



## ***GRACE NOTES ~ JANUARY 2024***



### **Worship Schedule**

**Saturday, 5:00 and Sunday, 9:00 January 7, and 9:30 January 14**

***(There will be two Sunday services, 8:00 & 10:00 - beginning January 21, 2024)***

### **Mission Statement**

*Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises, and the Abundant Life*



**Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SpiritOfGraceSCG/](http://www.facebook.com/SpiritOfGraceSCG/)**

## Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church

15820 W Clearview Blvd

623-977-6000

In the  of The Grand

[www.spiritofgrace.com](http://www.spiritofgrace.com)

### Worship Times

Saturday at 5:00—Sunday 9:00  
January 7

### Staff

#### **Pastor Scott Hackler**

[pastorscott@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:pastorscott@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Pastor Gary Benson**

[pastorgary@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:pastorgary@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Glenn Schultz**

Director of Finance & Administration  
[glenn@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:glenn@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Deborah Frusciano**

Faith Community Nurse  
[deborah@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:deborah@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Merly Miranda**

Administrative Assistant  
[merly@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:merly@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Jerry Huston**

Facility Manager  
[jhuston@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:jhuston@spiritofgrace.com)

#### **Norm Lindstrom**

Assistant Facility Manager

#### **Annie Huston**

Grace Notes Editor  
[annie@spiritofgrace.com](mailto:annie@spiritofgrace.com)

### Staff - Continued

#### **Ken Carnes**

Choir Director

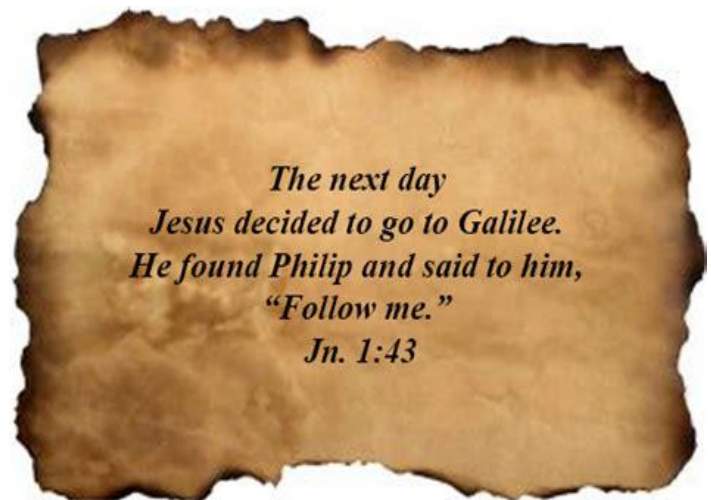
#### **Sandy Hobbs**

Choir Accompanist

### Worship Time Changes:

January 14—Sunday 9:30

January 21—Sunday 8:00 & 10:00





## *A Message From Pastor Scott...*

**FOR SURELY I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU,  
SAYS THE LORD, PLANS FOR YOUR WELFARE AND  
NOT FOR HARM, TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE WITH HOPE.  
~JEREMIAH 29:11**



We are a people with hope and as we enter this new year, we will do well to let our hope lead us. Hope is powerful. Years ago Kennon Callahan wrote about the most important human searches and among them is hope. He wrote: **"Hope is stronger than memory. Memory is strong. Hope is stronger. People live on hope, not on memory. Take away a person's memories, and they become anxious. Take away a person's hopes, and they become terrified"** (p. 124). We can face incredible challenges when we have hope and the people of God have reason for great hope.

***In the darkest days of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was asked by God to go out and buy a piece of real estate—complete with witnesses, a deed, and money exchanged (Jer. 32:6–15).*** This was a sign that there was hope for the future. It may have seemed to make no sense to those who looked on, knowing that the land he was buying would fall into the hands of the enemy. But the day eventually came when these captive people would be set free and returned to their land, rebuild homes and reestablish their vineyards. Jeremiah's purchase of land was designed to provide a beacon of hope.

It is sad that so many in our world are living without hope. I certainly can fall victim to my worries about the future...about my finances, my retirement, my health, my family, my family's health...and it can go on and on. But I continue to lean onto my hope in Christ which is greater than my worries. What an amazing hope we have!

***Our church is built on that hope.*** We stake our claim to it as we plan for our future. When we live out our mission goals and support them with our tithes, gifts and time, we live out our hope and we become a beacon of hope for others....to those who are captive to the despair and anxiety of these days. What a powerful presence that hope gives us.

I'm pretty sure we will not have a year devoid of struggles and problems. It would be nice. But whatever comes we can know and trust that Christ is our hope beyond it all. ***Hope was born in Bethlehem! Hope wasn't stopped by a cruel cross! Hope lives! You can count on it.***

In the peace of Christ,  
***Pastor Scott***



**FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF NOVEMBER 30...**

	November	Bdgt	YTD	Bdgt	2022
Income	52,110	76,894	667,391	707,776	743,938
Expenses	70,961	69,020	789,970	776,689	744,173
Fixed Asset Purchases	-0-				
Mortgage Balance	479,588				
Households:	445		+3		446
Members:	732		-2		743

The numbers above do not include an extraordinary item in either income or expenses. In August, Spirit of Grace received an Employee Retention Credit of \$144,832, from which was paid a professional fee of \$28,966 for preparation of the applications which generated the credit. The funds were used to open CD's pending the Council's decision on the use of these funds.

**Glenn Schultz,**  
*Director of Finance  
 & Administration*

**FOOD INGATHERING via Cash Donations**

**Our contributions are much appreciated by the  
 Valley View Community Food Bank!**



**Thank you**

If you have not given to this effort and want to be a part of it,  
**you may send a check by mail or drop it off at the office.**



**Contribution Total For DECEMBER — \$3,070**

**The Food Bank uses our monetary donations to  
 purchase items they are in most need of, at a generous  
 discount allowing them to purchase even more!**

**Glenn Schultz,**  
*Director of Finance and  
 Administration*





## *Pastor Gary's Gospel Glimpse...*

### ***Greetings to all in 2024,***

Oh my goodness, the years are passing so quickly. I can remember when I thought, what is it going to be like to say, this is the year 2000 ...? The sound of 2000 seemed so different, and here we are in 2024!!

So as the years have gone so quickly, consider this, ***"Who have YOU become?"*** Personally, when we consider who we have become, how might we think of it? I have become 75 years old, over the hill and picking up speed? Or maybe not picking up speed, maybe slowing down, yet trying how to figure out how to live my best life possible, in light of and in spite of, the challenges within and certainly around me.

On the one hand life is so personal, yet it is also lived in the public arena. Many say their faith is so personal, I say it may be personal, but don't allow it to be private. ***In these days, can those around you tell by your actions and words that you are a child of God? Do you in 2024 strive to be a better expression of God's love and favor for others?***

Recently I have hit the point where many of my long time friends have passed from this life, I have struggles with losing those who I love and care about, and have shared life with, for so many years. However, on the other hand, I celebrate the many seasons of joy, faith, hopefulness, and I think that spurs me on. How is that for you?

A long time friend likes to say, ***"No surrender, no retreat,"*** as if to say, keep living, be faithful, live a life worthy of the gospel. Don't we need that encouragement? With so many tensions, anxieties, and issues facing us as individuals, communities, and nation, lets keep going. How do we keep going? We keep going with the gospel ... the good news, that Jesus came to give us life and life abundant ... ***in Him is our joy, our courage, our future of hope.*** As has been said, I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future!! Does that mean we do nothing? No, it means we pray as hard as we can, and do all we can to be people of God we are created to be.

I don't know what 2024 holds, nor do you! I do however trust that as we serve and witness faithfully, God will go with us and before us! Let us journey together!! ***Thanks for the joy of your friendship and partnership in the Gospel!***

Joy and Peace,

***Pastor Gary E Benson***



## **CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL UPDATE:**

By now you have all received a letter from Council President Bruce Belanger and Finance Committee Chairman Phil Nelson informing you of the financial position of Spirit of Grace. We will have a significant shortfall in our contributions against budget. Please prayerfully consider your giving plan for 2024. Please see Glenn Schultz's Financial Report in Grace Notes. The food gathering support for December was \$3,070. The campaign for "Gifts of Hope" is still in progress. Thank you for your continued support of this program.

The "Giving Tree" program provided more than \$10,000 in gift cards for the families at Luke Air Force Base. Thank you for supporting this program.

Every year Spirit of Grace makes beneficial contributions to local charities. The Council has established a Benevolence Committee. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate various non-profits and establish a procedure for deciding which ones should receive contributions. If you as a member of Spirit of Grace and have a non-profit to recommend, please contact any Council Member.

**Ushers Needed: Starting on January 21** — We will begin having two Sunday services. Therefore, there is a need for additional people to help with services. There is especially a need for more people willing to serve as ushers. If you can assist with that, please contact Rich Frusciano.

Blessings in Christ,

### ***Dates to Remember:***

**January 14, 2024 – Spirit of Grace 25th Anniversary Celebration**

**January 21, 2024 — Two Sunday services, 8:00 & 10:00**

**February 4, 2024 – Annual Congregation Meeting – Between Services**

***Bruce Belanger,***  
Congregation President

Bruce Belanger  
***President***

Betsy Gusea-Gerringer  
***Vice President***

Julie Townsend  
***Secretary***

Treedah Magee

Terry Pierce

Paul Reichenbach

Sue Barbour

Sue Kopcha

Ellie Brooks

***Our Vision: To Bring the Spirit of Grace to All***

***Mission Statement: Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises, and the Abundant Life***

***CELEBRATING SPIRIT OF GRACE '25th' ANNIVERSARY  
AND HONORING OUR DEDICATED AND  
FAITHFUL SENIOR & ASSOCIATE PASTORS***



*Founding Pastor  
Joseph L. Carucci 1996 - 2003*



*Pastor Gary Hess 2004 - 2012*



*Pastor Vern Anderson 2013 - 2018*



*Pastor Scott Hackler 2019 - Present*

*Continued on following page ..*

*SPIRIT OF GRACE ASSOCIATE PASTORS—2000 to Present...*



*Pastor Phil Faves 2000-2004*



*Pastor Ellis "Bud" Fskritt 2005-2006*



*Pastor Fredrick Ramsay 2006-2007*



*Pastor Stephen Haggmark 2012-2013*



*Pastor Harold Stromer 2018-2019*



*Pastor Gary F. Benson 2020-Present*





## *Spirit of Grace 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*Our 25th Anniversary is just a couple of weeks away, come join the celebration on Sunday, January 14, 2024!*

### *Program*

**9:00** - *Meet & Greet — the current and former Senior and Associate Pastors and the Bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, Rev. Deborah Hutterer*

**9:30** - *Worship Service begins*

**10:30** - *Adjourn to the Fellowship Hall (for those with tickets and invited guests).*

**10:45** - *Food lines open for Breakfast*

**11:30** — *Return to the Sanctuary\* for the Celebration Program*

**12:15** — *\*Music by Dan Reed and Nicole Pesce\**

**12:45** — *Closing remarks - Pastor Scott*



**\*PLEASE NOTE:** EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T PURCHASE A BREAKFAST TICKET, YOU ARE INVITED TO RETURN TO THE CHURCH FOR THIS SPECIAL MORNING OF CELEBRATION.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!**

ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> AT 11:00, WE WILL BE SETTING THE TABLES IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL AND NEED MORE HANDS TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT.

***NO SIGN UP NEEDED!***



## ***Break Old Dishes in Front of Neighbor's Houses***

In any home, breaking a dish means breaking the mother's silence. Oh, undoubtedly dropping a dish would make your mom throw a fit at you. But, if you are in Denmark, and broke that same dish, you'd be able to get away with it for at least one day of the year. And that day is the first day of the New Year.

Yes, Danes save their old dishes only to throw them by the dozen at the doorsteps of relatives, friends, and neighbors on New Year's Eve. They believe, the bigger the pile of broken dishes on the doorsteps, the bigger the mass of friends one will have. Also, they believe it brings good luck for the year ahead!



So, if you are in Denmark on New Year's Eve and wake up to a pile of smashed crockery on your doorstep, don't panic it's a compliment.



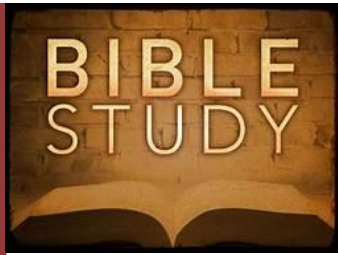
One other Danish tradition is to jump off a chair as the clock strikes 12:00 midnight to signify a leap into the new year! (*Stillunfold.com*)

## ***MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY—JANUARY 24***



Did you know that Martin Luther King Jr's famous, ***"I Have a Dream"*** speech was partially improvised and that the iconic phrase was left out of the original draft?

While King had used the line in several speeches in the months prior to the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, a few of his advisors questioned its use and kept it out of the original drafts of the speech. While delivering his address to the nation, King was encouraged by his friend and legendary gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson to ***"tell them about the dream, Martin."*** King departed from 4-minute prepared remarks to deliver one of the most famous and influential speeches of the 20th century.



Come Join us... **BIBLE STUDY... 10:00—11:00**

The Gospel of Mark is one of four accounts sharing the life of Jesus. It is a collection of stories, but not a collection that was randomly thrown together. It all has a purpose. Mark addresses some really specific questions about Jesus. Throughout this year Mark will be read in our worship services. Let's take a few weeks and come to know better this important Gospel account.

**January 24 – Who is Jesus? Mark 1-8a**

**January 31 – What does it mean for Jesus to be the Messiah? Mark 8b-10**



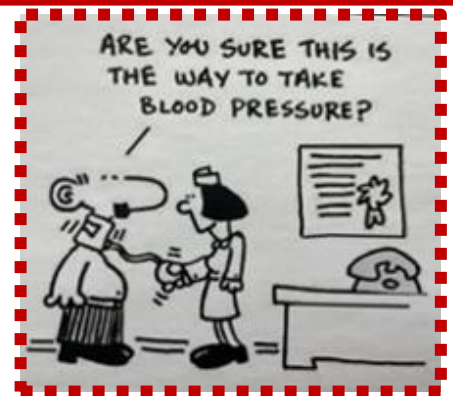
**February 7 – How does Jesus become King? Mark 11-16**

**Pastor Scott**

### **BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS**

Regular blood pressure checks are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Hypertension is often at the root of heart disease, and if left untreated can cause organ damage.

**Have your blood pressure checked *January 21, 2024*  
8:00 & 10:00—Immediately following each Service in  
the Conference Room.**



### **MEN'S SINGING GROUP GEARING UP...!!**



**The first rehearsal of our men's singing group will be  
on Tuesday, January 16, at 3:00.**

We will be singing in February. Date not set as of yet. Looking forward to seeing the guys. If you play an instrument, bring it with you on the second rehearsal. Thanks!

**Ken Carnes**

Choir Director



Subject to limitations, contributions to certain Arizona based charities can generate a dollar for dollar credit against your Arizona income tax. **Although Spirit of Grace does not qualify,**

**Valley View Community Food Bank does (listed Qualified Charitable Organization #20405).** If you give to the Spirit of Grace Food Ingathering, every dollar you give goes through Spirit of Grace directly to the Valley View Community Food Bank. Can you, therefore, take a credit on your personal return for your Food Ingathering contributions?



All I can say is "I do". This information is not meant to be used as professional tax advice. It is merely meant to make you aware of something that you might want to discuss with your tax advisor.

**Glenn Schultz**

Director of Finance & Administration



### **READY FOR SOME MARDI GRAS & JAZZ?**

The All Stars Big Band, under the direction of Duane Moore, will appear in our sanctuary to provide you with some of that sound and flavor from the streets of New Orleans on **Sunday, February 4 from 2:30 - 3:30**. Then after the program come into Cafe Grace for some fellowship and a Mardi Gras dessert. **Cost \$5. Tickets go on sale January 6 & 7, then the last two weeks in January.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MARCH 10 @ 6:00—The LIBERTY QUARTET** returns to our sanctuary to sing praises to our God In that wonderful harmony. You won't want to miss it. **More details next month!**



**Dorothy Carnes**

Fellowship Ministry



## "A FUTURE WITH HOPE!"

Spirit of Grace is a generous group of people! People committed to Jesus. People committed to this church...Christ's church. People committed to being generous for the sake of our shared mission. Among our stated values, we say that Spirit of Grace is **"A Generous Community sharing the gifts of time, talent and treasures."**

During the month of January, you will be receiving information through our stewardship campaign called, **"A Future with Hope!"** As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we will be thinking ahead and committing to some important goals that will carry us into **"A Future with Hope!"** We will kick it off with an announcement during worship on January 7th, and each week highlight how increasing our generosity will support important ministry initiatives for 2024 and beyond. We will also encourage each other to make a commitment that shows we are in this work together.

***Your gifts make a difference. Thanks for being generous!***

**Pastor Scott**



### SPIRIT OF GRACE ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING

**9:00—FEBRUARY 4, 2024**



*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ~ JEREMIAH 29:11*

## ***THE MIDDLE EAST – WHAT'S GOING ON THERE?***

**(The Geography, Culture, History, & Today)**

**Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> 2024, 10:00-11:00 – Fellowship Hall**

**Speaker: Winnie Fritz- Healthcare Professional & Spirit of Grace Member**



**For weeks, we have watched the news.** Are shocked & saddened to see the war & the lives of innocent Christians, Moslems, & Jews harmed, displaced, or killed.

**Many of us wonder:** What is going on? What caused this? Why now? When & how can this end?

Winnie has a home there; has been in the Middle East all or part of every year for 51 years.

***Come; join us to discuss & learn!***

***Winnie Fritz***



If you have lost a spouse, child, family member or friend, this is a place where you can find people who understand the deep hurt you feel. GriefShare is for people grieving the death of a loved one.

GriefShare is a Christ-centered small group. Each GriefShare session includes a video seminar featuring top experts on grief recovery, plus real people sharing their real stories. After each video presentation, we spend time in small groups discussing what was presented and how it applies to what is going on in our lives. **Even if you have attended GriefShare sessions in the past, join us for this new 4th edition. It contains updated information and relevant content for today's issues.**

Each session is independent. The 13-week series is free to attend, however a donation of \$20 is suggested to cover the cost of your workbook. Call the church office to register. 623-977-6000. *Call Deborah if you have any questions. 602-909-8369.*

**We meet every Thursday,  
January 25 to April 18, 2024,  
10-11:30 in the Fellowship Hall.**

*GriefShare Leaders:*

**Deborah Frusciano  
Miriam Hackler  
Carol Starnes**

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MINISTRY (CEM)

**Exciting things are happening in January & you're invited to participate!!**

A monthly prayer will be in both the bulletin insert and Grace Notes and will provide prayers of intercession on hunger this month and on other social concerns in the future. If you have a favorite prayer to share or would like a topic to be addressed please reach out to Nancy Jacob [nljacob@aol.com](mailto:nljacob@aol.com).



**On Sunday January 7, Solveig Muus, Director of the Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA)** will speak in the Fellowship Hall about the work of LAMA that the SOG Civic Engagement Ministry is supporting and inviting you to be a part of too! The CEM leadership committee members will be present in the narthex to offer information and sign you up if you would like to receive emails from the Spirit of Grace CEM group.

**The CEM Ministry Planning Team is meeting on Wednesday January 10** in the conference room at Spirit of Grace. If you would like to join our planning group, you're invited!

And last but not least ... **Thursday January 18 from 9:30-1:30 is Lutheran Day at the Legislature.**

## HUNGER & THIRST

Join Lutherans from around the state as we share our beliefs as Christians called to love our neighbor with **OUR** elected officials on issues of Hunger and Water in Arizona. *Carpooling is planned from Spirit of Grace.*

**Looking forward to a great month with your involvement and prayers of support!!**

*Our lives begin to end the day we stay silent about the things that matter" ~ Martin Luther King*

**Marsha Gilford**

*C.E.M. Leader*



## *Our Heartfelt Thoughts & Prayers for ...*

Suzanne Michaels and family for the passing of her husband, **Richard Michaels** on December 5. Richard and Suzanne have been members of Spirit of Grace since 2019.

### ***Cards of support may be sent to:***

Suzanne Michaels  
16477 W. Bell Rd. Apt 282, Surprise, Arizona, 85374

Nancy Giles and family for the passing of her husband, **Dale Giles**, on November 8. They have four children, Richard, Dennis, Julie and David. Dale and Nancy were members of Spirit of Grace since 2005, but relocated to Washington to be close to family as Dale's health declined. They were married for 66 years.

### ***Cards of support may be sent to:***

Nancy Giles, 9309 NE Oak View, Vancouver, Washington 98662

<https://obits.columbian.com/us/obituaries/columbian/name/dale-giles-obituary?id=53798133>



## ***CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PRAYERS FOR HUNGRY AND POOR***

The newly formed Civic Engagement Ministry invites you to join us in prayer for the hungry and poor. Include this prayer in your daily devotions when you can.

***God our Father, we ask you to help us to imitate your Son who was concerned for the poor and needy. Help us to be on the side of the poor and to be with them as they struggle for their rights. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen***



If you have prayer concerns and questions about this ministry, contact:

**Nancy Jacob at (623) 640 - 6356 or [Nljacob@aol.com](mailto:Nljacob@aol.com).**

***Thank you for your prayers!***





(Photo credit: Kafika House)

## ***Gifts of Hope 2023***

—

***Until Jan 5, 2024***



**What do surgeries for children,  
goats, scholarships, & meals for  
refugees all have in common?**

### **Thank you so much for the donations given thus far to Gifts of Hope!**

Funds for many items are still needed by our brothers and sisters in African countries. For over 20 years, our Spirit of Grace congregation has donated funds to *Gifts of Hope* for faith-based healthcare, food, education, livestock, water filtration, and transportation. With grateful hearts, the recipients of your giving in Africa send their most sincere "Thank You."

### **How did this begin?**

During the late 1990s, various Lutheran groups, including the ELCA, joined together in a program called "Stand with Africa – A Campaign of Hope." Spirit of Grace member Pastor Dan Olson (who had served 25 years as Africa Program Director of the ELCA) helped advance this effort to launch our congregation's "*Gifts of Hope*" in 2002.

### **What have we accomplished in over 20 years?**

Spirit of Grace members have donated over \$673,000 in funds to help individuals and families in Tanzania, Liberia, South Sudan, and other African nations. We only work with projects the ELCA supports. This means the projects are all vetted.

Over the two decades of Gifts of Hope, children with cleft palates, orthopedic abnormalities, and burns have received surgery and rehabilitation. You have helped fund mosquito bed nets to protect from malaria; goats for milk and cheese; chickens for eggs; a tiller and seed for crops; water pumps; and food for refugees. You helped buy cancer radiation equipment - a project that has a local connection with Barrow Neurological Institute.



## ***GIFTS OF HOPE.. Continued..***

### **What are the opportunities for support this year?**

You can support projects related to “**Healthcare,**” “**Education,**” and “**Nutrition.**” Examples include support for Kafika House (formerly The Plaster House) which provides life-changing surgeries (with pre-surgical care and post-surgical rehabilitation). Or, The Jacobson Endowed Scholarship--supporting medical training for much-needed local Tanzanian physicians. Or, a school lunch program in Cairo providing humanitarian aid to refugee-status and displaced children. And more.....



*(Photo credit: Saint Andrew's Refugee Services)*

### **How Can I Help Now?**

**Donate any time from November 18 - January 5, 2024.**

**Donation forms are available** at the *Gifts of Hope* table in the church narthex, at the church office, and downloadable on the church website.

**Submit your donation** (by mailing or bringing it to the church).

You may also give through the **church website:** Click “Give Tab – Go to Fund” and click the arrow for “*Gifts of Hope.*” If you wish to specify a gift, write it in the Notes section.

Please contact us with any questions or for additional information.

**Thank you for your generosity in support of 2023 Gifts of Hope!**

***Kerstin Smith (630-207-4041) and Winnie Fritz***  
***Gifts of Hope Co-Chairs***



This symbol - with the cross, water and a white lily - identifies the women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God: baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty and vitality that rise out of that life-giving baptismal water. The symbol also reminds us of the mission of the Church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." **MATTHEW 28:19**

## **Women's Ministry of Spirit of Grace (Women of the ELCA)**

### ***Come join other Lutheran sisters at our Circle Gatherings in January...***

**Circles this month will begin a new study entitled "Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith" by Rev. Sara Olson-Smith. The study is in the Jan/Feb 2024 issue of Gather Magazine. Jesus regularly invokes nature in his teaching, drawing us into deeper relationship with the created world. But it's not just Jesus inviting us to see creation as teacher and kin. The scriptures themselves help us see the important role of the created world in God's early world.**



***Sue Todd,  
WELCA President***

- **Monday, Jan. 8, 9:30- Martha Circle** will meet in the Fellowship Hall.  
■ Circle leader is Barb Stenberg ***bstenberg3@gmail.com***
- **Monday, Jan. 8, 1:00-Mary Circle** will meet in the Church Conference Room.  
■ Circle leader is Sue Tedell ***sjtedell@gmail.com***
- **Tuesday, Jan. 9, 9:30-Rachel Circle** will meet in the Fellowship Hall.  
■ Circle leader is Jerry Philip ***jmphilip22@yahoo.com***
- **Thursday, Jan. 11, 9:15 (note the time change!) -Deborah Circle** will meet in the Church Conference Room. Circle leader is Jean Schlenvogt ***jeansch101@hotmail.com***
- **Thursday, Jan. 11, 1:00-Elizabeth Circle** will meet in the Church Conference Room.  
■ Circle leaders are Judy Butz ***jbmaui25@aol.com*** and Carol Junge ***jungecarol@juno.com***

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Continued...

### Upcoming in Women's Ministry...

**Thursday, January 4 at 1:00**—Leader Guide for the January Bible Study with Pastor Scott for facilitators of January Circle Gatherings.

**Meet in the Conference Room.**

**Comfort Covers group will meet on January 16 from 9:00 - 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall. They will meet the third Tuesdays of the month in January through May of 2024.**

**\*\*ALL HELP IS APPRECIATED!**

Please bring any sewing supplies that you wish. Contact Lynn Kilgus for more information —[Lynn.kilgus@gmail.com](mailto:Lynn.kilgus@gmail.com)



save the date

### Join us for Bible Study with Rev. Sara Olson-Smith (author of the Winter/Spring 2024 Gather Bible Study) "Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith"



Jesus regularly invokes nature in his teaching, drawing us into deeper relationship with the created world. But it's not just Jesus inviting us to see creation as teacher and kin. The scriptures themselves help us see the important role of the created world in God's story and saving work. This four-session Bible study explores how biblical stories of the natural world help us to grow our love for and commitment to God, other people and our beloved earth.

**Rev. Sara Olson-Smith** will lead us in exploring Weather, Creatures, Rivers, and Food and how these things impact our relationship with the created world.

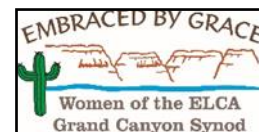
**Saturday, February 3, 2024**

**Time: 9:00 Registration  
9:30-noon Program  
Noon to 1:30 Lunch and Closing Remarks/Prizes**

**Where: American Lutheran Church  
17200 N. Del Webb Blvd  
Sun City, AZ 85373**

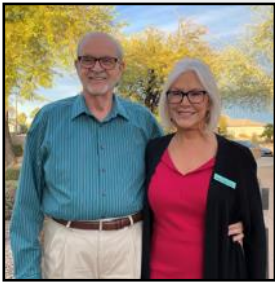
**Cost: \$15/person, includes lunch**

*Information on how to register will be on the website in January, 2024 [GrandCanyonwomen.org](http://GrandCanyonwomen.org)*





**SAY HELLO AND WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS . . .**



**Bruce & Hope Dubberstein** have been married for 8 years. Bruce has retired twice and worked for Del Webb, US West and DR Horton as sales manager. His interests are computers and any type of project. In his 20's he put a motorcycle together. Hope worked for the Chicago School System. She volunteers for Hospice, and enjoys bible studies. Hope was also a "Grandette" in The Grand dance troupe.

**Jeanette Paul** comes to us from Michigan and found Spirit of Grace by way of one of our members, Rita Logan. She retired from office work and was a Kelly Girl. Kelly Girls originated in 1946 in Detroit. Jeanette enjoys quilting, and cards.



**Sharon Masciale** is a native of California, coming from the Los Angeles area. She is a retired Interior Decorator both commercial and residential. Sharon enjoys traveling, golf and all outdoor activities including beachcombing. When she travels, her main quest is to find the best hamburger!

**Mary Minster** was born and raised in Indiana, moved to Michigan then to Indiana until retirement and is now a resident of Surprise. She drove a Dial-A-Ride bus and was a certified Matron for the police department and worked for environmental services until retiring. Mary sings Karoke and is the official birthday singer in Arizona Traditions. Mary and Henry Minster were recently married in December. Congratulations!



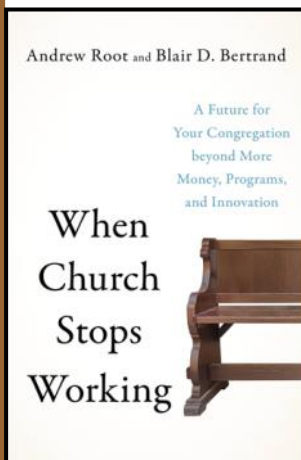
**Laura Kleinight** is from Indiana. She is a retired teacher and is currently a substitute teaching fifth grade. She enjoys going on cruises, reading and baking. She shared a humorous moment about her mother somehow getting in the middle of a wedding and came out the door instead of the bride, a lot of picture taking...

**Debbie Meyer** comes from Pennsylvania. She worked as a bookkeeper and enjoys volunteering and reading. For fun, she decorated Christmas trees for a pageant.



## FROM THE CHURCH LIBRARY...

### ***Sacred Encounters in a Secular World***



***When Church Stops Working by Andrew Root and Blair D. Bertrand*** agrees that the church has a problem but the solution is to work less and depend on God more. In this busy world, we need more 'sacred encounters' apart from the constant change and speed of our secular world.

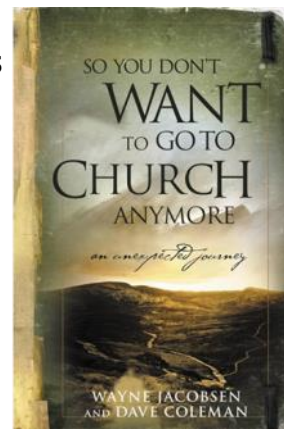
***"This book is theology—it seeks to address where we are by reminding us of who God is and who we are. Because it puts God in the center, it is a profoundly hope-giving book, engaging us all by diagnosing the real crisis of faith and encouraging us to live alertly and expectantly within that."***

Andrew Root is a professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, the ELCA's largest seminary. You will enjoy listening to his talk, ***The Church in a Time of Crisis, on You Tube.***

***So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore by Wayne Jacobsen and Dave Coleman*** chronicles thirteen conversations between Jake, a troubled pastor, and a man he believes to be one of Jesus' original disciples still living in the 21st Century. A man called "John", who talks of Jesus as if he had known him and whose way of life seems to mirror Jesus' own.

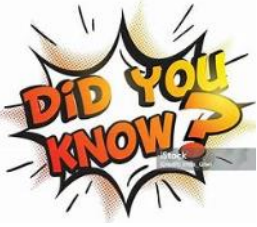
These exchanges turn Jake's world upside down. Armed with his mysterious friend's insights, Jake is able to face his darkest fears, struggle through brutal circumstances and come out on the other side as the person he has longed to become.

If you are tired of just going through the motions of Christianity and want to mine the depths of what it really means to live deeply in Christ, you'll find Jake's story will give you hope for your own. This book probes difficult questions and offers some far-reaching answers. It just might turn your world upside down as well. As one young reviewer wrote: ***"This is an exceptional story that will make you laugh, cry and be in awe of the love the Father has for all His children! It will challenge you to rethink what church is all about!"***



***Carole Parnell,***

Spirit of Grace Librarian



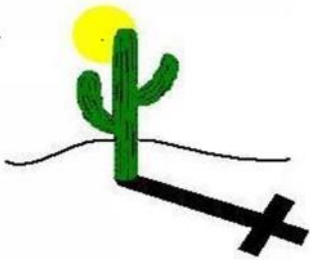
**Your nose is always visible to you, but your brain ignores it through a process called Unconscious Selective Attention.**

**If you sneeze while traveling at 60 mph, your eyes are closed for an average of 50 feet.**



**The brand name 'Spam' is really a combination of spice and ham. Not 'Scientifically Processed Animal Matter.'**

**German Chocolate cake was invented in Texas.**



## **WEST VALLEY LUTHERAN THRIFT SHOP**

**BE A WINNER...!!!**

Make a New Year's Resolution you can actually keep! Think back on all the resolutions you've made over the years like lose weight, start exercising, call your mother more often—sometimes those things are hard ... no wonder we fail!



But, volunteering at the Lutheran Thrift Shop is easy! And the good we do will make you feel like a winner! Most volunteers work 3 hours a week - who doesn't have 3 hours? Processing donated items like clothing, books, housewares, linens, appliances, crafts, artwork and holiday things keep volunteers busy in a clean, friendly environment.

We also have people who accept donations at our drive-up door and those who go out on our truck to pick up donations. As you can see, it's volunteers and donations that make this place successful.

*Hope to see you there!*

***This is your chance to be a part of something awesome and actually keep a New Year's resolution!***

***Lynn Morey***

***WIN/WIN. Call us today 623-815-706***

**West Valley Lutheran Thrift Shop, 10615 W. Peoria in Sun City - (623) 815-7061**

***Also follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)***



# A New Year With The Lord



God be  
PRAISED

A new year is about to unfold  
With new opportunities to explore  
Doors will open for new experiences  
New adventures with the Lord

Remember not the former things  
The things of this past year  
The Lord will do new things in us  
Much more than we are aware

For He will make a way for us  
As we put our trust in Him  
And He will guide our every step  
By His presence we have within

What God has placed within our hearts  
We find we'll be able to do  
If we look for the opportunities  
We'll see the door to go through

We mustn't let anything hold us back  
But rise up and take our place  
And be all that God wants us to be  
With a fresh touch of His grace

© By M.S.Lowndes



Happy  
New Year

