

Mount Cross Chronicle

February 2026



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

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” 1 John 4:16 (NIV)

Greetings and welcome to February 2026! In the verse for this month, I chose one about love, but not just any love. This verse reflects the deepest kind of love we can ever experience. It reminds us of the overwhelming love and the very presence of God in our lives and the significance of love in our faith. Living in love as God does means that we are to love others. We are to put love in action through our faith which includes extending kindness, compassion and forgiveness. When we do this with all sincerity, we are following Jesus' command to love one another.

For the shortest month of year, it sure looks like a lot things are happening this year in February. Just to name a few, there is the Super Bowl, the Winter Olympics, Valentine's Day, President's Day, and of course, Spring Training for Major League Baseball. Going back to the Super Bowl, I am inviting all of us to wear our favorite team's colors on the day of the Super Bowl, which is February 8th. Speaking of which, there will also be a Congregational Meeting immediately after worship (hint, hint). Now your favorite team colors can be of any professional, collegiate, high school, middle school or elementary school team. It is also SouperBowl Sunday and you are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for the local food pantry or give monetarily.

Now some may think I have just about covered all of the important dates in February, but I have left off the most important of dates and that is, Ash Wednesday and Lent. This year, Ash Wednesday will be on February 18th. As of this writing date, there will be a noon service at Mount Cross which will include the imposition of ashes. In addition, there will be something new offered, “Ashes on the Go.” You heard right, “Ashes on the Go.” Between the hours of 9-11am, I will stand at the curbside of the church with ashes for those who drive up. At this time, there is no information on an ecumenical service in the evening of Ash Wednesday, but rest assured you will receive more information about this as soon as possible. Also, please keep a lookout for information on this year's Lenten services and suppers.

In closing, I pray that we rely on God's love for us and extend that love to all we meet. God bless you all.

Peace,
Pastor Carl
Philippians 1:3-4



Our
STATEMENT . . . ChristConnectingCommunity

GLOBAL MISSIONS

The featured food item for the month of February is **canned fruit (pop-tops preferred)**. 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.



SouperBowl Sunday is just around the corner, so please begin to keep in mind the date of February 8, 2026, as a day to assist in tackling hunger...not just a day to watch your favorite team make football tackles on the field. This goal can be met in two ways: financially – giving money toward the cause and kept within the Payson community, or providing non-perishable food that will be transported directly to the local Deacon's Food Pantry. Here at Mount Cross, we will be collecting both and reporting our giving to the national organization, tacklehunger.org.

Concert Band & Jazz Ensemble
Directed by Mr. Michael Buskirk



Tuesday, March 10, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Mt. Cross Lutheran Church
Free admission & refreshments

EA 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.



Lent will begin this month on Wednesday, February 18th. We will again use the pink pigs as a vehicle for you to donate checks (written to Mount Cross with World Hunger in the memo line) or cash as gifting sources during the 40 days of Lent. These gifts will be collected on Palm Sunday, March 29th.

The pink pig boxes for depositing money for "World Hunger" will be found on the offering table as you enter the sanctuary.



Mount Cross Financial Report (January – December 2025)

2025 Approved Budget	\$335,793.00
Income	\$346,656.00 (103.00% of 2025 budget)
Expenditures	\$301,421.00 (89.76% of 2025 budget)
Under (Over)	\$45,000.00
Pledged-to-date / Given	\$235,245.00 / \$272,612.00 (115.9%)
2025 Mortgage Fund	
Total given to the Mortgage Fund during December 2025	\$7,125.00
Total Principal paid out in 2025 for mortgage	\$48,619.00
Current Principal balance	\$323,396.00
Pledged-to-Date / Given-to-Date	\$35,000.00 / \$95,931.00 (274%)

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

Total income received from Thrivent "Choice Dollars" in 2025

Mount Cross. \$2,972.00

Yours in Christ,
Barb DeYoung
Finance Secretary



For the 2026 year, our Council executive positions are:

President	Marlu Allan
Vice President	Daria Mason
Treasurer	Barb DeYoung
Secretary	Sheryn Daw

Supporting members are Carrie Backe, Shannon Bleakley, and Barry DeChaine.

SPECIAL Congregational Meeting

will be held on Sunday, February 8th, in the sanctuary after the service.

Two proposals regarding telephone and network upgrading will be presented, discussed, and voted on.



February Birthdays

6	Carrie Backe
7	Carl Sirozki
12	Mary Walker
15	Ellie St. Clair
25	Cathy Stewart
26	Gary Greer

February Wedding Anniversaries

12 Doug/Cathie Mann

February Baptisms

10	Tonnie Dice
20	Ellie St. Clair

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.

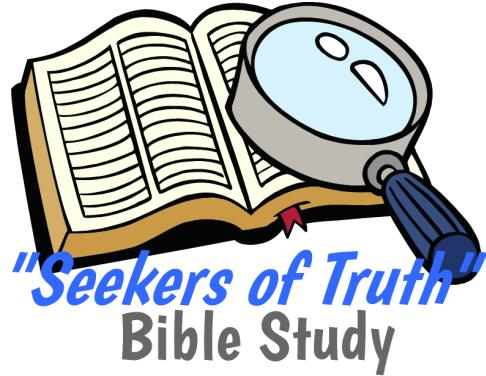
Friday afternoons, 1:00 PM in the Ponderosa Room.



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. February 19th is the date for this month's meeting.

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.



Due to conference room scheduling conflicts, the sign language group will meet on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. during the month of February. Participants, please make note of this time change on your calendars!



Office Closed
Monday, February 16th
in observance of
Presidents' Day.



Worship & Music Committee will meet after the service on Sunday, February 1st, in the conference room.

Next month, the office hours will be 9:00-11:30 a.m. from Wednesday, March 4th, through Thursday, March 12th and closed on Friday, March 13th. The office administrator will be visiting her youngest daughter and her first grandbaby.



Altar Guild will meet on Thursday, February 5th at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room.

They will be discussing the upcoming Lenten season.



Jean Larson

Friday, February 6th
11:00 a.m.

Light lunch in Building B
(log building)
after the service.

Daria Mason has planned a brunch, which will be held in Building B (the log building) after the service on Sunday, February 15th. All are welcome to participate in the fellowship event by bringing a brunch-type dish to share. You won't want to miss out on this time of sharing laughter and love with your family in Christ!!



Lent begins on
Wednesday,
February 18th.

Planning for Lenten mid-week services will be discussed at the Worship & Music meeting on February 1st. Please see the announcements in the Sunday bulletin for services.





ALONG WITH PASTOR KRISTIN

Pastor Kristin Engstrom, ELCA Global Missionary

January 2026

Faithfulness amidst Changes

I am so thankful for the faithfulness you have shared with me as people and congregations who support my work as an ELCA global missionary. I have served in three different countries since becoming an ELCA missionary (Senegal, Zambia, Madagascar). As of September 2025, my work shifted once again. I continue to live in Madagascar, but I am now the ELCA Regional Representative for Madagascar and English speaking West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone).

Since starting my new call, I am often asked what it means to be an ELCA Regional Representative. The best response I've found is that I am a bridge in the relationship between the ELCA and our global companions.

In the ELCA, relationships are the basis for mission. While we can be in relationship through email or online meetings, it is also important to be together, in person. To pray, to eat, to talk together. Just as God came to be with us, in person—in Jesus Christ. As the ELCA Regional Representative, I visit and participate in important events in our companion churches. I also give a lot of speeches, listen in a lot of meetings, and pray often with others.

Another part of my role is to facilitate grants our companions receive from the ELCA. During my visits, I make sure to visit communities and church workers who lead grant supported projects. Then, I can share with you, as members of the ELCA, the good work of God we are doing together.

Leaders of a Village Savings Program run by the Lutheran Church in Guinea.



Pastor Kristin Engstrom

I live in Madagascar and serve as the ELCA Representative in Madagascar and English speaking West Africa. I have been an ELCA global missionary since 2016, serving first in Senegal and then Zambia, and now in Madagascar

I'm originally from the midwestern United States, and served as a parish pastor in New Jersey for six years prior to beginning my call with ELCA Global Mission.



Accompanying Pastor Kristin

My work as an ELCA Global Missionary is possible thanks to the generosity of many congregations and individuals in the ELCA. Thank you! You can contact me at kristin.engstrom@elca.org. You are also invited to support me as an ELCA Global Missionary here. Previous newsletters are available on my blog alongwithpastorkristin.blogspot.com.

Walking Together in Mission

In late 2025, I visited the the five countries in West Africa where I will now be the ELCA Regional Representative. I met many faithful people and visited many amazing ministries. Let me share some glimpses of our siblings in Christ who do God's good work in West Africa.



Women in rural Sierra Leone welcome Rev. Kristin and new ELCA missionary Rev. Mytch Dorvilier. The community runs a clinic, school, and water-well thanks to ELCA support.



ELCA missionaries in Nigeria Marybeth and Bayo Oyobade (front left) Rev. Elitha Moyo (Africa Gender Justice coordinator, 2nd from right), and Rev. Kristin (right) meet with the traditional chief (center) and participants in a microfinance project that supports women who have been displaced from their home due to violence in northcentral Nigeria. The ELCA supports local emergency relief and long-term response to support people displaced by violence in northern Nigeria.



Lutheran Church of Liberia—Curran Hospital and nursing school administrators, with Rev. Kristin (center) and the church General Secretary (right).



Traditional Chiefs in the Volta Region of Ghana making a gender justice response plan in their community as part of an ELCA supported Gender Justice workshop.

The Petrie family will remember your prayers, cards, visits, food, hugs, and kind thoughts to honor Bill and to uplift Jean.

Bill enjoyed visiting with all of you and wished to be remembered as you last talked with him.

A special thank you to those who made the long trip to Phoenix to say farewell to Bill. Mount Cross Lutheran Church is and has been a caring home for me.

Many heartfelt thanks,
Jean

Thank
you

