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# Mount Cross Chronicle

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April 2025

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601 E. Highway 260  
Payson, AZ 85541  
Phone: 928-474-2552  
[www.mountcross.org](http://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](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=payson+mount+cross)

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**Pastor**

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

**Music Director**  
Daria Mason

[daria1024mason@gmail.com](mailto:daria1024mason@gmail.com)

**Accompanist**  
Angeline Ng

**Office Administrator**  
Lenore M. White  
[secretary@mountcross.org](mailto:secretary@mountcross.org)

**Custodian**  
Keri Morris

## ***Pastor's Musings & Ponderings***

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)*

For some reason, I cannot think about Easter without thinking of these gospel verses. Many may recognize the above passage as the Great Commission. This occurs after Jesus' resurrection and is the command Jesus gives to the disciples to go out and spread his teachings to all the nations, making them disciples and baptizing them. However, Jesus doesn't just give them a pat on the back and wish them the best of luck. He assures them that he is always with them to the end of the age. This command and promise is for us as well.

This command serves as the very foundation of evangelism and all missions in Christian theology. The Great Commission encourages us, all of us, to actively spread our faith to one and all by sharing the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But how can we do this? We can do this simply by talking to others. We can do this by bringing a friend or neighbor to church with us. We can do this by telling others about Mount Cross and of course, by living what we preach. I remember a teenaged young lady who had never attended church until a friend brought her to a Sunday service. It wasn't long after that she brought her younger brother and then, what seemed like a short while later, she and her brother were both baptized and eventually confirmed.

I am not saying that will always be the case when we share our faith with someone, but we will never know unless we actually do it. If you're not sure how to start sharing your faith, let's get together and see what we come up with. You may just surprise yourself. Remember, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

God bless you. I pray that you and your families will experience a most Blessed Easter!

Peace,  
*Pastor Carl*  
Philippians 1:3-4

### **Pastor Carl's weekly schedule**

Monday: Sabbath (day off)  
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.  
Thursday: study, prayer time (not in office, but available by phone, emergencies)  
Friday: 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.  
Saturday: By appointment



Our  $\dagger$   
STATEMENT . . . ChristConnectingCommunity



Due to the transition of recently elected government officials, both national and local, let us pray that the newly elected leadership will rule with wisdom and justice.

Lord,  
You are all-powerful, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May the leaders of Your people recognize that You reign supreme and that they are Your servants and are put in place to do Your will. Give them wisdom and a heart for being just. Help them to seek Your guidance, as did the biblical leaders of old...such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, et al.  
We ask this in Your mighty name.  
Amen.

## GLOBAL MISSIONS

The featured food items for the month of April are **cans of fruit and soup** (*pop-top cans are preferred*). Featured items may be placed on the table located in the narthex near the entrance doors going into the sanctuary.

Reminder: the **3<sup>rd</sup> 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.


God's work.  
Our hands.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.


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.

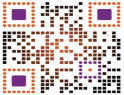



Because of you, life doesn't stop.

### #VitalToLife



**ADVANCE APPOINTMENTS**  
are encouraged.






## Payson Community BLOOD DRIVE


Monday, April 21, 2025  
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Mount Cross Lutheran Church ~ Donate in the Log Cabin  
601 E. Hwy 260 ~ Payson, AZ

To schedule your lifesaving appointment, visit [vitalant.org](https://vitalant.org) (Enter Blood Drive Code: P1057) or scan the QR code. For questions, please contact Vitalant at 877.258.4825

Two lucky donors will win groceries for a year! Donate April 1-30 and you'll be entered for a chance to win a \$10,000 gift card! Details at [vitalant.org/GroceryGiveaway](https://vitalant.org/GroceryGiveaway)





**DONATE BLOOD**  
[vitalant.org](https://vitalant.org) | 877-25-VITAL



## 2025 Lenten Schedule

Wednesday, April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Soup Supper – Hosts: Global Mission Team	5:00 p.m.
	Mid-week Lenten Service (Holden Evening Prayer)	6:00 p.m.
	Lenten monologue: Lazarus	
Sunday, April 6 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Soup Supper – Hosts: Carrie Backe/Susan Nafziger	5:00 p.m.
	Mid-week Lenten Service (Holden Evening Prayer)	6:00 p.m.
	Lenten monologue: Mary Magdalene	
Sunday, April 13 <sup>th</sup>	Palm/Passion Sunday	9:30 a.m.
Thursday, April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Maundy Thursday Service – Mount Cross	6:00 p.m.
Friday, April 18 <sup>th</sup>	Good Friday Mid-day Service – Mount Cross	12:00 p.m.
	Ecumenical Good Friday Service – Community Presbyterian Church	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 20 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Sunday Service – Mount Cross	9:30 a.m.
	Easter Sunday Brunch	10:45 a.m.



### Mount Cross Financial Report (January – February 2025)

2025 Approved Budget . . . . .	\$335,793.00
Income . . . . .	\$57,448.00 (17.1% of 2023 budget)
Expenditures . . . . .	\$52,142.00 (15.5% of 2023 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during February 2025 . . . . .	\$2,910.00
Total paid out in 2025 for mortgage . . . . .	\$5,730.00

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

Total income received from Thrivent “Choice Dollars” in 2025	
Mount Cross. . . . .	\$1,521.00

Our February contributions exceeded expenses. Thank you to those who were good stewards in the use of the contributions and to those who faithfully support Mount Cross with their contributions.

Yours in Christ,  
Financial Team

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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. A physical copy is also available on the entrance table in the sanctuary.



## **"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 38<sup>th</sup> 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.

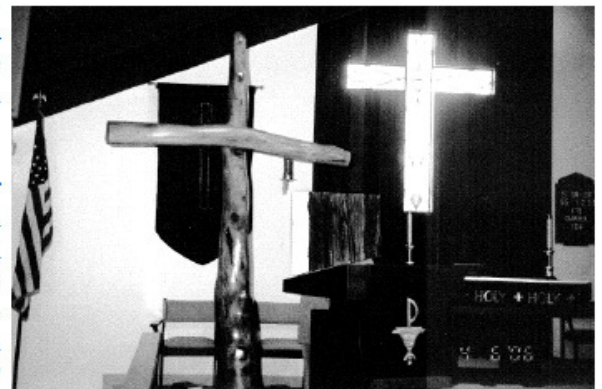
Jesus was crucified and died on a cross very much like this one.

*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



Choir practices during Holy Week will still be held on Thursday and will occur prior to the Maundy Thursday service. Choir will meet at the usual 4:15 p.m. time. Bell practice will begin at 5:00 p.m. instead of the normal 5:30 p.m.



There will be an announcement made on Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, regarding future meetings about church finances.

*Celebrating  
the Life of  
Scott Stallard*

Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

2:00 PM

Reception in Building B (log building)  
after the service



## Easter GARDEN

As has been the practice in previous years, an Easter Garden will decorate the altar area for the Easter season.

Please look for the form in the bulletin on the first Sunday of April, in which you can purchase a potted flower in dedication to either a loved one who has passed away, to honor someone who is special to you, or to celebrate a special event in your life.

The potted plants will be purchased for you and placed on the altar. The cost per plant is \$15. You may choose one of the potted plants to take home after the Easter season.



### April Birthdays

- 2 Terri Stevens
- 4 Sallie Loman
- 7 Judy Douglas
- 13 Bill Petrie
- 30 Catalina Dietrich

### April Wedding Anniversaries

- 5 Mike Buskirk/Daria Mason
- 12 Mark/Susie Duffy
- 30 Clyde Longberry/Gail Bensen

### April Baptisms

- 14 Linda Wiebe
- 24 Audrey Ricker

### Spiritual Growth Opportunities

#### Worship Services

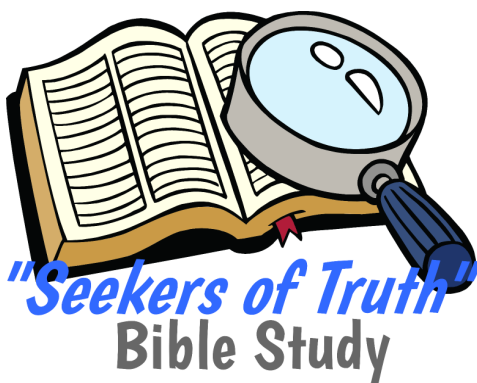
Weekly in-house communion & worship service held in the sanctuary; live stream of the service is available on Facebook.

**Sundays, 9:30 AM**

#### 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.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, 10:00 AM in the Ponderosa 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 at 10:00 a.m. April 17<sup>th</sup> is the date for this month's meeting.

Due to Sue Bobek undergoing surgery, Susan Nafziger will be facilitating the April meeting. This month's meeting will be held in the conference room so the attendees can view Season 1 Episode 1 of *The Chosen*.

After watching the episode, an informal discussion will take place and be followed by a time for sharing and support. If you have questions please contact Susan Nafziger, the group discussion leader for the month, or Jan Bartoli, the group facilitator. All are welcome to attend.

### Church office hours during the last two weeks of April:

Closed on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, in respect for the passing of our Lord  
 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday through Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>  
 Closed on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>  
 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>





# Music, Music, Music...

## Concert Band & Jazz Ensemble

Directed by Mr. Michael Buskirk



Tuesday, April 29, 2025

7:00 p.m.

Mt. Cross Lutheran Church

Free admission & refreshments



**PAYSON  
CAMPUS**

Eastern Arizona College, Payson Campus  
201 N. Mud Springs Rd. Payson, Arizona 85541  
(928) 488-8000 - [www.eac.edu](http://www.eac.edu)

Eastern Arizona College does not discriminate in admissions or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities on the basis of race, creed, color or national origin, sex, disability, or age. Approved for veterans benefits. Tuition is waived for Arizona residents who are 50-plus. Tuition waiver does not cover class or lab fees, books, or out-of-state tuition.



Payson Choral Society  
Presents

## *Spring Fever!* *Songs of Love and Life*



Daria Mason, Director  
Beth Christensen, Collaborating Pianist

Payson High School Auditorium

April 26 - 4:00 PM

April 27 - 2:00 PM

\$10 Advance Tickets

\$15 At the Door

Tickets available from Payson Choral Society members  
and the Payson Public Library