



The Oasis

February 2025

Cross in the Desert UMC

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

CITD Leadership Board

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank Karen Bulkeley for leading us on Church Council for years and in leading us through the transition to the SAS (Simplified, Accountable Structure) model and serving as our first Chairperson of the Leadership Board this past year. She did an incredible job.

In the area of Finance, if you've not turned in a pledge for 2025 General Fund, it is still not too late to do so. We always call it a "pledge", but it is an estimate of giving. If you need to cancel or adjust it, you're always free to do so. This information really helps us with our budget planning for the year. Having said that, our total inflow for our General Fund was higher in 2024 (\$214,716) than 2023 (\$211,886), and I'm optimistic that with the preschool now up and running, 2025 should be even better. As of January 2, our Together We Can Capital Campaign stands at \$165,819 received or pledged or just over 77% of our \$215,000 goal.

On the property front, with the Together We Can Capital Campaign money, we've made a lot of progress on painting and new flooring. The rest of the sanctuary painting and flooring is planned to be done soon. We're also currently working on air conditioning repairs and replacements. The Global Minds Preschool is up and running and has improved the looks of the Guthrie and playground areas. We also owe a huge thanks to our "NICE GUYS" who help with ongoing property management and maintenance. If this is something you'd like to assist with, let us know.

We just finished our Strategic Planning Session for 2025, and we created the following three goals:
Inspire and equip the congregation to develop spiritually, build relationships, and share their gifts.
Present a dynamic, welcoming, and inclusive invitation to the community
Increase opportunities for CITD to serve the community.

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Pastor's Corner



Compassion is not merely an emotion; it's an action rooted in empathy and a willingness to understand others. Finding courage in compassion requires a deliberate effort to listen—to not just hear the opposing viewpoints but to appreciate the feelings and experiences behind them. In today's climate, what can we do to embody this message of love and connection?

Start Small: Reach out to someone who seems distant or disconnected. A simple phone call or a cup of coffee can set the stage for a compassionate conversation. It can pave the way for healing relationships that misunderstandings or differing opinions might have strained.

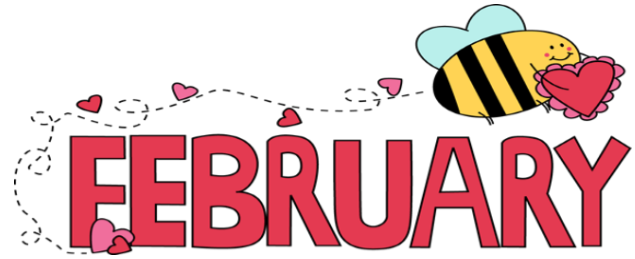
Educate Yourself: Learn about issues such as racial inequality, political divisions, or economic disparities from various perspectives. Engage with materials that challenge your beliefs. By broadening our understanding, we can respond with empathy rather than fear.

Pray: In our moments of solitude, let us pray not just for our own hearts but for the souls of others—those we agree with and those we don't. Asking for guidance and strength can empower us to serve with greater compassion.

Lead by Example: As members of this church community, let us not just talk about compassion, but embody it in our actions. Let us be the living, breathing examples of Christ's love in action. Whether volunteering, helping neighbors in need, or simply showing kindness in our daily interactions, each act of compassion can ripple outwards, encouraging others to do the same. Our actions can inspire and influence others, showing them the power of compassion in a divided world.

Engage in Dialogue: Host or participate in church discussions on understanding and compassion. Create a safe space for sharing differing viewpoints on issues such as social justice, political ideologies, or personal beliefs, and encourage honesty and respect during these conversations.

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Curt & Heather Robinson

February 24

Nancy Moller	February 2
Paula Paris	February 3
Karen Cahill	February 4
JoAnn Call	February 5
Leeanna Moore	February 8
Karma Quammen	February 11
Sherry Lindeman	February 16
Pam Dukarich	February 19
Cathy Milford	February 21
Jack Harvey	February 22
Maisie Goodwin	February 26
Dorothy Sanders	February 26
Bradleigh Foster	February 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 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.

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In times of difficulty, let us remember that compassion is our most potent weapon against fear and division. As a united community in Christ, we are all called to this path of compassion. It's a path that unites us, that connects us in our shared humanity. Together, we can inspire courage in others by embodying love and empathy.

As we step forward into the coming weeks, may we find strength in our shared humanity and allow compassion to illuminate our path.

Let us take the courageous step of reaching beyond our comfort zones, fostering an environment where understanding triumphs over fear.

Pastor Gina

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If you ever have any questions, concerns, or issues regarding our staff, property, finances, or anything in general, please feel free to contact me.

In His service,

Eugene O'Bryan, Chairperson
CITD Leadership Board
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Annual Valentine Heart Prayers

The prayer team will be collecting the annual Valentine Hearts prayer requests on hearts passed out February 9 before the service and collected after the service. They will be put up on the sanctuary side wall for prayer the following two Sundays. The congregation is encouraged to read and pray for the requests.

Please, continue to pray for the people of the Los Angeles area. Pray for those who have lost homes, loved ones, pets, businesses, and jobs due to the fire. Pray for the first responders who have worked tirelessly to save all they could. If you feel led to give monetary donations for relief efforts, here are some ways to give:

Donate to the Los Angeles Fire Recovery Fund through the UMC California Pacific Annual Conference. These funds will benefit all the Los Angeles communities suffering in the fires: <https://www.calpacumc.org/>.

Donate to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) for its disaster relief for all the California fires. <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/901670/>.

Donate directly to the effected churches. The funds will be used to help people who lost their homes cover immediate expenses and for the church's eventual reconstruction: <https://www.palisadesmethodist.org/giving> (Community UMC in Pacific Palisades) <https://gofund.me/6d803517> (Altadena UMC)

"Five Easy Ways to Integrate Self-Care"

Cross in the Desert
Cross in the Desert United Methodist Church Presents

HEART KEEPERS:
Care for the Caregiver Conference
Calming the Fire of Burnout

Special Guest Speaker:
Michele Thorne
CEO and Co-Founder of Care 4 the Caregiver

Saturday | February 22, 2025
8:30 am - 12:30 pm
RSVP TODAY

Food with Friends
Potluck
Saturday February 15th at
5:00 pm

Dinner & Dialogue

Thursday February 27th at 6:00 pm

Enjoy a meal and stimulating conversation on a timely topic.

Mark your calendar and watch for more details.





Prayer Corner

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS....

Elizabeth Weir, S.D.

PSALM 129:2 ".....they have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me."

Martin Luther King Jr. is one of our great men of history. He stood up for equal rights for the African-American people in the mid 1950s and 60s.

Although he received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 he was assassinated in 1968 as he organized a nonviolent protest rally for African-Americans who were not being paid equally to their white counterparts.

Our world is a different place today for all minorities and women because of Martin Luther King Jr. He was not a perfect man, but in spite of his flaws he carried out his God given mission and then he was gone. He is just one of many great people who have stood up for those in the minority and paid the ultimate price because of it.

We may not be confronted with the same level of persecution as Martin Luther King Jr., but we all deal with negative opinions and people who try to pull us down. Oppression can come in all different kinds of forms – physical attack, passive-aggressive behavior, bullying, negative words and constant put downs.

When negativity comes our way we can choose how we deal with it. We can allow it to get us down and change our lives or we can stand firm and not allow it to 'gain victory over us'. As Psalm 129 shows us, the people of Israel had experienced great oppression for an extended period of time, and yet, they trusted in the Lord and gained their meaning from Him.

It can be a real challenge to stop negative opinions from infiltrating into our thinking, but we must only hold dear to the thoughts and opinions of God. He does not wish negativity to have victory over us, only His love, grace and justice to prevail.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for great examples of people who stood up to injustice – Martin Luther King Jr., King David, Mother Teresa, Ghandi and, of course, Your Son, Jesus. May we learn from these incredible people and strive to allow Your words to have victory in our lives. Amen.

East District Prayer Focus for February

Desert Mission UMC—Scottsdale
Rev. Michael Patzloff

East District Korean Ministry
Rev. Sang Jae Lee

First UMC—Gilbert
Rev. Kristin Hansen
Pastor Adriana Hernandez





United
Women
in Faith

February Meetings of UWFaith

February 6	UWF Leadership Team	10:00 am
February 13	Mary Martha Circle	4:00 pm
February 18	Devotions & Dinner	6:30 pm
February 20	Bookworms United (Zoom)	10:00 am
	Book— <i>Becoming Grandma</i> by Leslie Stahl	
February 27	UWF Outreach	Fellowship Hall 11:30 am



Call to Prayer and Self Denial

Unit Meeting March 1

10:00 am in Fellowship Hall

Conference Spring Retreat

When: March 15

Where: First Phoenix UMC

5510 N. Central Ave.

Program is *Tools for the Soul*

with Mary Holland

Gathering is at 8:30AM,

Retreat 9:00 AM-3:30 PM



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