



First United Methodist Church
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“A New Year of Hope, Faith, and Renewal”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Dear Beloved Church Family,

Happy New Year! I greet you all with joy and gratitude as we begin the year of 2025 together. On the first Sunday of this new year, we participated in the Wesley Covenant Renewal – a beautiful tradition that invites us to reflect on our relationship with God, renew our commitment to His calling, and dedicate ourselves to living out His will in our lives. This powerful service offers us the chance to pause, reflect, and set our hearts in alignment with God's desires for us in the year ahead.



Halla and I enjoyed our visit with my friend and his family!

As we enter this year, I invite you to prayerfully consider setting three goals for your life – goals that will help draw you closer to God and further align your actions with His will. These goals can be based on your own unique circumstances, whether they are spiritual, relational, or personal.

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A New Year of Hope, Faith, and Renewal cont.

Take time to reflect on where God is calling you and how He is inviting you to grow in the coming year. Just as we renew our covenant with God, we can also renew our personal commitments and seek to live out these goals with hope and faith.

In his book *Unafraid*, Adam Hamilton writes, "Faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is the courage to face our fears and trust in God's presence and God's promise that God is with us, no matter what we encounter." As we set our goals for 2025, may we do so with the understanding that God walks with us through every challenge and every triumph. It is not always the absence of difficulties or uncertainties that we seek, but the courage and peace that come from knowing God is always by our side.

Scripture for Reflection:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." - **Jeremiah 29:11** (ESV)

"여호와께서 이르시되 내가 너희를 향하여 가지고 있는 계획을 내가 아노니 평안이요 재앙이 아니니라 너희에게 미래와 희망을 주기 위한 계획이라"- **예레미야 29:11**

Let us take this opportunity, in this new year, to commit ourselves to growing in faith, extending kindness and compassion, and trusting God more deeply. Whether it is through prayer, service, or acts of love, let us set goals that bring glory to God and align our lives with God's purposes.

I pray that in this year of 2025, you will feel the presence of God more deeply in your life. May you experience God's peace that surpasses all understanding, God's guidance in moments of uncertainty, and God's strength to overcome any fear. Know that you are not alone in any circumstance you face; God is with you, and God will never forsake you.

May this be a year of **hope, growth, and faith** — a year where we as a church family draw closer to God, support one another, and live out the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world.

I offer all of you my **blessings** and prayers for a fruitful and blessed year. May you walk in faith, trusting that God is always with you, and may your life be filled with His peace and joy.

Blessings and peace to you all,

Eun Young Ko

Senior Pastor

First United Methodist Church of Tucson

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH OF TUCSON!

Below: The annual Thanksgiving Feast was held on **Nov 28** at 12PM.



Below: Installation of the Honorary Elder, Andy Min, & the Christmas Cantata were held on **Dec 8th** at 10AM. (Below middle: The embroidered hand towels gifted to the congregation.)



Below left: Our sister in Faith, Pearl Zimmerman, passed away on Nov 28, 2025 and the memorial ceremony was held on **Dec 12** at 11AM at a restaurant. Below right: There was a New Short Documentary Films showing on **Dec 17** at 7PM. Minseo Choi, one of our students, was one of the directors of his film.



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First row left and middle: The infant baptism of Tomoe Lee Poczulp on **Dec 22** at 10AM. First row right and next two rows: There was a Christmas Eve Candle Lighting service on **Dec 24** at 7PM.



Below left: Clovis B. Snider (Mary Snider) - 1960's - Associate pastor of the FUMC of Tucson. Clovis Jack Snider & Jean Snider, Lauri Snider & Mike Malone - 1987 married here. Mary Susan (Snider) Houser. Below middle and right: There was a Christmas Gathering at Pastor Ko's house for Asian Young adult students on **Dec 25** at 5:30PM.



United Women in Faith at Desert Skies UMC invite you to a presentation by:



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Innocence Project

**Vanessa Buch, Director &
Associate Clinical Professor**

Wednesday January 29, 2025--6:00-7:30pm
First United Methodist Church - UA Campus
915 E. 4th St. Tucson

*ALL are welcome to attend this event,
including spouses and guests.*

Lay Servant Classes

There are two Lay Servant classes being offered this spring: “Introduction to Lay Ministry Basic Course” on February 1st and 8th at St. John’s UMC here in Tucson, and “Life Together in the United Methodist Connection (Polity)” on February 15 & 22nd and March 1st over Zoom. For more info, please visit

<https://dscumc.org/lay-servant-ministries-training-sessions/>

A Big “Thank You!” to Our Congregation

Thanks to your wonderful generosity, we had not one but TWO successful December drives.

The first was new socks for the homeless community served by The Loving Church; a whopping **129 pairs of socks** were donated to the cause!



The second drive was for pet food and supplies. Altogether, **over 25 lbs of dog and cat food** was collected, plus **18 blankets** and a **pile of toys**.

A Call for Liturgists

We are asking for liturgists for the next few months to make the announcements, say the opening prayer and read the scripture. The signup sheet is on the Social Hall stage if you’d like to give it a try! You’ll have a script to follow so you needn’t worry about making anything up on the fly. Thank you to those who have signed up so far!

Supporting a Missionary from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)

Thanks to your generous support, the Christmas offering plus Foundation match totaled \$2,480!



Daniel Humberto Contreras Varas is a Global Missionary with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. He is currently serving in Honduras.

Daniel is a member of Segunda Methodist Church in Iquique, Tarapaca, Chile. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Arturo Prat University and a Bachelor of Theology at Comunidad Teologica Evangelica de Chile (Evangelical Theological Community of Chile), Concepcion. He has served as a pastor in Los Angeles, a chaplain's assistant at Coronel Methodist Industrial High School and an English teacher at Saint Joan College, all in Chile.

His first missionary experience as an adult was with the Logos II ship with Operation Mobilization. He translated for 10 days while the vessel was docked in Arica. He also participated in Youth in Mission in Latin America.

"I come from a Christian home, being fourth-generation Methodist," Daniel said. "I found my own faith at 17 in an international retreat for young Christian leaders. Growing up in a conservative society, I used to think that spirituality and religion were lived only within the frame of mainstream church. When I had the opportunity of sharing with people from different traditions, creeds and nationalities, it opened my mind to a comprehensive approach."

Daniel continued, "The Aymara and Mapuche peoples, indigenous to Chile, offer a deep source of knowledge and spirituality that missionaries and the Methodist Church in Chile understand and work within accomplished ministry.

"For 13 years, my parents served the church through educational programs such as Emaná, in the north and la Obra Rural (rural work) in the south of Chile." He recalled his parents taking the entire family and driving for hours to host Sunday school and a hot meal for the Mapuche children. His father would go into the high plains of the Andes to care for Aymara children in a boarding school.

"I had a happy childhood," Daniel said, "worth remembering, because everything we did was serving others and sharing the word of God.

"My calling to mission," he said, "comes out of love for people. Christ lived a perfect life serving others, and he set the example of a God who lives humbly among those who suffer most."

He and his wife Karen are eager to model servant leadership for their two children.

We are able to support the missionary, Daniel, for three years, from January 2025 to January 2027, with \$100 per month.

#302278 (#KUMC140)

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

Wanderers on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

-WSQ meets on Mondays at 4:30PM in the library.
-Currently on break for the Advent book study.
-New book to be chosen soon!

Narcotics Anonymous (Underground)

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

All God's Creation (AGC)

-AGC meets on Tuesdays at 3PM over Zoom.

[Zoom ID: 994 3610 1655](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

Chancel Choir

-Choir is back in session!
-Practice on Thursdays at 6:30PM in the Sanctuary.
-A shorter rehearsal on Sundays at 8:50AM.

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](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)

-This support group meets at 7:30PM on Friday evenings in the Arizona room.

Mechanic Needed

The van belonging to The Loving Church needs transmission repairs or replacement. Any help with this would be much appreciated. Please speak to Jessie Hansen on Sunday or call the church at 520-788-2229 for more details.



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.

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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:

Catalina UMC, Tucson
Desert Skies UMC, Tucson
Oasis UMC Start, Eloy

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.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Christiana Ageh (Jan 3)
Steven Yoo (Jan 8)
David Lopez (Jan 12)

Bob Hansen (Jan 17)
Michi Michalsky (Jan 18)
An Khiet Lam (Jan 21)

Bill Bensema (Jan 23)
Jim Goff (Jan 26)

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

January 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 10th 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/locations/300-W-Wetmore-Rd-Tucson-AZ-85705)).

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 MONTH 2025

By Diane & Victoria Russell



January 2025 – National Thank You Month

National Thank You Month was established in 1977 by Marsha Friedman, to encourage gratitude and appreciation to the people in our lives by saying thank-you. Ways to say thank you include: verbally saying “thank you,” a handwritten note, giving a small token of thanks, or spending quality time with them.



January 10th – Save the Eagle Day

Save the Eagle Day was created in 2015 by the Bergen County Audubon Society to save a pair of local bald eagles. Today we celebrate and give thanks for the conservation efforts to protect all eagles. There are more than 60 species worldwide with two species in the USA – the bald and golden eagles.



January 10th – Houseplant Appreciation Day

Created in 2012 by The Gardener’s Network to raise awareness and appreciation of the benefits of houseplants. Plants bring nature and life indoors, convert carbon dioxide into oxygen for breathing, and improve the air quality of your house. So enjoy a plant or two for your home.



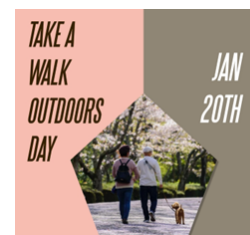
January 10th – National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

Created by the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance (CEEA) to encourage homeowners and businesses to help reduce energy costs. Ways to cut energy costs include weatherproofing your home, using solar power, turning down thermostats, using LED lights, using carpool/bus transportation, and turning off lights.



January 19th – Tenderness Toward Existence Day

This day is dedicated to exhibiting tenderness, compassion, and understanding toward all living beings on Earth which includes all humans, flora, and fauna.



January 20th – Take A Walk Outdoors Day

Take a break from your busy life by going outside for a peaceful stroll to get some fresh air and to enjoy nature. So whether you are a power walker, slow walker, or need a walker – go outside and enjoy the beauty of nature.



January 24th – Change a Pet’s Life Day

Created in 2009 by Hill’s Pet Nutrition to encourage people to adopt pets from shelters and to also raise awareness for animals in need. Ways to help change a pet’s life include: adopt from a shelter or rescue, foster a pet in need, volunteer at your local shelter/rescue, donate, and raise awareness.



January 26th – World Environmental Education Day

Created in 1972 by the UN Conference in Sweden for the Human Environment. The goal of this day is to raise awareness about participation on both a local/global scale to identify environmental issues and to actively help solve them by conserving and protecting the environment.



January 26th – February 1st - Kiss a Shark Week

This week is to raise awareness about sharks and other sea creatures with ways to help protect and save them. There are more than 500 species of sharks in the world. Sadly, about one-third of the shark species are threatened with extinction.



January 31st – International Zebra Day

There are three types of zebras in the wild; Grévy’s zebra, plains zebra, and the mountain zebra. They are known for their black and white stripes. This day is about spreading awareness to help protect zebras. The Red List of Threatened Species lists the Grévy’s zebra as 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.