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## **“A Sacred Invitation: Journeying Through Lent Toward Easter 2025”**

By Pastor Eun Ko

**Dear Beloved Members and Friends of FUMC Tucson,**

Grace and peace to you in this sacred season of Lent.

As we journey through Lent, we are invited into a time of deep reflection, repentance, and renewal. Lent is more than just a season of preparation—it is a sacred pilgrimage of the heart, a time to draw closer to God by embracing spiritual disciplines that shape us into the likeness of Christ.



Richard Rohr once wrote, "The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it. The more we are transformed by the presence of God, the more we can bring His love and grace to the world around us." Lent is a season that calls us into this transformation—to be in God's presence, to be changed by His love, and to extend that love to the world.

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## A Sacred Invitation: Journeying Through Lent Toward Easter 2025 cont.

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In the early church, Lent was a season of preparation for baptism and the renewal of faith. Even today, it is a time for us to pause, pray, and purify our hearts as we move toward the profound mystery of Holy Week and the joy of Easter. It is a season of fasting from distractions, feasting on God's Word, and renewing our commitment to follow Jesus with deeper faith.

### Lenten Opportunities for Spiritual Growth

I warmly invite you to join us on this Lenten spiritual journey in meaningful ways:

 **Weekly Reflection & Walk on the Labyrinth** – Every **Thursday at 10:00 AM at Rio Vista Natural Resource Park**, we will gather to reflect on the Psalms and take a spiritual walk. This is a beautiful way to engage in quiet reflection and prayer. Whether you have a Lenten booklet or not, all are welcome!

 **Small Group Discussion: "What Are Your Biggest Questions About Spirituality?"** – Led by **St. Francis in the Foothills UMC**, this thought-provoking series will take place every Tuesday during Lent at the Bruce Billings Building (formerly the CCC).

 **Holy Week Services** – As we move toward the culmination of Lent, I encourage you to prepare your hearts for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and ultimately, the glorious celebration of Easter morning.

Lent leads us to the cross, where we witness the depth of Jesus' love, and to the empty tomb, where we celebrate the victory of His resurrection. Without Good Friday, there would be no Easter Sunday. Without the journey of Lent, we might not fully grasp the beauty and hope of resurrection morning.

As we step deeper into this season, I encourage you to embrace the journey—whether through prayer, fasting, scripture reading, or acts of service—and allow God to renew and transform your spirit.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."  
**(Colossians 3:16, ESV)**

"그리스도의 말씀이 너희 속에 풍성히 거하여 모든 지혜로 피차 가르치며 권면하고 시와 찬미와 신령한 노래를 부르며 감사하는 마음으로 하나님을 찬양하고."  
**(골로새서 3:16, 개역개정)**

May this season of Lent awaken within us a renewed commitment to our faith and a deep longing for the presence of God.

**Blessings and grace to you all,**

**Rev. Dr. Eun Young Ko**  
**First United Methodist Church of Tucson**

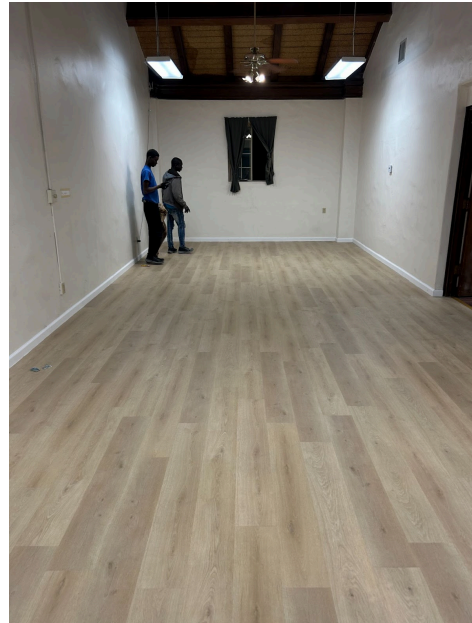
## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH OF TUCSON!

*Below left:* The Walk to Emmaus talks meeting was held on February 15th in our Social Hall. *Below right:* A Special Church Conference for the business was held on February 16th at 11 AM.



*Left:* Church choir members attended Cindy Turnbull's big sister's funeral on February 29 at East Lawn to offer their spiritual support and presence.

*Below:* The balcony room on the second floor is being transformed into the Korean Young Adults' room. More updates will be shared later.

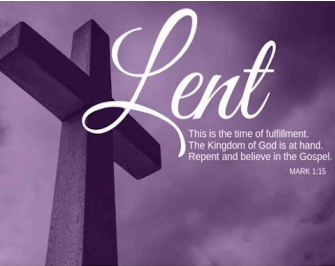


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Marjorie Task, a devoted choir member, passed away. A celebration of her life will be held at First Church on April 5th at 11 AM.

We invite all of you to order Easter lilies in memory of your loved ones.



## Lenten season of 2025

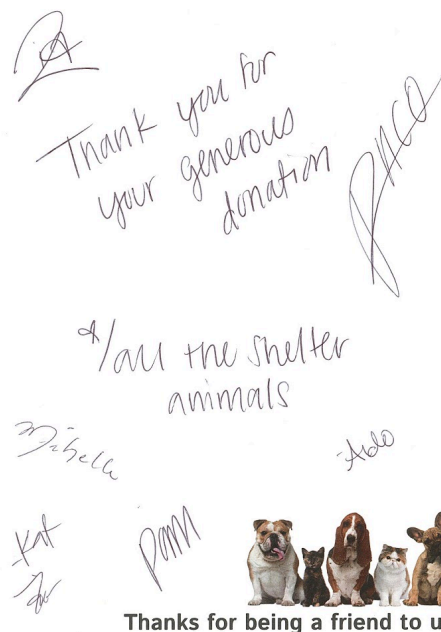
We invite all of you to the time of spiritual discipline during upcoming Lenten season.

- **Lent reflection with booklet of Psalm**  
Reflection group meets on every Thursday at 10:00 am at Rio Vista Natural Resource Park. We will walk on the Labyrinth)
- **Small Group Discussion about Spirituality**  
(at Wesley Center on March 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15 at 5:00 pm)
- **Ash Wednesday Service - Wednesday, March 5 at 6:00 pm**
- **Maundy Thursday Service - Thursday, April 17 at 6:00 pm**  
At Catalina UMC (2700 E. Speedway Blvd)
- **Good Friday Service - Friday, April 18 at 6:00 pm**  
At First UMC (915 E. 4th Street)

## Thank You For Your Donations!

The Humane Society gave us this card in gratitude for all the wonderful donations that were collected in December 2024 for the Christmas pet food and supplies drive. Thank you to everyone for your generous spirits!

**Everyone needs a friend...**



# ARIZONA THREE-DAY ACADEMY FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## "SINGING THE EARTH'S SONG: LAMENT, PRAISE, PRAYER"



**April 22-25, 2025**  
**at Redemptorist Renewal**  
**Center, Tucson**

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they who dwell therein." Ps. 24:1. The environmental crisis demands a response from the faith community, because the problem is not just a scientific or political problem; it's a spiritual problem. Materialism dictates our value system; we're short-sighted about the use of the earth's resources. Local churches have often chosen denial or complacency rather than hope and engagement, even though the environment is often the number one concern of our young people. This retreat is a journey into the heart of our faith tradition and the scientific community as together we find ways to respond.



### Our Faculty Presenter

**The Rev. Molly Vetter** is a United Methodist pastor serving as Senior Pastor at Westwood UMC, Los Angeles, California. Molly grew up in Nebraska, where her grandfather started organic farming in 1953. Molly's family now runs the farm, while she continues to be involved as part of her commitment to caring for the earth. A recognized leader in the UMC and ecumenical community, Molly has been a delegate to General Conference (4 times); served on the General Board of Church and Society; and participated in the Faith and Order work of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Molly recently completed the two-year Academy for Spiritual Formation. She lives with her husband Matthew Parker and their son Jonah.



### Science Consultant

**Dr. Gary Paul Nabhan** is a globally renowned ethno-botanist at the University of Arizona in Tucson. An ecumenical Franciscan Brother, Gary combines his scientific interest with wide-ranging interests in cultural diversity, spiritual practice, and traditional indigenous knowledge. Considered a pioneer in the local food movement, Gary has authored more than twenty books, including *Jesus for Farmers and Fishers: Justice for All Those Marginalized by our Food System*, recommended reading for this retreat. Gary lives with his wife Laurie in Patagonia, Arizona, where he farms a diverse set of heirloom fruit and nut varieties from the Spanish Mission era and from his Middle Eastern heritage.



## The Program

We begin this immersion retreat on Earth Day (April 22, 2025) at Redemptorist Renewal Center nestled next to Sahuaro National Park (West). With worship and joy, we'll celebrate the earth and listen for her songs. With silence, prayer, and community we'll learn and grieve, find hope and courage for the Great Work of addressing environmental degradation. Besides the classroom setting, we'll engage in field trips where we can listen to those actively creating places of ecological refuge. Our final day (Friday, April 25) will include time for discernment regarding "next steps" for addressing this crisis.

For a detailed schedule, please go to our website:

<https://dscumc.org/3-day-academy-for-spiritual-formation-april-22-25-2025>

## Retreat Team



**Gail Parson**  
Hospitality  
gailma@comcast.net



**Jerry Haas**  
Retreat Leader  
jndhaas@gmail.com



**Susan Morgan**  
Theologian  
sravenmorgan@gmail.com



**Joe Lee**  
Worship Coordinator  
kapellmeistereast@hotmail.com



**Tweedy Sombrero**  
Spiritual Guide  
tweedyandfelipe@yahoo.com

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

**REFUGIA FAITH: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth**  
by Debra Rienstra.

**JESUS FOR FARMERS and FISHERS: Justice for All Those Marginalized by Our Food System**  
by Gary Paul Nabhan.

Additional suggested readings can be found on our website.

FOR MORE INFORMATION and TO REGISTER, go to

<https://dscumc.org/3-day-academy-for-spiritual-formation-april-22-25-2025>



The home for our retreat is the  
**REDEMPTORIST RENEWAL CENTER**  
(<https://desertrenewal.org>)

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.

**SPECIAL SERVICES**

**Ash Wednesday** - March 5th at 6 PM in the First Church Sanctuary

**Maundy Thursday** - April 17th at 6 PM at Catalina UMC (2700 E Speedway Blvd)

**Good Friday** - April 18th at 6 PM in the First Church Sanctuary

**WEEKDAY GATHERINGS**

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

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

-New book to be chosen soon!

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**Korean Young Adult Student's Bible Study**

-This group meets on Monday at 7PM via Zoom.

-The current book is "The New Beginner" by Red. Jaechul Lee.

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**Narcotics Anonymous (The Underground)**

-NA meets at 7:30PM on Monday evenings in the Arizona room.

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**All God's Creation (AGC)**

-AGC meets on Tuesdays at 3PM over Zoom.

[Zoom ID: 994 3610 1655](https://www.zoom.us/j/99436101655) [Passcode: 6226481](https://www.zoom.us/j/99436101655)

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**Chancel Choir**

-Practice on Thursdays at 6:30PM in the Sanctuary.

-A shorter rehearsal on Sundays at 8:50AM.

-The Easter Cantata is rapidly approaching!

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**Progressive Book Study (PBS)**

-PBS meets on Thursdays at 3:30PM over Zoom. The current book is "Wrestling with Doubt," by Adam Hamilton.

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

[Zoom ID: 980 1573 8087](https://www.zoom.us/j/98015738087) [Passcode: 622648](https://www.zoom.us/j/98015738087)



**We Need Your Help in the Kitchen!**

We would greatly appreciate having a few more volunteers in the kitchen for food prep before the 10 AM worship service and for clean-up after Fellowship hour.

Thank you to everyone who has helped out so far! Everyone at First Church appreciates your gifts of time, effort, food, and monetary contributions.

## 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.

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## 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:

El Mesias UMC, Nogales  
First UMC, Bisbee

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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## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

Esther Lee (March 20)  
Janet Ageh (March 21)  
Ozzie Nelson (March 24)

Peggy Ford (March 26)  
Don Rollings (March 28)  
Carol Velzy (March 30)  
Martha Preston (March 31)

Jong & Miwon Lee (March 6)  
Arthur & Cindy Turnbull (March 7)

*(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 14th 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 at (520) 297-4796 by Wednesday so she can reserve enough seating at the restaurant.



# Animal & Environmental Holidays for March 2025

By Diane & Victoria Russell



## March – Pet Poison Prevention Awareness Month

This month is to educate and raise awareness about the dangers of accidental pet poisoning and how to prevent your beloved pets from becoming affected. There are products and foods that we use that may be poisonous for our pets – such as certain plants, medicines, xylitol, aspartame, and chocolate.



## March 9th – National American Paddlefish Day

Created in 2019 by the Shreveport Aquarium to raise awareness about this prehistoric fresh water fish. They can be found in the Mississippi and Missouri River tributaries and the Mobil Bay Drainage Basin. They are listed as vulnerable due to fishing, habitat loss, dams and reservoirs.



## March 14th – Int'l Day of Action for Rivers

This is a day that raises awareness about rivers and how they need help being protected from pollution and sewage. The 2025 theme is “Our Rivers, Our Future” which emphasizes the vital role rivers have in sustaining life on our planet and the need to protect them for future generations. Ways to celebrate include volunteering for river cleanups.



## March 14th – Moth-er Day

This is a day that is dedicated to moths and people who collect them. There are about 160,000 different species of moths in the world with about 11,000 species in the USA. Most moths can only be seen at night. Moths use light sources (the moon) to navigate, and often artificial lights can cause confusion.



## March 18th – World Serval Day

The Wildheart Animal Sanctuary created this day in 2023 to raise awareness about the threats faced by Servals and Savannah cats. Servals are exotic medium-sized wild cats native to Africa. Savannah cats are the offspring of wild servals and domesticated cats. Servals are beautiful but do not make good pets.



## March 18th – Global Recycling Day

This year we celebrate the 8th annual Global Recycling Day. This day encourages people to reduce waste, recycle materials, and reuse/repurpose products. The goal of this day is to raise awareness of the important role that recycling plays in preserving our natural resources for our planet's future.



### March 20th - World Rewilding Day

The Global Rewilding Alliance created World Rewilding Day in 2021. The goal of this day is to raise awareness of rewilding. Rewilding is the practice of allowing places in our environment to be reclaimed by nature so wildlife and ecosystems can thrive. This can help nature recover worldwide.



### March 20th - International Day of Happiness

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 to maintain that happiness and well-being are important to all people in the world. We can celebrate this day by spreading joy to others, smiling at people you meet, thinking about when you are the happiest and making every day a day of happiness.



### March 22nd - Earth Hour

The First Earth Hour was organized by WWF in 2007. This annual global event 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 2025 is "Create the Biggest Hour for Earth".



### March 23rd - National Puppy and Cuddly Kitten Day

This is a special day to share with our beloved pets by spoiling them with extra treats and cuddles. It is also a day to encourage people to adopt pets from shelters instead of buying them. Ways to celebrate include donating, volunteering, and fostering.



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.