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## “A Prayer of Self-Offering for the New Year”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Beloved FUMC family,

As we enter the new year-2026—we are invited to begin not with resolutions, but with surrender. The start of a new season offers us an opportunity to return ourselves—our plans, our desires, and our whole lives—into God’s hands once again. The following prayer by Ignatius of Loyola has been used for centuries as a prayer of dedication and self-offering. It invites us to place not only our work, but our freedom, memory, will, and future before God, trusting that God’s love and grace are enough.

### **Ignatius of Loyola – Prayer of Self-Offering (Full Version)**

Lord of all, I offer myself to You.

I offer not only my labor, but also my affection and my emotions.

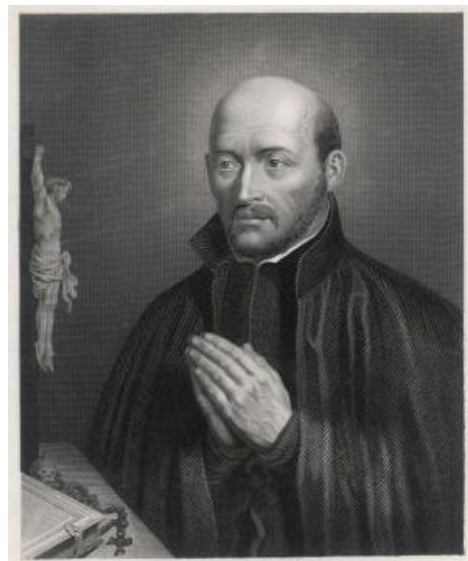
I gladly disregard my own inclinations, and, strengthened by Your grace and goodwill,

I earnestly desire to serve You alone.

Before Your infinite holiness, and before Your glorious Mother and all the saints in heaven, I offer You this entire self-gift.

For the sake of serving and honoring You, I desire to discipline my body and soul, to endure every hardship and humiliation, and to be conformed to You in all things.

Therefore, Lord, receive everything that I offer. Teach me how I may become more like You, and show me the way by which I may truly follow You.



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## A Prayer of Self-Offering for the New Year cont.

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### **Suscipe**

*Receive, O Lord, all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will - everything that I have and possess. You have given all these to me; now I return them entirely to You. All things are Yours. Dispose of them according to Your will.  
Give me only Your love and Your grace; that is enough for me.*

As we step forward into the year ahead, may this prayer shape the way we live, serve, and love.

May this be a year not measured by what we accomplish, but by how faithfully we follow.

May we become a people who give without counting the cost, who serve without seeking reward, and who trust that God's love and grace will sustain us in all things. In this new year, may we offer ourselves—again and again—into God's hands.

With love and blessings,

Pastor Ko

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH OF TUCSON!

On **December 8 at 11 AM**, we hosted a **South District Clergy Christmas Gathering** in our social hall. Our District Superintendent, **Rev. Javier Olivares**, who officially resumed his role in mid-September following his renewal leave, joined us in leading this meaningful time together. With good food, warm conversations, carol singing, and joyful activities, everyone had a wonderful time of fellowship. *Left: District Superintendent Rev. Javier Olivares leading the gathering. Middle: Pastor Ko with District Administrator Jeannine. Right and following two rows: The clergy participants.*







Below: We held our **Christmas Cantata** on **December 14, 2025**, featuring two narrators, **V. Carol Smith** and **Don Rollings** (right). The cantata was a beautiful offering of music and storytelling that deeply blessed our congregation.



Left: On **December 14, 2025**, we joyfully welcomed a **new member**, **Gene Kunde**, into the life of our church.

Next page: The **Celebration of the Life of Rev. Dr. Eugene Friesen** was held on **December 1, 2025**, at **Green Valley United Methodist Church**. Pastor Ko, Sam Haney, and Cindy Reinhart were present to give thanks for his life and ministry. Rev. Dr. Friesen had also worshiped with our congregation on several occasions.



Next page: **Young Christians' Time** took on special moments throughout December. Left: On **December 21, 2025**, **Dylan Boyd** assisted **Dottie** during Young Christian Time. Right: On **December 28, 2025**, **Gina Poczulp** came forward with her loving niece, **Tomoe**, who was visiting from California. We always rejoice in welcoming God's children of all ages.

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Our **Choir Christmas Party** was held on **Thursday, December 18**, celebrating the dedication and fellowship of our choir members during this busy season.

On **December 28, 2025**, **Dottie and Gary Poczulp's family** joined us for worship with their precious granddaughter **Tomoe**, who was baptized last year. What a blessing it is to witness her growing in faith and in the love of God.



*Below left:* Sam Haney and his granddaughter, An Khiet Lam, led the Advent Candle Lighting and joyfully lit the Christ Candle during our Christmas Eve service. *Below right:* During our **Christmas Eve service**, **Christiana and Andrew Ageh's family** shared a beautiful carol. Their offering of music was a true blessing to our congregation.



*Next page, below left:* The liturgist and readers for the service. *Middle:* Special singer, Siyu Pan (mezzo soprano). *Right:* The congregation during the Lighting of Individual Candles.

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Right: **June Song**, a resident of Calgary, Canada, spends her winters in Tucson with her husband **Wayne**. It was wonderful to have Wayne present to support June during the **Christmas Cantata on December 12, 2025**. His joyful encouragement for his wife always brings smiles to our church family.



On **December 21, 2025**, **Cindy Reinhart**, a beloved member of our congregation, shared her musical gift by offering a **special flute piece** during worship while the choir was on break. Her music was a beautiful blessing to all who were present.

*Below left:* **Rev. Sunny Park**, pastor from **San Pedro, California**, visited and worshiped with us on **December 28, 2025**. *Right:* **Rev. Grace Oh**, pastor from **Champaign, Illinois**, visited and shared the message with us on **January 4, 2026**.





# **A pastoral message from Bishop Lanette regarding the shooting in Minneapolis**

by Bishop Lanette Plambeck | January 07, 2026

## **A Pastoral Letter to the Dakotas–Minnesota Episcopal Area**

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; ...those whose spirits are overwhelmed.”  
- Psalm 34.18 NLT, adapt.

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?” - Micah 6.8 NRSV

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

I write as one who, in my episcopal role, is called to guard the faith, shepherd the people, and work for unity. It is from this responsibility that I offer these words.

Today in Minneapolis, during a federal immigration enforcement operation, Renee Nicole Good was fatally shot. Investigations are underway. Accounts differ. Many details remain unclear. At the time of this writing, what we know, and must not move past too quickly, is this: a human life has been lost.

The work of the church begins here. Before we receive deep analysis or a full explanation of the events that led to the shooting, we enter into lament. We grieve a life ended too soon. We hold in prayer the family and loved ones who now carry an unimaginable loss. We acknowledge the fear and trauma this event has stirred, especially among immigrant and refugee neighbors for whom encounters with law enforcement already carry profound risk.

We also speak to the wider moment in which this tragedy occurred. Across our nation, we are witnessing a troubling willingness to normalize violence as a tool of order and to resist accountability as though it were a threat rather than a safeguard. The church must say clearly: power that is unexamined, unchecked, or unaccountable stands in tension with the way of Jesus Christ.

Scripture reminds us that authority is given for the sake of the common good. When power is exercised, its first obligation is to preserve life and protect the vulnerable. The measure of justice is not how quickly actions are justified, but how faithfully truth is sought and responsibility is held.

This word is spoken not in condemnation, but in love. Love for communities living in fear. Love for institutions that must be called back to their highest purposes. Love for a nation whose soul is shaped, for better or worse, by the choices it makes in moments like these.

As your bishop, I call our congregations to be places of refuge and prayer in the days ahead. Be attentive to grief. Listen deeply to those who are afraid. Stay rooted in Christ, who chose the way of self-giving love over the way of force.

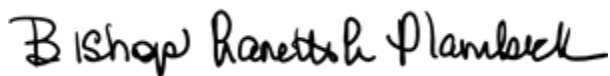
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In moments of grief and uncertainty, most of us naturally lean toward news voices we already trust. In our vulnerability, we rush to make complex situations clear-cut. While that is human, it can also narrow our understanding. I encourage us to broaden our listening, seek out careful reporting from news sources representing multiple perspectives, and remain open to voices that may challenge our assumptions. Expanding how we listen is one way we practice humility and love in the pursuit of truth.

In this fragile space between tragedy and truth, may we be a people who lament honestly, seek justice humbly, and refuse the lie that violence has the final word. We hold fast to the resurrection promise that love endures and that life, not death, will have the final say.

May the God who binds up the brokenhearted draw near to all who mourn, and may the Spirit lead us in the way of justice, mercy, and peace.

Grace and peace,



Bishop Lanette Plambeck  
Resident Bishop  
Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church

### **Prayer**

God of mercy and nearness,  
we come to you with heavy hearts.  
We grieve a life lost and hold close all who mourn.  
Be near to those whose hearts are broken,  
to those who are afraid,  
and to all who are waiting for truth to come into the light.

In this tender space between tragedy and understanding,  
teach us to lament honestly,  
to seek justice with humility,  
and to walk gently with one another.  
Guard us from haste, from hardened hearts,  
and from the temptation to let fear or violence shape our way.

We place our hope in you, O God of resurrection.  
When death and grief seem to have the final word,  
remind us that life and love endure.  
Make us instruments of your peace,  
and keep us faithful in the days ahead.

We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus,  
who brings life out of death  
and hope out of sorrow.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS**

**10AM SUNDAY SERVICE**

Join us in person for our English-language service! Or you can watch it live online at <https://www.youtube.com/c/TucsonFirstUMC>.

**한국어 사역**

주일 오전 11시 30분에 한국어 예배가  
현장예배와 온라인예배로 진행됩니다.  
기도와 참여 부탁드립니다.

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**WEEKDAY GATHERINGS**

**Nifty Needlecrafts (NN) Ministry**

-Join us at 3 PM on Sundays for sewing,  
crafting, and conversation!  
-Sewing machines, quilting fabric, notions,  
thread, and other crafting materials freely  
available.

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**Wanderers on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)**

-WSQ is on break until a new study book is  
chosen.

**PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

We offer our prayers for those in our community who are suffering, who are physically,  
mentally, & emotionally unwell, and for those caring for them.

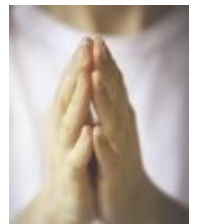
We offer our prayers for these sister faith communities:

Catalina UMC, Tucson

Desert Skies UMC, Tucson

Oasis UMC Start, Eloy

If you have a prayer request you would like to share in the Digest, please contact the church office at [office@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchtucson.org) or (520) 622-6481.



**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Christiana Ageh (January 3)  
Steven Yoo (January 8)

Bob Hansen (January 17)  
An Khiet Lam (January 21)

Bill Bensema (January 23)  
Jim Goff (January 26)



# Animal & Environmental Holidays for January 2026

By Diane & Victoria Russell



## January – Get Organized Month

Created in 2005 by the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals to raise awareness about the benefits of being organized. Benefits of organization include better productivity, saves time and money. Getting Organized will take time, so start by first getting rid of excess clutter.



## January – National Train Your Dog Month

Created in 2010 by the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT), emphasizes the importance of ongoing training and socialization. Training helps with behavioral issues and improves the human-canine bond. Use positive reinforcement for training by adding treats or toys for desired behavior.



## January 7th – National Old Rock Day

Remembering the history of this amazing planet we all call Earth. This day is dedicated to all the geologists who have studied its incredible history through the rocks of the earth. It is a day to appreciate old rocks and fossils of the past. Celebrate by visiting museums or starting a rock/fossil collection



## January 10th – National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

Created by the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance to encourage homeowners and businesses to help reduce energy costs. Ways to cut energy costs include; weatherproof your home, solar power, turn down thermostats, use LEDs lights, carpool/public transportation, turn off lights, and unplug devices.



## January 12th – National Clean Off Your Desk Day or National Clean Your Desk Day

Start off the new year off with a nice clean and organized desk. This day encourages people to declutter and organize their work spaces for increased productivity and reduced stress. Tips include removing everything from the desk, clean all surfaces, sort and purge paperwork, and organize drawers.



## January 13th – National French Bulldog Day

Since 2022, the French Bulldog has been ranked number one by the American Kennel Club (AKC) as the Most Popular Breed. They are known as

being affectionate, playful, and entertaining. They are small in size but full of character. They face significant health challenges due to their flat faces.



### January 15th - 18th - Wings Over Willcox (WOW)

Enjoy the 33rd Annual Wings Over Wilcox Birding & Nature Festival that provides opportunities to explore southeastern Arizona with tours for birding and enjoying nature. The best areas for viewing the migrating Sand hill Cranes are at the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area, Wilcox Lake, or Apache Station.



### January 21st - National Hugging Day

Created in 1986 by Kevin Zaborney, a pastor from Michigan to encourage family and friends to hug each other more often. Hugs offer numerous benefits, including releasing feel-good hormones

like oxytocin, which reduces stress (cortisol), and it also helps lower blood pressure.



### January 22nd - National Answer Your Cat's Questions Day

Cats have questions for you, but sadly, we don't speak Meow. Enjoy this special day by answering some of their curious meows, body language, and behaviors. Some common cat questions may include - Where do you go during the day? Or Why are dogs man's best friend?



### January 25th - National Observe the Weather Day

Weather is the condition of the atmosphere - it can be hot, cold, rainy, sunny, snowy, or windy at a specific time and place. Weather can change right now or even hours/days later. Have fun, go outside and observe what you think the weather will be like on this day and in the your future forecasts.



First Church Tucson is an inclusive multi-ethnic faith community and a reconciling congregation of the United Methodist Church. Established in 1879 as the first Protestant church in our city, First Church Tucson continues to pave the way in creating a faith community that embraces all peoples into the grace of God.

As a courageous family of faith, we celebrate the diversity of all God's children, welcome everyone to share in God's love and grace, and offer a sanctuary of hope.

We seek to be in ministry with all God's people, regardless of gender, race, age, class, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, ability/disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation. We continue to work towards building a loving and faithful community in Tucson, and welcome all of you to be part of it.