



The Oasis

May 2025

Cross in the Desert UMC

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

CITD Leadership Board

The Leadership Board met in April and reviewed progress across several ministry areas and campus initiatives. Here are the highlights:

Together We Can Capital Campaign:

Projects completed recently include painting the interior of the Sanctuary, replacing interior flooring in the Sanctuary, and building an ADA-compliant ramp in the Bell Choir area. Grass replacement and landscaping remain under evaluation with Dave Delster leading a detailed review of all required actions, costs, timing, and reviewing city requirements for the grant program. We are somewhat on hold while we evaluate all the issues including perhaps bypassing the grant program since meeting those requirements adds several complications and costs to the project.

Ministry and Committee Updates:

Prayer Team continues weekly intercession and hosted a successful "Prayer Hearts" event. They're preparing for May's "Pray for Another Church Member for a Week" initiative.

Property Team tackled irrigation issues, removed hazardous trees, installed signage, and continued landscaping interviews. Safety assessments showed good progress, with about 50% of last year's issues resolved.

Safer Sanctuaries work has started, with updated training materials in hand. Future updates will include expanded policies for vulnerable adults and online training access.

Medical Lending Closet is in early planning.

United Women in Faith (UWFaith) hosted a joyful Easter brunch and is preparing for their May 18 fundraiser tea for the Wesley Center Back-to-School Drive. A fall "Junque in the Trunk" is also planned.

Financial Health:

We reviewed the 2023 financial review and are pleased to report strong compliance with standards. The church remains in stable financial condition with continued progress on campaign pledges and responsible stewardship.

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Pastor's Corner



Winter's Farewell & Spring's Embrace

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As the desert air begins to warm and the vibrant colors of spring emerge, we find ourselves saying farewell to our beloved winter visitors. Many of you have enriched our community with your presence, laughter, and participation in our services and fellowship events these past months. Your contributions to our church family, whether through volunteering, sharing your gifts, or simply your warm smiles, have been deeply appreciated. We will genuinely miss you until we see you again!

To our cherished year-round members, your steadfast dedication and unwavering commitment to Cross in the Desert are the foundation upon which our community thrives. Your presence, week after week, is a constant source of strength and encouragement. We are eternally grateful for your faithfulness and tireless service to God and one another. Thank you for being the heart of our church family.

And as one season transitions into another, we're also delighted to welcome new members to our growing community! Whether you've recently moved to Phoenix or have been considering joining us for some time, we extend a heartfelt welcome. Cross in the Desert is a place where all are embraced, regardless of the time of year. Our doors are always open, and we believe that God's love knows no season, and neither does our community.

Even as some of our winter friends journey back to their homes, we want to remind everyone that our community transcends geography. Whether you are traveling near or far, we encourage you to continue to share your joys and concerns with Cross in the Desert. We want to be your support system, prayer partners, and spiritual family, regardless of location. Don't hesitate to contact us; we're always here for you. You can reach us by phone, email, or through our website.

Let us continue to pray for one another, to support one another, and to grow together in faith, no matter the season. May God bless you all abundantly.

With love and prayers,

Pastor G.



Isaac & Brooke Henry

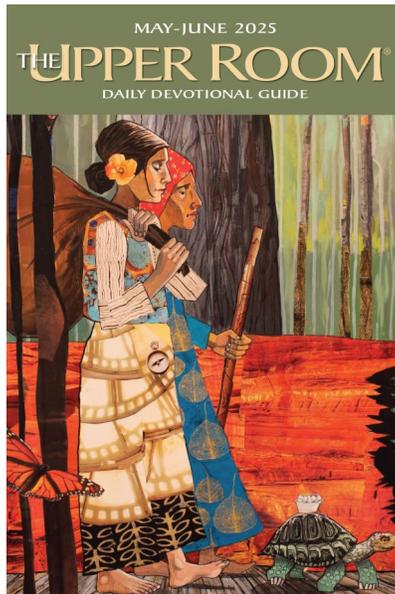
May 16

Bob & Dorothy Sanders

May 22

Brian Moore	May 6
Heather Robinson	May 13
Kevin Joy	May 17
Garrett Carlson	May 18
Wanda Picciotti	May 18
Elizabeth Weir	May 21
Kathie Hazen	May 25
Phillip Botts	May 26
Mary Ann Crist	May 26
Pete Thompson	May 26
Martha Bulkeley	May 31

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.



Where am I hiding now?

CITD Event Opportunity

Several of us will be attending the play, **Leading Ladies**, as a fun outing for the congregation, friends, and family.

Location: Don Bluth Front Row Theatre, 8989 E Vía Linda #118, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Date & Time: **June 21, at 2:00 PM**

Our group price for tickets is \$33. See/call/text Eugene O'Bryan at 602-363-4115 by **May 25th** if you are interested or have questions as the group rates need to be paid by 3 weeks prior to the performance. After that time, tickets may be available by contacting the Don Bluth Front Row Theatre directly or purchasing online. I've reserved 25 front row tickets. We hope to see you there!

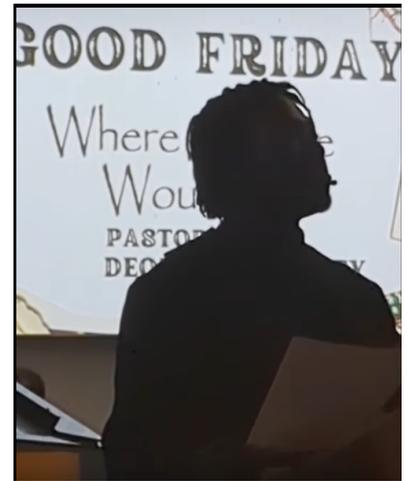
Holy Week Highlights



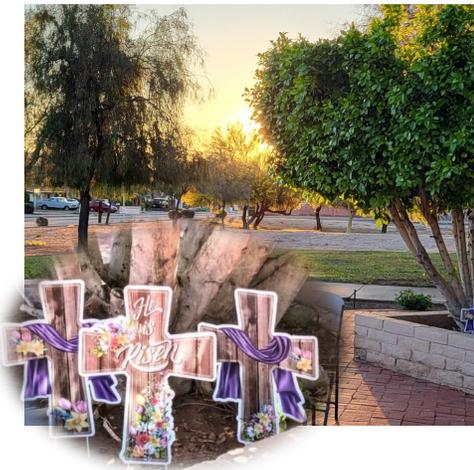
Palm Sunday—The Palm Procession
Hosanna!



Maundy Thursday—Remembering the Last Supper
Pastor Gina Pollard & Pastor Deontez Wimbley
Readers Kristin O'Shaughnessy & Julie Wagner



Good Friday at Cross Roads UMC
Pastor Deontez Wimbley



Easter Sunrise Service

He IS Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!



Easter 10:00 am Service

With One Flock Choir & Bells of Joy

Christ the Lord is Risen Today!



MISSION

A GREAT BIG thank you from the Paradise Valley Community Food Bank! They received 30 Orange Bags - 274 pounds of food!

Blessings abound for and by the people of our community.

Be sure to pick up an orange bag on our next Orange Bag Sunday on June 1st!



The mission focus for May is the Annual Conference Mission Project. This year's Annual Conference is being held in June in Las Vegas NV, and the focus of the project is support of Food Banks in the North District of the Desert Southwest Conference. We will be collecting money to send in support of this project. Please mark your donation "Annual Conference Project".

Schedule Your Stroke & Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screening



Over 10 million people screened since 1993

Where:
Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church

When: Thursday May 8, 2025

Who should attend:
Anyone over the age of 40

Special Member Pricing for \$159

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Plus a **FREE** Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Call 888-814-0466 and use promo code HSCA001

Visit  [LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA](https://llsa.social/hscatext)



Text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.



Prayer Corner

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS -

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Job 38:4

Several years ago I attended a silent retreat. One of the activities was to silently prayer walk around the backyard garden area. It was a beautiful Spring day and I slowly began my walk curious as to how/if I would encounter God. I didn't have to wonder long for as I turned a corner of the building, I stumbled into a huge Bougainvillea bush filled with big pink flowers. Stunned, I gasped at its beauty and my first thought was "I wish I could praise God as beautifully and completely as that bush does." I celebrated a moment of joy in God's magnificent creation. Scripture tells us even the rocks will cry out and all creation will praise Him.

In Job:38 God takes Job on quite a nature walk of his own. Job had lost everything. He was bankrupt financially, physically, mentally, emotionally and that poor, troubled man wanted and needed an answer from his Creator about his situation and what the heck is going on.

In answer to Job's crises of faith verse 1 says "then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm". Kind of like God spoke to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:12 with an important difference. Instead of answering in a gentle whisper God shows up within blinding flashes of lightning and the roaring voice of dark clouds (Job 37:1–5, 14–16). And from within the power and violence of a thunderstorm, the great God of everything uses the beauty and wonder of the world He'd made to help the servant He loved trust Him.

Can you imagine Job's amazement as God reminded him of His grand design of the world? Well, Job got a firsthand explanation of the natural world: "'Who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?'" (vv. 6–7). He got a geography lesson regarding God's imposed limitations of the seas (v. 11). "this far may you come but no farther and here your proud waves must stop".

God continues to inform Job about the light He creates, snow He produces, and rain He provides to make things grow (vv. 19–28). Job even heard about the constellations from the One who flung them into space (vv. 31–32).

Finally, in humility and awe Job responds, “I know that you can do all things.”

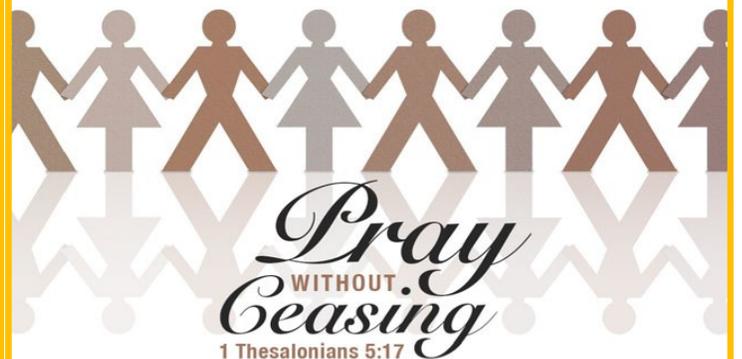
Dear God, thank You for creating such a magnificent, diverse, fascinating world. As we experience your creation, may we stand in awe of your wisdom and power. Help us to appreciate your perfect workmanship and may we pay attention to the big pink flowers and realize and remember that You can do all things. Amen

East District Prayer Focus for May

St Paul’s UMC —Globe
Pastor Gary Gene Simons

Sun Lakes UMC—Sun Lakes
Rev. Jennifer Lambert
Rev. Chan Hong Kim

The Bridge UMC—Phoenix
Rev. Jamie Booth



ARE YOU FIRE SAFE?

Did you know that home fires claim seven lives every day, but having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of death by half? The American Red Cross offers specialized smoke detectors, including those with bed shakers and strobe lights for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Check out the Red Cross “Sound the Alarm” program which provides these types of alarms and also offers free installations.



American Red Cross



HELP SOUND THE ALARM!

Call (602) 336-6469, visit www.redcross.org/sound-the-alarm, or scan the code to **schedule a smoke detector installation today!**





United
Women
in Faith

May Meetings of UWFaith



May 1	UWF Leadership Team—Library	10:00 am
May 8	UWF Outreach—Library, Program & Potluck	10:30 am
May 14	Mary Martha Circle—Library	9:30 am
May 15	Bookworms United - Zoom	10:00 am
	Book— <i>Small Great Things</i> by Jodi Picoult	
May 18	UWF Spring Tea and Fundraiser	3:00 pm
May 20	Devotions & Dinner—	6:30 pm
	Oregano's, 4602 E. Cactus	

- CITD United Women in Faith – Spring Tea, May 18, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

- Bring your teapot that has a story for fun and information.

- Proceeds will be used to purchase school supplies which will be taken to Wesley Community Center.



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Save the Dates: October 4, 2025 – East District Celebration, Payson UMC
 October 25, 2025 – Conference Celebration, Willowbrook UMC, Sun City

MISSION U 2025



PRACTICING HOPE TOGETHER

July 17-19, 2025

Join us at Mission U as we learn about “*Practicing Hope Together*”. This theme will explore the hope that emerged within a small community of followers after the resurrection of Jesus that changed the world. Out of so much confusion and fear following the crucifixion of Jesus, grew a “Resurrection People” steeped in hope who began living out their faith in powerful ways.

How do we understand hope as followers of Christ? Is it merely optimism despite what we witness all around us or is it something deeper than that? This theme begins with the resurrection appearances of Jesus to explore how these people were changed and the actions that followed (Acts). What does it mean to be “resurrection people” in the 21st century, and what can we learn and apply to our own lives from the accounts of people who encountered Jesus after his resurrection? This study will explore what it means to have hope in God even when things seem to be falling apart.

The Adult Study is – Practicing Hope by Tabatha Holle – The curriculum will explore hope, particularly when hope seems hard to find. The curriculum asks questions such as: What is hope in the face of neofascism? What is hope in a time of genocide? How do we imagine a future for the next generation as our planet grows hotter by the season? What tools do we have to face these hard realities? How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall?

This study’s purpose is to allow all of our communities to cultivate hope that is honest about our current conditions (refugia), hope that is restorative when everything feels urgent (rest), and hope that is possible even when we transgress (repair).

Purchase your Book here: <https://uwfaithresources.org/prodDetail.cfm?productID=11781&catid=2526>

Registration closes on July 11, 2025. Note: No late registrations can be accepted. NO refunds after the deadline, the registration may be transferred. Contact Lois Downin at homers210@cox.net to transfer registration.

SCHOLARSHIPS are available from both your District and Conference United Women in Faith. Please contact your treasurers for information and to apply.

Hotel Information

To get a Hotel Registration form: <https://dsc-reg.brtapp.com/MissionUInPerson2025>. We have a reserved block of rooms at **Best Western, 6201 N. Oracle Road, Tucson, AZ 85704.**

Call the Hotel directly at: **(520) 297-8111** and mention **MISSION U** and request the first floor. There is a complimentary hot buffet breakfast and social hour.

Cost is: Standard 2 queen beds (max 4 people) **\$80.99** + tax. There are 2 ADA rooms with either a single king or single queen for the same rate. Cut off date to secure a room at this discounted rate is **6/17/2025**. After this date, the rooms will be released and you may have to pay a higher rate.

(continued from Pg. 1)

Other Notes:

Our revamped yellow cards for support requests will soon be in the pews. They are undergoing final review and printing. We collected 274 lbs. of food at our most recent drive! We plan to have a drive every other month with Missions covering in June and the Scouts covering in August.

If you have questions or want to get involved, please reach out to me or any member of the Leadership Board: Mary Nell Woodward, Romi Simons, Brooke Henry, Jonathan Foster, Rhonda Mortenson, Ada Thompson, Wanda Picciotti, and Kristin O'Shaughnessy.

In His service,

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

Sanctuary Renovations Completed in time for Palm Sunday



It was a hectic month...

March 24—April 1

They started with repairing drywall cracks and then painting—in some very high places!



April 2—April 11

Then the platform was repaired, and alterations made as the old carpet was being removed.



Then the carpet arrived—lots of it!



Eladio and his crew worked very diligently to get all the work done by Palm Sunday (and with a day to spare).

All finished and put back together on April 12th!





VELDA ROSE UMC HOLDS FINAL SERVICE



After a long and impactful ministry, Velda Rose United Methodist Church in Mesa held its final worship service on April 17, 2025. While this marks the end of one chapter, the spirit of Velda Rose continues through its adoption by Red Mountain UMC, which has welcomed its members and inherited key resources. The church property will now be managed and, hopefully, redeveloped by the Conference’s New and Vital Faith Committee for future ministry or community outreach.

Leadership Talk May 12 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm MST on Zoom the Human Edge: Reshaping the Future of Work in the AI Era

The Clergy and Lay Leadership Development team will host this leadership talk via Zoom featuring *Ana Melikian*, Ph.D. on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 7 pm (MST).

AI is changing how we work and stirring both excitement and uncertainty. In the business world, many embrace AI to enhance productivity and automation, while others grapple with doubts about best security practices, concerns about privacy and ethics, and information overload. In boardrooms and break rooms alike, people ask:

‘What does this technology mean for our future?’

Most businesses approach AI as a race to do more, reduce costs, and implement new tools. But this narrow focus on efficiency misses something crucial: AI isn’t just another productivity tool, it’s a fundamental shift in how humans and technology work together.

By rushing to adopt AI without a human-centered strategy, we risk creating systems that accelerate burnout rather than unlock potential. The real challenge isn’t implementing AI faster – it’s reimagining how we can thrive alongside it.

Register at <https://dscumc.org/event/leadership-talk-the-human-edge-reshaping-the-future-of-work-in-the-ai-era/>

Conference Contacts

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Conference Lay Leader

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Melissa Rynders

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