



# The Oasis

November 2024

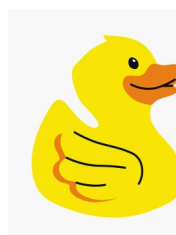
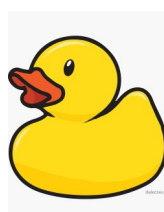
Cross in the Desert UMC

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

## Church Conference 2024

Church Conference 2024 was held on Sunday October 20th. District Superintendent Rev. Melissa Rynders presided over the meeting. The theme was Love: L—Listen to Each One's Story, O—Be Open to Change, V—Value Diversity, and E—Embody Belonging. Pastor Gina shared a reflection on the Last Year, and business matters were presented and voted on. Dobby the Love Duck made an encore appearance, and everyone was given a duck sticker to pass on.

Church Conference Booklets are available if you wish to look at the reports presented.



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# Pastor's Corner



Dear Beloved Congregation,

As the echoes of campaign speeches fade and the fervor of political debates dim, we find ourselves standing in the aftermath of another election. The ballots have been cast, the votes counted, and the leaders for the coming term have been chosen, or we are waiting for results. In a nation as richly diverse and dynamic as ours, elections often bring a mix of emotions—joy for some and disappointment for others. Regardless of where your candidate stands now, God's charge to us remains abundantly clear: to walk in kindness, empathy, and love.

As we navigate the days after the election, we must focus on the enduring principles that uplift and unite us, transcending any temporary divides. Here are a few humble reminders to help guide our actions and conversations:

1. **Kindness as a Currency of Grace:** In a world that can sometimes feel fractured, kindness possesses the unparalleled power to mend and heal. Each gesture of understanding and each word of encouragement represents a currency that never loses value. Let us be generous with our kindness, offering it freely to those around us, regardless of political affiliations, reminding ourselves that we are all children of God at our core.
2. **Empathy Bridges the Gap:** Empathy is the bridge that connects our hearts to the experiences and concerns of others. It invites us to step into the shoes of our neighbors, seeking to understand their fears, hopes, and dreams. By listening deeply and compassionately, we affirm the worth of others and enrich our perspective, broadening our capacity for love.
3. **Love as Our Greatest Commandment:** The scripture teaches us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This call to love is not contingent on agreement but is unconditional and unwavering. Let us strive to embody this love in our interactions, fostering a community where everyone feels valued and heard.

**A Prayer for Unity:** As we move forward, let us continually lift our voices to God in prayer—seeking peace, wisdom, and unity for our nation. Let us pray for our leaders so that they may govern with humility and justice. And let us pray for one another that we may be lights in the world, shining brightly with faith and hope.

In moments of uncertainty and change, let us anchor ourselves in the unchanging love of Christ. May we be vessels of His peace, actively building a community that reflects our Lord's inclusive and unconditional love. Let us go forth with hearts full of grace, hands ready to serve, and spirits committed to walking together, undivided in purpose and love.

With heartfelt blessings,

*Pastor G*





Alice Easter	November 2
Liz Shelton	November 2
Karen Mischik	November 3
Romi Simons	November 5
Emily Nelson	November 12
Stephen Parrott	November 12
Bryan Crist	November 20
Gary Simons	November 21
Marriah Sweet	November 24



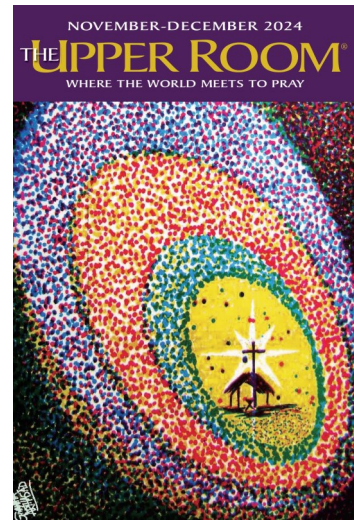
Jack & Judy Smith  
Jim & Pam Dukarich

November 7  
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.

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.





We continue to make good progress towards our goal of \$215,000 by the end of 2026. I'm very happy to report that we are over 76% on the way to our goal. Here's where we stand just prior to the Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, offering and pledges:

Source	Amount	Percent
Hawaii Real Estate - Received	\$ 1,499.50	0.7%
CITD Designated Funds - Received	\$ 13,110.18	6.1%
DSC Deferred Maintenance Grant - Received	\$ 15,000.00	7.0%
DSUMF Request - Received	\$ 5,000.00	2.3%
Early Donors - Received	\$ 46,000.00	21.4%
Donations Eligible for CITD Foundation Match - Received	\$ 20,868.50	9.7%
CITD Foundation Match (\$20K Max) - Received	\$ 20,000.00	9.3%
<b>Total Received - In the fund</b>	<b>\$ 121,478.18</b>	<b>56.5%</b>
Pledged for 2024 Remaining	\$ 5,090.90	2.4%
Pledged for 2025	\$ 18,722.00	8.7%
Pledged for 2026	\$ 18,722.00	8.7%
<b>Total Received, Approved, Pledged (All)</b>	<b>\$ 164,013.08</b>	<b>76.3%</b>

On Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, please join us during the Fellowship Time to hear from Anne Green and Judi Smith from the Desert Southwest United Methodist Foundation on ways to give through securities, qualified charitable distributions from IRAs, and Life Insurance. This information is applicable to any of your charitable giving. It's also good to show our appreciation for the help they've given us with the campaign and for the \$5,000.00 donation we received from them for the campaign. We're hoping for their continued support. Thank you!

In His service,

Eugene O'Bryan, Chairperson  
 Together We Can Capital Campaign  
 Home: 602-788-0742  
 Cell: 602-363-4115  
 eobryan@cox.net

## **Watch your *Together We Can* dollars at work!**

Beginning soon you will see fresh paint around the campus! We have retained the services of Chavez Painting AZ LLC to begin painting projects around the campus. They will be painting the lobby area and hallways in the worship center, and will also be doing exterior painting of the Guthrie Building and the main office building. We will be looking all fresh and neat in time for the holidays!





Do you know someone who will be alone for the holiday? Invite them to share a potluck meal and fellowship with us! Meat will be provided, so just bring a favorite holiday side dish or dessert to share. Be ecologically friendly and bring your own table service. There will be no childcare available.



### **The Prayer Team would like for you to join us in prayer from Labor Day to Election Day.**

We want to be in prayer for Cross in the Desert UMC supporting our staff, capitol campaign, volunteers and groups.

We want to be in prayer for our country so we can make wise choices in the November elections from President down to our local school boards. Maybe you know someone running for office. As Christians we need to be a catalyst to bring dialog back to our communities.

Questions ask Ray Roop or Mary Ann Crist







# Prayer Corner

## LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS....

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

NE 8:10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared...."

November is a busy month. We have Election Day, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving Day - the biggies. Along with a few lesser known holidays such as Susan B. Anthony voting for the first time 130+ years ago, the Mayflower's historic landing at Cape Cod and we can't forget Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

With all the hustle and bustle of the beginning of the holiday season, it may be difficult to be full of gratitude. John Wesley believed in gratitude. Wesley believed Christians should be good citizens, should confront society's evils, should work for reform, should not be naive about fallen humanity while being hopeful about God's constant desire to bless creation with His abundant grace.

Many dramatic social reforms that Wesley sought, like abolishing slavery, were eventually achieved. Wouldn't he be amazed by the social improvements of today compared to his own time? God has indeed done a marvelous work and the Lord summons us to work for so much more, always with gratitude.

There's much about which to complain in America. But, we should live with gratitude as the most privileged people in human history and savor all that is good and joyful in today's America, for which we can never be too grateful.

And we can be hopeful about God's plans for the future and how He continues to bless and rescue undeserving humanity. We can trust with confidence in God's unchanging goodness.

Every day is Thanksgiving Day when you are a Christian.

## WALK WORTHY

**Glorious and mighty God, we come before you now in an attitude of gratitude for all you have done in each of our lives. Just as the Pilgrims faced enormous struggles to persevere through the first Thanksgiving, we ask that you strengthen and be with each of us as we face our own challenges. Surround us with a hedge of protection against the world that we may be comforted and embraced in your presence now and always.**

**In Jesus of Nazareth's name we pray. Amen**

### East District Prayer Focus for November

The Fountains, a UMC—Fountain Hills    Rev. David Felton

Tongan UMC—Mesa

Pastor Taike Lolohea

UMC of Casa Grande—Casa Grande

Pastor Steve Gregory



United  
Women  
in Faith

## November Meetings of UWFaith

November 7	Leadership Team	3:00 pm
November 9	Junque in the Trunk	7:00 am until Noon
November 14	Mary Martha Circle	canceled
November 19	Devotions & Dinner Flower Child at Desert Ridge, 21001 N. Tatum Blvd.	6:30 pm
November 21	Bookworms United at Arvilla's Book: <i>A Fever in the Heartland</i> by Timothy Egan	10:00 am



On October 12 a group from UWF visited the Joy Bus Diner. They enjoyed a breakfast and learned all about Joy Bus' outreach to cancer patients



Junque in the Trunk  
November 9, 2024  
7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Buy a parking spot in the church's parking lot for \$20 and then you have five hours to sell whatever you brought in your trunk. This is a fundraiser for United Women in Faith. There will also be a blood drive in the parking lot starting at 8:00 a.m.



United  
Women  
in Faith



Layettees and more layettes! We were able to assemble 47 layettes for presentation to needy moms in Phoenix. Thanks to everyone who donated!







The Blessing of the Animals was held on October 13. Many animals received a blessing from Pastor Gina. The attendance from the community was limited due to the record setting high temperatures, but many thanks to all the volunteers in the CITD family who helped with set-up and stayed behind to clean up. You all rock! We had amazing vendors. Foothills Animal Rescue brought 2 dogs, and Love Connection Dog Rescue had 4 adorable puppies who came to visit. Donnie's Doggy Desserts looked good enough to eat! Yahweh Ice is a community outreach from the new church in downtown Phoenix, Iglesia Aliento. The Shave Ice was awesome. And really hit the spot on a hot, hot day.





## MISSIONS



### Christmas Gift Card Sales - Special Order Opportunity

The Missions team will be selling gift cards **every** Sunday in November to allow plenty of time for our annual Christmas gift card sale. The pre-pay order form will be available on Sunday, November 3. The deadline to submit your order is November 24, and we plan to distribute your completed orders on December 1. During the month, our normally stocked gift cards will be available for immediate purchase.

**Please note** that **you can now use your debit or credit card to purchase gift cards!** We have instructions at the Missions table, and we are happy to help you. It is important that you do not start the payment process until you are ready to make the purchase to ensure that your payment is verified by the Missions team representative.



**Save the Date!**

**Santa's Workshop returns to Parsons Village**

**Friday December 13**

**Watch for Updates**

## BLOOD DRIVE

**Saturday, November 9**

**8:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Bloodmobile in Parking Lot**



To schedule an appointment, scan QR code,  
visit [vitalant.org](https://vitalant.org) (Blood Drive Code: P1846),

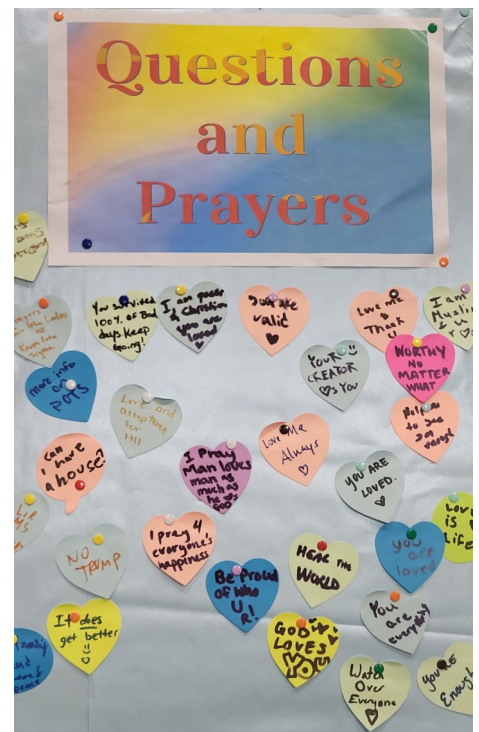
## Dinner & Dialogue

The final Dinner & Dialogue of the 2024 season was held on October 24 with a very timely topic - ***Maintaining Your Peace During Election Season.*** The presenters were Dawn Farmer and Sharon Hornbeck. Dawn Farmer is a pastor at Desert Springs Bible Church with over 20 years of ministry experience. She holds a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy, with specialized training in trauma care. Dawn has a heart for helping people navigate conflict, manage stress, and strengthen their emotional resilience. Through a blend of biblical wisdom and practical tools, she guides individuals with compassion and insight. Whether in a church setting or through therapy, Dawn encourages a gentle approach—beginning with self-compassion and awareness, and leading to practical steps that can be woven into everyday life. Sharon Hornbeck is a certified Spiritual Director who provides trauma informed and diversity sensitive care for her directees as the journey toward a closer relationship with God.

Since we all have felt the effects of this year's very divisive campaign through countless ads, texts, emails, etc, we were all grateful to have the opportunity to process our feelings. Dawn and Sharon presented a few meditations and centering methods to relieve the anxiety and fears surrounding the election process.



Our own Pastor Gina is the chairperson of the WARM committee of the Desert Southwest Conference! WARM means WELCOMING, AFFIRMING, RECONCILING MINISTRIES. She represented the DSC at the Phoenix Pride Festival October 19th and 20th at Steele Indian School Park.



# Desert Southwest Conference News

The Clergy & Lay Leadership Development team will host this Leadership Talk via Zoom, featuring **Bishop Karen Oliveto**, on **November 11, 2024**, at **7 p.m. (MST)** Arizona time.

**Karen Oliveto** is a retired bishop in The United Methodist Church. She has served in local church and campus ministries in rural and urban settings in NY and California. She holds a BA, MPhil, and PhD from Drew University and MDiv from the Pacific School of Religion, where she also served as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and adjunct professor of United Methodist Studies. She has also taught as an adjunct professor at Brite, Drew, Iliff, and Yale.

She has written several books, including Talking About Homosexuality (co-authored with Kelly Turney and Tracy West) (Pilgrim Press: 2005), Our Strangely Warmed Hearts (Abingdon: 2018), and Together at the Table (Westminster John Knox, 2018).

Prior to her election as bishop, Oliveto was the lead pastor at the 12,000 member Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. At that time, she was the only woman serving as lead pastor in any of the top 100 membership churches in the UMC. She is also the first openly LGBTQ+ person to be elected to the episcopacy. She currently resides with her wife in Nova Scotia, Canada.

## Her talk will address:

What is prophetic leadership? What is required of one who seeks to move a community to embrace prophetic ministries that produce personal and communal transformation while challenging unjust powers and principalities? How does one encourage a congregation to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God”?

One cannot be an effective prophetic leader without a pastoral heart that gets close enough to those entrusted to one's care to be disturbed by the forces of death that keep people enslaved. Likewise, if one has deep pastoral engagements, one will be compelled to ease the suffering of those whose lives are impacted by unjust forces.

A prophetic leader is a person of faith who feels a deep call to be prophetic in a particular situation, time and place; understands the biblical prophetic tradition; insightfully analyzes the present situation; imagines and projects possible futures; and seeks shalom and justice in the congregation and community of which they are a part. This webinar will assist participants as they explore their prophetic voice and pastoral heart.

## Conference Contacts

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**Building and Grounds Concerns**  
Please contact the office by phone or email so  
the Property Team may be notified