



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

First United Methodist Church
915 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719
www.firstchurchtucson.org

2.22.2021

First Church Tucson is an inclusive multi-ethnic faith community, 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 and disability, and sexual orientation.

We welcome you to join in our journey of faith through worship, prayer, Bible study, and service for social justice and ministries of compassion.

At First Church Tucson,
you have a home.
At First Church Tucson,
You have a family of faith.
At First Church Tucson,
you belong.



“Planting Seeds of Faith”

By South District Superintendent Matt Ashley

“The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.”

~Isaiah 51:3~

Look at the Facebook page of Frontera Wesley, our campus ministry in the South District, and you'll see pictures of college students planting a community garden together between the Campus Christian Center and First United Methodist Church of Tucson, just off Park Avenue. With shovels and laughter and joy, some young people planted seeds of faith that will one day soon be a living testimony of God's abundance and goodness to the University of Arizona community walking past.

When my wife Felida and I moved into our new house in Vail, we had a new back yard full of nothing but dirt, an empty canvas of possibility for a willing gardener. But we lack the time and energy, the passion and commitment to plant and tend a garden, so we did the exact opposite. We hired a company to put down synthetic grass and landscape fabric and rock, creating a wonderful area for our two dogs to run and play in but no plants for us to tend, no lawn for us to mow, and hopefully few weeds for us to pull.

(cont. pg 3)

THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE!

Find us on Youtube for a live stream of our Sunday morning reflection followed immediately with Zoom fellowship gathering.

Sundays @ 10AM (English), 11:30AM (Korean)
Visit <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube> and subscribe to the channel. (Address is case-sensitive.)

First Church Fellowship is on Zoom.

[Meeting ID: 972 7492 7766](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

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한국어 사역

주일 오전 11:30에 Youtube에서 말씀 묵상 나눔이 있습니다. <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube>

이어서 Zoom에서 교제에 시간이 있습니다.

[Meeting ID: 998 6112 0822](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

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같은 주소에 금요일 오후 7시 소그룹에 초대합니다.

WEEKDAY ONLINE GATHERINGS

Women on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

-A classic UM small group accountability and fellowship on Monday Evenings at 4:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 920 5951 9248](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

All God's Creation (AGC)

-A time of scripture reading and reflection with a focus on living creatures, on Wednesday Mornings at 10AM.

[Meeting ID: 994 3610 1655](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

Chancel Choir

- The choir meets in our cars! Join us for Parking-Lot Choir, this Saturday (2/20) at 2pm.
- Meet with the choir online from the comfort and safety of your home on Wednesday Evenings at 6:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 929 7830 4567](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

Progressive Book Study (PBS)

- Would you like to be part of a book study? If you'd enjoy reading with us, join Progressive Christian theology on Thursday Afternoons at 2PM. The new book is titled: "Eternal Life - A New Vision" by John Shelby Spong.

[Meeting ID: 980 1573 8087](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube) Passcode: 6226481

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*Not seeing something of interest?
We'd love to hear from you. Let's talk.
Contact pastor@firstchurchtucson.org*

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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 those caring for them.

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We offer our prayers for these sister faith communities:

Huachuca UMC, Huachuca City
UMC of Green Valley, Green Valley
Patagonia Community UMC, Patagonia
First UMC, Safford

SUPPORT FIRST CHURCH TUCSON

Head to our website, www.firstchurchtucson.org, 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.
We thank you for your commitment to making a difference in our community.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Byung Kim (Feb 24)

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

SOUL KITCHEN

Ravioli with Creamy Squash Sauce

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/ravioli-with-creamy-squash-sauce/>

Ingredients

1 pkg (9 oz) refrigerated
cheese ravioli
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp butter
1 pkg (10 oz) frozen cooked
winter squash, thawed
1 pkg (6 oz) fresh baby
spinach
1 cup heavy whipping cream
½ cup vegetable broth
¼ tsp salt
1 cup chopped walnuts,
toasted

Directions

1. Cook ravioli according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, in a Dutch oven, saute garlic in butter for 1 minute. Add squash and spinach; cook 2-3 minutes longer or until spinach is wilted. Stir in cream, broth and salt. Bring to a gentle boil; cook for 6-8 minutes or until slightly thickened.
3. Drain ravioli; add to squash mixture. Toss to coat. Sprinkle with walnuts.

“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.”

~ John Wesley

PLANTING SEEDS OF FAITH (cont.)

It works well for us, and yet I'm aware of the missed opportunity of what could've grown in that space.

There's something to that, isn't there? Human beings have a long relationship with the soil, dating back to Cain, the tiller of the ground in Genesis Chapter 4. My own ancestors tended the soil in Nebraska, raised crops in Mississippi and the Carolinas, perhaps farmed in England and Ireland and Bohemia. But sometimes we'd rather not get our hands in the soil, and so we hire others to do our dirty work for us.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Season of Lent, a forty day period of spiritual preparation when we face our own mortality, acknowledge our own brokenness, cooperate with God in pulling out the weeds and planting seeds of faith. We sift through the dirt in which we've been mucking about, realizing the ways we've dishonored God and harmed our neighbors and done the very things we do not want to do. We do this remembering that Cain spilled his own brother's blood into the soil and that we are more like Cain than we'd like to admit.

And yet we have the choice to sanitize or overlook the Season of Lent, to forego the business of pulling weeds and planting flowers, to hire landscapers who'll cover the soil with fabric and artificial turf and rock so we don't have to acknowledge or deal with what lies beneath. (Though despite our best efforts, the weeds will find their way through eventually.)

My new work as District Superintendent can be dominated by administrative concerns, so removed from the rhythms of worship and local church ministry that twice I have forgotten about Ash Wednesday and asked my clergy colleagues to schedule meetings that night. They have had to gently remind me that Ash Wednesday is not about meetings but about ashes and dust and mortality and pulling weeds and planting seeds.

And so I want to remind you of the Community Garden planted by the college students of Frontera Wesley. Community because it's not a solitary endeavor of an individual behind a block wall in a back yard, but a community effort of people coming together, planting seeds, with no walls, for all who walk past to enjoy. A garden where soil must be tended, weeds pulled, seeds watered, all so that flowers and plants, faith and hope, love and joy will grow.

Maybe this Season of Lent can be like that. A season of coming together and sifting the soil through our fingers together, of finding the broken pieces of what has been shattered in our life together, of pulling out what doesn't belong and what doesn't give life, of planting and raising flowers that bloom in the diversity and creative goodness of God's green earth.

When we cooperate with God in acknowledging our brokenness and seeking a better way of living life together, the wastelands become a garden of the Lord, with joy and gladness in abundance. And so I invite all of us to observe a Holy Season of Lent together.

Thanks for listening –
Matt

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus' 40 Days in the wilderness was more than a period of testing by Satan. It was more than simply showcasing how holy Jesus was, or how human Jesus was, or how well-versed in scripture Jesus was. It was a time of preparation before his ministries, a time of preparation we are called to follow.

Most references of a 40 day period in scripture follow the same theme. 40 days, Moses waited for the commandments. 40 days, the spies surveyed the land. 40 days is in some way a time designated for preparation. Yet, it was not always received as such. During the 40 days of Moses, the Israelites made for themselves idols. Returning from the 40 days of surveying, 10 of the 12 spies reported that the promise land was an impossible future. Joshua and Caleb on the other hand saw the potential, and were ready to enter.

The fact that Caleb and Joshua felt differently than the other 10 suggests that we can either consider periods in our life as punishment or as time of preparation.

How will we spend these 40 days of lent? As a time of preparation for what is to come? Or as a time of punishment? It all depends on our focus.

Will we focus on our suffering? Or will we focus on what God is calling us to be? Will we focus on ourselves? Or will we focus on being selfless? Will we make demands of when and how God should respond to us? Or will we follow what and how God is leading us?

May our time during these 40 days be a period of preparation.

Pastor Paul Cho



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