
Mount Cross Chronicle

April 2026



601 E. Highway 260
Payson, AZ 85541
Phone: 928-474-2552
www.mountcross.org

Sunday Worship/Communion Service

9:30 a.m.

Livestreamed
Online Worship Service

Mount Cross Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/MountCrossPayson>

Mount Cross YouTube Link
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=payson+mount+cross

Pastor

Rev. Carl Sirotzki
928-474-2552
608-370-1284 (emergencies)
pastor@mountcross.org

Music Director
Daria Mason
daria1024mason@gmail.com

Accompanist
Angeline Ng

Office Administrator
Lenore M. White
secretary@mountcross.org

Custodian
Keri Morris

Pastor's Musings & Ponderings

"...he has risen, just as he said..." Matthew 28:6 (NIV)

It has been an amazing Lenten season again this year at Mount Cross and there are so many who helped make this a very special Lent. We had the Giving Tree with all of the meaningful prayers, scriptures, blessings and hopes that so many shared on the leaves. We also had the Lenten challenges that individuals and families participated in. Then there were the Holy Week boxes that again, were used by individuals and families. Of course our Wednesday evening Lenten worship service with the Holden Evening Prayer and a new Voices of Lent.

None of these things would have been possible without the creativity and dedication of those who helped put all of these together. Thank you to all who provided their gifts of time, ideas, creativity, music, and readings. We at Mount Cross are so fortunate to have a congregation that is so rich in gifts and so willing to share their gifts for the benefit of everyone. I am truly humbled by all that you do for God's people and the glory of God.

April has always seemed to a "Spring Cleaning" month. I'll always remember when I was growing up that Spring Cleaning meant to me that I better hide my baseball cards, some board games, and records out of my mom's enthusiastic cleaning reach come every April. Although I wasn't always successful in my efforts, I was usually able to save some of my most treasured baseball cards, at least until the next year.

However, what I did learn from those Spring Cleaning days of my youth was that it could be a good thing to reassess what I considered to be treasures. Sometimes, it's not only the physical things and places that we need to go over. Sometimes it's a good idea to see what we have been holding onto in our hearts that needs sprucing up or even letting go of.

A blessed and happy Easter to all of you from Jo and I!!

Peace,
Pastor Carl
Philippians 1:3-4

Pastor Carl will be taking a few days off after Easter Sunday: Monday, April 6th through Wednesday, April 8th. During this time, Madeline Fuentez (414-217-3409) can be contacted if emergency pastoral care is needed.



Our STATEMENT . . . ChristConnectingCommunity



The featured food items for the month of April are 1# bags of spaghetti and cans of spaghetti sauce. Featured items may be placed on the table located in the narthex near the entrance doors going into the sanctuary.

Reminder: the 3rd Sunday of the month is Food Bank Sunday. You are encouraged to purchase any non-perishable food items and place them in the grocery cart on that Sunday.

ELCA's World Hunger 40 Days of Giving program during Lent generated \$545.00. Thanks to all who picked up a pink pig; collected change, dollars, and wrote checks during the Lenten season; and turned in on Palm Sunday. Those who receive food due to your generosity will enjoy some nourishment that they may not have been able to experience.

The Global Missions Team will meet on Sunday, April 12th, after the service in the back of the sanctuary. We will be discussing future fundraising events. Anyone interested in joining the team is welcome to attend and share their ideas!



Where can you be of assistance? Do you have a love for the outdoors? Do you enjoy fixing things? Do you like to share stories and experiences with others?

Why not stop by on Thursday mornings and help to beautify the church campus? The group of gentlemen, known as the Property Committee would welcome you with tools and comradery.

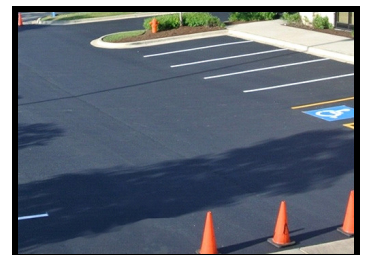
UPKEEPING THE PREMISES

Father & Sons Window Cleaning will be servicing the insides and outsides of the windows of the main church and office on Friday, April 17th, beginning around 7:30 a.m.



Carpet cleaning is scheduled for Building B (log building) on Friday, April 17th, with an anticipated start time of 9:00 a.m. Please refrain from accessing the building during Friday and Saturday (April 18th) to allow time for the carpet to dry thoroughly.

Please be aware that portions of the parking lot will be closed for asphalt crack sealing on Wednesday, April 29th. Holbrook Asphalt Company will be performing this service. If you have business with the church on that day, please park in the dirt area.



Mount Cross Financial Report (January – February 2026)



2026 Approved Budget	\$333,699.58
Income	\$61,823.00 (18.52% of 2026 budget)
Expenditures.	\$48,240.00 (14.45% of 2026 budget)
Under (Over)	\$13,583.00

Pledged-to-date / Given \$44,471.00 / \$40,011.00 (90%)

2026 Mortgage Fund

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during February 2026	\$4,341.00
Total Principal paid out in 2026 for mortgage.	\$22,725.00
Current Principal balance	\$300,671.00
Pledged-to-Date / Given-to-Date	\$6,353.00 / \$24,739.00 (389%)

Please note: above amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Total income received from Thrivent "Choice Dollars" in 2026
 Mount Cross. \$180.00

Yours in Christ,
Barb DeYoung
Finance Secretary



"Our God Is an Awesome God" Piano Concert
Sunday, May 3, at 3:00 p.m.
 at the Payson United Methodist Church

LaDonna Welsh will share piano arrangements of well-loved Christian hymns/praise songs during the program titled, "Our God Is an Awesome God." You are warmly invited to this opportunity to celebrate God's gift of music. LaDonna was the interim organist/pianist at Mount Cross before Angeline, and during that time offered a piano concert enjoyed by many Mount Cross members. LaDonna has a Master of Music degree from Arizona State University and is retired from a career in music ministry and public education. Please plan to come, invite your friends and neighbors, and share 75 minutes of worshipping God through music.



A long time, active member of Mount Cross, Jerry Carlson, was the creator of the cross that currently stands in the altar area of the church. Many are not familiar with the story that brought about this cross. The following pages had been written by the creator of the cross and provides that story.

"For God So Loved The World" **The Story Behind Our Cross**

For many years I have made canes for my dad, uncles, and friends; first finding them in the woods as dead branches, always sanding them to perfection, staining them to bring out the character of the wood, and finally, a coat of polyurethane to protect them. My dad made the statement "I don't need it yet, but maybe someday I will." Later, he found other people in the community that needed a cane. Once it was made, he would proudly give it to his friend saying, "My son made it for you."

The cross I have given to our church comes in a miraculous way. The day after our 38th wedding anniversary, my wife and I traveled to Pine to look at a cabin that was for sale. The little old lady that owned it had cinnamon buns baking in the oven . . . need I say more.

The following day, I received word that my wife had been killed instantly in a car accident. This tragic news was devastating to my family, myself, and many close friends and neighbors. I knew I needed to buy the cabin for our family; it would help with the healing process. Meanwhile, with the little old lady seriously ill and confused about the move, I thought it would be best to allow her to continue living in the cabin until her home was built.

One day she called and said that there was a lot of activity of the two lots below the cabin. I remembered that they were for sale. I called the realtor and found out that he had an offer on them. I remember telling him, "Before we conclude this call, you will have two offers." Needless to say, I bought them.



300 yr old alligator juniper tree that
branch from cross was taken

After moving up from the Valley, I found a majestic alligator juniper tree in the middle of a small wash on one of the extra lots I had purchased. I noticed that it had many dead branches that would eventually need pruning. Three years later, with help from my neighbor, Darrold, and his new chainsaw, we finally cleaned it up. Most of the twisted branches would become firewood, but there was one branch that stood out from the rest with future possibilities. It was about 9 feet long and straight. I remember telling Darrold, "I might be able to make a cross out of it." I vividly remember thinking, if it turned out well, it could be given to our church. We have so many people that give of their time and talents, surely I could do my part.

I had no idea how many hours it would take, but somehow it didn't matter. Nearly a year and a half later it began to take shape. During that time, I had helped Bill and Edie Morris as they prepared to move. Bill and I had served together on the Call Committee and we had accompanied one of our pastoral candidates on a tour of Main Street prior to the required interviews; it was a memorable experience for all three of us. That candidate became our new pastor, and Pastor Elaine has become near and dear to us. Bill was a strong motivating force as he encouraged me to complete the cross before his move. It was his desire to be present when Pastor Elaine was given the cross. I wish Bill could have been present during the services on Palm Sunday, Maundy, Thursday, and Easter Sunday. His gentle prodding was necessary as I struggled to complete the cross only about two weeks before he moved.



Cross draped in mourning



Cross draped in Easter glory

The hugs, handshakes, and sincere appreciation shared by so many have made it all worthwhile. I had finally given something back to the church family that has given me so much throughout my healing process for the past six years. I feel honored and privileged to have done this for all of you and to see how the cross added to the inspirational services of this past Holy Week. I feel as a congregation, we have just begun. Many friends, neighbors, and relatives will gain from our witness of a life-size cross as THE STORY is told for many years to come.

You are a gifted congregation in a community that has many people struggling through life without the benefits of a church family. May this cross help you share the good news of the gospel with these people.

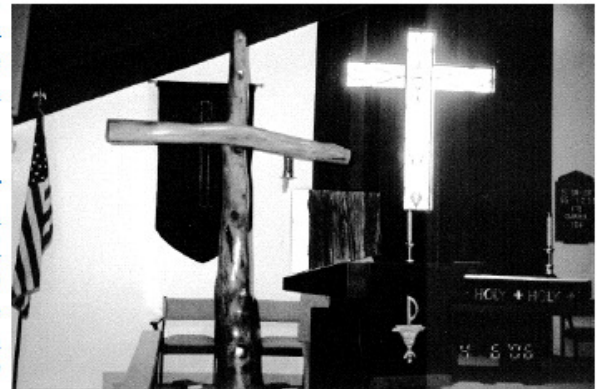
Jesus was crucified and died on a cross very much like this one.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

May God continue to bless you as you go forward in your ministry.

Thanks to the many people who helped make this possible: Darrold Mahlman, Bill Morris, Jim Potter, Jim Bailey, Tom Backe, our musicians, the Altar Guild, Pastor Elaine Watskey, but most of all to God himself for His inspiration along the way.

The tree that produced this branch is now older than our country. For 300 years, it has overcome fire, drought, and severe weather conditions, while this branch remained strong enough to become the cross that you now see. So then, should this writing stop here? Why was this tree singled out and saved for 300 years? Why was this branch saved among the twisted branches that became firewood? "Why me, Lord?" Why Payson and Pine? Where do we fit? Why Mount Cross?



Finished cross

Those of you who have attended Mount Cross for the past few years know the answer, for here you will find the Holy Spirit at work. Is there more work to be done? Emphatically, YES! So, then, go forth and "let your light so shine" for we have all been touched by the healing hands of God Himself, who has given so much.

Thanks again,

JERRY CARLSON

Daria Mason, the Music Director, will be away during most of the month of April. Here is the schedule for the month:



Bell Choir practice

- ◆ Maundy Thursday, April 2nd: after the service (approximately 5:45 p.m.)
- ◆ Easter Sunday, April 5th: 8:30 a.m.
- ◆ Thursday, April 9th: no rehearsal
- ◆ Sunday, April 12th: no rehearsal
- ◆ Thursday, April 16th: 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ Sunday, April 19th: no rehearsal
- ◆ Thursday, April 23rd: 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ Sunday, April 26th: 8:30 a.m.

Praise Choir practice

- ◆ will not meet during Holy Week
- ◆ Easter Sunday, April 5th: 9:00 a.m.
- ◆ Thursday, April 9th: 4:15 p.m.
- ◆ Sunday, April 12th: 9:00 a.m.
- ◆ Thursday, April 16th: no rehearsal
- ◆ Sunday, April 19th: 8:45 a.m.
- ◆ Thursday, April 23rd: 4:15 p.m.
- ◆ Sunday, April 26th: 9:00 a.m.

Spiritual Growth Opportunities

Worship Services

Weekly in-house communion & worship service held in the sanctuary; live stream of the service is available on Facebook.

Sundays, 9:30 AM

Prayer Session

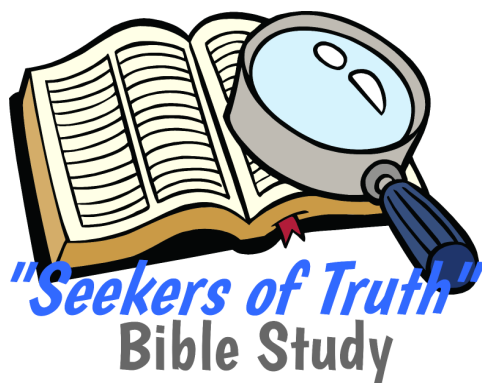
Weekly gathering of those who desire to spend time in prayer: "Where two or more are gathered in Jesus' name, Jesus is there among them."

Fridays, 1:00 PM in the Ponderosa Room.

Seekers of Truth Bible study

This is a monthly Bible study which will be focusing on the parables of Jesus. All are welcome to attend.


3rd Thursday of the month, 9:30 AM in the conference room.



Seekers of Truth is a small Bible study and fellowship group for women and men, which is held on the third Thursday of each month in the conference room at 9:30 a.m. April 16th is the date for this month's meeting.

The group is currently studying the parables of Jesus.

All are welcome to attend. All you need is a Bible. The formal discussion period of the meeting generally lasts about an hour and is followed by a time for sharing and support. If you have questions please contact Susan Nafziger, the group discussion leader, or Jan Bartoli, the group facilitator.



Church office hours
during Holy Week:
Closed on Friday, April 3rd
in respect for the
passing of our Lord.

JOIN US FOR



Holy Week

Palm Sunday - 9:30 AM
Maundy Thursday - 5:00 PM
Good Friday - Noon

&

Easter Sunday

9:30 AM

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

April Birthdays

- 2 Terri Stevens
- 4 Sallie Loman
- 7 Judy Douglas
- 10 Shannon Bleakley
- 30 Catalina Dietrich

April Wedding Anniversaries

- 5 Mike Buskirk/Daria Mason
- 12 Mark/Susie Duffy

April Baptisms

- 14 Linda Wiebe



Imagine

*A Concert Presented by
Angeline Ng, Family, and Friends
at Mount Cross Lutheran Church*

*Easter Sunday
April 5th at 4:00 p.m.
Free admission*

SPRING!!

**A time...for
music**

Monthly Jazz Concerts

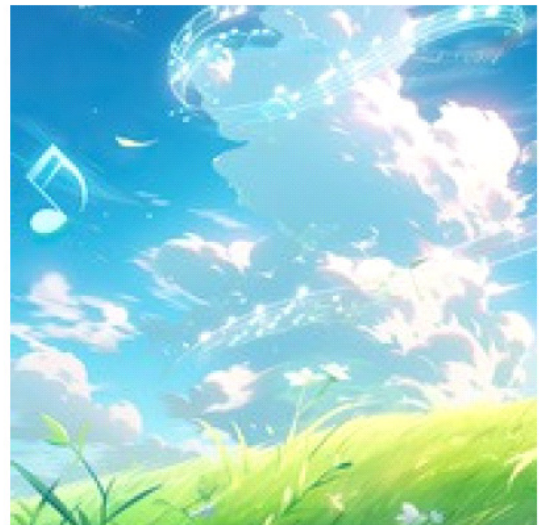


Jazz Concerts will be held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the Mount Cross sanctuary.

This month's concert will occur on Sunday, April 12th.

All in the Payson community are invited to attend and enjoy an afternoon of music!

Payson Choral Society Presents
To Touch the Sky



Payson High School Auditorium
April 25 - 4:00 PM
April 26 - 2:00 PM

This year's scholarship winners will perform!

\$10 Advance Tickets. \$15 at the Door
Students admitted free of charge
Tickets available from Payson Choral Society
members and at the Payson Public Library

Adam Burriel, Director
Beth Christensen, Collaborating Pianist

**A time...
for rejoicing!**