
Mount Cross Chronicle

December 2022



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
In transition
474-2552

pastor@mountcross.org

Music Director
Daria Mason

daria1024mason@gmail.com

Accompanist
Angeline Ng

Office Administrator
Lenore M. White

secretary@mountcross.org

Custodian
Claudia Landa

President's Ponderings

For the past two years I have filled the position of Church Council President, after Jan and Sherrie Loomis moved to Colorado to care for his mother and to be near their family. After Jan's move, Elizabeth Winter became President and among much change James Zorn assumed the position. I was vice president during this time, so when James and Gwen moved, I stepped up to fill the vacancy.

It was a difficult time, with COVID, voting to not sell part of our property to the Warming Center, refinancing the church, and working on a contract between the Warming Center and Mount Cross, which became a very large one and was finally discarded as too difficult to enforce, thus we are working on a simple one. Along with all of that, we lost some members when physical church services were discontinued during 2020. We also had new pastors who were on board for two months before this occurred. After a year, Pastor Cliff Hanus started the *Service Under the Pines*, which brought some of us together again. All of this was hard for all of us to handle, including meeting in the church with the doors open during winter, but with the usual amazing Mount Cross joy, we once again have built up a church family again.

We have also had changes with Pastors Hanus leaving and seeking a new permanent pastor during the period of supply pastors serving our faith community. Pastor Linda Westcott very graciously had served for two months and then in December Pastor Lance Kittleson will assume those duties. I can only express my thanks to both of them. We needed some stability.

For the Council that has served during this period, I must bow down to their willingness to keep on keeping on as we addressed so many events as well as worked for very hard on a home we inherited that we sold after some serious cleaning and fixing. This has been a hard working group of folk. Chores were divided and then we moved ahead. At this point we are ready to once again become the amazing Mount Cross.

As your Council President, I would like to thank Lenore White for her ongoing support and help. Also Barry Peiffer, who does the accounting chores, and Daria, Mike, Candy, Daniel and Angelique for keeping our music and communications going. Our counters continue on quietly doing their job, the Altar Guild keeps us in the proper seasons, acolytes Ernie and Gary help with the services, Sharon Vaplon makes sure our music and services are on target as well as helping with many chores in LOMONA, the church and with me in many other tasks. Nancy & Ernie Kellett and John and Patricia Proescholdt keep the coffee and cookies going and Ron Reifschneider donates coffee. THANK YOU ALL!

Now I thank all of you for putting up with me. It was a privilege to serve you.

Alice Natale
Council President



Our
STATEMENT . . .

† ChristConnectingCommunity



For this month spend time praying for our nation, our state, our town and our church. Then look at our prayer list, and start praying. I am extending the prayers that I have promised for another month.



APPRECIATION to MOUNT CROSS

Hosted by Poder en Cristo on Sunday, December 18th, after the service in the log building.

Coming soon: an angel tree with the names of the Poder en Cristo children.



For this month let us pray for our church, the many concerns we have, and for strength to build our relationship with Christ, living in faith, and in trust as we look forward to another year.



Mount Cross volunteers will again serve a sloppy joe supper on Thursday, December 1st. 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.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>
December 4 th	2 nd Sunday of Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 11 th	3 rd Sunday of Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 18 th	4 th Sunday in Advent Worship Service	9:30 a.m.
December 24 th	Christmas Eve Worship Service	5:00 p.m.
December 25 th	Christmas Day Worship Service	9:30 a.m.

Mount Cross Financial Report (January – October 2022)



2022 Approved Budget	\$306,010.00
Income	\$220,239.00 (72.0% of 2022 budget)
Expenditures	\$218,810.00 (71.5% of 2022 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during October 2022	\$6,054.00
Total paid out in 2022 for mortgage	\$78,650.00

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

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

There were 27 commitment cards received on Commitment Sunday, November 6th. This represents a little more than 1/3 of Mount Cross households. There are many reasons that commitments haven't been received. It is never to late. If a commitment card is needed, one can be found on the table just inside the sanctuary doors. Once the *time & talent* brochure and commitment card have been completed, you can mail them in, drop them by the office anytime, or place in the offering plate. Thank you to those who faithfully support Mount Cross with their contributions.

Yours in Christ,
Financial Team

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 4th 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 Christmas Day service. This year the price is \$12 each and we must have your order by December 19th.

2022 Credit for Contributions

Please note: If you have any funds that you plan on giving and want credited to the 2022 year, the contribution would need to be received prior to December 30th. Any monies received after that day will be credited to the 2023 year.

*Lord, in this holy season of prayer
 and song and laughter,
 we praise You for the great wonders
 You have sent us:
 for shining star and angel's song,
 for infant's cry in lowly manger.
 We praise You for the Word made flesh
 in a little Child.
 We behold his glory,
 and are bathed in its radiance.*

Women of the ELCA

The WELCA Bible Study has been very interesting. In October, it focused on nature and in November, the study moved forward to how Jesus chose the outdoors to preach. He did not seek out the rich and famous, but instead preached to the common folk wherever they were gathered. He often spoke with the poor, the sick, and those whom society had thrown away. He spoke directly to women, in an era when that was not a common practice. He spoke often of the birds, other creatures, and of nature. Jesus tied the entire world together as a part of God's kingdom. Looking at the aspect of all creatures being part of God's Kingdom, there are no divisions except for how we live. If we are not very cognizant of how we use things, and how we treat things, we are a part of the problem of our very crowded planet. Now that we have so many billions of people, are we thinking about care of God's gifts?

Amassing things are great, but we cannot take them with us. Do we have too much stuff in our lives, jamming our homes, storage buildings, and everywhere we look? I have been thinking about it and of using *'Enough is a Enough'* as a mantra. Do I need to keep collecting anything, ever? Do I need to compete for things...that once achieved, are meaningless? I am taking a self inventory. Now that Christmas is upon us, do I need to take giving as my New Years resolution? Who knows? All we can do is think like Jesus, consider the birds of the field, they live without all our trappings. Can we do with a reduction of the some of our trappings?

And now for the joy of Christmas! We will have the decoration of the church with a finger food meal. The Payson Choral Society will be giving a concert with the "Christmas Carol" being the theme. The library has a few concerts at noon. Mount Cross will have Christmas Eve service with music at 5:00 PM. Then the next day we will have a regular service at the usual time. Make your plans, and then enjoy.

Alice Natale
WELCA president



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 Advent calendars and devotionals can also be found on the *Good Gifts* table, which you can use for yourself or family members.



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 16, 2022.

Committees requiring end of year financial statements from the bank, your reports are due to the church office no later than Friday, January 13, 2023, in order to allow for receipt of year-end financial statements.



December Birthdays

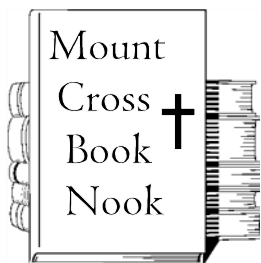
4	Jan Bartoli
12	Sue Hess
16	Lynn Hess
17	Nancy Kellett
19	Helen Swenson
29	Bill Lee
31	Carol Wilder

December Anniversaries

12	Ernie/Nancy Kellett
26	Jim/Virginia McCall

December Baptisms

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



December's cart will feature all of the Christmas related books that are in the library.

As the weather gets colder why not curl up on a comfortable chair, pick up a book, and enjoy reading about this season of joy, love, and giving. With all the busyness of this month, succumb to the desire to sit and relax...take time for yourself and focus on the 'spirit of Christmas.'

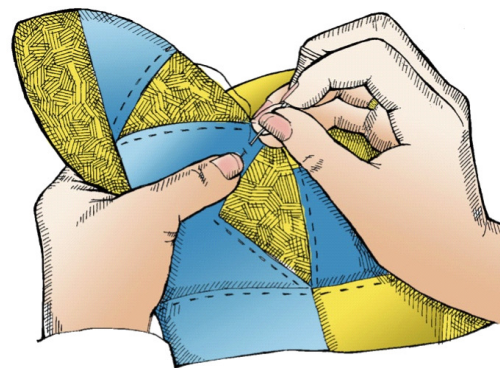
Wishing you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Your Librarian,
Eloise Jones

COZYING UP WITH A QUILT

Upon reading the Book Nook, the thought of wrapping up in a quilt is very inviting. As a matter of interest, there will be two quilts that will be displayed in the narthex during the month of December. One of these quilts could become yours if you are the winner of the silent auction; final bids will be accepted until Christmas day after the service.

One quilt has been provided by Nancy Kellett, who estimates it to be around 100 years old. 'Grandmother's Flower Garden' was hand-pieced and hand-sewn. The second one, 'Flowery Dreams,' is 40 inch square and was made by Marlu Allan. The proceeds will be sent to the Navajo Mission to assist in heating their facility.



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, December 8th, at 10:00 a.m.

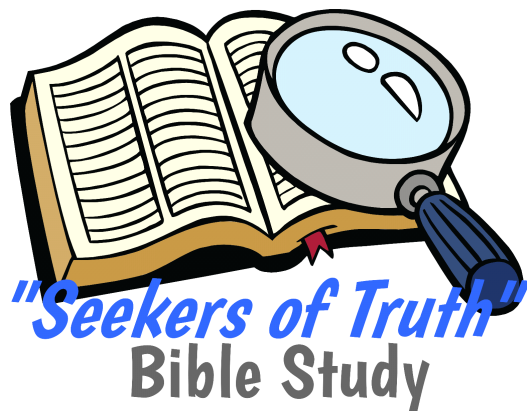
Bible studies from *Gather* magazine are used. The topic for the December study continues with "Jesus and nature: Creatures." Do you observe the wildlife around the area? Payson is a wonderful place to watch elk, squirrels, and other woodland animals. This is the Bible study for you! We will finish the session with the 1st week's Advent devotional.

As an added bonus, you can view a supplemental video from Rev. Sarah Olson-Smith at this web address:

<https://www.gathermagazine.org/november-2022-video-supplement-to-jesus-and-nature-creatures/>

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; December 15th 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!



Council

Marlu Allan (3 year term)
Tom Spencer (3 year term)
Carrie Backe (2 year term)
Ron Nelson (1 year term)
Sharon Vaplon (1 year term)

Mission Endowment

Herb Mueller (3 year term)
Alice Natale (3 year term)
Ed Stevens (3 year term)

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

Many thanks to the following for accepting nomination for reelection: Herb Mueller, Alice Natale, and Ed Stevens for Mission Endowment; and Ron Nelson and Sharon Vaplon for Council.

A warm welcome to these newly elected members: Marlu Allan, Carrie Backe, and Tom Spencer for Council.

Also, much appreciation to Alice Natale and John Proescholdt, the outgoing members of the Council, for their willingness to serve on Mount Cross Council! Alice had been very instrumental in making sure that many needs were taken care of during her time as president (please read her letter at the beginning of this newsletter) and John saw us through with follow-ups in regard to the church's refinance, arranging for help in the upkeep of the church grounds, and contacting a company to paint the church eaves.

Also, thanks to Barbi Buchanan and Sharry Lien, for their service in the church Council. Each have resigned due to dealing with health issues of spouse and self, respectively.

Budget of \$326,229.32 for the 2023 year was approved.

The updates made to Mount Cross' constitution and by-laws, to bring them into compliance with the ELCA's *model constitution for congregations*, were accepted. The accepted, updated constitution and by-laws have been sent to the Grand Canyon Synod for approval.



Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!