

February @

 **Spirit of Joy**
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dear People of Spirit,

Happy St. Valentine's Day! It's been around a long time, with origins rooted in a pagan-roman festival called Lupercalia that was rather saucy and was banned towards the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day. It was popularized by Geoffrey Chaucer as a celebration of love and William Shakespeare later on enhanced its romantic appeal. I remember giving out little valentines in elementary school to all my classmates saying something like: "Will you be mine?" and a bigger card to a few young ladies I felt more serious about. The greatest and most serious valentine given to us is God's very son, inscribed with the same words: "Will you be mine?"

I have to start by saying "Thank You" all for the many surprises given to me as I passed my 80th birthday – claps of celebration, so many cards and gifts, and the best Birthday cake ever! I am humbled – mostly by those who have passed this milestone of life before me and continue to be so active at Spirit of Joy, and especially by those who are still running around after passing 90. We could all be arrested for speeding, caught on the radar of time. Although our bodies tell us to slow down, that's hard to do in the company of so many in this congregation who keep going and are active in so many ways in Spirit of Joy's many ministries. You are all inspiring.

At our Annual Meeting we elected a wonderful Council for the coming year, and I am looking forward to working with them. We have many challenges ahead, but I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is indeed leading and guiding the people of Spirit of Joy, and that there will be many wonderful surprises and things to celebrate in the year ahead. We push on with what we need to do in anticipation of our next pastor, and in the meantime focus on our growth in the Lord, all of us working together to build up the Body of Christ in Love in this place.

Thanks to all of you who are supporting our worship ministry in many ways, along with our Caring ministries. Special thanks to Rosie West and Nancy Bright who have been such great colleagues to me this past year. As a community, you have had a wonderful response to our "Learning Community" initiatives already, and I hope that that trend will continue throughout the spring. I could go on and on naming every dimension of our life together. I pray that Spirit will empower us to keep growing in every vital way, so that folks who 'come and see' will come to know a Lord who winks at us and says, "follow me".

Grab your seat belts. We're moving into 2026!

Pr. Braaten (Interim Pastor)





Ruth Tasa	1
Marcia Shanahan	4
Rozanne Kaminski	16
Betty Diets	21
Sandy Prigge	22
Alex Musil	23
Ann Torruellas	27

If your special day is missing from our list, please call or email the church office to let us know.



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

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. Let's do better and don't forget to designate your rewards when shopping!



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.



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.

2ND ANNUAL DINNER WITH THE HOMELESS!



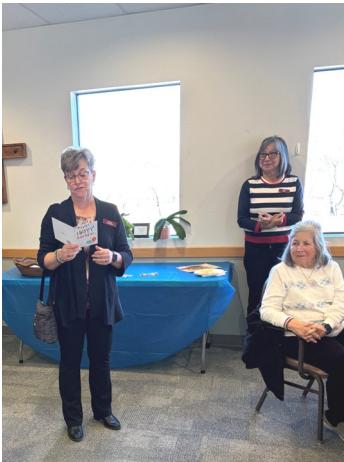
Thursday, February 12th at 2PM
Verde Valley Homeless Coalition Center
654 N Main St., Cottonwood
(Directly across from Camelot RV Park)

Sloppy Joes with all the extras will be served.

SOJ members can contribute by bringing cookies/bars.
Please RSVP by calling the office, 928-634-4102, by Feb. 2nd.

See the special flier for full details.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PASTOR BRAATEN!



Members gathered at fellowship on January 11th to celebrate Pr. Braaten's 80th birthday. We are blessed to have him serve as our Interim Pastor and grateful for his leadership. We wish him peace, love and good health in the year ahead!

GATHER BIBLE STUDY

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



WEEKEND BIBLE READINGS



Feb 1: Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Cor 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

Feb 8: Isaiah 58:1-9a[9b-12]; Psalm 112:1-9[10]; 1 Cor 2:1-12[13-16]; Matt 5:13-20

Feb 15: Exodus 24:12-18; Ps 2 or Ps 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matt 17:1-9

Feb 22: Genesis 2:15-17; :1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matt 4:1-11

CELEBRATION OF LIFE!

There will be a Celebration of Life for Roger & Rita Dunn on Saturday, February 14 at 10:30am followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall.



Lent and Easter Schedule

Ash Wednesday Service - Feb 18th, 5pm

Wednesdays—February 25—March 25, 5:00pm

Holden Evening Prayer Vespers
followed by a soup supper each week.

Celtic Sunday—March 15th

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



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 / GREEN BAG SUNDAY!

Non-perishable food items will be collected this weekend, February 1st for our local food bank. Leave your food items in the grocery cart in the narthex. If you participate in the Green Bag program, bring in your filled bag at this time. (Please remember to check the expiration dates on food before donating.)



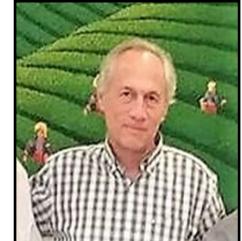
SPIRIT OF JOY LEARNING COMMUNITY

St. Paul challenges the churches he mentors to be Learning Communities! We're underway! A Confirmation Class has started up, and hopefully a Sunday School class will begin this month. There has been a wonderful participation in the **“Faith and Civic Life”** class led by Kellie Sanders and Pr. Naomi, as well as to our current **Spiritual Growth** class on Paul's letter to Colossians. Lots going on right now! Lent begins on February 18th with Ash Wednesday. I am working on leading a **Lenten Class** on the importance of the witness of Lutheran Martyr Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer for our times and will let you know more information via Sunday bulletins and email blast. Stay tuned!! Please think about putting our **Faith and Science Lecture Series** led by Andrea Meyer on your “Must do!” bucket list (see more information below).

2026 RELIGION AND SCIENCE LECTURE SERIES

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

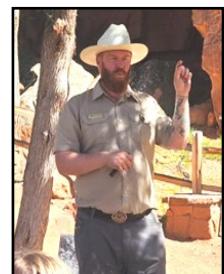
Feb 15—Dr. James Allen is a primary care internal medicine specialist who worked in the US public health service before moving to Indonesian Borneo in 1994. For the next 22 years he worked in community and occupational health across Asia, managing teams in 14 countries. As Chevron's Asia Pacific medical director, he led community health projects for tuberculosis and HIV control in Myanmar, primary care in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh; and emergency medicine in Azerbaijan and rural China. He later helped develop maternal and child health programs in Colombia and Angola.



It is not always clear how to best contribute to help others in sustainable ways. Dr. Allen would like to share some lessons learned when “Trying to do Good” outside the company’s fenceline.



Feb 22—Gary Beverly holds a PhD degree in Physical Chemistry from the University of California. Since moving to Prescott in 1974, he taught physical science and alternative energy at Yavapai College, then worked as a farmer, contractor, and businessman. Since retiring, he is an environmental activist focused on protecting the Verde River. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club and holds a leadership role in the Citizens Water Advocacy Group. He represents those organizations on the team working for Congressional designation of the Upper Verde Wild and Scenic River.



March 1—Nicholas Massoni is a Heritage Site Technician for the Red Rock Ranger District. He has managed the Crane Petroglyph Heritage Site, Palatki Heritage Site, and Honanki Heritage Sites for the past three years. While he is not an archaeologist nor historian; he is an interpreter, whose mission is to provoke and inspire, rather than to educate or instruct.

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.



Thank you to everyone at SOJ for their Get Well card after my recent fall!

Naomi Barcanic

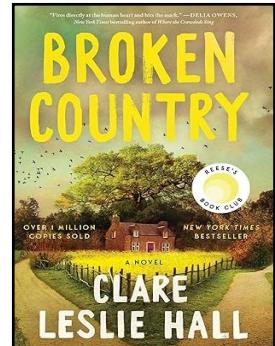
DAYTIME BOOK CLUB

Broken Country

Author—Clare Leslie Hall

978-1668078181 320 pages

Summary



The story, set in the English countryside and told in nonlinear fashion, centers on Beth, who is happily married to Frank. Their peaceful life is disrupted when Gabriel Wolfe, Beth's first love who broke her heart years ago, returns to the village with his young son, Leo. Beth and Frank's marriage relies on the past staying buried, but Gabriel's reappearance and Beth's growing connection with his son, who reminds her of her own son who died in a tragic accident, bring long-held secrets and jealousies to the surface. The narrative begins with the death of a farmer and a question of who killed him, building tension toward a dramatic climax and a murder trial.

We will meet on Thursday, February 26th at 2:00 pm in the conference room. Bring a friend and look forward to leading the discussion in the future. If you want more information about this group, please contact Judy Haslow, 928-301-1121 by text, phone call or email at jccjmh45@gmail.com.



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 for fellowship and to discuss that week's Gospel. This month, they will meet on Thursday, February 12th, and February 26th. For more information contact Tom Berlage, 1-218-576-8861.

Souper Bowl of Caring

On February 8th we will be holding our ANNUAL SOUPER BOWL food collection. Both monetary and food donations will be taken to help tackle hunger in our community. Your donations will go to our JoyPacks program and Rising Hope Food Pantry. Items can be placed in the containers in the narthex.

The youth of Spirit of Joy will be assisting in this collection effort.



WELCA NEWS—January 2026

Sue B called the meeting to order with 14 members in attendance. Carol S shared an ice breaker Hink Pinks, which made us all think!



- Sue B did the devotions how life can be like an oyster. Carol S will do devotions in Feb.
- The collection basket and sign-up sheets were passed around.
- Glena A gave the Treasurer's report. Our Taste of Christmas was a good fund raiser for us.
- Mell'O'Dee read the minutes of the November meeting and brief December update.
- Special thanks to Becky K for hosting the Christmas WELCA get-together. 18 members enjoyed the wonderful food and fellowship.
- Meals for the homeless was discussed. We need to gather more information and perhaps help out another church. It was decided once a month was too much at this time. We will still do our Valentine meal on February 12th.
- Meals for First Responders was discussed. Becky K will check to see when will be a good time.
- There will be a sign-up for Lenten Soup Suppers starting Feb. 25th. More details will come at our Feb. meeting.
- No chili cook-off this year.
- Celtic Sunday in March.
- Patio sale will be discussed later.
- Easter Brunch will be on April 5th. It was decided to have the carpets cleaned after Easter. Sue B will get it scheduled.
- Mother's Day cake and flowers in May.
- Father's Day Pie Sunday in June.
- The refrigerator needs to be fixed. Sue B volunteered to look into it. She also will check into the Fellowship Hall rental policy as some questions have been asked.
- Joyful Crafters (meets on Fridays at 9am) asked if anyone would like to sew at home. They have squares all ready to go.
- Everyone welcome! It was discussed how to include more women in WELCA. A change of time was suggested. We will do a hand-out survey for ideas.
- We will meet at 9am for our next meeting because of Bible Study at 10am.
- Dee Suhr would like to hear from all of us.
- Marie P shared "3 Wise Women".
- Ruth T suggested we do a silent auction raffle baskets.
- A field trip to Camp Verde will be discussed in the future.
- Special prayers for our faithful worker, Loma, having surgery on Monday, January 12th.

We closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Mell'O'Dee Gaber, Co-Secretary

JOYFUL CRAFTERS



Lutheran World Relief has reported that 315,818 quilts were distributed to countries worldwide in 2025. The LWR Western Region of the US donated 10,581 quilts to that total figure with our own Friday Joyful Crafters contributing 100 quilts to that amount! Awesome work ladies!

Sunday School Coming Soon?

We are exploring the possibility of having a Sunday School class for Elementary aged students before Worship (8-9am). If you have family members, friends or neighbors that have children in this age range, there may soon be an opportunity to invite them to participate. Please contact Ellen Daniels with questions.

IN-REACH / OUTREACH TEAM

Several Spirit of Joy Members have been sent letters to join our team. Please seriously consider helping us as part of your commitment to SOJ. We discuss the current projects of providing outreach to NELM (Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission) our brothers and sisters in NE Arizona, VVHC (Verde Valley Homeless Coalition), the homeless in the area and other outreach projects. We also provide in-reach to those of Spirit of Joy with card ministry EOF (Expressions of Faith) that provides help to the homebound, welcoming new visitors to our SOJ services and several other ways we help our people. Come join us! Our next meeting is on Wednesday, February 4th at 10am in the conference room.



Please take note of the new bulletin board in the narthex. if you do not have time to read it in the narthex, take a pic with your phone and read it when you have time. Also, remember to check for updates when new members join or when we put new faces in the congregation.

Because no one remembered to schedule the Chili Cook-Off our team suggested postponing it until next January. Soup suppers will be starting, so we suggest you bring chili to the soup suppers. Also, WELCA and the In-Reach/Outreach Team feel much has been expected of our congregation's food preparers. So this year we will celebrate Celtic Sunday with Celtic Worship followed by Celtic themed treats during fellowship hour instead of our usual potluck.

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

Lenten Challenge 2026

Register today for the 40-40-40 Region 2 Lenten Challenge!

Friends in Christ, Region 2 Lutherans and friends—

Lent is soon upon us (Ash Wednesday February 18). Once again, we are invited into a holy season of prayer, repentance, and renewed love of neighbor. If you've participated in the Region 2 Lenten Challenge before, you already know how powerfully God can work through simple, daily steps: a Scripture-based reflection, a faithful action, a moment of courage, a practice of compassion. This year's challenge is ready for you at lentenchallenge.org—and your place in it matters. Your steady "yes" to the Spirit becomes a witness in your congregation, your community, and your own heart.

The theme, *Lord, When Did We See You?* derives from Matthew 25:37-40. The [spiritual practices](#) for the six weeks of Lent will focus on stretching our learning, care and advocacy muscles on behalf of underserved communities. Your R2 synod hunger leaders have created a [Toolkit](#) for 6 weeks of learnings and actions in which children, youth, families and congregations are invited to participate. This year's daily devotions on the theme represent diverse voices and cultures across our region.

So let's do this together—again. Register today at lentenchallenge.org and join fellow disciples across Region 2 as we walk the way of the cross with honesty, hope, and purpose. Whether you're returning with momentum or returning because you need a fresh start, this is a grace-filled opportunity to be grounded in Christ and strengthened for the work of love in the world. Invite a friend, share it with your congregation (promo tools [here](#)), and commit to the journey—because Lent is not meant to be traveled alone, and God is not finished with us yet.

Challenge donations received benefit [ELCA World Hunger](#).
Appeal code **R2LENT2026**.

[REGISTER TODAY!](#)

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.

January 2026

JOY PACKS

Fred & Sally Huff

Anita Young

HONORARY / MEMORIALS

Deanna Codner

In Honor of Jovan & Calbe

Deanna Codner

In Memory of Roger & Rita Dunn

Barb Nord

In Memory of Roger & Rita Dunn

Kip & Laura Stranky

In Memory of Roger & Rita Dunn





330 Scenic Drive
Clarkdale, Arizona 86324



In need of prayer?

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

February Highlights

- 1—Food Bank/Green Bag Sunday
- 4—In-Reach/Outreach Team Meeting (CR), 10am
- 7—Council Retreat (FH), 9am-1pm
- 8—Quilt Sunday & Souper Bowl of Caring Collection at 9:30am worship
- 12—WELCA Meeting (FH), 9am
Dinner with the Homeless at VVHC 2pm
- 14—Green Bag Food Event, Mountain View UMC, 12th St, 10am
Celebration of Life of Roger & Rita Dunn, 10:30am
- 16—**President's Day—Office closed**
- 18—Church Council Meeting (CR), 1pm
Ash Wednesday Service, 5pm
- 19—Gather Bible Study (CR), 2pm
- 24—Pr. Naomi's Book of Job Bible Study resumes (BS1), 10am
- 25—Holden Prayer Lenten Vespers, 5pm, followed by Soup Supper
- 26—Daytime Book Group (CR), 2pm



SOJ Weekly Worship Schedule

Mid-Week Worship—
Wednesdays, 5pm

Sunday Worship—9:30am

Fellowship—following
Sunday worship