



The Oasis

July 2022

Cross in the Desert UMC

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

HAPPENINGS AT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE – From Rev. Boyett & Lay Member

Kevin Joy

The annual meeting of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference was held online and in person on June 8, 10, and 11. Much was accomplished in those few days.

Korean UMC of Las Vegas had voted to close and received approval to do so. Aldersgate UMC (located on 32nd Street in Phoenix) voted to become a 2nd campus for Dayspring UMC in Tempe. This was also approved and they are now known as Dayspring Arcadia.

Pastor Linda Larsen was elected to Associate Member of the Annual Conference (the highest standing for a local pastor). Karen Meredith Joubert was elected a provisional deacon and Sylvia Harris, Michael Wilkerson, and Christopher Wurpts were elected provisional elders of the Annual Conference. One clergy member was elected as an elder in full connection: Rev. Brooke Burris Isingoma. One ordained deacon, six ordained elders, and one local pastor were granted retirement this year, including our district superintendent, Rev. Susan Brims. Our new district superintendent is Rev. Melissa Rynders.

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Congratulations to this Spring's Graduates!

Tyler Joy—On May 27, 2022, Tyler graduated from Navy A School at Navy Nuclear Power Training Command in Charleston, SC. He will have another 8 months at NNPTC completing his qualifications as a nuclear Machinist Mate aboard an aircraft carrier.

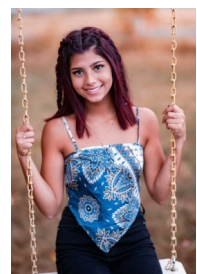


Morgan Clayton—

Associate Degree from Paradise Valley Community College



Savannah Biswanath—
Granddaughter of Tom and Mary Botts, and great-niece of Alice Easter—Westview High School, Beaverton, OR



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Pastor's Corner



Have you ever read something that was so funny you couldn't even finish it?

I did that today. I finished a sentence and without even reading what happened next, I knew what happened next. You should have seen me sitting in a busy waiting room while my car was being serviced, trying to hold in my laughter so as not to disturb others. I darn near choked!

Laughter is healthy, and can be contagious if we aren't afraid of making fools of ourselves. But I still didn't want to look, or sound, like some manic lunatic. Oh well, it was still funny as all get out, and so was trying to hold in my laughter.

Have you ever asked yourself if God laughs? Do you think God is happy? Does God enjoy our laughter, our happiness?

I had a pastor once who always started every service with a joke – usually Christian in nature. He told us how many times we needed to laugh every day to stay healthy; and proceeded to provide us with one laugh to go towards our daily total. I loved him.

But really, in this world of woe, Christians are supposed to be happy, full of joy, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah tells us the gifts of the Spirit are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. But Paul tells us the gifts of the Spirit are: charity/love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity. Nothing against Isaiah, but why so serious? See why I am a Christian?

After I move my brother this week, I will be back, and we will begin a sermon series that has way too long a title: Holy Joy: The Sacrament of Happy. We will talk about whether or not God is happy. What it means for a Christian to be happy. Where does joy go when we are grieving? Happy can change the world. I hope you all can join us.

And if any of you have a good joke we can add to our service, let me know.

Pastor Galene





BIRTHDAYS



Beverly Ashcraft	July 2
Diane Ingold	July 2
Curt Robinson	July 5
Aubrie Hamblen	July 7
Burt Burton	July 8
Marlene Thompson	July 8
John Livingston	July 9
John O'Bryan	July 9
Charlotte Osborn	July 9
Pam Bortz	July 11
Colleen Cummings	July 11
Wendy Pleake	July 11
Suzy Zarkovich	July 11
Rod Gaylor	July 16
Barb Hendrickson	July 19
Gretchen Miller	July 20
Thomas Livingston	July 22
Marianne Lowenthal	July 22
Tom Botts	July 23
Heather Foster	July 23
Amanda Dudek	July 24
Margaret Bridgewater	July 25
Jeannette Delster	July 26
Junior Harlan	July 26
Gene Lumba	July 27
Mary Tassi	July 30

Jerry & Kathy Hobbs	July 1
Les & Marianne Lowenthal	July 1
Dave & Rosalie Wagner	July 5
Bill & Connie Bruhn	July 12

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.



SCOUTING MINISTRY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

July 31st is the deadline for Boy Scouts of America registration! Cubs, Scouts, and Crews need to register new and returning members, as well as adult volunteers, so if you are interested in any of these groups for yourself or others, please contact our Scout Coordinator, Kevin Joy.

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Along with normal conference business, it was decided to allow the conference trustees to sell our Conference Center if they received an offer of 2.5 million dollars or more. The most recent valuation put the value of the property at 1.4 million dollars. While high real estate values do make selling the property worthwhile, the real change that allows for its sale is multiple years of reduced use of the center before it was closed in 2020 due to COVID. Continuing emphasis on working remotely and having online meetings convinced conference members to allow for the possibility of selling. Nothing is certain at this point, though.

A resolution was adopted that required all Annual Conference meeting areas to be gun-free zones. All churches were reminded that in 2018 a resolution was passed that required all local church properties to be gun-free zones.

As the Desert Southwest Annual Conference met, so did the Florida Conference. Due to using a “slate” style vote to approve people for ministry, sixteen candidates for commissioning were denied approval per the Board of Ordained Ministry request. The denial was due to two candidates being members of the LGBTQIA community. The Desert Southwest Conference endorsed the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry in Florida and agreed to stand with the sixteen candidates whose response to God’s call is now in upheaval. If you hear about the Florida 16 in the news, this is the situation being discussed.

There was a discussion of the new process for electing bishops in the Western Jurisdiction – which will take place in November. We expect to have a new bishop assigned to us as of January 2023.

Though there has been much said and reported about the Global Methodist Church launched by the Wesley Covenant Association, and some local congregations are voting to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church for the purpose of joining the Global Methodist Church, this does not affect our denomination and so no action or discussion took place at our annual meeting.

Also, there was no discussion about LGBTQIA concerns other than diversity concerns and conference culture, which all congregations are encouraged to address. Resources are available for these discussions. Please speak to the pastor if you believe Cross in the Desert should address these concerns, or any others such as gun violence, immigration, etc.

Unsustainable Living Alert

This is taken from a women’s study done by the women of our church entitled, A Hopeful Earth. The subtitle is Faith and Science and the Message of Jesus. July’s focus is on all the **divisions** in our cities, our courts, our nations and our church. These divisions are destroying The Christ given message of love and kindness and mercy for all. Not just for some people or situations, but for all. John Wesley taught these three principles and they have been focused on recently by Bishop Ruben Job. **1. Do no harm. 2. Do good. 3. Stay in love with God. No where does it allow us to blame someone else.** It is not just the fault of the Republicans nor the fault of the Democrats-- We must go back to the principles of listening to each other and working together and stop blaming. What directs us in our choices and guides us in our decisions? Is it a certain news channel, deciding without using multiple sources of information, or through prayer. We have become so divided that nations are increasingly hostile toward each other, communities divide themselves between their own wants and education and services for children; and religions or particular groups of people within a faith community claim to have a total grip on the truth? We are weakened by this divisiveness and strife. (pg. 39) It is important that we learn that science and religion are not at odds with each other. There is place for both and they enlighten each other and will help us take care of our world. There is room for different opinions and ideas if we share and listen to each other rather than take a stand and refuse to even listen openly. Listening does not mean you totally agree. It means we treat each other with respect and dignity and use the best ideas and information for making decisions whether public or personal. We proclaim faith in God as a primary factor in our country. So let’s live that out the best ways we can.

Submitted by Rev. Sharon MacVean

FINANCE COMMITTEE



CITD Financial Corner

May's giving was the second best of the year behind April. We did not get much extra for a 5-Sunday month with the Memorial Day weekend. It was also a 3-Payroll month which put us significantly in the red for the month, but we did survive it. If you can keep up your giving during the summer months, it will certainly be a big help. I should note that other than the month of January's Apportionment which was covered by the Conference, we have not been able to make any payments of our own.

We are continuing to work on funding the efforts the Trustees are currently working on: our alarm system, doors in all our buildings, and irrigation. We are also still working out the details for the effort to replace flooring in the sanctuary building. We still plan to use existing Memorial Funds as well as doing a Memorial Fund Drive. I wanted to report that our Memorial Funds are now much closer to covering almost half the effort. More details will follow as we have them.

Thanks for your continued prayers and financial support. If you have any questions or have ideas to help, please feel free to contact me.

In His service,

Eugene O'Bryan, Chairperson
CITD Finance Committee
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Regretfully we have had to cancel this year's camping trip to Flagstaff! The O'Leary campsite is closed due to the wildfires in the Flagstaff area. Karen attempted to find an alternate location, but all other group campgrounds in the cooler country were fully booked.

Camping Ministry

Registration is now open! **Aug. 12-14** we are going camping in cool Flagstaff! See Karen Bullock for the details. No experience necessary.

Cancelled

Want to escape the heat, but don't like camping? Make a hotel reservation in Flagstaff & join the campers during the day!

Prayer Corner

Dear Jesus Christ, May the gift of your Holy Spirit that we celebrate on Pentecost Sunday be with each one of us each and every day. Guide our church, our pastor and leaders and our volunteers in knowledge and behaviors that will help our congregation grow. We believe our outstanding music program will bring people in to visit and discover what a friendly church we are. We are blessed with our beautiful choir, praise singers and Mary Tassi and Amy Burns on the piano, organ and electric piano.. Guide us, we pray, to share with those we meet about our wonderful worship music. Guide us to share God's love and kindness everywhere we go such at the grocery store and the pharmacy and other places. Every person is a beloved child of God but many do not know that yet and we are called to be the voice of God in sharing that knowledge. We lift up prayers for those who are ill and struggling with health, financial or family issues. We pray for mercy and love for the people of Ukraine and for those adults and children who have been murdered without any provocation on their parts. It is encouraging to know that God's Spirit knows our deepest hurts, pains and struggles and provides mercy and healing in times of need. Help us read scripture and pray daily to walk closely with God. Amen.

Prayer written by Rev. Sharon MacVean



East District Prayer Focus for July

First UMC, Gilbert

First UMC, Tempe

St. Paul's UMC, Globe

The Bridge UMC, Phoenix

Velda Rose UMC, Mesa

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.





United Women in Faith

June Meetings of UWF

July 7	Leadership Team	3:00 pm	Zoom
July 14	Outreach Circle	10:30 am	Fellowship Hall
July 14	Mary Martha Circle	6:30 pm	Contact Mary Nell W.
July 19	Devotions and Dinner	6:30 pm	Contact Gretchen M.
July 21	Bookworms United	10:00 am	Zoom

Book—*They Call Us Enemy* by George Takei

July 30—10:00 am—Unit Meeting in Fellowship Hall.

“A Timely Topic”

Guest Speaker—Brittany Fonteno from Planned Parenthood
Please bring a sack lunch. Beverage and dessert will be provided.
Donations of bottled water will be collected.

World Day against Trafficking in Persons—July 30, 2022

World Day against Trafficking in Persons is held on July 30th each year, and is an annual event. People trafficking and modern day slavery is a massive worldwide problem with very few countries immune to human trafficking, and the event by the United Nations is to raise awareness and increase prevention of that.

Thousands of men, women and children end up in the hands of traffickers every year, often through being tricked and mislead to believe that they are being taken to work that will make their family better off, or through force, kidnap, or even through very poor families selling children in order to survive. There are many ways that people get caught up in trafficking, but the result is the same, they lose their rights and identity and are used and abused, and it is a global problem, an industry not far behind drugs and arms in terms of profit for traffickers.

Trafficked people are forced to work, often doing hard labor or prostitution, for no reward, and usually have their identity and documents removed from them. They are warned of terrible punishments if they escape, and often they are taken to unfamiliar countries where they don't know the language and have no way of getting help. Some die and are never heard of again by their families and communities.

A global problem like trafficking needs a global solution, which is why the United Nations organize the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, to raise awareness encourage vigilance and gain support for prevention of human trafficking, and also why they have produced a protocol to punish human trafficking and are hoping to implement this globally, as well as an act to protect victims of trafficking.

CELEBRATE KIDS THIS SUMMER!



On Friday June 24th the “drive-in” movie show came to CITD! The kids enjoyed the movie and snacks right in their cardboard “cars”.

Next event for Celebrate Kids! VBS is Saturday July 9

8:30 am to 10:00 am VBS Craft Market Place

This event will be inside the Guthrie Building.

Come and have fun learning about the Market Place!

We will have fun making fun crafts to take home , and enjoy some snacks!



Coming Soon!

Get ready to build an igloo!

It looks like we will need a lot more empty egg cartons!



Support Our Scouting Program

Raelynn Pitts is working toward completing her Eagle Project, and is asking for our help. She is collecting new and gently used items for a local non-profit youth group, Swift Youth Foundation, which provides underprivileged children the opportunity to experience summer camp.

Please leave your donations in the labeled boxes located around the campus.



What Does Swift Need?

Teddy Bears

Tennis Shoes

Towels

Backpacks/Bags

Bathing Suits (boys and girls age 7-12)

Books

Blankets

Toiletries—Shampoo, Conditioner, Soap. Toothbrushes, Toothpaste

MISSIONS

Help Missions Everyday!

Easy ways to support Missions include

- ◆ Donate to the Food Bank—watch the sales and purchase extra to share when you see a bargain. Deposit in the shopping cart in the narthex.
- ◆ While you are shopping those sales at Fry's, be sure that community rewards are linked to Cross in the Desert on your Fry's card.
- ◆ But I shop on Amazon! - That's easy! You can link your Amazon Smile account to Cross in the Desert.
- ◆ Oh, and by the way, you can purchase Amazon gift cards at the Missions Table on Sundays after church. We also have restaurants and other stores for in-person shopping. Cash or check only please.



HOW CAN WE HELP UKRAINE?

We can help the Ukrainian refugees by donating to UMCOR Advance #14053A . We can help the Methodist churches in the Czech Republic as they help refugees by donating to UMCOR Advance #00399A.

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“Our commitment to the sanctity of human life makes us reluctant to condone abortion. We unconditionally reject it as an acceptable means of birth control or a mechanism for gender selection and other forms of eugenics.

We support measures requiring parental, guardian or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood, except in cases of alleged incest.”

“We oppose late-term or partial-birth abortion, a process also known as dilation and extraction. We call for the end to this practice, except when the life of the mother is in danger, no other medical treatments are feasible, or when severe abnormalities threaten the viability of the fetus. We recognize that these and other tragic conflicts of life with life may justify decisions to terminate the life of a fetus. In these limited circumstances, we support the legal option of abortion and insist that such procedures be performed by trained medical providers in clean and safe settings.”

“We urge all those considering abortions to seek appropriate medical advice and pastoral counseling and to engage in searching, prayerful inquiries into other alternatives, such as making babies available for adoption. We pray for those facing unintended pregnancies and offer our prayers and support as they attempt to discern God’s will and seek God’s wisdom and guidance. Regardless of the circumstances in which someone might get an abortion, we do not condone bullying or shaming people for their decisions or actions.”

“We acknowledge that young women of childbearing age frequently report that they lack the ability to make meaningful life choices or exercise effective control over their own lives. We challenge pastors, congregations, campus ministries, and others to be at the forefront of efforts to empower these young women. Additionally, we support resource centers that offer compassionate care and help women explore alternatives to abortion.” (The 2020 Revised Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, K. Reproductive Health and Abortion, p. 28-29).

As always, I am impressed with the collective wisdom of our church on this stance. It is a balanced and compassionate stance that takes into account the autonomy of women to make their own decision on what is best for their lives and the future. Too often, the patriarchy of our culture means that men make decisions that are not theirs to make. Dare I also say that our legal and political system is making this same presumption. Abortion, as difficult a decision as that is, must be decided by the individual woman and her family.

In the end, no legal court, no political system, and no church can unilaterally make that decision for an individual woman.

In the coming days, I pray that you will openly and compassionately discuss this with each other and your church members. We will have different options and values on this, but we need to dialogue openly and listen to each other.

Be the Hope,
Bishop Grant

Desert Southwest Conference News

BISHOP'S BRIEFING—from the office of Bishop Grant J. Hagiya

Statement on Dobbs v. Jackson

June 24, 2022

One of the most difficult pastor care situations I faced as a local church pastor occurred in my second appointment. I had a good 15 years of pastoral experience under my belt; and completed all of my Ph.D. classes in theological and social ethics, so I was not a pastoral rookie. A church family was in crisis over the pregnancy of their teenage daughter. The parents, fearing this would destroy their daughter's future, wanted her to get an abortion. The daughter, in her first trimester, wanted to keep the child. The daughter's boyfriend was so immature he could not commit to anything, so she would be alone in raising the child. The daughter was also so young that she could not foresee the challenges of teenage motherhood, as she would be a sophomore in high school. Both parents and child lobbied me to take their side and try to convince the other that they were right. Much of my book knowledge and pastoral experience went out the window in such an emotionally charged situation. I kept reminding this family that I was not there to take a side but to provide emotional and spiritual support so that they could make the best decision. I kept reminding myself that I had to leave my values and options out of their decision, and my role was to provide a safe holding space for them to hash this out and make the best possible decision.

The Supreme Court decision of Dobbs v. Jackson has taken such decision-making out of the hands of this family for many states who will outwardly ban abortions. We are lucky to be living in a state that will still allow it, but many other Americans will be denied this crucial decision-making ability.

No one decision, doctrine or law is a solitary matter. United Methodists from around the world worked over many years to revise our Social Principles to ensure that the church's stance was clear on many current issues and realities. That includes abortion:

(continues on previous page)

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