



## FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

142 North Date Street Mesa, Arizona 85201

Mission Moments

October 2022  
Volume 17 Issue 10

### *Celebrating Seventy-four Years of God's Amazing Grace*

October 1, 2022

#### **In Response to the Good News of Jesus Christ:**

##### **Our Purpose...**

Gathered to worship!  
Sent to witness and serve!

##### **Our Vision...**

To become more diverse, creative, nurturing, and welcoming within our congregation and in the wider community.

##### **Our Guiding Principles...**

We will follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

We will read, teach, and preach God's Word faithfully.

We commit to prayer and worship as a way of life.

We invite people to know Jesus Christ.

#### **Reconciling in Christ Welcoming Statement**



"First Evangelical Lutheran Church/La Primera is committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in faithfulness to the Gospel and our Lutheran heritage, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide programs, ministries, and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place. All are welcome here, including persons of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression."

The Messenger is a monthly publication of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mesa, Arizona. Please submit information by email to [felc@firstevlutheran.com](mailto:felc@firstevlutheran.com) or in written form to the church office by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Dear Family of God,

What an exciting time to be part of this community. God is at work at First. I can see it in the people. Over the last month, I have been excited to get to know the people and ministry of First Evangelical Lutheran Church and the (almost) seventy-five years of ministry. What a Legacy you have. That impact continues today as you serve your community through food pantries, schools and other LSS programs. What a gift you are to Mesa.

We are now engaging on another chapter at First. This will be an exciting time not only to reflect on where you have been, but where are you are going. I see no better time than an anniversary year to continue the process that Al Loveland has already begun with you.

I have been blessed to have met with your amazing staff and with a number of your members over the last month. You are truly blessed with a committed team who seem to juggle many balls.

Whenever there is a change, anxiety can rise in a system. I am sure you may feel some discomfort as we get to know one another. I will make mistakes as I learn you and your community. I encourage you to come talk to me if I am stepping on any toes. I will be in the office on Tuesdays from 10 AM – 1 PM and can set up a meeting to discuss anything in person, zoom or phone; contact me if you want to meet with me at another time.

The pastors at Holy Trinity, Pastor Bernie Carl and Vicar Luis Ochoa are excited to be a part of First and leading worship. Vicar Luis, will continue to work with Rhonda with youth, and some of the members from HT will be worshipping with you at First. Holy Trinity members want to get to know you and assist First in achieving the goals of increasing ministry and funding a full time pastor.

Al Loveland will be leading a team of folks from Holy Trinity and First to make this transition go smoothly and to ensure all voices are heard. I am excited to be part of this dedicated congregation as we strive to do as God calls us to do, "Go and Make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Sincerely,

Pastor Christine Stoxen



### OFFICE HOURS

Mondays through Wednesdays:  
8:30AM-2:30PM

### Staff

Christine Stoxen, Pastor  
Joy Petroff, Admin. Secretary

### Congregational Officers

Sarah Shaw, President  
Rhonda Schmidt, Vice President  
Kathleen Rogers, Treasurer

### Congregational Council

Corrine Cursi	Kathleen Rogers
Annmarie Dyslin	Connar Schmidt
Diane Johnson	Rhonda Schmidt
Ellen Riske	Sarah Shaw
Evan Rogers	

### Contact Us

Phone: (480) 969-7221

Fax: (480) 969-7222

Email: felc@firstevlutheran.com

Web: www.firstevlutheran.com



### Change for Change Offering

on October 30 will support  
Lutheran  
Social Services  
of the Southwest



Sundays at 9:30 AM in the sanctuary or on Zoom

### To join Zoom Worship

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84976912216?pwd=MIN1VmdhdnNlc1czenZyNEE4clVhdz09>

Meeting ID: 849 7691 2216

Passcode: Bible



First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
75th Anniversary Celebration  
Sunday, October 22, 2023





A special honor for FELC charter member, Bonnie Johns

## Arizona Softball Foundation Diamond Highlights

Summer 2022

Special Banquet Edition

### 2020-2022 ARIZONA SOFTBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



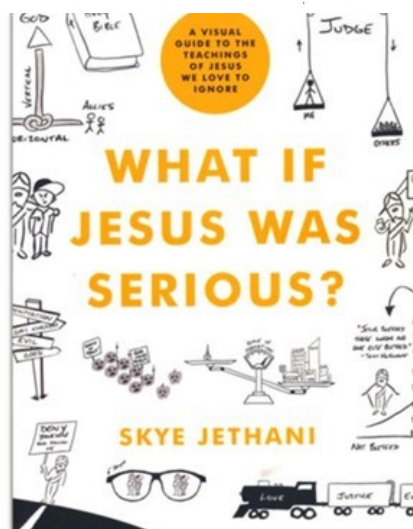
**Veteran Player Bonnie (Allum) Johns:** Bonnie started her softball career on various Elementary School, High School and Women's Majors Softball Teams. One of the first competitive teams she played for was the Vito-Gro Chicks and then the Blakely Rockets Team. She was a member of the 1952 Rockets National Softball Congress, National Championship Team. She was also selected to the N.S.C. All-Star Team that year. From the Rockets Team she went on to play for the PBSW Ramblers. As a Rambler, she participated in 5 National A.S.A. Tournaments from 1953-1957. She was a member of the A.S.A. 1955 and 1957 PBSW Ramblers National- Runner-Up Championship Teams. She was selected multiple times to Arizona All-State Teams.



Pastor Bernie leads a study  
Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM

Meeting ID: 819 0306 8084  
Passcode: 606144

Or join in person at Holy Trinity



Monday Morning Book Club  
7 AM

On Zoom  
Meeting ID: 838 1436 2438  
Passcode: 132468



Join us!

1989 W Elliot Rd, Chandler 85224  
on Mondays at 6:30 PM for a  
beverage and rousing discussion of  
current social issues.



### World Food Day Celebration

Join ELCA World Hunger for a celebration of World Food Day, hosted by Rick Steves and special guest Mark Jansen, CEO of Blue Diamond Almonds. This special event will be streamed online so you can celebrate with ELCA World Hunger wherever you are!

**When:** Sunday, October 16, 3 PM

**Where:** [ELCA Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans/) (<https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans/>) and [ELCA YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/elca) (<https://www.youtube.com/elca>)

RSVP not required; simply visit our Facebook or YouTube page to attend. Facebook and YouTube accounts are not required. Can't stream it live? The recording will be available on Facebook and YouTube after the event is over. **Questions?** Contact [hunger@elca.org](mailto:hunger@elca.org).





## Trunk or Treat

**Monday, October 31 Church Office Parking Lot**  
**Set-up at 5 PM, Treats 6-9 PM**

**FAMILY CARNIVAL**

You are invited to join us for a free family event. Event includes carnival style games, free hot dogs, root beer floats and prizes.

**FRIDAY, 07 OCTOBER**

**HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 5-8 PM

 **HOLY TRINITY**  
 Lutheran Church  
 worship • grow • serve

**October 30 at Holy Trinity**

**REFORMATION DAY**  
~~DAY~~

**FEST!!!**

11 AM  
 (following 10 o'clock worship)  
 Lunch with Brats and Hot Dogs

Games for the children  
 Costumes welcome!

Oompa Band

vegetarian option too




The virtual angel tree is a convenient way for you to view and select Christmas gifts for children, teens, refugees, people in hunger or homelessness, and older adults in need.

Information is available at:

<https://www.lss-sw.org/christmas-2022>

## Christmas Wishes

Virtual Angel Tree 2022

SPREAD JOY TO NEIGHBORS IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



## Council Meeting Minutes - September 25, 2022

**Present:** Pastor Chris, Corrine Cursi, Annemarie Dyslin, Diane Johnson, Evan Rogers, Kathleen Rogers, Ellen Riske, Connor Schmidt, Rhonda Schmidt, Sarah Shaw

**Absent:** None

**A. Opening Devotions/Prayer:** Pastor Chris opened the meeting with prayer at 10:59 AM.

**B. Review and Approval of Council Minutes for August 21, 2022**

**C. Reports #5 - Report from Holy Trinity/First Evangelical Lutheran Committees:** Sarah corrected "outreach committee" and "transition committee" to "partnership committee".

**D. Old Business #6 FELC 75th Anniversary:** Sarah corrected the date from October 23, 2023 to October 22, 2023.

Rhonda moved to accept the August minutes with corrections. Ellen seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### C. Reports

**1. Treasurer's Report:** Kathleen reported that we are currently in the red due to the shared cost for the AC unit at the school. The AC cost was previously approved by the council. Additionally, there was a charge from Johnson Controls and the utilities were high in July.

**2. Pastor Chris' Report:** (following minutes)

**3. President's Report:** (following minutes)

**4. Report on Youth:** Connor reported on the upcoming youth events.

September 25: Bowling today

October 2-7: Fall break camp at Holy Trinity was canceled

October 7: Youth Carnival at Holy Trinity

October 9: Pancake breakfast at Grace Lutheran. Everyone is invited to participate.

October 16: No youth event

October 23: Pumpkin carving

October 30: Luther Fest at Holy Trinity

**5. Report from Holy Trinity/First Evangelical Lutheran Committees:** None.

**6. 75th Anniversary Task Force:** None.

**7. Approval of Reports:** Evan moved that all reports are accepted as given; Connor seconded. Council unanimously approved the reports.

### D. Old Business

**1. Church Constitution:** Sarah gave Ellen the soft copy and she will make changes.

**2. COVID-19:** Closed. This may be reopened if there are changes that need to be addressed.

**3. 2022 Goal for Visioning Strategy:** Kathleen reported that sending the apartment complexes FELC postcards to include in the rental informational packets would be more effective than phone calls asking them to put in a postcard that they have not seen. She will follow-up by getting more postcards to send out.

**4. Roof Repair:** Pastor Chris had the HT facilities person come out with a roofer to look at the roof. Kathleen will check to see if there is any insurance coverage for the roof. Annemarie asked if repairing the spire will be included with the roof repair. Some of the stained glass and caulking needs to be replaced. In addition there is a window panel on the east side of the church that needs to be replaced. The spire and glass will be included in quotes for roof repair.

**5. New AC Units:** She will send an email to council outlining which designated funds could be used for this. Richard and Ellen will provide information from the Endowment Fund for payment.

**6. Gift Shop Space for LSS-SW:** Annemarie requested that we delay a decision on renting LSS-SW the gift shop space as FELC is running out of storage space. Ellen and Annemarie will determine what needs to be stored and where it could be stored next week. They will inform council of their findings. Kathleen will update the current MOU with LSS-SW, but not include the gift shop space at this time.

## **7. Other Old Business: None**

### **E. New Business**

**1. Signs:** Kathleen stated that since we are hosting more groups at FELC, campus signs need to be updated. Kathleen will double check the signs and the final cost.

**2. Grants:** Pastor Chris reported that there are several grants that FELC may want to apply for. These include three grants that are due in mid-October. Pastor Chris will meet with Kathleen, Corinne, and Diane on Tuesday, September 27 via Zoom to outline the grants.

**3. Advent:** Pastor Chris suggested that FELC hold Advent services around noon and HT will hold services at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, November 30, December 7, and December 14. Council was in agreement.

**4. Christmas:** FELC will hold the traditional Christmas Eve service at 7 PM; HT will hold a Children's Service on Christmas Eve at 5 PM and their traditional services at 7 PM and 10 PM. Since Christmas is on Sunday, FELC will have a Christmas Day service at 9:15.

**5. Leadership Expenses:** Council approved funding supplies and other miscellaneous expenses for the new leadership team. This includes new business cards.

**6. Partnership Committee:** The committee will meet to determine their roles and will submit a monthly report to council.

**7. Trunk or Treat:** Rhonda stated that the youth group would like to hold a Halloween Trunk or Treat in the FELC parking lot. Rhonda will check with Concordia and LSS-SW to see if they want to participate. FELC members can donate treats to be given out, or they can come over to FELC and join in.

### **8. Other New Business: None**

**F. Adjournment and Closing with the Lord's Prayer at 12:37 PM:** Connar moved to adjourn and Ellen seconded.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Next Council Meeting will be held on October 16, 2022.

## **PASTOR'S REPORT**

It is good to be with you! I have enjoyed working with the staff and leadership this month! Everyone has been so helpful.

### **DIVISION OF DUTIES:**

Vicar Luis, Pastor Bernie and I are looking forward to serving you. We will be dividing the work in the following ways:

Luis : Preaching (1 or 2 x a month), Youth

Bernie: Preaching (2x a month), Homebound Visits

Chris (1x a month on council Sundays): Preaching, Administration, worship planning, office hours on Tuesday  
Pastoral care such as hospital visits, counseling, etc will be done as a team depending on needs of the congregation/Pastoral Availability.

**ROOF:** I had the HT facilities person come out and look at the roof (Dan Ewart). He brought out a roofer who said it might be able to be covered by insurance. Kathleen is pursuing this, along with the roofer, Mick Heath.

**SAVINGS:** Joy , Sarah and I have found ways to save \$\$ together by sharing a worship software App called "Sundays and Seasons" as well as Zoom Accounts between the two churches.

**GRANT:** Sarah and I spoke about getting the service onto YOUTUBE, I will be writing a grant Hidden Treasures to help us do that. Zoom can continue as well. I believe YOUTUBE is more comfortable for those who are looking for a church. They can view it at anytime and anonymously.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Mike Epping is working with FELC's Social Media. He has met with Joy this week and they are coordinating Facebook/Instagram/Website so that we can get information out accurately. Another way

to let people know what is happening at FELC. I am working on getting an email for Pastor@firstevlutheran.com.

**WORSHIP TEAM:** I look forward to meeting with the Worship Team soon to discuss Advent/Christmas.

**MASKS:** At this time, I see no need for masks, unless things change dramatically, I do not believe we will be returning to masks unless the council believes it is necessary. Of course, anyone who feels more comfortable in a mask is always welcome to wear one!

**NAMETAGS:** I look forward to Joy making nametags for everyone. Although you may all know each other, Pastor Bernie, Vicar Luis and I do not know all your names, and it is of course it is visitor friendly. I hope they will be ready in the next week or so. We can keep them in basket in the entrance way.

**HOMEBOUND VISITS:** Joy gave me a list of 5 homebound members. Pastor Bernie will be in contact with them to make a visit. If there is anyone you think needs a visit, please let us know.

**FIRST TIME VISITOR GROUP:** I would love a couple of people to talk with about first time visitors. What kind of follow up have you done in the past? What has worked? Do you give out gifts? Are there phone calls made? I need a creative brainstorming group that can meet for a short time.

I look forward to continuing to work with you. Please let me know if I can be of any help, or if I am stepping on anyone's toes. I try to bounce ideas off of staff and Sarah and ask who is in "charge" of that area in order to learn about what is happening or to discuss ideas with the right people. I may miss something in translation. Please provide grace as we move into this new relationship.

The staff and members of Holy Trinity are excited to expand the partnership we have had through the youth group for years. Pastor Chris

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Farewell part for Pastor Dana was well attended, 50 congregants in attendance during service and most were able to join the celebration. Big thank you to Virginia and her team!
- Met with Pastor Chris regarding upcoming church seasons to begin reviewing schedules for special services coming up in Advent and Christmas. Also did general review of our history and traditions. Made small adjustments for Sunday's service to allow for the Pastoral preferences concerning communion distribution as well as discussed adding YouTube for sharing our services virtually. Reviewed upcoming grant opportunities and the 'Shut-ins' list.
- Zoom account switched to share with HT, new link shared with Joy for all services starting October 2 to be shared on the bulletin and all other communications including announcements.
- Social media accounts being shared with Mike Epping, still working to get Instagram access. Church websites are separate entities with some shared content.
- Provided names to Pastor Chris of people who have agreed to be a part of different committees and we will begin connecting them with their counterpart(s) at Holy Trinity.

### **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**



As of 8/31/22	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Actual 2021	Budget 2021
Offerings	\$91,848	\$75,833	\$80,679	\$78,000
Other Income	\$50,664	\$43,331	\$50,738	\$46,664
Total Income	\$142,512	\$110,748	\$131,417	\$124,664
Expenses	\$138,620	\$108,734	\$123,781	\$124,858
Inc. Less Exp.	\$3,892	\$2,014	\$7,636	\$-194



## **Meet the Pastoral Team**



**Christine Stoxen** was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and has lived in a number of states including Connecticut, Delaware and South Carolina. She graduated from Gettysburg College with a B. A. in Psychology in Elementary Education. Following college, she served in the Lutheran Volunteer Corps in Wilmington, DE in a homeless shelter for women and children. From there, she served as a social worker for the State of Delaware, continuing to work for social justice. In 1995, she felt a call to ordained ministry and in 2000 she graduated from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Pastor Chris has served three congregations in South Carolina and came to Holy Trinity in Chandler in 2017. When she is not at the church, you can find her hiking, reading and spending time with her two grown children, Zachary and Nicholas, and their families, which include grandsons Oliver and Chance.

**Pastor Bernie Carl** was born and raised in Wheeling, West Virginia. He graduated from West Liberty State College, West Liberty, West Virginia in 1973 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1977. Pastor Bernie has served congregations in West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. He retired from active ministry in 2013 after 35 years of pastoral ministry, the final 20 years serving St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He moved to Chandler in 2013 where he lives with his wife, Barbara. Pastor Bernie and Barbara are the parents of one son, B. William Carl who resides in Kailua, Hawaii with his wife, Caroline and their two daughters, Delainey and Adelaide. In addition to his work as the Pastor of Caring Ministries he enjoys an occasional game of golf as well as the sports scene provided by the Sun Devils, Coyotes, and Diamondbacks. He is not yet ready to cheer on the Cardinals as he is a huge Pittsburgh Steelers fan.



**Luis Ochoa** was born in Guatemala and moved to Los Angeles, California when he was 7 years old. He graduated from Trinity Lutheran College in Issaquah, WA in 2008 with a BA in Children, Youth and Family Studies. He has been doing youth ministry for 13 years and enjoys every part of it. He has been married to his wife Bobbie for thirteen years and has two kids; a son, Eduardo who is nine years old and daughter Joleen who is seven. He enjoys cooking, being outdoors, spending time with family and friends and playing and watching different sports. Being part of the ELCA has been key in his faith journey and he is very excited to share his faith and personal experiences.