



@ *Spirit of Joy*
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Dear People of Spirit of Joy,

The month of March holds much of our journey in Lent this year, even though we are already two weeks into this time of Reflection, Repentance, and Reconciliation before the cross of Christ. I want to invite you to Wednesday's "Holden Evening Prayer" Lenten Devotions – and, of course, soup! As the month ends, we enter Holy Week services and then Easter. A lot is going on, but it is all connected. Why does all this reflection focus on Jesus' crucifixion, and what does Jesus' resurrection have to do with it all? Well, Come and See!

I've been asked to lead an "Adult Confirmation" class by a number of our members, so we've scheduled a four-session course – 10:00–11:30 am on the following Fridays in Bible Study 1 room: March 6th, March 20th, April 17th and April 24th. I will be using a booklet entitled "*Baptized We Live*" by Rev. Daniel Erlander, but we will work a lot with the questions you bring. Sign up, but if you forget, show up anyway. Helpful if you commit to all four sessions. This is for folks who have missed Confirmation, forgotten Confirmation or just plain want a refresher course on what being a Lutheran Christian is all about.

Others have asked me if I would do a course on the "Forgotten Luther" project that I have been involved with for a dozen years or so. This project has produced three books (Fortress Press) and has developed a website that makes a "Declaration" on the crisis of Democracy available online. I will begin a six-week class on this topic after Easter, beginning at 10:30am–12:00pm on Thursdays, April 23rd through May 28th. We will make a sign-up sheet available in the narthex soon. If you participated in Kellie Sanders/Pr. Naomi's class on the Statement "Faith and Civic Life", you would find "The Forgotten Luther" a challenging next step.

I continue to thank all of you for your faithful participation in the life and ministry of Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church. You are a wonderful "community in the Lord", and I continue to learn so much from you. We are blessed with a wise and passionate Council and are making headway in our goal to bring a full-time pastor into our midst. The Stewardship of every member, in "time, talent, and treasure" is essential to achieving that goal.

May your Lenten journey be filled with blessings and surprises!

Pastor Braaten
Interim Pastor



Jan Graham	3
Chris Rice	3
Elizabeth Lombardi	10
Anita Swenson	11
Micah Swenson	13
Kylie Densmore	15
Kellie Sanders	15
Pat Ruese	16
Jennifer Musil	22
Lynn Makow	27
Ian Musil	28

Did you know...

you can edit your own profile in our new online Instant Church Directory? Don't like your picture? Download a new one! Changes are made instantly to keep our directory up-to-date!



Deaths

Please pray for the families of these members and former members who have passed into eternal life:

Nancy Sowarby, Carolyn Ward, George Wells, Yona Ash, Mary Ann Schulz, Ken Suhr, Roger & Rita Dunn, Marge Gerhardt

REWARD PROGRAM

Spirit of Joy is the recipient of donations from the Fry's Community Rewards program. You do nothing, other than register, and a percentage of your purchases will be sent to Spirit of Joy to be used by the Altar Guild.

SOJ received \$47.94 from Fry's for the 3rd quarter 2025. When shopping, don't forget to designate your rewards to benefit our church!



Recurring Offerings

Want to give a recurring offering to SOJ without writing a check every time? Most banks have a free "bill pay" feature that you can utilize to have a check mailed directly to SOJ. Contact your bank for more information.

Spirit of Joy
LUTHERAN CHURCH

330 Scenic Drive
Clarkdale, Arizona 86324
928-634-4102

Rev. Conrad Braaten
Interim Pastor
prbraaten@gmail.com

Nancy Bright, Director of Music

Rosie West, Office Manager
officesoj@sojaz.net

Website:
www.sojaz.net

Send prayer requests to:
prayer@sojaz.net

Visit us at:
www.facebook.com/sojaz

Communion Ministry



Please see Pr. Braaten if you are interested in taking communion and/or visiting with homebound members.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

You are invited to attend our four-part “Adult Confirmation” class to be led by Pastor Braaten. This class will run on the following four Fridays from 10-11:30 am in Bible Study 1:

- March 6
- March 20
- April 17
- April 24



We have participants signed up who have:

- been through Lutheran confirmation as a youth and want a refresh
- been through confirmation at a different faith tradition and want to find out more about Martin Luther and the ELCA
- never been through confirmation before and want to see what it is all about.

Whatever your background, you are welcome to REVIEW->REFRESH->RENEW. Sign up in the narthex or in the church office. Other segments of Adult Confirmation will be offered in the Fall. Any questions, call Ellen Daniels or the church office.

SOJ's MEN'S GROUP!



The Men's Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 8am at Red Rooster Café in Old Town. Join us for fellowship and to discuss that week's Gospel on Thursday, March 12th, and March 26th. For more information contact Tom Berlage, 1-218-576-8861.

GATHER BIBLE STUDY

The Gather Bible Study will meet on Thursday, March 19th, at 2pm in the Conference Room. We will be using the Gather magazine Study Guide for March. All are welcome to join us!



JOYFUL MUSIC MAKERS

Join us as we Make a Joyful Noise every Sunday.

9:00am –Joyful Music Rehearsal

9:15am—Joyful Hymn Sing

11:15am—Joyful Music Rehearsal

All singers, instrumentalists and noise makers of all ages are welcome!





WHAT A DAY IT WAS!

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

2nd ANNUAL DINNER WITH THE HOMELESS

24 Spirit of Joy members and one grandson shared a delicious dinner with 20 homeless people. It was at their shelter—their home away from home.

Sloppy joes with all the trimmings, plus a variety of desserts were served. Tables were decorated with ♥ tablecloths that were sprinkled with sparkly hearts, red and white ribbons and decorated candy bags were at each place setting.

Our own Wendy Anderson played her violin during the dinner. If you think Wendy only plays hymns, she proved you wrong that day! She was joined at times by hand clapping and foot tapping!

I imagine for some of our SOJ members, attending this event was stepping out of their comfort zones—but they did it anyway. Well done thou good and faithful servants. As Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you have done it to me.” Matthew 25:40

The Case Manager Elery thanked us for coming. He told us that the surrounding communities have blessed VVHC with so many of its needs. However, he said it’s only the SOJ members who invite the homeless to have dinner at their place!

During the afternoon, Elery gave tours to see VVHC’s Transitional Housing on campus.

WHAT A DAY IT WAS! Without a doubt, SOJ will be back.



WEEKEND BIBLE READINGS



March 1: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

March 8: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

March 15: 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

March 22: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

March 29: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philipp 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14—27:66

CELEBRATION OF LIFE!

There will be a Celebration of Life for Marge Gerhardt on Saturday, March 21st at 10:30am followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall.



Lent and Easter Schedule

Wednesdays—now thru March 25, 5:00pm

Holden Evening Prayer
followed by a soup supper each week.

Celtic Sunday—March 15th

Worship followed by fellowship with an Irish flavor, in honor of St. Patrick.



Holy Week

Passion/Palm Sunday—March 29, 9:30am

Healing Sunday

Maundy Thursday - April 2, 5:00pm

Good Friday - April 3, 5:00pm

Easter Celebration Worship - Sunday, April 5, 9:30am

Easter Potluck Brunch following worship

FOOD BANK SUNDAY!

Non-perishable food items will be collected this Sunday, March 1st, for our local food bank. Leave your food items in the grocery cart in the narthex.

Please remember to check the expiration dates on food before donating.



DAYTIME BOOK CLUB

True Colors

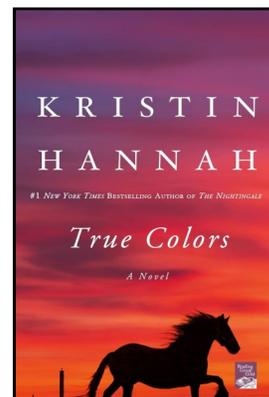
Author—Kristin Hannah

978-0312606121 528 pages

Summary

True Colors by Kristin Hannah is about the close-knit Grey sisters—Winona, Aurora, and Vivi Ann—whose bond is tested by jealousy, secrets, and a devastating crime after Vivi Ann falls for a mysterious stranger, Dallas, who becomes the prime suspect in a local murder, tearing the family apart and forcing them to confront their deepest insecurities and the father who always favored Vivi Ann, revealing the true nature of their sisterly loyalties and the power of forgiveness.

Come join the discussion, March 26, 2:00 pm in the church council room. This book about three sisters will create a lively discussion. Questions, contact Judy Haslow 928-301-1121.



In need of prayer?

Please direct all prayer requests to Laura at klstransky@gmail.com or call 970-749-2270.

2026 RELIGION AND SCIENCE LECTURE SERIES continues...

Join us on the following Sundays at 2:30pm in the SOJ sanctuary followed by light refreshments in the fellowship hall.

March 1— Spence Gustav of Sedona, is a petroleum engineer who has worked in North Africa, South America, the North Sea, and SE Asia (among other places). With his extensive background in Archaeology and Geology, Spence has documented and photographed remote indigenous sites, as well as the more well-known Honanki and Crane Petroglyph Sites.

March 8—Tyler Carson, classically trained violinist aka “Fiddler on the Rock”. Tyler is a former child star who has reemerged as a visionary artist transformed through a profound healing journey that reshaped his music and mission.



These lectures are a participation in the Clergy Letter Project, an association of religious leaders and scientists who believe there is no necessary conflict between religion and science.

WELCA NEWS—February 2026



The meeting was called to order by Sue B. Sue did a scavenger hunt in the kitchen. The object was to acquaint us all where things are located. Table one won the prize...chocolates!

- Carol S led the devotions “Growing Old”. Becky K will do devotions for March.
- A collection basket, fellowship sign-ups, and sign-ups for the Dunn’s memorial luncheon were passed around.
- Glena gave the Treasurer’s report.
- Mell’O’Dee gave the Secretary’s report with no additions or corrections.
- We will set up for the Dunn’s memorial luncheon on Friday, Feb. 13th at 11am.
- We are providing food for the Meal with the Homeless today. BBQ salads with bars and cookies for dessert.
- Serving meals in the Park for the Homeless was discussed at length. We will check with another church to see what is involved.
- Becky K checked with the First Responders. They suggested we do root beer floats. Ann M made a motion to spend \$50 and Carol S seconded it. We discussed more options we could also do.
- We will do soup suppers for Lent. We need six pots of soup each week.
- No Celtic dinner in March but fellowship will be Celtic treats instead.
- No Chili Cook-Off this year.
- Easter Brunch will be on April 5th.
- The date for the Patio Sales is April 18th. Final plans will be done at the March meeting.
- We all agreed to do a short meeting April 9th and then do a field trip to Camp Verde for lunch.
- Sue will make an appointment to have the carpets in the fellowship hall cleaned.
- The repairs on the refrigerator is a work in progress.
- Sue shared the policy, use and procedure for events. One person to be the contact and assign duties.
- Joyful crafters are working hard to reach their goal of 50 quilts . Carol reported two more people picked up kits.
- Food handlers need to renew their license.
- Ann M will provide the ice breaker for the March meeting.
- It was suggested to perhaps have a Joyful Crafters on a Saturday so we could share about WELCA and perhaps get more people interested in joining us.

Prayers for many were shared. We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Mell’O’Dee Gaber, Co-Secretary



JOYFUL CRAFTERS

PLEASE NOTE: Crafting is switched to Saturday on the second Saturday of the month after the WELCA meeting in order to allow those who work during the week to attend some crafting. WELCA minutes will also be reviewed to keep you up to date.

*I thank my God
every time I remember you.*
Philippians 1:3



*A heartfelt thank-you for your kind
expression of sympathy.*

*"Thank you so much for all of your help in
organizing the service for our parents, Rita
and Roger Dunn. We were all so pleased
with how everything turned out and
know that they would be too.
We are so happy to know what a loving
church home they found at Spirit of Joy."*

The "kids"
Amy Koepke
Denise Dunn
Chris Dunn
Valerie Musgrave

**MEMORIALS, HONORS
& GIFTS**

*If you have felt blessed by
someone, give a gift in their
honor or memory.
You are sharing that blessing
with others.*

February 2026

JOY PACKS

Lucy Acheson
Sharon Thaler
Kip & Laura Stransky

HONORARY / MEMORIALS

Bruce & Linda Burton
In Memory of
Roger & Rita Dunn

Stanley & Kathy Embree
In Memory of
Roger & Rita Dunn

A. C. & Mell'O'Dee Gaber

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Wartburg College
Castle Singers & Kammerstreicher

Thursday, March 5
7 PM

Join us for a beautiful concert filled with powerful voices and elegant strings. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased through the church office or at the door.

(623) 584-2000 | www.LOLaz.org | info@LOLaz.org
13724 W Meeker Boulevard, Sun City West, AZ

Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Sun City West will host the **Wartburg College Castle Singers and Kammerstreicher** on **Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 7:00 PM**, offering our synod an evening rooted in Lutheran musical excellence. For Lutherans, music is not ornament—it is proclamation. From Luther’s hymns to today’s choral and instrumental offerings, music carries the Word in ways that form faith, shape community, and root us in God’s story. This concert is an opportunity to experience that living tradition through powerful voices and elegant strings.

2026 SPIRIT OF JOY CHURCH COUNCIL

Officers

Kellie Sanders—President
ksanders0410@gmail.com, 815-751-1133

Kim Rice—Vice President

Pam Moody—Secretary
SOJCCPAM@gmail.com, 802-503-2598

Tom Atkins—Treasurer

Liaisons

Mick Shanahan—Property

Ellen Daniels—Faith Formation

Mark Goodwin—In-Reach/Outreach

Financial Report for January 2026

Operating Fund

January	Income	Expenses	Net Income	Transfer to Business Fund	Adjusted Net Income
	\$16,143.98	\$14,085.28	\$2,058.70	\$3,095.00	-\$1,036.30
Year-to-Date January	Income	Expenses	Net Income	Transfer to Business Fund	Adjusted Net Income
	\$16,143.98	\$14,085.28	\$2,058.70	\$3,095.00	-\$1,036.30

1/31/2026 Ending Operating Fund Balance

General Fund	\$113,981.89
Mortgage Fund	7,357.21
Restricted Ministries	<u>12,196.35</u>
	\$133,535.45

Board Restricted Fund

January	Income	Expenses	Net Income	Transfer to Business Fund	Adjusted Net Income
	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$3,095.00	\$3,120.00
Year-to-Date January	Income	Expenses	Net Income	Transfer to Business Fund	Adjusted Net Income
	\$25.00 *	\$0.00 **	\$25.00	\$3,095.00	\$3,120.00

* Thrivent Dollars \$ 25.00

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1/31/2026 Ending Board Restricted Fund Balance

Mortgage Fund	\$132.00
Organ/Piano Fund	2,300.87
Pastoral Call Fund	43,558.44
Property Fund	1,220.00
Undesignated	<u>5,516.37</u>
	\$52,727.68

Mission Investment Fund Mortgage Balance \$98,267.75

Mission Investment Fund Savings \$2,429.46

National Bank 11 month CD \$10,000.00

Spirit of Joy LUTHERAN CHURCH

330 Scenic Drive
Clarkdale, Arizona 86324



March Highlights

- 1— Food Bank Sunday
Elementary Sunday School classes begin, Classroom 1, 8am
- 4— In-Reach/Outreach Team Meeting (CR), 10am
- 6— Adult Confirmation classes begin (BS1), 10am
- 8— Quilt Sunday at 9:30am worship
- 12—Men's Group @ Red Rooster Café, 8am
WELCA Meeting (FH), 9am
- 14—Church Council Visioning Retreat (FH), 9am-Noon
- 15—Celtic Sunday
- 18—Church Council Meeting (CR), 2pm
- 19—Gather Bible Study (CR), 2pm
- 21—Celebration of Life for Marge Gerhardt, 10:30am
- 26—Daytime Book Group (CR), 2pm
- 29—Palm Sunday & Healing Sunday



SOJ Weekly Worship Schedule

- Lenten Holden Prayer —
Wednesdays, 5pm
Followed by Soup Supper
- Sunday Worship—9:30am
Fellowship—following
Sunday worship