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## “Rooted in Grace, Walking Together”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace to you as we enter the month of February. It is hard to believe that one full month of 2026 has already passed. The new year often begins with energy and intention, and now we find ourselves settling into the rhythms of daily life, faith, and community. I pray that each of you is sensing God’s presence walking with you in this season.

This month, I warmly invite you to join us in our Lenten Journey. Lent is a sacred season in which we slow down, reflect, and open our hearts more deeply to God’s transforming grace. During this time, we are invited to dwell more deeply in Scripture and prayer, allowing God to shape our inner lives.

As a prayer for this season, we hold these words together:

Psalm 51:10/ 시편 51장 10절

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

“하나님이여 내 속에 정한 마음을 창조하시고 내 안에 정직한 영을 새롭게 하소서.”



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## Rooted in Grace, Walking Together cont.

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You will find more detailed information about our Lenten programs and Ash Wednesday service later in this newsletter, and I hope you will take time to look through those opportunities for worship and reflection.

On a more personal note, our home has been filled with joy these past days. My sister's family has been visiting us from South Korea. Tomorrow, February 4, my brother-in-law and two of the children will return home, while the two younger ones will stay with us for two more weeks. This has been precious time — getting to know one another more deeply, sharing daily life, and creating meaningful memories together. I am grateful for this gift of family and will share a family photo with you.

As we continue into this year, may we remain rooted in Christ's love, attentive to one another, and open to the work God is doing among us.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Ko

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## [What Does the Lord Require? A Pastoral Letter grounded in Micah 6:1-8](#)

by Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut | Jan 28, 2026

### ***To the people of God in the Desert Southwest and New Mexico Conferences and beyond***

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who hears the cries of the oppressed and calls us to walk in the ways of justice, mercy, and humility.

In recent days, our siblings in Minneapolis have endured immigration raids that have led to senseless deaths, unrest, and violence. Families have been torn apart. Children have watched parents taken away. Children themselves have been taken away. Indigenous neighbors, immigrants, and communities of color continue to face harassment, intimidation, and fear. The weight of these events presses heavily upon our collective spirit.

Into this moment, the prophet Micah speaks with piercing clarity.

“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)

Micah's words are not abstract ideals. They are a summons—a divine insistence that faith must take shape in the world, especially when human dignity is under assault.

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## **Do Justice**

Justice is not vengeance. Justice is not domination. Justice is not the unchecked exercise of power. Justice is the recognition of the image of God in every person—regardless of citizenship, language, skin color, or place of birth.

The raids we have witnessed do not reflect justice. They reflect fear. They reflect systems that value control over compassion. They reflect a disregard for the sacredness of human life.

As people of faith, we must name this truth without hesitation: No policy, no order, no enforcement action justifies the terrorizing of families or the loss of life. Justice demands that we stand with those who are targeted, silenced, and pushed to the margins.

## **Love Kindness**

Kindness is not weakness. Kindness is courage in the shape of compassion. In these days, kindness looks like:

*Standing with immigrant families at vigils, court hearings, and community gatherings*

*Offering sanctuary, accompaniment, and protection*

*Creating safe space to listen to the stories of those who live in fear*

*Supporting Indigenous communities whose sovereignty and dignity continue to be violated*

*Providing financial support and basic necessities and supplies*

*Refusing to let cruelty become normal*

Kindness is the steady, stubborn insistence that every person deserves safety, respect, and belonging.

## **Walk Humbly with God**

Humility is not silence. Humility is the willingness to be guided by God's heart rather than our own preference. To walk humbly with God is to recognize that we are bound to one another. It is to confess that our liberation is tied to the liberation of our neighbors. It is to acknowledge that we cannot claim to love God while ignoring the suffering of God's children. Humility calls us to listen—to the cries of those who mourn, to the resilience of immigrant communities, to the wisdom of Indigenous elders, to the truth-telling of people of color who have long named the violence woven into our systems.

## **Standing in Solidarity Across Our Region**

Although these most recent tragedies have unfolded in Minneapolis, we who serve in Southern Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas stand in full solidarity with our siblings there. Their grief is our grief. Their fear is our fear. Their struggle is bound to ours.

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For we know that these same patterns of raids, harassment, and racialized violence are not confined to one city or one state. They are happening in Las Vegas, where families live with the constant threat of being torn apart.

They are happening in Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma, where immigrant communities navigate daily fear and surveillance. They are happening in Las Cruces and El Paso, where border communities—rich in culture, resilience, and faith—continue to bear the weight of policies that dehumanize and divide. What we witness in Minneapolis is part of a larger, painful reality across our country. And so we declare, with one voice and one heart: **We are bound together. We will not look away. We will not abandon one another.**

### **A Word to Those Who Have a Different Perspective**

Beloved, I also want to speak directly—and respectfully—to those among us who believe that immigration laws should be upheld and that enforcement is necessary. I know that many who hold this view do so out of a desire for order, safety, and fairness. I respect that. I am not asking you to abandon your political convictions or to change your party affiliation. That is not my purpose.

My appeal is deeper than politics. My appeal is spiritual. I ask you to consider whether the methods we are witnessing—the midnight raids, the militarized presence, the separation of families, the fear sown in entire neighborhoods—reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ or the values we share as people of faith.

We may differ in our political approaches, but we are united in our belief that every person is created in the image of God. We are united in our conviction that human dignity is non-negotiable. We are united in our calling to love our neighbor, protect the vulnerable, and seek the well-being of the stranger in our midst.

We can support the rule of law and still insist that enforcement be humane. We can value secure borders and still reject practices that traumatize children. We can hold varying political views and still say, “This is not who we are as followers of Christ.”

I am not asking you to change your politics. I am asking you to let your politics be shaped—first and foremost—by your faith, your compassion, and your commitment to the sacred worth of every human being.

### **Appealing to Our Common Humanity**

Before we are citizens, we are human. Before we are divided by borders, we are bound by breath. Before we are sorted by race or status, we are woven together in the fabric of God’s diverse family.

We share a longing for safety. We share a desire for our children to grow without fear. We share a hope for communities where dignity is honored and peace is possible.

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Let us reclaim these shared values. Let us refuse narratives that dehumanize. Let us resist policies that destroy families. Let us reject the lie that some lives are worth less than others.

### **A Call to the Church**

Church, this is our moment to embody the Gospel. Let our sanctuaries be places of refuge. Let our prayers be bold and unrelenting. Let our advocacy be grounded in love and courage. Let our witness be clear:

*We stand with the immigrant.*

*We stand with Indigenous communities.*

*We stand with people of color.*

*We stand with all who are harmed by violence and harassment.*

Micah reminds us that God is not impressed by empty rituals or pious words. God desires a people who live justice, breathe kindness, and walk humbly. May we be such a people.

### **A Prayer for This Moment**

*God of justice and compassion,*

*Hold the grieving, protect the vulnerable, strengthen the weary.*

*Expose the roots of violence and uproot the systems that harm.*

*Give us courage to act, wisdom to discern, and humility to follow your way.*

*Make us instruments of your peace and partners in your justice.*

*We pray for Minneapolis, as we pray for Las Vegas, for Phoenix, for Tucson, for Yuma, for Las Cruces, for El Paso, and for every community across our country where families live under the shadow of enforcement that disregards human dignity.*

*Bring an end to the raids, the fear, the violence, and the trauma inflicted upon your children.*

*Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

*Amen.*

Beloved, may we move forward with resolve, tenderness, and holy courage. The work is hard, but we do not walk alone. The God who calls us to justice walks beside us, before us, and within us.

Your fellow disciple,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlo" with a large, stylized cross symbol to its left.

Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut

## [In Loving Memory of Winona Kay Powell \(February 1, 1928 - January 25, 2026\)](#)

*It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our beloved sister in Christ, Winona Kay Powell. She had been a faithful member of the First UMC of Tucson and moved back to Missouri in July 2023. –Pastor Ko*



Winona Kay Powell, 97, of Harrisonville, Missouri, left this world peacefully on Sunday, January 25, 2026, at Maria Court Assisted Living in Mulvane, Kansas. Born on February 1, 1928, in Daugherty, Missouri, she was a daughter of Robert James and Naomi (Noell) Powell. Winona's early education began at Hutchinson Rural School # 62, and she later graduated from Harrisonville High School in 1945, a testament to her dedication to learning.

Winona's journey through life was marked by a rich tapestry of experiences. From 1949 to 1955, she served as a flight attendant for TWA Airlines, embarking on numerous adventures across the skies, both nationally and internationally. Her passion for education and music led her to earn three Master's Degrees—two in music and one in education—before embarking on a profoundly rewarding career as a school teacher. In 1963, she moved to Tucson, Arizona, where she devoted 27 years of her life to teaching music in public schools, shaping the hearts and minds of countless students. Winona's commitment extended beyond the classroom; she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1966 to 1969, reflecting her unwavering desire to give back to communities in need.

In her later years, Winona's love for travel, writing, and ballroom dancing brought her joy and fulfillment. In 2023, after sixty years of vibrant life in Tucson, she returned to her roots in Harrisonville to be closer to her family and became an active member of the Harrisonville Methodist Church, where her warmth and spirit were felt by many.

Winona is preceded in death by her parents and two beloved sisters, Ruth Mathis and Helen Smith. She is remembered with love by her niece, Lynda (Rod) Moravec of Mulvane, Kansas, and her nephew, Robert (Leslie) Smith of Jupiter, Florida.

In accordance with Winona's wishes, she will be cremated. A memorial service honoring her life will be held at a later date, allowing friends and family to gather and reflect on the countless memories shared with this remarkable woman. We invite all who knew Winona to celebrate the impact she made on our lives and the love she spread throughout her journey.

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 are freely available.

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

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

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**Narcotics Anonymous (Underground)**

-NA meets at 6:30PM on Monday evenings in the Social Hall.  
-Medallion Night takes place on the last Monday of the month.

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**Chancel Choir**

-Thursday practices take place at 6:30 PM.  
-Shorter Sunday rehearsals start at 9 AM.  
-Now's the perfect time to join!

[Zoom ID: 980 1573 8087](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

**February Meet'n'Eat**

The next Meet'n'Eat is on **Friday the 13th at 11:30 AM** at the Olive Garden on the northeast corner of Oracle/Wetmore ([300 W Wetmore Rd, Tucson, AZ 85705](#)). If you're interested in coming, please notify the church office or Shirley Murray (520-297-4796) by the 11th so that enough seating can be reserved at the restaurant.

**GIVING TO FIRST CHURCH TUCSON**



When you attend Sunday services in person, the offering box is in the narthex for your generous giving. Head to our website [www.firstchurchtucson.org/give](http://www.firstchurchtucson.org/give) to give online. As always, you can mail in checks to the church office at the address printed on the front page. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA.

**When we give to God from our hearts, it is always enough.** We see you, and we thank you for your commitment to making a difference in our community.

## **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:

Chaplains & Counselors in the South District  
TMM Family Services – people served and staff, Tucson

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.

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## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Cindy Turnbull (February 8)  
Tripp Cahill-Gordon (February 11)  
Josh Williams (February 11)

Barbara Jones (February 12)  
Abby Turnbull-Frontroth (February 13)  
Kay Jackson (February 17)

*(If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!)*

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**Ash Wednesday**

Join us for the Ash Wednesday Service as we begin Lent with prayer, fasting, and ashes as a sign of humility and God's grace.

February 18 at 6 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Tucson  
915 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

## **Lenten Journey 2026**

- Ash Wednesday Service: Feb 18 at 6:00 pm (First UMC of Tucson)
- Every Monday: Bible Study with Pastor Ko for six weeks at 2:00 pm
- Every Thursday: Holy Labyrinth walk at 10:00 am at Rio Vista Natural Resource Park.
- Holy Thursday Service: April 2 at 6:00 pm (First UMC of Tucson)
- Good Friday Service: April 3 at 6:00 pm (Catalina UMC)

# Animal & Environmental Holidays for February 2026

By Diane & Victoria Russell



## February - Pet Heart Health Month

February is Heart Month, a time to raise awareness about cardiovascular health in both humans and pets. Just like people, pets can get heart disease. Some symptoms of heart disease include: persistent coughing, difficulty breathing, heart murmurs, and abdominal swelling. Always seek veterinary care.

## »»»»»»»» NATIONAL «««««««« PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH



## February - National Pet Dental Health Month

In 1993, the American Veterinary Dental Society created this month to raise awareness about the importance of oral hygiene for your pets. Take some time this month and check out your pets' teeth. Ways to help include: schedule a dental checkup, brushing their teeth, use dental chews, and safe toys.



## February 8th - Puppy Bowl XXII

Looking for excitement during Super Bowl Sunday? - Check out the 150 adoptable puppies from 72 different shelters and rescue

organizations participating in this year's Puppy Bowl XXII. The fun begins at 2 PM ET on Animal Planet. This three-hour event features "Team Ruff" vs "Team Fluff."



## February 9th - Sick of Food Waste

Created in 2024 by Hellman's to encourage people to not waste food by saving and reusing their leftover meals instead of throwing them in the trash. This day raises awareness about the environmental and economic impact that wasted food causes.



## February 1st-9th - National Secondhand Wardrobe Week

With more than 25,000 secondhand, resell, or thrift stores in the United States, more and more people are discovering the amazing and cost effective secondhand wardrobe. Gone is the stigma of thrift store purchases. Buying secondhand clothes saves money, the environment, and offers one of a kind finds.



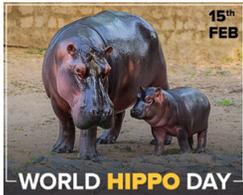
**February 9th - 15th - Homes for Birds Week**

Let's help out our bird friends by providing bird houses or nesting boxes for birds to nest in. This will enhance biodiversity, help to preserve and increase bird life in the environment, and provide protection from predators and harsh weather, which will increase the survival rate of baby birds.



**February 14th - Valentine's Day**

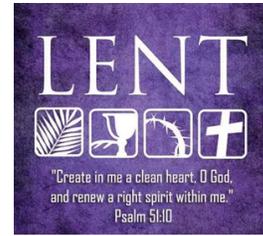
Valentine's day is a day to express love. It is not a day only for couples, but for our friends, family members, animals/pets, and even ourselves. Enjoy and celebrate this day of love.



**February 15th - World Hippo Day**

There are two types of hippos; the common and the pygmy. This day was created to honor and

educate others about the hippo's vulnerable status. It is a celebration for the 3rd largest living land mammal. Even though they are large, they are agile in both water and land and can run up to 19 mph.



**February 18th - April 4th - Lent**

Lent is a season of forty days of preparation for Easter. The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. It is a time for spiritual reflection and growth which include repentance, prayer, fasting, and acts of charity preparing for the resurrection.



**February 27th - International Polar Bear Day**

Created in 2011 by the Polar Bear International organization (PBI); to raise awareness about their threatened status and to help protect moms and cubs while denning. Threats to polar bears include climate change which causes the loss of their natural habitat, toxic pollution, and oil exploration.



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.