
Mount Cross Chronicle

December 2025



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

"The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him the complete gifts of undeserved grace and truth have come down to us." John 1:14 (CEV)

"The Word became a human being and lived here with us." Many of us are probably more familiar with the scripture translation that is, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

"The Word became flesh" discloses to us the amazing mystery of the incarnation. John emphasizes the incarnation as the human nature of Jesus, meaning that Jesus was God in human form. When we read that Jesus "made his dwelling among us," it truly means that Jesus lived here with us, or as Eugene Peterson wrote in his bible translation, *The Message*, "and moved into the neighborhood." Jesus was much more than a physical presence, he fully entered our human experience. He experienced our joys, sorrows and struggles first hand. Hopefully, this will continue to remind us that God really does know us and that he desires to have a close and personal relationship with each and every one of us.

Welcome to Advent 2025! Advent is the first season of the liturgical year and always begins on the first Sunday following Christ the King Sunday. Advent actually began on November 30th. Not only did we begin the season of Advent, we also began a new liturgical year, which is year A. This year, we will be focusing on the Gospel of Matthew.

As we turn our calendars to December 2025, how will we look back on these past 12 months? It certainly has been a year filled with unique challenges and changes. Whatever our individual take is on 2025, I pray that we will be able to look at 2025 as a year of blessings and promise for all of us.

When most of us think about Advent, we think about Christmas being only four weeks away! However, Advent is so much more than that. Advent is a time of waiting, hope, and expectation. Advent also offers us a time to reflect. To reflect on how we look upon what Christmas, the birth of our Savior, really means to us. Advent also reminds us to prepare and look forward to the expected return of Jesus Christ.

"So, pastor, does this mean we aren't supposed to look forward to decorating our tree, wrapping and giving presents and having parties?" Let's face it, Christmas does have various appeals to different people. As an example, Matt and his wife Christine do a fun thing this time of year, they have a Christmas Movie Marathon, with a gigantic pot luck along with the movies. I have never seen their set-up, but as they describe it, there are a number of TVs throughout the house and Matt rigs it so they are all showing the same movie. It honestly sounds like a lot of fun!

That got me thinking about some of my favorite Christmas movies. One of my all-time favorites is a 2006 movie called “*The Nativity Story*” and almost any version of “*A Christmas Carol*,” which is as good as gold to me; especially versions with Jim Carey, or Patrick Stewart, or George C. Scott and, of course, The Muppets! This could be a great way to celebrate Christmas with friends and family.

Christmas truly is a joyous time! Our Redeemer and Savior is born! Let that really sink in and share the good news with one another. Hey, here’s an idea I shared with you last year, but thought it was a good enough idea to share with you again this year... invite someone you may not know well to the Mount Cross Christmas Eve service!

I pray that we all have a blessed and Merry Christmas...all the year through!

Peace,
Pastor Carl
Philippians 1:3-4



Our †
STATEMENT . . . ChristConnectingCommunity



ELCA Good Gifts catalog are available in the narthex for you to use to provide ideas and answers for your CHRISTmas gift list.

There are hundreds of ELCA projects in 80 countries around the world that your gifts help fund. Gifting of farm animals helps provide ongoing food sources for many of the people who live in those countries.

You can also choose to the gift of education, as the people are taught how to care for the animals and grow crops. Education also includes providing children with school supplies or vocational training for adults. There are many options to select from and you can view them and order online at <https://goodgifts.elca.org/all-gifts>.

Free interactive Advent calendars can also be found on the *Good Gifts* table, which you can use for family members, neighbors, or friends.



You are invited to help decorate the church on Wednesday, December 3rd at 8:00 a.m. The trees and decorations will be pulled out from storage and set up in preparation for the Christmas tree lighting service. All are welcome to enjoy a morning of working together to get ready for the Advent/Christmas season.

Be sure to come back at 5:00 p.m. to share a finger-food supper, decorate the Chrismon tree, and stay for the 6:00 p.m. mid-week Advent service. The theme for the mid-week Advent services is the *Names of Jesus*.



<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>
December 3 rd	Church decorating... <i>join the Altar Guild, Property and Worship & Music Committees</i> Finger-food Supper – hosts: Worship & Music Committee	8:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.
	Chrismon Tree decorating – sanctuary	after supper; before service
	Tree lighting and Mid-week Advent Service – sanctuary	6:00 p.m.
December 7 th	2 nd Sunday of Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 9 th	Community Jazz Band Concert – sanctuary	7:00 p.m.
December 10 th	Finger-food Supper – hosts: Altar Guild	5:00 p.m.
	Mid-week Advent Service (theme: <i>The Names of Jesus</i>) – sanctuary	6:00 p.m.
December 14 th	3 rd Sunday of Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 17 th	Finger-food Supper – hosts: Praise & Bell Choirs	5:00 p.m.
	Mid-week Advent Service (theme: <i>The Names of Jesus</i>) – sanctuary	6:00 p.m.
December 21 st	4 th Sunday of Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 24 th	Christmas Eve Worship Service	4:00 p.m.
December 28 th	1 st Sunday of Christmas Worship Service	9:30 a.m.

Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to remember a loved one during the Christmas season purchasing a Poinsettia to decorate the altar for Christmas, please complete the form found in your December 7th Sunday bulletin, place in one of the envelopes provided, and either place in the offering plate or bring/mail to the church office. If writing a check, please make it payable to: Mount Cross Lutheran Church with “Poinsettias” written in the memo line. If you would like your poinsettia, you may pick it up after the service on Sunday, Dec. 28th. This year the price is \$15 each and we must have your order by December 19th.



Christmas Eve
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE

Wednesday
December 24th
4:00 PM

Mount Cross Financial Report (January – October 2025)



2025 Approved Budget	\$335,793.00
Income	\$258,656.00 (77.0% of 2025 budget)
Expenditures	\$250,929.00 (74.7% of 2025 budget)
Under (Over)	\$7,727.00
Pledged-to-date / Given	\$196,038.00 / \$200,619.00 (102.3%)

2025 Mortgage Fund

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during October 2025	\$4,042.00
Total Principal paid out in 2025 for mortgage	\$17,092.00
Current Principal balance	\$354,923.00
Pledged-to-Date / Given-to-Date	\$29,167.00 / \$29,274.00 (100.4%)

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

Total income received from Thrivent "Choice Dollars" in 2025	
Mount Cross	\$1,997.00

Yours in Christ,
Mount Cross Finance Team



REMINDER

Attention Committee Chairs:
Annual Report time is just around the corner.

Reports for committees not reporting financial detail are due to the church office no later than Friday, December 19, 2025.

Committees requiring end of year financial statements from the bank, your reports are due to the church office no later than Friday, January 16, 2026, in order to allow for receipt of year-end financial statements.



December Birthdays

3	Roberto Fuentez
4	Jan Bartoli
5	Andrew Kok
12	Sue Hess
17	Nancy Kellett
18	Patience Linkey
25	Susan Nafziger

December Anniversaries

12	Ernie/Nancy Kellett
23	Roberto/Madeline Fuentez
26	Jim/Virginia McCall

December Baptisms

6	Gail Bensen
7	Mavis Denofsky
17	Lori Andretta
21	Eloise Jones
25	Madeline Fuentez
30	Jan Bartoli

CONTRIBUTING IN 2026

Your contribution envelopes for 2026 may be found in your church mailboxes as of the middle of December. You will find a banded set of envelopes, based on your giving style. If you give monthly, you will receive 12 envelopes plus some extra for Advent and Lenten midweek giving. If you give weekly, you will receive 52 plus extras for the special offerings. Those giving via their bank bill pay will not receive any envelopes. Should anyone desire additional envelopes, just contact the office and extras will be printed for you.

Since this is a season of giving, think of all the opportunities to help others as well as your own families and friends. How can we, as a church, give to others to ease their lives.

Also during this month, enjoy the many gifts of music, songs, and other bits of merriment with an open and grateful heart.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**God's work.
Our hands.**



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



The final Choir rehearsals for the 2025 year will be on Thursday, December 18th. Practices will resume beginning January 8, 2026. Practices during the new year will continue to be on Thursdays, with Praise Choir meeting at 4:15 p.m. and Bell Choir at 5:30 p.m.

Congratulations and welcome, newly elected/re-elected members!

Council

Marlu Allan (3 year term)
Carrie Backe (3 year term)
Shannon Bleakley (3 year term)
Barb DeYoung (2 year term)
Daria Mason (2 year term)

Memorial Committee

Tony Andretta (3 year term)
Ellie St. Clair (2 year term)

Mission Endowment Committee

Marlu Allan (1 year term)
Curt Goris (3 year term)
Nancy Kellett (2 year term)
Cathie Mann (3 year term)



Many thanks to Tony Andretta for accepting nomination for reelection for Memorial Committee .

A warm welcome to these newly elected members: Carrie Backe, Shannon Bleakley, Barb DeYoung, and Daria Mason for Council; Ellie St. Clair for Memorial Committee; and Curt Goris, Cathie Mann, Nancy Kellett, and Marlu Allan for the Mission Endowment Committee.

Also, a **BIG** "thank you" to Sharon Vaplon, the outgoing member of the Council, for her willingness to serve on Mount Cross Council for so many years!

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

Weekly Prayer sessions

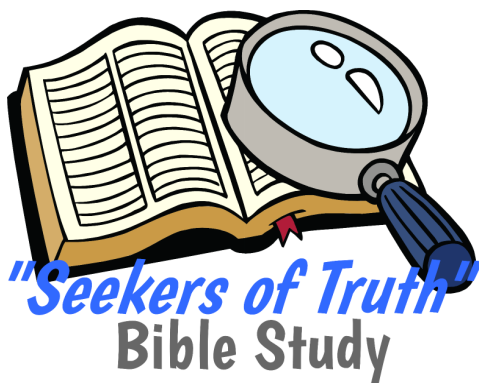
The focus of the sessions are to bring concerns and prayers of thanksgiving to God.

Friday afternoons, 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, 10:00 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 10:00 a.m. December 18th is the date for this month's meeting. This month, the group will be sharing a potluck meal, so bring a food dish to share!

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.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

The featured food items for the month of December are cans of fruit and soup, *preferably pop-tops*. 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.

November was the kick off for the annual Navajo Heating fund-raiser. It began as of November 1st and continues through the end of December. Please view these multiple options to participate in this event. You can select the items of interest to you, place the money in the cash can, and place your raffle ticket in the coinciding can...or you can make guesses at the amount of Legos used to build the castle at \$1 per guess...or bid on one of the silent auction items.

• GLOBAL MISSIONS FUNDRAISER •
FOR
NAVAJO MISSIONS WINTER HEATING
RAFFLE

Diamond Point Restaurant \$150.00 Gift Card!!

OR

Beautiful Handmade Quilt

TICKETS

\$5 FOR 1 TICKET OR \$10 FOR 3 TICKETS

• PLACE TICKET IN CAN OF YOUR CHOICE •
PLACE \$ IN CASH CAN • THANK YOU!!

COMING SOON!!

more HOLIDAY FUNDRAISERS

SILENT AUCTION GIFT BASKETS

and Annual Arts & Crafts and Baked Goods!!

How many LEGOS will WENDY PUT IN THE CASTLE?? \$100 PER GUESS WIN \$50 GIFT CARD

Wine, Faith, Relaxation, Coffee, Chocolate

MUSIC...

MUSIC...



Concert Band & Jazz Ensemble

Directed by Mr. Michael Buskirk



**Tuesday, December 9, 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) 468-8039 - www.eac.edu

Eastern Arizona College does not discriminate in admission 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 55-plus. Tuition waiver does not cover class or lab fees, books, or out-of-state tuition.

MUSIC!

Payson Choral Society Presents

Hearthside Harmonies



Adam Burriel, Director

Beth Christensen, Collaborating Pianist

Payson High School Auditorium
Saturday, December 6 - 4:00pm
Sunday, December 7 - 2:00pm



An hour long Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah
Performed by our Payson Community Singers with
Beth Christensen as conductor

Performances will be held on:

**Saturday December 20, 2025
at the Seventh-day Adventist Church - 11:00 a.m.**

**Sunday December 21, 2025
at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - 4:00 p.m.**

**Sunday December 21, 2025
and at Mount Cross Lutheran Church - 7:00 p.m.**

*3 performances are scheduled on the above dates and are free of charge.
A free will offering will be received.*

For more information, email Angeline Ng at justangeline@aol.com