



**MARCH 2026**

## **Our Mission at Vista de la Montaña United Methodist Church**

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and to reach out to others, help them, welcome them into our family of faith as we gather for worship, fellowship, education, and service.



## FELLOWSHIP FOCUS

### *Walt & Mary Louise Roberson*

Meet the Robersons, Mary Louise and Walt. Their lives have been woven together for 70 years to be celebrated this August 19<sup>th</sup>. Beginning their lives in the 1930s, their story reads like a beautiful piece of Americana.

Mary Louise was born on August 22, 1933 to Louise and Elbert Gump in Marshalltown, Iowa that included a total hospital bill of \$25. She arrived into the world as a surprise to her parents who did not think another pregnancy was possible. Her name was inspired by her mother's best friend, Mary Howell, and her favorite Aunt Louise, thus the reason Mary Louise has never allowed the shortening of her name. Her surprise arrival completed the family of five: she arrived at home to two older brothers, Jerry (15 years her senior) and Jim (10 years older). Shortly after, the family moved to Maquoketa, Iowa, where her father was high school principal and superintendent. When Mary Louise was four, her father was diagnosed with severe asthma resulting in the move to Tucson in 1938. Mary Louise attended Sam Hughes Elementary (where her father was later Principal). The Gumps transferred their church membership to the First Methodist Church where Mary Louise met many of her lifelong friends. Early on, their group was dubbed the name "Good Girls" by one of the friend's mothers.

Mary Louise transferred to Miles Elementary for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades when the family moved to 1721 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, a home her parents built. Her activities and achievements from this point to high school graduation read like a "Who's Who." She tap danced at Davis Monthan during WWII, performed at the Mickey Mouse Club at the Fox Theater on Saturday mornings, radio shows (Cinderella and Wizard of Oz) and plays on stage at the Temple of Music and Art. She was extremely active all through THS as well as church and Rainbow Girls. Her key achievements were serving as Grand Worthy Advisor for the Rainbow Girls and she was one of Arizona's two delegates to Girls Nation in Washington DC (during the Korean War). Mary Louise has fond memories of her parents' Masonic and Eastern Star activities as well as Rotary International, which allowed Mary Louise and her parents to travel to many interesting cities.

Enrolling at the University of Arizona in 1951, Mary Louise became a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma. She graduated "with high distinction" with a BA in Education in 1955. Since she had completed the course work in 3 ½ years, she was able to teach 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Safford Elementary School in downtown Tucson from November to the end of school. She also worked for an insurance agent and in the Personnel Office at Hughes Aircraft (now Raytheon).

She met Walt in the fall of 1951 when she was playing jacks in front of the Kappa house; they dated some that academic year, but they did not date again until their graduation night in June, 1955.

Let us get to know Walt now. Born on St. Patrick's Day in 1931, he appears to have been as active as his busy wife throughout the years. His parents, Jack and Laura Burns Roberson, lived in Vega, Texas (population 257), located 35 miles west of Amarillo on Route 66. Walt graduated from Amarillo

High School in 1950 where he had been active in student government, ROTC, lettered in baseball and managed to write a sports column for the school newspaper. In 1950, he enrolled at the University of Arizona and joined Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. Among his many activities were: President of the Student Union Activities Board, the Bobcats, Student Council, three years as Intramural Horseshoe Champion, as well as lettering in baseball for three years. He graduated in 1955 with a BS in Education. (In 1965, he earned his Master of Education degree).

He returned to Amarillo in 1955, where he was employed by Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America and Texoma Production Company as a Petroleum Land Scout. He quickly suggested that Mary Louise apply for a teaching job and move to Amarillo and she agreed. He married Mary Louise Gump at the First Methodist Church in Tucson on August 19, 1956. They lived in Amarillo (with six months out for military service in Ft. Knox, Kentucky and El Paso, Texas) where son Bruce and daughter Sarah were born.

They moved back to Tucson in 1960 where a third child was born, daughter, Laura in 1966. Walt immediately became involved on the Corporation Board and Chapter Advisor for his Arizona Alpha SAE Chapter. He was the Chapter Advisor for many years, mentoring many SAE members who later became lifelong friends. He was in the first class of inductees in the SAE Arizona Alpha Hall of Fame. He worked with numerous UA groups, notably the Bobcats, and received the first Bobcats A.L. Slonaker Award in 1996. Over the years he held many positions at the UA : Assistant Alumni Director; Assistant Student Union Director; Associate Director of Purchasing, and then Director of Purchasing, Land Acquisition and Stores from 1975 until he left in 1985 to become part owner, President and COO of Metropolitan Water Company, an investor-owned water utility in Northwest Tucson. At that time MWC was the largest investor-owned water company in the state. He retired in 1992 when MWC was sold to the City of Tucson. He was a founding member of the Southern Arizona Chapter of Water Utilities Association of Arizona and served as Vice President of both groups. Before leaving the University, he had been elected Vice President of the National Association of Educational Buyers. Walt was President of the Catalina Rotary Club and later a member of the Rotary Club of Tucson. He was a 20-year volunteer for the State Bar of Arizona Fee Arbitration Committee.

Bowling was very important to him throughout his life, starting with being a pin boy when he was very young in Amarillo. He was a past President of both the Tucson Bowling Association and the Arizona State Bowling Association, as well as being inducted into both the TBA and ASBA Halls of Fame. He was the 83<sup>rd</sup> President of the American Bowling Congress in 1996, the national governing body for league bowling, and was also President of the Young American Bowling Alliance, the national governing body for youth bowling – he was one of only two persons to have been president of both organizations. He was inducted into the Pima County Sports Hall of Fame and Museum in 2004.

Mary Louise has led a truly remarkable and dedicated life in Tucson since arriving back in 1960. Her journey from teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Lineweaver Elementary to becoming an Administrative Assistant in the VP for Research office was a “dream” job. It highlights her deep commitment to education and her community. Based on her memories, here are a few connections to the organizations she served so faithfully:

- Kappa Kappa Gamma: Her long-standing service to the Kappa House at UA is a

testament to her loyalty.

- Junior League of Tucson: her work starting a kindergarten for low-income families was visionary, especially considering her early teaching days at Safford when TUSD did not provide those services.
- Pima Council on Aging (PCOA), Community Food Bank, IMPACT, the Cancer Society and Alzheimer's Association: these organizations remain cornerstones of the Tucson community, continuing the mission of service Mary Louise helped champion during her time with the Volunteer Bureau.
- The University of Arizona: retiring in 1995 from the office of the VP for Research placed her at the heart of the University during a period of massive growth. Her love for Arizona basketball and football certainly makes her a "native" in the eyes of any Wildcat!

Both avid UA fans, Walt and Mary Louise had season football, basketball and softball tickets and traveled to many out of state games. Walt has known every UA Athletic Director, starting with J.F. "Pop" McKale.

The Roberson clan has grown over the years, much to Mary Louise and Walt's delight. Their daughter, Laura and her husband, Jim, live close by and have two married sons. Sarah and her husband, also Jim, live in Phoenix and have a married son and daughter. Bruce and Donna live in Houston and Miami Beach and have two daughters. In addition to the six grandchildren added to the Roberson family are three great grandchildren in Tucson and four great grandchildren in Phoenix.

Mary Louise often refers to herself as a "cradle to grave Methodist." Her parents were Methodists in Iowa and she was baptized there. She and Walt were members of Christ Church Methodist for several years. One Sunday an invitation came to attend the first service of a new church being established near Catalina, AZ, with Don Cooke as the Pastor. Don had been their Pastor at Christ UMC several years prior. Mary Louise and Walt became Charter members. She was on the Site Selection Committee as well as Chairman of the Building Committee for this site's Master Plan, utilities, columbarium and the current sanctuary and patio room. She was Vista's only Lay Member to Annual Conference for several years, taking and typing minutes for Stu Elson, the Conference Secretary. She continued to serve on various committees, including Staff Parish. When Vista became a Stephen Ministry church in 1995, she attended Leadership Training with Grant Robinson at the University of Washington. Mary Louise chose to be both a Stephen Leader and a Stephen Minister. Although it is a two-year commitment, she continued for several years and is now "emeritus". For years, she volunteered in the Vista Church office on Fridays, earning the nickname "Friday Girl." Vista de la Montaña will always be the Roberson's home church. Live streaming has been a wonderful way for her to stay connected each Sunday, as the couple have now moved to a retirement home near the home where they raised their family in Southeast Tucson.

The Robersons are thoroughly embracing every moment of their new way of life!

Robin Conner

# NEW MEMBERS



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## New members mini bios

**Cris Gears** - I was born and raised in MN, spent 20+ years in WA. I have always loved sports, music and of course my sweet wife Donna. Donna and I have a blended family, 5 kids and 13 grandkids. We plan to spend 7+ months each year at our new home in Sun City, the rest of the year we will be in MN. I love to laugh and have fun!!!!

**Donna Gears** - I was named after my father Don and mother Marie. I was born in MN into a Catholic family of 7 children. I taught school for over 20 years; mostly elementary. I am married to Cris (32 years), we are a blended family with 5 kids. We are new to AZ, having most recently been WA residents. My hobbies include exercising, biking, walking, dancing and I love to read.

**Terry Jackson** - I grew up in Berkley, MI a suburb of Detroit. I became an air traffic controller in the Navy and did the same job for the FAA. I retired in 1998 and moved to CO and built my own log house. Married Karol in 2008.

**Karol Jackson** - I'm from Pagosa Springs, CO. I'm a retired high school counselor and social worker for the Ute Mountain Tribe. I have been blessed with two Christian husbands: Larry Novak and I were married for 39 years until he went to heaven and my current husband, Terry and I have been married for the last 18 years. I have 4 grandchildren, all living in Durango, Co who all are in college. We have lived in SaddleBrooke for 12 years. I am heavily evolved in pickleball, square dancing & swimming.

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**Jerry Halliday** - I worked on Cessna Aircraft for 42 years in Illinois. I moved to AZ in 2006. I will have worked at Home Depot 20 years next month. I am widowed after 56 wonderful years. I have a son, 2 granddaughters and a great granddaughter here in Tucson.

**Lucinda Legel** - I live in SaddleBrooke Ranch. My husband, Tim and I moved here 3 years ago and love our retirement. I grew up in Santa Rita, NM near Silver City and the southwest has my heart. I lived and worked in Minnesota and Kansas in professional life and don't miss the cold and snow one bit!

**Silvia Perdue** - I was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but moved with my parents and brother to Sydney, Australia in 1974. I came to the U.S. in 1990, Monterey, CA. Moved to Tucson in September 2021. I am a registered nurse and certified case manager currently working remotely, hoping to retire in 5 years. My hobbies are making arts & crafts, painting, mosaics, jewelry, crochet, gardening, and the outdoors, particularly hiking. I have one son and one daughter.

**James Perdue** - I am James. I am a freelance illustrator among other things with many creative hobbies, if I'm not at work, I'm probably working on multiple projects at once.



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**Thomas Ravencroft** - Born and raised in Rochester, IN. I worked my way through college at Purdue in food service. Got paid to taste ice cream for my first job. Worked for Dean Foods Co. for 46 years. Started on night clean ups at the new dairy plant and retired as president of the dairy division in the Chicago area. Married my high school sweetheart Janet for 70 years. Janet and I have a son and daughter, 6 grandchildren, and 8 great grandchildren and one on the way!

**Janet Ravencroft** - I love this church with the views of the mountains. We look forward to becoming actual associate members. Our home is at Splendido OV, 7 months of the year and Rochester, In in the early spring, summer and early fall. I met Tom, my husband in high school. We have a son and daughter, 63 grandkids here and 8 grandchildren. We have been fortunate to have good health throughout our lives and are thankful.

**Ray Wagner** - Hello, I was raised in Crownsville, MD and attended Baldwin UMC. I was baptized, sang in the children's choir, attended boy scouts and married at Baldwin. Both of our children were baptized and attended Sunday school at Baldwin as well.

**United Women in Faith is sponsoring a Creative Hands fundraising lunch on St. Patrick's Day, Tuesday, March 17, at 11 AM in the Elizabeth Room.**

**Creative Hands creates wonderful children's clothing, including bibs, pajama sets, dresses, and short outfits, for Family First and Impact of Southern Arizona. All donations for this event go directly to support their work.**

**Donations for the March 17 luncheon will be accepted on March 8 and March 15, both before and after church** 



## ***MISSION OUTREACH***

**"Thank you again for everyone who contributed to the six weeklong Share the Warmth Clothing Drive. Although our days are now warming, we did have a cold stretch during which all those well insulated clothing items were much appreciated by low-income area residents.**

**A summary of items donated follows.**

**Total items - 286 (142 Women's items and 139 Men's items, plus two blankets and three throws.**

**The socks won out - totaling 65 pair (24 women's, 41 men's)**

**Total coats and jackets (15 women's, 26 men's)**

**Total slacks, jeans, pants (30 women's, 5 men's)**

**Total sweaters, sweatshirts, warm-up outfits, leggings and sweaters - 75 (26 women's, 49 men's)**

**Plus, assorted shirts and t-shirts, pajamas, dresses, shoes, gloves and mittens, headwear and vests.**

**Warm Blessings to all who "shared the warmth this winter"!**

**Benith MacPherson, "Share the Warmth" coordinator**

***COMMUNION & LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING  
FOR MARCH***

**CREATIVE HANDS**

# OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT, SERVE & SUPPORT

**Communion Servers:** If you are interested in being part of this ministry, please contact Linda Galka lindagalka65@gmail.com or speak with me at church and I will add you to the list. We need two servers the first Sunday of each month to serve bread and juice alongside Pastor Mary and the Liturgist. All elements are gluten free! No advance training is required!

## Landscaping

The Landscaping crew are now meeting on Thursdays at 7:00 instead of 8:00, due to the increase in temperatures. The guys are always seeking others to join them, and sometimes there are even donuts provided for those who show up, such a deal!

**Agua Prieta greeting cards** are available for 50¢ each in the Library during office hours.


**Complimentary Prayer Beads** are available in the Narthex and in the Library.

**Upper Room booklets** are available in the Narthex and the church office for \$2.00 each or online at upperroom.org. It is free to sign up for a daily devotional email.

**A wheelchair** is available during services in the Narthex.

**March Communion Offering**  
**Creative Hands**

Help create children's clothing such as bibs, pjs, dresses and outfits for Family First and IMPACT.



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**Prayers for Healing**  
Eileen Carender, Dottie Lou Colby,  
Margaret Overman, Mary Louise Roberson, Marilyn  
Rutkowski, Nancy Kimmel, Ed Jensen, Linda Phillips (Jan  
Bohe's daughter)

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**Prayers for our South District Churches**  
El Mesias UMC, Nogales  
First UMC, Bisbee

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**Home Bound**  
Marlin Bolar, Jerry Browning, Orland Burbey,  
Rev. Alan and Kathy Campbell, Lynn Duenkel,  
Jerry Eshelman, Bill Gureck, Marsha Hartz, Jo Ann  
Hubbard, Ken and Diane Podlasek, Sharon Poole,  
and Barb Rempel

## Upcoming Events

Tuesday 03.03.26	5:00pm	Trustees Meeting
Wednesday 03.04.06	10:00am	Lenten Study
Wednesday 03.04.06	10:00am	Handbell Practice
Wednesday 03.04.26	1:00pm	Choir Practice
Thursday 03.05.26	8:00am	Landscaping
Friday 03.06.26	10:00am	Prayer Bead Group
Saturday 03.07.26	8:00am	Vista Men's Meeting
Sunday 03.08.36	10:00am	Worship
Monday 03.09.26	9:30am	Creative Hands
Wednesday 03.11.26	10:00am	Lenten Study
Wednesday 03.11.26	11:00am	Handbell Practice
Wednesday 03.11.26	1:00pm	Choir Practice
Sunday 03.15.26	10:00	Worship
Tuesday 03.17.26	9:30am	Women of Faith Meeting
Tuesday 03.17.26	3:00pm	Church Council Meeting
Wednesday 03.18.26	10:00am	Lenten Study
Wednesday 03.18.26	11:00am	Handbell Practice
Wednesday 03.18.26	1:00pm	Choir Practice
Friday 03.20.26		ECHOES - Articles due
Saturday 03.21.26	10:30am	Fram Hampton Memorial Service
Wednesday 03.25.26	10:00am	Lenten Study
Wednesday 03.25.26	11:00am	Handbell Practice
Wednesday 03.25.26	1:00pm	Choir Practice

### **Breakfast with the Pastor**

**2nd Tuesday, of the month, 8:00 AM Sunny side Up Cafe**

**STAY IN THE KNOW....**

## **March 28<sup>th</sup> - Vista Clean Up Day!!**

Everyone is invited to help out our landscaping team clean up the church campus.

**8:00 am**



The magnets on the name badges cause malfunctions to pacemakers, and they should not be worn. If you need a non-magnetic name badge please let the welcome desk know

**Happy St. Patrick's  
Day**