

Mount Cross Chronicle

January 2024



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
Rev. Carl Sirotzki
474-2552
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

A very happy and blessed New Year to you and your families!

For many Christian congregations, the season of Epiphany will begin on January 6th. This is when it is believed that the Magi arrived to celebrate Jesus' birth. Now we really don't know exactly how many Magi had followed the star that would lead them to Jesus and it is most likely they were astrologers or possibly priests, and not kings as they are referred to in a popular song. It has also been popularized in song and poem that there were three Magi who followed the star from the east to pay homage to a young Jesus. This is probably due to the three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh presented to the young Jesus, but truth be told, we just don't know how many there were.

This brings up another of my childhood reflections, that I would like to share with you at this time, which involved a celebration we observed on January 6th and 7th. If there was one thing my mom was adamant about, it involved not taking any of our Christmas decorations down until after January 6th. I never questioned why our family always seemed to have our decorations up longer than any of our neighbors because quite frankly, I always loved having Christmas decorations up and I knew that even though December 25th came and went, we would have another Christmas celebration the evening of January 6th. I don't know many 10 or 11 year olds that would turn down a second Christmas!

Eventually I was taught that because my mom's father had emigrated from Minsk, which at that time was still part of the USSR, he would celebrate Christmas beginning on January 6th. I remember my mom teaching me about this tradition and calling this Russian Christmas.

There would always be one gift for me to open and we would have some special foods like deviled eggs (also called Russian eggs) and dumplings, whose Russian name doesn't come to mind right now, but I do recall these dumplings were filled with either meat, sauerkraut, or potato that seemed very similar to the Polish pierogi that we would have on December 24th, Easter, and many other times during the year.

Although most of us do not have access to giving gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we are able to give our time and talents and other gifts to our congregation and local community. Just like the light of the star which guided the Magi, Christ's light reveals whose we are.

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 STATEMENT . . .

† ChristConnectingCommunity



Our world needs our prayer. As we live in turmoil, here in our country, as well as the rest of the world, it is time to rely upon God, our Savior, and our hearts.

How can we, as the people of God, help improve things? The simplest thing is to pray and to remember, "Be Still and Know that I Am God" as we go about our daily living.

vitalantSM

blood drive

Open to the community!

**Monday, January 22nd
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
in the log building**

To schedule an appointment, call 1-877-25-VITAL (258-4825) or schedule online at: www.donors.vitalant.org and use Blood Drive Code: P1057

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



The church needs help on several committees:

- ✧ The Property Committee needs those who love working on repairs and yard work.
- ✧ Altar Guild needs volunteers for duty in setting up for weekly communion and changing altar cloths for the color that suits the season.
- ✧ Congregational Life Committee is down to three, which needs many volunteers to serve meals for funerals, setting up and cleaning up after potlucks, and preparing coffee hour as well as clean up Sundays. In addition, we need willing folk to donate a dish of food at potlucks, or for any other special event.
- ✧ The Endowment Committee, which meets twice a year now, has an opening.
- ✧ The choir is always in need singers, if you have a voice that soars.
- ✧ A volunteer to assist in the office by folding the bulletins, filing, etc. would be helpful to the office administrator, and most important of all, a volunteer or two to handle the scheduling for usage of the log building.




Our sloppy Joe supper for the Payson Community Kids' after school program will be held on Thursday, January 25th, with set-up at 4:15 p.m.

The PCK program is in need of homework helpers and supervisors.

If anyone is interested in volunteering at the after school program, you can call the Payson Community Kids Office at 928-478-7160 for more information.

OFFICE HOURS



Office Closed
Monday, January 1st
for New Years Day
and
Monday, January 15th
in observance of
Martin Luther King
Federal holiday.

Mount Cross Financial Report (January – November 2023)



2023 Approved Budget	\$326,229.00
Income	\$248,500.00 (76.1% of 2023 budget)
Expenditures	\$215,720.00 (66.1% of 2023 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during November 2023 \$1,895.00
 Total paid out in 2023 for mortgage \$31,515.00

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

Total income received from Thrivent “Choice Dollars” in 2023
 Mount Cross. \$449.00

We have received 22 financial commitment cards out of 76 households. Thank you to those who have promised to support Mount Cross with their contributions during the 2024 year. We also thank those who have not filled out a commitment card, but continue to provide financial offerings throughout the year. May your 2024 year be filled with many blessings!

Yours in Christ,
 Mount Cross Financial Team



For the 2024 year, our Council executive positions are:


- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| President | Marlu Allan |
| Vice President | Barb Howe |
| Treasurer | Wayne Peterson |
| Secretary | Alice Natale |

Supporting members are Barry DeChaine and Sharon Vaplon.



REMINDER TO COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Committees that were awaiting their December bank statements, your annual reports are due on Friday, January 19th. 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 19th of this month.



Coming up next month!

Gather your cash,
 write a check,
 bring your non-perishable
 food items
 on Sunday, February 11th.

Help ‘tackle’ hunger!

Happy New Year!

It is time to think about new ideas, new opportunities to build faith, and new ways to serve the church. How do we want our church to be looked upon as a viable part of the community?

Some years ago, when we had hymnals, we had a book called *“The Singing Church.”* As I sat in church this past month with the beautiful music, I thought about how we are becoming a center for concerts, great songs from our choir, and beautiful music from the piano and organ, as well as cello and flute instrumentals that makes our hearts soar and our minds go to a higher place. We are blessed by this music and the overhead pictures as well as words.

We have a new pastor, who is a teaching pastor, with a message each week that gives us a gem or two to think about as we go home. Being a context person, I then have to read the whole chapter of the Bible involving the passage that he is preaching on, in order to fully remind myself of the lesson.

Now I wonder, where can all this lead? We are here, ready for challenges, or maybe not, but now is the time to think about how we wish our future faith walk to look. We are church together, meaning all of us in this congregation. Things we do each year depend on all of us working together. As a music mecca, are we supporting our music folks? As a learning congregation, are we actively involved in learning? As a committee driven activities church, are we all participating as well as we can?

For the new year, there is a time to evaluate our plans and to make changes in our activities as well as commitments. Build your resolutions to include the church, your family, your friends, and your community. Then look beyond that to see if there are others things to challenge you. Enjoy your life, and live it well.

Alice Natale
WELCA president



The month long fund-raising event, put on by the Global Missions Team, yielded a total amount of \$1,936.35.

The fund-raising event commenced on Sunday, December 3rd, with a combination farewell to Bill & Kathryn Lee and offering frozen dinners for a contribution of \$15 per meal. The proceeds of the donations for the frozen meals were the beginning of funds collected for the Navajo Mission to assist in paying for winter heating costs. Each remaining Sunday in December, featured goodies displayed on a table in the narthex. Fire pots were ready to accept monetary gifts in exchange for the available items.



**You Are Invited
to Assist with...**

**Sanctuary Un-Decorating Event
and
Christmas Tree Removal
Thursday, January 4th
8:00 a.m.**

Following this event,
the Altar Guild will meet
at 9:00 a.m.
in the Ponderosa Room
for a short meeting.



January Birthdays

- 11 Ernie Kellett
Patricia Proescholdt
- 12 Vickie Weins
- 13 Marilyn Black
- 18 Lynn Sloan
- 24 Kathryn Lee
Sherri Taylor
- 25 Mark Milbauer
- 28 Mark Duffy

January Wedding Anniversaries

- 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 13 letters of Paul. All are welcome to attend.

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



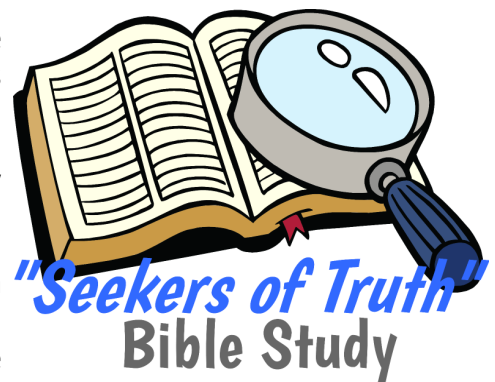
The monthly WELCA (Women of the ELCA) Bible study will be held in the Ponderosa Room on Thursday, January 11th, at 10:00 a.m.

The subject of Gather's Bible study for winter/spring 2024 is "Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith" by Rev. Sara Olson-Smith. The January session will focus on "Weather: Powerful Force for Change." The weather can't be controlled, but we can learn from it. The lives of human and non-human beings are significantly impacted by the weather. Scriptures also have a strong effect on our lives as Christians.

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 Ponderosa Room at 10:00 a.m. January 18th is the date for this month's meeting.

The group is currently studying the 13 letters of Paul in the New Testament.

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 Sue Bobek, the group discussion leader or Jan Bartoli, the group facilitator.



The first Bell & Chancel Choir rehearsals for the 2024 year will be held on Thursday, January 11th.

Practices will be held at 4:15 p.m. for the Praise Choir and 5:30 p.m. for Bell Choir.