

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.

Upcoming Events:

- **Nov 30th, Dec 7th
Dec 14, Dec 21st**
Wed. Advent Services
- **Dec 11th**
Sunday School
Christmas Program
- **Dec 13th**
Hilltop Christian
Preschool
Christmas Program
5:00 p.m. Pre-3
6:00 p.m. Pre-K
- **Dec 24th**
Christmas Eve Service



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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)

DEC/JAN/FEB 2022/2023

A New Thing



In Isaiah 43:19 our Lord gave His word to His people "Behold, I do a new thing, it shall spring forth, shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." In Isaiah's day, circumstances for the people of God were dire and getting worse, but God did the unfathomable, He provided a way where previously there was no way. He provided water, necessary for life, where there was no water. In our times, as things seem to be getting more dire by the day, our Lord's word to us is the same as it was to His people in Isaiah's day, and at every other time. He, and He alone, is our hope. As God always keeps His promises, ultimately He restored His people even while He was fulfilling His promise in a much bigger way – Christ Jesus. Through Christ Jesus, He won our victory, not just for the moment, not just for a time, but for all time and eternity. Just as importantly, our Jesus was not only there to win the decisive victory, but he walks with us each step of the way, that we might arrive at His victory and make it ours. Today, as we eagerly try to put the anxieties and griefs of the last few years behind us, may we not futilely attempt to recreate the past, but embrace the future God has brought about for we, His people.

God's peace, Pastor Karl



Worship Schedule

Advent Services: 6:00 p.m. Wed. 11/30 through Wed. 12/21

Christmas Eve Service: 5:00 p.m. Saturday 12/24

Christmas Day Service: 9:00 a.m. Sunday 12/25



*The magic of Christmas is not in the presents,
but in His presence.*



Special Thanks To.....

- All those who work behind the scenes to make the church function smoothly.
- The Sunday School teachers for their dedication to our young ones of the congregation.
- For all that helped with Oktoberfest and Friendship Sunday
- Those who decorated the Lord's church for the Christmas season.
- All who pray for our church members and our country.

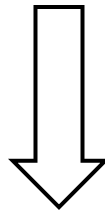


We are truly blessed here at Faith Lutheran Church. Please join us in a Thank-a-Thon. Find members of our church to thank in the coming weeks for their service.

**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:

COME CELEBRATE JESUS

The word Christmas is made up of two parts - Christ, which is a title for the Messiah whose appearance is prophesied in the Old Testament, and the suffix -mas, which, from Webster's, is a combining form with a specified festival or celebration. Christ-mas means, literally, a celebration of Christ, or, since we believe Jesus IS the Christ or Messiah, a celebration of Jesus. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that "During the 4th century the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25 was gradually adopted by most Eastern churches."

The Saturday after Thanksgiving, the church was decorated for the Christmas Season. I'm sure that some of you have already started decorating, or at least have a plan for what your decorations will look like. In years gone by, those decorations were left up until Three Kings, January 6. Nowadays, it seems they are gone soon after Christmas at a lot of houses around town. But does the celebration of Jesus end when the decorations come down? Does it end when we stop singing Christmas carols and hymns? When does the celebration of Jesus end? Or, to put it another way, *should* the celebration of Jesus ever end?

The word celebrate is only found three times in the King James version of the Bible, twice in Leviticus, where God tells the Hebrews to celebrate certain feasts to Him, and once in Isaiah. But there are several instances where certain happenings spoken of in the Bible could be considered celebrations. In a Gospel reading Jesus goes to a wedding feast, which could certainly be considered a celebration. In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, the father throws a celebration upon the return of his long-lost son. At the birth of Jesus, the Father held a celebration of His own - as Luke and Matthew tell us - an angel invites common shepherds to view the newborn Savior, as a multitude of the heavenly host is praising God, and Wise men from the East travel to see where the Christ child has been born. And just imagine the celebration that the angels must have held in heaven when Jesus returned triumphant after His Resurrection.

But the ultimate celebration is still to come - the one described in the Book of Revelation. John tells of the scene in heaven, where the slain Lamb, who we know as Jesus, stands amidst the ongoing celebration (Rev 7:9ff, 11:15ff, 19:4ff, 21:1ff). Paul summed up the reason for the celebration in Philippians 2: 5-11: ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! ⁹ **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,** ¹⁰ **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** ¹¹ **and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** (NIV) (emphasis mine)

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President's Article Continued.....

Once the decorations are put away, what will we celebrate? We can celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and weddings. Although these are all good things to celebrate, the **best** celebration should be for this: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV) What better celebration can there be? So this Christmas Season, after the decorations are down and the gatherings over, I invite you to COME CELEBRATE JESUS all year long!

And may the Peace, Strength, and Love of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

Yours in Christ, Gene Sucharski

In Council News: At the November Congregational Meeting, the full slate of candidates for open Council positions were accepted. I would also like to thank Dick Logue for his many years of service as Vice-President. Also, the budget for 2023 was passed.



Church President: Gene Sucharski
 Vice President: Richard Watson
 Treasurer: Sandy Thompson
 Financial Secretary: Donna Woodruff
 Recording Secretary: Myra Anderson

Board of Trustees: Carl (Rocky) Warczinsky
 Board of Elders: Les Mickle
 Board of Christian Ed: Terri Mickle
 Board of Outreach: Kathy Wagner

Please pray for our Church Council. These individuals are supportive of the church. They attend worship regularly, spend time in God's word and take time to share their spiritual gifts in leadership, to strengthen our church and ministries.

Board of Outreach: Board of Outreach Chair - Kathy Wagner

Thank you all for your wonderful support of Operation Christmas Child. You have given many children a wonderful Christmas. God Bless You! Advent By "SON" Light was held on Sunday Nov. 27th. We started our "Cold Weather Drive" for Old Town Mission and Verde Valley Homeless Coalition. These items will be delivered before Christmas.

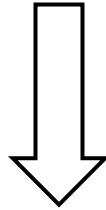
We continue to serve food to Verde Valley Homeless Coalition twice a month. Their warehouse, that held their food supplies and clothing, experienced a fire. They are in great need. We hope to continue this ministry in the future.

God Bless You and thank you for your generosity!
 Kathy Wagner, Chair



TREASURER'S REPORT

This report can be found in a hardcopy of the newsletter, found in the church office.
Continue to the next page for more church happenings.



Board of Christian Education News

Board of Christian Education Chair - Terri Mickle



Sunday School:

Sunday School is going strong. We meet 9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m., in the Youth room. Sandy Wilson, Kathy Merrick, Andrew Olesky and Drea Mickle have been taking turns teaching.

The Sunday School Christmas Program will be held Sunday, December 11, it's going to be a little different this year, so not to give away the surprise, you'll just have to come and see.

There has not been any Youth Bible Study. Oktoberfest 2022 was a great success. We had 33 of the Hilltop families attend, along with Hilltop staff.

We are excited to announce that the new playground is installed, and the dedication was held on Friendship Sunday.

We still have two students that have not been adopted yet, so I ask that you please pray about it to see if that is something that has been placed in your heart. You can do 25% or 50%, either one is very much appreciated for our preschool families.



Hilltop Christian Preschool



Our classrooms are bursting at the seams and are all full; we currently have 50 students enrolled!

December is always a busy time in preschool getting ready for Christmas and our Christmas program on December 13th. The teachers and students are busy learning Christmas songs and making gifts for their families.

January we will be having our Daddy & Me Day building a craft out of wood. This is a great event that we have been doing for years where dad (or grandpa or other male father figure if dad isn't available) come to spend the morning building a project with the preschoolers! We have built birdhouses, stepstools, key racks plus a lot of other projects.

February is a time of friendship and love as we learn how to show others we care with Valentines.

Our preschool classes are continuing to work on learning the alphabet, numbers, colors & shapes as well as social skills!

Windy Mickle





Look What's Coming Up!

Advent Services

Wednesdays
Nov 30-Dec 21
6:00 p.m.

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 11
during Service



Christmas Eve Services

Saturday, December 24
5:00 p.m.



Ongoing Ministries

Women's Weekly Bible Study— Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.
(Sandy Thompson)

Men's Bible Study —Second & fourth Thursdays of the month 8:45 a.m.
(Gene Sucharski and Deacon John Schaefer)



Look for more information in the Sunday announcement page for any schedule changes.

Confirmation Class:

Pastor Karl and the confirmands continue to meet during Bible study hour. The teachings help them become grounded in the scriptures and come to an understanding of what we believe. They will be confirmed this coming May. Thank you to Deacon John for substituting for Pastor Karl in the Adult Bible study.



New Playground Brings Smiles to Preschoolers' Faces!

Our preschool playground has been upgraded to comply with current early childhood development and State health and safety standards. The playground was dedicated to Cristy Valenzuela. Thank you to the Board of Christian Education, and others. Our Lord has blessed this project with funding from Pacific Southwest District, Northern AZ Circuit (26) and congregational members. Let the play begin!

