



The Oasis

June 2026

Cross in the Desert UMC

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



Brunch Potluck Sunday, June 14th 10:00 am

Join us as we send Rev. Gina
off on her next adventure!

Pastor Gina's last day with us will be June 14th, when she will deliver her last sermon. Then we will have the opportunity to send her off with an amazing brunch potluck! Plan to attend, and bring cards and remembrances of her time with us.

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Pastor's Corner



Dear Beloved Cross in the Desert UMC Family,

As I write this final newsletter, my heart is full of gratitude for the incredible three years we have shared together. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to serve as your pastor and to walk alongside you through seasons of joy and challenge alike.

Together, we have weathered difficult times, holding one another up when the road seemed uncertain. We have celebrated milestones, shared countless moments of laughter, and built memories that I will treasure forever. You have taught me what it truly means to be a community of faith—loving deeply, serving faithfully, and supporting one another through every season.

Change is never easy. It asks us to step into the unknown and trust that God is already there, preparing the way. Yet change also brings growth, new perspectives, and fresh opportunities to experience God's faithfulness in unexpected ways. I am confident that the lessons we have learned together will continue to guide and strengthen you in the days ahead.

As I prepare to say goodbye, I want you to know how much you mean to me. Your kindness, your faith, and your generous spirits have shaped me in ways I am still discovering. You are a remarkable congregation, and I have no doubt that your best days are still ahead.

I know that you will extend the same warmth, grace, and love to Pastor Tu'ulauena that you have shown to me. Welcome him with open hearts, and trust that God has great things in store for this next chapter of Cross in the Desert UMC.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your story. You will always hold a special place in my heart.

With love and blessings,

Rev. Gina



Happy Anniversary

Tyler Joy	June 5
Nancy Stein	June 5
Billy Pleake	June 15
Tim Carlson	June 17

Wes & Wanda Picciotti	June 1
Jeff & Karen Bulkeley	June 5
Jeff & Linda Moore	June 8
Hank & Barb Hendrickson	June 12
Bill Moyer & Ada Thompson	June 12
Jim & Becky Bussey	June 25

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.



The *Upper Room* makes a perfect devotional, so be sure to pick one up today. It is available in a large print version as well as a regular print compact version that is perfect for pocket or purse.

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



There is a Chrysalis Flight scheduled for July 10-12 at Christ Community United Methodist Church in Avondale. Chrysalis is for teens age 14-18. Questions Contact Mary Ann Crist or azemmaus.org.

CITD Leadership Board

I am assuming that there will be more information somewhere else about our farewell potluck for Pastor Gina, but please note that we will be having a potluck in her honor on Sunday, June 14th, at 10:00 AM. There is a sign-up in the church narthex. Please bring cards and tokens of appreciation if you feel so inclined to thank her for her time and contributions. We will also be planning something to similarly welcome Pastor T as our new Pastor on July 5th. There will be more information on this in the coming weeks.

There were about 25 staff and laity attending our Onboarding session with Pastor T that was facilitated by Rev. Rachel Gilmore. It was a chance for us to get to know Pastor T better and for him to get to know us. It was a very positive experience all around, and you will not have trouble finding someone to talk to who was there to tell you more about the experience and more about Pastor T.

I know progress has been slow on our two Together We Can projects that are currently active. I think it's safe to say we're getting close on both. There is a City of Phoenix Zoning adjustment hearing scheduled for June 18th for our digital sign so hopefully that will finish up soon. We are currently getting bids on the landscaping project, so we've made great progress there as well.

From a financial perspective, our giving was well under budget for January and February, but March and April have been much improved getting us almost to budget so that's been a positive development. Hopefully, that will continue.

The Financial Review of 2024 was completed with no areas of real concern. There were a few recommendations for improvements.

If you have any questions, concerns, feedback (positive or negative) or want to get involved, please reach out to me or any member of the Leadership Board: Ada Thompson, Rhonda Mortenson, Wanda Picciotti, Kristin O'Shaughnessy, Philip Botts, or Melanie Konski. This is also a reminder that Leadership Board meetings are open for you except when we are in Executive Session.

In His service,

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



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Members of the Serving Committee provided a bit of end-of-the-year encouragement to the staff of three schools along the 32nd Street corridor recently. Nutritious and sweet treats were shared at Greenway Middle School, Shea Middle School, and Indian Bend Elementary. These are the same schools we at Cross in the Desert support through gifts of feminine hygiene products. It takes a village, and we are blessed to be able to be a blessing to our village.



Ada Thompson, Wanda Picciotti, and Kristin O'Shaughnessy delivered treats and the blessing to one of the schools.

◆ A BLESSING ◆

A Blessing for the Whole School Village

*To the teacher who stays late and arrives early —
may your energy return to you tenfold.*

*To the office staff who hold everything together —
may you be seen for the cornerstone you are.*

*To the counselor who carries what others can't name —
may your own cup be filled.*

*To the cafeteria crew who nourish hundreds every day —
may you know the warmth you bring.*

*To the custodians who make a place feel cared for —
may that care come back around to you.*

*To every aide, coach, volunteer, and quiet presence —
you matter more than you'll ever be told.*

You are the village. Thank you for showing up.

From your neighbors at Cross in the Desert UMC



June 28th is Orange Bag Sunday

Be sure to pick up your Orange Bag on Sunday June 28th so you can take advantage of the sales and Senior Day on July 1. We will return the filled bags to church on July 5th. Let's make it a goal to show Pastor Tu'ulau our generosity on his first Sunday with us.



Global Minds Preschool finished their second year with a recital on May 21st. Director Adam Maynard introduced each class. There were 4 groups—young Chinese, young Spanish, older Chinese, and older Spanish. Each group sang a few songs in the language they were learning. There was a full house of appreciative parents and friends!



The younger Spanish class was very enthusiastic and had a great time singing and playing their tambourines.

Phoenix Women’s Chorus presents *Wild, Wild WOMEN*

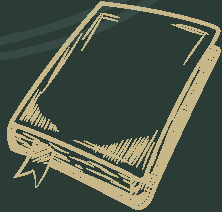
On May 16th and 17th the Phoenix Women’s Chorus brought their 80+ member ensemble to perform here at CITD. A violinist and percussionist added depth to several of the pieces that were performed under the direction of Karli Anderson. It was a powerful performance. Pastor Gina was front and center!



SUMMER VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY · 2026

Bible Study for the *Busy*

Good
News



Hard
News



Your bible
This week's news
A community that listens

Thursdays at 7pm • June 4 - Aug 27 • Virtual - Zoom



You don't need to attend every session since each week stands alone. Just drop in when your schedule permits. The link to Zoom is printed in the Friday email, or can be obtained from the office. Contact is Kristin O'Shaughnessy.

BACK AGAIN THIS SUMMER!

Saturday at the Movies

Next Showing: Saturday June 13

Doors open at 2:45 pm

Movie starts at 3:00 pm

CITD Youth Room

Mark your calendar for future showings on July 11, August 22, and September 26. Please contact Rhonda Mortenson with any questions or movie suggestions.

PRAYER

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

There is a tiny four-letter word in the Bible that is like a command - WAIT. How can such a little word be so hard to do?

WAIT on the Lord.... We read that a lot in Scripture. Wait, not always so easy, is it? We know God always answers prayers: sometimes he says "yes", sometimes he says "no" and sometimes he says "wait". The yes and no answers, are pretty straight forward but, that wait part is more confusing and difficult. We want to know the answer right now so we can move on. Yes or no But, wait? What are we supposed to do with that?

Does it mean we should sit down and staring into space, watching the clock or sit at a desk and mark the days off on the calendar? Or even better, get in our heads and play the what if.... this or that game. We could sit there so long we may not be able to get up anymore just - waiting.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death

Yes, we walk through the valley. We do not sit down and take up residence in the valley and watch the clock. As Christians we are waiting for the Lord's return. And as we wait for his return we live our everyday lives. The challenge is that no matter what we are waiting for: a check in the mail, health care test results, word about a new job or the Lord's coming. We continue to do our service, to have fun, to fellowship with family and friends and to live our lives the best we can to God's glory. Amen? Amen.

WALK WORTHY

PRAYER: We turn to you our God and thank you for loving us just as we are. You fill us with your love and goodness because you created us. May we bring life to our world and may you be satisfied with us. In Christ's holy name we pray, Amen.

East District Prayer Focus for June

- Bishop & Staff of the Desert Southwest Conference
- Chaplains, Counselors & Staff of the East District
- Staff & Churches of the West District, North District, & South District





The **Leadership Team** will meet Thursday, June 4 at 10 am via Zoom. You can find the link in "It's Happening Here."

Mary Martha will meet not be meeting for the summer.

Devotions and Dinner will meet at Mellow Mushroom, 5350 E High St., on Tuesday, June 16 at 6:30 pm.

Bookworms will meet on Thursday, June 18 at 10:00 via ZOOM. The book for June is ***The Secret of Secrets*** by Dan Brown. You can find the link in "It's Happening Here." Join us for a lively discussion. New readers are always welcome!



Mission u

In person - July 16-18 at Trinity United Methodist – 3600 Fourth St., Flagstaff, AZ 86004

[Click Here for in person registration](#)

Registration deadline July 9

Virtual via Zoom - August 4-6

[Click Here for virtual registration](#) Registration deadline July 28

This year's theme will explore times in the Bible when people experienced "God with us," especially times that involve God "calling" people to a particular action or way of being. Through these stories we will explore what these experiences can teach us about God and what God desires for this world and the ways we move through it.

HOTEL INFORMATION for in person

We have a reserved block of rooms at the Days Inn by Wyndham, 3601 East Lockett Rd, Flagstaff, Arizona. Use this link to book your room: [Click here to book](#) There is a complimentary hot buffet breakfast provided.

All rooms must be reserved by July 1st to receive the discounted group rate. Select the correct dates on the reservation page to receive these discounted rates. Rates are: \$110 weekday / \$165 weekend (plus taxes)

Questions, Lorraine Shaw, Mission u, Dean, ladyinsurance@att.net
Clair Hart, Mission u, Assistant Dean, hartcd89131@gmail.com

Are you ready to welcome Pastor T.?

His name is Tu'ulauena Taina Lolohea, and he welcomes being addressed as Pastor Tu'ulau or Pastor T. He is from Fakakai, Ha`apai, Tonga, and graduated from high school in Hawaii. He played football for the University of Hawaii as a linebacker. He studied at Sia`atoutai Theological College in Nuku`alofa, Tonga, where he met his wife Taina. Both are PKs. Pastor T's dad, Taike Lolohea, is the pastor of the Tongan UMC in Mesa. Tu'ulau is coming to us from an appointment at St. Mark's UMC Sanctuary Campus in Tucson.

Pastor T. will be with us in a half time position beginning July 1st. We will be sharing him with Mission Bell UMC, 4645 W. Bell Rd in Glendale. We have changed service time to 9:00 am, and Mission Bell has changed their time to 11:00 am, so don't expect Pastor T. to hang around on Sunday mornings to chat! He needs to get on the road!

We are looking forward to welcoming Pastor T., Taina, and the children to CITD!

Mālō e lelei



Can you help?



One of the comments we hear from people when you ask them to describe how they feel about CITD is that *“it feels like family”*. It seems like that for many of us, but times have come when some of our family needs some help! Congregational Care is always looking for people who are willing to share their time. Have you looked at the back of the yellow card recently? You can indicate areas where you may feel called to pitch in. Right now we have those who are needing transportation for worship services and medical appointments. If you might be available to help with rides, please indicate on the yellow card or contact Cathy Milford at 602-390-6661. Cathy has the availability lists and pairs people up.

There are other opportunities to help with worship services, fellowship time, etc. indicated on the back of the yellow card. There may be something there that would be a perfect fit for you. Just indicate on the yellow card or contact the office at 602-992-1960.



A Call to the Desert Southwest Annual Conference Regular Session 2026



WE ARE THE CHURCH TOGETHER
ACTS 2:42-47 | EPHESIANS 4:11-16

Dear United Methodists in the Desert Southwest,

Greetings in the name of the One who calls us into beloved community for the sake of the world!

I hereby call the regular session of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to convene on June 18-21, 2026 in Sun City, AZ. Our primary venue will be at Lakeview United Methodist Church with some events happening at First UMC of Sun City and Arizona Korean UMC. We will be hosted by our siblings in the West District and we look forward to learning more about them and their ministries.

Our theme this year is “*We Are the Church Together*” based on Acts 2:42-47 and Ephesians 4:11-16, the second in our vision of becoming “*A Healthy Church for a Healthy World.*” Building on last year’s theme, “*And Let It Begin With Me*” where we underscored personal health as the beginning point in healing the world, this year we will focus on the health of local churches. Healthy disciples will make healthy churches. Healthy, vital churches will work towards healthy communities. Healthy communities will create a healthy world. Given the unrest and turmoil in the world today, I cannot stress enough the need for healing and the call to be part of that work.

It is fitting that as we focus on the health and vitality of churches, our annual conference session is going back to a local church venue. It will be quite a different experience from what we may be used to in convention centers. I invite us to come with an openness to do things differently which in turn may lead to deeper reflections about how God is calling us to change and innovate in order to become healthy and vital.

Your attendance is always important for the sake of strengthening our bonds in the body of Christ and it is even more so, this year, because we will be making important decisions in the life of our annual conference, among them electing our delegates to the 2028 General and Jurisdictional conferences. Your voice and vote are valued, and I hope that you will take this responsibility seriously and make plans to attend.

Information is now available at dscumc.org/ac. I especially invite you to pay attention to the due dates for registration and other submissions and ask you to please abide by these deadlines. This will greatly help the continuing work of planning the conference and avoid undue stress on our staff and volunteers. I trust that you will do your part as beloved members of our covenant community.

I look forward to being with all of you at Lakeview in June! May the Holy Spirit move in our minds and our hearts, even now, as we prepare for this important work of holy conferencing.

Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut

Conference Contacts

Bishop: Carlo A. Rapanut

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Conference Lay Leader: Alberta Farnsworth

East District Superintendent: Melissa Rynders

Assistant: Jeannine Marinoni jmarinoni@dscumc.org

East District Lay Leader: Trinity Donovan

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cdillabough@dscumc.org

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Youth and Technology Coordinator

Kevin Joy

Music Director

Thomas Hartwell

Building and Grounds Concerns

Please contact the office by phone or email so the Property Team may be notified