
Mount Cross Chronicle

January 2023



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

Sunday Worship Services

9:30 a.m.
Worship/Communion Service

Livestreamed
Online Worship Service

Pastor Lance Kittleson
Supply Pastor
641-430-2400
chapkitt@icloud.com

Music Director
Daria Mason
daria1024mason@gmail.com

Accompanist
Angeline Ng

Office Administrator
Lenore M. White
secretary@mountcross.org

Custodian
in transition

Pastor's Ponderings

If you can, remember back far enough to the girl/boy next door, down the street, or at your church. You knew each other for all those years growing up, in school or shoveling snow, cutting grass. And then one day you went out on that first awkward date. You were nervous, a little apprehensive even though you had known each other for years. Suddenly, the relationship took a turn and you didn't know what exactly to think of it.

While the analogy is not perfect, it could easily apply to a retired pastor, friend of Mount Cross suddenly becoming the supply Pastor. During the summer when the Bishop called to ask if I would consider helping out at Mount Cross, the answer came easily and I replied 'Sure,' all the while watching my granddaughter flit around the softball bases with grace and ease. As it got closer to come down to Arizona from Iowa, my thoughts turned to more "What have you done now, Kittleson?"

If you appreciate the musical "Oklahoma," there is a slightly bawdy song "I'm Just a Girl who Can't Say NO." Without the bawdiness, it can apply to a good many pastors of either gender in these days of a dire clergy shortage. It would be very difficult as long as health permits to say 'NO' to the needs of a congregation you have been attending for 12 years.

So, for better or worse for Mount Cross, here I am. To those willing to indulge me, I have been expressing that I am a 'low church' Lutheran who believes that the form of the liturgy is good, but not sacred. What matters is "The Message" of the Gospel found in the Word and the Sacraments. All else is good stuff, but can be changed/skipped without damage to our faith and relationship with God in Christ Jesus.

As you've probably noticed, I believe worship can be conversational in nature and also contain humor. Not being a person of great intellect, I have always found meaning in the use of relatable stories which connect us to the Good News and each other. That's why movie and TV programs are so popular in our society, because stories (as Jesus knew so well) somehow pierce stony, cynical souls to communicate and change humans. And now with the availability of the visual techniques, we can add one more sense to our worship. Thus, you will see more 'sermon slides' trying to connect to our hearts through sound and sight.

Having shared all that, my prayer for myself, Mount Cross, and 2023 is that until

a full-time pastor miraculously appears on the horizon riding a white horse, our worship and service together may honor, praise, and glorify the newborn King of Kings in our lives and the world, that we may we “Love God, Love People and Serve the World” at Mount Cross throughout the coming year.

I may still secretly think to myself “What have you done now, Kittleson?” but I can’t help but give Mount Cross and my Savior and Lord my “best shot...until the cows come home or the Lord returns first.”

And, yes, you can really call me “Lance” unless you just can’t bring yourself to do it. I understand and respond to “Pastor” as well, especially “Pastor, it’s time for coffee and refreshments.”

Pastor Lance



Our STATEMENT . . . † ChristConnectingCommunity



Our prayer list is long, and those who are on it need our prayers. Our world needs our prayers, our country needs our prayers, and our families need our prayers. Let us all join in endless prayer.



Mount Cross volunteers will again serve a sloppy joe supper on Thursday, January 19th. If you are willing to help us out at 4:15 p.m. or provide funds for the food that we buy, please contact Sharon Vaplon, 928-468-8711.

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



Are you bored? Are you dreary? Are you empty? Why not find something that gives you passion as you do God's work? If you love what you do for others, you soon find that joy and love come from sources you never would expect. Think in terms of singing, serving in Altar Guild, on Property Committee, provide refreshments for church, or any other form of service to the church. Using your skills, find a ministry/volunteer activity that gives you joy...and your world will become richer. A New Year Challenge!



Coming up next month!

Gather your cash, write a check, bring your non-perishable food items on Sunday, February 12th. Help 'tackle' hunger!

It's a new year and there are plenty of opportunities for you to beautify the altar with a gift of fresh flowers. Some of you may be new to Mount Cross and may not be familiar with the process of giving flowers; the procedure is as follows:



1. Locate the flower chart on the west wall of the Narthex (close to the mailboxes).
2. Pick your desired date, place your name on the line next to that date, and provide a reason for the flower gift.
3. Either buy flowers and bring them to the church or you may also order flowers and have them delivered to the church.
4. On Sunday, you may pick up your flowers after the service. Take them home and enjoy their beauty.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 928-474-2552.



Mount Cross Financial Report (January – November 2022)

2022 Approved Budget	\$306,010.00
Income	\$249,752.00 (81.6% of 2022 budget)
Expenditures	\$234,169.00 (76.5% of 2022 budget)
Total given to the Mortgage Fund during November 2022	\$3,034.00
Total paid out in 2022 for mortgage	\$81,515.00


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

Total income received from Thrivent "Choice Dollars" in 2022
 Mount Cross. \$4,708.00

The amount of \$25,000.00, as per the congregation's approval at the annual congregational meeting on November 20th, was sent to Mount Cross' mortgage holder and was credited toward payment on the principle.

Due to the generosity of the congregation, our income has exceeded the expenses thus far. Thank you to those who faithfully support Mount Cross with their contributions!

Yours in Christ,
 Financial Team



Office Closed
Monday, January 2nd
 in celebration
 of the new year
 and
Monday, January 16th
 in observance of
 Martin Luther King

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Our WELCA studies have centered on nature and how Jesus used nature as a part of his messages, living a humble life, speaking with those outcasts, or even worse, women directly, as a part of his teachings.

In December, as a member of the Order of St. Luke, I led the lesson on Philip's teachings in Samaria and how he converted so many to Christianity in Samaria. Samaritans were enemies of Israel as a result of various wars and invasions, so having people listen to the good news and to be given the opportunity to see life with Christ as grace given by God was the very wonderful thing.

In the lesson, it was pointed out that the Spirit of God is with us, we become believers in a new way of life, but do we always receive that second anointing? The one with the special relationship with God, where his Holy Spirit descends upon us and we feel the spirit within us. In thinking about this, the thought of being a part of God's family is our joy, our salvation, our place in his kingdom. But do we spend as much intimate time with Christ as is needed to keep a strong relationship with the Holy Spirit?

My challenge to all of us, in our church, is to spend those quiet minutes with God each and every day. Until we do it (just the same as taking a shower, brushing our teeth, drinking our coffee, and having God time, alone with his Holy Presence), we will not have the feeling of closeness of His Spirit around us at all times.

In our world's of too many things to do, rushing, competing, caring for others, we forget to take time for ourselves and nurturing the most important relationship we will ever have. As a New Year's resolution, let us plan to spend time with God on a daily basis, building that relationship to the fullest, giving us the peace and comfort that our souls so badly need. AMEN.

Alice Natale
WELCA president



For the 2023 year, our Council executive positions are:

President	Gary Greer
Vice President	Marlu Allan
Treasurer	Ron Nelson
Secretary	Carrie Backe

Supporting members are Tom Spencer and Sharon Vaplon.



Committees that were awaiting their December bank statements, your annual reports are due on **Friday, January 13th**. If you are the chairperson for a committee that does not rely on banking statements to complete your report, the due date for your report has passed, but will still be accepted up until the 13th of this month.



January Birthdays

- 11 Ernie Kellett
Patricia Proescholdt
- 13 Marilyn Black
- 18 Lynn Sloan
- 24 Kathryn Lee
Sherri Taylor
- 27 Tamé Adams
- 31 Wes Hathaway

January Wedding Anniversaries

- 21 John/Barbi Buchanan
- 28 Gary/Barbara Greer

January Baptisms

- 26 Helen Swenson
- 27 Sherri Taylor

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

WELCA Bible study

This is a monthly Bible study using the studies found in the WELCA publication "Gather". All women are welcome to attend.

2nd Thursday of the month, 10:00 AM in the Ponderosa Room.

Seekers of Truth Bible study

This is a monthly Bible study which will be focusing on the biblical prophets. All are welcome to attend.

3rd Thursday of the month, 10:00 AM in the Ponderosa Room.

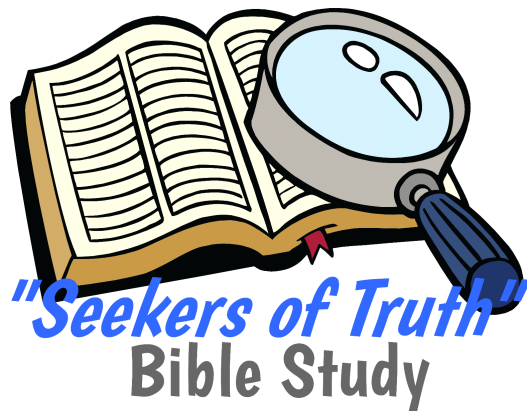


The monthly WELCA (Women of the ELCA) Bible study will be held in the Ponderosa Room on Thursday, January 12th, at 10:00 a.m.

A four-session study of the 10 commandments by ELCA pastor and Bible study author Christa von Zychlin. She will help us see how these commandments are more than they may appear at first glance. The January session, entitled "Dancing the Decalogue" will focus on the first two commandments. Get ready to explore old and new interpretations of God's laws!

Seekers of Truth Bible study, support, social, and friendship group, is held on the third Thursday of each month in the Ponderosa Room at 10:00 AM; January 19th is the date for this month's meeting. Refreshments will be served; BYB (Bring Your own Beverage).

The group continues to focus on sixteen major and minor Old Testament prophets at each of the meetings, they discuss one or two prophets.



Members of the group will be given handouts before each meeting with information about the prophet or prophets to be discussed. There is NO book requirement. Members of the group who have study Bibles will be encouraged to read about each prophet in their own Bible and to share with the group what their Bibles say about each prophet.

The last part of the meeting will be a time for socializing, eating, and supporting each other.

Jan Bartoli is the facilitator of the group and Sue Bobek is the discussion leader. If you have questions, suggestions, or wish to be a part of this group, please call Jan at 928-517-1119 or Sue at 928-478-6166.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

“Un-decorating” Party!

Join us in taking down the Christmas decorations on Thursday, January 5th at 8:00 a.m.

It's not too late to give some things up for a New Year's...not just January 1st, but during the entire year. We could call these daily endeavors “our New Year's resolutions.” Maybe just strive to do one each day and continue throughout the year. Here are a few suggestions:

Mend a quarrel.

Seek out a forgotten friend.

Dismiss suspicion.

Write a long overdue “thinking of you” note.

Hug someone tightly and whisper, “I love you so.”

Forgive an enemy.

Be gentle and patient with an angry person.

Express appreciation.

Gladden the heart of a child.

Find the time to keep a promise.

Make or bake something for someone else – anonymously.

Release a grudge.

Dust off your Bible and read from it each day.



A graphic for a church service. On the left is an illustration of a young boy in a red tunic and white head covering, playing a drum. In the center is a black box with yellow text: "The Little Drummer Boy & Me in '23". On the right is a lit red candle. At the bottom, yellow text reads: "The first Sunday in Christmas January 1, 2023 Mount Cross Lutheran Church 601 E. Hwy 260, Payson, AZ". The background features faint musical notes and German text.