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## “A Season of New Beginnings: Celebrating Graduates with Hope and Support”

By Pastor Eun Ko

Dear families of the First United Methodist Church of Tucson,

As we approach the season of graduation, our hearts are filled with both joy and nostalgia. It's a time of celebration as we honor the achievements of our graduating students and send them forth into the next chapter of their lives. It's also a time of reflection, as we look back on the journeys that have brought them to this significant milestone.

To our graduates, we offer our heartfelt congratulations. Your hard work, determination, and dedication have led you to this momentous occasion, and we are incredibly proud of all that you have accomplished. As you stand on the threshold of new opportunities and challenges, know that you carry with you the love and support of your church family. We believe in you, and we are excited to see the incredible things you will achieve in the days ahead.

As you embark on this new journey, we encourage you to hold fast to the values and principles that have been instilled in you throughout your time with us. Let your faith be a guiding light, illuminating your path and inspiring you to live with integrity, compassion, and humility. Remember that you are not alone on this journey—God walks beside you, offering strength, wisdom, and grace every step of the way.



*Our exchange program student, Xiong Ran (who goes by Victoria), goes back to Singapore soon. She is working on her undergraduate degree in Literature.*

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## **A Season of New Beginnings: Celebrating Graduates with Hope and Support** cont.

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To the families and friends of our graduates, we extend our gratitude for your unwavering support and encouragement. Your love and guidance have played a crucial role in shaping the lives of these remarkable individuals, and we are blessed to have you as part of our church family.

In the midst of our celebrations, I would like to share a personal request with you all. As many of you know, my father has been battling illness, and it weighs heavily on my heart. I will be traveling to South Korea to be by his side and offer whatever support and comfort I can. During this time, I kindly ask for your prayers for my father's healing and for strength and guidance for my family and me.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates and lift up prayers for those in need, let us also take a moment to pray for one another, knowing that God hears our prayers and holds us in His loving embrace.

In the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." As our graduates step boldly into the future, as I journey to be with my father, let us trust in God's promise and rejoice in the blessings that await us all.

With love and blessings,

Pastor Ko

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### **What's Happening at First Church of Tucson!**

- We had a book study with "Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets" by Andy Stanley. Fourteen people participated, and after the book was finished, we had a delicious potluck.





- Below left: Bill Snyder sang, “Steal Away to Jesus,” for our Offertory music on April 28th. Below right: Danny Park (center) is transferring from University of Arizona to Ohio State University.



- Our accompanist and interim Music Director, Yukyung Hwang (on piano; holding flowers), did a performance and lecture for her PhD. On Sunday, the 5th of May, she bid us farewell.



- A number of our students graduated from the University of Arizona this year! Left to right: Shin Hye Park, Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry; YuHyun Park, Counselor Education and Supervision PhD; Hyunah Kang, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching; YuKyung Hwang, DMA in Piano Performance major.



- Next page, left: Kevin Kuruvilla defended his dissertation for his Masters in Mechanical Engineering on May 6th. Center: Randy and Lu Stofer went back to Colorado for the summer. Right: The Korean congregation planted various leafy green vegetables (like radish and lettuce) in February, and now they are ready to be harvested.

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- To celebrate the building of Pastor Ko's new home, she held open houses on April 27th and May 4th for the two congregations to come and enjoy canapes and conversation. Some of her visitors brought flowers to beautify her home.





## ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEWS

### [UPDATE: Phase Two of AC Mission Project Announced: The Inn](#)

by Billie K. Fidlin | Apr 2, 2024



The first part of this year's Annual Conference Mission Project is monetary donations to support the [Asylum Aid and Border Ministries Fund](#). This fund provides financial support to our churches who are engaged in asylum and border mission work, helping people who come from all over the world to the United States, seeking asylum and safety from human predators.

We are delighted to share that [The Inn](#) has been selected to receive item donations. This ministry provides care for migrants passing through the U.S./Mexico border.

Director Gretchen Lopez shares that the following items are needed:

- Toddler & children's t-shirts (2T-16)
- Toddler & children's pants/shorts (2T-16)
- NEW Children's underwear (XS, S, M, L, XL)
- NEW Children's Socks
- Women's leggings or stretch pants (S, M)
- Women's t-shirts, long and short sleeves (S, M)
- NEW Women's underwear (Size 5 & 6)
- Women's Bras (sports bras – S/M/L but not XL)
- NEW Women's socks
- Men's jeans/sweatpants (28-32" waist highest demand, but need all sizes 28-38")
- Men's t-shirts, long and short sleeves (S, M, L)
- NEW Men's underwear (S, M, L)
- Men's belts (S, M, L)
- NEW Men's socks
- Flip Flops (for showers)
- Diapers (Size 4, 5, 6, 7)
- Baby Wipes (individual packs)

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Director Lopez will happily accept gift cards as well. Should you wish to purchase gift cards: Walmart, Amazon or Visa will be GREAT!

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You may bring your church's product donations to the main lobby of Annual Conference and drop off at the tables located there. The Inn staff will be picking up your donations daily. Should you be bringing gift cards, please give to Billie Fidlin.**

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## **Volunteers Needed for Ramp Assembly/Disassembly**

*By Ray Spooner*

Greetings in Christ.

I am the Volunteers in Mission coordinator for the Desert Southwest Conference, United Methodist Men conference president, and on the board of [SAWs Southwest](#). SAWs is providing a ramp for Annual Conference in Tucson in June. I am looking for assistance in several ways: The ramp is fabricated in the SAWs shop in Fountain Hills, AZ and will need to be transported to Tucson on the 12th.

Specifics:

- Will need a means to pull the trailer from Fountain Hills to Tucson on the 12th.
- Will need volunteers to install the ramp on the 12th at the convention center.
- Will need volunteers to disassemble the ramp on the 16th.
- Will need a means to pull the trailer back to Fountain Hills.
- All persons 16 and over are welcome.
- Tools will be provided. I'll even provide lunch on the 12th.

Ray Spooner, IHS

[raymond.spooner@comcast.net](mailto:raymond.spooner@comcast.net)

925-321-2312

### **Chancel Choir Summer Break**

The choir has worked hard this past year and it's time for them to take a well-deserved break. They will take time off from June 1st through August 3rd, resuming on Sunday, August 4th.



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**

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

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

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**Narcotics Anonymous (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?pwd=6226481)

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**Chancel Choir**

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

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

-Summer break runs June 1st - August 3rd.

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**Progressive Book Study (PBS)**

-PBS meets on Thursdays at 3PM over Zoom.

The current book is "Poverty, by America" by Matthew Desmond.

Questions? Call 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)

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**Cocaine Anonymous (CA)**

-This support group meets at 6:30PM on

Friday evenings in the Arizona room.



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

We would greatly appreciate having a few more volunteers in the kitchen for food prep before the 10AM worship service and for clean-up after Fellowship hour. The work is not difficult at all, but it can be time-consuming with so few people doing it.

**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:

Grace UMC, Douglas  
Huachuca UMC  
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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### **BIRTHDAYS**

Rev. Ko (May 9)  
Mike Choi (May 10)  
Myong Yun (May 11)

Young Kim (May 15)  
Joyce Garcia (May 26)  
Lana Yoo (May 27)

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

### **Anniversaries**

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, everyone is invited!*

The next Meet'n'Eat is on **Friday, May 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)).

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 seats at the restaurant.

# Animal & Environmental Holidays for April 2024

By Diane & Victoria Russell



## May is National Clean Air Month

Created in 1972 by the American Lung Association. This month encourages people to contribute to cleaner outside and inside air. Ways to help include carpooling, reducing dust at home by vacuuming, choosing pump sprays instead of aerosols, and having houseplants and trees.



## May 8th – World Donkey Day

Created in 2017 to celebrate these hard-working animals, which are often used as a "beast of burden". Sadly, they are often abused and used in harsh conditions. Donkeys are known for being stubborn, but usually only refuse to move if they feel they are not safe or are in danger.



## May 10th–19th – National Public Gardens Week

Created in 2009 by the American Public Gardens Assoc. and Rain Bird to encourage people to visit local public gardens. Tucson's local gardens can provide education on environmental resources such as plants, water conservation, and beautiful green spaces.



## May 11h - Migratory Bird Day

In North America, about 75% of the birds migrate to some extent. Birds usually migrate for better food sources and better climate conditions. This year's theme is "Protect Insects, Protect Birds", which focuses on the importance of insects as a food source for migratory birds.



## May 17th - National Endangered Species Day

Celebrating the 19th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Day which celebrates learning about and taking action to help protect threatened and endangered species. According to the IUCN, there are more than 44,000 species of flora and fauna that are at risk of extinction.



## May 18th – National River Cleanup Day

Starting in 1991 The "American Rivers" org. along with thousands of volunteers have cleaned up rivers across the USA. Rivers are an important source of water, but they also provide habitats for animals and plants. They need to be protected and cleaned up for future generations.





## BE PART OF THE PLAN

International Day  
for Biodiversity  
2024

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

Created by the UN to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues. The 2024 theme is “Be Part of the Plan”. The goal of this day is to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity - to make sure that all creatures and ecosystems not only survive but will thrive.



### May 25th – World Fish Migration Day

Migratory fish swim short or long distances to complete their life cycle, mate, and feed. The goal of this day is to ensure the survival of these species for future generations. This year’s theme is “Free Flow” - to help safeguard rivers and restore swim ways for migratory fish.



### May 28th Intersectional Environmentalist Day

Created in 2020 by Leah Thomas, a Los Angeles environmentalist. This day recognizes that environmental injustice does not affect all people equally. Intersectional Environmentalism advocates for the protection of both people and the planet.



### May 29th – World Otter Day

This holiday was created in 2014 by the International Otter Survival Fund to raise awareness about these cute and playful mammals. There are 13 different species. All species of otters are at risk of survival due to habitat loss, road accidents, illegal trade for fur and as pets.



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.