



**First United Methodist Church**  
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## “Trusting in God's Providence as We Reflect on 2024”

By Rev. Dr. Eun Ko

Dear Beloved Church Family,

As we approach the close of this year, I find myself deeply reflective, having returned from South Korea where I had the sacred privilege of being present during my father's last moments and funeral. Living far from my parents, I often wondered whether I could ever be with them in their final moments. By God's providence, I was blessed to be by my father's side in this pivotal time—a gift I will cherish forever.



During those days, my mother, who lives alone on Jeju Island, found comfort and strength as I navigated the many challenges of hospital care, discharge, home care, and the intricacies of the funeral process. With my three siblings living on the mainland, I felt the immense weight of responsibility, but also a profound sense of gratitude that God enabled me to walk with her through such a tender and challenging season.

Life, as we know all too well, is uncertain. It rarely unfolds according to our plans or desires.

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## Trusting in God's Providence as We Reflect on 2024 cont.

Yet, in the midst of uncertainty, God's providence shines through—powerful, steady, and beyond our comprehension. I saw it in the way everything came together, even in the face of grief, allowing me to celebrate my father's life through multiple services: when we entered the funeral home, when my sisters' church pastor and his congregation traveled from the mainland to gather with us, when we departed for cremation, and finally, when we laid my father's ashes to rest. Each moment became a sacred celebration, a testimony to God's abiding grace.

What about you? As you reflect on this past year, what moments did not go according to your plans or desires? Perhaps one or two, or perhaps many. Yet, even in those moments of disruption or loss, let us place our trust in God's providence, knowing that His plans are always greater, stronger, and more gracious than ours.

As we reflect, let us hold fast to God's promise in Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

잠언 3:5-6:

“너는 마음을 다하여 여호와를 신뢰하고 네 명철을 의지하지 말라. 너는 범사에 그를 인정하라 그리하면 네 길을 지도하시리라.”

May we enter the new year with hearts full of hope, ready to embrace God's providence in all that lies ahead.

With love and gratitude,

Pastor Ko

*The pictures of the funeral of my father:*



**Service of Encoffining** - A service held when placing the deceased into the coffin. 11/14/24

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**Memorial Service (Service of Comfort)** - A service held to offer comfort and encouragement to the grieving family. 11/15/24



**Service of Departure** - A service held when the coffin departs the funeral home for burial or cremation. 11/16/24



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**Service after Cremation** - A ceremonial gathering held after the cremation process to honor the deceased, offer prayers, and provide comfort and closure for family and friends, often including rituals for the placement or handling of the ashes. 11/16/24

## What's Happening at First Church in October and November!

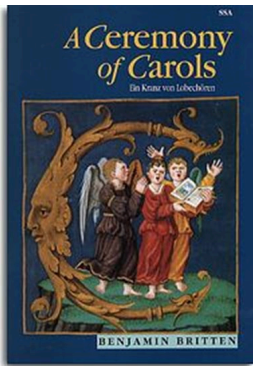


Above: Charge Conference was held on October 1st at 7PM. Below: The memorial service of Shirley Biamonte (Victoria's grandmother & Diane's mother-in-law) on Oct 15, 2024.



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Below: Tea outing with Korean young adults on Oct 20, 2024



## Upcoming Special Sundays and Events

### December 8th at 10AM

This coming Sunday will be a joint service with the Korean congregation, during which there will be **the installation of an Honorary Lay Elder** and then the choir's **Christmas Cantata**. Don't miss it!

### December 22nd at 10AM

**Infant Baptism:** Pastor Ko will baptize Tomoe Poczulp (the grandchild of our Certified Lay Minister, Dottie Poczulp).



### December 24th at 7PM

We will hold a **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** on Tuesday evening.

### December 29th at 11AM

The first Sunday after Christmas will be a **joint service** during which the Korean choir will sing.



### December 30th thru January 3rd

**The church will be closed.** The office will reopen January 6th at 10AM.

## Opportunities for Generosity

1. Through December, a portion of the Christmas offerings will go to **supporting the missionaries** from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).
2. There is a **Christmas sock tree** on the social hall stage waiting to be covered with new socks for our homeless brothers and sisters who are served by The Loving Church.
3. **Operation Santa Paws**, December 1st-24th: Holiday Pet Food and Supply Drive for shelter animals (sponsored by our Animal and Environmental Ministry). Some supplies needed include: toys, treats, pet food and kitten food, blankets, towels, collars, leashes, harnesses, and yoga mats. The collection box is on the social hall stage.



**Dottie Poczulp**, our Certified Lay Minister, had knee replacement surgery on November 18th and is recovering at home. Please pray for her continued healing.

## Charitable Donations for Tax Benefits

If you would like to give to the church in time for the 2024 tax season, please mail in your offering no later than December 31st (your envelope must be postmarked by that date). You can also give online through the 31st at [firstchurchtucson.org/give](https://firstchurchtucson.org/give). Thank you so much for your generosity and goodwill.

### December 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, December 13th at 11:30 AM** at the Olive Garden on the northeast corner of Oracle/Wetmore ([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.



*"YOTO's support has shown me that there is hope and people out in the world that care about you. No matter what I'm struggling with, there are people at YOTO who care about my wellbeing and success."*

*-- YOTO Graduate*

October 29, 2024

Margo Kahler  
First United Methodist Church  
915 E 4th St  
Tucson, AZ 85719-5007

Dear Margo and Congregants of First United Methodist Church,

Every day I meet kids whose lives are better because of the generosity of organizations like yours. They have a fighting chance to finish high school and plan for the future because you showed them that you believe they can succeed. Your recent gift of \$852.00 to Youth On Their Own sends a message to these kids that they are important and deserve to be successful. Thank you!

We are delighted to continue to receive support from First United Methodist Church this year. Because of your dedication and the example you set, YOTO program participants are inspired to lift up not only themselves, but others, helping build a better community for us all. On behalf of everyone here at YOTO – staff, Board, volunteers and students – I thank you. You truly make our work possible. Together, we can empower this generation of young people to create brighter futures for themselves and ensure that no youth's potential is limited by their circumstances!

On behalf of everyone here at YOTO – staff, Board, volunteers and students – I thank you. You truly make our work possible!

All my best,

Bethany Neumann  
Director of Development & Communications

*Your gift of \$852.00 was received on 10/25/2024.  
Unless otherwise stated, no goods or services were exchanged for this gift.*

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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>.

**December 8th at 10AM and December 29th at 11AM** will be joint services.

**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 (NA) (Underground)**

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

-No meeting on December 30th.

<https://natucson.org/>

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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

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**Chancel Choir**

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

-A shorter rehearsal is on Sundays at 9AM.

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**Progressive Book Study (PBS)**

-PBS meets on Thursdays at 3:30PM over Zoom. The new 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: 6226481

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**Cocaine Anonymous (CA)**

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

-No meeting on January 3rd.

<https://catucson.org/>



**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:

Christ Church UM, Tucson  
Community UMC, Bowie  
Duncan UMC

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**

Carol Nelson (Nov 1)  
Marilyn Hall (Nov 6)  
Kyoung Hee Kim (Nov 6)  
Nancy Tomlinson (Nov 7)  
Marjorie Task (Nov 12)

Charlotte Baker (Nov 14)  
Lori Medcoff (Nov 14)  
Megan Dominguez (Nov 23)  
Joonkil Ahn (Nov 29)  
Patricia Murphy (Nov 29)

Nan Rollings (Dec 3)  
Adam Lange (Dec 9)  
Jim Rollings (Dec 19)  
Deanne Kelly (Dec 23)

Don & Nan Rollings (Dec 21) (50 yrs!)  
Gary & Dottie Poczulp (Dec 28)

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

# Animal & Environmental Holidays for November & December 2024

By Diane & Victoria Russell



## November - National Gratitude Month

Gratitude allows us to appreciate the positive in our lives instead of the negative. Being grateful helps us appreciate the little things in life we often take for granted. Some ways to show gratitude include saying “Thank You”, being thankful for what you have, and volunteering your time to give back to others.



## November 28th - Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day has been one of our most cherished American holidays since 1621. It is a day for celebration with your family and friends. It is also a day for expressing gratitude and reflecting on your life's blessings.



## November 29th - International Jaguar Day

Created in 2018 to raise awareness of the critical conservation efforts for this Near Threatened cat in the Americas. Sadly, they are mostly eliminated from the United States, and their populations in Central/South America are down due to trophy hunting, human conflict, and habitat loss.



## December 2nd - World Pollution Prevention Day

Created to honor the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy on December 2, 1984 to raise awareness of pollution control to help prevent future disasters. The 2024 theme is “Clean Air, Green Earth: A Step Towards Sustainable Living”. Reducing pollution today helps ensure a safer planet for tomorrow.



## December 3rd - Giving Tuesday

Created in 2012 by the 92nd Street Y and the United Nations Foundation to inspire people to do good for their communities and the world. Ways to participate include supporting your favorite charity or doing an act of kindness for someone. Remember to be generous every day – not just on Giving Tuesday.



## December 4 - World Wildlife Conservation Day

Created in 2012 by former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton to raise awareness about wildlife conservation. It is a day to end wildlife crime and to support the Endangered Species Act. It also brings awareness about protecting and preserving our planet's flora and fauna.



## December 10th – International Animal Rights Day/Human Rights Day

Created in 1998 by the animal rights group “Uncaged”. This day is also shared with Human Rights Day, because both animals and humans have the right to be treated with respect and without cruelty.



## Dec 14 to Jan 5 – Christmas Bird Count Week

The National Audubon Society has conducted its Christmas bird counts since 1900. Tucson Valley Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is celebrating its 53rd year on December 17th. This is a community science event that counts every bird species encountered within a certain area.



## December 25th – Christmas

Christmas is one of the most important Christian holidays during the year. The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of our Savior – Jesus Christ.



## December 27th – Visit the Zoo Day

The Philadelphia Zoo was the first zoo to open in the US in 1874. Zoos today are held to a higher standard of care. The main goal of zoos is to educate and inspire connections among people and animals. Conservation is another big component of zoos. Celebrate by going to Reid Park Zoo!



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.