



The Oasis

December 2022

Cross in the Desert UMC

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

Advent /Christmas/Epiphany Schedule

November 27th -Sunday at 10 am – First Sunday of Advent: **Angel Visits** – Gabriel and the Doubting Priest

December 4th -Sunday at 10 am – Second Sunday of Advent: **Angel Visits** – Gabriel and the Believing Maiden

December 4th -Sunday at 5 pm – **Blue Christmas**: A service for those who are feeling blue, who don't feel like celebrating the holidays, who need a little quiet and encouragement. This is a healing service which includes anointing with oil.

December 11th - Sunday at 10 am – Third Sunday of Advent: **Angel Visits** – The Angel and the Dreaming Carpenter

December 18th - Sunday at 10 am – Fourth Sunday of Advent: Christmas Cantata -- *What a Glorious Night*

December 24th - Saturday at 7 pm -- **Christmas Eve: Angel Visits** – The Angel and the Startled Shepherds

December 25th - Sunday at 10 am – **Christmas Around the Table**, including carol sing (in the Fellowship Hall)

January 1st - Sunday at 10 am – **Wesley Covenant Renewal Service**, a Methodist tradition for the new year, dating to 1780, and requiring a commitment from those in attendance, not to the church, but to the will of God in their lives.

January 8th - Sunday at 10 am – **Epiphany: Angel Visits** – Listening to Dreams

Mark your calendar so you don't miss any of the Angel Visits!



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Pastor's Corner

Does the Christmas season excite you, or exhaust you? Are you longing for the traditions of old, or waiting for something new to happen? Are you bored with the entire holiday season of HalloThanksMas?

I had a pastor friend that changed the song during the candle lighting on Christmas Eve from *Silent Night* to *Still, Still, Still*. It created such an uproar you would have thought she had desecrated the sanctuary by killing a live chicken and scattering its blood around. But once upon a time, the entire Christmas Eve service was lit by candles or oil lamps because there was no electricity, and no one sang *Silent Night* because it hadn't been written yet. Until the 20th century, most churches wouldn't have a guitar in the sanctuary, let alone allow *Silent Night* to be played on one. So things have changed. Isn't the point of Christmas, the good news of Jesus, that something has changed in our world and we need to allow it to change us?

The story of Jesus' birth is an old one, told many times. We have added other traditions to the mass of Christ, like Christmas trees, special music, Santa Claus, giving gifts. There is nothing wrong with our celebrations, except possibly one thing: are our traditions so structured we are no longer surprised by possibilities and miracles?

A couple years ago I was surprised by the movie "*Last Christmas*". I took it to be a standard rom-com version of Christmas and so missed the clues of the much better ending. As much as I love and cherish traditions, I want to be surprised more often. I don't want the story of Christmas to become a monotone playing in the background of the season. I want Mary to come tell me what she remembers of her pregnancy, the birth, and those first tiring days. I want to hear Joseph talking about his role in everything. And what did Grandma and Grandpa think of this child? When did they first see him? What happened when they babysat? Tell me the stories, sing me the lullabies. My husband held our newborn son on his arm, head in hand, body draped on his forearm, and stared at him in wonder. I want to see that wonder on Christmas Eve in church.

So, maybe we are more traditional this year than last (no Grinch lurking). But that doesn't mean we shouldn't expect, even desire, a few things to change. I pray each of us finds what we are looking for this season, including calm and rest. And may the wonder of Christmas be yours.

Pastor Galene





December Birthdays



Helen Holloman
Eugene O'Bryan
Samson Gavini
Tim Foster
Tucker Pleake
Sophia Quinton
Dick Bulkeley
Sam Miller
Kay Caris
Bob Hood
Sandy Hansen
Malcom MacVean
Jonathan Foster

December 3
December 4
December 7
December 8
December 9
December 11
December 12
December 19
December 23
December 27
December 28
December 29
December 31

Ron & Debbie Selleck
John Easter & Merrily Abels
Charlie & Jeannine Diller
Augustine & Madhu Gavini
Bob & Jewell Hood
Paul & Suzy Zarkovich
Dick & Martha Bulkeley

December 2
December 5
December 19
December 22
December 22
December 24
December 28

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



Caught in the Act!

Thanks to the merry band of elves caught decorating the sanctuary on November 20th!



It's Back!



For many years, CITD has sponsored a Santa's Workshop for the children residing at UMOM's Parson's Village. After a two year hiatus, Santa's Workshop is back! Parson's Village is a permanent, low-income apartment complex located in Sunnyslope. This year's Santa's Workshop is scheduled for **December 16th from 6:30-8:00PM**.

What is Santa's Workshop? It is an evening of fun that provides an opportunity for approximately 40 children residing at Parson's Village to "shop" for Christmas presents for their parents or other important adults in their life. In the past some children have told us that they have never been able to give a gift to their parent before. In addition to shopping, the children participate in a craft project and story time.

How can you help? Volunteers and Donations are needed. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

- * Bring 1 or more UNWRAPPED ADULT gifts valued between \$15-20 to the church on Pink Sunday (December 11th) and place them under the tree.
- * Sign up at the Missions Table to donate other items such as gift tags, bows, or snacks.
- * Volunteer to attend Santa's Workshop and help the children shop; wrap their gifts; create crafts; etc.

Don't miss this big event that brings Christmas cheer to children and adults alike! Please see Karen Bulkeley after service to sign up to help or email ksbulkeley@gmail.com.

Sustainable alert

Submitted by Rev. Sharon MacVean

A Hopeful Earth, the Women's Bible Study, lists that there are three major temptations that take us away from our faith in God.

The first one is that **Salvation can come by Science and Technology** alone. Jesus performed miracles throughout his ministry, and through seeing or hearing of these miracles, people followed him. But his miracles were motivated by a desire to heal and care for people, not to perform tricks for his own glorification. We also are called to live within the laws of nature and not override them. In this way we will live a sustainable lifestyle for ourselves and for those who come after us.

The second temptation is **Salvation can come by Politics and Economics** alone. What does it mean that God gave humanity dominion over the earth? It means that humanity is to care for the land and that the people are able to be fruitful and multiply. As people of the earth we are interdependent and interconnected and we are to be stewards of creation.

The third temptation is to think **we are saved by personal salvation** alone and do not need to be connected to other believers. Our temptation today is to believe that God will magically save us from our own destruction. Good religious people are believing that God will save them from the environmental destruction. John Wesley said, "You do not become holy by keeping yourself pure and clean from the world but by plunging into ministry on behalf of the world's hurting ones."



CITD Financial Corner

Giving for October and November appear to have rebounded from our low September, but in general our overall inflow of funds is still a concern. As we try to prepare a budget for 2023, our pledges are down from 2022. We are still getting some pledges back. If you've not done so, already, please consider submitting a pledge. Remember that this is really an estimate of giving. We understand that financial situations can change, and if you need to modify your commitment, we totally understand. This really helps us with our planning. We are trying our best to not make drastic cuts, but we are currently looking at a big shortfall in 2023.

We are continuing to work on some additional funding options to help close the gap until we can get things turned around. SPRC applied to the Conference for Equitable Compensation help for 2023, and we believe we will again receive \$10,000 from Conference to apply to Pastor's salary. Foundation is also another source. We are reviewing whether we will qualify for Employee Retention Credits, but our initial look doesn't look too promising for that. We also applied for and were accepted into a new Church Cartographers conference program. This will involve an extensive review of our church and investigate opportunities to increase the participation and support from non-church related groups.

Our Luminarias for All Saints Day project generated \$1458, and we had at least 32 attendees. All proceeds from this went toward paying Conference Apportionment. With these funds and some of the money we received from Foundation, we did pay a month's worth of our Apportionment.

If you have any questions or ideas, please feel free to contact me.

In His service,

Eugene O'Bryan, Chairperson
CITD Finance Committee
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Cell: 602-363-4115
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Will you help in worship ?

The worship committee is looking for volunteers to help in worship services in 2023. Please notify Pastor Galene, or the church office if you are interested in participating by:

1. Helping to prepare communion elements for Communion Sunday
2. Assisting the Pastor by serving communion
3. Participating in services as liturgist

Prayer Corner

Dear loving God, Lord of us all, We raise our voices in praise to you . Lift our hearts to remember Mary and the Christ child and Joseph and the angels. We pray for peace on earth in all that we do. Guide our leaders, and those who govern us, to seek peace and work for it. May we work together and listen to your voice as to how to help us see beyond our ideas and opinions so that we can listen to others with whom we may not share the same opinions. Send hope and comfort to those who are in hospitals and assisted living and memory care facilities. And bless all the people who work in those places to have hope and peace in their hearts. Dear God we pray for those going through grief and sorrow. Let us have a wonderful celebration for Advent and Christmas and end many of the divisions We pray for those who do not have much so that they have food and basic needs. WE pray for the homeless in tent cities. May we all give to the programs and organizations that bring them relief and hope. Lead people back to church dear Lord, so that they too may have comfort and hope and receive the blessings of a congregation to belong with others. God, pour out your spirit of love and hope on us all. Help us be grateful for our country and all the gifts we receive. Bless us this most special season of the year. May peace come to the earth. Amen.

Prayer written by Rev. Sharon MacVean



East District Prayer Focus **for December**

Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida, Phoenix
Pastor Regina Pollard

Red Mountain UMC, Mesa
Rev. Jennifer Lambert
Rev. Rula Colvin

Phoenix Native American Fellowship
Rev. Floy Scott



United
Women
in Faith



December Meetings of UWF

December 1	UWF Leadership Team	3:00 pm	Fellowship Hall
December 6	Mary Martha Circle	5:00 pm	Flamingo Palace
December 8	Outreach Circle Meeting	10:30 am	Fellowship Hall
December 10	Reading lists are due to Ada		
December 11	Christmas Tea	3:00 pm	Fellowship Hall
December 15	Bookworms United	10:00 am	Zoom

Book: *She Came to Slay: the life and times of Harriet Tubman*
by Erica Armstrong Dunbar

UWF Christmas Tea

December 11

3:00 pm

Enjoy Tea and Cookies

Installation of Officers



Look what's new in the UWF library!

Becoming - Michelle Obama
The Land Is Not Empty - Sarah Augustine
The Time Is Now - Joan Chittister
White Fragility - Robin DiAngelo
The Moment of Lift - Melinda Gates
One Dress. One Year - Bethany Winz
She Persisted In Science - Chelsea Clinton
The Unstoppable Garrett Morgan - Joan DiCicco
Midnight Teacher - Janet Halfmann



Check Out a Library Book

Luminarias

On November 6th we honored our departed friends and family members with a luminaria gathering in the courtyard. Thanks go to Eugene O'Bryan and Linda Lulkovich for coordinating a moving display utilizing this year's angel theme. There was an opportunity to share memories, a snack and fellowship on a beautiful moonlit evening.



2022 Church Conference

Cross in the Desert UMC held the 2022 Church Conference on November 21st. Our new District Superintendent Rev. Melissa Rynders (pictured near right) presided over the meeting. Others presenting reports were Karen Bulkeley, Church Council Chair, Eugene O'Bryan, Finance Chair, and Rev. Galene Boyett. You can obtain a copy of the reports booklet if you were unable to make the meeting by contacting the church office.



CHILDRENS' MINISTRY

In October, Cross in the Desert hosted a trunk-or-treat event for the kids. The trunk-or-treat went off smoothly and the children had a great time. I added a new activity this year, "I Spy With My Little Eye" scavenger hunt, both children and parents enjoyed finding the items on the checklist and picking a prize at the end. Next was a costume parade to show off their magnificent costumes both personally created and purchased. We had 28 decorated cars stocked with candy and parked near the pumpkin patch. It was nice to see several families from the neighborhood having fun also. It was a beautiful evening to have shared with Cross in the Desert family and our surrounding neighbors.

November is nearly over and we hope that you all enjoyed your Thanksgiving time with your families. Our Children's Church kids made placemats for their place at the table. Next Sunday they will return and tell us at least 3 things they are thankful for and experienced as per Sue Wilson challenging them during Children's Moment. Pastor Galene had requested the children become more active within the church so we will be meeting with her on Sunday, December 4th. Please join us in greeting the Pastor, with their bio on when they were acolytes, how old they are, what grade they are in and what other activity they would like to be a part of such as Greeting or Offering Time. The children are learning about what Thankful is and how to be Thankful, grateful for our church as well as Children's Church. Pastor Galene will complete the children's moments for the holiday season, as they'll be reading a book together to get in the spirit of the holiday season.

This past Sunday, the children voted on having a party on Sunday, January 1st, celebrating the new year with a movie and donuts with Ms Connie. Please be sure to bring your children on that day and every Sunday. It is an amazing time of year to be together. We are learning a couple of Christmas songs to be a part of either Children's Moment or sneak in as part of the service. Join us each and every Sunday morning from 10 - 11:15. December 25th we will be joining in the fun with the entire church in the fellowship hall.

Acolyting is open for children 3rd grade or older, as well as helping with offering time or greeting at the door. Just let me know, Ms Connie, and we will get them involved.

Have a blessed December and Christmas season.

Connie Bruhn

Coordinator of Children's Ministries

Merrily, Katie & Heather

MISSIONS

Sock Drive

**We are collecting new socks for
Shoebox Ministry!**

**Please bring your donation of
men's and women's socks by
December 18th.**



COMING EVENTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION



JANUARY 7, 2023
9:00AM-4:00PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL

Listen with openness to the Holy Spirit and to each other. "I sought the Lord, and He answered me." —Psalm 34:4a

Strategic planning is an important part of the creation, development, and growth of any organization. Ministries that are interested in church growth are not exempt from planning. Church planning helps the organization map out strategic steps to achieve its mission and vision. Churches can experience a level of success without a plan, but those who invest the time and resources into developing a specific strategy and plan can achieve success at a much quicker pace.

[\(4StepstoChurchPlanting.pdf \(thegl.org\)\)](#)

Strategic Planning usually has two purposes: 1. The activity of seeking God's Will for a ministry or church; and, 2. The decision to act in faith on what has been discerned. (<https://www.ecfvp.org>)

During our strategic planning session, we will build on the vision and mission statements developed earlier this year and we will answer three central questions:

1. Where are we as a church?
2. Where do we want to go?
3. How do we get there?

Everyone is encouraged to attend this important day of planning and discernment. Lunch will be served. At the end of the day we should have identified several specific, attainable goals as well as the persons/committees responsible for working toward those goals. There will also be plans for how we will track and monitor progress toward our goals.

Please let Karen Bulkeley (ksbulkeley@gmail.com) know that you plan to attend so that the room can be set up to accommodate all attendees and enough food provided. I hope that each of you will prayerfully consider participating in this important activity.

Desert Southwest Conference News

Bishop Grant Hagiya retires 12-31-2022

Greetings in the name and spirit of our Creator and Sustainer! As you may know, Bishop Grant Hagiya will enter the retired relationship on December 31, 2022. Before being elected bishop in 2008, he pastored various congregations in Southern California before his assignment as Los Angeles District Superintendent and the California-Pacific's first Executive Director of Leadership.

He has continued to grow, learn, and teach throughout his tenure as pastor, superintendent, and bishop. He inspires those around him to "take thou authority" and to "try something new" when the old ways no longer work. Leadership and innovation are hallmarks of his ministry. One can see the fruits of it in the number of clergy and laity who have been trained as coaches; in the new partnerships many congregations form to explore the re-purposing of their properties; and in the open-appointment-making processes he leads each year. It is easy to see the fruits his consistency and commitment bring to ministry contexts where he serves. Claremont School of Theology has tapped him to serve as Interim President upon his retirement. That will give him a unique opportunity to continue to live and do his leadership passions for many years.



DSC welcomes Bishop Carlo Rapanut 1-1-2023

The Rev. Carlo A. Rapanut, assistant to the bishop in the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, has been elected a bishop by The United Methodist Church's Western Jurisdiction. He is the first Filipino American bishop in The United Methodist Church, and the first U.S. bishop who was ordained in a central conference — a United Methodist region outside the U.S. Delegates elected Rapanut, 48, on Nov. 4 at the jurisdiction's meeting in Salt Lake City. He has been appointed to the Desert Southwest Conference, where his term of service begins Jan. 1, 2023. In the United States, bishops are elected to serve for life.



Rapanut, an elder in the Pacific Northwest Conference, has served as assistant to Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky in the Greater Northwest Area since 2021. Since 2014 until May this year, he also served as co-dean of the Greater Northwest Area bishop's cabinet and conference superintendent of the Alaska United Methodist Conference. As superintendent, he supervised clergy over Alaska's vast geographical area and helped envision the conference's transition into a mission district in a decolonized and values-driven way. He also was the Alaska Conference's director of connectional ministries from 2014 until becoming assistant to the bishop. In the early days of the pandemic, he led the Greater Northwest Area's COVID Response Team, which helped provide online worship resources and aided churches in securing federal Paycheck Protection Program loans. He previously served as pastor of United Methodist Church of Chugiak, Chugiak, Alaska.

Rapanut grew up in Baguio City, Philippines. He has a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in management from the University of the Philippines. He also has a Master of Divinity from Wesley Divinity School in Cabanatuan City, Philippines. Before moving to the U.S., he was senior pastor of Baguio City First United Methodist Church and later assistant to now-retired Bishop Benjamin A. Justo. In The United Methodist Church, bishops are ordained elders who are called to "lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church." Bishops, in consultation with district superintendents, are responsible for appointing clergy. They also preside at annual conferences, jurisdictional conferences and General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly.

Bishop Rapanut is married to wife Radie and has two sons, Titus and Caleb.

"Let us pray that the road ahead would give us beautiful surprises of how God can work among us," Rapanut said.

Conference Contacts

Bishop

Grant Hagiya (until 12-21-2022)

Carlo A. Rapanut (as of 1-1-2023)

Bishop's Assistant:

Julie O'Neal joneal@dscumc.org

Conference Lay Leader

Alberta Farnsworth

East District Superintendent

Melissa Rynders

Assistant: Cynthia Holly cholly@dscumc.org

East District Lay Leader

Trinity Donovan

Director of Communications (Assistance with technology)

Christina Dillabough

cdillabough@dscumc.org



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Cross in the Desert UMC Staff

Pastor

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Lay Leader—vacant

Communications—Dinah Brooks

Coordinator of Children's Ministries
Connie Bruhn

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Youth and Technology Coordinator
Kevin Joy

Music Director — Nicosia Garrison
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Bell Choir Director—Julie Wagner

Administrative Assistant—On medical leave
Linda Moore
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Temporary Administrative Assistant
Julie Wagner
citd@crossinthedesert.org

Building and Grounds Concerns

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