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“A Season of New Beginnings”

By Pastor Eun Ko

August has a way of reminding us that life is filled with new beginnings. Backpacks are being filled, classrooms are being prepared, and students of all ages are stepping into another season of learning and growth. Elementary, middle, and high school students will meet new teachers, friendships, responsibilities, and challenges. College and graduate students will begin or continue their journeys of study, professional training, and research.



A photo from welcoming new and returning University of Arizona students and families in 2025. Left to right: Steven, Jessie, Cindy, and Shirley.

It is hard for me to believe that Halla begins her driving lessons today! After completing the required hours and supervised practice, she will be able to drive on her own this fall after her 16th birthday. As a mother, I find myself wondering how we arrived at this milestone so quickly—and I have a feeling I will be praying even more from now on!

Every new beginning carries both excitement and uncertainty. Yet our faith reminds us that we never enter a new season alone. The God who has accompanied us through every chapter of our lives goes before us into places we have not yet seen and walks beside us as the journey unfolds.

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A Season of New Beginnings cont.

Here in Tucson, we are especially mindful of the many new and returning students arriving at the University of Arizona. Some come from nearby communities, while others have traveled far from their families, from across the country and around the world. As a congregation located so close to the university, we have a wonderful opportunity to be a place of welcome and belonging. Some students may be excited about their new adventure, while others may quietly struggle with homesickness, loneliness, academic pressure, or simply finding their place in a new community.

Christian hospitality does not always require a large program. Sometimes it begins with remembering someone's name, sharing a meal, offering practical help, or simply asking, "How are you doing?" and taking the time to listen. Through these small acts of care, a stranger can become a friend and someone far from home can discover a new community.

We also give thanks for the many people who make education possible: teachers and professors, administrators, counselors, staff, and countless others who faithfully teach, guide, encourage, and care for students. We remember families as well, especially parents and grandparents learning to let their children take new steps of independence. I suppose I am learning something about that myself this year!

During this season, I invite us to pray intentionally for our students, educators, school employees, and families. But let us also remain attentive to how God may be calling us to become part of the answer to those prayers. Perhaps there is a student who needs encouragement, an international student who needs a friend, or a young person who needs a spiritual home. May we have eyes to notice them and hearts ready to welcome them.

To all our students, educators, school employees, and families: you are in our hearts and in our prayers. May you enter this new season knowing that God goes before you, walks beside you, and surrounds you with grace. As we begin this new season, may we hold these words close to our hearts:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NRSV)

"너는 마음을 다하여 여호와를 신뢰하고 네 명철을 의지하지 말라. 너는 범사에 그를 인정하라 그리하면 네 길을 지도하시리라." 잠언 3:5-6 (개역개정)

May this season of new beginnings bring meaningful learning, unexpected friendships, renewed purpose, and countless reminders of God's faithful presence along the way.

Rev. Dr. Eun Young Ko

Lead Pastor

First United Methodist Church of Tucson



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH OF TUCSON!

The "Nifty Needlecrafts" sewing ministry has been growing and growing! In the past year, twenty people have taken turns visiting the sewing room in the church basement to work on projects such as dresses, bathrobes, hats, tunics, pants, and more. Some of us are collaborating to create new banners for the Sanctuary! We have also gratefully received even more donations of fabric and sewing machines. Left to right: Kel, Trey, and Ellie. (Photos taken by ministry leader Tripp.)



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Below left: Cindy Turnbull gave a report on the Annual Conference during the worship service on June 21, 2026. She attended the conference as our church's lay representative. Below middle and right: Korean church members gathered for dinner and cheered for the Korean national team during a World Cup match on June 24, 2026.



Below: Some Korean seniors enjoyed a summer outing to Phoenix on July 3, 2026. They ate Korean shabu-shabu, visited the Heard Museum to learn about Native American history and culture, and enjoyed dessert afterward.



Below left: Missionary Samuel Lee shared a presentation about his ministry during our worship service on July 12, 2026. Moved by the presentation and the work of the Holy Spirit, one of our church members anonymously donated \$5,000 to support his ministry in Mexico. Below right: Halla returned from South Korea after spending five weeks there on her own. She had been craving her mom's homemade cooking and happily enjoyed it upon her return on July 23, 2026.



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Below: Rev. Chung's brother, Hyunsoo; his sister, Hyunsook, and her husband, Na Jaehwan; his daughter-in-law, Eunhye; and his granddaughter, Arum, worshiped with us and served a delicious Korean meal during fellowship time in celebration of his 78th birthday on July 26, 2026.



Below left: Changgon Kim, a postdoctoral researcher who married last year, was finally reunited with his wife this summer. Pastor Ko welcomed her to Tucson and to our faith community on July 29, 2026.

Below right: Gary Poczulp was diagnosed with prostate cancer and stayed in Phoenix for four weeks of chemotherapy. Pastor Ko visited him on July 30, 2026, offering pastoral care, encouragement, prayer, and Korean fried chicken.



Below left & middle: Korean students and adults went on an outing to Madera Canyon on August 7, 2026. Steven Yoo prepared food for the group.



Above right: Dottie Poczulp, a certified lay minister and Tomoe's grandmother, led Young Christians' Time on August 9, 2026. Dottie's son, Alex, and his daughter, Tomoe, visited Tucson and rang the church bells on August 7 to celebrate Gary's completion of his cancer treatment.

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. 예배 후 점심식사가 제공되며, 식사와 함께 친교의 교제 시간이 이루어 집니다.

매월 첫째 주 토요일 오전 11시에 선인장 모임 (소그룹 예배 모임)이 있습니다.

매월 마지막 주 주일 친교 후에 청년부 선인장 모임이 청년부실에서 있습니다. 많은 기도와 참여 부탁드립니다.

매주일 예배 후 주일 설교와 주보가 교회 홈페이지에 업로드 됩니다.

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Nifty Needlecrafts

- Join us on Sunday at 3 PM for crafting and conversation! Work solo or collaboratively!
- Don't have your own supplies? We have fabric, notions, sewing machines, books, and much more available for use.
- Have questions? Text Tripp at 520-428-4680 or leave a voicemail.

Wanderers on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

- WSQ meets on Mondays at 4:30 PM for book study and accountability. All are welcome to join!

Narcotics Anonymous – The Underground

- NA meets at 6:30PM on Monday evenings in the church basement. (Access via the long stairway on the north side of the building.)
- Medallion Night is on the last Monday of the month.

Chancel Choir

- The choir has resumed their meetings!
- Practice on Thursdays at 6:30 PM.
- Shorter rehearsals on Sundays at 9 AM.
- Now's the perfect time to join!

Progressive Book Study (PBS)

- The 3:30 PM Thursday online book study group is reading, "The Faith Club: A Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew," by Ranya Idliby, Priscilla Warner, & Suzanne Oliver. If you'd like to join, please contact Rev. Gaston at 520-323-1611.

[Zoom ID: 980 1573 8087](#) [Passcode: 622648](#)

Praise Team

- The Praise Team meets every other Saturday beginning on the first Saturday of the month.
- This month, the Praise Team meets on the 1st, 15th, and 29th.

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 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:



Huachuca UMC - Huachuca City, AZ
Iglesia Semilla de Amor - Tucson, AZ
Journey UMC - Maricopa, AZ

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

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Sang Ho Park (Aug 11)

Christopher & Stephanie Kang (Aug 7 - 56 yrs)

Byung & Young Kim (Aug 15 - 39 yrs)

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

August 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, August 14th at 11:30 AM** at the Olive Garden on the northeast corner of Oracle/Wetmore ([300 W Wetmore Rd, Tucson, AZ 85705](http://300%20W%20Wetmore%20Rd.%20Tucson.%20AZ%2085705)). If you're interested in coming, please notify the church office by the 12th so that enough seating can be reserved at the restaurant.

Animal & Environmental Holidays for August 2026

By Diane & Victoria Russell



August – American Adventure Month

American adventure Peter Kulkula created this month in 1984 to encourage people to have more outdoor adventures by visiting across America. Everyone needs a vacation once in a while to get away from everyday stress. If you can't explore across America, there are plenty of adventures in Tucson.



August 1st-31st – Clear the Shelters

The 12th annual nationwide pet adoption and donation campaign led by NBCUniversal Local along with hundreds of shelters and rescues. The goal of this month is to connect families with adoptable animals with lower adoption fees. In Tucson, PACC, HSSA, and SOS Cat Rescue are participating.



August 15th – National Relaxation Day

Created in 1985 by 4th grader Sean Moeller of Michigan to encourage people to relax more. Sean said that "real work and cleaning are not fun and are not parts of relaxation." Some ways to celebrate include spending the day with low

stress activities such as reading a book or going on a nature walk.



August 16th – Scimitar-Horned Oryx Day

Created in 2025 by the British and Irish Association of Zoos and the Maxwell Wildlife to celebrate the amazing comeback from being "Extinct in the Wild in 2000" to "Endangered". Today there are over 600 that roam the Sahara Desert in Africa and thousands safe in zoos and reserves.



August 19th – World Humanitarian Day

The UN founded this holiday in remembrance of the lives lost during the bombing of the UN Baghdad headquarters in 2003. This day recognizes humanitarian workers who dedicate their lives to helping others. The 2026 theme is "Strengthening Global Solidarity and Empowering Local Communities".



August 20th – World Mosquito Day

This day raises awareness about the dangers of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile

virus, malaria, dengue, Zika, yellow fever, and chikungunya. Ways to help protect yourself include using insect repellent, wearing loose, long sleeve shirts with light colors, and removing standing water.



August 21st – World Goat Day

Let celebrate the wonderful world of goats. Goats have lived and worked with humans for thousands of years providing people with farming help, land care, and being amazing pets. There are over 300 recognized breeds of goats in the world



August 25th – National Park Service Founders Day

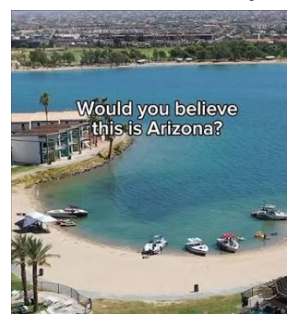
Come celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Organic Act from 1916 creating the National Park Service with free admission on August 25th. This day recognizes the conservation and

preservation efforts of the National Parks system. Today there are over 400 areas and 63 National Parks protected.



August 25th-31st – Be Kind to Humankind Week

This annual global event encourages people to be kind to everyone. The week begins with “Sacrifice Our Wants for Other’s Needs Sunday, Motorist Consideration Monday, Touch-A Heart Tuesday, Willing -to-Lend-A Hand Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursday, Forgive-Your Foe Friday, and Speak-Nice-Words Saturday”.



August 30th – National Beach Day

Created in 2014 by pet and family lifestyle expert Colleen Paige to raise awareness about the beauty of our public coastlines such as oceans, lakes, and rivers. This day encourages people to help protect the shoreline from trash and plastic pollution that may harm birds and other aquatic animals



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, or sexual orientation. We continue to work towards building a loving and faithful community in Tucson and welcome all to be part of it.