



First United Methodist Church
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“Gratitude and New Beginnings”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace to you in the love of Christ.

This season of May feels especially tender and meaningful as we find ourselves surrounded by moments that call us to both give thanks and look ahead with hope. Graduation season and Mother’s Day gently invite us to pause and notice how faithfully God has been at work among us—guiding, nurturing, and bringing forth new life in so many ways.



This year, we celebrate with great joy three undergraduate graduates and two Ph.D. graduates from our church family. What a gift it is to witness their journeys—the perseverance, the quiet strength, and the courage it takes to keep going. We give thanks not only for what they have accomplished, but for who they are becoming. As they step into new chapters, we hold them in prayer, trusting that God will continue to lead them with wisdom and grace. As they step into new chapters, we pray that they will walk with confidence, rooted in God’s love and guided by His wisdom.

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## Gratitude and New Beginnings cont.

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As Scripture reminds us, “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)

"너의 마음을 다하여 주님을 의뢰하고, 너의 명철을 의지하지 말아라. 네가 하는 모든 일에서 주님을 인정하여라. 그러면 주님께서 네가 가는 길을 곧게 하실 것이다." (잠언 3:5-6)

At the same time, we celebrate Mother’s Day - a day filled with love, gratitude, and reflection. We honor mothers, grandmothers, and all who have loved, nurtured, and cared with open hearts. At the same time, we remember that this day can hold many emotions. Wherever you find yourself - whether in celebration, remembrance, or longing - may you feel held in the gentle compassion of God. The love we see in those who nurture reflects something holy and enduring about God’s own heart.

This coming Sunday, we will share in the joy of an infant baptism during worship. There is something deeply moving about witnessing God’s grace poured out at the very beginning of life - a reminder that we are loved and claimed by God long before we can understand it. As we welcome this child, we also renew our own baptismal promises, recommitting ourselves to be a community that surrounds one another with faith, hope, and love.

Together, these celebrations remind us of a deeper truth: God is always at work bringing forth new life. Just as graduates begin new journeys and families continue to grow and change, so too are we invited into new beginnings in our own faith. Perhaps God is calling you to take a step forward—to trust more deeply, to serve more boldly, or to love more generously. Whatever that next step may be, know that you do not walk alone. As a community of faith, we journey together, encouraging and supporting one another along the way.

As we look ahead to the Annual Conference, please note that our summer edition of the newsletter (Digest), covering June and July, will be shared a little later than usual, following the Annual Conference in mid-June. We look forward to reconnecting then with updates and stories from our shared life together.

Until then, may your days be filled with gratitude for where you have been, and quiet hope for where God is leading you next.

With gratitude and hope,

Rev. Dr. Eun Young Ko

Senior Pastor

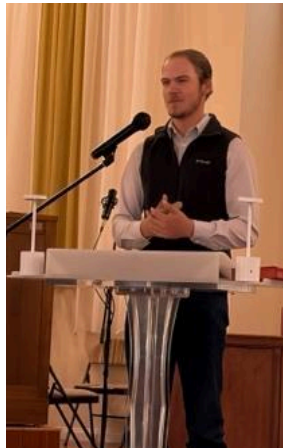
First United Methodist Church of Tucson

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

Our church is blessed with dedicated leaders who love and faithfully serve to build up the church. The Covenant Board met on April 11, 2026. Please continue to keep our church leaders in your prayers for their spiritual and physical well-being.



*Below left:* Dylan Boyd, a graduate of the University of Arizona with a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies. We were grateful to have him as our guest speaker on April 12th. *Below right:* Dottie Poczulp, a Certified Lay Minister, leads Young Christians' Time each Sunday during worship. When no children are present, Margo, one of our young-at-heart adults, graciously assists.



*Below:* My colleague and friend, Rev. Hyosun Oh, came to Tucson to visit and worship with us on April 12th. Afterward, we attended the Tucson Philharmonic Youth Orchestra concert to support Halla as a family.



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My cousin, Hyungjoon Kim, came for his business trip to Phoenix, AZ from South Korea for two months. I was able to go and meet him on April 17th, 2026. It was our first meaningful conversation since my high school years. Time flies! He was surprised by my vocation (pastor). Thanks to the grace of God, I was grateful to be present with him as a witness of Christ's love.



Our graduate, Min-Suh “Mike” Choi, offered a lecture for the Korean congregation on May 2nd at 12:00 PM, titled, “What is a Movie?”



We celebrated our graduates on May 3rd. Congratulations to all our graduates! Left to right: Emily Claver, Laryssa A. Shipley , Changgon Kim (Ph.D. in Space Science in School of Space Research), Min-Suh “Mike” Choi (Bachelor of Arts in Film and Television), and Dylan Boyd (Bachelor of Religious Studies).



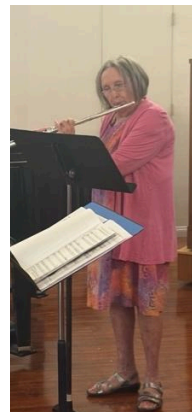
## Congratulations to the Graduates!

- Emily Claver: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, majoring in Accounting
- Laryssa A. Shipley: Ph.D. in Anthropology, Archaeology of the Ancient World
- Changgon Kim: Ph.D. in Space Science in School of Space Research
- Min-Suh “Mike” Choi: Bachelor of Arts in Film and Television
- Dylan Boyd: Bachelor of Religious Studies

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Left and middle: Cindy Rinehart, our church member, played the flute for the chancel choir on May 3rd, 2026. Right: The same day, Norman & Mazie Webb visited us from Seattle and worshiped with us. They are here in Tucson for their high school reunion. Norman's parents were faithful members of the Tucson First UMC and dedicated the stained glass in the narthex.



Min Hahn treated a lunch fellowship for the Korean congregation on May 3rd, 2026 at a newly opened Korean restaurant (Seoul-Shi).



**The church choir will take a break from June 1st-August 9th.  
We wish for them to have a blessed break and recharge over the summer.**

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

by Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut | Feb 02, 2026

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://www.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 at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=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. 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.

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**WEEKDAY GATHERINGS**

**Nifty Needlecrafts**

-Join us on Sunday at 3 PM for crafting and conversation! Don't have your own supplies? We have quilting fabric, notions, sewing machines, books, and much more available for use.

-Questions? Text Tripp at 520-428-4680 or leave a voicemail.

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**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.

**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, now in the church **basement**. (Access via the long stairs on the north side of the building, NOT the stairs next to the smoking benches.)  
-Medallion Night is on the last Monday of the month. Celebrate sobriety!

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**Chancel Choir**

-Thursday practices take place at 6:30 PM.  
-Shorter Sunday rehearsals start at 9 AM.  
-The choir will take a summer break from June 1st until August 9th.

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**Progressive Book Study (PBS)**

-The 3:30 PM Thursday online book study group is finishing their current book, "The Fourth Gospel: Tales of a Jewish Mystic." If you'd like to join them for the next book (TBD) please contact Rev. Gaston at 520-323-1611.

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

## **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:

Grace UMC, Douglas  
Huachuca UMC, Huachuca  
Menlo Park UMC, 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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## **MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**

Eun Young Ko (May 9)  
Minsuh “Mike” Choi (May 10)  
Dohoon Kim (May 14)  
Peter Ageh (May 24)  
Joyce Garcia (May 26)

Minkyung Song (May 28)  
Lana Yoo (May 27)  
Andrew Ageh (May 29)  
Sam Haney (May 29)

Ozzie & Carol Nelson (May 2 - 49 years)  
Jim & Ann Goff (May 21 - 45 years)

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

### **We Want YOU to Give Us Sunday Hymn Recommendations!**

While the choir is on summer break, in place of anthems, we will sing songs that have been picked out by the congregation. If you have a song or two in mind that you'd like us to sing, you can write them down on an index card on Sunday morning and put it in the basket on the narthex table, or you can email the office. We are taking suggestions through the end of May.

### **May 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 8th at 11:30 AM** at the Olive Garden on the northeast corner of Oracle/Wetmore ([300 W Wetmore Rd, Tucson, AZ 85705](https://www.olivegarden.com/locations/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 6th so that enough seating can be reserved at the restaurant.

# Animal & Environmental Holidays for May 2026

By Diane & Victoria Russell



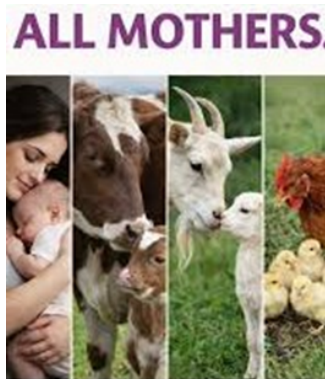
## May – International Respect for Chicken Month

Created by United Poultry Concerns in 2005 to celebrate these intelligent and sentient animals throughout the world. This month raises awareness about the treatment of chickens in industrial farming and the need for compassion and better living conditions.



## May – American Wetlands Month

The EPA created American Wetlands Month in 1991 to celebrate the importance of Wetlands for its crucial environmental and social benefits. Wetlands provide flood protection, water purification, and wildlife habitat. The goal of this month is to protect, preserve, and restore wetlands.



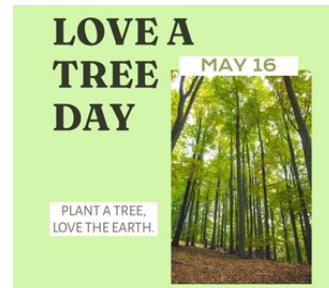
## May 10th – Mother’s Day

Mothers can come in all shapes and sizes. This day is to honor all mothers who share the bonds of motherhood whether they are human or animal. All mothers share a special bond with their babies. Happy Mother’s Day to our human, fur, feather, scale, or fin mothers/parents.



## May 12th – International Day of Plant Health

The United Nations designated this day to raise global awareness to help protect plant health and to help end hunger. The 2026 theme is "Plant biosecurity for food security," to help protect plants from pests and diseases to ensure global food supplies.



## May 16th – National Love a Tree Day

Today we celebrate all the wonderful things that trees provide for us. Trees provide us with lumber, they produce oxygen for us to breathe, they provide homes for animals, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> from the air, and provide shade and food. Let's help keep them healthy and plant more trees for future generations



### May 17th-23rd – Int'l Heritage Breeds Week

Created in 2015 by the Livestock Conservancy to raise global awareness about how the traditional livestock and poultry breeds raised by our ancestors are being replaced by the new factory farm agriculture. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, one breed a month is lost to extinction.



### May 19th – May Ray Day

Created in 1977 by Richard Ankli to honor his brother Ray, to encourage people to go outside and enjoy nature before it gets too hot during summer. It is a day to “soak up some rays,” and get your daily dose of Vitamin D from sunshine.



### May 22nd – Int'l Day for Biological Diversity

Created by the UN to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues. The 2026 theme is “Acting locally for global impact.” This theme emphasizes that local actions are essential

to help halt and reverse biodiversity loss - to make sure life not only survives, but will thrive.



### May 23rd – World Turtle Day

The American Tortoise Rescue started this day in 2000 dedicated to celebrating and protecting both turtles and tortoises. Turtles are aquatic or semi-aquatic, whereas tortoises only live on land. According to the IUCN, there are 360 known turtle and tortoise species, and 127 of them are endangered.



### May 31st – World Parrot Day

The World Parrot Trust created this day in 2004 to promote conservation efforts to combat habitat loss and illegal pet trade for both wild and captive birds. The theme for 2026 is "Lets crack the hard nuts – be more Parrot." There are over 390 species of parrots and almost 1/3 are considered endangered.



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.