



# The Oasis

**April 2025**

**Cross in the Desert UMC**

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

<b>April 2</b>	<b>Lenten Study &amp; Soup Supper</b>	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>April 9</b>	<b>Lenten Study &amp; Soup Supper</b>	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>

## Holy Week Schedule

**(Please note that this is a change to previously published information)**

<b>April 13</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
<b>April 17</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>
<b>April 18</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>

**Service will be held at Crossroads UMC,  
7901 N. Central Ave at Northern**

<b>April 20</b>	<b>Easter Sunrise Service in the Courtyard</b>	<b>6:30 am</b>
<b>April 20</b>	<b>Easter Service in the Sanctuary</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>



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# Pastor's Corner



Dear Beloved Community,

As we journey through the season of Lent, I, your Pastor G, invite us all to reflect on how its core themes can guide us not just through these 40 days, but throughout our entire lives. Lent is often associated with sacrifice and the giving up of things. While these practices can be valuable, they are most powerful when they serve a greater purpose: fostering deeper connection with God and living out the values of our faith more fully.

At its heart, Lent is about intentional living. It's a time to examine our lives with honesty and humility, recognizing where we fall short and where we can grow. Just as the wilderness journey shaped the Israelites, Lent offers us a period of reflection and reorientation. It's an opportunity to discern what might be distracting us from our relationship with God and with one another.

The traditional Lenten themes of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving offer a framework for this intentional living:

- **Prayer:** Regular communication with God, whether through structured prayers or quiet contemplation, strengthens our spiritual core. Just as we nourish our bodies with food, we nourish our spirits through prayer. Lent encourages us to deepen our prayer practice and prioritize time for communion with God.
- **Fasting:** Fasting, in its broadest sense, refers to intentional abstinence. It's not just about giving up chocolate or coffee; it's about identifying and letting go of anything that hinders our spiritual growth. This could be excessive screen time, negative self-talk, or habits that harm us or others. By creating space in our lives, we open ourselves to God's presence.
- **Almsgiving:** Lent reminds us that faith is not just a personal journey; it's a communal one. Almsgiving, or acts of charity and service, calls us to share our blessings with those in need. This could involve donating to those less fortunate, volunteering our time, or simply offering a helping hand to a neighbor.

Lent encourages us to embrace these practices not just for 40 days, but as lifelong disciplines that shape us into people who embody love, compassion, and justice. As we journey together through this season, may we each find renewed strength and purpose in our walk with God.

Blessings,

Pastor G

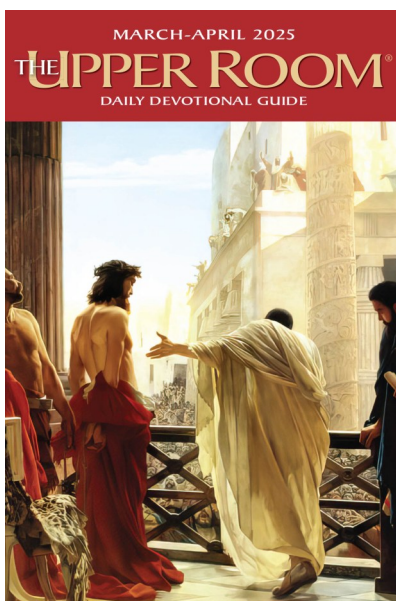




Jack Robinson	April 1
Ray Roop	April 2
Elizabeth Robinson	April 5
Phyllis Sadler	April 12
Kathy Salmon	April 13
Millie Tobias	April 13
Bob Sanders	April 14
Hank Hendrickson	April 17
Dave Delster	April 19
Katie Nelson	April 19
Daisy Pleake	April 20
Suzanne Hartley	April 21
Phillip Miller	April 21
Ada Thompson	April 21
Becky Gaylor	April 22
Rhonda Falknor	April 23
Kristin O'Shaughnessy	April 27
Naomi Mills	April 30
Jeff Moore	April 30

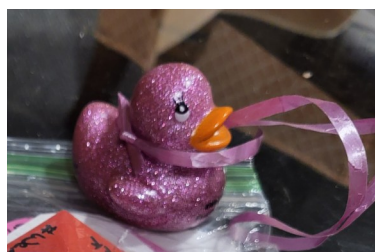
Gary & Romi Simons	April 10
Todd & Rhonda Mortenson	April 28

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



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?



Aren't the roses beautiful this year? Thanks to Cathy Milford and anyone else involved in their tender care.

## CITD Leadership Board

We were not able to meet in March. Our meeting was delayed to April 1 due to scheduling conflicts but below is an update on our Together We Can Capital Campaign as of March 15th.

<b>Received Funds</b>	\$159,549
<b>% of Goal (\$215,000)</b>	74.2%
<b>Total Funds Spent or Committed</b>	\$98,388
<b>Money left to be spent</b>	\$61,037

Projects completed: Painted Sanctuary lobby and hallways, replaced sanctuary lobby and hallways flooring, painted Guthrie exterior, painted Fellowship Hall/Office exterior, painted gazebo and painted over turquoise on sanctuary, and replaced HVAC for Kitchen/Library. (note: Guthrie NW HVAC replaced by CITD Foundation)

Projects underway: Painting Sanctuary interior and replacing Sanctuary interior flooring

Projects actively being worked on: Grass replacement and landscaping improvements

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or issues regarding our staff, property, finances, or anything in general, please feel free to contact me or anyone else on the Leadership Board. The other members of the Leadership Board are 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



April 6<sup>th</sup> will be Cross in the Desert's first Orange Bag Sunday. What is that, you ask. It is a way for CITD to be more intentional about donating to the PV Community Food Bank. You can pick up a special Orange Bag with the PVCommunity Food Bank contact information printed on it after service on April 6th. Just take the bag with you when you shop for groceries the following week, and fill it with nonperishable food items. It's a relatively small bag, so it won't be too heavy or too expensive. Bring it back to church the following Sunday. The bags will be delivered to the Food Bank, emptied, and returned for reuse.

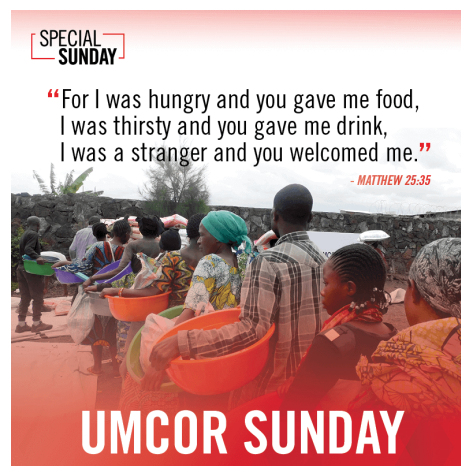
We will start out by having an Orange Bag Sunday once a quarter. It's simple, easy, and advertises the Food Bank as you shop - so others may learn more about how to donate or to receive needed help. It may also be an opportunity to spread the word about Cross in the Desert.

Orange Bag Sunday is another way for Cross in the Desert to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our local community.





Thanks to everyone for their generous support of UMCOR on Sunday March 30. We raised over \$900.00 toward the payment of UMCOR's administrative costs!



## Sanctuary Renovations in Progress

Why are we worshipping in Fellowship Hall on March 30th and April 6th? Because long needed sanctuary maintenance and repair is underway. Painting will have been completed by the time this newsletter is published. Removal of the worn carpeting occurred on Wednesday April 2, and new carpeting will be installed. We hope to be back in the renewed and revitalized worship center by Palm Sunday. This is all thanks to the generous donations in support of the *Together We Can* campaign! The pictures below were taken on Sunday March 30th.



Sanctuary painting—a very large and complicated lift was needed to reach the ceiling



Worship in our temporary location—the old sanctuary! Wonder what the choir is up to now?

# Prayer Corner

## LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

### READ MATT. 28:1-10

Many of us have read or heard that bit of Scripture since we were very young children. Matthew says Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there. Luke says Salome was there, John says Joanna was there. A few women were at the tomb that first Resurrection Sunday along with guards and disciples.

Scripture says they were trembling, shaking, crying, mourning and afraid. Yet, Jesus had been telling people what was going to happen for quite a while and yet everyone is still stunned when it happens. The women were frozen with fear but what did they do? Their response was to remember his words, **Luke 24:6-8**. They were full of joy and went to share it with the others. Just as we should remember his words and go out and share them with joy to the world. **Matt. 28:9-10**

And how did the guards and disciples respond to what happened? MMMM....

Continuing in **Matt. 28:11-14**. The guards saw and knew all that had happened and were just as terrified as everyone else. So they ran and told the earthly powers that be all about it and then what happened? They caved. They sold Jesus out for money just like Judas and the lie began. **Matt. 28:15**

It's Interesting what the disciples did. **Matt. 28:16-17** These were the men who lived with, ate with, traveled with Jesus for three years. They heard what he said about what was to happen and yet while some worshipped, there were some who doubted.

### WALK WORTHY

Mighty and most awesome God, at different or challenging times in our lives we may fall into any one of the categories of response. We pray that like those who were blessed to be at the tomb that first Easter morning that we, too, will remember Jesus the Christ's words and rejoice in them always. Amen.

### East District Prayer Focus for April

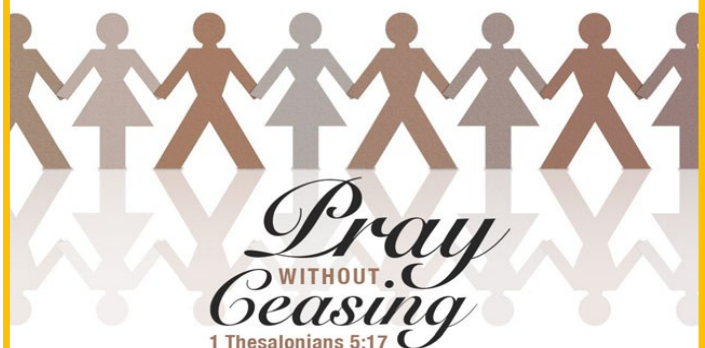
Red Mountain UMC —Mesa  
Rev. Sandra Lynn Johnson

Scottsdale UMC—Scottsdale

Rev. Jamie Booth

Shepherd of the Pines UMC—Overgaard

Pastor Winona Dye



## CITD Event Opportunity

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

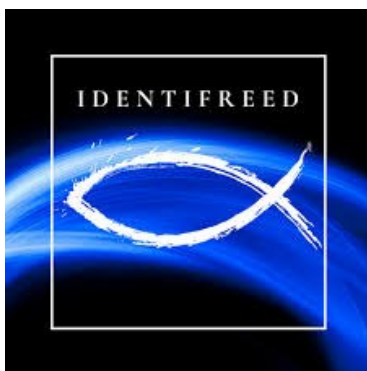
Location: Don Bluth Front Row Theatre, 8989 E Vía Linda #118, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

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

Synopsis: In this hilarious comedy, two English Shakespearean actors, Leo and Jack, find themselves so down on their luck that they're performing "Scenes from Shakespeare" on the Moose Lodge circuit in the Amish country of Pennsylvania. But then, what luck! They hear that dear old Florence of nearby York, PA is about to die and leave her fortune to her two long lost English nephews whom she has never seen. For Jack and Leo it is the work of an instant to turn themselves into nephews Max and Steve and grab the cash. And that's when the complications set in... Romantic entanglements abound, as *Some Like It Hot* meets *Twelfth Night* in this screwball comedy filled with bad behavior, high heels and a world of comedy. Fast-paced and bursting with mistaken identities and clever plot twists, *Leading Ladies* is a highly combustible and increasingly raucous farce!

Our group price for tickets is \$33. See/call/text Eugene O'Bryan at 602-363-4115 by **May 25<sup>th</sup>** 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!

## New Ministry Partner—IdentiFREED Attic



Since Shoebox Ministry has merged with Andre House, we have chosen to support a new ministry partner in the neighborhood. We will be supporting IdentiFREED Attic, a Non-Profit Thrift Store/Outreach Center located at 13637 N. 32nd St. They are an Outreach Center that provides a place for women who are escaping trafficking, domestic violence, and addiction to obtain resources. They are also a thrift shop open to the public.

Any items that you would have donated to Shoebox Ministry will be welcome at IdentiFREED. They also accept donations of clothing.

Please see members of United Women in Faith to hear more about this new ministry.





United  
Women  
in Faith

## April Meetings of UWFaith



April 3	UWF Leadership Team—Library	10:00 am
April 9	Mary Martha Circle - Canaan in the Desert	10:00 am
April 10	UWF Outreach—Canaan in the Desert	10:30 am
April 15	Devotions & Dinner, Picasso's Healthy Italian Kitchen, 4669 E. Cactus Rd.	6:30 pm
April 17	Bookworms United - Zoom	10:00 am
	Book— <i>Carved in Ebony</i> by Jasmine Holmes	

# Mission u

Save the Dates!

MISSION U 2025



Adult Study  
July 17th - 19th  
In Person at  
St. Marks UMC  
1431 W Magee  
Tucson, AZ

Adult Virtual Study  
Aug. 5th 2:30-5 pm  
Aug. 6th 24th 3-6 pm  
Aug. 7th 3-5:30 pm  
Virtual Via Zoom

Save the dates for Mission u 2025 both in person at **St. Mark's United Methodist Church** in **Tucson** from **July 17-19, 2025** or virtually via a **Zoom** from **August 5-7, 2025!**

This is a transformative event focused on learning, growth, and action! Mark your calendar for this inspiring gathering and transformative commitment. Mission u 2025 will offer engaging workshops with great Study Leaders, time for fellowship and

opportunities to deepen your understanding of key social action issues. Stay tuned for registration to an experience designed to re-charge and refocus your faith. Mission u motivates, informs and enriches information. Don't miss the chance to be part of this impactful experience—reserve the dates and join us for Mission u 2025!

This year's theme is "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.

Save the Dates: October 4, 2025 – East District Celebration, Payson UMC

October 25, 2025 – Conference Celebration, Willowbrook UMC, Sun City





Coming in May...

This year's annual conference mission project is in support of food pantries in the northern district since this year's annual conference is being held in Las Vegas, NV. Watch for more information about how you can support this project.

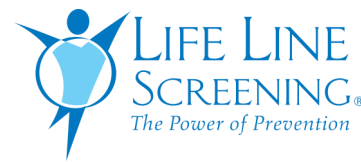


## Blood Drive May 4, 2025

The Vitalant Bloodmobile will be at Cross in the Desert on Sunday May 4th from 8:00 am until noon. Make your appointment to donate at [www.vitalant.org](http://www.vitalant.org).

## 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/hsc)



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.





Only 75 tickets  
available

May 17 10 am - 2pm

Fashion Show and Gala 1-2pm

**IdentiFreed Styles**

*Fashion Show and Gala*

**BLESSING CROSSROADS FOR WOMEN**

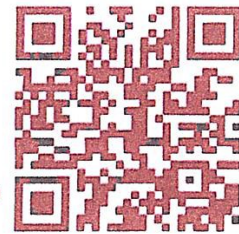
**Tickets \$50**

**Information Tables start at \$250**

*Link to purchase tickets*

<https://givebutter.com/QozNrq>

QR code for tickets and information tables



IdentiFreed Attic, 13637 N 32nd St, Phx

602.413.8909

Other ways to partner can be  
found at [IdentiFreed.org](http://IdentiFreed.org)





# Desert Southwest Conference

The United Methodist Church



## 2025 Desert Southwest Annual Conference

June 12-15

Las Vegas, Nevada

This year's Annual Conference will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in the Northern District of the Desert Southwest Conference. Appropriately, the Annual Conference Mission Project will reflect the location, and will be focused on support of food banks in the area. This will echo the theme of the conference, *A Healthy Church for a Healthy World*. In addition to laity and clergy plenary sessions, there will be several worship services during this time, including the Episcopal address by the Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut, and a memorial service.

An exciting part of the gathering for Cross in the Desert, and for Pastor Gina, will occur on Saturday evening, when Pastor Gina will be commissioned as a Provisional Elder.

### Conference Contacts

#### Bishop

Carlo A. Rapanut

#### Bishop's Assistant:

Julie O'Neal [joneal@dscumc.org](mailto:joneal@dscumc.org)

#### Conference Lay Leader

Alberta Farnsworth

#### East District Superintendent

Melissa Rynders

Assistant: Jeannine Marinoni

[jmarinoni@dscumc.org](mailto:jmarinoni@dscumc.org)

#### East District Lay Leader

Trinity Donovan

#### Director of Communications

(Assistance with technology)

Christina Dillabough

[cdillabough@dscumc.org](mailto:cdillabough@dscumc.org)





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Website: <https://www.crossinthedesert.org>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CrossintheDesertUMC>



**Cross in the Desert UMC Staff**

**Pastor**

Pastor Gina Pollard  
[pastorgina@crossinthedesert.org](mailto:pastorgina@crossinthedesert.org)

Youth and Technology Coordinator  
Kevin Joy

**Administrative Assistant**

Julie Wagner  
[citd@crossinthedesert.org](mailto:citd@crossinthedesert.org)

Music Director  
Thomas Hartwell

**Financial Secretary**

Alice Easter  
[finance@crossinthedesert.org](mailto:finance@crossinthedesert.org)

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