall
Registration & Refreshments

9:00 - Worship Center
Welcome & Keynote Address

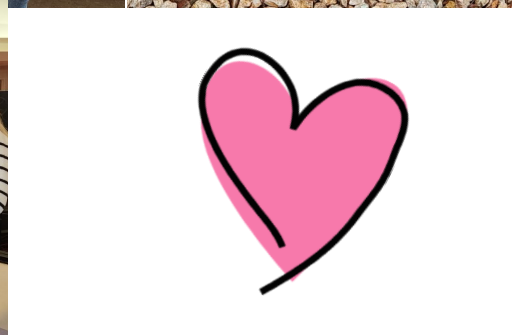
10:30 - Lobby
Vendor Visits

11:15 - Fellowship Hall
*Self Care Exercise
Lunch*

12:15 - Worship Center
Closing Remarks



Pastor Gina with Anne Green from Desert Southwest United Methodist Foundation



**CancerCaregivers
Of America**™

Cancer Caregivers Education Program

Lesson Plans, a Resource Library, and
Cancer Care Community for ALL Cancer Caregivers

Register at cancer caregiversofamerica.com

Contact: barbarak@azmyelomaneetwork.org or (623) 466-6246
501(c)(3) nonprofit charity organization EIN 32-0169742

Desert Southwest Conference News

March is Women's History Month in the United States, with women around the world being celebrated on March 8 for International Women's Day.

Women have long shaped the history of Methodism, beginning with Susanna Wesley, the mother of Methodism's founders. Across the centuries, women have been vital to the denomination's growth as leaders, teachers, missionaries and organizers.

From the local church to the global church, women have led and served ministries within marginalized communities, as well as initiate important social and political reform.

We invite you to explore the inspiring stories of women within Methodism who have made important contributions to the life of the church, as well as discover ideas to help nurture your own participation and witness.

A timeline of women in Methodism and a quiz can be found on the DSC website at <https://www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/our-people/women-in-the-umc>



Cross in the Desert Recognized

Cross in the Desert was recognized in the February 7th issue of the Desert Southwest Conference Newsletter as recently celebrating 60 years of ministry since its founding on January 12, 1964.

The 60th anniversary theme was "Forward in Faith and Hope." **Rev. Gina Pollard** says *"Throughout our journey, we have faced challenges, celebrated victories, and grown together as a community of believers. Now, as we embark on this new phase in our church's history, we are poised to build upon the foundation laid by our predecessors. With unwavering faith in God and a hopeful spirit, we eagerly anticipate the beautiful things that lie ahead. Looking back at the past, we remember those who came before us – those who labored tirelessly to establish this church and create a faith-filled environment for us all."*

Rev. Gina Pollard

Conference Contacts

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Bishop's Assistant:

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Conference Lay Leader

Alberta Farnsworth

East District Superintendent

Melissa Rynders

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East District Lay Leader

Trinity Donovan

Director of Communications

(Assistance with technology)

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Cross in the Desert UMC Staff

Pastor

Pastor Gina Pollard

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Financial Secretary

Alice Easter

finance@crossinthedesert.org

Lay Leader—vacant

Music Director

Thomas Hartwell

Coordinator of Children's Ministries

Vacant

Youth and Technology Coordinator

Kevin Joy

Building and Grounds Concerns

Please contact the office by phone or email so the Trustees may be notified

Administrative Assistant

Julie Wagner

citd@crossinthedesert.org