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“More Days to Celebrate Together!”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Greetings in Jesus Christ, I hope and pray that you are experiencing the grace of God every day by the help of the Holy Spirit.

In South Korea’s tradition, there is Children’s Day on May 5th and Parents’ Day on May 8th, which are different from having a Mother’s Day on the second Sunday (8th) of May and a Father’s Day on the third Sunday (18th) of June.

According to Wikipedia, Children's Day highlights the dignity of children and their need for love, care, and respect. It is also a day to honor adults that have contributed to improving the lives of children. The origins of Parents’ Day can be traced back to the 1930s. To celebrate Mother’s Day or Parents’ Day, some Christian communities quoted this tradition from the United States and later was combined with Korea's traditional Confucianism culture to eventually establish Mother's Day.

So, in South Korea’s tradition, they call the month of May as the Month of Family. In the United States, we know that the month of May is a month of graduations and the month that has Mother’s Day. As we are located on the campus of the University of Arizona, we will witness lots of graduates and their families coming and celebrating their children’s achievements.

What a blessing for the FUMC of Tucson to be called to serve this city’s campus!

Some of us might be disappointed or drained when sending graduates to their own towns or home countries. But, I love to dream with you that we are planting precious seeds of the love of Jesus Christ while they are here even though we won’t see the fruit of theirs in our sight. God’s plan and providence are beyond our sight and expectation. Let us pray for those graduates, their parents and families as we are aware that we are children of God no matter how old or young we are.

(cont. pg 2)

More Days to Celebrate Together! cont.

I love to share one of the prayers from the book “A Child’s Garden of Prayer.” They call it when I’m Happy.

[You are] giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Oceandepth of happy rest!
[You] our Father, Christ our brother,
All who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine! Amen
(from All God’s People Sing, 147:3)



*Korean women’s Bible Study group: (top)
Jun, Kay, Gina; (bottom) Stephanie & Kate*

Romans 8:28-29

28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

로마서 8장 28-29절

28 우리가 알거니와 하나님을 사랑하는 자 곧 그의 뜻대로 부르심을 입은 자들에게는 모든 것이 합력하여 선을 이루느니라

29 하나님이 미리 아신 자들을 또한 그 아들의 형상을 본받게 하기 위하여 미리 정하셨으니 이는 그로 많은 형제 중에서 맏아들이 되게 하려 하심이니라

With gratitude and love,

Pastor Ko

Reflection of the 9-week Korean Bible Study

Kay Kaiser:

Bible study always makes me anew and gives me an opportunity to reflect on God again, which was a very happy and grateful time for me.

I was able to share how I experienced God with other participants while we studied and share our experiences with one another. I hope to continue to have this kind of time. I always praise the Lord and love God.

Stephanie Kang:

Ever since I was a child, I went to United Methodist churches almost my whole life in South Korea and the U.S.A. First time I had a bible class for 9 weeks that made me have a good spirit and good meeting with God. I realized how important faith in God is. I learned what is different between being a new Christian and beginning as a Christian, which is that you live the right way to believe in God as a new life.

I believe in God who created the world and gave us life, love, and an honest way of living as a tool of God. I re-notice that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life, the savior, and Spirit of God. Originally Saturday was the Sabbath but Jesus Christ rose on Sunday, which became a foundation of the Sabbath on Sunday. In chapter 10, I believe that Christian family life is important and the family is the small church that if we live in that meaning that the family is the small church, we will produce beautiful fruits and overcome any sufferings or hardship for a long time by the grace of God and be grateful that our children are doing well thanks to the grace and love of God, which is with us all the time. He gave me a good faith and spirit.

I am also grateful that pastor Ko invited me to this bible study for nine weeks even though she was very busy. I learned a lot and realized good things through the time with her.

Gina Craft:

We finished the Bible study based on the book called "The New Believer" by Lee Jae Chul. The class was about 8-9 weeks long with 5 students under pastor Ko's teaching. During the class, I got to know each member better and it was a valuable opportunity to examine my faith or the lack of it.

I joined the class half-heartedly, only because it was there.

But upon finishing the class, I could reflect on the health of my faith. Once long ago as a new Christian, I was fervently yearning for God's words. But along the way, I have now become a lukewarm believer.

I blame the easy and stagnant lifestyle of retirement, and perhaps, easy access to online services and sermons in which one can remain a passive member. I fear I may be shaken up at any time at God's will in order to be awoken. But I also trust and find solace in that God will not let go of my hand once he has gotten hold of me.

In good time, in God's time, I trust God will pull me close and allow me to join and be part of His work..... for I know God is merciful.

Thanks to God.

Truly, Gina

(cont. pg 4)

Kate Park:

Greetings, this is Kate Park.

I have been attending the church since my childhood. My mother was the first generation of Christians in my family so she was persecuted by my father who was not a Christian. I believe that God is the only one who can save me and my family from this miserable situation. Many of us might know that people struggled from many difficult situations and left the church. Isn't it? Of course, I have done that. However, there are so many moments for me to experience the grace of God in the middle of hardship and suffering.

In 2022, I wanted to know more about God and questioned by myself how I can know more about God. During that questioning, pastor Ko invited me to the Bible study with a book called "New Christians."

Why is the title "New Christians"? I have believed in God since my childhood though.

My initial question was solved through reading the book for the study. I was able to re-define the foundation about God. I was able to listen to other members' thoughts and testimony through the discussion in the study. There were moments we cried and laughed while we shared our lives how much God poured out the grace in individuals. I felt the living God deeply.

I pray that I will become from old Christian to servant Christian finishing this study, "New Christians." I praise God who allowed me to have an opportunity to know God deeply and more. I am grateful for pastor Ko that she led this study in the middle of her own hardship in life.



Heaven's Touch Fundraising Event!

Join us for this event with two professional hair designers offering
50% discounted haircut for the mission!

Cost: \$15.00 for Men & \$20.00 for Women

When: Saturday, May 6th, 2023
10:00-12:00pm
1:00-4:00pm

Where: First UMC of Tucson
(915 E. 4th Street, Tucson, AZ)



First Church supports Women and Children in the Congo



"It is SO GOOD to see you guys!" After 32 hours flying and 30 days working to bring hope to victims of neglect and abuse in the Congo, Blaise Lolika was joyful to be back at First Church and reunited with his wife Natalie and four children.

He had left Tucson with the prayers and financial support of our congregation, touched by his testimony on March 12 about the toll of war and rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he was born. In multiple trips to the DRC, Blaise was following his call to be of service and was well prepared by his background as a registered nurse at University Hospital with expertise in obstetrical care. The organization he and Natalie founded, Global Assistance for Women and Children, began to grow.

This journey began March 17. After landing in the capital, Kinshasa, Blaise coordinated with the team in place that was responsible for delivering hands-on, holistic care with dignity. From there, Blaise needed to reach the shelter and clinic in Kinsangani, but getting a plane was risky and difficult. After days, a text message arrived in the middle of the night to get to the airfield immediately.

Blaise brought well wishes from our church to the MWANA MUPENDA site. Girls traumatized by rape and ostracism had begun to heal and dream of going to school. Malnourished children also received loving attention to their needs. Despite the geographical distance, First Church was playing a role in strengthening the work at this shelter, directed by Counselor and Pediatrician Dr. Mimina, a dedicated nurse, and another member of staff working tirelessly from his wheelchair. God was bringing a blessing there.

Through stamina and sacrifice, the trip was a success. Natalie bravely fought a respiratory infection while her husband was away. Please continue to pray for this family and all those needing care in the Congo.

Shortly after returning to Tucson, Blaise received a letter he had been waiting for: Global Assistance for Women and Children has been granted nonprofit status.

Annual Conference June 15-17, 2023

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

With this letter, I hereby call the regular session of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to meet on June 15-17, 2023, in a hybrid format: in person at the Mesa Convention Center or online. Information is now available



at <https://dscumc.org/annual-conference>. I especially call your attention to the due dates for registration and other submissions and invite you to please abide by these to aid in the continuing work of planning the conference and prevent undue stress on our staff and volunteers. I trust you will do this as beloved members of our covenant community.

Our theme this year is **#WeAre: Wrestling, Engaging, Rising**, based on the story of Jacob in Genesis 32 and 33, and the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus in Luke 22-24. To say that the past year was difficult is an understatement, for we have been in an extended, extremely challenging season that spans more than three years.

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be with us, and while we are slowly coming out of it, we are certainly grappling with its long-term effects in multiple facets of our personal and communal lives.
- Systemic racism and white supremacy continue to plague our society and our church and harm our BIPOC siblings.
- While scheduled for May 2024 after numerous postponements, the continued delay in holding the 2020 General Conference continues to bring harm to our LGBTQIA+ siblings.
- The disaffiliation of churches from our ranks and the misinformation and disinformation that has accompanied some of these conversations has adversely affected our connection and our witness.

As a result of these and other concerns, our church is splintering, and our relationships are frayed and falling apart. Many are feeling isolated, disconnected, and alone. Trust towards each other is low.

And so, our theme is a prayer and a declaration that **we are**, as a covenant community of faith, coming together to continue **wrestling** with our current realities and concerns in order to begin **engaging** in conversations that will lead to healing and wholeness so that we may together be on a path towards **rising** to face the new day that God invites us all to with hope and joy!

I am so excited to be with all of you for what will be my first ever annual conference session to preside at as bishop and my first with you! May the Holy Spirit work in our minds and our hearts, even now, as we prepare for this important work of holy conferencing.

Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut

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.

매주 목요일 성경공부는 가을에 다시 시작됩니다.

NOTICE: Due to the low numbers of new COVID cases in Pima County, our safety guidelines have been updated again:

- **We are relaxing our mask recommendation for the time being;** however, please feel free to continue masking if you want to.
- If you are not yet fully vaccinated or are immuno-compromised, or if you are not feeling well, we ask that you watch the YouTube livestream rather than attend in person.
- Choir members are required to be fully vaccinated in order to sing for the congregation during the service.

These guidelines are subject to change with Pima County and CDC recommendations.

WEEKDAY GATHERINGS

Women on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

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

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. The group is reusing last year's book, "All God's Creatures: Daily Devotions for Animal Lovers 2021."

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

Chancel Choir

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

-Rehearsal is at 9AM on Sundays.

-The Christmas Cantata is coming up—don't miss it!

Progressive Book Study (PBS)

-PBS meets on Thursdays at 3PM. The current book is "The Naked Now" by Richard Rohr.

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

[Zoom ID: 980 1573 8087](#) [Passcode: 6226481](#)

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)

-This support group meets at 8:30PM on Friday evenings in the Arizona room.

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:

Grace UMC, Douglas
Huachuca UMC, Huachuca City
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 or (520) 622-6481.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Eun Young Ko (May 9)
Emily Rud (May 12)
Young Kim (May 15)

Joyce Garcia (May 26)
Carol Humphrey (May 26)
Lana Yoo (May 27)

Andrew Ageh (May 29)
Sam Haney (May 29)

Ozzie & Carol Nelson (May 2)
Jim & Ann Goff (May 21)

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

May Meet'n'Eat

This is a fellowship time to visit with each other and see old and new friends. *All are welcome!*

The next Meet'n'Eat is **Friday, May 12th 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 call Shirley Murray at (520)297-4796 by Wednesday so she can reserve enough seating at the restaurant.

Animal & Environmental Holidays for May 2023

By Diane & Victoria Russell



May 3rd – National Specially-abled Pet Day

Created by animal advocate Colleen Paige in 2006 to encourage people to adopt these amazing animals. Pets can become specially-abled due to diseases, birth flaws, or injuries. These animals are very “able” pets, and they just need a chance to be loved and accepted.



May 3rd – World Tuna Day

The United Nations Assembly created this day in 2016 to raise public awareness on how important tuna is to the world. The goals include sustainable tuna fishing and the conservation of tuna. The 2023 theme is "The Global Tuna Industry: Trailblazing Through Tough Times".



May 10th – Mother Ocean Day

Created in 2013 by the South Florida Kayak Fishing Club to raise awareness and respect for the Earth's five oceans. Oceans generate most of the oxygen that we breathe. The oceans need to be protected from pollution, overfishing, over exploitation, and climate change.



May 7th-13th – International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW)

ICAW was started in Canada in 1995 by the Compost Council of Canada. Composting is the natural process of recycling organic material such as food scraps, leaves, into fertilizer to enrich soil and plants. The 2023 Theme is “For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food... Compost!”



May 8th – National Animal Disaster Preparedness Day

FEMA created this day in 2010 to encourage people to prepare for any natural disasters that may arise. Pets depend on us-so be prepared. Make or buy an emergency kit with 3-7 days of supply for pets and, do not evacuate without taking your pets.



May 13th – World Migratory Bird Day

This is a global awareness campaign to celebrate their journeys and to promote conservation efforts of migratory birds and their habitats. The 2023 theme is “Water: Sustaining Bird Life” - which focuses on the priority of water for migratory birds.



May 14th – 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 Mother's share a special bond with their babies. Happy Mother's Day to our Human, fur, feather, scale, or fin mothers/parents.



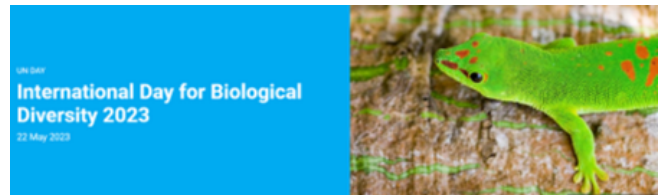
May 19th - Endangered Species Day

Celebrating the 18th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Day which celebrates learning about and taking action to help protect threatened and endangered species. This year's theme is "Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act".



May 20th – World Bee Day

In 2018 the United Nations General Assembly declared this day to raise awareness and promote actions to help protect and enhance pollinators and their habitats, and sustainable beekeeping. The 2023 theme is "Bee Engaged in Pollinator-Friendly Agricultural Production".



May 22nd – International Day for Biological Diversity

Created by the United Nations to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues. The 2023 theme is "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity." This day is dedicated to making sure that all creatures and ecosystems on Earth not only survive but will thrive.



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.