



First United Methodist Church
915 E 4th St, Tucson, AZ 85719
www.firstchurchtucson.org

Pastor Ko (847) 345-8070 pastortucsonfirstumc@gmail.com
Office (520) 622-6481 office@firstchurchtucson.org
Office hours: Monday-Thursday 10AM-2PM

“What Is Growing Between the Stones?”

By Pastor Eun Ko

As we move through the month of March, we find ourselves in the sacred season of Lent. In a world that constantly pulls our attention outward, Lent invites us toward reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a season to consider how we might create intentional space for spiritual formation in our daily lives.



This spring, something unexpected began to bloom in the gravel of my yard. I did not plant these flowers. After a bit of rain, small green shoots appeared between the stones. At first, I assumed they were weeds and considered pulling them out. But I waited—and they bloomed.

Lent reminds us that spiritual formation often begins in places we would not have chosen. What appears disruptive or inconvenient may, in time, reveal itself as grace at work.

The theologian Henri Nouwen once wrote:

“Spiritual formation is not about mastering God, but about allowing ourselves to be mastered by God’s love.”

(continued next page)

## What Is Growing Between the Stones? cont.

---

In this season of Lent, spiritual practices—prayer, repentance, Scripture, generosity—are not ways to control our growth. They are ways of making space. They help us recognize what God is already bringing to life within us. It is not too late to begin a spiritual practice. I invite you to join us in welcoming the Spirit’s shaping work in our lives. Sometimes the gravel places of our lives are not empty after all.

As we prepare to enter Holy Week, we will walk together through the story of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection. I invite you to join us for our Holy Week services and to celebrate the joy of Easter Sunday as a church family. Resurrection is not only a past event—it is God’s ongoing work of bringing new life where we least expect it.

As our congregation continues to grow and serve, your faithful giving allows the mission of this church to flourish. Through worship, outreach, hospitality, and discipleship, we participate in God’s renewing work in our community. I encourage you to prayerfully consider supporting the mission and ministry of the church during this holy season.

As Scripture reminds us:

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”

— Isaiah 43:19

“보라 내가 새 일을 행하리니 이제 나타낼 것이라 너희가 그것을 알지 못하겠느냐?”

— 이사야 43:19

May we have the courage not to pull up too quickly what God may be preparing to bloom.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. Eun Young Ko



Late last year, our Missions Coordinator, Jessie Hansen, set up a box in the Social Hall in hopes of getting some donations of new socks, which would be given to The Loving Church to pass out to the homeless people whom they serve.

Your generosity did not disappoint! Thank you to everyone who contributed to the sock drive – you are so appreciated!

## What Has Been Happening at Our Church in January and February 2026!

*Below left:* Tina Todd's mother visited Tucson and spent some time with Tina in late January 2026. *Right:* The Korean young adults went to Three Points Veterans Memorial Park to watch the stars in the night sky on January 20, 2026.



*Below left:* Pastor Ko participated in the Growing Church Conference from February 9–12 in San Diego. *Right:* Pastor Ko with her colleague and friend, Rev. Hannah Ka, who serves at First UMC of San Diego.



*Below left:* Cindy Reinhart enjoyed a free birthday dessert at Olive Garden during the Meet'n'Eat gathering on February 13. Happy Birthday, Cindy! *Middle and right:* V. Carol Smith hosted a Valentine's Party at her home on February 15 at 2:00 PM. Pastor Ko had the opportunity to meet friends who came from Arkansas.



*(continued next page)*

Below left: After the Ash Wednesday service, JiHyung Oh (Young Eun's friend) who came to help with her lecture recital joined us for a late dinner at Culver's. Right: Pastor Ko met Rev. Sungchul Lim, who will retire soon, and his wife, along with Rev. Chung and his wife, who serve at Tucson Presbyterian Church.



Below: Our music director, Young Eun Kim, presented a lecture recital in our sanctuary on February 17.



Below: We held an Ash Wednesday Service on February 18, beginning our Lenten journey.



## Upcoming Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) Classes on Zoom

Lay Servant Ministries is one of the most significant lay leadership development programs available within The United Methodist connection. Through this system of equipping and empowering, lay servants have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples. Classes are offered throughout the year focusing on various topics and you can find the latest offerings by selecting the events listed on this page. If you're new to Lay Servant Ministries training, you'll need to start your journey with the Basic Course and then move on to more advanced courses.

Questions about Lay Servant Ministries may be directed to Susan Bowers at [layservants@dscumc.org](mailto:layservants@dscumc.org).

Register at <http://dscumc.org/lay-servant-ministries>.

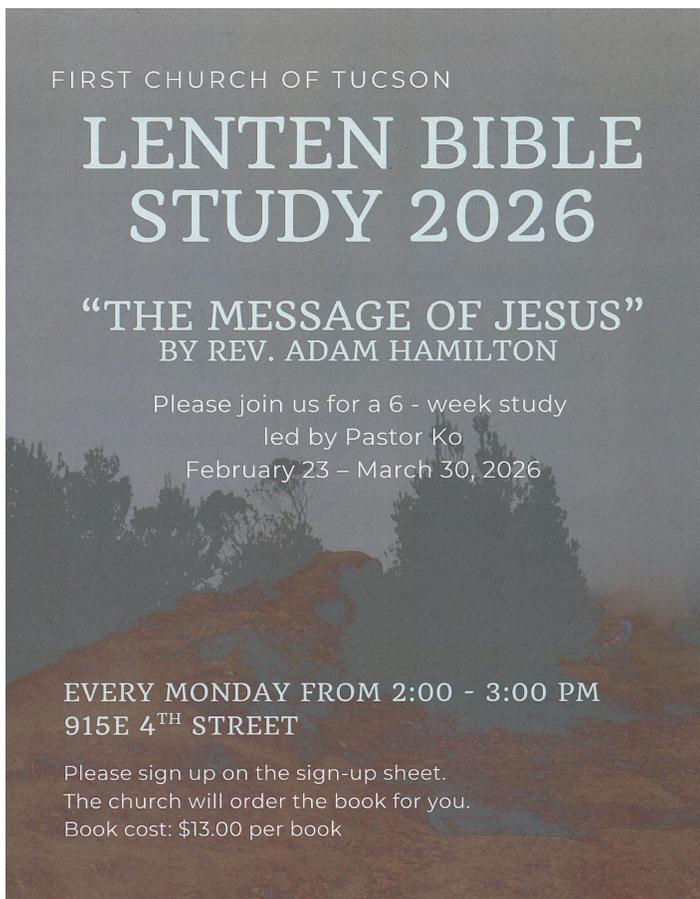
### **Introduction to Lay Servant Ministries**

April 25, May 2 & May 9 (9am -12:30pm)

Facilitated by Susan Bowers

### **Leading Public Prayer & Intercessional Prayer**

April 19, 26 & May 3 (1:30 pm - 5pm)



FIRST CHURCH OF TUCSON

# LENTEN BIBLE STUDY 2026

“THE MESSAGE OF JESUS”  
BY REV. ADAM HAMILTON

Please join us for a 6 - week study  
led by Pastor Ko  
February 23 – March 30, 2026

EVERY MONDAY FROM 2:00 - 3:00 PM  
915E 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET

Please sign up on the sign-up sheet.  
The church will order the book for you.  
Book cost: \$13.00 per book

## 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)

## **A Call to the Desert Southwest Annual Conference Regular Session 2026**

By Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut on Feb 02, 2026 09:01 am

Dear United Methodists in the Desert Southwest,

Greetings in the name of the One who calls us into beloved community for the sake of the world!

I hereby call the regular session of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to convene on June 18-21, 2026 in Sun City, AZ. Our primary venue will be at Lakeview United Methodist Church with some events happening at First UMC of Sun City and Arizona Korean UMC. We will be hosted by our siblings in the West District and we look forward to learning more about them and their ministries.

Our theme this year is “We Are the Church Together” based on Acts 2:42-47 and Ephesians 4:11-16, the second in our vision of becoming “A Healthy Church for a Healthy World.” Building on last year’s theme, “And Let It Begin With Me” where we underscored personal health as the beginning point in healing the world, this year we will focus on the health of local churches. Healthy disciples will make healthy churches. Healthy, vital churches will work towards healthy communities. Healthy communities will create a healthy world. Given the unrest and turmoil in the world today, I cannot stress enough the need for healing and the call to be part of that work.

It is fitting that as we focus on the health and vitality of churches, our annual conference session is going back to a local church venue. It will be quite a different experience from what we may be used to in convention centers. I invite us to come with an openness to do things differently which in turn may lead to deeper reflections about how God is calling us to change and innovate in order to become healthy and vital.

Your attendance is always important for the sake of strengthening our bonds in the body of Christ and it is even more so, this year, because we will be making important decisions in the life of our annual conference, among them electing our delegates to the 2028 General and Jurisdictional conferences. Your voice and vote are valued, and I hope that you will take this responsibility seriously and make plans to attend.

Information is now available at [dscumc.org/ac](https://dscumc.org/ac). I especially invite you to pay attention to the due dates for registration and other submissions and ask you to please abide by these deadlines. This will greatly help the continuing work of planning the conference and avoid undue stress on our staff and volunteers. I trust that you will do your part as beloved members of our covenant community.

I look forward to being with all of you at Lakeview in June! May the Holy Spirit move in our minds and our hearts, even now, as we prepare for this important work of holy conferencing.

Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut

*The video of Bishop Carlo’s Call to Annual Conference, can be found here:*  
<https://youtu.be/mJ5DO90mpts>.

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.

\*\*\*

**WEEKDAY GATHERINGS**

**Nifty Needlecrafts (NN) Ministry**

-Join us at 3 PM on Sundays for crafting and conversation!

-Sewing machines, knitting needles, books, handheld looms, patterns, and crafting materials galore are available for use.

\*\*\*

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

-WSQ meets on Mondays at 4:30PM in the library.

-New book to be chosen soon!

\*\*\*

**Narcotics Anonymous (Underground)**

-NA meets at 6:30PM on Monday evenings in the Social Hall.

-Medallion Night is on the last Monday of the month.

\*\*\*

**Chancel Choir**

-Thursday practices take place at 6:30 PM.

-Shorter Sunday rehearsals start at 9 AM.

\*\*\*

**Progressive Book Study (PBS)**

-PBS meets on Thursdays at 3:30PM over Zoom.

Questions? Call Rev. Gaston at (520) 323-1611.

[Zoom ID: 980 1573 8087](https://www.zoom.us/j/98015738087) Passcode: 6226481

We want to thank everyone who contributed to filling our 2026-2026 holiday pet food and toys drive! You generously donated a total of 53 lbs of dog and cat food, 3 lbs of treats, and 9 chew toys, which were delivered to the Humane Society of Southern AZ by the Animal Ministry co-leaders, Diane & Victoria Russell.



## 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.

---

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Andy Min (March 12)  
Susan Williams (March 13)  
Hyeonah Kang (March 14)  
Stephanie Kang (March 16)  
Min Hahn (March 20)

Janet Ageh (March 21)  
Ozzie Nelson (March 24)  
Peggy Ford (March 26)  
Don Rollings (March 28)  
Martha Preston (March 31)

Art & Cindy Turnbull (March 7 - 45 yrs)

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

### **March Meet'n'Eat**

This is a fellowship time to visit with each other and see old and new friends. *All are welcome, everyone is invited!* 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](http://www.olivegarden.com)). 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.

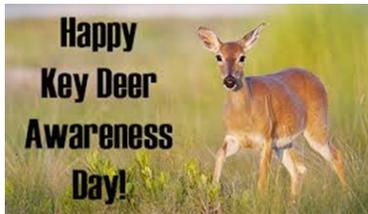
# Animal & Environmental Holidays for March 2026

By Diane & Victoria Russell



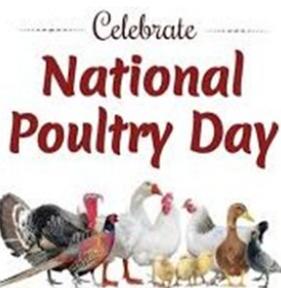
## March 8th-14th – National Groundwater Awareness Week

Water is one of the world's most important resources that supports life on earth. All living things depend on water to survive. This week was established in 1999 to raise awareness and protection of groundwater. Let's all help conserve water.



## March 11th - Key Deer Awareness Day

Created in 1967 to raise awareness to the plight of the endangered Key Deer located in the Florida Keys. They are a subspecies of the White-Tailed Deer and have been endangered due to habitat loss, car accidents, and poaching. They range in size from 24” to 30” inches tall at the shoulder.



## March 19th – National Poultry Day

Poultry are domesticated birds kept by humans for their resources. Poultry are also known as fowls which include chicken, turkey, ducks,

geese, quail, pigeons, and pheasants. It is a day to celebrate these wonderful birds that provide so much for the world. Try to honor them by not eating poultry today.



## March 20th – International Day of Happiness

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 to establish that happiness and well-being are important to all people in the world. The 2026 theme focuses on social media and happiness. Take time to identify what brings you joy and include it in your daily life.



## March 20th – World Frog Day

Created in 2014 by Dr. Kerry Kriger, founder of “Save the Frog Day” to help raise awareness for the conservation of frogs, toads, and other amphibians. Frogs are amphibians that can be found on land, in water, and in trees. There are over 7,000 frog and toad species worldwide.



### March 21st – World Planting Day

Spring is in the air – a time to plant trees, flowers, and vegetables. People are encouraged to make a lasting, positive impact on the earth’s ecosystem by increasing biodiversity, combating climate change, and improving environmental health. Plants are essential in sustaining life for future generations.



### March 21st – Digital Cleanup Day

Created in 2020 to raise awareness about digital waste and its impact on the environment. This day encourages people to declutter and organize their digital devices such as computers, data storage, smartphone, and tablets. Ways to declutter include deleting unnecessary files, emails, and apps.



### March 22nd – International Day of the Seal

This is a day to celebrate and promote the conservation of seals around the world and to protect their habitats from threats like pollution and hunting. Seals belong to a group of animals

called pinnipeds, which means “fin-footed.” Seals come in different shapes and sizes, with 33 different species.



### March 23rd – World Bear Day

There are eight species of bears worldwide. According to the IUCN Red List, six species are considered to be threatened or vulnerable. Humans have put them in danger by habitat loss, the illegal wildlife trade, and for “medicinal” practices.



### March 28 – Earth Hour (8:30–9:30 PM Saturday)

The 20th Anniversary of this annual global event created by WWF.. Earth Hour encourages individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off all non-essential electric lights for one hour from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm (local time) to help protect the planet. The theme for 2026 is “Give an Hour for Earth”.



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.