



The Oasis

October 2025

Cross in the Desert UMC

Where God's Love Transforms Lives, building a just and joyful community.

CITD Leadership Board

We are entering a very active time of the year with the summer ending, stewardship campaign underway, preparations for Church Conference, and planning for 2026 to name a few. The church calendar is also filling up with lots of activities so please keep an eye on the Oasis, It's Happening Here, and the Sunday morning worship slides.

The Together We Can Capital Campaign is continuing to do well and addressing funding needs. Together We Can purchased a new AC unit for the Choir Room, replacing an original unit from the sanctuary's construction. A downpayment was made for the digital sign. The company is currently preparing the paperwork for getting the necessary permits. We are continuing to do preparations for kicking off the landscape project in December with most of the work planning to be done the first part of 2026.

Church Conference will be on October 19th at noon. Please plan to be there as we meet with our District Superintendent, Melissa Rynders, to conduct our necessary annual business which needs your vote and input and to be informed of our business.

Our next Leadership Board meeting is planned for October 28th at 7:00 PM via Zoom. I want to remind you that our meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend. If you're interested in attending, the office or anyone on the committee can get you the link.

If you have questions, concerns, feedback (positive or negative) or want to get involved, please reach out to me or any member of the Leadership Board: Mary Nell Woodward, Romi Simons, Brooke Henry, Jonathan Foster, Rhonda Mortenson, Ada Thompson, Wanda Picciotti, and Kristin O'Shaughnessy.

In His service,

Eugene O'Bryan, Chairperson
CITD Leadership Board
Cell: 602-363-4115
eobryan@cox.net

In This Issue.....

Pastor's Corner.....2
Birthdays, Anniversaries.....3
General News.....3,4,5,6,8,9

Prayer Ministry.....7
UWFaith.....10
Conference.....11

Pastor's Corner



Dear Beloved Community,

This fall, we are collectively embracing our stewardship theme: *The Change Makers*. We firmly believe that God has already equipped us with the necessary assets to confront the challenges of this moment—compassion, collaboration, creativity, and empowerment. These gifts not only sustain us through change but also drive us to create a better world. Your active participation in this theme is crucial, as it is your compassion and collaboration that will shape our journey.

Over the last weeks, we've been reflecting together on how compassion and collaboration shape us as followers of Jesus. Compassion draws us close to the heart of God. It is the willingness to notice the suffering of others and to respond with love. In our congregation, compassion shows up in the ways we pray for one another, care for those who are ill, feed the hungry, and extend welcome to the stranger.

Collaboration reminds us that no one is called to follow Christ alone. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, and the Spirit continues to call us into community. Together, we dream bigger, act bolder, and love more deeply than we ever could on our own. Collaboration is the holy work of linking arms, sharing resources, and trusting that God's abundance multiplies when we offer ourselves for the sake of others.

As we prepare for the year ahead, we invite you to prayerfully consider how you will invest your compassion and collaboration in this congregation. Your financial pledge is a crucial way to do that. Every gift—large or small—strengthens our capacity to be a people of change, bringing hope to our community and beyond. Your pledge empowers us to serve and make a difference.

Pledge cards are due by Sunday, November 2. When you return yours, you are making a sacred commitment to partner with God and with one another in the work of transformation.

Thank you for being the Change Makers that you are. Your past contributions, filled with compassion and collaboration, have allowed us to embody God's love in powerful and life-giving ways. With your continued support, we will undoubtedly continue on this transformative journey.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Gina

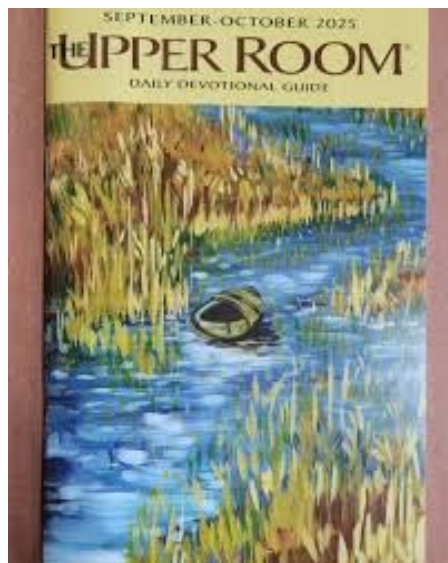
October Birthdays

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Jen Foster	October 5
Jeannine Diller	October 11
Carol Monsma	October 14
Casey Joy	October 16
Bill Moyer	October 19
Tess Menendez	October 20
Mary Botts	October 23
Ella Plant	October 23
Jan Wickliffe	October 29

Tim & Jen Foster	October 1
Tom & Rhonda Falknor	October 21
Steve & Karen Cahill	October 23

We apologize if we have missed your special day. It means that the office does not have your information. Please notify the office if we need to update your information.



Have you been looking for a devotional? Did you know that *The Upper Room* is available in the narthex. Regular and large print versions are available.

A small donation is appreciated if you are able, but feel free to take one even if you can't donate.

The Men's Walk #269 will be January 29-February 1 at Christ Community UMC, 104 W. Western Ave, Avondale.
The Women's Walk #270 will be February 12-15 at Christ Community UMC, 104 W. Western Ave, Avondale.
Apply today. There are brochures and applications in the narthex.
Questions—Contact the office or Mary Ann Crist.



Dreaming Boldly Together

In September, Rev. Gina Pollard and Leadership Team member Kristin O'Shaughnessy attended the *Co-Creator Retreat* in Phoenix—an inspiring gathering for those discerning new ministry ideas. Guided by Rev. Dr. Candace Lewis, President of Gammon Theological Seminary, and Rev. Rachel Gilmore, Director of New & Vital Faith for our Desert Southwest Conference, participants explored what it means to faithfully dream, create, and lead.

Through fellowship and conversation, we named the hopes and possibilities for Cross in the Desert UMC. Some of these dreams are already moving toward action, while others will continue to be refined. Two words kept rising for us: **courage** and **precipice**—reminders that we stand at the edge of something new, with the Spirit calling us forward.



A New Service Opportunity!

Our church is a place of worship, fellowship, and care — and part of caring for one another is making sure everyone feels safe. This year, we're launching a **Safety Action Team**: a group of trained volunteers who will help prepare for the unexpected, from prevention to crisis response. If you have a heart for protecting and serving your community, we invite you to prayerfully consider joining this new ministry. Together, we can ensure our church remains a sanctuary in every sense of the word.

Help Us Shape the Future of Our Virtual Bible Study!

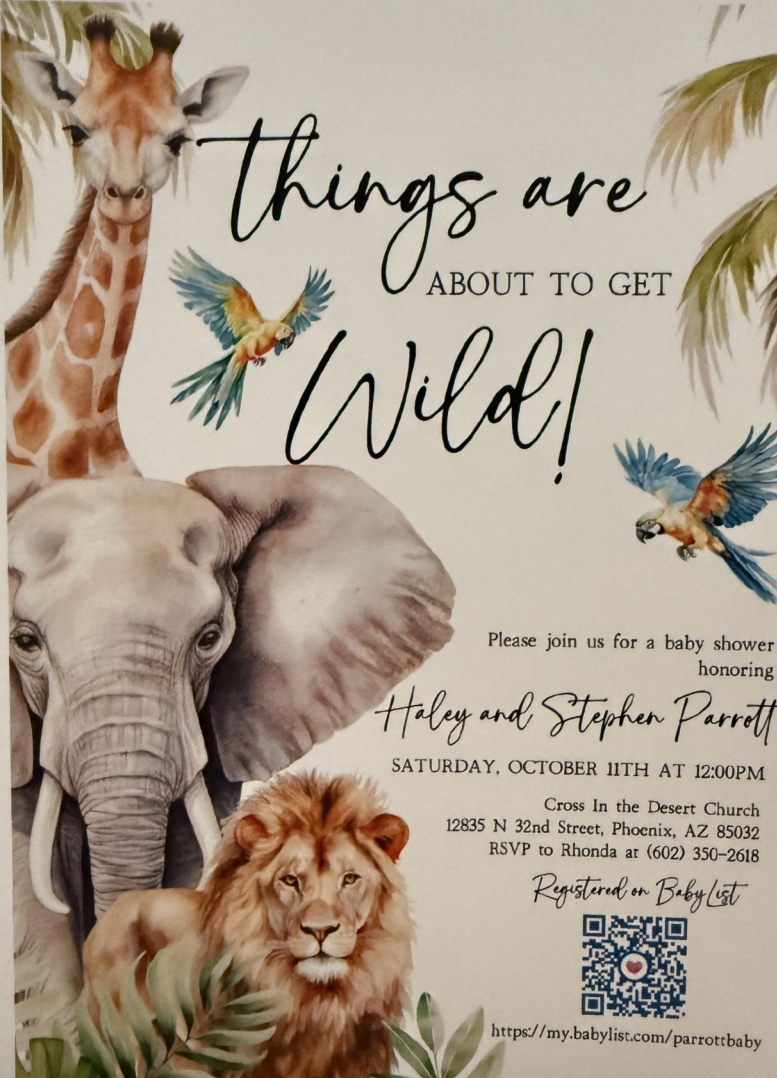
This summer we launched our first season of Bible Study for the Busy—a virtual Bible study designed for busy people who still long to spend time in the Word together. Now, we'd love your feedback!

Whether you joined us each week, dropped in occasionally, or even if you weren't able to participate this time, your voice matters. Please take a few minutes to complete our short, anonymous survey. Your input will help us understand what worked, what could improve, and how we can make this ministry more accessible in the future.

The link to take the survey is <https://forms.gle/jUH0DUwoPEKAKq2N6>

Thank you for helping us grow this ministry!





Things are
ABOUT TO GET
Wild!

Please join us for a baby shower
honoring
Haley and Stephen Parrott
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11TH AT 12:00PM

Cross In the Desert Church
12835 N 32nd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85032
RSVP to Rhonda at (602) 350-2618
Registered on Babylist



<https://my.babylist.com/parrottbaby>



Book for Baby

Instead of a card we have a small Request bring a book that you Like best. Either well-loved or brand new, Please sign your book with a line or two Letting baby know this gift is from you!



Diaper Raffle

Please bring a pack of diapers in any size for your chance to win a special prize!

Name _____




Cross in the Desert Church Blood Drive

Date: Saturday, November 15, 2025
Time: 8 a.m. - Noon
Location:
Vitalant Bloodmobile in Parking Lot



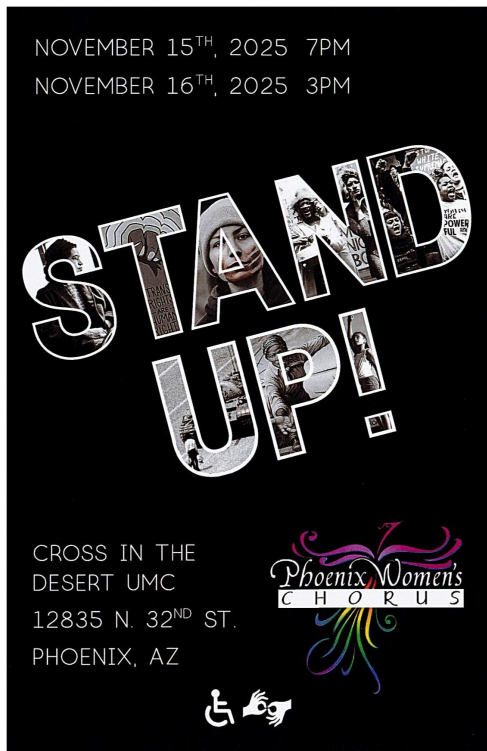
Reserve your donation time, visit
vitalant.org (Enter Sponsor Code: P1846), scan QR
code or contact Church Office at (602) 992-1960.

Donate In November and you'll be entered for a
chance to win one of two \$10,000 gift cards.

For more information visit us at
vitalant.org or call 877-258-4825.
Because of you, life doesn't stop.



GIVE BLOOD!
and
SAVE A LIFE



The Phoenix Women's Chorus invites you to our annual fall concert! Centered around protest songs from eras throughout history, **Stand Up!** will feature some familiar favorites, mixed with some newer compositions. You'll hear songs that celebrate our nation's diversity, that call for justice, and that rejoice in the love of one's community.

Tickets available at <https://www.azpwc.org/>

Schedule Your Stroke & Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screening

Over 10 million people screened since 1993

Where:
Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church

When: Thursday **October 30, 2025**

Who should attend:
Anyone over the **age of 40**

Special Member Pricing for \$159

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Plus a **FREE** Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

- Call 888-814-0466 and use promo code **HSCA001**
- Visit LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA
- 

- Text the word **"circle"** to **216-279-1607**

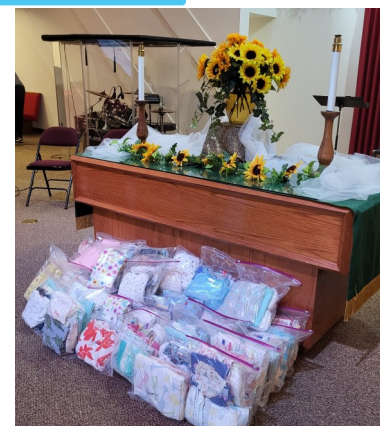
These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.





UWF Layette Project 2025

UWF members collected items and assembled about 40 layettes for distribution to needy moms for their newborns. The layettes were blessed during the worship service on September 21st.



PRAYER

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS -

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

READ GENESIS 6:5-8

Grace - we know what that is, don't we? Sure we do, we hear about it all the time, right? Every preacher, teacher, pastor we ever heard talks about it. We know what Grace is, we're Christians, after all. Although, it is interesting that verse 8 of the above passage says, "But, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." NKJ It seems God's grace has been around a lot longer than Christianity can take credit for. Anyway, back to grace, most of us have heard the story of and know at least some of the words to Amazing Grace. Probably one of the most well-known and popular hymns ever.

There is so much going on in the world and we are bombarded with everything happening as it happens. It's a scary place out there filled with the relentless noise of the "bell" that Corrie Ten Boom talks about so well. The bell the devil rings to distract us from keeping our eyes on Jesus. The world says "look over here", the Internet says, "look over there", the iPhone says "no, you have to look this other way". And they're all wrong, we have to keep our eyes straight ahead on Jesus the Christ. And be blessed by God's amazing grace which is sufficient for us.

Occasionally, we may forget and need to be reminded of God's Amazing Grace and what it means to us. We need to think daily about God's grace and continue thinking about it and hearing about it. For it is by his grace alone that we live or die. It is by grace alone that we have a God who loves us and wants the best for us, it is by Grace alone that we have a God who will never forsake us and it is by Grace alone that we have a God who thinks we're to die for. Amen.

WALK WORTHY

Amazing Lord, you and only you are God. Help us to stay strong in our faith. Give us blinders that we may walk only in your path and shut our ears to the world's noise. Help us to be brave enough to follow only your Word and turn away from the ringing bell of the world's distractions. You are worthy, Lord, you are worthy. In Jesus of Nazareth's mighty and sacred name.

Amen.

East District Prayer Focus for October

Song of Life UMC—Queen Creek
Rev. Sylvia Harris

Spirit of Joy UMC—Coolidge
Pastor Tracy Perry

St. Matthew UMC— Mesa
Rev. Ann Lyter

PRAY
without ceasing
1 Thessalonians 5:17

COME JOIN US UPCOMING EVENTS...

October

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, and a great time to let Gina know that we value her here at CITD. Thanks Gina!



Food with Friends returns

October 18th at 5:00 pm in Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendar, plan your favorite dish, and join us for a potluck. After we eat it will be Game Night, so bring a fun game to share.



November



Blessing of the Animals Family Festival

Saturday, November 8th, 10a-1p

Bounce house
Dog Adoptions
Pet Portraits

Rainbow Bridge Memorial
Door Prizes
Food Truck
Canine Apple-bob

Cross in the Desert | 32nd St & Sweetwater

The poster features a central illustration of various animals (a dog, a cat, a rabbit, a bird, a fish, and a parrot) with halos, surrounded by autumn leaves. The text is arranged around the illustration, listing activities and the location.



POSTCARD PARTY- November 16th AT 11:00 AM

This will be a chance for you to communicate with elected officials after the November 4th election. Write notes of congratulation or messages suggesting needed action. Addresses, postcards and stamps will be provided.



Dinner and Dialogue

November 20 at 6:00 pm

Friendsgiving Potluck!

Saturday November 22 at 5:00 pm

Mark your calendar and save the date for a fellowship meal to celebrate Thanksgiving. Know a friend who will be alone for the holiday?

Be sure to invite family and friends to join us.



Advent begins November 30th

December Highlights

Advent Study—December 3, 10, and 17th at 5:30 pm

Blue Christmas—December 21 at 5:30 pm

Christmas Eve Service—December 24 at 6:00 pm



United
Women
in Faith

October Meetings of UWFaith

October 2	UWF Leadership Team Meeting	10:00 am	Library
October 8	Mary Martha Circle	9:30 am	Library
October 9	Outreach Circle	10:30 am	Library
October 16	Bookworms United	10:00 am	Zoom
	Book— <i>Our Missing Heart</i> by Celest Ng		
October 21	Devotions & Dinner	6:30 pm	Café Mexicano

Conference Event - United Women in Faith Annual Celebration

October 25 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

The Annual Celebration of United Methodist Women will be held on **October 25, 2025** at Willowbrook United Methodist Church from **8:30 a.m.** to **3 p.m.** Willowbrook UMC is located at 19390 North 99th Avenue, Sun City, Arizona. The theme is “You are like a spring of water”. Registration closes on October 15, 2025 and is **\$25.00**.

[Register Now](#)

PLANNING MEETING

Please mark your calendar and attend the UWF Planning Meeting on **November 1 at 10:30 am** in Fellowship Hall.



We believe love in action can change the world.

November Unit Meeting (United Women in Faith):

Fellowship Hall November 15, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

World Thank Offering Program

Speaker from Wesley Community Center, Maria Luz Saldana, Youth Services Director



Gun Violence Awareness Statement

by [DSC Communications](#) | Sep 15, 2025 | [Church and Society](#), [Conference Newsletter](#), [Gun Violence Awareness](#)

As followers of Jesus Christ and members of **The Desert Southwest Conference of The United Methodist Church**, we grieve the continued loss of life due to mass shootings in our communities, schools, places of worship, and public spaces. Each act of violence is a tragic reminder of the brokenness of our world and the urgent need for justice, compassion, and peace. Violence within churches and schools that target our most sacred community spaces are the hardest for us to fathom and reminds us how precious our lives truly are.

We believe that every person is created in the image of God and is of sacred worth. Violence against any of God's children is a violation of this truth and an affront to the gospel of Jesus Christ, who calls us to be peacemakers and agents of healing in a hurting world.

In the spirit of our Wesleyan tradition, which calls us to both personal and social holiness, we cannot remain silent in the face of such tragedy. We mourn with those who mourn, we pray for healing and comfort for victims and their families, and we recommit ourselves to the work of nonviolence, advocacy, and community safety.

The 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions provides us with a list of ways that our churches can be active in preventing these events, and we republish them here as a reminder of our Global Church's commitment:

As followers of Jesus, called to live into the reality of God's dream of shalom as described by Micah, we must address the epidemic of gun violence so "that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in God's paths." Therefore, we call upon United Methodists to prayerfully address gun violence in their local context. Some of the ways in which to prevent gun violence include the following:

- 1. For congregations to make preventing gun violence a regular part of our conversations and prayer times. Gun violence must be worshipfully and theologically reflected on, and we encourage United Methodist churches to frame conversations theologically by utilizing resources such as "Kingdom Dreams, Violent Realities: Reflections on Gun Violence from Micah 4:1-4" produced by the General Board of Church and Society.*
- 2. For congregations to assist those affected by gun violence through prayer, pastoral care, creating space, and encouraging survivors to share their stories, financial assistance, and through identifying other resources in their communities as victims of gun violence and their families walk through the process of grieving and healing.*
- 3. For individual United Methodists who own guns as hunters or collectors to safely and securely store their guns and to teach the importance of practicing gun safety.*
- 4. For United Methodist congregations that have not experienced gun violence to form ecumenical and interfaith partnerships with faith communities that have experienced gun violence in order to support them and learn from their experiences.*
- 5. For United Methodist congregations to lead or join in ecumenical or interfaith gatherings for public prayer at sites where gun violence has occurred and partner with law enforcement to help prevent gun violence.*
- 6. For United Methodist congregations to partner with local law-enforcement agencies and community groups to identify gun retailers that engage in retail practices designed to circumvent laws on gun sales and ownership, encourage full legal compliance, and to work with groups like Heeding God's Call that organize faith-based campaigns to encourage gun retailers to gain full legal compliance with appropriate standards and laws.*
- 7. For United Methodist congregations to display signs that prohibit carrying guns onto church property.*
- 8. For United Methodist congregations to advocate at the local and national level for laws that prevent or reduce gun violence.*

2020/2024 Book of Resolutions -3212 Our Call to End Gun Violence

As a Conference, we are also committed to taking tangible steps to support the safety and security of our congregations. To this end, we will be publishing resources and best practices on the [Conference Board of Trustees](#) webpage to help local churches assess and strengthen their safety protocols and ways to respond to violence in words and actions.

Conference Contacts

Bishop

Carlo A. Rapanut

Bishop's Assistant:

Julie O'Neal joneal@dscumc.org

Conference Lay Leader

Alberta Farnsworth

East District Superintendent

Melissa Rynders

Assistant: Jeannine Marinoni

jmarinoni@dscumc.org

East District Lay Leader

Trinity Donovan

Director of Communications

(Assistance with technology)

Christina Dillabough

cdillabough@dscumc.org



Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church
12835 N. 32nd Street
Phoenix, AZ 85032
Phone: 602-992-1960
E-mail: citd@crossinthedesert.org
Website: <https://www.crossinthedesert.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CrossintheDesertUMC>



Cross in the Desert UMC Staff

Pastor

Rev. Gina Pollard
pastorgina@crossinthedesert.org

Youth and Technology Coordinator
Kevin Joy

Administrative Assistant

Julie Wagner
citd@crossinthedesert.org

Music Director
Thomas Hartwell

Financial Secretary

Alice Easter
finance@crossinthedesert.org

Building and Grounds Concerns
Please contact the office by phone or email so
the Property Team may be notified