



The Oasis

October 2026

Cross in the Desert UMC

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



October is Pastor Appreciation Month

Please take a moment to tell Pastor T how much we appreciate him. Ways to celebrate him include writing a note to let him know you are praying for him and his family, and for their physical and emotional well-being. Send an encouraging text or email. Compliment strong points in ministry such as telling him when you really enjoy a sermon. Make an appointment to stop in and really get to know him, and he you. He is going to school and writing papers, so he will appreciate any encouragement we can offer.



Pastor's Corner

Why I Coach Football as a Pastor

People often ask me, "Pastor, don't you get tired?"

The honest answer is, sometimes I do. But coaching football has never felt like a job to me. It has always been part of who I am, and today I see it as another way God has given me the opportunity to serve and impact young lives.

Football became part of my life through my family, especially my uncles on my mother's side. They were a big reason I started playing the game. But as I continued from Little League to high school and college, I developed a deeper love for football because of the lessons my coaches taught me.

They taught me discipline, commitment, teamwork, perseverance, and how to respond to both success and failure. Looking back, I realize they were teaching me much more than football. They were helping shape the person I would become.

That experience is a big part of why I coach today.

I remember what it was like to be a young athlete looking up to a coach. I know how much a coach's encouragement, correction, and belief can mean to a young person. Because I was once in their shoes, I understand the responsibility that comes with having an opportunity to influence them.

As a pastor, I also see a strong connection between coaching and ministry. A coach leads, teaches, encourages, corrects, and prepares athletes for what is ahead. A pastor does many of those same things while helping people grow in their faith and in their lives.

For me, ministry does not stop at the church doors. It extends onto the football field.

Every practice and every game gives me an opportunity to teach character, responsibility, respect, and perseverance. More importantly, it gives me an opportunity to remind these young people that their worth is greater than their performance on the field.

I may not know every challenge a young athlete is facing, but I can make sure they know that someone believes in them, cares about them, and wants to see them succeed in life.

Winning football games is part of the sport, but developing young people is the greater purpose.

I coach because others invested in me. I coach because football helped shape my life. And I coach because I believe God can use me on the football field just as He uses me in the pulpit.

Football started as a game for me, but it became a teacher, a passion, and now another place where I can serve.

That is why I coach.

Not because I have to, but because
I believe it is part of my purpose.

Pastor Tuulauena Lolohea





Carol Monsma	October 14
Casey Joy	October 16
Bill Moyer	October 19
Tess Menedez	October 20
Mary Botts	October 23
Ella Moore	October 23
Jan Wickliffe	October 29

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.



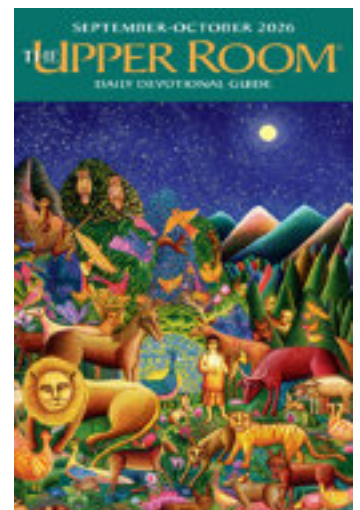
Upcoming Walk to Emmaus Events

Women's Walk October 8-11, 2026
 Lakeview United Methodist Church, 10298 W. Thunderbird Rd.
 Sun City.
 Lay Director Toni Berg

If you would like to be a pilgrim, or sponsor a pilgrim, please contact Mary Ann Crist or the church office. There are applications in the Narthex.



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 leave a small donation if you are able.

CITD Leadership Board

There are a couple significant events coming up this month and early next month. The first is that we will not be having worship service at Cross in the Desert on October 25th. Instead, we will be worshipping and celebrating Mission Bell's 50th Anniversary with them. The second is that we will be having our Church Conference on November 1st at 1:00 PM. We will not be holding it at Cross in the Desert either. We will be participating in a joint Church Conference session with Dove of the Desert, Sunrise, and Mission Bell at Dove of the Desert. This is an important business meeting for our church, and an opportunity to join with fellow United Methodists. I know this will not be as convenient for everyone, but I hope that all of you will make an extra effort to join in with both. Please be looking for more information on both events, particularly for October 25th.

Here's this past month's update on our goals. Again, if you have anything you feel is appropriate to add for past or upcoming events, please let me know.

Month	Church Goal 1	Church Goal 2	Church Goal 3
July- set new goals	Welcoming: Opening Doors Wide To create a culture where every person who encounters Cross in the Desert-whether in worship, online, or in the community-feels seen, valued, and embraced as a beloved child of God.	Loving: Building a Community of Care To embody Christ's love in authentic relationships-within our congregation and beyond so that every person experiences belonging, compassion, and spiritual growth.	Serving: Hands and Feet of Christ To serve our community with compassion and justice, reflecting God's love in tangible ways that transform lives and systems.
September	• Continuing to work on campus improvement projects • Kid's Bags plus small toys to choose from done • Maybe need to move some toys to Narthex or play area in worship center	• Women's Bible Study continuing to meet • Summer Movies • Birthday cake celebration for the month	• Orange bag Sunday for PV Food Bank • UWF Collecting for Period Poverty • Delivery to Justa Center • UWF Tea to benefit Identifreed

If you have any questions, concerns, feedback or would like 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, Melanie Konski, or Carol Monsma. Leadership Board meetings are open to you except when we are in 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



Sunday October 25, 2026

11:00 am

**Combined Service at Mission
Bell UMC**

4645 W. Bell Rd

Be ready to help Mission Bell UMC celebrate their 50th anniversary on October 25th! We will attend a special Celebration Service with them on this special Sunday. There are plans for special music and sharing from former pastors.

There will be no service or live stream from Cross in the Desert on that day.

The service will be followed by a special Banquet meal. We have been asked to bring desserts to share. Please plan to bring "finger" desserts, like bars or cookies which are easy to serve and eat.

Please RSVP to the office

1. Your name and how many are coming
2. Will you be able to contribute a dessert? If so what and how much. Please label so the allergy people can share (e.g. nuts, gluten, dairy in your dish?).
3. Will you need transportation? Please let the office know so we can arrange carpooling.

The Phoenix Women's Chorus has chosen Cross in the Desert again this year as the home for their 2026-2027 concert series. Don't miss their fall concert.

Lift Every Voice

Saturday November 21 at 7:00 pm

Sunday November 22 at 3:00 pm





Summary of Together We Can Status as of:	8/18/2026
Together We Can General Capital Campaign	
Goal	\$215,000.00
Received Funds	\$218,417.18
% of Goal	101.6%
Total Funds Spent	\$211,836.40
Total Funds Committed	\$6,282.27
Money left to be spent	\$298.51
TWC Designated for Digital Sign Expenses First from CITD Foundation	
Received Funds	\$45,000.00
Total Funds Spent	\$8,402.65
Total Funds Committed	\$31,787.95
Money left to be spent	\$4,809.40
TWC Designated for Sewer Expenses First from CITD Foundation	
Funds received and spent	\$120,000.00
TWC Designated for Repaying Preschool from CITD Foundation	
Funds Received and spent	\$33,000.00

I'm very happy to report that we are now at 101.6% of our General Capital Campaign Goal as of August 18th! Our 101.6% progress does not count the other \$198,000 in additional projects funded by the CITD Foundation through Together We Can. We continue to have significant needs that need to be addressed so please continue to contribute as you are able. We've made huge improvements to our campus, but there is much more to do. While the campaign was to run through 2026, the Leadership Board decided we will keep Together We Can going to support capital improvements going forward. Thanks so much for what you have done!

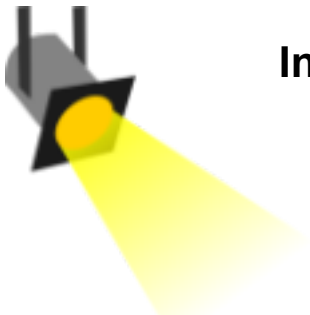
The landscape project is complete, and we received approval for our digital sign from the city. The sign is being built, and we need to address the electrical requirements, but I think we're close to a final resolution to our digital sign.

If you have any questions or input, please see or contact Eugene O'Bryan at 602-363-4115.



Food With Friends
is back in October!

**Mark your calendar for
October 17th at 5:00 pm.
Come to Fellowship Hall with
your favorite dish. Enjoy
reconnecting after the
summer break as we share a
meal and fellowship.**



International Outreach Spotlight

World Vision®

Meet our sponsored World Vision child from the Pejeh-Sowa community in Sierra Leone. Moigua Ansu is 12 years old, and currently is in primary school studying grade six. World Vision staff monitors well-being, and currently his health is good. This past year he and his family built a hand-washing station at school to help stop the spread of disease. They learned about what to feed a child so they can grow healthy and strong. They received a water purifier giving the family clean, safe water at home. They also learned which local water sources are safe to drink from. Their community is grateful for our support.



Neighborhood Outreach

Mary Botts and Kathleen Boos are modeling the bags made by Arvilla Jungman to be donated to the Foster Alliance. These bags are given to foster children as they are moved to provide them a nice permanent bag for their belongings. Too often they have to carry their belongings in black garbage bags. These bags give them something nice that they can call their own,

The FOSTER Alliance

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Rest. Refresh. Renew.

Mugs and Muffins and Soul Care

YOU ARE WORTHY. YOU ARE LOVED. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

OCTOBER 17, 2026

8 AM - 4 PM

DOVE OF THE DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Contact: 602-740-9737

SPONSORED BY **WOW** **WOMEN OF WORSHIP**

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PRAYER

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Halloween often brings with it a bunch of creepy decorations, ghostly costumes, and spooky stories meant to send chills down our spines. While it's fun to dress up and partake in festive activities, it's important to remember that as Christians, we are called to live in the light of God's love, not in the shadow of fear.

In this season where many things can seem scary, we stand firm knowing that God's power is greater than anything we might face and is always with us. Although, it's a time when pranks and mischief are common, we can use this time to focus on acts of kindness and love. By showing love we reflect the heart of God to those around us. And with the excitement and sometimes chaos of Halloween, it's essential sound minds remain grounded in God's truth. A sound mind helps us to discern what is good and is a reminder to choose activities and costumes that honor God and reflect our faith.

As we celebrate with fun activities and treats, let 2 Timothy 1:7 be a guiding light, transforming a season often associated with fear and evil into one filled with faith, love and wisdom.

PRAYER: Dear God thank you for giving us a spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Help us to choose wisely as we partake in festivities and to remember your strength and love whenever we feel afraid.

In Jesus' the Christ of Nazareth's name,
Amen

WALK WORTHY

Valley District Prayer Focus for October

Shepherd of the Valley UMC - Phoenix	Pastor Janet Culbertson
Song of Life UMC - Queen Creek	Rev. Sylvia Harris
St. Matthew UMC - Mesa	Rev. Ann Lyter
Sunrise UMC - Phoenix	Pastor Robin Lee





United Women in Faith

The **Leadership Team** will meet Thursday, October 1 at 10 am in the CITD library.

Mary Martha will meet on Wednesday, October 7 at 9:00 am in the CITD library.

Devotions and Dinner will meet at The Mexicano, 4801 E Cactus Rd., on Tuesday, October 20 at 6:30 pm.

Bookworms will meet on Thursday, October 15 at 10:00 via ZOOM. October will be a Frederik Backman author study. Choose one of his books to share with the group. You can find the link in "It's Happening Here." Join us for a lively discussion. New readers are always welcome!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH DESERT SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE ANNUAL CELEBRATION

St. Matthew United Methodist Church
2540 W. Baseline Road, Mesa, AZ 85202

stmatthewmesa.churchtrac.com

Saturday, Oct. 24, 9 am to approximately 3 pm
Check-in begins at 8:30 am

Leadership training begins with dinner on your own at 4:30 pm Friday, Oct. 23;
training follows at 5:30 pm, location to be determined.

Registration fee is \$20.

There will be two workshops during the day. When you register, you will be asked to number the three choices in order of your preference, and we will do our best to give you your first choice.

The workshop choices are:

- Stepping Forward in Faith, led by Lorraine Shaw
- Activating the Flame, led by Deaconess Toni Smith
- Social Action and the Charter for Racial Justice, led by Yvonne Daniely

Register online, <https://dsc-reg.brapp.com/>
[UnitedWomeninFaithAnnualCelebrationatStMatthewUMCOctober23242026.](https://dsc-reg.brapp.com/)

Register by Oct. 17.

You may direct questions to the email addresses below, but please don't send your registration to these addresses.
You will invite confusion. However, do let us know if you have trouble.

Johanna Eubank, jmaeub@gmail.com,
and Debbie Pallack, dpallack@aol.com
Celebration Registrars



LURA TURNER HOMES' 41st HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

Lura Turner Homes for Adults with Special Needs hosts its 41stth holiday bazaar and craft fair, noon to 6 p.m. Friday, November 6th 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.



Life Line Screening will be back on the CITD campus on Friday, October 9th. They offer simple screenings for stroke risk and heart disease. appointments are made through their website lifelinescreening.com. The office has 2 complimentary certificates for carotid screening. Please contact the office if you are interested in having one.

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



Desert Southwest Conference

The United Methodist Church



Celebrate Iglesia Aliento's second anniversary on October 18

Published on Sep 21, 2026 Sonoran District Newsletter Valley District Newsletter

Iglesia Aliento invites the community to celebrate its second anniversary as an official United Methodist Church on Sunday, October 18, at 12:30 PM, at 701 S. 1st St. in Phoenix.

Since its official launch in October 2024, Iglesia Aliento has continued to make space for people to experience the love of Christ and find community. The anniversary is an opportunity to give thanks for the people, relationships, and mission God has entrusted to the church. It is a moment to celebrate together as we collectively transform the world, creating new Disciples of Jesus one person at a time, as the body of Christ. We are the church, together.

"Iglesia Aliento continues to serve immigrant families experiencing vulnerability and difficult social circumstances," said Luis Nazario. "In the midst of many challenges, we continue strong and persistent, seeking and creating spaces where people can experience the love of Christ, find community, and become disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world."

Nazario is serving Iglesia Aliento while its pastor, Rev. Flor Granillo, is on leave. He also leads the multi-church youth ministry called Un Nuevo Aliento, a snow cone truck ministry called Yahweh Ice, and a catering ministry of Iglesia Aliento UMC called UNA Caters.

All are invited to join Iglesia Aliento in celebrating God's faithfulness and another year of ministry.

Conference Contacts

Bishop: Carlo A. Rapanut
Executive Asst to the Bishop: Julie O'Neal joneal@dscumc.org
Conference Lay Leader: Alberta Farnsworth
Valley District Superintendent: Melissa Rynders
Administrative Assistant: Jeannine Marinoni jmarinoni@dscumc.org
Director of Communications: Christina Dillabough cdillabough@dscumc.org
Communications Assistant: Molly Shannon mshannon@dscumc.org



Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church
12835 N. 32nd St.
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

Tu'ulauena Lolohea
tlolohea@crossinthedesert.org

Administrative Assistant

Julie Wagner
citd@crossinthedesert.org

Financial Secretary

Alice Easter
finance@crossinthedesert.org

Music Director

Thomas Hartwell

Youth & Technology Coordinator

Kevin Joy