

BUILDING ON FAITH

God wants us to grow in Christ so we can build up His Church in Cottonwood, the Verde Valley, and to the ends of the earth.

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE VERDE VALLEY FAITH FORWARD

2021 E. Fir Street-P.O. Box 3732, Cottonwood, AZ 86326
928-634-7876 (www.cottonwoodfaithlutheran.org)

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2022

Upcoming Events:

- **March 2nd**
Ash Wednesday
- **April 10th**
Palm Sunday
- **April 14th**
Maundy Thursday
- **April 15th**
Good Friday
- **April 17th**
Resurrection Sunday



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A Lenten Prayer

As we begin in our Lenten season this year, certainly the last two years have given us much to consider, both good and bad. Traditionally we think of Lent as a time to prepare our hearts to celebrate the hope of the resurrection that we have in Christ Jesus. Another tradition is to give up something for Lent as a way of making more room in our life for what God would have to give us. It is my prayer this Lenten season, that we allow our many differences to diminish and make more room in our lives for the proclamation of Christ Jesus and His forgiveness of sins. Sadly, it seems that the events of the last two years have divided the body of Christ as much as it has the world and has damaged our witness. The Church has had, and continues to have, a golden opportunity to be a safe-haven, a sanctuary, from the wars and divisiveness of the world, where people may come to learn and experience the truth of God's fathomless love for them, and begin healing. While we will always have our differences in this life, it is only in Christ Jesus that we will be at peace with God and one another.

Christ Jesus, help us to speak Your truth in love to everyone we encounter.

God's peace, Pastor Karl



Worship Services for the Easter Season

Palm Sunday 4/10: 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday 4/14: 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday: 4/15: 4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Resurrection Sunday, April 17th

8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

*There will not be a Sunrise Service or breakfast this year.



Special Thanks To.....



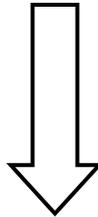
- All the church service volunteers, and Sunday School teachers
- All who clean the inside and outside of the church and work behind the scenes to make the church function smoothly. Thank you to those who helped at our church cleaning in February too!
- The church council and Pastor for their leadership

We are truly blessed here at Faith Lutheran Church. Please join us in a Thank-a-Thon. Find members of our church to thank in the coming weeks for their service.

**This section, which includes Birthdays and Anniversaries,
is left blank intentionally to protect
member's privacy, on-line. Please refer to the hard copy
at the church for more information.**

This newsletter continues on the next page.

Thank you.



From the Council President...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

How many of you read bumper stickers? While I didn't research the origin of bumper stickers, I can imagine how they might have started. Think back to the garden of Eden— Adam and Eve, leading their donkey out of the Garden, probably piled high with spare fig leaves, with a sign pinned to the donkey's tail - "An apple one day and God sent us away!" Later, the Roman chariots around the Coliseum probably carried the latest box scores - Lions 10, Christians 0. These days, there are many different types of messages available for anyone riding behind you to read: "I love New York", "Save the Whales", humorous messages such as "We're spending our children's inheritance", "At least it runs" – usually found on some old clunker. I've even seen bumper stickers with foul language on them.

Of course, there are also stickers with religious messages: "Jesus is Lord", "Love one another", "To God be the Glory". But the message I saw, which became the basis for this article, was on the back of a car in a parking lot. It said simply, "TRY JESUS".

As I thought about those words, I wondered, "How DO you *Try Jesus*?" Is he like a new coat or a pair of shoes that you can try on in the store and return to the rack if they don't fit? Or maybe He's like that new dish that your wife surprised you with last week - the One that everyone tried but was only eaten by the garbage disposal. How do you *try* Jesus?

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the word "try" in some form or other appears 17 times in the King James version of the Bible. Thirteen times in the Old Testament and four times in the New:

Judges 7:4 God will **try** the people to see who will go with Gideon into battle

2 Chron 32:31 God **tries** Hezekiah

Job 7:18 Job asks God why He (God) should **try** man

12:11 Job asks "does the ear **try** words"

Psalms 11:4 The Lord's eyes **try** man

26:2 David asks the Lord to **try** him

139:23 David again asks the Lord to "Search me...**try** me and know my heart."

Jer 6:27 God is asked to **try** the people

9:7 God says He **will try** the people

17:10 The Lord searches the mind and **tries** the heart

Lamen 3:40 Jeremiah says "Let us...**try** our ways".

Dan 11:35 (people) of understanding shall fall, to **try** them

Zec 13:9 The Lord will **try** men as gold is **tried**

1 Cor 3:13 every man's work will be **tried** by fire

1 Pet 4:12 Peter talks about "the fiery trial which is to **try** you".

1 John 4:1 John says to "...believe not every spirit but **try** the spirits whether they are of God".

Rev 3:10 Jesus says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to **try** them that dwell upon the earth".

Continued on next page.



Did you notice a pattern in any of the verses above? In one, the ear is to **try** words, in one verse people will **try** their own ways, fourteen times God is either asked to, or will **try** men, a single man, or man's works. The 17th verse comes the closest to the bumper sticker's message, but *it* says **try** the *spirits* to see if they are of God.

NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE IS MAN ASKED TO TRY GOD. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE IS MAN ASKED TO TRY JESUS. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE IS MAN ASKED TO TRY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

How could man try his Creator? As Paul says in Romans 9:20-21a "...O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' Hath not the potter power over the clay?" If, as Paul says in truth, we should not esteem ourselves able to question God, where did "Try Jesus" come from? The author of this bumper sticker probably had good intentions: to get people to at least see what Jesus is like. Jesus Himself said in Rev 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" - and if we don't get along, I'll split and catch the next bus out of town. Isn't that what "try Jesus" could be like? Maybe you invite Him into your heart, like a new acquaintance comes to dinner, you might hit it off, but then you grow tired and ask your "friend" to leave. Can you picture doing that to Jesus? Once you accept Jesus as your own personal Lord and Savior, how could you possibly send Him away? I'm sure all of us as Christians have had TRYING times when we've questioned our devotion, our commitment and even our faith - but we know Jesus is there for us to turn to - to strengthen us and help us through our troubles.

These past two years, dealing with Covid and its variants have been especially *trying*. Neighbors, friends and family have become ill or passed away because of this pandemic. Faith Lutheran, through the grace of God, has remained open throughout this troubling time. Why? Because Jesus is HERE! He is evident in our worship - as He promised in Matt 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in the midst of them". He is evident in our children - even if they are rambunctious and noisy in church - as He said in Matt 21:16b "...have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast brought perfect praise?'" He is evident in our fellowship - the love and caring shown by the brothers and sisters in Christ here in our midst - especially those who follow the words of Jesus in John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

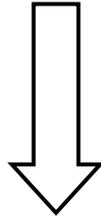
The love of Jesus IS what binds us together *and* what can carry us through the tough times ahead. To paraphrase another bumper sticker - "Jesus is the reason for ALL seasons". In the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 6, Jesus says, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father, but by Me." Does that sound like one who would say, "Try Jesus"?

My prayer is that, when God tries us, we will be found worthy because we have been washed in His blood and have been redeemed by His sacrifice for us - open your heart to Jesus, let Him come in and live with you, and you will find that the "trying times" of this life will be easier to bear.

And may the Peace, Strength, and Love of our Lord Jesus be with you all.
Yours in Christ, Gene Sucharski



**Treasurer's Report can be found in the hard copy of the newsletter at the church.
More newsletter information on the next page.**



Board of Christian Education News

Board Chair - Terri Mickle



Thank you to our Sunday School Teachers, Sandy Wilson and Kathy Merrick who have done a wonderful job with the lessons and special activities for the students entrusted to their care and spiritual direction. The students have been learning about prayer and Bible stories, like David and Saul. In April, they will be studying the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Sunday School helps prepare students for confirmation class, by giving them a strong Biblical foundation upon which to build.

Hilltop Christian Preschool



Here we are, making inroads into the year 2022! Despite all of the challenges of C-19 and its' various variants, Hilltop is healthy, strong and boldly moving forward. This year will be coming to a close with full classes, plus the introduction of the 'Little Me' class, all of which puts our facilities at their maximum capacity. The Lord continues to bless us with our preschool, strengthening us with challenges along the way.

We extend a mighty and heartfelt 'Thank You' from all of us (especially from our beautiful little ones) for our Adopt a Student Sponsors and other generous donations given to our preschool scholarship fund. Thanks to you, a great many of God's precious children will celebrate their preschool graduation this year. Many 3-year-olds also experienced their first time in preschool and hope to complete their final year in the Spring of 2023. We could not have offered these opportunities without your help. Again, thank you!

Hilltop Christian continues striving toward the construction of a new playground. The present one is over 40+ years old. It is important for us to uphold our 'Quality First Five-Star' rated program. With the assistance of Sandy Thompson and the Board of Christian Education, we were able to apply for a grant of \$20,000 from our Circuit and another \$20,000 from our District. We already received the grant in the amount of \$20,000 from our Circuit and are still waiting to hear from District. Donna Woodruff graciously contributed all of Rick's memorial money toward the new playground. The preschool has retained a grant writer, (Carol Henderson-Dahms) to help implement other available grants. Please, keep us in your prayers and if the Lord leads, make a financial contribution to expedite this worthy venture.

For our students, a lifetime of learning and growing has just begun. Look out Kindergarten, here we come! In May, Hilltop Christian Preschool will graduate 36 children. God's blessing on their continued educational adventures. We are thankful for the wonderful job their teachers do throughout the year, the Board of Christian Education for their support and Pastor Karl for spending time with them once a week in chapel.

Terri Mickle

Preschool Director report is on the next page.....



Preschool continued.....

April is a busy month as we will be celebrating Easter and also having our annual Daddy & ME day where we build something with our dads!

We will be celebrating our Mom's with a Mommy & Me Craft Day in May. Last year we switched from a tea to a craft day and it was a big hit so we will do it again this year! We also have our Preschool Graduation coming up at the end of May! We will be having each of our classes have their own graduation night. It is such an exciting time for these children who have grown so much since the beginning of preschool!

Our Pre-K classes are working their way through to the end of the alphabet and then will begin their review of all that they have learned this year! One of their biggest feats will be to memorize Psalm 100! It's always a favorite verse for them to learn and knock their family's socks off with their amazing ability to memorize with some sign language!

As the school year draws to an end we want to say a BIG thank you to Kathy Wagner, Vicci Wikening, Myra Anderson, Tieann Blackburn, Sandy Wilson and Rhonda Koeppe for helping us keep our laundry clean! Also a BIG thank you to Gary Wilharm and Gene Sucharski for fixing all the things that needed fixing!

We also want to thank the Board of Outreach group for making birthday cards for each child this year! What a great ministry! And a BIG thank you to everyone who has contributed to our preschool whether it be with the scholarships, random donations, paper drive or prayers! We truly appreciate everything that you have done for us! We have so much to be thankful for!

Windy Mickle– Hilltop Christian Preschool Director.



Help Our Church Earn Some Money:

From the Fry's website: Earn money for your community organization when you use your loyalty card. If you shop at Fry's, and have a loyalty card, you can help Faith Lutheran by naming the Church as your Community Rewards organization.

If you do not have an online account, you are missing out on digital coupons and other perks.

To create an account, go to: <https://www.frysfood.com/> On the top right, hold your cursor over "Sign-in" and the dropdown menu will show "Create Account". Fill out the info and your account will be ready to go. After you log in to your account, hold the cursor over your name (on the top right), and click on "My Account". On that page go down to "Community Rewards" to register the Church. Be sure you find the correct Faith Lutheran, as there could be several listed. Once you have registered the Church, use your loyalty card each time you shop at Fry's and the Church will be credited with your purchases. If you have questions, please see Gene Sucharski.



Board of Outreach-Kathy Wagner, Chair

THANK YOU, members of Faith Lutheran for your generosity of gifts to Old Town Mission and House of Ruth. They appreciated your donations. A big THANK YOU to all of you who have given us greeting cards over the years, we were able to send almost 200 Christmas cards to Holiday Cards for Heroes, through the Red Cross.

We will be assisting Lutheran World Relief with their needs. This is a very wonderful organization that has been helping all over the world since 1945. Information on this project will be available from members of the Board of Outreach and will also be in your bulletins beginning with Ash Wednesday. God Bless you all!

Take a Hike!

Come and be refreshed in God's country. Faith Lutheran Church has a hiking club! Whether you are a casual hiker or serious one, each hike caters to your comfort level. Come enjoy nature and fellowship. Check the church bulletin board for hiking dates throughout the year. Thank you Mark and Lori for leading us on the trails.



Confirmation:

We continue to study the first five books of the Bible and to memorize Luther's Small Catechism! Our three confirmands and their parents join us each Sunday at 9:30am for the purpose of making God's gift of faith our own by living out His word.

Roof Renovation Update:

Since 2017 our Faith Lutheran Church family has been working towards paying off the new roof. Matching donations continue. Please prayerfully consider renewing your pledge or giving a one time or monthly financial gift. Pledge sheets are available at the church office.

Hymns of Our Christian Church:

Have you ever wondered where those beautiful hymns came from, or about the composers? Join us for a time of reflection on ten well known hymns and the stories behind them. Hymns such as; A Mighty Fortress, In the Cross of Christ I Glory, Be Thou My Vision and more. Bring your singing or humming voices. Please sign up on the church bulletin board so we know if we will have enough people interested to provide this time of reflection.



Sunday, May 15th 3:30-4:30 pm.

Lent is the season of the church year, lasting about six weeks. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends the day before Easter Sunday. People typically give up something, in remembrance of what Jesus gave up for us, His life. It is also a time when we look forward to and prepare for His death and resurrection. During the forty days of Lent, we remember God’s faithfulness to His people and how His faithfulness is complete in Jesus.

The Days of Holy Week:

During Holy Week we celebrate **Palm Sunday**, when Jesus went to Jerusalem and people celebrated his arrival. **Maundy Thursday** was the Lord’s last supper. On **Good Friday** Jesus died on the cross and on **Holy Saturday** he awaits His RESURRECTION on **Easter Sunday!**

Look What’s Coming Up!

Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, March 2nd
 6:00 p.m.

Palm Sunday
Sunday, April 10th
 8:00 am & 11:00

Maundy Thursday
April, 14th
 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday
April, 15th
 4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.



Resurrection Sunday
April, 17th
 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.



Ongoing Bible Studies

*All Bible Studies are held at the church.

Men’s Bible Study –Second & fourth Thursday of the month 8:45 a.m.

Women’s Bible Study - Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m.



Coming Soon.....Overcoming Life’s Sorrows - Bible Study:

What do you do when life goes off the rails and your left with questions? We will explore the book of Jeremiah, using the Bible and the teachings from Professor Reed Lessing’s book, “Overcoming Life’s Sorrows.” You may remember the video presentation presented last Fall. Come learn how Jeremiah overcomes, through the hope of Jesus. This study will be held in the fellowship hall, led by Pastor Karl. Stay tuned for dates to come soon.

