The Oasis

November 2026

Cross in the Desert UMC

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

CITD Leadership Board

Because the Leadership Board did not meet in October as the Cluster Church Conference approached, there are no meeting or goals update this month. I hope CITD was well represented at the conference.

I am writing on the day of our participation in Mission Bell's 50th anniversary celebration. Congratulations to the Mission Bell congregation on this milestone. I believe we all enjoyed the occasion very much. Thank you to everyone who attended to support Mission Bell, Pastor T, and CITD; to those who provided desserts; and to our choir members who participated in the joint choir during the worship service.

I did not have an opportunity to obtain a full update on the Together We Can Campaign, but it appears that we have raised close to $228,000—more than 106% of our $215,000 goal. This is encouraging because we still have many needs to address. Our digital sign is expected to be ready to ship by the end of October, and we hope it will be fully installed and operational in November. Once the sign is completed and all related costs, including any last-minute expenses, are paid, we will have a clearer idea of how much remains for future projects. One of those projects will be our parking lots. Addressing them will not be inexpensive, but delaying the work could make it significantly more costly.

Our scouts have helped complete several projects around the church. Their work has included painting the cross southeast of the Fellowship Hall, cleaning the enclosed area in the south parking lot, and improving the sign on Sweetwater.

Thanks to funding from the CITD Foundation and the work of Pastor T and his crew, several concrete projects have been completed. Curbing was constructed around the enclosed area in the south parking lot. Concrete was also replaced along the sidewalk between the Fellowship Hall and Preschool, at the northeast corner of the Fellowship Hall, and in sections of the sidewalk east of the Outreach Building. These improvements addressed tripping hazards that had existed for some time.

Many thanks to Dave Delster and Kevin Joy for helping complete the projects described above. Special thanks also to Dave for continuing to monitor the new landscaping and making sure everything is progressing as it should.

If you have questions, concerns, or feedback, or if you would like to get involved, please contact me or any member of the Leadership Board: Ada Thompson, Rhonda Mortenson, Wanda Picciotti, Kristin O'Shaughnessy, Philip Botts, Melanie Konski, or Carol Monsma. Leadership Board meetings are open to everyone except during Executive Session.

Thank you for your continued prayers, participation, and support.

In His service,

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

Pastor's Corner

Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

First and foremost, I give all glory, honor, and praise to God for His unfailing love, abundant grace, and continued provision over our families, our church family at Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church, and our shared ministry.

I want to take a moment to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your support, dedication, and participation in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Mission Bell United Methodist Church.

Over the past several weeks, we have spent many days and hours preparing for this special celebration. There was much work to be done, but through your willingness to serve, your generosity, and your love for one another, we came together to make this occasion a beautiful and memorable celebration. I am truly grateful for all that you have done.

A special thank-you to everyone who prepared and brought the wonderful desserts. They were absolutely delicious, and everyone enjoyed them! Thank you for sharing your gifts and your generosity with us.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to our choir director, Thomas, and our wonderful choir for joining Mission Bell's choir and helping make the celebration so meaningful through the gift of music. Your time, preparation, and willingness to share your musical gifts were truly appreciated.

Serving in ministry across two congregations is a blessing, and this celebration reminded me of the beauty of working together as one in Christ. When we come together in faith, love, and service, God can do wonderful things through us.

I am grateful to serve alongside such a caring, generous, and faithful church family. This celebration was a success, and I could not have done it without each of you. Thank you for your prayers, your hard work, your time, and your willingness to serve.

May God continue to bless Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church and Mission Bell United Methodist Church as we continue to grow in faith, serve our communities, and share the love of Christ with others.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. To God be the glory for the wonderful things He has done and continues to do among us!

With love, gratitude, and blessings,

Ofa atu Pastor Tuulauena Lolohea

Alice Easter	November 2
Liz Shelton	November 2
Romi Simons	November 5
Taike Lolohea	November 6
Stephen Parrott	November 12
Ruth Lee	November 14
Bryan Crist	November 20
Gary Simons	November 21
Daniel Krause	November 30

Jack & Judy Smith	November 7
Jim & Pam Dukarich	November 27

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.

Arizona Walk to Emmaus
THE UPPER ROOM

<u>Upcoming Walk to Emmaus Events</u>

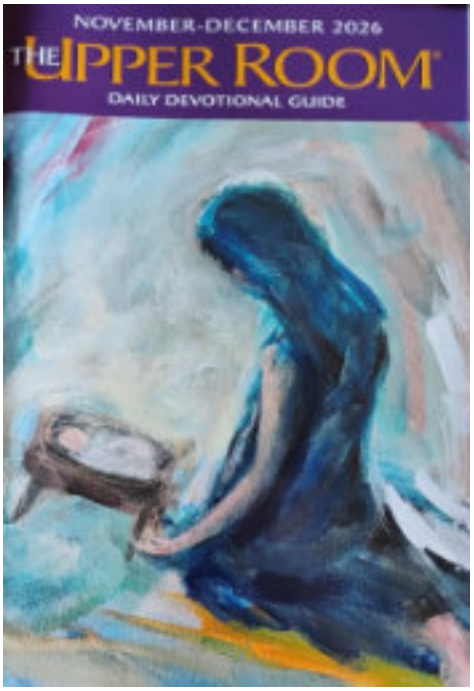
Men's Walk - February 18-21, 2027
Women's Walk - March 4-7, 2027

Walks will be held at Christ Community UMC
104 W Western Ave. Avondale AZ 85323

If you have any questions please contact Mary Ann Crist or the church office. There are applications in the Narthex.

Chrysalis

Chrysalis Flight 40
January 15-18, 2027
Lay Directors Kelly Capps (W) & Timmy Hoskinson (M)
Christ Community UMC, 104 W. Western Ave., Avondale, AZ



The Upper Room

The Upper Room daily devotional is available on the welcome table in the lobby. Please a leave small donation if you are able.

Plan to join us for Phoenix Women's Chorus Concert
Saturday November 21 at 7:00 pm
Sunday November 22 at 3:00 pm
Tickets are $20.00 and can be purchased at azpwc.org

Phoenix Women's CHORUS

LURA TURNER HOMES' 41st HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

Lura Turner Homes for Adults with Special Needs hosts its 41st[th] holiday bazaar and craft fair, noon to 6 p.m. Friday, November 6[th] and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, November 7 at Cross Roads United Methodist, 7901 N. Central Ave. (Northern & Central) Phoenix. Dozens of vendors will offer everything from original art to baked goods to homemade Christmas decorations to jewelry and more, much more. Vendors from Magic Moments' long-time boutique will be present, too. Proceeds from this free event benefit the special needs men and women who live at Lura Turner Homes, founded in 1965 by the late and much-loved Methodist deaconess Lura Ann Turner. Event is free, but shoppers are encouraged to bring canned goods for Desert Mission Food Bank. To reserve a booth, please call Dixie at 602-943-4789. For info., see LTH's website: luraturnerhomes.org.

Food with Friends

Saturday November 14 at 4:00 pm

Join us in Fellowship Hall for our Thanksgiving Celebration. Meat will be provided. Please bring a favorite holiday side dish or dessert to share.

Saturday November 28th at 10:00 am

Come and help decorate the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. We have tasks that everyone can help with - putting up the tree and decorating with Chrismons, hanging wreaths and garland, and many more.

What is a chrismon you ask? A chrismon is a handmade white and gold Christmas tree ornament that displays ancient Chritian symbols representing Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.The word is a combinatioon of Christ and monogram.

The first Sunday of Advent is November 29th.

vitalant

Blood Drive

The Vitalant Bloodmobile will be in our parking lot on Sunday, November 8th from 8:00 am until Noon. Please consider donating. The need is always there, and it only takes a few minutes for you to be a lifesaver for someone who needs a transfusion. Make an appointment on their website www.vitalant.org

Mission Bell UMC 50th Anniversary Celebration
October 25, 2026

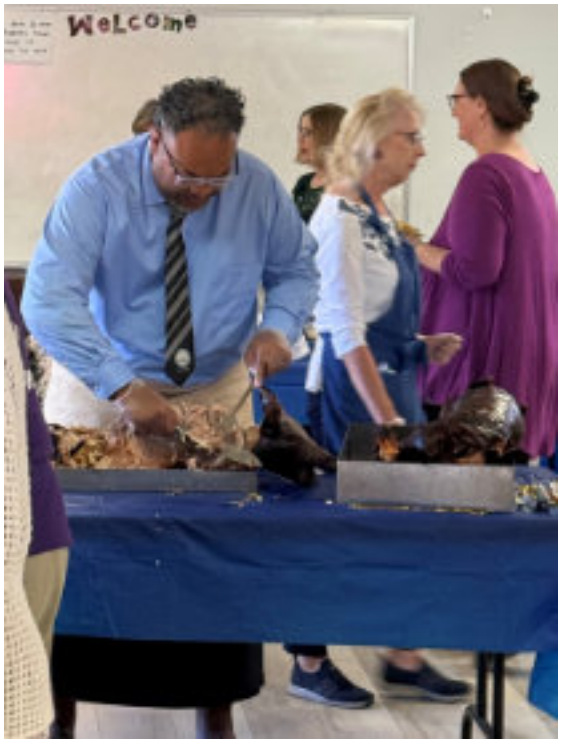
Combined Choir and Praise Team

Pastor Tu'ulauena Lolohea

Guest Speaker - Pastor Doug Reynolds

Combined Choir
One Flock from CITD and the Mission Bell Choir
Directed by Diane Jamison - Mission Bell Choir Director
Accompanied by Thomas Hartwell - CITD Music Director

District Superintendent
Rev. Melissa Rynders



After the service there was a banquet featuring roast pig, with delicious sides and an overflowing dessert table.

After carving duties were fulfilled, Pastor T., Taina and Monalisa thanked everyone with a song.

Please remember our deployed members in military service:

Tyler Joy

Stephen Parrott

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

ROMANS 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

On November 3 we will vote in mid-term elections across our country. Whether we are happy with or disappointed in the outcome of the races, we have a lot to be thankful for... thankful for the right to vote. Thankful that we have people willing and eager to serve our country.

We are blessed to live in a country where we have the right to cast our vote for the people we wish to see elected and our vote carries with it our hopes. However, let's remember that we should put our hopes in someone much greater than man or woman. We will be much better served if we rest our hopes in God, our Creator and know that we are better off each and every day that we choose to live a life with Christ.

As citizens of God's kingdom, we are lucky to have God at work in the world no matter who leads our city, state or country for we know that God loves all of us and He wants health and peace and plenty for all the people of the world. We are part of something much bigger than one nation; we are citizens of Heaven and we work on behalf of a much greater cause.

Let's remember to pray for our country, our leaders and all who work to make a better world. Every day is Thanksgiving Day when you're a Christian.

WALK WORTHY

PRAYER - Lord, we bless your holy name. You deserve all the glory and honor due your name. Father thank you for your goodness and love for us that lasts forever. Amen

Valley District Prayer Focus for November

The Fountains, A UMC - Fountain Hills	Rev. David Felten
Tongan UMC - Mesa	Rev. Taike Lolohea
Trinity UMC - Phoenix	Rev. Loye Ashton

United Women in Faith

All members are invited to the 2027 Unit Planning Day on **Saturday, November 12**. Join us at 10:00 am for a time to discusss the goals and visions for Cross in the Desert United Women in Faith in the coming year. Coffee and lunch will be provided. Bring your ideas and a beverage for lunch.

The **Leadership Team** will meet Thursday, November 5 at 10 am in the CITD library or via Zoom, link is available in “It’s Happening Here.”.

Mary Martha will meet on Wednesday, November 11 at 10:00 am in the CITD library.

Devotions and Dinner will meet at Flower Child at Desert Ridge, 21001 N Tatum Blvd, on Tuesday, November 17 at 6:30 pm. Following dinner, we will do Christmas shopping for our Wesley family.

Bookworms will meet on Wednesday, November 18 at 9:00 am via ZOOM. The book for November is ***Freeing Jesus*** **by Diane Butler Bass and** ***A Prayer for Our Country*** **by Barry Black**. You can find the link in “It's Happening Here.” Join us for a lively discussion. New readers are always welcome!

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United Women in Faith

Brunch and Installation of 2027 Officers

Saturday, December 5 ~ 10:00 am

CITD Fellowship Hall

More from United Women in Faith:

The Mary Martha Circle has been sending greetings to missionaries and staff of the United Women in Faith who have birthdays during the week they meet each month. They received two interesting replies in October and would like to share them.

From Rev. Collins Prempeh, in Africa:

Greetings in Christ!

Thank you so much for your kind birthday wishes and encouragement. I truly appreciate the love and support from the women of United Women in Faith at Cross in the Desert UMC. I give all the glory to God for the opportunity to serve in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries in Zimbabwe and beyond.

May God continue to bless you all.

Blessings,
Pastor Collins
Regional Missionary – Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries

And from Rachel Splaingard:

Thank you for the birthday message and prayers.

I am in ministry is Greenwood, MS living out my call as a Deaconess as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Greenwood Salvation Army. We serve 14 counties in the Mississippi Delta. We are currently reviewing Angle Tree applications for children under 12 and seniors over 65 and hiring seasonal workers for our Red Kettle Christmas Campaign. I'm also sourcing uniforms for children in our local school district. We get referrals from the school counselors and work to provide a uniform and shoes; this year we have 57 requests.

My husband and I have been married for 12 years and became parents five years ago. We adopted both of our children. Our son is 14 and in 7th grade and our daughter is 8 and in 3rd grade.

We appreciate your prayers and thanks again for taking the time to send a birthday message

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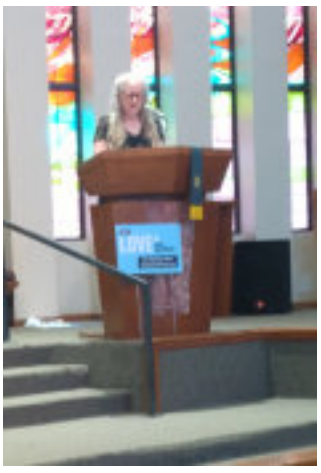
The Desert Southwest Conference United Women in Faith Annual meeting was held on October 24th. Gretchen Miller was reelected Conference Treasurer. She led us in the Pledge service. Arvilla Jungman, Kathy Seward and Mary Ann Crist were in attendance.



Peace in the Desert Church to Formally Charter as New Union Congregation on November 15

Published on Oct 06, 2026 Canyon District Newsletter New and Vital Faith Ministry Sonoran District Newsletter Valley District Newsletter

The service marks the official recognition of Peace in the Desert Church, formed this year from the merger of North Scottsdale United Methodist Church and Ascension Lutheran Church.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. October 6, 2026 — Peace in the Desert Church (PDC) will hold a Chartering Sunday service on November 15 at 10 a.m., formally recognizing the congregation as a union of the United Methodist Church (Desert Southwest Conference) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Grand Canyon Synod). The service is open to the public.

Peace in the Desert Church launched August 1, 2026, from the merger of North Scottsdale United Methodist Church, founded in 1978, and Ascension Lutheran Church, founded in 1952. Chartering Sunday marks the point at which both denominations formally constitute the congregation as one church.

"This Sunday makes official what has already been true in how we've worshiped and served together since August," said Rev. Christopher Wurpts, Co-Pastor of Peace in the Desert Church. "Chartering is a formal way to recognize the Holy Spirit's work amongst our people and their ministry."

The public is invited to attend the 10 a.m. service at 11735 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85254. A luncheon and time of fellowship will follow. No RSVP is needed.

Conference Contacts

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Conference Lay Leader: Alberta Farnsworth
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Kevin Joy