

The Messenger

**Cross of Christ
Lutheran Church**
4045 N. Van Nuys Road
Kingman, AZ 86409

Phone: 928-757-3543

Website:

**www.crossofchrist-
kingman.com**

Email:
**crossofchristkingman
@gmail.com**

Paul Mueller, Pastor



Worship Services

Sunday: 10:00 am

Wed. 4:00 pm: at Flowers Wed.

6:30 pm: at White Cliffs

Worship at White Cliffs every

Fourth Sunday: 1:30 pm

Communion

*1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays and
Wednesdays of each month.*

Bible Classes

Sunday: 9:00 am

Tuesday: 11:00 am & 1:30 pm

Wednesday: 1:30 pm

Thursday: 1:30 pm & 7:00 pm

Thursday 4:15 pm (Catechism)

Men's Bible Class

Second Saturday: 9:30 am

Sunday School

Sunday: 9:00 am

~~ APRIL 2020 ~~

Message from the Pastor

Only God Knows

An old Christian man lived in a small German village. He was envied by many for he owned a small but beautiful and unique grove of trees whose wood was highly valued. People offered considerable sums for his trees, but the man sold the lumber from only a few trees. These hard-to-grow trees were planted by his grandfather as a family memorial.

One day lightning hit the tallest tree and set a fire which burned the grove. The villagers scoffed. "You old fool, we told you, you should sell the trees! You could have gotten a fortune. Now they're gone; you've been cursed by God."

The old man responded, "Don't speak too quickly. The trees are gone. That's all we know now. If I've been cursed, how can you know? Who can say what will come next? **Only God knows!**"

The people laughed. They had always thought he was a fool for not selling the trees.

The next spring something amazing happened. The dead trees provided a rich soil for seedlings to grow and a new and even greater forest was beginning. Once again, the villagers gathered around the woodcutter and spoke. "Old man, you were right and we were wrong. What we thought was a curse was a blessing. Please forgive us."

The man responded, "Once again, you go too far. The trees are growing back, but how do you know if this is a blessing or not? **Only God knows.**"

"Maybe the old man is right," they said. But down deep, they knew he was wrong. They knew it was a blessing. With a little bit of water, the trees would grow and could be sold for much money. Or they could be sold to start other forests.

But during the rainy season, a particularly heavy rain came. Since the old trees were not there to hold the

soil, it all washed away taking the new trees with it. The people renewed their chant about him being a fool and being cursed.

The old man spoke again. "You people are obsessed with judging. The soil was washed away. Who knows if it is a curse? **Only God knows.**"

It turned out that the rushing water moved several rocks and formed a natural dam at the corner of the man's property. The good silt settled there. The trees could be returned to their original place. And now the old man would not have to worry about a water shortage anymore.

"You were right, old man," they said. "God knows you were right. This proves it.

The old man spoke again. "It's hard to talk with you. You draw conclusions. **Only God knows.**"

The woodsman is right. We don't have all the answers because we don't know the final outcome. Tragedies and triumphs are only pages out of God's book of life he gives to each of us. We must be slow about drawing conclusions. We must reserve judgment, especially on life's storms, until we know the whole story. We have a God who promised to send nothing more than we could bear.

Is Covid19 a curse or a blessing? Only God knows! It has been a challenge, that's for sure. But perhaps God is using this as a caution to us. Our lives here are only temporary. Eternity is forever. Even in our world of sophisticated medical knowledge and equipment, a 'bug' is wreaking havoc on the world. Is this a call to be sure we have a rock-solid trust in God?! Is this a time to "**be still and know that I am God**"? Job 30

When Good Friday unfolded, I'm sure the disciples would have said this was a curse. But for sinners of all ages, it was and is a blessing because Jesus took away our sins through his suffering, death and resurrection. Only God knows what is best for us and only God can be trusted to do what is best for us. Jesus went through some pretty wild ups and downs. Yet he knew that each one of them was accomplishing a purpose. Isaiah knew that too when he wrote "**as the rain comes down from Heaven... so that it (the Earth) yields... bread for the eater, so is my Word...It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire.**" Jesus' death gives us life. Easter's empty tomb shows Good Friday's horror had a purpose. **Only God knows**—and through faith we do too!

Come celebrate that with us on Easter Sunday (figuring that we will be able to have worship services that day.) Jesus is Lord. He is Risen Indeed!



Something to Think About Do you Believe This?

Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." John 11:25-27

Jesus asked Martha a very pointed question, and it came at a most difficult time. Lazarus, her brother, had just died. Emotionally she was conflicted. Physically she was drained. Mentally she was confused. Although Jesus did offer her words of promise and assurance, he also added that key question, "Do you believe this?" In reality, the question was even more direct, "Do you trust me?" Martha's answer is a testimony to her confidence in Jesus and an example for us.

Every day we face many challenges. Some are easy to overcome. Others are more difficult. Still, with persistence we usually manage. There are even times when we find a source of strength I didn't know I had. Throughout these times we are able to say with some certainty, "I believe."

This certainty will be seriously challenged in extreme situations. How will I respond if someone close to me dies? How will I respond if I am diagnosed with Covid 19? What if something permanently alters my life? How will I find a source of strength when emotionally, physically, and mentally I'm empty? Will I still say, "I believe?"

This is where Martha becomes a wonderful example. When Jesus asked her, "Do you believe this?" she gave a resounding and inspiring answer. More than saying, "I believe this," she said, "I trust you."

Here is where I need to re-examine and reinforce my faith. At the worst possible time, Martha said, "I can trust you, Jesus." I need that same unshakable trust. What is reassuring is that Jesus goes to great lengths to provide that trust. Certainly, his loving promise to be with me always tells me I can trust him. He offers me more. By his death on the cross, Jesus rescued me from the punishment for sin. As my Savior, he offers me the great assurance of forgiveness and the gift of God's peace. And by his resurrection, Jesus proved his victory over the devil, my greatest enemy, and he takes away my fear of eternal death. I have every reason to trust him for this life, and for the life to come in heaven.

In this life there will be many disappointments, and many people will prove to be disappointing, so it is often difficult to find someone or something I can always trust. There remains one bright hope that will never fail to shine even in the darkest of times, and that is Jesus. He is someone I can always trust. Pastor Dan Wagenknecht



Live Bible studies have been suspended. Pastor is hoping to have a weekly Bible Study on the church website. He would mail out the materials, conduct class by video, then invite you to email or phone in your questions/comments. Again, you must let Pastor know if you are interested before he begins.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES & ALTERNATIVES

With Covid 19's specter floating around like Satan, everything is up in the air. After prayer and consideration of both the spiritual and physical health of our congregation, AS OF APRIL 1, WE WILL NOT HOLD LIVE SERVICES. Call or go to our website for the latest. We are looking into getting a FM transmitter and having people come to church and remain in their cars. Social distancing could be maintained and the word of God heard through your car radio. (The transmitter we're considering would only have a range of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.)

We are putting an abbreviated service online along with the sermon. Our camera quality was not good. So, we are working on improving that. It will be ready by Easter (April 12). If you have any questions, contact us by email. OR if you would like the sermon mailed to you, let us know. If you could give an offering to help off-set the postage costs, that would be much appreciated.

YOUR GIFTS & OFFERINGS are still very important. Church expenses continue. Please mail your offering to our address.

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Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship will be conducted by Phoenix area Pastors. These worship services too are on our website.

One more thing, if you prefer a 'live' service, Grace Lutheran in Tucson livestreams its services. We have a link on our page to it and to the WELS church in Morriston, TN.

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

Since we cannot have Easter services on April 12th in person, you can still hear and see it through the website as we mentioned above. However, we do plan on having a complete Holy Week schedule when the governor gives the all clear. That means we might celebrate Easter in the middle of July. Better to celebrate later than not at all.

FEARFUL OF COVID-19? Pastor has written a comforting message about that very topic. It too is on the church website. He is also available to talk anytime by phone.

DID YOU KNOW that nearly all of Pastor Mueller's sermons are on YouTube? Just go to YouTube and type in Cross of Christ Kingman and you should be able to find it. You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel from the Sermon tab on the church website. The latest sermon will be up front; all you have to do is click on it.

Humor- A smiling man came to his priest to confess his sins. "Bless me Father for I have sinned in adultery with three beautiful women." The priest told him God had forgiven him. But he also told him to go home and squeeze the juice of ten lemons into a glass and then drink it. "Is this some new form of penance?" the man asked. "No", the priest replied, "but it will wipe that stupid smile off your face."



**APRIL
FELLOWSHIP
MEALS SCHEDULE¹**

<u>DAY</u>	<u>MAIN DISH</u>	<u>HOST(S)</u>
5 th		
12 ^h	EASTER BREAKFAST	Gene & Shari
19 th	MEAT LOAF	Mark & Rhonda
26 th	Hot Dogs	Christine & Peggy

¹Subject to cancellation based on current status

MARCH

<u>Worship Attendance</u>		<u>Fellowship Meal Attendance</u>	
1 & 4	124	1 & 4	70
8 & 11	95	8 & 11	59
15 & 18	80	15 & 18	51
22 & 25	34	22	N/A
29		29	N/A



APR BIRTHDAYS

1 st	Vern Peglow
4 th	Bradley Wood
12 th	Norma Noyes
22 nd	Sarah Maczuga
26 th	Danna Woods
27 th	Annette Peglow
30 th	Bob Boyd
30 th	Merissa Wood



APR ANNIVERSARIES

8 th	Steve & Joyce Shaffer
8 th	Paul & Kris Taranec

We are always in need of the following items for our Sunday morning meals:

- Lg. & small dinner plates (heavyweight paper)
- Dessert plates (heavyweight paper)
- Dessert/Soup bowls (heavyweight paper)
- Forks, knives & spoons (heavyweight/plastic)
- Coffee (regular & decaf)
- Powdered coffee creamer
- Rolls of paper towels

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Providing a dish to share at the Sunday meal or kitchen supplies & food items are greatly appreciated.



**APR USHERS**

Carl Barnes  
Steve Shaffer  
Bill Neal  
Jimmy Woods  
Dwayne Nessa

# THE LADIES CIRCLE



Thank you to all the ladies who attended March's monthly meeting on Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>.

## 2019/2020 Series - Virtues of a Proverbs 31 Woman

### MARCH DEVOTION - INDUSTRY

She is a willing worker, cheerful and content with initiative to work hard on her own.

The Proverbs 31 Woman is an eager worker that delights in work.

...[she] works with willing hands. ~ *Proverbs 31:13*

The Proverbs 31 Woman is business savvy with confidence to make good decisions.

...[she] considers a field and buys it; ...~ *Proverbs 31:16*

The Proverbs 31 Woman is industrious.

...[she] sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. ~ *Proverbs 31:18*



## *April Meeting Postponed*

Date: ~~Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>~~

Time: ~~9:30 am~~

Where: Education Building

Devotion series: Virtues of a Proverbs 31 Woman



***All ladies of the congregation are invited to our monthly meetings. We look forward to the Christian fellowship, planned activities and the missions we support!***

## **HOSTS NEEDED**

Contact Christine Hanson if you are interested in becoming a host for the Sunday fellowship meals. Meal hosts are alternated during the month.

**FUTURE ACTIVITIES are postponed until further notice.**